**ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE PREAMBLE 25 April 2016**

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**It is after dark on the 24th 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 3rd 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 3rd Brigade landed first followed by the 2nd Brigade then the 1st Brigade.**

**The diary entry of an anonymous soldier from the 3rd 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.**