

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 14 ANZAC Day for Japanese

1 May 2020

Australia is succeeding in significantly reducing the number of new cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Now, preparations are being made ahead of easing various restrictions, such as increased testing and the release of an app to enable contact tracing, the COVIDSafe app. I immediately downloaded the app. www.covidsafe.gov.au

However, large gatherings are still not allowed. In Australia, every year on 25 April, ANZAC Day is commemorated to honour the service and sacrifice of military personnel, and around the country, large-scale services and parades are held. This year's ANZAC Day took a different form and commemorations were held as "ANZAC At Home" (#ANZACAtHome) – national and state commemorative services were conducted with only a small number of participants, and Australians listened to or watched live broadcasts of the services at home.

I also participated in the series of ANZAC services at home. Japan has a history of being at war with Australia. How should we Japanese understand and relate to ANZAC Day? Let us reflect on this question as we look back over our two countries' history.



**Prime Minister and Mrs Morrison laying a wreath
at the ANZAC Day National Commemorative Service
(ABC News, 25 April 2020)**

ANZAC Day has its origins in the Gallipoli Landing by the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) in Turkey on 25 April 1915, when Australia, only recently federated as a nation, was fighting in the First World War. Many Australian soldiers lost their lives in the Gallipoli Landing and subsequent battles. In time, ANZAC Day came to be a day to honour the service and sacrifice of all Australian military personnel.

At the national dawn service, Prime Minister Morrison cited a speech that then Prime Minister Curtin gave on ANZAC Day 75 years ago and said that the ANZAC torch is being passed on to every generation of Australians, and that Australians today must grasp that torch and raise it high again. In an article by the Prime Minister published in *The Australian* on the same day, he emphasized that Australians would withstand and overcome the current COVID-19 hardship.

Listening to various speeches from the series of ANZAC Day events, I felt that the day has become an occasion for the people of Australia to reflect upon past hardships that the nation has faced and overcome, and to gain strength through this as the country moves forward to the future. For the people of Japan, the end of the Second World War, 15 August, has become an important opportunity to reflect on Japan's past and to look towards the future. The meanings may be

different, but for the people of each country, they are important days to consider one's own position within the history of the nation.



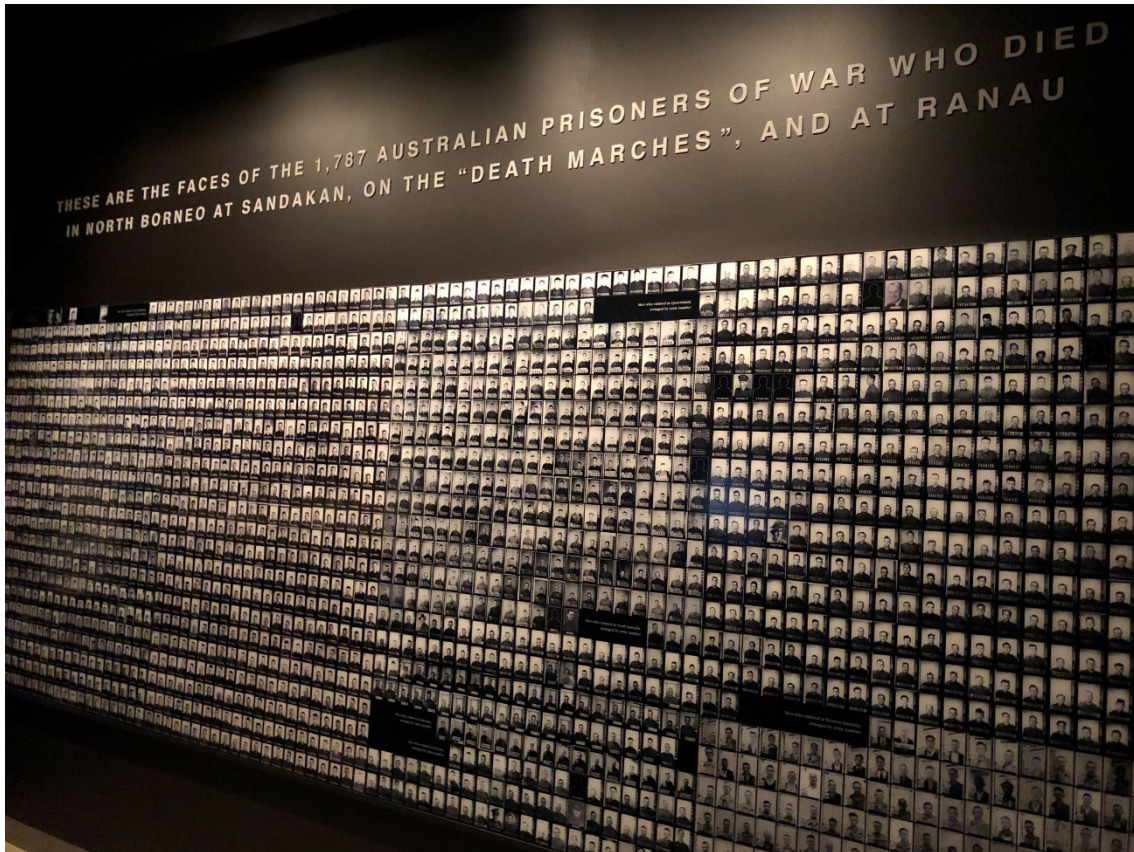
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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**Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* and Australian light cruiser *Melbourne* escorting the ANZAC convoy on the Indian Ocean in 1914
(Australian War Memorial website)**

