



Patron: His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales

PO Box 410 Paddington NSW 2021 August / September 2017



NEWSLETTER

BATTLE FOR AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people, the Traditional Custodians of this land on which we are gathered, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Along with many others across Australia, in Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth we are gathered here today to commemorate the Battle for Australia which consisted of a number of campaigns which occurred between January 1942 and March 1943, and included:

- Battle for the Coral Sea,
- Kokoda,
- Battle for Milne Bay,
- Battle of the Beachheads - Buna, Gona and Sanananda,
- Battle of the Bismarck Sea

We should remember that this period was the first time that Australia experienced direct threats and at a time when all three of our forces were deployed overseas in the Middle East, Europe and the UK. The direct threats to Australia included:

- The loss of HMAS Sydney on 19 Nov 1941 off the West Australian Coast with the loss of 645 RAN personnel,
- The bombing of Darwin on 19th February 1942,

- 92 air raids during 1942 and 1943 on Broome, Darwin, Townsville and coastal areas,
- Japanese submarine attacks on Sydney and Newcastle in May and June 1942,
- The sinking of HS Centaur by torpedo off the Queensland coast on 14 May 1943 with the loss of 268 crew and medical personnel, and
- The loss of some 30 merchant ships to mines and enemy attacks around our coast.

We are gathered here today on the 75th Anniversary of this period in our history to remember, to commemorate and to pay tribute to all of those who were part of the effort which repulsed these threats to our way of life at that time. In doing this we have been joined by:

- The Governor's Representative,
- Senior representatives of the Australian Defence Force, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the NSW Police,
- The Diplomatic representatives of those countries which stood with us - PNG, USA, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the Netherlands,
- Representatives of DVA, NSW Government and Parliament, and the City of Sydney,
- Representatives of many Ex Service Organisations including many RSL Sub Branches,



Doug Roser, President.

- Representative of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Veterans and Services Association,
- Representatives of Schools,
- Veteran and their families, and
- The General Public

We thank you all for your presence and for joining us in this Service. I was recently privileged to visit the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbour and was struck by the simple message of its aims for the visitors - to understand, to remember and to honour. And that is our purpose today.

OUR PURPOSE TODAY

To Understand

I am somewhat frustrated by the underlying comments as to whether there really was a Battle for Australia and whether we should commemorate the events of that time as, as far as I am concerned, there is no doubt that, at that time, our region including our country was under direct threat.

As a nation we need to better understand why this situation developed, the impact the invasion by Japanese forces had on our region, and how we together with our committed allies responded.

To assist this process our Association held a special event in February in the form of a special address by Professor Peter J Dean of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. His studies include extensive research into this period and he has written a number of books on the events of that time.

We are very fortunate that he has provided a summary of his address to us and it is included in the Newsletter we are passing out today - it will assist your understanding of the events of that period.

To Remember

We must remember the efforts and actions of our political leaders, our servicemen of all three services, the support of our allies, and the sacrifices of the general population of the nation in support of the response. Some examples are - the decision of Prime Minister John Curtin to have the 7th Division returned to Australia in defiance of Winston Churchill, the reorientation of our association with the Commonwealth to one with the USA, the sending of Australian forces to defend PNG, the requirement for every able-bodied male to join our military forces, the taking of 23,000 or so Australian servicemen and women as prisoners by the Japanese of which only 14000 or so survived, and the rationing of most foods.

We must also remember the battles such as Battle of Coral Sea and the Battle of Milne Bay in which the Australian forces defeated the Japanese for the first time on land. We are fortunate to have Colonel Glenn Ryan who is representing Commander Force Command to give our Keynote Address today to remind us of the efforts of our soldiers in the Battle of Milne Bay and Kokoda.

To Honour

And finally we must pay tribute to all of those who contributed to the response and honour those who died or were wounded at that time.

We must also honour and pay tribute to those who manned the homefront at that time in the absence of the service personnel fighting overseas. It was a time when Australians as a nation gave their best and we pay tribute to them by being here today.

