

From: Neville Clark
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13 June 2015

Guy Barnett, Esq.,

Chairman,

The House of Assembly Standing Committee
on Community Development,

House of Assembly,

Hobart, Tas., 7000.

Dear Guy,

Forgive the informality but I am presuming on
old acquaintance, for I well remember a keen Manifold
House Christian had in a small I.S.F. group along with
Debbie Chandler, Jean and Stuart Burtone et al, (where
are they now, one wonders) back in the 1970s.

This letter nevertheless has a purpose. I was
delighted to read in yesterday's "Mercury" that you are
chairing a committee which is inviting submissions
on proposals to amend the Tasmanian Constitution —
congratulations, incidentally, on your distinguished
service as an Australian Senator these past six years.

(Appropos, I was particularly impressed with your advocacy
for the remembrance of the nation's wartime service and,
at the time you were objecting to Tasmania's exclusion
from the travelling Victoria Cross exhibition, I wrote in
support to my former regimental comrade, Major General
Steve Gower AO, AO (mil), who was then serving as Director
of the AWM — poor Steve has since lost his wife and

retired somewhere near to Canberra, though Dr. Nelson seems to be a worthy successor — he also answers letters, which is rare enough in these days of instant communication.)

To get (finally) to the point: I'm enclosing for your interest a copy of the submission I made to the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (I also received a courteous answer from its Secretary, Ms Toni Matulick). As you will see, I prefer a minimalist alteration — though I'm open to more extensive suggestions. I'd prefer a proper mention in the Preamble (or "Short Title" as it's called) to any specific provision in the body of the Document — certainly the race provisions (Clauses 25 or 51, *xmri*) should be excised, but I wouldn't want them replaced with any other race clause, certainly not one which mentioned anti-racial discrimination, or indeed any form of discrimination (where does one stop — sexism, 'homophobia', misogyny, marriage "equality", religion etc etc.?).

I also love the historical wording of the 1901 Document and would hate to see certain of its phrases removed on the pretext of multicultural sensitivity, phrases such as "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God" and "one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown" etc. Whatever the 2017 referendum case turns out to be, I'm convinced that the least alteration has the best chance of a "Yes" vote — which I'd like to see (having failed to vote in the 1967 Referendum because I was on operations in South Vietnam at the time — I think I was fined!). Anyway I'm following all the current discussions (Noel Pearson's, Warren Mundine's, Andrew Bolt's etc.) with

great interest. Good luck to you and best wishes on your own forthcoming discussions on the Tasmanian Document — with which, I regret to say, I am unfamiliar.

Just a couple of other matters while I've got you (if you're, kindly, still reading!) — and for goodness sake don't go to any trouble with a formal reply. Once I've finished my month of eye surgery here at Tasmanian Eye Clinics — successful so far — and have been back to Melbourne (hence the address shown on my letter to the Joint Select Committee) and returned, in the Spring, to our new Hobart address, it would be lovely to meet up for coffee, if you had time, at our favourite local haunt, the 'Tan Tar', Hampden Road, corner of South Street. Round about October, I should think?

Also for interest I enclose a copy of the brief address I gave at the Melbourne Dawn Service (if in the meantime I can locate the 2014 address I'll send that too). Yes, it was ironic that Tasmania was to be excluded from the V.C. exhibition visit, given that Tasmania produced the greatest number of V.C.s (including the latest, tragic, case of Cameron Baird V.C.) of any State on a proportional basis.

I may also have attempted to bore you with the biography I wrote of your dear housemaster? Boy and Barbara have just flown back in Boy's Piper Arrow (though ex-RAAF son Bill was at the controls) from a holiday in Broune, flying over much of the Territory that Boy knew, both during wartime and peacetime flying.

Enough — you're been very patient. My wife, Lorna, and I wish you every blessing in your continued service to Tasmania and the Commonwealth. Proudly,
Yours ever,
David Clarke.

8/26 Brougham Street,
NORTH MELBOURNE,
Victoria, 3051

[Joint Select Committee]
etc.

Dear

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION REFERENDUM

Given the almost universal desire to excise the two blatantly racist provisions in The Australian Constitution (Clauses 25 and 51.xxvi), and given the need to minimize any other alteration so that the Referendum will have the best chance of returning a "Yes" vote, I would like to propose the following minimalist changes to the "Short Title" or Preamble.

"Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland [*Tasmania and Western Australia*], humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established:

"And whereas it is expedient [*meet and right, to acknowledge the prior occupation of the Australian Continent by its First Peoples, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as well as*] to provide for the admission into the Commonwealth of other Australasian Colonies and possessions of the Queen:

"Be it therefore enacted etc. etc."

My hope is that such a minor alteration would be considered neither disrespectful nor unmanageable.

Yours faithfully, or sincerely if I
found not a name!

Neville Clark, M.C., O.A.M.

DAWN SERVICE 2015, Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne.

The moon is down. It is 3 a.m. They know that they have an hour of darkness before dawn will silhouette the jagged ridge-line of Sari Bair. They are the covering force, two rifle companies from each of the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Battalions. From Ari Burnu a captain of the Turkish 27th Regiment is straining his eyes seawards, despite reassurances from his headquarters that any landing will occur further south, towards Fort Gaba Tepe.

On Little Ari Burnu, the southern promontory of what will become known as ANZAC Cove, a light glows at 0429. "Look at that!" exclaims Captain Ray Leane. The figure of a man appears on the skyline. A voice calls from the land and a rifle flashes. Four, five shots, then regular fire growing fast. Thirty yards for the nearest boats now; bows grate on shingle; "Thanks, Mid" – this to the 15-year-old Royal Navy Midshipman at the tiller – then it's over the side, waist-deep, rifles at the high port, but no return of fire because magazines have not been charged, they'll go in with the bayonet. Racing across ten yards of pebble and sand, men take cover behind a low bank. Lesson One: Turks shoot straight.

Offshore also Turkish fire is causing casualties. Private "Combo" Smith recalls his Sergeant insisting that bullets will make a noise like small birds flying overhead. "Combo" has the whole boat laughing as, cocking an eye at the sky, he remarks to his mate, "Snowy" Howe, "Just like little birds, ain't they, Snow?"

Confusion grows onshore. Whether through miscalculation or a last minute alteration, boats have converged more than a thousand yards north of the originally intended landing place, confronting troops with a tangled array of precipitous slopes – even worse, units have become intermingled, the boats carrying the 9th Battalion criss-crossing with those of the 10th, while the 11th is further north still. Commanders are desperately trying to link up with their men, some of whom are already dead. "Come on boys, they can't hit you!" cries Talbot Smith to his Scouts of the 10th. "Come on boys... by God, I'm frightened!" roars Captain Peck of the 11th as he dashes at the cliffs. On balance you'd have followed Captain Peck, but up they go, hand-over-hand, clutching at arbutus roots and prickly holly-oak, boots sliding backwards on the gravel patches, wild thyme in the nostrils...It's not the larrikin in the ANZAC soul that sends them up those cliffs, it's the discipline instilled in training combined with the initiative of individuals, men of every rank and no rank, men like Blackburn and Robin, Tulloch, Loutit, Plant, Margetts, Lalor (Lalor with his grandfather's Eureka Stockade sword by his side, soon to die) and those whose skeletal remains and AIF insignia will be found years later high on the Third Ridge, where on this day they will penetrate further inland than any other troops in the entire campaign.

That's courage and audacity in attack – you'll see that, too, in the penetration of the Dardanelles by Submarine AE2 that very night, and again at Lone Pine, Beersheba, Villers-Bretonneux, Le Hamel, Amiens, Mont St. Quentin, El Alamein, the Ruhr Valley and the Moehne Dam, Maryang San, Afghanistan. Writing of that first D-Day for Australians and New Zealanders, Churchill is to record, "From that moment, through all the months that followed, the power did not exist in the Turkish Empire to shake from its soil the grip of the Antipodes" – *there's* stubbornness in defence: and you'll see *that* again at Quinn's Post, Tobruk, Bakri, Isurava, Milne Bay, Sunda Strait, Kapyong, Coral, Long Tan. And there's Simpson plodding up Shrapnel Gully with his donkey – ultimate sacrifice and mateship. And you'll see *that* again on the Burma Railway, amongst the Nursing Sisters, the "White Coolies" of Sumatra, and those who died in the Sea King helicopter bringing aid in that very region to the earthquake victims of Indonesia.

