

**FRANCE'S DEFENCE ATTACHE PAYS HOMMAGE TO HIS DISTINGUISHED PREDECESSOR,
REAR ADMIRAL JEAN-FRANCOIS DE GALAUP, *LE COMTE DE LAPEROUSE***

The French Defence Attaché, Captain (FN) Yann Marboeuf attended the La Perouse Day Ceremony on Friday March 10th.

His speech below, reproduced with permission, resonates across all those who love the sea - mariners past and present, family and friends who wait for their return - and esteemed members of our two Navies, Australia and France working closely together now in a new strategic partnership.

THE FRENCH DEFENCE ATTACHE'S SPEECH – 10th MARCH 2017

His Worship Councillor Noel D'Souza, Mayor of Randwick City
Monsieur le Consul General,
Madame la Présidente,
Captain Schlegel, representing the Fleet Commander,

Dear Brian,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to join you this evening to commemorate the 229th Anniversary of Lapérouse's departure from Botany Bay in 1788.

As the expedition was first and foremost a scientific one, I have chosen to talk about **figures** to remember my illustrious predecessor, *Jean-François de Galaup, le Comte de Lapérouse*:

0. As Lapérouse did not have any children, he has no direct descendants. This has certainly contributed to the legend that has developed around his persona.
1. Louis the 16th, King of France, who will always be remembered as a weakened Sovereign, carried away by the French Revolution, was passionate about the Sea and also Geography. He devoted a lot of time, attention and resources to the Royal French Navy. He provided the initial impulse for Lapérouse's renowned scientific expedition across the Pacific.
2. *L'Astrolable* and *La Boussole*, Lapérouse and *Fleuriot de Langle*, both ships and men were inseparable. Lapérouse, the navigator and born leader; Vicomte Fleuriot de Langle, the technician and organiser.
3. Like the number of years of it took each full journey made by both Captain Cook and Lapérouse (1785-1788)
4. Like the number of places in the Pacific that honour Lapérouse's memory:
 - a. Lapérouse Pinnacle in the Hawaiian archipelago.
 - b. Lapérouse Bay on Easter Island.

- c. Lapérouse Straits, the international waterway between the Russian Pacific Coast and Japanese Islands.
 - d. And last but not least, the significant suburb in south-east Sydney where we are all gathered this evening.
5. Like the number of French Naval ships that bore and still bear the name of Lapérouse. There is currently one based in Brest (Brittany) – it is a survey ship.
 6. The number of expeditions undertaken to search for Lapérouse, from the D'Entrecasteaux expedition in 1793, to the New Zealand Diver Reece Discombe in 1962 which located the second shipwreck, *la Boussole*.
 7. All the scholars and artists aboard the *Astrolable*, including:
 - a. Gaspard Monge, French mathematician and founding father of the well-known *Ecole Polytechnique*
 - b. Barthélmy de Lesseps, French diplomat, once vice-consul of Russia and uncle of Ferdinand de Lesseps, known for having built the Suez and the Panama Canals.
 - c. Father Receveur who rests besides us here at Botany Bay.
 - d. Seventeen scientists embarked along with Lapérouse and Fleuriot de Langle, compared to only 3 or 4 during Captain Cook or Bougainville's expeditions.
 8. Like the 8th of July 1783, the date Lapérouse married Eleonore Broudou, despite opposition from his family, and with whom he was engaged for 8 years. Eléonore was a loyal and patient Lady.
 9. The total number of Lapérouse's commands. History particularly remembers *La Boussole*. But from a military perspective, Lapérouse's most prestigious command remains *Le Spectre*, a 74-gun ship he commanded during the American Revolutionary War. When he won the Battle of Hudson's Bay in 1782, he demonstrated his outstanding qualities as a man and humanist and as a military leader by treating English prisoners with the greatest decency. Louis the 16th remembered the way he had behaved and entrusted him with commanding the expedition that we are commemorating this evening.

Lapérouse was a great sailor and open to the great discoveries of the 18th century, a century that we like to call in French *le siècle des lumières* (The Age of Enlightenment). He was always, and above all, a humanist, who never denied the values he believed in, when dealing with his enemies or facing populations he came across during his expedition in the South Pacific region he kept in mind what he had written before leaving France: "*I shall make every effort to ensure that the inhabitants of the Islands we might visit will never be sorry for having welcomed us*".

Thank you for your kind attention.

YM.