

Veterans Support Centre



2nd Edition May 2022

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association (NSW)
Hastings Manning Macleay Branch Inc.



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Mental health - Who do I contact if I, or someone I know, needs help now?



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Our office is open weekdays - phone or call in 10am - 2pm

Committee Meetings:

President and Committee may determine a date and time for these meetings

Annual General Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements are available at the office.



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THURSDAYS -

Join us on Thursday mornings at the Veterans Support Centre from about 10am for an informal get - together. Find out what's happening with veteran's issues, catch up with old and new friends or just have a chat over a cup of coffee or tea.

These informal mornings are followed by **OUR FAMOUS \$7 LUNCH**

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Hello again,

So much to share, good and bad, but I don't know where to start.

OK, bad first - how can people who are living through their worst times be so angry towards those who have arrived to help them? Yes, Lismore floods, tragic and so many have lost everything (again) due to flooding. But why abuse verbally and gesture rudely and spit on those ADF members who have come to help? **See pg 19**

In this issue I have also celebrated the good - the incredible work done by the ADF to help flood victims in both Queensland and northern NSW. **See pgs 20-23** As always, they get right in and work hard, ambo drivers, bushfire support, age care home help, vaccine rollout, NT covid help, border control, flood relief and repair, to list just a few. They also continue to support our Pacific neighbours, as well as training and honing their own skills and fulfilling their primary roles. I may have mentioned before that I was asked "What does the ADF do when there are no wars to fight?" So I have also put in some of the extraordinary things that have happened over the last 12 months, this covers a fraction of what they have achieved. **See pgs 32-35**

As Vietnam Veterans, many of our readers were sent to fight for their country, no choice in that decision, also many volunteered, but either way you are all owed a debt by your fellow countrymen. So are our younger veterans, many who have served in war zones and conflicts and/or struggle to return to a "normal" life outside of the ADF. I most sincerely hope that Minister Gee's demand for funding to shrink the backlog of 60,000 outstanding claims by veterans through DVA can be fast tracked, especially to veterans who grow old waiting. Sadly, I have read of the extension to the current Royal Commission to mid-2024. DVA need to put far more effort and shorten the time taken to clear the 60,000 claims still waiting, then maybe there would be fewer veterans so desperate as to take their own life? **See pg 15**

Also, I still struggle with the SAS trial in progress and the trial by media alongside it, such a highly trained and experienced force, bringing down not just the soldier in question but also the integrity and belief in the SAS and the ADF in general? Whatever the outcome, the process will bring sadness to so many and permanent damage to another veteran. I now read that a similar trial by media is happening for veterans from the Timor Leste deployments, more damage to our veterans, the units and the ADF reputation, even before any legal inquiry starts. The damage is done even when members or veterans are shown to be innocent of any wrong-doing.

I feel privileged to be put your Contact Front together each quarter and spend many hours looking for something that I hope you will find interesting, thought provoking or entertaining. Thank you to the contributors for this issue. If you have something to pass on or share, I will try to include it. Just email to the address to the left of this editorial. You may notice that I have 'tweaked' a few of the standing pages, this is to make space for longer articles and to remove items that are no longer relevant.

Finally, the chuckle pages are just that. The jokes come from many sources, as listed, and they are, in my opinion, funny, included for that reason alone. If you wish to avoid adult humour, sexist or offensive humour, please don't read the joke pages and then complain. Feel free to just skip the last 2 pages - most people will just take them as funny, often service related, shared humour.

Stay safe and well, Jill

Please remember that opinions expressed in this issue are mine and may not conform with those of the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia or the VPPA Hastings Manning Macleay Branch Inc.



Jill Opie, Editor

ANZAC Day 2022 - Wauchope



Above - forming up for the March, The Pipe Band

Below - Wreath layers at the front of the March, community groups from SES and Guides Australia



The March was led by the Pipe Band, then the flag bearers representing the Services and the national flag, next came the wreath layers along with a contingent of veterans and serving members, with the community groups following, - SES, Guides Australia, the local schools, community groups such as CWA, Wauchope Show Society and many others supporting ANZAC Day 2022.

ANZAC Day 2022 - Wauchope



Above - Catafalque party at Wauchope Cenotaph and President Mr W Wagner, Veterans Support Centre, Port Macquarie



Above - Mr L Barker, Mr W Starrenburg, Mr W Wagner, Mr D Barnes, (all Veterans Support Centre PM) and Mr M Brownlow, President of Wauchope sub-branch RSL



Above - left Mr B Starrenburg, centre the lunch guests at RSL Wauchope, right Mr D Barnes



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If you need help accessing DVA's website, call the VSC for help



The **VPPAA** is dedicated to the welfare of all Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers, ex-service and serving personnel and their families. If you, or someone you know, is ill and you suspect the illness may be a result of military service, please do not hesitate to consult one of our trained volunteers.

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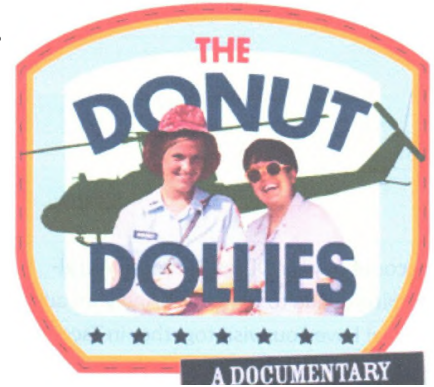
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"We don't take your safety lightly"

Meet Red Cross Donut Dollie Evelyn Safford Jacobs

What prompted you to join SRAO (Supplemental Recreational Activities Overseas) and want to go to Vietnam?

My college advisor had just posted an American Red Cross (ARC) poster that said "For the Best Year of your Life". It caught my eye, it sounded exciting and I was always up for an adventure. I went back to the dorm and wrote away for an application, when it arrived I filled it in and sent it back immediately. I didn't really know anything about the war. I was conservative, so hadn't protested, but didn't tell anyone what I was doing. The ARC flew me to San Francisco for an interview so I had to tell my parents what I was doing. The interview was very informal, not at all what I expected. I later realized that the interview was the chat with the male director on the walk to the coffee machine and tour of the office. When we sat down again, he asked me straight away, "did I want to go to Korea or Vietnam?" I said "Vietnam, I haven't even considered Korea". I sat there thinking 'where is the interview', but I guess it was the ability to talk to him with ease.



When and where were you stationed in Vietnam? Did you go by a nickname?

In Vietnam I went by Evie and I was posted to An Khe with the 4th Division in the Central Highlands from October 1, 1970 until we closed the unit in early November. The recreation centre had been closed, so it was all Clubmobile runs meaning that we visited the men out on the firebases and units/companies on base camp presenting our programs. We spent a lot of time with the 173rd LRRPs (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) on base. We had a regular run to Pleiku. I was transferred to 11 Field Force HQ in Long Binh in early November. It was also a Clubmobile unit with no recreation centre. We had runs to the big base at Long Binh and forward runs to the 25th Division units out at Tay Ninh and the 11th ACR (Armoured Cavalry Regiment) out in Phuoc Tuy Province. We also had an overnight run to the Delta.

I was transferred to Qui Nhon at the end of April, 1971. It was my first experience working in a recreation centre, although it closed shortly after I was assigned to the unit. It was an 8 girl unit, but as the centre closed we were reduced to a 5-6 girl unit. I stayed at Qui Nhon until we closed the unit at the end of 1971. We moved to a BOQ (bachelor officer quarters) across town in an old hotel on the beach for the last 3 months. It was really just a home base, as we had a 4 day/3 night run to Pleiku, and a 3day/2night run to Phu Cat AFB (Air Force Base) with an overnight extension to LZ English. So we weren't in Qui Nhon a lot.

What was a routine day like in Vietnam?

There were very few routine days in our days in Vietnam, except for runs to the big support bases like Long Binh where we went from one company to another doing our programs. We usually did 6 programs a day. Our job was to boost the morale of the troops. A program consisted an introduction, a few starter jokes and challenging activities to engage the men, followed by the main trivia game based on a new topic each week. We wrote programs and swapped them between Red Cross units in-country. Each game had a method of scoring, which often involved active participation. The most successful program I wrote was on motorcycles. I knew nothing about motorcycles, but the men at the recreation centre at Qui Nhon supplied all the questions and answers. We would wind down by having a chat as we distributed short timer calendars and puzzles.

Out in the field we would give out goodies sent from Red Cross chapters back home (ie cards, mirrors, soap, beer can openers etc). On the forward runs we fit in with the conditions. At An Khe, my very first visit to an outpost was on top of a cleared mountain. It was cold and wet. I remember an air mattress floating in a foxhole as we walked around and talked to the men. We may not have done a program due to the conditions. If we did, we would gather the men in one spot, set up our props on sandbags and do a program.