*Lest we
Forget*

Australia in 1942

By Dr Peter J. Dean

Introduction

The year 1942 represents the first time that the shadows of war from a great power conflict touched the shores of Australia. The bombing of Darwin and the Japanese air offensive against northern Australia, the attack on Sydney harbour and the battles for the air, land and sea gap to Australia's north occurred within a critical period of Australia's history.

1942 was a challenging time for Australia. In the face of a modern great power conflict the nation had to navigate unprecedented challenges without the support of its traditional protector, the British Empire. In forging a new alliance and setting new directions Australia matured as a nation. However aside from the prisoner-of-war experience, the only area of World War II that has retained any sense of public consciousness is the battle for the Kokoda Trail. Beyond this campaign, 1942 does not seem to deeply resonate with the Australian public at large.

Yet as Professor David Horner has argued, 1942 was a 'pivotal' year for Australia. While Gallipoli in 1915 might reverberate as the birthplace of the Anzac legend, or even Australian national identity, it did so in the shadow of Australia's relationship with Great Britain. 1942, is the year in which, devoid of the traditional reliance on Great Britain, Australia faced the threat of invasion for the first and only time since European settlement. In response Australia mobilised; industrialised; fought a number of vital battles; ratified the Statue of Westminster; forged a relationship with the United States of America; shifted power to the Commonwealth through legislative and taxation reform; and set the stage for post-war migration. Other than being the birthplace of Anzac, 1915, as a year, pales in comparison to the influence of these events and reforms on Australia's history.

Australia found itself in a 'desperate situation' in 1942. By the time Japanese bombs fell on Darwin on 19 February 1942, Singapore had surrendered, much of the Dutch East Indies had been overrun and the Japanese had occupied Rabaul. Soon after they would land in New Guinea, and with the exception of a small force in Timor, the 8th Division went into captivity. With the Japanese holding air and sea superiority throughout the Pacific the US position in the Philippines would soon fall and Australia was under threat of isolation.

One key issues at this time, and one of the few questions /issues that has resonated in the memory of 1942, was whether or not Australia was under the threat of invasion? This evidence on this is very clear – the Japanese had no formal plans of invading. An invasion was not a part of their initial war planning and once the Japanese finished their first stage operations and set about implementing stage two operations Australia was not on their list of invasion targets.

This does not mean that the threat at the time did not seem real. The attack on Darwin coincided with the invasion of Timor (the rationale for the bombing) and the Australian government's consideration of Winston Churchill's request to send the 6th and 7th Australian Divisions to Burma. Despite pressure from the British and United States, the Government demanded the



Dr Peter J. Dean

troops be returned to Australia – it was to prove to be a wise decision as they would go onto to play a major role in the victory at Kokoda and Milne Bay in Papua.

The following month (March) the Japanese decided the next stage of their plans. Commander of the Japanese Fleet Admiral Yamamoto wanted to draw the US fleet into a decisive battle and thus the Midway campaign was settled upon. In addition the Japanese planned to take Port Moresby to protect their fleet base at Rabaul and then to take a series of islands in the South Pacific to isolate Australia and cut her off from Hawaii and the USA. The battles fought from March-December 1942 where therefore, not so much a 'battle for Australia' as Curtin called them, but rather the battle for Australia's

"The Japanese planned to isolate, rather than invade, Australia."



The Japanese decision led to a number of pivotal battles during the year. The first of these was the battle of the Coral Sea. Largely fought by the US and Japanese carrier groups, but also with an important role for Task Force 44 which included HMAS Australia and Hobart. The aim of the Japanese was to land an amphibious force at Port Moresby. To the Allies the battle that was a tactical defeat, taking greater casualties and losses, but an important strategic victory. The Japanese assault force withdrew and Port Moresby was saved.

