ANZAC DAY Speech: Major Graham Hales

Mrs Gray, teachers, staff, students, parents, family, friends and guests, it is an honour to be asked to provide the ANZAC Day Service address at the Wilton Public School. As a parent of two school children at this wonderful school it is indeed more of an honour to be here. Thank you for asking me to come and talk to you this morning to commemorate ANZAC day, which most Australians, recognise as one of the most important days of the year.

ANZAC.... Now that's an unusual word.... Originally it was not a proper word, it was a set of initials as Alyssa has described; where the initials stood for Australian and New Zealand army corps and in 1915, those men, together with British, Indian and French soldiers were sent to fight in the part of Turkey known as the Gallipoli peninsula. It was because of the way those Australians and New Zealanders fought, and the way they faced the hardships and dangers which confronted them that the initials became a word - ANZAC - which today is respected in both Australia and New Zealand.

Their actions forged what has become known as the ANZAC spirit and that spirit has been the driving force behind all Australian servicemen and women ever since - in France, later on in World War II, Korea, Malaysia, Borneo, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan; many of which happened long before you were born. It is also present in the peacekeeping operations our service people undertake today.

Currently, approximately 3300 service men and women from the Australian Navy, Army and Air Force, which make up the Australian Defence Force are deployed to 11 operations overseas and within Australia to protect Australia and its national interests. Of these, approximately 400 ADF members are actively protecting Australia’s borders and offshore maritime interests. Countries and regions include the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, South Sudan in Africa, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste.

Our roles are many and include:

- Securing Australia’s borders and resources,
- Contributing to global security, through close cooperation and friendship with allies and through UN peacekeeping operations.
- Providing humanitarian and disaster-relief operations in our region.

In meeting these everyday challenges Australian Defence Force men and women embrace this ANZAC spirit. It is part of us; particularly for those who wear the uniform.
But what does the ANZAC spirit mean? And what should it mean to you? I believe it is a short word for a number of qualities which all of us, not just men and women serving in the Navy, Army and Air Force, can usefully use in our everyday lives.

The ANZAC spirit represents a sense of **purpose** and **direction**. The original ANZAC's knew what they had to do, they knew of the dangers and the difficulties but they got down and did not let those difficulties stop them from obeying their orders. It is true that the whole campaign did not achieve what was hoped for. But the soldiers on the ground stayed until their leaders decided it was time to withdraw.

You can apply this to your everyday life. You know what work you have to do at school and what jobs your parents may have set you to do about the house. No matter what difficulties you think are in the way, think of the ANZAC's and others who have followed them and push the difficulties to one side and do accomplish your task.

Secondly, the ANZAC spirit represents an **acceptance** of **responsibility**. This is another quality you should apply in your everyday lives. Take responsibility for everything you do. It is easy to say 'I did that' or 'that's my work' when everything goes right. We all know that sometimes things do not go right. Sometimes you do something which is against the wishes of your parents and teachers. Remember the ANZAC spirit and take responsibility for what you are doing.

The ANZAC spirit also includes a **sense** of **compassion**. (ie: Being kind and considerate). This has been summed up in the Australian experience as **mateship**. This means to watch out for your mate, help him or her at all times and don't poke fun at other people at school because they may have had some misfortune, or come from a different part of the world.

So these three very simple things are what we mean when we talk about the ANZAC spirit. Another word you can apply to this same spirit is **unselfishness**.

Now, I like every other person hopes that Australia will never be involved in another war - and that you will never be called upon to experience such a terrible thing. But you should use these things I have talked about - a sense of purpose; acceptance of responsibility and unselfishness, not only while you are at school, but whatever you do in your lives. If you do this you will be keeping the faith with those who put the word ANZAC into our language and you will be helping to make sure that the ANZAC spirit is always part of life in Australia.

Thank you.