Any routine day could change in an instant. Like the day a GI hitched a ride in our chopper and, over Mang Yang Pass decided he was going to end it all by jumping out. The gunner grabbed him and they saved him. Or the day our Chinook broke down and we set down in an open field with no protection. Or the day we missed the C-130 flight, so we went up to the tower and hitched a ride to Pleiku. Or the day we got caught in an awful thunderstorm on the way back from Ban Me Thout in a fixed wing aircraft. Or the day we flew back to An Khe and the cloud was so thick we couldn't get down to the chopper pad, so had to fly back to Lane Valley and wait until the cloud lifted. Or the day our chopper pilot set us down at a remote location and said to go over and ring the bell at the gate, then took off immediately. We got short shift (in very plain language) by the officer who answered the bell. We later realized it was a secret CIA base in Laos. I was with the unit director and she had a stern chat with the pilot after we had to sit unprotected in a village for an hour waiting for him to come back.

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Some days we would take a mike boat (a mechanized landing craft) up the Mekong River or we would go out in a jeep but mostly we flew by chopper. One day we flew out to a Navy ship off the coast of Qui Nhon. When visiting the 11th Armoured Cavalry Regiment, we would fly all day with Col. Valentine and his kelpie dog. He would visit all his units and we would do a program while he worked with his command. We would often serve lunch after our midday programs, then sit on the sandbags and eat with the men. If we were on base, we would eat with the men at their company mess hall.

Did you ever have any "close calls" either on base or in any vehicles?

Yes, early in my first weeks of in-country flying out of An Khe, a rocket missed the chopper skid by a mere metre. The pilot took evasive action as we dived to a low level along the tree line. A number of times, we could see tracer fire coming towards our bird. Once when we were flying over open rice paddies in the delta, suddenly we were taking fire. The worst time was a rocket attack at our Qui Nhon base. I woke when the first rocket hit and my fan fell on top of me. My roomie was screaming at me to hit the floor and to pull the mattress over myself. One of the five rockets landed right outside our hooch window. I saw the flash of fire. I remember gripping the concrete floor and praying "Dear God, please don't let the next one hit us".

Were you ever injured in Vietnam?

No, other than having the worst case of Hong Kong flu I've ever had and a wisdom tooth out, there was nothing. I always say "I had a lucky war". My number wasn't up.

What was it like to visit soldiers in the hospital?

I can only recall one scheduled visit to a hospital at Phu Cat Air Base and they were all non-war related injuries. I did visit a couple of guys I knew who'd had surgery at Long Binh. We did visit a Vietnamese hospital in the Phuoc Tuy Province. It shocked me how basic it was. The families were squatting under the beds and cooking whilst looking after the patients who were a family member in the ward. The 11 Field Force HQ had a drug amnesty centre just down from our compound. A few times we went down and visited it. That was a real eye-opener to watch guys in various stages of withdrawal from heroin and it shocked me when I would recognize someone.

How was the transition returning home to the United States?

I didn't go home to the US. Another Donut Dollie, Dibby and I hopped on an R&R flight to Sydney, Australia after we signed out in Saigon. We spent the first 2 weeks in Australia in Sydney. We met some GIs who had migrated to Australia. One of the guys said to us "Nobody wants to know about Vietnam and nobody wants to hear about how we do things in America". So I took his advice. (At that stage life in Australia was fairly basic). Dibby and I started a working holiday. I went to a cattle station (a working cattle ranch) and Dibby went to a sheep station working as a Mother's help. So the adventure went on. We eventually travelled around the Australian outback on a bus tour and spent 6 weeks backpacking around New Zealand. I met an Aussie and found they were short of teachers so I began a teaching career. Life went on, I rarely talked about Vietnam until 1987 when the first welcome home march was held in Sydney.

What would you like people to remember and understand most about the women who served?

I always say we were young and naïve and had no idea what we were getting into. We were just the "girls from next door" who the American Red Cross sent to Vietnam to boost the morale of the troops. We offered a "touch of home in a combat zone" to "the boys who became men" who were called to serve their country. We were the big sisters to those 18-19 year old kids. It changed our lives forever, just like it changed theirs. Looking back, we were unique women. We were willing to step out of our comfort zone. There were many natural born leaders and high achievers amongst us. The majority of us got on with life after Vietnam, but we realize that it was an experience that we would never repeat. We shared a unique bond with all our Dollie Donut sisters, no matter which year we served.



Far left - Donut Dollies at the 11 Field Force. Long Binh

Left - 7am walking to the chopper

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How do you feel Veterans think of your time having served with them? Have any veterans expressed their feelings to you directly?

I'm only in contact with a couple of American veterans. One says I saved his life by getting him out of the field. At the end of the program when he'd answered every question (despite us trying to handicap him) I said to him "What's a smart guy like you doing in the field!" Apparently the officers heard me and he was offered the company clerk's position back in the rear.

In Australia, I'm generally accepted as "one of them". I was fortunate to visit Nui Dat, the Australian base, several times as we had an artillery unit on the perimeter. So when we talk, they realize I've been there and I can understand the Vietnam experience. Often a wife will say to me "I've just heard him talk more about Vietnam to you than I've ever heard".

I recently went back to Vietnam. I hired a private tour guide who took us out to Long Binh, Bien Hoa, Nui Dat and Vung Tau. He knew the area well. One of the things that I realized was that as Donut Dollies we mostly flew everywhere and mostly didn't really know where we were on a map or how far we were away from our base.

I've done a lot of public speaking as part of ANZAC Day services (our Memorial Day - Australia & New Zealand Army Corps). I now get very emotional when I march and speak at ANZAC services. I went to the Welcome Home match in 1992 in our nation's capital, Canberra and to the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project dedication in 1993 in Washington DC. Both were huge events for me.

What is your fondest or most interesting memory of Vietnam?

The Long Binh unit got special permission to present a Bob Hope skit to all of our troops in the field during the week before Christmas. I was the Sgt Major who couldn't dance and Sally was the hot Lt who could. Roseanna was Bob Hope complete with golf clubs and jokes. The other 2 girls had pretty dresses. We were to present 7 shows a day for 7 days straight out in the field. We only had 2 failures due to no power and a hot LZ. We did our dialogue then sang a Christmas carol with the guys and then finished up having a dance with a few of the guys. During the skit Sally, as the Lt, would ask "Where did you learn to dance?" and my punchline reply was "I went to shake and bake school!" That wasn't scripted; it just came out of my mouth the second or third show and became one of the most laughed lines in the skit. Shake'n'Bake was a quick chicken breeding product that was popular at the time and referred to Sergeants who went to school to become one rather than rising through the ranks the hard way. The enlisted men called it the "Shake'n'Bake School".

Postscript - After my time in the SRAO program as a Donut Dollie, I remained in Australia. I married my Aussie in 1972 and started teaching for the NSW Dept of Education. I enjoyed a full time teaching career for 42 years and still do substitute teaching a few days a week due to a teacher shortage. Being a Physical Education teacher, I became heavily involved in Sports organisation in both the schools and community. I'm still actively involved in administration of community basketball, surf lifesaving and play masters field hockey. We've lived in beautiful Crescent Head overlooking the Pacific Ocean for the last 42 years. My son is also a PE teacher in western NSW. He and his wife have 2 sons.



Sept., 1970 SRAO training class

Above - Donut Dollies rehearsal

Top right - Evelyn Safford Jones in her Christmas Show outfit with Phil at the 11th Armoured Cavalry Regiment, 1970

Right - Dibby Clark (L) and Evelyn with 2 pilots at their Fini Flight (aka final flight)

Source - contributor via veteran B





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The Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Why was the Cuban missile crisis such an important event in the Cold War?

Cold War, the open yet restricted rivalry that developed after World War II between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. The Cold War was waged on political, economic, and propaganda fronts and had only limited recourse to weapons. The term was first used by the English writer George Orwell in an article published in 1945 to refer to what he predicted would be a nuclear stalemate between “two or three monstrous super-states, each possessed of a weapon by which millions of people can be wiped out in a few seconds.” It was first used in the United States by the American financier and presidential adviser Bernard Baruch in a speech at the State House in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1947.

Origins of the Cold War

Following the surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945 near the close of World War II, the uneasy wartime alliance between the United States and Great Britain on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other began to unravel. By 1948 the Soviets had installed left-wing governments in the countries of eastern Europe that had been liberated by the Red Army. The Americans and the British feared the permanent Soviet domination of eastern Europe and the threat of Soviet-influenced communist parties coming to power in the democracies of western Europe. The Soviets, on the other hand, were determined to maintain control of eastern Europe in order to safeguard against any possible renewed threat from Germany, and they were intent on spreading communism worldwide, largely for ideological reasons. The Cold War had solidified by 1947–48, when U.S. aid provided under the Marshall Plan to western Europe had brought those countries under American influence and the Soviets had installed openly communist regimes in eastern Europe.

