

# **ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE**

## **PREAMBLE 25 April 2016**

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**It is after dark on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1915 as the fleet of 200 ships ferry the men of the Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Army Corps to a destination known only to but a few of the more senior officers a place called Gallipoli.**

**It was a tense time for all as the landing had been postponed for 48 hours because of severe weather and now the men hoped they would be second time lucky.**

**That night, the 4,000 soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the First Australian Division were 'lying in wait' thinking and feeling different thoughts about the coming battle.**

**They would be the first to lead the charge.**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade landed first followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade then the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade.**

**The diary entry of an anonymous soldier from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade begins the story,**

**‘Arrived with the rest of the fleet, consisting of Battleships, Cruisers, Torpedo-Destroyers, Transports etc at a quarter to three.**

**It is now pitch black the moon having gone down, sky clear and sea calm.**

**Everyone is in a state of eager excitement; men move around the deck noiselessly and speak in whispers.**

**We can now see the high black peaks of the shores of the Peninsula about 5 miles distant ..... transport boats are lowered and steam pinnaces and destroyers come alongside to take the boats in tow.**

**All men are now lined up on deck and the orders issued, “no rifles are to be loaded ... equipment to be left unbuckled ... silence to be strictly maintained in the boats.**

**Bayonets to be fixed the moment of landing and the first line of trenches to be taken at the point of cold steel” ... at precisely 3.10am countless numbers of small craft push off together for the unknown.**

**The scream of a shell and the water is thrown fifty feet skywards ...**

**three shrapnel shells burst high over our heads and the contents come down like hail in the water nearby ...**

**our Battleships commence and immediately there is the roar of a hundred guns and the whole place is illuminated ...**

**the concussion is awful, one would fancy the whole mountain-side had fallen**

**...**

**we are now within a mile of the shore and the row and din has increased ...**

**the whole side of the mountains seem to be sending forth tongues of flame and the bullets fairly rain upon us –**

**the water is churned up from the rifle-fire, machine-guns, maxims, shrapnel and common shells ...**

**seven of the boys in our boat are killed and god knows how many in the others**

**...**

**the boats bottom scratch on the rocky shore ...**

**50 yards from land and to wade ashore with the feeling on you that you are at least one of the first to put foot on Turkish soil ...**

**silent forms lay scattered on the beach everywhere:**

**some gone to their last resting place ...**

**some writhing in their last agonies, others with their life-blood- fastly oozing out**

**The battle for Gallipoli had begun.**