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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Australia celebrates 100 years of ANZAC tradition**

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – Australians and New Zealanders, Saturday, will celebrate the centenary of a pivotal episode in their respective national histories — the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings in World War 1. The event is commonly known as ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Day.

ANZAC Day is one of Australia and New Zealand's most important national days and is the equivalent of America's Veteran's Day. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces in World War 1.

The day commemorates the 1915 Allied landings where Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the British and French expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula.

The overall plan was for an Allied landing force (the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) to capture the Gallipoli peninsula, thus opening the Dardanelle Straits. Then, the Allied fleet could steam into Constantinople, (now Istanbul in Turkey) and force the surrender of the Ottoman Empire. This surrender would strip Germany of a key ally, and reduce pressure on the Russians.

At dawn on April 25, 1915, the ANZACs landed north of Gaba Tepe (the landing area later named Anzac Cove) while the British forces landed at Cape Helles on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

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French diversionary attacks were also launched in the area, but these forces eventually redeployed to the Cape Helles area.

The ANZAC landings on Gallipoli met fierce resistance from the Turkish defenders. The Allied plan (conceived by a young Winston Churchill) to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months. Instead of the swift knockout blow envisaged by Allied planners, the Gallipoli landings quickly descended into static trench warfare, and remained so for the duration of the campaign.

Gallipoli was Australia and New Zealand's first significant opportunity to show what their soldiers could do. Both countries strongly supported the Allied war effort and maintained very strong cultural and historical links to Britain.

News of the landings and the reality of subsequent events (both in Gallipoli and on the Western Front) however, had a profound impact on Australians and New Zealanders at home. The ANZACs generated a reputation as courageous fighters during World War 1.

The spirit of ANZAC, with its human qualities of courage, mateship, and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity. Australian and New Zealand soldiers have since adopted the informal label of ANZAC and the pride they took in that name continues today.

In Australia, April 25 was officially named ANZAC Day in 1916. It was marked by a wide variety of ceremonies and services in Australia and where troops served overseas. For the remainder of the war, ANZAC Day featured patriotic rallies, recruiting campaigns, and parades of serving members of the Australian Imperial Force in most cities.

During the 1920s, ANZAC Day became established in Australia as a national day of commemoration for the 60,000 servicemen and women who had died during the war.

It became an official public holiday in 1927. In New Zealand, the first ANZAC Day public holiday occurred in 1921 and has continued ever since, although New Zealanders have commemorated the day since 1916. By the mid-1930s, all the common activities associated with ANZAC Day — dawn services, marches, reunions, 'two-up' games — were firmly established as part of ANZAC Day culture.

Since then, the meaning ANZAC Day has been further broadened to include Australians and New Zealanders killed in all the military operations since World War 1.

In this spirit, Australians and New Zealanders will commemorate the sacrifices of their veterans on ANZAC Day.

Traditionally, ANZAC Day is commemorated by remembrance service held at dawn — the time of the original landings in Gallipoli. Afterwards, veterans meet to take part in marches through the major cities and in many smaller towns. Formal commemorative ceremonies are usually held at major war memorials.

A typical ANZAC Day ceremony may include the following features: an introduction, hymn, prayer, an address, laying of wreaths, a recitation, the Last Post, a period of silence, either the Rouse or the Reveille, and the national anthem. After the formal ceremonies, veterans and their Families often continue to mark the day at some sort of informal social event.

These range from attending one of the marches for veterans, annual gatherings of ex-service associations or low key social activities with friends and Families.

ANZAC Day celebrations are well attended by the Australian and New Zealand public and celebrations will often last through the day and into the evening.

For current and former service members, it is often an occasion to renew friendships with former colleagues whom they may only get to see each ANZAC Day.

Recent years have seen resurgent support for ANZAC Day with attendance at commemorative services increasing annually. Many Australians and New Zealanders have also started to travel to Gallipoli and the Western Front battlefields to mark ANZAC Day. This has become so popular that places available at Gallipoli this year will only be available by ballot.

For Australian and New Zealanders, ANZAC Day now goes beyond the anniversary of the Gallipoli landings.

It is the day we remember all our veterans who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. On ANZAC Day, people in towns and cities across Australia and New Zealand will be up before dawn to acknowledge the service of our veterans.

For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

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(Editor's note: Prior is the Australian Army liaison officer to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence.)

### *About Fort Leonard Wood*

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*Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains about 80,000 military and civilians each year.*

*Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.*

*Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. A colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.*

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