RSLWA
North Beach
RSL Sub-Branch

Homages from Monthly Meetings

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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August 2014

This month in Australian military history, an RAAF crash in 1940 claimed the lives of 11 in Canberra. Crucial Australian War plans were temporarily disrupted as the victims included, the Minister for Army, the Minister for Air, the Chief of the General Staff as well as eight crew and passengers.

September 2014

This month in Australian military history, Australia's first Submarine 'HMAS AE1' disappeared without trace off New Guinea on 14 September 1914, with the loss of 35 crew.

This was Australia's first major loss of World War One

October 2014

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 31 killed, 36 wounded when the 4th Light Horse Brigade rode into history on 31 October 1917 with the acclaimed last great cavalry charge at Beersheba. It was probably Australia's first and only cavalry charge and using bayonets, not sabres.

November 2014

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Navy's worst loss that of the entire crew of HMAS Sydney II, sunk off WA on 19 November 1941 with 645 killed in action against the German Raider Kormoran.

We also remember the loss of 4 killed and 26 wounded of HMAS Sydney I, 100 years ago yesterday, on 9th November 1914, famously sinking the German Light Cruiser Emden off Cocos Island whilst escorting the Australia's first contingent of diggers to Egypt.

December 2014

This month in Australian military history, we remember the RAAF's largest air-to-air battle which took place over Sunchon North Korea on 1st December 1951. Twelve 77 Squadron Meteors engaged between 40-50 higher performance Chinese MIG-15s. The one RAAF pilot KIA was part of the 37 who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Korea.

January 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 1945 Sandakan death marches which were probably the worst atrocities suffered by Australian servicemen in WW2. Only 6 out of 2500 POW survived this ordeal in Borneo.

February 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Banka Island massacre of 1942 where 22 members of the Australian Army Nursing Service were callously machine gunned by their Japanese captors. Western Australia's Sister Vivien Bullwinkel was the only survivor.

March 2015

his month in Australian military history, we remember the 1942 sinking of HMAS Perth in Sunda Straits, Indonesia. 353 of Perth's 680 crew perished in the battle

April 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 1951 Battle of Kapyong, Australian Army's most significant and important Korean battle.3 RAR lost 32 killed, 53 wounded when stalling the Chinese advance and preventing Seoul from falling into enemy hands.

May 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the devastating fire on board HMAS Westralia, just 7 kms off Fremantle on 5th May 1998, which claimed lives of 4 sailors.

June 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Blackhawk accident in Townsville on 12 June 1996 which claimed the lives of 15 SAS troopers and 3 Aircrew.

July 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the torpedo attack on HMAS Hobart off Vanuatu on 20 July 1943.

13 crew were killed.

August 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Battle of Long Tan, South Vietnam on 18 August 1966. 18 diggers from 6RAR were killed and 24 wounded.

September 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Battle of Nui Le 31 September 1971 South Vietnam which claimed the lives of 5 diggers killed in action and 30 wounded.

October 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Charge of the 4th Light Brigade at Beersheba, Palestine on 31 October 1917 where we lost 31 killed and 36 wounded.

November 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the loss of 645 crew in the sinking of HMAS Sydney on 19 November 1941, the most grievous loss suffered by the Royal Australian Navy.

December 2015

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 100 sailors lost when HMAS Armidale was sunk off Timor on 1 December 1942. More would have been

lost if not for 18 year old Teddy Sheean's conspicuous bravery. All alone manning an AA gun on the rapidly sinking ship, defying injury, incoming fire and his own safety, he downed 2 Jap fighters harassing floating survivors, before going down with the ship.

January 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember the torpedo attack on HMAS Hobart off Vanuatu on 20 July 1943.

13 crew were killed.

February 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember when war came to Australia with the Bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942. 243 civilians and servicemen perished and 400 were wounded.

March 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 138 sailors who perished on HMAS YARRA when it was sunk on 4 March 1942, south of Java. A very one sided affair, it had been attacked by 3 Japanese heavy cruisers and 2 destroyers.