And so the sun rose on that first ANZAC Day, exactly one hundred years ago today – the Rising Sun, if you like, of the Australian soldier – and with it there came a new realisation of what it meant to be an Australian. And the world began to know it too: Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, the ANZACs' bravest enemy, is to hail the ANZAC dead as "our sons as well". How many great Australians there are today, military and civilian, who carry on the ANZAC traditions of courage and endurance, of duty rather than entitlement, initiative and self-reliance rather than complaint and victimhood, cheerfulness and wry humour rather than gloom and despair – of unselfish team-play and, above all, of standing by your mate – who are beacons of hope inspiring the rest of us, everyday Australians, to do exceptional things – in the Spirit of ANZAC!

Neville Clark, 25 April 2015

THE SPIRIT OF ANZAC

We come to this sacred place not to glorify; certainly not to celebrate (the modern cult of celebrity would have been unrecognisable at ANZAC: as CJ Dennis's Ginger Mick knew, 'It's crook to tell / A tale that marks for praise a single one'.). If we are true to the purpose for which this Shrine was built, however, we come to commemorate. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps gave to two new nations a new spirit which neither of them could have imagined before.

Australians and New Zealanders knew that they had to fight in 1914 because they knew the cost to themselves if the British Empire should go down – they'd go down with it. Australians and New Zealanders have not fought in wars to gain anything: Australians and New Zealanders have fought in wars not to lose something – freedom. To protect their new nationhood – and their freedom – the A.N.Z.A.C. went to war with a spirit of determination which has marked their successors ever since.

The determination, for instance, of the tragic, successive waves of the Light Horse in the charge at The Nek in order to give the equally heroic New Zealanders the best chance of seizing Chunuk Bair, tactical key to the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The determination shown at Passchendaele by the Machine Gun Section Commander who wrote down his orders for his Section, all of whom had – like him – volunteered to man a potentially fatal outpost. His orders?

1. This position will be held and the section will remain here until relieved.
2. The enemy must not be allowed to interfere with this programme.
3. If the section cannot remain here alive, it will remain here dead, but in any case it will remain here.
4. Should all the guns be blown out, the section will use Mills grenades and other novelties.
5. Finally, the position, as stated, will be held.

The section did indeed remain until relieved, fully 18 days later, and these orders became so famous along the Western Front that for many years they were promulgated in British Army Orders and, in 1940 at Dunkirk, were hailed in the press as 'the spirit that won the last war.' And the author, and Section Commander? A Tasmanian clergyman.

The determination of the Bomber Command aircrews to fly straight and level through the death zone to give themselves the best chance of hitting their targets in the Ruhr Valley.

The determination of the Captain and crew of HMAS 'Yarra' to protect a three-ship convoy by steering their own diminutive craft directly into the path of the Japanese heavy cruiser squadron.

The determination of the walking wounded from Kokoda not to clog up the 'fuzzy-wuzzy' stretcher line but to keep moving themselves, if necessary by crawling on their knees.

The determination of the POWs that no Australian should die alone on the Railway of Death.

The determination of the nursing sisters to maintain their honour and show no fear to their captors after the Banka Island massacre.

The determination of the exhausted division in the pivotal coastal sector at Alamein to bring upon themselves if necessary the whole weight of the Afrika Korps counter-attack to enable a break-out further inland.

The determination to mount the slopes of Maryang San, to advance through the rubber trees of Long Tan, or to search through the green valleys and up the desert crags of Afghanistan.

The determination to keep the home fires burning till the boys come home.

This spirit of determination has led inevitably to sacrifice, not just the fact of sacrifice which, between 1914 and 1918 for instance, resulted in irreparable loss for two young nations, but also a spirit of sacrifice, a team spirit if you will, through which many lives were saved by selfless acts of courage, for the sake of comrades-in-arms, and ultimately for freedom.

And it was this spirit of sacrifice which was defined 2,000 years ago, and for all Eternity, by a brave and beloved leader whose words are engraved on stone at the heart of this Shrine.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

The Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne
ANZAC Day, 2014

Neville Clark