

SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF ANZAC MEMORIAL SERVICE
IPSWICH, BUNDAMBA DISTRICT, APRIL 25, 2015.

Charles W Lepani

High Commissioner of Papua New Guinea to Australia

Padre, Major Rod Strong, Counsellor Bruce Casos, Reverend Jeanette Gillam, Reverend Keren Terpstra, Pastor Don Stewart, The Band, Students, Distinguished Friends.

On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, I am honoured to be invited here today to join you in paying homage, on this occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the landing of troops on the brutal shores of Gallipoli, to the fallen in that particular theatre of war, to those who returned injured in body and in spirit and to their loved ones. Let me also pay special tribute to the 86 sons of the District of Bundamba, who took up arms to fight in the First World War and in particular in Gallipoli.

Might I add the little known historical fact that connects Papua New Guinea to World War I and Gallipoli.

Australia had commissioned only two submarines at the time of the outbreak of hostilities in the First World War. Those were the E Class Submarines AE1 and AE2. AE2 sailed with the convoy of ships into the sea of Mamara and was valiant in destroying and clearing mines so the convoy of ships and flotilla of landing crafts could land the troops. It was eventually sunk but all crew survived and were interned as prisoners of war by the Turkish Navy.

The Submarine the AE1 escorted the HMAS Parramatta under orders to capture the German outpost in Rabaul in East New Britain, and have the Germans surrender. The mission was accomplished successfully and on the next morning the two vessels set sail on patrol. The HMAS Parramatta returned to port in Rabaul but the submarine did not. It disappeared with all its crew. I was fortunate enough to be at a ceremony to remember the tragic event and to witness the launch of the effort to find the submarine in the Bismark Sea of Papua New Guinea.

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Hon. Peter O'Neill, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, wishes me to convey this for this occasion:

"In Papua New Guinea, we too reflect upon the significance of ANZAC Day, and join with our Australian and New Zealand brothers and sisters to pay homage to those who served to protect our land in World War II. At dawn services around Papua New Guinea, including the Bomana War Cemetery and Isurava on the Kokoda Track, we will remember those who lost their lives defending our land. Their sacrifice was in the just cause of freedom of their countries and peoples, and for our people. We thank the Australians, New Zealanders, Americans and Papua New Guineans who bravely fought side by side in those vicious battles seven decades ago. As a community of nations we have all grown, and countries that once fought in Papua New Guinea are now friends who work together. We will always respect the

resting places of those who are buried on our land or at sea around Papua New Guinea, and welcome their countrymen and women who come to pay homage."

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