April 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 3300 casualties and 1170 taken prisoner of war in the **First Battle of Bullecourt** on this very day 99 years ago on 11 April 1917. It was largest number captured in a single engagement during the war.

May 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember

Private Errol Noack, 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, who was the first Australian national serviceman to be killed in the Vietnam War, on 24 May 1966.

By the end of the War, the National Servicemen's' sacrifice was 200 killed and 1279 wounded out of Australia total of 521 killed and 3000 wounded.

June 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember

The Malayan Emergency which was declared 16 June 1948 and the 51 Diggers killed and 27 wounded in that 10 year conflict.

July 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember the worst 24 hours in our entire history. The World War One, Battle of Fromelles, Australia's first and costliest encounter when on the 19th July 1916, we suffered 5533 losses in a single night.

August 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 10 diggers killed in the deadly month of August in 2010, 2011, 2012, out of total since 2007 of 41 Diggers Killed 261 wounded in Afghanistan.

September 2016

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 59 diggers killed and 100 plus injured from 2/33 Battalion, when a fully loaded US B24 crashed into them in Port Moresby 7 September 1943

October 2016

This month in Australian military history, on 5 to 8 October 1951, we remember the 20 diggers killed and 89 wounded from 3RAR, in the Battle of Marrying San, when engaged against the Chinese.

November 2016

This month in Australian military history, overshadowed by the loss of HMAS Sydney one week before, we remember the loss of HMAS Parramatta on 27 November 1941, when 138 sailors perished in the Mediterranean Sea near Tobruk.

December 2016

This month, 101 years ago, the triumphal evacuation on the 20 December 1915, drew to a close the carnage at Gallipoli. We remember the 8,000 dead and 18,000 wounded in that flawed campaign.

January 2017

This month on the 5 January 1945, HMAS Australia assisting the US in the Philippines, was the target of Kamikazi attacks for the second time in the war.

We remember the 25 killed and 30 injured during the encounter.

February 2017

His month in February 1942, two events 4 days apart shook Australia to its core.

On the 15th we remember the 8,000 of 15,000 Australians taken prisoner after the fall of Singapore, who died as POWs in appalling conditions, and on the 19th, it was the first of 64 air raids that pounded Darwin.

We remember the 300 killed and 400 wounded in those raids.

March 2017

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 1942 sinking of HMAS Perth in Sunda Straits, Indonesia. 353 of Perths 680 crew perished in the battle

One year later on the 28th Aussie Rules football champion and ace fighter pilot Squadron Leader 'Bluey' Truscott died in a training accident at Exmouth WA

April 2017

This month in Australian military history, exactly 3 years to the day after Gallipoli, we remember the second Villers Bretonneux Battle in 1918, which claimed 1469 casualties

May 2017

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 16 diggers killed and 56 wounded in the 1968 Battle of Coral and Balmoral Fire Support Bases.

June 2017

This month in Australian military history, we remember 21 years ago, the Blackhawk accident in Townsville on this very day 12 June 1996 which claimed the lives of 15 SAS troopers and 3 Aircrew.

July 2017

This month in Australian military history, is the centenary of the start of the 3rd Battle of Ypres on 31st July 1917. We remember the 38,000 Australian casualties that followed.

Also, on this very day, 10th July in 1911, the Royal Australian Navy was formed and in 1940, the Battle of Britain began.

August 2017

This month in Australian military history, as well as our losses at Long Tan 18 August 1966, we also remember the 193 casualties including 84 killed on HMAS Canberra in the Solomon Islands on 9 August 1942.

September 2017

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Battle of Milne Bay 25 August to 7 September 1942 where 167 diggers were killed and 206 wounded. This was the first major battle where Allies had defeated the Japanese in the Pacific.

October 2017

This month in Australian military history on the 75 th anniversary, we remember the second Battle of El Alamein 23 October to 11 November 1942 where 1200 diggers were killed and 2500 wounded in this and earlier fighting. This was a significant battle as Winston Churchill was to say:

"Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat".