The struggle between superpowers

The Cold War reached its peak in 1948–53. In this period the Soviets unsuccessfully blockaded the Western-held sectors of West Berlin (1948–49); the United States and its European allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a unified military command to resist the Soviet presence in Europe (1949); the Soviets exploded their first atomic warhead (1949), thus ending the American monopoly on the atomic bomb; the Chinese communists came to power in mainland China (1949); and the Soviet-supported communist government of North Korea invaded U.S.-supported South Korea in 1950, setting off an indecisive Korean War that lasted until 1953.



Left - Aerial photograph of Medium Range Ballistic Missile (MRBM) Launch Site 1 near San Cristóbal, Cuba, taken on October 25, 1962. U.S. Department of Defense/John F. Kennedy Presidential Library
Right - U.S. Pres. John F. Kennedy signing the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, October 7, 1963. National Archives and Records Administration

1953 to 1957 Cold War tensions relaxed somewhat, largely owing to the death of the longtime Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in 1953; nevertheless, the standoff remained. A unified military organization among the Soviet-bloc countries, the Warsaw Pact, was formed in 1955; and West Germany was admitted into NATO that same year. Another intense stage of the Cold War was in 1958–62. The United States and the Soviet Union began developing intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in 1962 the Soviets began secretly installing missiles in Cuba that could be used to launch nuclear attacks on U.S. cities. This sparked the Cuban missile crisis (1962), a confrontation that brought the two superpowers to the brink of war before an agreement was reached to withdraw the missiles.

The Cuban missile crisis showed that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union were ready to use nuclear weapons for fear of the other's retaliation (and thus of mutual atomic annihilation). The two superpowers soon signed the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1963, which banned aboveground nuclear weapons testing. But the crisis also hardened the Soviets' determination never again to be humiliated by their military inferiority, and they began a buildup of both conventional and strategic forces that the United States was forced to match for the next 25 years.

The Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Throughout the Cold War the United States and the Soviet Union avoided direct military confrontation in Europe and engaged in actual combat operations only to keep allies from defecting to the other side or to overthrow them after they had done so. Thus, the Soviet Union sent troops to preserve communist rule in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979). For its part, the United States helped overthrow a left-wing government in Guatemala (1954), supported an unsuccessful invasion of Cuba (1961), invaded the Dominican Republic (1965) and Grenada (1983), and undertook a long (1964–75) and unsuccessful effort to prevent communist North Vietnam from bringing South Vietnam under its rule.

Toward a new world order

In the course of the 1960s and '70s, however, the bipolar struggle between the Soviet and American blocs gave way to a more-complicated pattern of international relationships in which the world was no longer split into two clearly opposed blocs. A major split had occurred between the Soviet Union and China in 1960 and widened over the years, shattering the unity of the communist bloc. In the meantime, western Europe and Japan achieved dynamic economic growth in the 1950s and '60s, reducing their relative inferiority to the United States. Less-powerful countries had more room to assert their independence and often showed themselves resistant to superpower coercion or cajoling.



Left - Soviet invasion of Prague, Czechs confronting Soviet troops in Prague, August 21, 1968. Soviet forces had invaded Czechoslovakia to crush the reform movement known as the Prague Spring. *Libor Hajsky—CTK/AP Images*

Right - Berlin Wall opening - People from East and West Berlin gathering at the Berlin Wall on November 10, 1989, one day after the wall opened. *AP Images*

The 1970s saw an easing of Cold War tensions as evinced in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) that led to the SALT I and II agreements of 1972 and 1979, respectively, in which the two superpowers set limits on their antiballistic missiles and on their strategic missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. That was followed by a period of renewed Cold War tensions in the early 1980s as the two superpowers continued their massive arms buildup and competed for influence in the Third World. But the Cold War began to break down in the late 1980s during the administration of Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev. He dismantled the totalitarian aspects of the Soviet system and began efforts to democratize the Soviet political system. When communist regimes in the Soviet-bloc countries of eastern Europe collapsed in 1989–90, Gorbachev acquiesced in their fall. The rise to power of democratic governments in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia was quickly followed by the unification of West and East Germany under NATO auspices, again with Soviet approval.

Gorbachev's internal reforms had meanwhile weakened his own Communist Party and allowed power to shift to Russia and the other constituent republics of the Soviet Union. In late 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and 15 newly independent nations were born from its corpse, including a Russia with a democratically elected, anticommunist leader. **The Cold War had come to an end.**

Right - U.S. Pres. Ronald Reagan (left) talking with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow, 1988.

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum/National Archives and Records Administration



Source - The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica This article was most recently revised and updated by Adam Augustyn.

The Cuban Missile Crisis

Cuban missile crisis,

(October 1962), major confrontation that brought the United States and the Soviet Union close to war over the presence of Soviet nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba.

Having promised in May 1960 to defend Cuba with Soviet arms, the Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev assumed that the United States would take no steps to prevent the installation of Soviet medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. Such missiles could hit much of the eastern United States within a few minutes if launched from Cuba. The United States learned in July 1962 that the Soviet Union had begun missile shipments to Cuba. By August 29 new military construction and the presence of Soviet technicians had been reported by U.S. U-2 spy planes flying over the island, and on October 14 the presence of a ballistic missile on a launching site was reported.



Soviet military buildup in Cuba, 1962.

United States. Department of Defense. Department of Defense Cuban Missile Crisis Briefing Materials. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

Right - John F. Kennedy: Cuban missile crisis

After carefully considering the alternatives of an immediate U.S. invasion of Cuba (or air strikes of the missile sites), a blockade of the island, or further diplomatic maneuvers, U.S. Pres. John F. Kennedy decided to place a naval “quarantine,” or blockade, on Cuba to prevent further Soviet shipments of missiles. Kennedy announced the quarantine on October 22 and warned that U.S. forces would seize “offensive weapons and associated matériel” that Soviet vessels might attempt to deliver to Cuba.

During the following days, Soviet ships bound for Cuba altered course away from the quarantined zone. As the two superpowers hovered close to the brink of nuclear war, messages were exchanged between Kennedy and Khrushchev amidst extreme tension on both sides.

On October 28 Khrushchev capitulated, informing Kennedy that work on the missile sites would be halted and that the missiles already in Cuba would be returned to the Soviet Union. In return, Kennedy committed the United States to never invading Cuba. Kennedy also secretly promised to withdraw the nuclear-armed missiles that the United States had stationed in Turkey in previous years. In the following weeks both superpowers began fulfilling their promises, and the crisis was over by late November.

Cuba’s communist leader, Fidel Castro, was infuriated by the Soviets’ retreat in the face of the U.S. ultimatum but was powerless to act.

The Cuban missile crisis marked the climax of an acutely antagonistic period in U.S.-Soviet relations. The crisis also marked the closest point that the world had ever come to global nuclear war. It is generally believed that the Soviets’ humiliation in Cuba played an important part in Khrushchev’s fall from power in October 1964 and in the Soviet Union’s determination to achieve, at the least, a nuclear parity with the United States.

Source - The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica This article was most recently revised and updated by Adam Augustyn.

Summary of Question and Answer session - DVA Representative – Owen Rasmussen

Q & A session

Q. Has DVA considered re-employing ex-staff

A. Some ex-staff have been approached but it is not widespread.

Q. Newcastle confirmed what most ESOs have experienced with the loss of good advocates due to ATDP accreditation requirements. Many still think TIP qualifications should have been accepted without further study.

A. ATDP designed to improve the qualifications of advocates to provide a more professional service to clients.

Q. The DVA phone system is cumbersome and takes too long on hold. Why not allow a direct line to a delegate. Also, when DVA rings an advocate it registers as an unknown caller and is generally disregarded as a nuisance call. DVA caller never leaves a message. Suggested DVA delegates use SMS Suggested having a call-back feature rather than hold-on.

A. The problem is recognised and is being investigated.

Q. There is an issue with clients needing to repeat their case record for PI, which can be traumatic if the matter is sensitive.

A. Taken on notice for follow-up

Q. Is DVA going to merge with Centrelink.

A. Definitely not.

Q. Are clients entitled to reimbursement for financial advice on managing lump sum payments.

A. Taken on notice for follow-up

Q. It was mentioned NDIS provides better support than DVA

A. Agreed to review the NDIS services and see what additional services DVA might provide.

Q. Are there fact sheets on entitlements under all conditions and Acts.

A. Agreed to make available.

Q. How can we lodge a compliment with DVA

A. There is a feed-back link on the DVA web site

Q. Mudgee reported the re-emergence of a Singapore based firm charging for advocacy services in Australia and which is providing a very poor service.

