



Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales

NEWSLETTER

January 2024

Battle for Australia Association 2023 AGM

The Battle for Australia Association AGM was held on Monday, 16th October, in the Imperial Services Club Room of the Royal Automobile Club of Australia, whereby the following were elected as office-bearers for the year:

Vice-President: Dr Darren Mitchell
Treasurer: Mr John Butcher
Secretary: Ms Megan Lavender

Currently the role of President remains vacant.

The following members were elected as ordinary committee members:

Mr Chris Dawson
Mr Ted McKeown
Mr Matt Vertzonis
Mrs Eileen Henderson
Mr Doug Roser
Mr John Howells
Mr David Ross
Rev Geoffrey Usher
Mr Doug Wood

Following the acceptance of Reports, including the Audited Financial Statements, members adjourned to the Victoria Room for refreshments.

Battle for Australia Annual Oration 2024 – Discovery of the Montevideo Maru

The eighth annual Battle for Australia Oration will be delivered at the Royal Automobile Club, Sydney on Tuesday 20 February 2024 at 1000h. The Oration is held each year to mark the occasion in the Second World War when Prime Minister John Curtin coined the phrase "Battle for Australia" in communicating to all Australians the dangers that lay ahead, following the Fall of Singapore.

The 2024 Oration "Discovery of the Montevideo Maru", will be presented by Commodore Timothy Brown AM RAN Ret'd, at the Royal Automobile Club of Australia incorporating Imperial Service Club Ltd at 89 Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW.

CDRE Brown led a specialist team of deep-sea experts, endured the effects of a tropical cyclone, conducted hours of painstaking research, but also had some extraordinarily good luck before finally solving one of Australia's greatest naval mysteries; finding the final resting place of the sunken Montevideo Maru.

The Montevideo Maru was a merchant ship of the Empire of Japan. Launched in 1926, it was pressed into service as a military transport during World War II. It was sunk by the American submarine USS Sturgeon on 1 July 1942, drowning 1,054 people, mostly Australian Prisoners of War and civilians who were being transported from Rabaul, in the former Australian territory of New Guinea, to Hainan in Japan. The sinking is considered the worst maritime disaster in Australia's history. The wreck of the Montevideo Maru was discovered on 18 April 2023.

The Battle for Australia – Curtin’s Update, 15 October 1942

When looking back on the period from the Fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 and the ensuing years of the Battle for Australia, as Prime Minister John Curtin termed it, we should be careful not to use our benefit of hindsight to minimise the threat that Australians felt and experienced from Japanese forces during that time. It seems obvious to say that in wartime it is not possible to know the enemy’s intentions, but we do well to try and think what it must have been like at the time, more than eighty years ago.

In a statement issued to the press on 15 October 1942, a few days after the sea Battle of Cape Esperance in which Japanese forces suffered heavy losses, Curtin expressed these uncertainties:

“... a longish struggle was ahead in the Solomons. We did not know whether the Japanese Navy was coming against us there and we did not want to move our Navy from this area. The allies wanted to keep the Japanese guessing. The Japanese lines of communication had been interrupted and they might not know the extent of their setback in the Solomons. We also did not want them to know our intentions

regarding Rabaul. We had to keep an eye on the Japanese, who might use Timor to go into the Indian Ocean or attack the northwest coast of Australia. The Japs were keeping up reconnaissance of the northwest coast to see what we were doing.”

Curtin was explaining the challenges of fighting an enemy close to home, indeed of not knowing in the fog of war when and where the next strike on Australia’s mainland might occur. In the days and weeks ahead the fiercest engagements of the Solomons Campaign at Guadalcanal were fought. Thus, the term “Battle for Australia” still captures the very real fears and uncertainties felt by Australians as they contended with invading forces to the north and west. The annual Battle for Australia Association Oration seeks to honour the service and sacrifice of Australians in the Pacific campaign of the Second World War by addressing the experience of those who lived in that era. The 2024 Battle for Australia Oration is scheduled for Tuesday 20 February 2024. Details in this newsletter.

[Reflections shared at the Battle for Australia Association (NSW) AGM on 16 October 2023 by Vice President Dr Darren Mitchell, in his report on the Association’s activities.]