November 2017

This month in Australian military history, we remember the loss of 645 sailors on HMAS Sydney in 1941, and 3 years later the 516 diggers killed and 1572 wounded in the Bougainville campaign which started 23 November 1944.

December 2017

This month in Australian military history, we remember the RAAF's largest air-to-air battle which took place over Sunchon North Korea on 1st December 1951.

Twelve 77 Squadron Meteors engaged between 40-50 higher performance Chinese MIG-15s. The one RAAF pilot KIA was part of the 37 who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Korea.

January 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember 5th January 1941 and Australia's first major land battle of WW2 at Bardia when the 6th Division captured 40,000 Italian prisoners including 4 generals at a cost of 130 diggers killed and 326 wounded.

February 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember the terrible Fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 when 18,000 diggers were captured after incurring losses of 1789 killed in action and 1306 wounded.

March 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember the February/March 1942 Tol plantation massacre of 150 diggers after the collapse of the ill-fated Lark Force expedition on New Britain. Hopelessly under equipped and undermanned, nothing could be done to save isolated task force of 1400, overwhelmed by a massive Japanese invasion force.

April 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 1941 siege of Tobruk which began 77 years ago tomorrow, lasted 241 days, cost 744 killed, 2450 wounded, captured and missing. and so was borne the Rats of Tobruk legend.

May 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember precisely 75 years ago today, the 1943 sinking of the Hospital Ship CENTAUR, 50 miles north east of Brisbane. Only 64 of 332 crew and nurses survived the Japanese submarine torpedoing. Ironically, it was the CENTAUR which rescued the KORMORAN survivors in 1941.

June 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 14 airmen and 2 sailors killed on D Day, 74 years ago on 6 June 1944 at Normandy. It is not generally known that approximately 3,000 Australian Military personnel and Merchant navy took part in the D Day Landing.

July 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 14 RAAF airmen killed in the Battle of Britain which began 78 years ago tomorrow on 10 July 1940. It is not generally known that 35 Australian pilots took part in that battle which lasted until 31 October 1940.

August 2018

This month in Australian military history, we remember, precisely 76 years ago today, the 1942 sinking of the Cruiser HMAS CANBERRA, off Savo Island in the Pacific. 84 sailors perished and 109 were wounded assisting US forces.

September 2018

This month in Australian military history, is the centenary of the AIF's only mutiny. A remarkable mutiny, NOT to avoid conflict but to protest against High Command decision to withdraw Australian battalions when the smell of victory was in the air. The diggers had refused to dessert their 46,000 dead comrades on the Western Front.

October 2018

This month in Australian military history, on 21 October 1944, one day after General MacArthur returned to the Philippines, HMAS Australia, assisting US forces in Leyte Gulf, was victim to probably the wars first Japanese Kamikazi attack. We remember the 30 sailors killed and 64 wounded in that attack.

November 2018

This month in Australian military history, most Australians are aware of our worst naval disaster, the sinking of HMAS Sydney, 19 November 1941. Less aware they would be that Sydney 1, 2 and 3 all have featured in November over 104 years. In 1914, Sydney 1, engaged and sunk SMS Emden off Cocos Island. In 1940 Sydney 2, was the lead in the Battle of Otranto in the Adriatic Sea. One year and one week, later she was sunk by German Raider Komoran of Geraldton. And in 1971, Sydney 3, embarks the bulk of its final Australian units from Vietnam at Vung Tau.We remember the 700 crew killed and wounded from HMAS Sydney 1, 2 and 3.

December 2018

This month in Australian military history, on 5 December 1939, Australia's and indeed the British Commonwealth's, first operational sortie of WW2, was carried out by RAAF's 10 Squadron. It was the only RAAF squadron to see continuous active service throughout the war. We remember the squadron's 161 crew killed during the conflict.

January 2019

This month in Australian military history we remember 'The Gull Force 2/21st Battalion' sacrifice at Ambon on 30 January 1942 and later. This suicide mission pitted the battalion against a Japanese force of 20,000. Only 352 of the battalions 1131 survived the war.