A. More information sought from Mudgee

Q. A member reported an issue with DVA refusing to pay for robotic surgery or being able to pay the gap.

A. Agreed to investigate and recommended lodging an appeal.

The questions were raised at a recent meeting at Granville and answered by the DVA representative



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Australia under attack: The Nackeroos - an almost forgotten unit

The North Australia Observation Unit (NAOU), nicknamed the “Nackeroos” or “Curtin’s Cowboys”, was created in mid-March 1942, a week after Broome was strafed. The unit’s commander, Major William Stanner, had been an anthropologist before the war and knew the north well.

The unit was barely 550 strong, and with their headquarters in Katherine, in the Northern Territory, they were given the task of patrolling northern Australia to look for signs of enemy activity. They operated in small groups, and most of their patrols were on horseback. The men made use of the knowledge of local Aboriginals and maintained coastwatching outposts.

As the threat of invasion passed, the unit was reduced in strength and disbanded in March 1945.

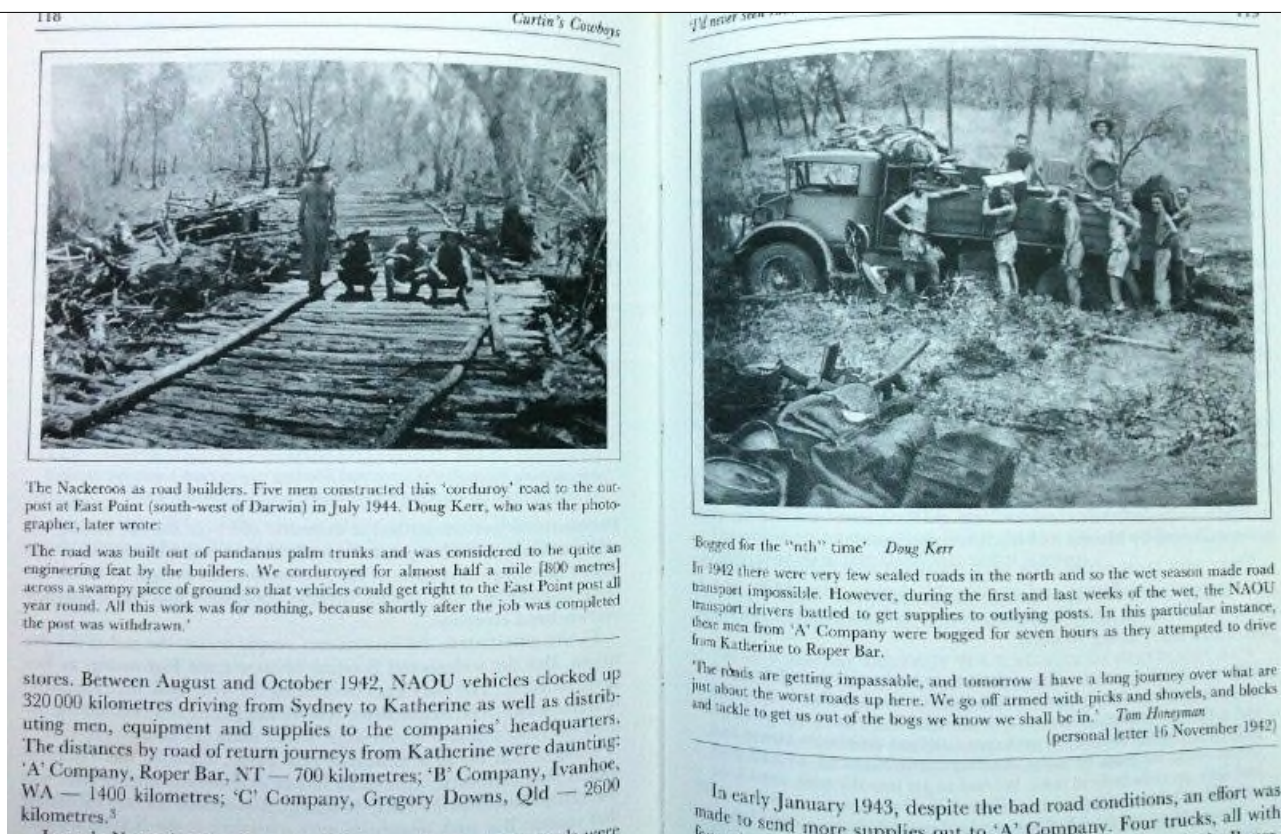


Above left - Major William Stanner Above right - A NAOU patrol
Photos above from Australian War Memorial archives
Article from book “Curtin’s Cowboys” courtesy Ms C Purches

The 2/1st North Australia Observer Unit (2/1 NAOU) was an Australian Army reconnaissance unit of World War II. 2/1 NAOU was formed in May 1942 to patrol remote areas of northern Australia and provide warning to the Northern Territory Force of any Japanese landings. As the threat of Japanese landings declined 2/1 NAOU patrols were reduced in July 1943 and the unit was disbanded in March 1945.

Item above from Regimental books - “Curtin’s Cowboys - – Australia’s Secret Bush Commandos”

Item below - pages from book ‘Curtin’s Cowboys - Australia’s Secret Bush Commandos’ by Richard & Helen Walker



ADF members subjected to verbal abuse from residents during NSW flood recovery efforts

Military personnel helping flood-affected communities have been verbally abused by some residents, and in one case a soldier was allegedly spat on, in behaviour described as "regrettable" by the Australian Defence Force.

The head of the NSW State Emergency Service's Northern Command, Steve Patterson, told the ABC he was frustrated at so-called social media influencers and members of the public who had unfairly criticised soldiers in uniform. Chief Superintendent Patterson, who also previously served in the ADF, said many of the local military reserve personnel working under him had also lost property during the floods. "A Defence member that I've been working with quite closely right throughout the flood, who was in Lismore in uniform, was spat upon by a member of the public," he said. "That's just behaviour that is almost beyond my understanding at any point, but let alone when these members have been out there working so hard."

Over recent weeks there has been heavy criticism over the time taken for the military to respond to the flood disaster, with state and federal government figures blaming each other for not deploying ADF resources earlier. Several soldiers, who spoke to the ABC on the condition of anonymity, described incidents of flood victims in the Northern Rivers taking their personal frustrations out on men and women in uniform.

Videos posted online by Instagram users with thousands of followers have also featured vision of deployed ADF personnel along with derogatory comments about their work ethic. In an Instagram story created by a popular Gold Coast entrepreneur, soldiers were pictured walking in uniform with an accompanying caption stating: "Sadly no help from the army – not a sign of dirt." "All fun and games for them. Did not see them interacting with a single local," the high-profile influencer claimed in her post.



Soldiers (Left) and members of the RAAF (Right) have also joined the flood recovery efforts.
(Defence: CPL Julia Whitwell)

Another widely viewed video featured a woman driving past soldiers who appear to be taking a break by the side of a road, who then sarcastically tells them: "Great job guys – smoko!"

Chief Superintendent Patterson said he was worried about the mental health impacts of the emerging negative attitude towards emergency responders, and urged critics to carefully reflect on their words. "I would just ask them if they have a platform, if they have a profile, just to reflect on the fact that the tone and the content of the information that is being put out there can have a really profound effect on people who are just really working their guts out," he said. "I fully understand that the people impacted by these disasters, there will be anger, there will be grief, that is a completely normal response to what they've been through."

Lieutenant Colonel Susana Fernandez, who commands the Army Reserve's 41st Battalion based in East Lismore, told ABC North Coast earlier this week that some of her troops had been "getting a bit of negative feedback from the locals that's really not fair". "Soldiers were there on the ground at the beginning, and I just hope people appreciate that when they meet a soldier in uniform who might be driving home, going to the shops, picking up fuel, picking up kids from school – that they thank them," she said.

In a statement to the ABC, the Defence Department said it was "aware of reports of regrettable behaviour directed at ADF personnel supporting flood response and recovery efforts in northern New South Wales by a small number of community members".

"While there is no place for such behaviour anywhere in the community, we acknowledge this has been an extremely difficult time for those affected by this significant flooding event."

"The ADF is proud to serve the community and grateful for the positive response our personnel have received from a broad sector of the communities we are supporting."

Exclusive by defence correspondent Andrew Greene and Siobhan Heanue

Operation Flood Assist 2022



ADF on its way

Photographer: SGT Andrew Sleeman

Commander of 3rd Brigade, Brigadier Kahlil Fegan, DSC, addresses soldiers at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville, ahead of their deployment on Operation Flood Assist 2022.