The following major campaigns of 1942 in the Pacific were fought to ensure the security of Australia and New Zealand. The C-in-C of the United States Navy (USN) Admiral Ernest King set two major strategic priorities for the Pacific Area in 1942: the Defence of Hawaii and the maintenance of the sea lines of communication to Australia and New Zealand via the South Pacific.

Despite Allied global strategy focusing on Germany first, King was determined to ensure that his would not be a passive defence. So in order to defeat the Japanese drive in the South Pacific he launched his only trained amphibious formation, the US 1st Marine Division, and the bulk of his viable fleet, aircraft and logistical support

to an assault on Guadalcanal. The aim was the security of the sea lines of communication to Australia and New Zealand and the development of these two countries, especially Australia, as a base to defeat the Japanese.

Meanwhile General MacArthur had arrived and Australia was mobilising. This decision caused a number of major changes to the home front and was part of the government's move to encouraging an 'All-in' war effort. These moves affected the role of women in the work force and the domestic sphere, saw the introduction of widespread rationing and civil-defence measures. Thousands joined paramilitary organisations and air raid precautions became a national priority. The government formed the Department of Home Security, blackout restrictions were put in place, and air-raid shelters dug. Thousands of 'enemy aliens' were interned and rationing was introduced. In two of the most significant moves the government widened conscription and introduced the Manpower Directorate. All Australians over 16 were registered and civilian work and occupations were regulated. By 1944 there were 855,000 women in paid labour, some 25% of the workforce. Once this occurred the pre-war majority of domestic occupations for women in the workforce ended forever.

The government also passed critical legislation during the year, none more important than the Statue of Westminster backdated to September 1939. It was a significant step along the road to Australia's full independence. In addition the government had to pay for all of these war measures. This was a substantial financial problem for the nation and the government had to increase revenue. In order to do so it nationalised income tax. The states challenged it in the High Court and lost and thus 1942 also produced the modern Federal system of taxation and government that we have today.

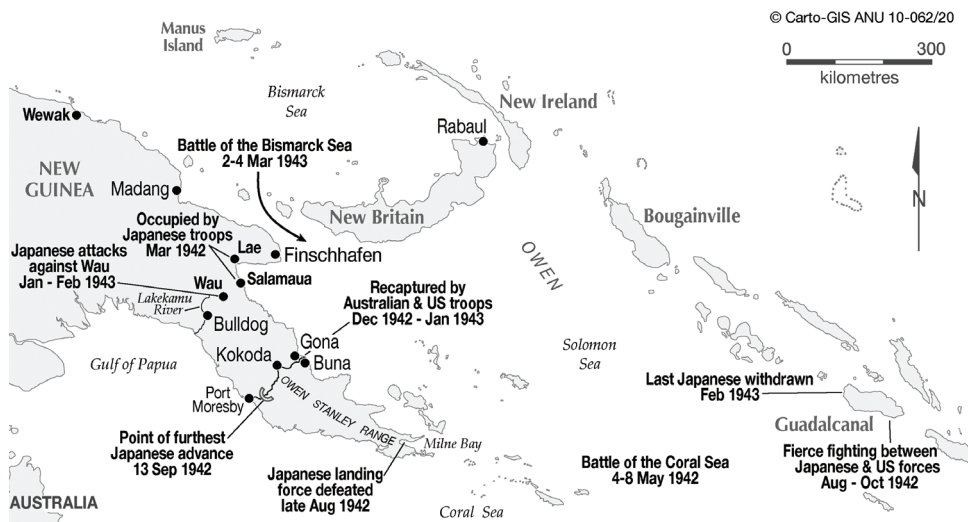
Militarily the situation in early 1942 was, however, bleak. Despite this initial bravado MacArthur's confidence would soon be sapped as the realisation of the magnitude of his defeat in the Philippines would sink in. At this time the US Army in Australia had no tanks, no heavy artillery and most of its combat aircraft were obsolescent and in poor condition. There was also little likelihood that large numbers of US combat units would be forthcoming any time soon. It was also clear that the US troops at Bataan and Corregidor in the Philippines were doomed

To compound his problems MacArthur soon discovered that Australia, his newfound coalition partner, had lost one of its few highly trained infantry divisions in Singapore and the islands to Australia's north. The remainder of its elite all-volunteer Army formations (AIF), along with a considerable number of its Air Force squadrons and naval units, were either staying in the Middle East or only just making their way to the Pacific.

