

**Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP
on the occasion of
ANZAC Day
Wednesday 25 April 2018**

Veterans, distinguished guests, our Serving women and men of our defence services, emergency services cadets, scouts, the Seton Catholic College choir, guides, volunteers, ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

Records or people's interpretations of war are presented in different formats ranging from the 'Official Record' through to war correspondents, the media, personal letters and diaries (now texts and emails), sent home by our serving men and women, books by various authors, on-line information, school essays, songs and poems.

Today I reflect on one of those formats, a poem by Jeff Cook, a prolific writer from South Australia.

I had a wonderful telephone conversation with Jeff to seek his permission to use one of over 5,000 poems and as it happens, he is a former mayor of a local government and still holds a position of Councillor stretching back over 35 years.

The poem is titled: 'After The Service'

"I saw a man parade today, in uniform complete,

*His hat cocked neatly on his head, clean boots
upon his feet,*

*His buttons highly polished, and his belt was shiny
too,*

*His head held high, his shoulders back, like I once
used to do.*

*The pride in him was evident in every move he
made,*

*The smile and twinkle in his eye, that time would
never fade,*

*So young and fit and confident, with his gun upon
his shoulder,*

*And I prayed that he would never see his mates
with him grow older.*

For if I could alter history the wars would not have been,

No-one should ever have to face the horrors I have seen,

In the stinking, sweaty jungles, with the bullets and the bombs,

And the fever and the insects, in a world so full of wrongs.

I saw fighting in the deserts too, in blinding, searing heat,

Saw men go mad with thirst, or fear, or not a thing to eat,

I saw injuries and damages that no-one could believe,

And saw months of non-stop "action" without a day of leave.

I was part of ocean warfare in a ship and submarine,

Part of sinking other tortured souls - a memory obscene.

I saw oceans full of burning oil, and lifeboats upside down,

And officers and "other ranks" who would either burn or drown.

I piloted a bomber and I bombed from in the skies, I saw planes explode, or crash to earth, and airmen, too, likewise,

I also flew a fighter and I flew it mighty well,

And I reckon what I saw of war would coincide with hell.

I was nursing sick and broken men to bring them back to health,

And I did all that I could do to protect the Commonwealth,

*I fought and fed and flew and rode and drove and
sailed and nursed,*

*And if I could have a dying wish, I'd see those
days reversed.*

*Then no-one would be hurt next time, no mates or
cobbers fall,*

And everyone would understand the futility of it all,

*Now I pray that that young man I saw will be just a
sentinel,*

*And I pray that I'm a dying group, - for I am the
R.S.L."*

Poet Jeff Cook

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, as we
prepare to leave here shortly take the opportunity
to approach one of our veterans (Aussie's and

Kiwi's) or the serving men and women of the Australian Defence Force and thank them for their service for our country.

Lest We Forget