February 2019

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 10 sailors lost overboard from HMAS Nizam off the coast of Cape Leeuwin 11 February 1945. It was recorded that the destroyed had heeled over 65 degrees.

January, in Australian military history we remember 'The Gull Force 2/21st Battalion' sacrifice at Ambon on 30th January 1942 and later. This suicide mission pitted the battalion against a Japanese force of 20,000. Only 352 of the battalion's 1131 survived the war.

March 2019

This month in Australian Military history in 1942 the RAN lost sunk, HMAS Perth and Yarra 3 days apart in Indonesian waters and with them 500 sailors perished.

And 10 years ago this month in Afghanistan in 2009, we lost Sergeant Brett TILL to a roadside bomb and Corporal Mathew HOPKINS in a firefight.

April 2019

This month in Australian Military history on 8 April 1942 and exactly 77 years ago today, the RAN lost sunk, the gallant HMAS Vampire. After collecting 5 battle honours for service around Calabria, Libya, Greece, Crete and the Indian Ocean, luck ran out when Vampire, a sitting duck without Allied air support, was bombed and sunk by Japanese Carrier aircraft off Columbo, Sri Lanka. We remember the CO and 8 sailors who perished in that encounter.

May 2019

This month in Australian Military history we remember the loss of Australia's and indeed the British Empire's greatest air ace, Robert Alexander LITTLE who perished

on 27 May1918 with 47 kills to his credit. A naval aviator, most of his service was with the RN and Royal Flying Corps. He was 22 years old.

We also remember the 16 diggers killed and 47 wounded when Fire Support Base Coral was twice attacked in May 1968.

June 2019

This month in Australian Military history we remember the loss of 5 diggers in Afghanistan in June 2010, in June 2011, one digger and in 2014 another.

We also remember 23 years ago, the Blackhawk accident in Townsville on 12 June 1996 which claimed the lives of 15 SAS troopers and 3 Aircrew.

July 2019

This month in Australian Military history we remember the loss of 845 diggers from 2/22 Battalion, No 1 Independent company and approximately 200 civilians all POWs, who drowned trapped on board the Montevideo Maru, The Japanese transporter, which was sunk by the submarine USS Sturgeon, near the Philippines coast on 1 July 1942.

August 2019

This month, August, in Australian Military history, is a deadly month. As well as the 10 diggers lost in **Afghanistan** between 2010 and 2014, the 18 diggers lost in the **Battle of Long Tan** on 18 August 1966, we also remember the 1167 who perished in the **Battle for Lone Pine** on 9 August 1915. Of the 4600 troops committed, half became casualties in a matter of 2 days. Lone Pine was one of the few Allied successes in Gallipoli, but came at a heavy price both during and after its capture,

September 2019

This month in Australian military history, we remember the last battle in which the Australians fought in Vietnam, The Battle of Nui Le on 31 September 1971 which claimed the lives of 5 diggers killed in action and 30 wounded.

It is also 80 years ago this week that Australia's involvement in World War Two began. This ultimately resulted in the loss of 27,000 killed and 66,000 wounded.

October 2019

This month in Australian military history, on 5 to 8 October 1951, we remember the 20 diggers killed and 89 wounded from 3RAR, in the Battle of Maryang San, when engaged against the Chinese.

November 2019

Overshadowed by the loss of HMAS Sydney one week before, we remember the loss of HMAS Parramatta on 27 November 1941, when 138 sailors perished in the Mediterranean Sea near Tobruk. Parramatta's mission enabled the besieged Tobruk Garrison to be resupplied and hold out against Rommel's Afrika Corps.

December 2019

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 100 sailors lost when HMAS Armidale was sunk off Timor on 1 December 1942. More would have been lost if not for 18-year-old Teddy Shean's conspicuous bravery. All alone, manning an AA gun on the rapidly sinking ship, defying injury, incoming fire and his own safety, he downed 2 Jap fighters harassing floating survivors, before self-sacrificing by going down with the ship.