Photographer:
CPL Dustin Anderson

Australian Army Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles from 3rd Brigade arrive at Evans Head, New South Wales, as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.



From front cover
Photographer: Mr
Bradley Richardson

Australian Army aircrewman Warrant Officer Class Two Benjamin Dwyer from the School of Army Aviation prepares to conduct a rescue by winch of a community member from an MRH-90 Taipan, over Lismore, New South Wales, during Operation Flood Assist 2022.

Operation Flood Assist 2022



Photographer: CPL
Jonathon Goedhart

Australian Army soldiers from 6th Engineer Support Regiment prepare Zodiac inflatable boats to assess flood damage and debris in the Richmond and Wilsons rivers in vicinity of Coraki, New South Wales, as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.

Photographer: CPL
Jonathon Goedhart

An Australian Army soldier from the 5th Engineer Regiment uses earth moving equipment to clear debris from a flood-affected house in Lismore, New South Wales, as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.



Australian Naval teams assist with removal of household goods from flood damaged homes. Photographer not listed

Source - Dept of Defence with permission, PGS 20, 21, 22, 23

Operation Flood Assist 2022



Australian and Fijians soldiers working side by side to rebuild the Upper Wilsons Creek access road in northern New South Wales.
Photo: Corporal Sagi Biderman

Australian and Fijian soldiers are working side by side in northern New South Wales to rebuild a community access road as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.

Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) personnel had intended to spend their three months in Australia this year on Exercise Coral Warrior, but the significant flooding and devastation has seen our Pacific neighbours volunteering their time to help Australian communities clean up.

The Fijians spent their first full day in Australia with 8th/9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, and 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment soldiers rebuilding an access road.

A significant landslide cut off access and flooded the main route in and out of the Upper Wilsons Creek community, 60km north of Lismore.

Platoon commander Lieutenant Brett Bennett from 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment said the Fijian soldiers were a welcome and easily integrated part of their task unit.

"The Fijian combat engineers have complementary skills and fit in easily," Lieutenant Bennett said.

"Australians and Fijians are working side by side on the tools, and sharing the planning for the effort."

Using local fallen trees and supplies from the community of volunteers, the team was successful in creating approximately 200 metres of road.

Photographer: 7 Brigade

Australian Army soldiers from Task Unit Ram assist the local community in moving waterlogged hay bales in northern New South Wales as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.



Source - Dept of Defence with permission, PGS 20, 21, 22, 23

Operation Flood Assist 2022



Australian Defence Force member wades through to property checking for stranded occupants. Photographer not listed

Australian Defence Force helicopters and aircrews are deployed on Operation Flood Assist 2022 to support emergency services across Queensland and New South Wales respond to flood waters. Photographer not listed



Photographer: CPL Nicole Dorrett

Australian Defence Force personnel assist the public by clearing flood-damaged hazards from Colleges Crossing recreation reserve in Ipswich, Queensland, as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.

Source - Dept of Defence with permission, PGS 20, 21, 22, 23

Honouring the legacy of those who served on Horn Island to save Australia during WWII



During World War II, Horn Island in the Torres Strait was among Australia's most critical defence posts standing between the mainland and an impending Japanese invasion.

Ngarupai, the island's traditional name, hosted the nation's largest Allied air base with about 5,000 troops and airmen stationed there by the end of 1942.

Its strategic importance as a staging base for Allied air missions against the Japanese and as a stopover for fighter aircraft heading to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Coral Sea saw the island come under heavy fire.

The RAAF Advanced Operational Base was the only military installation in Queensland to be regularly targeted by the Japanese; some 500 bombs were dropped during an 18-month campaign making it the second-most attacked location in Australia, behind Darwin.

Over the course of the campaign, more than 150 military personnel lost their lives defending Horn Island and the surrounding area and more than 80 civilians also died.



While the island and the troops who served there played a significant role in the defence of the nation, military historian and archaeologist Gordon Grimwade says that contribution has gone largely unrecognised. "It's just missing from the psyche," he says. "We always hear about Aussies in overseas conflicts when we actually had significant conflict going on in our backyard. We hear about the bombings of Darwin ... but we don't hear very much at all about the fact that Horn Island was a frontline air base with a significant number of troops based there dealing with the New Guinea movement."

As well as drawing a large contingent of Allied troops from Australia and around the world, the bombing raids on Horn Island were the catalyst for many Torres Strait Islanders to enlist in the defence forces.

The continual bombardment of the area eventually led to the formation of Australia's first and only Indigenous battalion — the Torres Strait Light Infantry (TSLI).

Horn Island was also the only place in Australia where Indigenous and non-Indigenous soldiers served together in such large numbers, with 880 Torres Strait men volunteering.

Signs to provide learning and a lasting legacy

The Horn Island War Memorial Preservation Society (HIWMPS), formed by veterans and their families, together with a small and dedicated group of historians have been working hard to see those personal contributions given greater prominence. They have recently completed the installation of several interpretive signs at significant sites on Horn Island detailing Ngarupai's history from both a military and First Nations' perspective. Gordon Cameron (OAM), who has recently passed away, was among the few surviving veterans of Horn Island and was a champion of achieving greater recognition for his comrades as HIWMPS president. One of his last acts before his passing in January was to sign off a conservation management plan for the 34th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery site at which he served almost 80 years ago. His son Doug has since taken on the role of HIWMPS president to carry on his father's work.

Top Left - Royal Australian Air Force personnel have a cup of tea while on break from duties on Horn Island during WWII

Top Right - Kittyhawk fighter aircraft were based on Horn Island during WWII
Bottom Left - Members of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion on parade during World War II

Bottom Right - Horn Island's airstrip was a valuable strategic point for Australian and American defence forces during WWII.

All photos - Supplied: Australian War Memorial

Bottom Right - Small craters pockmark the surface of the Horn Island airstrip following a Japanese bombing raid.

(Supplied: Torres Strait Heritage Museum)

Honouring the legacy of those who served on Horn Island to save Australia during WWII



"It was a simple decision; the commitment by the families is that the gunners will not be forgotten," Doug says. "Every year since 1948 the gunners have met to honour their mates and with only one still alive in February 2022, that tradition is being continued by spouses, siblings, children and grandchildren. "There's a roll call with the catchphrase,

'As long as the gunners meet, our mates will not be forgotten'.

"That passion drove him for so many years." He hopes the signage will add to what his father set out to achieve in building a lasting memorial on the island. "In the end, his legacy is the physical — the rocks and plaques and flagpoles at Horn Island airport, and plaques and gun and gun pits at King Point — that tourists and locals can enjoy and learn from," Doug said. Information for the signs has come from various sources including the Australian War Memorial archives, the National Archives, the State Library of Queensland, State Library of Victoria, along with personal accounts from those who served on the island.

Doug has just travelled to the Torres Strait to hand-deliver the conservation management plan to Kaurareg elders and other stakeholders. "Having completed a major documentation would be wasted unless we could enlist the commitment of others," he says. "What worked for Dad, should still work. Take it to the decision-makers."

Battle against time to preserve remnants of war

The society has also gone to great efforts to preserve the 80-year-old remnants of the battlements, which have weathered in the harsh tropical environment. Remedial works have been carried out on the bunkers, which have suffered concrete cancer, along with maintenance of the 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun, which Gordon campaigned for 15 years to have returned to Horn Island.



The project's head archaeologist Gordon Grimwade says preserving the gun has been particularly difficult in such a remote location. "The gun's a fairly complex machine and getting rust removal, chemicals in and cleaning it up and painting it is a real challenge, particularly when you're 10 kilometres from the nearest power," he says. "You've got to take all your portable power and all your equipment has to be brought in by truck ... you're working in the open air. It's quite challenging."

And while the mission is to attract greater recognition for the role Horn Island played during the war, that also poses other issues. Drawing more visitors to the sites will require management to protect them against potential damage from human interactions. "There's a lot of people who are really interested in military history and with the military history buffs coming in, there's a certain visitor load that each site can bear," Mr Grimwade says. "But we've had a number of senior military personnel up there in recent months, and they've spoken very highly of the importance of the area. "That to me confirms what we're doing is a good valid approach to the preservation of military history."