At home Australia's defences were maned by a poorly trained and ill-equipped conscripted militia. Despite MacArthur's later claims there was no 'Brisbane Line'. By the time he had arrived the Australian General Thomas Blamey and his US predecessor General George Brett had already drawn up plans to move forces north and to fight in Papua. MacArthur accepted all of their advice and adopted their strategic outline.

As July gave way to August three important inter-connected battle were being fought. Kokoda, Milne Bay and Guadalcanal. As the Japanese advanced along the Kokoda Trail they attempted to use a pincer movement by landing a force to capture Milne Bay. Lacking air superiority they were only able to land a small force and it was cut off and destroyed.

Meanwhile in the South Pacific Admiral King's counter offensive had begun with the landing of the Marines at Guadalcanal. This led to the first major surface naval



action in the theatre on the night of 8-9 August when a number of Allied ships were lost including HMAS Canberra. This meant that within the space of less than nine months the RAN had lost Sydney, Perth (in the Dutch East Indies) and Canberra, making 1942 was the worst year in the RAN's history.

The landing of the US Marines had a major impact on the battles of late 1942. It caused the Japanese to alter their plans and forced them to delay their advance on Port Moresby. So while the diggers were securing a victory at Milne Bay the Japanese commander at Kokoda was ordered over to the defensive. The Japanese on the Kokoda Trail were eventually defeated at the battle of Oivi-Gorari (4-11 November 1942). It was the pivotal battle of the campaign and coincided with Allied success at El Alamein, decisive battle of the North African campaign, where the 9th Australian Division played a vital role.

There was to also be a third important battle fought in November 1942 - this one in Brisbane. The arrival of US personnel had initially been greeted with great enthusiasm in Australia but as their presence became routine tensions started to develop. From the highest levels of the military to the lowest private's cultural differences and one upmanship developed.

The tensions amongst the soldiers broke out on the streets of Brisbane on 26-27 November when, after a dispute between a drunken soldier and an American Military Policeman (MP), about 100 Australians 'besieged' the US Army Postal Exchange (PX) on the corner of Creek and Adelaide Streets.



Early 1942; U.S. Military Police outside the Central Hotel, Brisbane.
(Source: Sunday Truth, Brisbane/State Library of Queensland.)

Throwing rocks and bottles the crowd began to grow and several fights broke out in the city. By 8pm the disturbance had grown to some 5000 people. At the PX the US MP's armed themselves which only further inflamed the situation, a scuffle broke out, a shot gun was discharged three times and an Australian artillery soldier was killed and another five Australian soldiers and two civilians were wounded. By 10pm the crowd dispersed leaving much of the PX in ruin. The following night another crowd gathered and numerous scuffles between Australians and Americans broke out with eight US Army MP's and four US officers hospitalised.

The irony of the whole incident is that it started when some Australian soldiers involved themselves in an issue between a US Army private and a US Army MP.

The Australians believed that the US MP was being heavy handed, a reputation they had amongst the Australians, when he tried to use his baton on the young US soldier. It was only after the death and injury of the Australian soldiers that the tenor of the incident took on an anti-US flavour. In reality for the Australian soldiers the original cause of the riot was an anti-military police rather than an anti-US one.

Episodic disturbances would continue to occur in Australian cities in towns thereafter but they were generally few and only on very small scale. In particular it should be noted that relations between Australian and US service personnel were overwhelmingly 'harmonious'. They shared similar outlooks on life, shared similar burdens and discomforts. This was particular apparent the closer you got the front line. As General Blamey noted in response to the battle for Brisbane 'strangely enough as always, the nearer one gets to the actual war the better the feeling and we have nothing here [in Papua] to indicate the curious outlook that has grown up in Queensland.'