In fact, the first ANZAC convoy going to the battlefields of the First World War were escorted by the Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* of the Imperial Japanese Navy, which was one of the Australian allies. Some of the ANZAC troops being escorted in this convoy participated in the Gallipoli Landing. The story of the escort mission has been handed down, and a model ship and a painting of the *Ibuki* were donated to Australia and can now be found at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the departure of that first ANZAC convoy, which departed from Albany in Western Australia, a ceremony was held on 1 November 2014 in Albany. Then Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakane came from Japan to participate in the ceremony, and JS *Kirisame* was dispatched by JMSDF to join the re-enactment of the convoy's departure. Then Australian Prime Minister Abbott and then New Zealand Prime Minister Key both thanked Parliamentary Vice-Minister Nakane for attending the ceremony and for dispatching JS *Kirisame*.



The Sandakan Death Marches exhibit at the Australian War Memorial

During the Second World War, Japan became Australia's enemy. This history is still told in Australia today.

During his speech at this year's National Commemorative Service on ANZAC Day, Prime Minister Morrison mentioned the history of the jungles of New Guinea, the death marches from Sandakan, and the attacks by the Japanese torpedo bombers in the Coral Sea. In his article in *The Australian*, he referenced the historical events of the Thai-Burma Railway, the Sandakan death marches and Kokoda in New Guinea. In addition, during the Sydney Rotary Club ceremony which I took part in via Zoom, one of the participants mentioned that his father had been a POW on the Thai-Burma Railway and that had his father not survived, he would not exist.

Soon after assuming my post as Consul-General, I visited the Australian War Memorial in November 2019 and reflected on Australia and Japan's war history. At the Sandakan Death Marches exhibit, photos of the victims of the death marches cover one wall. The explanatory note says that many English and Australian POWs died during the marches on the island of Borneo in 1945 and that only 6 people are recorded as having survived.



**Prime Minister Abe's address
to the joint meeting of the Australian Parliament
(Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet website, 8 July 2014)**

After the Second World War, Japan and Australia walked the path of reconciliation thanks to the goodwill and effort of a wide range of stakeholders. Time passed. In July 2014, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo addressed a joint meeting of the Australian Parliament. On that occasion, the Prime Minister said the following:

Our fathers and grandfathers lived in a time that saw Kokoda and Sandakan.

How many young Australians, with bright futures to come, lost their lives? And for those who made it through the war, how much trauma did they feel even years and years later, from these painful memories?

I can find absolutely no words to say. I can only stay humble against the evils and horrors of history.

May I most humbly speak for Japan and on behalf of the Japanese people here in sending my most sincere condolences towards the many souls who lost their lives.

Prime Minister Abe went on to mention that the revival of Japan's industry after the war was possible because of Australian coal, iron ore and natural gas, and that the two countries have freed themselves of one old layer of history and were moving towards a new "special relationship" as demonstrated by initiatives such as the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA), TPP and RCEP, as well as security cooperation and working to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific.