Top - Left - Kaurareg elder Enid Tom reading the sign at Kausar, Horn Island.(Supplied: Gordon Grimwade)
Centre - Kaurareg traditional owner Milton Savage and Doug Cameron met on Thursday Island to discuss the conservation management plan.(Supplied: Vanessa Seekee) Right - Interpretive signage near a gun pit on Horn Island details the importance of the site during WWII.(Supplied: Gordon Grimwade)
Bottom - Left - A 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun used during World War II remains in situ on Horn Island. Recently added signage shows what the gun pit looked like with shells in the bays.(Supplied: Gordon Grimwade) Right - Gordon Grimwade is a military historian and heritage specialist and has worked as lead archaeologist on the Horn Island conservation works

Source - Far North correspondent Brendan Mounter

Welfare Officer's Report

I am here to help with any welfare issues you may have, information and guidance as well as transport and care matters. Please call the office (open 1000-1400 week days) for an appointment on Tuesdays to talk directly to me. Take care, **Peter**



**Welfare Officer
Peter Millen**



**Compensation Advocate
Mike Opie**

Compensation Advocate's Report

Please remember you can always contact me, Mike, Compensation Advocate at the Veteran Support Centre about any issues or questions regarding your claims, old or new, changes in circumstance or health changes. I can help with wording and details to help the claim get through the application process. Call Monday to Friday between 1000 and 1400 to make an appointment or ring to talk to me directly on Tuesdays from 1000 - 1400. **Mike**

Membership Officer's Report

This is just a short report to bring you up to date regarding membership matters so far for 2022.

As at 4 May 2022 we have 78 financial members, which is a good start for the year.

NOTE that for every membership payment of \$30.00 made here at your local sub-branch, **\$12.50 is retained by your sub-branch for local use.** To those who have renewed their membership for this year, thank you! Please stay covid safe and well.

Trevor Morrow, Membership Officer



**Membership Officer
Trevor Morrow**



**Lyn Hancock
Office Manager**



**Treasurer
Peter Dorman**



Treasurer's Report

Our present financial position will allow us to keep operating for the remainder of this year provided there are no large unforeseen expenses. The presence of FORTEM (first responders counselling service) in our unit has reduced the pressure of the rent on our finances.

One issue that may occur is with the printing of the newsletter. We have received a grant for the printing of the newsletter, but the printer is now no longer able to be maintained by Fuji as it is too old. We will continue to use it until it ceases functioning and then use an outside source for printing.

Regards, Peter Dorman, Treasurer

President's Report

Anzac Day - The attendance at Wauchope for the dawn service and main service exceeded expectations with the numbers attending. It was also very pleasing to see all the school children who marched behind the veterans. Many thanks to the teachers and schools involved. I have also been informed that the dawn service and main march at Port Macquarie were equally supported.

The Conference held in March enabled Granville and other Branches to talk about problems which had caused a few issues to one and all. One is that DVA require a lot more detail to be recorded for the time involved with pension and welfare cases. This needs to be kept as precise as possible to account for all time spent. As we all know a lot of these cases take more than five minutes, also time taken by DVA to process cases after cases have been presented. Other issues included declining membership which can be put down to age and younger veterans not joining our association, which is relevant to our Branch. One other issue is the financial situation in which some Branches find themselves.



President - Bill Wagner

In the latest newsletter from Granville you would have read the article regarding the proposal put forward by RSL CEO Jon Black to Granville for Granville to become a Sub-Branch of the RSL who would then take over running of Granville. I would have liked to have been at that meeting and heard the responses from all present. Granville and the Branches must be doing alright with the Pension and Welfare work.

One other main issue that has been brought to my attention over the past few weeks is the problem of the elderly moving into nursing homes with costs involved and other hidden expenses which is causing unnecessary worries. The office will endeavour to obtain necessary information to assist the husband or wife when faced with the prospect of moving into assisted living. The office will only be able to obtain guidelines but the relevant nursing homes also have their own criteria.

The office is assisting Soldier On, Fortem (First Responders) and Open Arms which we are hoping will encourage younger veterans to attend our premises and socialize with our Thursday luncheons.

There was talk of setting up a veterans well-being centre in Port Macquarie but that has been postponed until a later date after the upcoming elections. The next step will be decided by what is available by the next elected government.

To all our sponsors, thanks for your support over the years. It helps to keep the newsletter printing. Also thanks to Jill, our newsletter editor for all the information, which is very well received to all who receive the newsletter.

**Bill Wagner
President**

HONOUR THE DEAD BUT FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE LIVING



**My apologies for the error in the last
Contact Front which should have said
Lindsay Thomson
has passed away and not Lindsay Dalton
I regret any distress this may have
caused. Jill Opie, Editor**

Vale

Lindsay Thomson

Veterans were sad to hear that Lindsay Thomson has passed away. He was a strong leader of NAMBUS, helping to get the bus, displays and personal stories of the Vietnam War to local high schools each year. The President and members as well as the local NAMBUS crew send their deepest sympathies to his family and loved ones.

Thank you for your service and RIP mate

Bombing of Darwin Day 19 February 1942 - over 80 years ago

We observe Bombing of Darwin Day on the anniversary of the day in 1942 when Darwin, in northern Australia, was first bombed by Japanese warplanes. The people of Darwin suffered terribly during this time and many civilians were evacuated. To this day, this action remains the largest and most devastating modern attack by a foreign power on mainland Australia. Bombing of Darwin Day is a time for us to recognise and remember the allied service personnel and civilians who suffered through that experience.

Significance of the date

Since the 1930s, Darwin had been a strategic trading port at the top end of Australia. During World War II, the Allies used Darwin as a military base and transit point for the defence of the Netherlands East Indies. With Australian and allied troops stationed there, Darwin's population had more than doubled by 1942.

At 9:58 am on 19 February 1942, 27 bombers accompanied by fighter escorts began the first Japanese air raid on the Australian mainland. Closely followed by aircraft, their goal was to destroy the Allies' military base in Darwin. From Darwin, the Allies could contest the Japanese invasion of nearby islands, Timor and Java.

The Japanese mounted 2 air attacks that day. The first attack focused on the town centre and the harbour. Many buildings and ships were destroyed, including public buildings like the Darwin Post Office, the police barracks and the office of the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

Of the 47 ships in Darwin's harbour that day, 8 were sunk, one was beached and lost, and 11 were damaged. One bomb fell through the several decks of the hospital ship HMAS Manunda before exploding.

The ship disintegrated in a burst of flame which appeared to grow out and reach a height of 100 feet [30 m]. She finally pointed her nose to the sky and disappeared in a pall of black oily smoke, the gun on her fo'c's'le firing to the bitter end.

[Unnamed observer, in Peter and Sheila Forrest, *Federation Frontline*, Darwin, 2001, p 48]

Continued attacks

Between 19 February 1942 and 12 November 1943, the Japanese mounted 97 air attacks on towns and military bases across northern Australia. Broome was attacked on 3 March. More air raids were made on Wyndham, Port Hedland and Derby in Western Australia, Darwin and Katherine in the Northern Territory, Townsville and Mossman in Queensland, and Horn Island in the Torres Strait.

On 31 May 1942, the war came to the east coast of Australia, when 3 Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour. In June 1942, a submarine lightly shelled coastal suburbs of Sydney and Newcastle. Japanese submarines also attacked coastal ships, causing the loss of around 29,000 tons of shipping.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00480.001



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

304981



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NWA0447

Above Left - People survey the bombed Post Office and postmaster's residence where 9 people died after the first Japanese air raid on Darwin on 19 February 1942. AWM P00480.001

Above Right - Crew members of the depot ship HMAS Platypus survey the harbour after the first Japanese air raid on Darwin, 19 February 1942. In the centre, the transport ship HMAT Zealandia is burning, and the hospital ship HMAS Manunda is to its right. AWM 304981

Left - Australian servicemen in Darwin repairing a bombed building after the second air raid by Japanese warplanes on 19 February 1942. These were possibly huts at the RAAF base. AWM NWA0447

Bombing of Darwin Day 19 February 1942 - over 80 years ago

Commemoration of those who died

Some 250 people, both allied service personnel and civilians, died in Darwin on 19 February 1942. Members from all 3 Australian armed services were among those who died, ranging from wing commanders right through to cooks. Members of the United States Navy and Air Force were also among the casualties. A large number of lives lost included merchant seamen, postal workers and civilians. These were everyday Australians simply going about their daily lives.

The names of civilians who died are not recorded on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Instead, they are commemorated by name in Darwin, where many of them are buried.

The Darwin Cenotaph and memorial garden in Bicentennial Park overlook the harbour. This is where the first shots were fired in defence of Darwin by the 14th Anti-Aircraft Battery. The monument continues to be a place of commemoration for all those who died and suffered in the Bombing of Darwin.

Source - DVA (Department of Veterans' Affairs) (2022), *Bombing of Darwin Day 19 February*, DVA Anzac Portal, accessed 18 February 2022, <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/commemoration/key-dates-australia/bombing-of-darwin>



Above Left - This is a black-and-white photograph showing damage from a Japanese bomb attack to an oil storage site on Stokes Hill, above Darwin harbour, in the Northern Territory in 1942. There appear to be two plumes of black smoke billowing from the site, indicating two large oil tanks have been hit. On the left-hand side of the photograph is a temporary suspension bridge, linking two parts of the Stokes Hill wharf, damaged in a previous Japanese attack. The building with columns in the centre of the photograph is Darwin's Flying Boat Base.