Our Website

Thanks to the efforts of John Howells, a member of our Committee, who manages our website a great deal of new material has been added to it. It can be accessed through the website <http://www.battleforaustralia.org.au>.

Membership

Our Association relies on the annual fees of our members and the many organisations, particularly RSL sub-branches, which are members to fund our activities. Our membership is steady but we will always welcome new members, so please spread the word. The Application Form can be downloaded from our website and contact details can be accessed on it here: http://www.battleforaustralia.asn.au/documents/Membership_Form.pdf

Obituary - Major General Warren Glenny – former Association Chairman

Major General Warren Glenny AO RFD ED's first involvement with the Lancers was in the 1 RNSWL Cadets, from 1950 to 1953. His National Service training was from August to November 1953, and he then passed into the ranks of the Regiment; Lieutenant, 14 December 1955; Captain, 27 August 1959; Major, 171963; Lieutenant Colonel, 1 July 1972.

After commanding from 1 July 1972 to 30 June 1975, he was posted to 2nd Training Group located at Ingleburn and became Chief Instructor TAC 5. On 1 September 1979 he was appointed Colonel (Armour), Headquarters 2 Division Field Force Group; then, in July 1981, he became Colonel (Projects), HQ Training Command, until promoted to Brigadier with command of 5 Brigade on 1 January 1984. Also, as from 1 April 1984 he was appointed Honorary ADC to the Governor General for a period of three years. During January 1968 Glenny was in South Vietnam for operational experience.

At the end of his command of the brigade, he moved to Melbourne, promoted Major General and given command of the 3rd Division. After a year the Division was amalgamated with the 2nd Division, and General Glenny became its commander until November 1994. When he was awarded the AO and retired from the Army, he was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, succeeding Sir Laurence

Street. General Glenny relinquished the Honorary Colonelship in 2012, handing over to Colonel Long.

In civil life he was a company executive in a retail chain. From early in his adult life General Glenny has been very active in community affairs, such as voluntary ambulance and fire brigade, politics and especially the Parramatta Foundation Week on the committee of which he served from 1964 to 1981. Later he was Commissioner of the St John Ambulance in NSW. And president of the Castle Hill RSL Club and Sub-Branch.

From 2013 'till 2016 General Glenny served as the chair of the Battle for Australia organisation. His service as Patron of the Lancers' Museum where he was a generous supporter from 2015 was greatly appreciated.

General Glenny died on the morning of Wednesday 5 July 2023, a life of service to the nation and community ended. He was survived by his wife Gaye, son Andrew and family.

His funeral held at All Saints, Parramatta on 14 July 2023 was well attended by military and civil colleagues, including members of the Lancers' Association. The eulogy was delivered by Brigadier Phillip Bridie AM ADC, the Regiment's current Honorary Colonel. The proceedings were conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Colon Aitken, Army Chaplain, and friend of General Warren for many years.

[Contributed by Australia Association Committee Member Christopher Dawson.]



Figure 1. Warren and Gaye Glenny marry in 1965



Figure 2. General Glenny's funeral All Saints Parramatta



Figure 3. Guard of Honour at General Glenny's funeral



Figure 4. A Final Salute for General Glenny

Battle for Australia 2023 National Day of Commemoration – 6th September

The 2023 Battle for Australia Commemoration was held in beautiful conditions in the presence of the Governor of NSW Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC and Mr Dennis Wilson. It was great to be able to gather again with our fellow citizens and mark that time in 1942-45 when our nation was threatened by foreign invasion. The commemoration was notable for the Acknowledgement of Country speech by SGT Lachlan Youll, the prayers by Geoffrey Usher, musical contributions by the NSW Police Band and soloist Belinda Parsons, and the Sydney Women's Vocal Orchestra, the catafalque party provided by HMAS Kuttabul, and the terrific keynote address by Lieutenant Colonel Jill Smith. Our MC Dr Darren Mitchell OAM again excelled himself as did Junior Legatee Kelly Randall in reciting the ode. We are grateful also for the fine contributions of Mosman Prep School (Guard of Honour), Piper Robert Pearce OAM, and St John Ambulance, Sydney University Division.

Those who made it to the luncheon in the Fullerton Hotel enjoyed good company.

