

ADDRESS BY  
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING QC  
**ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**ANZAC DAY SERVICE**  
Kormilda College, Darwin  
24 April 2008

---

Ladies and Gentlemen

Some of you may have seen the television documentary last week on the discovery of HMAS Sydney off the coast of Western Australia. It was very evident that everyone aboard the deep water survey vessel *Geosounder* was waiting with bated breath for the first glimpse of the warship on the sea floor. Sixty-seven years after HMAS *Sydney* sank with its entire crew following attack by the German *Kormoran*, it was finally found at a depth of 2,450 metres.

Why did the experienced researchers aboard the survey vessel cry? Why do our Grandfathers and Grandmothers still weep for family and friends they knew who never returned from the many arenas of war more than half a century ago? Why do we stop all our regular tasks tomorrow and make a point throughout the nation of remembering war?

It is incredibly hard to imagine, as young men and women here at Kormilda in 2008, what fighting for your country actually entails. When I was a young man, I knew friends and associates who were conscripted for a war being fought in the jungles and amongst the paddy fields of South-east Asia.

There are Vietnam veterans living in the Northern Territory, you may know some of them, who would describe their endeavours in Vietnam as a nightmare struggle against both guerrilla fighters and the effects of the perfidious cocktail of chemicals that was used – “Agent Orange”. However, the Australian forces did themselves proud.

I would like to share with you part of the citation for the Eighth Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, which was first read out by Lieutenant General Do Cao Tri, on 29 October 1970. Note that the soldiers were the forerunners of those currently based at Robertson Barracks.

*An excellent combat unit, always displaying high morale while co-operating and assisting the Vietnamese people in their struggle against Communism and to defend peace and freedom. Though fighting under the most difficult conditions, (they) still fought bravely and determinedly and had many glorious victories.... Together with their military effort, (they) participated in the civic action programme to assist the local population to reconstruct their houses, roads, bridges, markets and schools, and achieved excellent results. Through their glorious activities outlined above, (they brought) great credit to the Royal Australian Armed Forces.*

Strength of character is something that I would urge our next generations to learn.

I'm not sure that it can be taught as a school subject, but much of what you do learn here contributes to strength of character: teamwork, hard work, sportsmanship, caring for your fellow students.

More than ninety years ago, thousands of young people not much older than you joined the Australian Imperial Force as volunteers and found themselves fighting 20,000 kilometres away.

On the Western Front in Europe in World War I, these soldiers became an elite force contributing to the Allied victory and acquiring many honours and decorations along the way.

But there were great losses. 60,000 Australians were killed, more than the entire population of Palmerston and the rural area combined. Many of them died during the ill-fated 1915 Gallipoli campaign when the letters ANZAC came to mean much more than the initials of a fighting force.

As you know, ANZAC comes from the words: Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, the formation into which Australian and New Zealand soldiers were grouped in Egypt prior to the landing at Gallipoli in April 1915. The word was initially used to refer to the cove in Turkey where the Australians and New Zealanders landed and soon after, to the courageous soldiers themselves.

The spirit of the ANZAC is something we seek to this day. Which brings me back to my earlier question *why do people weep unashamedly on ANZAC Day?* It is because the date serves as a memorial to all those who have fought for Australia over the years.

To those who have shown outstanding spirit and gallantry, courage and sacrifice. Those who have died aboard ships like HMAS *Sydney* or in fighter planes, members of special forces, and those that provided support to our troops all over the world.

We remember them and we thank them.