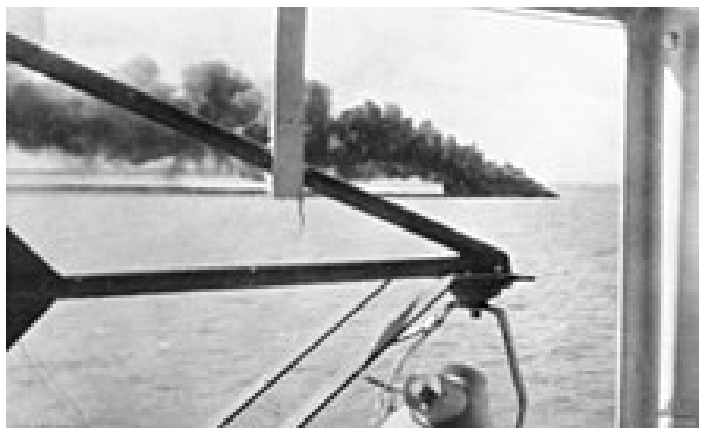
Source - Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Limited,

Above Right - MV Neptuna explodes at Stokes Hill Wharf. In front of the explosion is HMAS Vigilant which is undertaking rescue work. In the centre background is the floating dry dock holding the corvette HMAS Katoomba . In the foreground is the damaged SS Zealandia.

Source - National Archives of Australia

Right - A sunken ship (MV Neptuna) and burnt-out wharf in Darwin Harbour following the attack (AWM 027334) USS Peary sinking.

Source - Wikipedia



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“What does the ADF do in peacetime?”



Tonga in time of need



They help with humanitarian aid - Tonga, this page and Solomon Islands, next page - to any of our Pacific neighbours needing help



Australian Defence Force personnel participate in sporting activities at a local school in the Republic of Palau. Photo: Leading Seaman Nadav Harel

While they spent their downtime joining in many community events, the No. 35 Squadron team in Palau spent most days conducting aerial surveillance to support local maritime law enforcement authorities. The aircraft from No. 35 Squadron, a C-27J Spartan, worked to detect, deter and report maritime threats in support of a major multilateral maritime surveillance operation – the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency’s Operation Rai Balang. **By Flying Officer Lily Lancas-**



While the C-27J Spartan was flying over scenic Palau, Royal Australian Navy hydrographic ship HMAS Melville was sailing in Micronesia, also contributing to the aims of Operation Solania and Operation Rai Balang.

Chairman of the Palau fishing cooperative Belau Offshore Fishermen’s Association, Okada Techitong, was glad to have Australia’s enduring support in the region.

Royal Australian Navy hydrographic ship HMAS Melville berthing alongside Pohnpei, Micronesia. Photographer not named



A P-8A Poseidon flies off the New South Wales coast after a mid-air refuelling from a KC-30A from No. 33 Squadron as part of Exercise Diamond Seas 2022. Photo: Leading Aircraftwoman Kate Czerny

This year’s Diamond series kicked off with the successful completion of the first exercise, Diamond Seas 2022 in February. The Diamond series is part of the six-month air warfare instructors course (AWIC) focused on producing expert and approachable air warfare instructors capable of harnessing the combat potential of integrated air, space and cyber capabilities in support of the joint force. P-8A Poseidon pilot Flight Lieutenant Michael Hawkins, of No. 11 Squadron, said the air warfare instructors played a crucial role when air and maritime platforms operated together.

“Often air-maritime platforms operate in close proximity with each other, however, their roles are quite varied and different,” Flight Lieutenant Hawkins said.

“The purpose of air warfare instructors is to bridge this gap to allow for force integration and fusion of data, to maintain maximum battlespace awareness.

By Flight Lieutenant Jessica Aldred

“What does the ADF do in peacetime?”



Left - Solomon Islands children welcome an Air Force C-27J Spartan aircraft carrying food and critical aid supplies to Auki airport, Solomon Islands. Photo: Corporal Jarrad McAneney
 Right - One of the Air Force C-17J Spartan aircraft delivers food and emergency medical supplies to Gizo airport, Solomon Islands. Photo: Corporal Jarrod McAneney

Two Royal Australian Air Force C-27J Spartan aircraft returned home to Australia recently following a successful mission supporting the Solomon Islands Government's response to a COVID-19 outbreak. The Spartan aircraft and 60 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel conducted 54 flights between February 14–21, delivering more than 50 tonnes of food and emergency medical supplies to Auki, Kirakira, Naratupe, Gizo, Balalae, Lata and Munda.



ADF joins with many international forces for joint exercises, benefitting both countries, honing skills and knowledge, sharing and learning, supporting and befriending other countries Defence members

Boatswain's mates from HMAS Arunta conduct training on a 12.7mm machine gun using a flare target during their regional presence deployment.

Photo: Leading Seaman Sittichai Sakonpoonpol

HMAS *Arunta* recently took part in the multilateral Exercise Milan 2022. It was the first large-scale multilateral exercise on Navy's calendar this year. The Indian-led exercise was held in the port of Vishakhapatnam, India, and in the Bay of Bengal. It aimed to enhance professional interaction between friendly navies and provide experience operating at sea in a multilateral large force. The sea phase followed a busy and successful harbour phase program in Vishakhapatnam, which included an opening ceremony, seminars, briefings, technology demonstrations and training activities as well as a parade, social functions, and cultural and sporting events. Exercise Milan is an important biennial training activity for the Royal Australian Navy, and the region, and has been conducted since 1995, with Australia involved since 2003. The 2022 iteration drew together ships and personnel from 16 navies from across the Indo-Pacific.
By Lieutenant Commander Andrew Herring

Sources for pgs 32, 34 - all from Dept of Defence website, pictures acknowledged where shown, articles are shorter versions, full details on website under International tab

“What does the ADF do in peacetime?” contd



ADF personnel and other mobile vaccination team members from Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation, Rekindling the Spirit, Bullinah Aboriginal Medical Service, Northern NSW Local Health District, and NSW Police ahead of the Northern NSW tour.

By Flight Lieutenant Eamon



An Australian Defence Force School of Special Operations instructor takes aspiring Australian Olympic Games team athletes and coaches through a training session as part of the Gold Medal Ready program.

Photo: Corporal Tristan Kennedy

COVID support at aged care homes

Since the Prime Minister's February 7 announcement committing ADF personnel to supplement COVID-related staff shortages, more than 50 residential aged-care facilities have requested Defence assistance.

Air Force musician Flight Sergeant Adam Schlemitz was a shift supervisor with the informatics team at the Department of Health and Human Services during Operation COVID-19 Assist.

By Flying Officer Steffi Blavius



FOOD SUPPLY

A Royal Australian Air Force C-27J Spartan transport aircraft from No. 35 Squadron delivers critical food supplies to Coober Pedy in South Australia, after the region was cut-off by floodwaters caused by significant rainfall.

Photo - LSIS Jarrod Mulvihill

Source - Dept of Defence with permission, PGS 32,33,34,35

“What does the ADF do in peacetime?” contd



Left - BUSHFIRE SUPPORT WA

Air Force personnel from No. 25 Squadron at RAAF Base Learmonth provide ground support to Western Australia Parks and Wildlife Services attempting to contain several bushfires near Exmouth, Western Australia.

Photo: Flying Officer Geoff Weston-Webb

ADF have been involved with covid vaccination programs, covid aged care homes support, State border security, flood assistance in so many ways at many locations with many varied tasks, farm assistance with flooding and feed supply, bushfires and after-fire recovery tasks and many other supportive tasks and roles. All, of course, in addition to maintaining their skills and training as ADF members.

ADF Regular forces and Reservists have recently been deployed to assist with flooding in Nimbin, Chinderah, Cabbage Tree Island, Goodna, Brisbane, Lismore, Casino, Broadwater, Coraki, Gympie, Bribie Island, Gatton, St Lucia and so many other places not listed.



Above - FEED DELIVERY TO STRANDED FARMER

Private Patrick Hyland, centre, from 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, delivers feed to a farmer near Casino, New South Wales, as part of Operation Flood Assist 2022.

