

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2015
GALLIPOLI CENTENARY

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:45): I would like to commend motion by the member for Florey that this house notes the centenary of the battles of Lone Pine and The Nek at Gallipoli, gratefully acknowledges the courage and heroism displayed by the forces involved and the significant deaths and injuries suffered by the gallant ANZACs—the soldiers of Australia and New Zealand—and the tenacity of the opposing Turkish forces.

In relation to the overall number of losses, at Gallipoli about 9,000 Australian lives were lost and 3,000 New Zealand soldiers were lost and, as the member for Morphett stated, almost 45,000 allied forces. The number for the Turkish forces, from memory, was around double that, at least 90,000, and probably more. We have to remember that the Turkish forces were fighting for their homeland and were very keen to lay their lives on the line for that cause.

The Battle of Lone Pine was one of the most recognised as being partly a success, I guess, in World War I. There were several Victoria Crosses, one during that battle which raged for several days. There were some great acts of heroism, including one soldier who kept throwing bombs back that had come over from the Turkish lines. It shows how close people were. In fact, in the Battle of The Nek, the lines were only 27 metres apart and, because of the lack of synchronisation of watches, the artillery stopped seven minutes in advance of the attack.

The first wave of men went over the top and were butchered, and the same thing happened with second wave. However, there were not as many casualties with the third wave because men were going over the top and searching for cover as they went because they could sense the suicide and the futility of the assault. And because of confusion in the trench and soldiers not being able to find commanding officers, and that sort of thing, quite a few men in the fourth wave went over and lost their lives as well. Overall, World War I showed some terrible losses of men. I think it just goes to show that we come from the Middle Ages style of warfare, where people were basically face-to-face. Here were men going over the top, up against machine guns on either side.

I have not had the privilege to visit Gallipoli, and I hope I will at some time in the future, but I have certainly had the opportunity to visit the battlefields of the Western Front, and that was very sobering. I spent four days there in late 2010; it is an amazing place. Certainly from every position I visited, whether it was Passchendaele or Messines, Ypres and around the Somme, it looked like our trenches and our men were always downhill of the enemy. There were some courageous acts in charging uphill, and this was certainly the case at Gallipoli. What happened there is a terrible tragedy.

I note the letter that came back from Keith Murdoch, which certainly changed the face of the Gallipoli campaign. I suppose the one success was the withdrawal. We noted on the most recent Gallipoli teledrama the tenacity of the Australians and other forces in getting off the beach, so to speak, and back to

their ships without one casualty, using devices such as water dripping into jam tins hanging from the triggers of 303s so that the Turks thought people were still in the trenches firing at them.

We must never forget the sacrifice of our Diggers, and there were far too many sacrificed in World War I. I was very fortunate to have a great uncle come home from the war. He was serving on the Western Front and got shot through the nose sideways; he was walking between two other troops. He was fortunate enough to be repatriated back to England and, by the time he was ready to go back to service, the war was over. We must never forget the gallant feats.

I visited many sites on the Western Front like Villers-Bretonneux and others and, as I said, it is a sobering thought. You look at the many graves—3,500 war graves just on the Western Front. I also visited a German cemetery on the Western Front where there were single graves, but also there were four communal graves with 3,000 soldiers in each, so there were 12,000 men buried there. I say that because there has been a lot of discussion—and I know I am digressing a little—about what happened at Fromelles with the allied soldiers, the Aussies and New Zealanders and British soldiers, who were buried in a communal grave. But from some of the history I have researched on that, the efficiency—and that is probably the wrong word but it was what the Germans used, and they used it with their own people, and I am not suggesting it is right. I commend the people of the war graves units who have found our soldiers and put them in the new cemetery at Fromelles which is a beautiful spot for them to rest in peace.

There is a lot of futility in war. I suppose if you have to have war, it is good in a way that things are a lot better managed and I guess there are a lot better communications and that kind of thing. As we know, it is the centenary of World War I. It was a long time ago and communications were not the same. I commend the motion. Lest we forget.