As November turned into December 1942 the Allied successes in the air, at sea and in the battles for the Kokoda Trail, Milne Bay, the Beachheads and on Guadalcanal ensured the security of Australia.

Australia also fought another important campaign against the Japanese in Timor during 1942. Timor's dense and inhospitable terrain aided in a long guerrilla campaign, but the early success of these operations was only made possible by the support of the Timorese people, who provided food and shelter, acted as carriers and guides, helped set up ambushes and fought alongside the Australians. Many Timorese were brutally repressed by the Japanese and a significant number executed for helping the Australians.

Maintaining a supply line to Timor was especially difficult. Vessels of the RAN and the Dutch Navy ran the gauntlet of Japanese bombers throughout the period of Australian operations on Timor. On 23 September 1942 HMAS Voyager went fast aground and was attacked by

Japanese aircraft and later lost. On 1 December 1942 HMAS Armidale was sunk by Japanese air attacks while attempting to land Dutch troops as part of an operation to relieve the 2/2nd Independent Company.

By years end the positions in Timor was desperate and the decision to withdraw the troops as made. In December 1942 and January the Independent Companies were withdraw. What Timor illustrated was the critical importance of the local people to the success of Australia's military campaigns. Their local knowledge and bush skills were omnipresent. Their sacrifice and endurance in face of Japanese occupation and brutality should be remember alongside the sacrifice that Australian service men and women made.

Conclusion: 1942 in reflection

Australia's experiences in 1942 were just one small part in a global conflict. While the shadows of war merely touched Australia's shore, millions of people across the globe lived in the darkness that came with Nazi or Japanese occupation. Meanwhile the battle for the Atlantic continued to see-saw. In Eastern Europe, where the bulk of the German military effort was directed, Hitler's forces suffered a devastating defeat at the battle of Stalingrad (21 August 1942 – 2 February 1943).

In the air 1942 also saw the Allied strategic bombing offensive against Germany swing into full action when, on the night of 30-31 May 1942, the RAF launched its first 1000-bomber raid on the German town of Cologne. One thousand and forty-six aircraft rained more than 2000 tons of bombs on the city, reducing 13 000 houses to rubble. Thousands of Australians served in bomber command through the Empire Air Training Scheme; their casualties being the highest of any Australian service during the war.

In the Pacific tens of thousands of Allied military personnel became prisoners of war of the Japanese, while the Sino-Japanese war in China continued unabated, occupying the bulk of the Japanese Army. Yet while the Second World War was global in nature, its ramifications were felt most significantly at the local level. Speaking in Federal Parliament on 27 January 1943, Prime Minister John Curtin reflected on what had been achieved during the year to 'save this country from invasion' and to 'protect our own soil'. The successes were self-evident. 'Nowhere in Australia last night', he continued, 'did people fear that air-raid warnings would interrupt their slumber or work.'

The country had emerged from the crisis of 1942 much stronger. The fledgling minority government had established itself and the Prime Minister had emerged as a national leader. The government had put in place major reforms to the wartime economy, and had reoriented Australian society to the war effort.

The partnership with the United States was cemented and critical victories had been won in the air, at sea and on land. In 1943 the Australian and US militaries were poised to strike at the very heart of Japanese power in the SWPA and by the end of that year the reconquest of central New Guinea would be complete and MacArthur would launch his deep-strike operations that would take him rapidly onto the Philippines in 1944.

For Australia 1942 was and will remain a 'pivotal' year in our history and it should continue to receive its due recognition in the crowded space that is Australian memory and history of war.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Colonel Glenn Ryan, CSC and Bar



Glenn Ryan was born and raised in Victoria before entering officer training in 1993. He was assigned to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC) and initially served as a tank troop leader in 1st Armoured Regiment. He has a broad RAAC background, including tank, reconnaissance and armoured personnel carrier commands, including command of the first operational M1A1 Tank Squadron.