Photo: Corporal Dustin Anderson



Left - Sergeant Roger Derrick is the watch leader for ADF personnel supporting NSW Police at the Albury Wodonga Causeway checkpoint on the NSW Border. By Lieutenant Anthony Martin

Australian Army soldiers from 7th Brigade assist a farmer near Gatton, Queensland, by cleaning fences of flood debris and checking their integrity. In the grips of a drought, Mrs Shirley Schultz sold one-third of her cattle in 2019. Waiting for the rain at her Gatton farm, the 84-year-old widower hand fed her cattle a mixture of waste vegetables and hay twice a day. Trooper Rylan Green, from 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry), said he will remember the devastation when his troop arrived to fix Mrs Schultz's fence, following some of the worst flooding in memory. The fence surrounding her 50-acre property was swept away, forcing Mrs Schultz to keep her 30 head of cattle in a small enclosure until help arrived.

By Private Jacob Joseph



Source - Dept of Defence with permission, PGS 32,33,34,35

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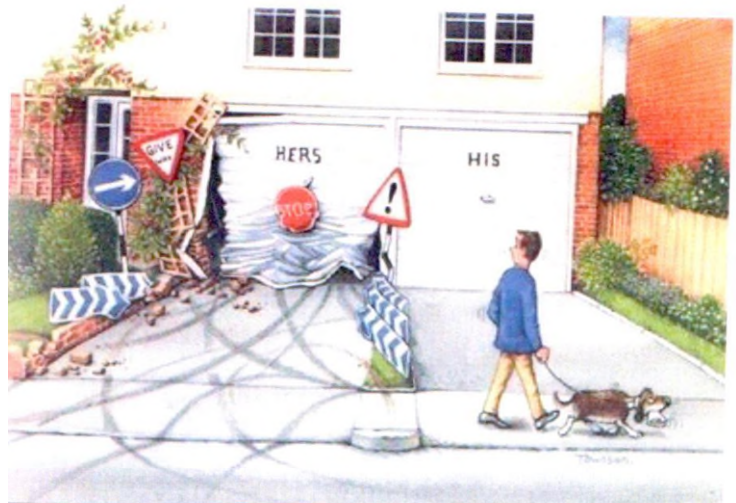
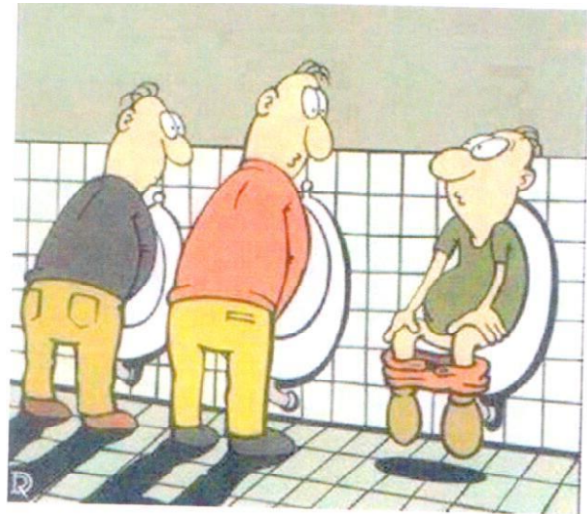
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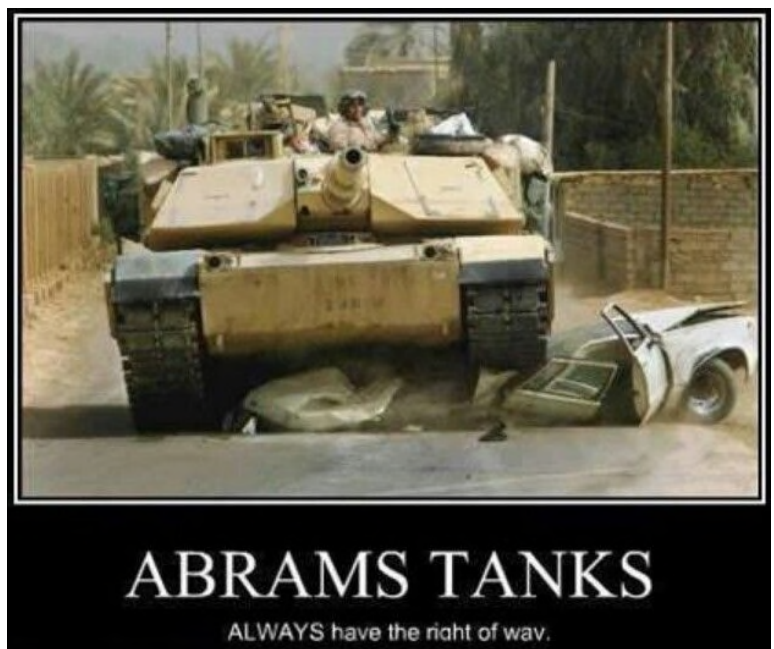
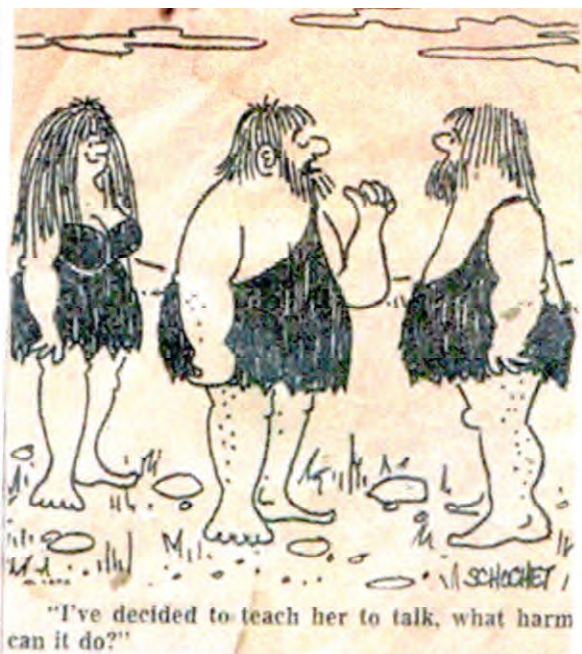
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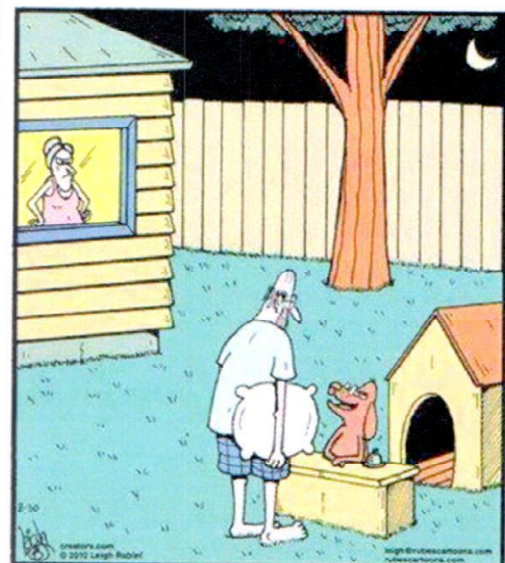
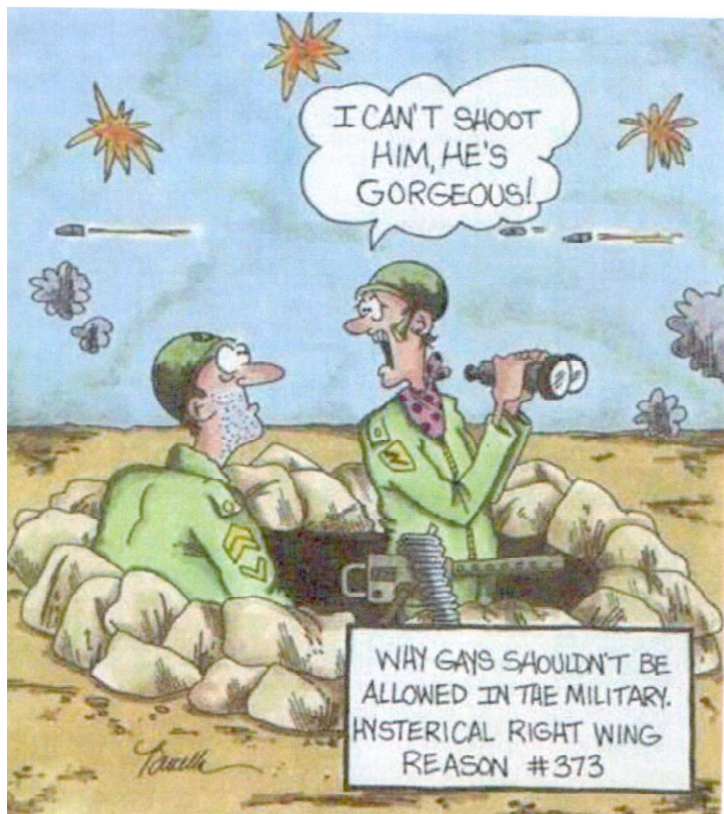
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