

### Mr Watt's ANZAC Speech 2016

Each year we gather to remember the brave souls who have fought in wars and conflicts around the world. Their purpose has been to support an ally or maintain the way of life we hold so precious.

This year, I thought I would share with you a diary excerpt from an Australian soldier bound for Gallipoli. This excerpt is:

#### **A NARRATIVE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE OFFICER COMMANDING THE 4th FIELD AMBULANCE, AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**

*By*

#### **JOSEPH LIEVESLEY BEESTON**

It is extraordinary how one adapts oneself to circumstances. For years it has been almost painful to me to look down from a height; as for going down a ladder, in ordinary times I could not do it. However, here there was no help for it; a commanding officer cannot order his men to do what he will not do himself, so up and down we went in full marching order. Bearer work was carried out among the stony hills which surround the harbour.

Finally, on the 24th April, the whole armada got under way, headed by the *Queen Elizabeth*, or as the men affectionately termed her, "Lizzie." We had been under steam for only about four hours when a case of smallpox was reported on board. As the captain informed me he had time to spare, we returned to Lemnor and landed the man, afterwards proceeding on our journey. At night the ship was darkened. Our ship carried eight horse-boats, which were to be used by the 29th Division in their landing at Cape Helles.

Just about dawn on Sunday the 25th I came on deck and could see the forms of a number of warships in close proximity to us, with destroyers here and there and numbers of transports. Suddenly one ship fired a gun, and then they were all at it, the Turks replying in quick time from the forts on Seddul Bahr, as well as from those on the Asiatic side. None of our ships appeared to be hit, but great clouds of dust were thrown up in the forts opposite us. Meanwhile destroyers were passing us loaded with troops, and barges filled with grim and determined-looking men were being towed towards the shore. One could not help wondering how many of them would be alive in an hour's time. Slowly they neared the cliffs; as the first barge appeared to ground, a burst of fire broke out along the beach, alternately rifles and machine guns. The men leaped out of the barges—almost at once the firing on the beach ceased, and more came from halfway up the cliff. The troops had obviously landed, and were driving the Turks back. After a couple of hours the top of the cliff was gained; there the

troops became exposed to a very heavy fire from some batteries of artillery placed well in the rear, to which the warships attended as soon as they could locate them. The *Queen Elizabeth* was close by us, apparently watching a village just under the fort. Evidently some guns were placed there. She loosed off her two fifteen-inch guns, and after the dust had cleared away we could see that new streets had been made for the inhabitants. Meanwhile the British had gained the top and were making headway, but losing a lot of men—one could see them falling everywhere.

The horrors these men must have seen and lived through is unimaginable to us as we enjoy the lifestyle for which they have made their sacrifice.