Within Army, Colonel Ryan has served in the three combat brigades at unit and brigade level. Colonel Ryan commanded the 1st Recruit Training Battalion in 2014/15 before being promoted to assume his current role as Colonel Operations at Headquarters Forces Command.

Colonel Ryan has deployed to East Timor, Israeli Occupied Territories, Syria, Lebanon and Afghanistan. Most recently he completed a tour in Afghanistan with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as a planner to transition security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces.

Colonel Ryan's general staff roles include postings to brigades and Army Headquarters appointments to support Army, joint, interagency and inter-department activities. This has included postings to the Directorate of Future Land Warfare in support of Army, Navy, Air Force and joint futures, and Office of the Chief of Army in a personnel support role.

Colonel Ryan has a Masters in Project Management, Graduate Diploma of Strategy in Defence Studies, Graduate Certificate in Defence Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in Information Systems and History. He was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross for his performance as the Brigade Major of 1st Brigade and a Bar to the Conspicuous Service Cross for his performance as the Commanding Officer of the 1st Recruit Training Battalion. He was also awarded a Meritorious Service Medal from the United States for service as a staff officer in ISAF Joint Command, Afghanistan.

37 SQUADRON FLY PAST

An RAAF C130J Hercules will provide the fly past over Martin Place Cenotaph, Sydney as part of the 2017 Battle for Australia Day commemorative service.

37 Squadron is a part of Air Mobility Group based at RAAF Base Richmond operating the C-130J Hercules aircraft.

37SQN was formed on 15 July 1943 at Laverton, Victoria, originally flying Lockheed Lodestar aircraft. During this time 37SQN flew frequently into New Guinea and Dutch New Guinea. When re-equipped with Dakotas in March 1945, 37SQN started conveying Australian troops and equipment from island bases throughout the Pacific back to Australia. In 1946 37SQN started to support the deployment of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan and on 24 February 1948 37SQN was disbanded.

After being re-established at RAAF Base Richmond on 21 February 1966, now flying the C-130E Hercules, 37SQN began long range transport missions in support of Australian forces in Vietnam. These flights included aero-medical evacuations conveying wounded soldiers back to

Australia. After the Vietnam War, 37SQN continued to fly throughout the region. Among these flights, humanitarian tasks and civil aid became a large aspect of 37SQN's operations, with 37SQN becoming a vital component in the evacuation of civilians following Cyclone Tracy in Darwin, 1975. 37SQN was also employed by the Federal Government to provide air transport during the pilots' dispute that stopped operations by the two feuding domestic airlines in 1989.

In 1999, 37SQN began the replacement of their C-130E with the new C-130J model, with the final C-130E flight taking place in November of that year. 37SQN has supported many Australian peacekeeping missions around the world, including those in East Timor and Iraq. 37SQN was expanded on 17 November 2006 when 36SQN's C-130H Hercules fleet was transferred to 37SQN and 36SQN moved to RAAF Base Amberley. All 12 C-130H aircraft were decommissioned

in November 2012, and today 37SQN continues operations with its fleet of 12 C-130J aircraft.

The primary role of 37SQN and the C-130J fleet is airborne operations, including all forms of airdrop, combat airlift roles, formation flying and airland capabilities. These roles have been extensively performed since commencing operations in the Middle East Region in 2003 and continuing today. Secondary roles include air logistics support, aeromedical evacuation and search and rescue, all of which are used during 37SQN's considerable humanitarian support and domestic operations.

More recently, 37SQN have conducted extensive election support operations in PNG (2012 and 2017) and humanitarian assistance / disaster relief operations in Fiji (Cyclone Winston, 2016), Vanuatu (Cyclone Pam, 2015) and Queensland (Cyclone Yasi, 2011, and QLD floods, 2010-11 and 2013).

A GLANCE BACK

PHOTO GALLERY 2016 - 17



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www.battleforaustralia.org.au

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