

The Dawn Service

Wending their way home after an ANZAC Eve function in the early hours of ANZAC Day 1927, five members of the Australian Legion of Ex-Service Clubs, Messrs J. Davidson, E. Rushbrook, G. Patterson, L. Stickler, and W. Gamble observed an elderly woman laying a sheaf of flowers on the Cenotaph. One of them asked the woman if she would allow them to join her in her tribute and they all bowed their heads in silent prayer.



At the going down of the
sun and in the morning
we will remember them.

At a subsequent meeting of the Legion, it was decided that a Wreath Laying Ceremony would take place at the Sydney Cenotaph at 04.30 hours every ANZAC Day. This was the time that the first troops landed at ANZAC Cove in 1915.

Very little publicity was accorded that first simple ceremony. However, in 1928, about 150 people were present. The following year, 1929, an open invitation brought 250 people and prayers and bugle calls were added.

In 1930, representatives of the Federal and State Governments and more than 1,000 people attended. The State Governor of the day, Sir Phillip Game, began what was to become almost a Vice Regal duty when he attended in 1931. Another first that year was the provision of special trams, trains and buses, which greatly increased the public participation.

The Service continued to grow and in 1933 the representatives of the 3rd Brigade, the first troops to land on the shore at Gallipoli, 9th Battalion of Queensland, the 10th Battalion of South Australia, the 11th Battalion of Western Australia and the 12th Battalion of Tasmania were invited to attend and that year the attendance was more than 8,000.

By 1935, the 20th Anniversary of ANZAC was one of the biggest to that time 10,000 attending and in 1939 with the threat of another war imminent 20,000 were there.

With members of the Legion of Ex-Service Clubs getting on in years, the National Servicemen's Association NSW Branch has been asked to assist, and with the Legion has formed The ANZAC Day Dawn Service

Trust Inc. to continue on with the tradition, in a manner worthy of ANZAC's and all those who have made the Supreme Sacrifice for their Country.

With 2003 marking the 75th Anniversary of the first organised Dawn Service, the ANZAC Day Dawn Service Trust is accepting donations from Clubs or individuals for the continuance of this very special event.

Donations may be sent to PO Box 126 Belfield, NSW 2191

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