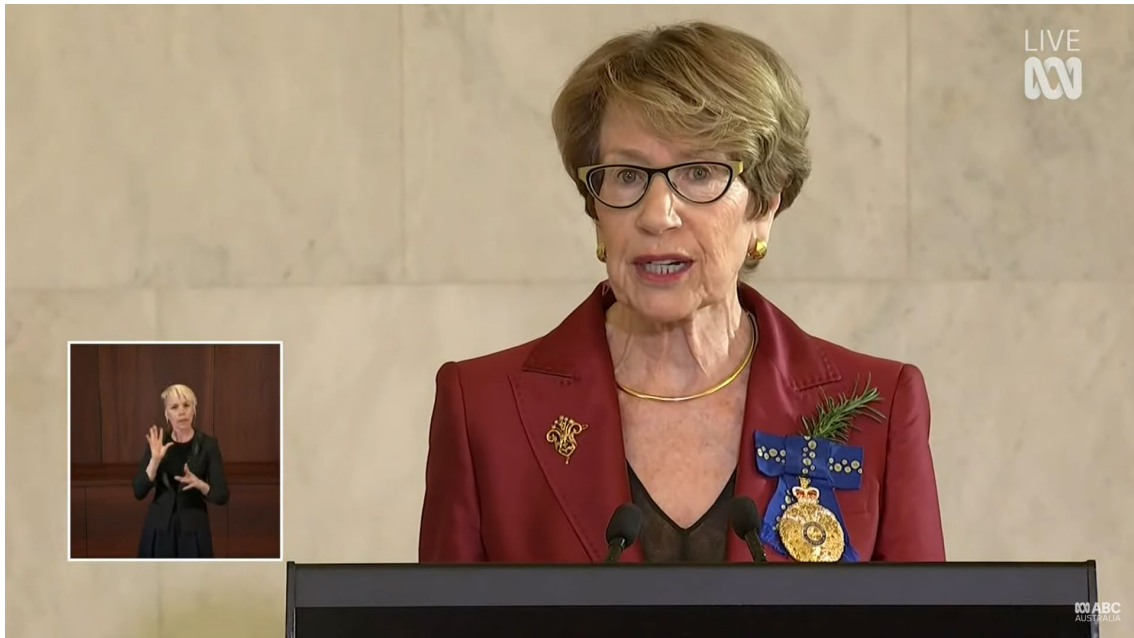


**At the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial
on Remembrance Day, 11 November 2019**

Today when interacting with Australians, if Japanese reflect on the history between our two countries and understand how reconciliation has been achieved, I think it will allow us to build even stronger ties as we face the future.

Last November when I visited the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, I had the opportunity to lay a wreath during the Last Post Ceremony for Remembrance Day. I think that by not forgetting those people who lost their lives in the course of Japan and Australia's history – by living by "We will remember them"- it is showing respect for others and enables us to make the best of ourselves.

On ANZAC Day, as a Japanese person, I reflected on aspects of history such as those mentioned above. Then I renewed my commitment to promoting various ways to work together with Australian people towards the future.



**NSW Governor Beazley speaking
at the NSW ANZAC Day Commemoration Service
(ABC News, 25 April 2020)**

Our most immediate issue is the coronavirus pandemic. Facing this crisis, each country is having to address it in its own way.

In her speech at the NSW ANZAC Day Commemoration Service, NSW Governor Beazley described the COVID-19 pandemic as an enemy and said that “just as in war”, the physical and mental health of the nation’s people is of greatest concern. The Governor emphasized the need for Australia to show community spirit and help others during these difficult times. I wonder if one of the reasons that Australia is being successful in the fight against the coronavirus is because of occasions such as ANZAC Day, through which the sense of Australian community spirit is heightened.

Now is also a critical moment for Japan. As Japan faces and works to overcome its own difficulties, every day I am doing my utmost to support Japanese nationals living here. This office is also being affected by the situation and consular counter service is presently only available during the morning, but phone enquiries are operating as usual. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact us.

Tourism Australia – ANZAC Day

<https://www.australia.com/en/events/arts-culture-and-music/anzac-day.html>

Australian War Memorial – ANZAC Day & ANZAC At Home 2020

<https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac-day>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/AnzacAtHome/>

Prime Minister Morrison’s National ANZAC Day Commemorative Service Address (transcript)

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/address-anzac-day-commemorative-service>

Japanese cruiser *Ibuki* – painting and model ship (Australian War Memorial collection)

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C174620>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C111976>

Prime Minister Abe’s address to the joint meeting of the Australian Parliament (8 July 2014)

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201407/0708article1.html

NSW Governor Beazley’s NSW ANZAC Day Commemoration Service Address (transcript)

<https://www.governor.nsw.gov.au/governor/selected-speeches-and-messages/show/1072>

Neville Meaney, *Towards a new vision: Australia and Japan across time* (2nd Edition) (UNSW Press, 2007)

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