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American Samoa Joins Samoa in Honoring ANZAC Day



The Honorable Tuala Iosefo Ponifasio, Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa and Minister of Customs and Revenue, a former soldier of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (3rd Battalion), who is the current President of the Returned Servicemen Association (RSA), extended the invitation to the Governor of American Samoa, Honorable Lemanu P.S. Mauga, who is a United States Army veteran Major retired (Ret.), to attend the Australia & New Zealand Army Corp (ANZAC) in Samoa and honor the heroes who fought for our peace and freedom. A

delegation from American Samoa Veterans of the United States Military led by the American Samoa Government Chief of Staff and retired U.S. Army Major (Ret.), Loa Tuimavave T. Laupola, joined Samoa Government leaders, the diplomatic corps, disciplined forces representatives, and foreign dignitaries at the ANZAC Day dawn memorial service on Beach Road, Apia, Samoa. The delegation consisted of veterans of the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps, and the United States Navy.

The annual ANZAC Day memorial service commenced with a parade by war veterans from Samoa, American Samoa, New Zealand, and Australia. The official opening ceremony was held at the Town Clock war memorial in Apia. Retired US Marine Sergeant Major (SgtMaj) Palaita Tusipasi who served in the United States Marine Corps (USMC) for more than 30 years shared that it was the first time the American Samoa U.S. veterans participated in the celebration of the ANZAC Day festivities in Apia, in many years. “It was an opportunity to be a part of a prestigious event celebrating the service, sacrifice, and legacy of our forefathers who fought alongside Pasefika warriors in past wars. The services rendered by soldiers and servicemen of any country is considered the highest honor, especially at the risk of not returning to their loved ones,” said SgtMaj Tusipasi, USMC, Retired.

The Prime Minister of Samoa (PM), Honorable Fiame Naomi Mataafa, delivered the keynote address and she reminded the audience that the ANZAC celebration was not for glorification, but for solemn reflection and to remind us of peace. “We must not forget how the peace and freedoms we enjoy were won on all fronts and the magnanimity of the sacrifices made,” shared PM Mataafa. “While the ANZAC legend was born on the shores of a country far from our own, it has become part of our shared histories. ANZAC Day reminds us of the close and enduring links between Samoa and its Pacific neighbors working in close cooperation and collaboration to ensure that we can co-exist in a region of peace, security, and stability,” PM Mata’afa.

While on her official visit to Australia, PM Mataafa laid a wreath at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and in New Zealand. PM Mataafa acknowledged the contingent of war veterans from American Samoa and thanked the delegation for joining Samoa in honoring the legacy of our Pasefika warriors.

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