

Anzac day in australia

[Parts of the World](#), [Australia](#)



The 25th of April, Anzac Day - The one day of the year that evokes universal emotions in so many people. I am no different as I stand with pride as an Air Force cadet in my perfectly pressed blue uniform, time honored slouch hat, high polished belt buckle and black patent shoes that glisten like ebony in the sun. With a steel grey Styer rifle slung over my shoulder I stand guarding the Forest Lake War Memorial as part of the catafalque party. I feel honored to have been chosen along with three other cadets from 224 Squadron at Amberley to silently stand guard at this sacred memorial on Anzac Day 2010.

With the blazing mid-morning sun, searing down on the back of my neck I silently plead with God. " Please don't let me faint in the heat, like so many have done on previous parades". All the cadets from 224 SQN have taken bets on who would be the first cadet to collapse in the harsh sun; bets are on Brewell, who is nearly 15 kgs overweight and known to never make it through a bivouac without having to report to the First Aid station at least once. As I stand with my head solemnly bowed, my mind wanders as I stand perfectly still.

I think of Granddad, who when he was not much older than me was " Chasing Japs around the bloody jungle". This is the only insight I have of Granddad and the war as he seldom talks of it. I catch a quick glimpse of Granddad from the corner of eye as he stands in the massed crowd, at 85 years of age he still stands tall. It is nearly 65 long years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed and the war declared over, yet Granddad has never missed an Anzac Day ceremony. However, he has never marched on this day

of remembrance or ever worn his medals, much preferring to blend in with the crowd and remain anonymous.

Why he chooses to do this, I don't know. Although, I strongly suspect it has something to do with the fact that many of his childhood friends from the small country town in Victoria that he grew up in, never returned to Australia from the fighting in New Guinea. Or is it because he is a modest man? As he once said " You shouldn't have to be thanked or applauded for doing the right thing". My mind is brought back to the present, when the silence is pierced by the sounds of " The Last Post" from the lone bugle and the Wing Commander of the day barking out the command for the flag to be lowered.

As the sound of the bugle fades, my mind returns to Granddad. Like a time traveler, I am transported back to another Anzac Day parade when I was about 10 years of age. I am marching with the Moggill Boy Scouts, at the Kenmore parade, once again Granddad blending in with the crowd that throngs the side of the road. After the ceremony, I am walking back up the steep hill beside Granddad, having to take two steps to his one. I ask him why he never marches on Anzac Day and lets me wear his many medals on my right breast.

He simply mumbles, " I have my reasons". As we approach the bakery, where I know we will stop and he will buy me an ice cold Coke and sticky finger bun with bright pink icing, he turns to me, ruffles my hair and quietly says " But, you make it all worthwhile". Suddenly a thunderous roar of an F1 11 resounds approaching from the east and interrupts the speech by Shane Neumann, the local sitting member for the Federal electorate of Blair. I

suspect the crowd is rather pleased that this silver winged albatross drowns his lengthy speech out.

The F1 11 is now directly overhead and the crowd raises its eyes to see the belly of this huge piece of flying machinery. I wonder why this obsolete aircraft that most countries have phased out years ago still can bring a crowd to a standstill. Is it that, like Anzac Day, people like tradition and want to have a connection with the past I start to gently sway from side to side to try and get a bit of circulation into my body. The temperature must be at least 30 degrees and I have been standing unmoved for nearly an hour.

I start to plead with God again not to let me faint. Once again my mind wanders off and I find myself thinking of not only Granddad but of Nana, who is also a returned service woman, and who like Granddad and so many more gave away their youth to serve their country. I think of Nana in the small kitchen of their modest home in Taringa, fussing around making me and all the other grandchildren making morning tea. I find it hard to believe that she could have ever been in the army. Why would someone so quiet and caring like her want to serve during a war?

She must have felt it was her duty, for at the time five of her older siblings were in the forces serving overseas. Her father, also being a returned veteran from World War 1, maybe this is why Nana also comes and watches me on Anzac Day. Once again my mind is brought back to the present when the silence is broken by sounds of music that accompanies the wreath laying. As the young and old solemnly walk and place a wreath at the foot of

cenotaph, I listen to the words of the chorus of the accompanying song, "Lest we Forget"

Yes, as I stand with the Styer slung over my shoulder, I realise it is those three words "Lest we Forget" why I am here today. I am here today to thank Nana, Granddad, and everybody else who served in the war, for making such huge sacrifices, to secure our nation's freedom. I hope that their sacrifices will not be forgotten. As the flag is again raised and the lone bugler plays the Reveille, I look around at the huge crowd, and I know for sure they will all be remembered.