



**Government
of South Australia**

Veterans SA

**Hon Martin Hamilton-Smith MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs**

Operation SLIPPER National Commemorative Activity

**Saturday, 21 March, 2015
9.00am – 1.00pm
Torrens Parade Ground, Adelaide**

Acknowledgements

- His Excellency, The Hon Hieu Van Le, AO Governor of South Australia
- Professor Brenda Wilson, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia
- The Hon Christopher Pyne MP - Minister for Education and Training
- Steven Marshall MP - Leader of the Opposition
- Air Marshal Geoff Brown, AO Chief of Air Force
- Service Representatives
- Sir Eric Neal, AC CVO – Chair of Veterans' Advisory Council
- Most importantly, Veterans of Operation SLIPPER

Welcome

- Good morning ladies and gentleman

Operation Slipper

- We gather today to honour the service and sacrifice which you and more than 34,500 Australians have made, from the Department of Defence, the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other government agencies who have deployed as part of Operation SLIPPER.
- You have experienced an operational environment which is, complex and turbulent. It has demanded that you be adaptive; it has demanded that you learn quickly; it has demanded that you look after yourselves and your mates; and it has demanded that you accept the consequences of your actions. At every step you have exceeded our expectations, which are extraordinarily high, and brought credit to yourselves, your service, the Australian Defence Force and the nation.
- My message on behalf of South Australia to the families of the 41 Australian Defence Force members who made the ultimate sacrifice, and the 263 personnel who were wounded whilst deployed, is to remind you that your sacrifice was righteous, just, honourable and given to protect a nation, which they loved and which loved them, from great peril.
- Our thoughts are also with the families of those killed and those who were injured in training. The loss of Lance Corporal Mason Edwards who died in a training accident at Cultana Training Area on 21 October,

2009 having already completed two deployments to Afghanistan, is felt no less heavily than those killed in action.

- The entire nation thanks you and your families for the deprivations and hardships you have endured to ensure our continued safety and security.
- We know that operational deployments are not the only challenges you and your families have faced. The rigorous training, the additional burdens placed on your husbands, wives, partners and children, and the challenges of being separated from your families all add to the impact.
- Some of you have deployed on multiple occasions, on this operation and others. I know that it gets no easier and each occasion presents its own challenges.
- Your service is as honoured by this nation, as that of the men before you, who hit the beaches of Gallipoli. Your predecessors fought bravely, showed compassion, courage, determination, endurance, loyalty, mateship and tenacity. They are the Anzac values. You are them!
- These characteristics were seen at Gallipoli in 1915 and throughout World War I and World War II in PNG, the sky's over Europe and South West Pacific, Vietnam and many other conflicts and operations, on land, sea and in the air.
- You have exhibited all these characteristics and added your own – honour, honesty, initiative, teamwork, respect, excellence, agility, and dedication.

- They define your service in Afghanistan.
- A gallery to honour the 5 South Australians Killed in Action in the Afghanistan War has been opened at the Army Museum of South Australia at Keswick Barracks.
- South Australian soldiers Sergeant Andrew Russell, Sapper Darren Smith, Private Tomas Dale, Sapper Jamie Larcombe and Corporal Scott Smith are all commemorated in the gallery. The gallery contains memorabilia and photographs from the Afghanistan War and information about these courageous men.
- Our thoughts are with all of the families who have had to bear the loss of loved ones during Operation SLIPPER. Loss that is impossible to fathom except to understand it was to defend us from a great evil.
- Our thoughts are also with those men and women currently deployed on Operation OKRA in Iraq, Operation HIGHROAD in Afghanistan, Operation MANITOU in the Gulf, and in other operational theatres across the globe. They are continuing the legacy of selfless service as you yourselves have done during Operation SLIPPER.

Conclusion

- As our newest generation of veterans, I want you to know that South Australia will work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that our community provides you the support you require as you make the physical and emotional transition to life after Afghanistan.
- It is my hope that you can enjoy the benefits of what you and previous generations of service men and women have fought and died to preserve and what freedoms enemy would deny, summers by the beach, rounds of golf, enjoying the company and food of people from around the world we welcome to our nation and our state, following your favourite football team - or more importantly, watching daughters, sons and grandchildren enjoy the freedom to grow, learn, explore and follow their dreams in a safe, tolerant and supportive society.
- One more time former Prime Minister, John Curtin expressed this sentiment not long before his death in 1945 when he said: “Is not Anzac Day a day that breathes the very soul of freedom? And is not freedom the hope of the world? The men of ANZAC handed on a torch, now firmly clenched and carried high, by the fighting men of today. From their hands it will go on to the coming generations.”
- You men and women have carried that flame. It is the light of the free.
- We thank you for what you have done in our name, for keeping us safe and we will never forget.
- We could not be more proud of you. Welcome Home.