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Message from His Eminence Archbishop Makarios on ANZAC Day



“The ANZACs have been recorded as models of selflessness and self-sacrifice in the consciousness of the Greek people”, notes His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, in his message for today’s Australian national commemoration of ANZAC Day. His Eminence reminds, moreover, that “the soils of our homeland, from Lemnos to Crete, and in many other corners of mainland and island Greece, are watered with the blood of hundreds of Australian soldiers”. He also refers with gratitude to the Australians who in 1941 fought and sacrificed for the defense of Crete, a place “that was not, but became theirs”.

Finally, His Eminence emphasises the increased responsibility of the Greek Omogeneia of Australia to respect and honour the memory of the ANZACs, while pointing out that “their example will always move us, inspire us and guide us”.

The following is the entire Message of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia for ANZAC Day:

The soil of our homeland – from Lemnos to Crete, and in many corners of mainland Greece and the islands, is watered with the blood of hundreds of Australian soldiers, who fought and sacrificed their lives for the universal values during the

First and Second World Wars. These heroes were just some of the thousands of ANZAC men and women who, although far from their homeland and families, unselfishly defended the values of freedom, democracy, justice and human dignity.

The ANZACs have gone down in history as models of altruism and self-sacrifice in the consciousness of the Greek people who joined them, for example, in Lemnos when they hosted and cared for the soldiers who took part in the Gallipoli Campaign, or in Crete and in other parts of Greece, when locals and Allies fought side by side to stave off the Nazi invasion.

There is no better day than today to demonstrate to the whole of Australian society the prominent place that ANZACs hold in the hearts and minds of Greeks. And as a Cretan by birth, I feel the need to go a step further and express our gratitude to the ANZACs for their commitment to the high ideals that spurred them to shed even their blood to defend our land – a place that was not theirs, but which became their own!

Therefore, fully aware of our historical responsibility, we bow down today in reverence to the glorious heroes of the Australian nation. Their example will always move us, inspire us and guide us. Lest we forget!

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