



Australian Commemoration at the Athens' Commonwealth War Cemetery

Members of Australia's Federation Guard (AFG) led a ceremony at the Phaleron Commonwealth War Cemetery in Athens, Greece, to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Greece and Crete. Present at the 18 May ceremony were six Australian veterans of the conflict, officials from the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence, and Greek member of the Australian Parliament, the Hon. Steve Georganas.

The Commanding Officer of the AFG contingent Lieutenant Luke Haitas said that the catafalque party had conducted an excellent and moving ceremony at the beachside cemetery. "The commemoration went well and it was quite emotional for both the soldiers and the veterans," Lieutenant Haitas said. "I'm very proud of the guard in conducting what was a dignified and solemn ceremony to remember those Australians that died defending Greece during the German invasion."

"Being of Greek heritage, with my family fighting in WWII, as well as being an Australian Army Officer, the ceremony was very moving

for me - it emphasised the strong bond between the two nations."

Regimental Sergeant Major - Ceremonial, of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Warrant Officer Class One Leanne Iseppi said that the commemoration was the first of many that will be conducted by Australia's Federation Guard in Greece and Crete. "Today's ceremony was an excellent start to the program in Greece," Warrant Officer Isseppi said.

"It was quite emotional watching the veterans laying wreaths at a ceremony were many of their WWII colleagues lie buried. "The Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen on parade represented Australia proudly in the hot Mediterranean sun."

There are currently 2,029 Commonwealth servicemen of the Second World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery.

Australia's Federation Guard is an ADF unit, comprising of members from the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force, that provides ceremonial support for the Australian Commonwealth.

