



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## **ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE**

**Saturday 25 April 2026**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we are gathered – the Bunurong people of the Eastern Kulin Nation – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

I also want to acknowledge past and present members of the Australian Defence Force with us today – thank you for your service.

I want to acknowledge the Anzac ambassadors who will lead the Anzac Day March this morning.

- Commander **Helen Ward** – representing the Royal Australian Navy;
- **Ricky Morris** – representing the Australian Army;
- **Rebekah Herron** – representing the Royal Australian Air Force;
- **Suzy Wilson** and **Simon Rawson** – representing veterans of the Gulf Wars; and
- **Shiraz Ahmadi** – representing Afghan interpreters.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the veterans of peacekeeping missions in the Middle East and Afghanistan – who will lead today's March.

Lest. We. Forget.

Those words sum up Anzac Day.

They sum it up because – in the dark before dawn and in the light of the eternal flame; on this sacred day and on this holy ground – we are here to remember.

We are here to remember that first morning at Gallipoli.

We are here to remember the millions of Australian Defence Force personnel who served – and serve – on our behalf.

And we are here to remember the 103,132 men and women who lost their lives while serving in Australian military units.

That is the solemn duty we share.

Standing here this Anzac morning, many of us have some place or some moment or someone in mind that we cannot forget.

It might be a place where we served;

It might be a moment when our life changed;

It might be a lost comrade or loved one.

Each remembrance is personal. But if your remembrance feels heavy this Anzac morning, let me say this:

Look around. You are not alone.

There is a temptation, when remembering past conflicts, to speak only about battles fought in distant lands and skies and seas.

The stories of those battles are worthy of remembrance, but we should also remember the battles fought closer to home.

For instance, I suspect many Australians have never heard of Monterey.

Monterey is not a far-off nation. Or city. Or battlefield.

Monterey is a building that is a short walk from the Shrine – 17 Queens Road, South Yarra.

Today, Monterey is a three-storey apartment block.

In 1942, Monterey was a joint Australian-US intelligence unit FRUMEL – the Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne.

This was Australia's Bletchley Park – the place where codebreakers cracked enemy naval signals.

The Australians and Americans working at Monterey were the ones who gave Allies the advance warning that helped win the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway.

They also warned of the invasion that led to the brutal fight along the Kokoda Trail.

Like Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes, Monterey in Melbourne saved countless lives and shortened the war.

And, like Bletchley, many of the foot-soldiers of Monterey never told their stories because they were sworn to secrecy.

Warriors like **Jessie Flanders** – who served in the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service – and only told her family about her work at Monterey after she received a Bletchley Park memorial badge from the British Prime Minister in 2011.

**Jessie** took her pledge of secrecy so seriously she didn't march in an Anzac Day parade until 2018 – at the age of 97.

**Joan Fairbridge**, not officially enlisted, was a servant of espionage and intelligence gathering from 1941 in the Australian Navy.

Joan was warned she would be shot if Australia lost the war.

Remember, this was 1942 – our nation’s darkest year.

The year Singapore fell;

The year that Darwin, Sydney and Broome were attacked;

The year HMAS Perth was sunk;

The year Melbourne prepared for invasion and slit trenches were dug into the lawns around this Shrine.

**Joan Fairbridge** knew what was at stake for herself, but – like so many among us this morning – she answered the call and served.

And, yes, most of the 80 Australians at Monterey were women.

As I said, each remembrance is personal, but each remembrance – from so many Australians of different backgrounds and genders and generations – is connected by service and sacrifice ... and duty.

Standing here this morning, we are ensuring the eternal flame of that duty remains alight.

And none of us stands alone.

The duty we share, then, is to not just remember the stories we carry within ourselves but honour the service and sacrifice of our fellow Australians because, as the inscription in the Sanctuary of this Shrine reads,

‘Greater Love Hath No Man.’

Finally, I want to say this to the returned servicemen and women with us this morning:

Your nation is forever in your debt.

And we will never forget.