

100 Years Ago Today

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One hundred years ago today, thousands of brave young men died for our freedom. Boys, really, many of them much younger than myself. I couldn't imagine going to war even at my age. The reasons for which they died were reasons of greed and selfishness. Opposition and non-acceptance. Old men sent young men to die because they couldn't agree with each other. But die they did, because they trusted their country and their officers and the loved ones they wanted to protect. The future they wanted to protect. We are that future, and the year we stop remembering those young men is the year we stop deserving the freedom they died to preserve.

I never knew them, my parents never knew them, my grandparents probably never knew them either. But I still remember them because they have. I still honour them because they have. I still live because of their sacrifice. And for that I will be eternally grateful. I never knew those young men, no. I can never thank them for what they did for me and all the generations to come. They went to war with the hopes that I would never have to. To do what they could to make life better for those who came after them, even though they may not have understood at the time that's what they were doing. Most people assume war is about creating conflict, but most men don't go to war to indulge in the conflict, they go to war with the hopes that they can do something to help end it.

Today, one hundred years after the event at Gallipoli, my own fiancée stood for hours at a monument with his CFS cadets, honouring those who died. This time next year, my own fiancée will be a soldier himself - a military fire fighter. There is none he respects more than those young men who died for him. And there is none I respect more than him for the sacrifices he is making to serve his country, and to make our new life together better. I wish those young men could see him now - see the future they have provided. See that their sacrifice was not in vain. People all over the country today will lay red poppies at monuments containing thousands of names. Names without faces, names without memories, names without meaning to most, but names that represent the only thing that everyone on this Earth agrees on:

Freedom.

Lest we forget.

1915 - 2015, 100 years since the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli.

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