January 2020

101 years ago, in January 1919, a contingent of 150 diggers formed part of the doomed British North Russia Relief Force. This month in Australian military history, we remember the 10 diggers killed and 30 wounded fighting in appalling arctic conditions. Only 2 VCs were awarded in the campaign and remarkably both went to Australians.

February 2020

This month in Australian military history, we remember the Banka Island massacre of 16 February 1942, where 22 members of the Australian Army Nursing Service were callously machine gunned by their Japanese captors. Sister Vivien Bullwinkel was the only survivor.

March 2020

This month in Australian military history was a sad, dark period for the RAN. We remember the loss of **HMAS Perth** on March 1, 1942 and **HMAS Yarra** on March 4. A total of **491** sailors from those gallant ships perished. In Australia's North West in the same month, the Japanese continued to harass Darwin, Wyndham, Broome and Katherine, inflicting casualties on both servicemen and civilians.70 people died in those raids.

April 2020

This month in Australian military history, we turn to the oft referred to **'Forgotten War'** and we remember the 1951 **Battle of Kapyong,** Australian Army's most significant and important Korean battle.

3 RAR lost 32 killed, 53 wounded when stalling the Chinese advance and preventing Seoul from falling into enemy hands.

May 2020

This month in Australian military history, we remember the devastating fire on board HMAS Westralia, a tanker and the navy's largest ship at the time. The incident occurred just 7 kms off Fremantle on 5th May 1998, claimed lives of 4 sailors.

June 2020

This month 24 years ago on 12 June in Townsville Australia experienced its worst peacetime military disaster when a black Hawk training exercise went wrong, killing 18 men. We remember the Blackhawk accident in Townsville which claimed the lives of 15 SAS troopers and 3 Aircrew.

July 2020

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 14 RAAF airmen killed in the **'Battle of Britain'** which began 80 years ago on 10 July 1940. It is not generally known that 35 Australian pilots took part in that battle which lasted until 31 October 1940.

Closer to home, we also remember Sean McCarthy, Nathan Bewes, Todd Langley and Blaine Diddams, the four diggers who perished in Afghanistan in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively.

August 2020

This month in Australian military history, we remember the 6 RAAF pilots from *The Red Sales* aerobatic team lost 16 August 1962 at RAAF East Sale while training for Air Force Week.

Four years later, on 18 August 1966. the **Battle of Long Tan** claimed 18 diggers. **Long Tan** is the best known of the Australian Army's actions in Vietnam, it has assumed a similar significance as battles such as **Gallipoli, Kokoda and Kapyong.**

The month of August also claimed another 12 diggers in The Afghanistan conflict between in 2010 and 2012.

September 2020

This month in Australian military history, we remember Australia's first casualties of WW1. Though relatively unknown, this significant and remarkable engagement took place on 11 September 1914, in the one and only one in New Guinea, barely 1 month after Allies had declared war on Germany.

Out of a raiding party of 25 predominantly Naval Reservists, we lost 6 killed and 4 wounded in capturing the Germans strategic Pacific radio station at Bit Paka.

Three days later, in waters off New Guinea and in mysterious circumstances, the Navy lost its first submarine AE1. 35 sailors perished.

October 2020

The Second Division on 5 October 1918 fought its last infantry battle of the War with a cost of 430 casualties. It was a small but successful attack at Montbrehain. From that date the Division moved into reserve, and only a few Australian units, the flying corps and some tunnelling companies, were still in action until the Armistice

November 2020

On 23 November 2007 in Afghanistan, 4 RAR Commando Regiment lost Private Luke WORSLEY and 1 year later Lieutenant Michael FUSSEL.

November 1941 was most grievous for RAN when it lost HMAS Sydney with all 645 crew off Carnarvon and one week later, HMAS Parramatta with 138, perished in the Mediterranean Sea.

December 2020

79 years ago, on 8 December 1941, Australia announced that it was at war with Japan. In the three-and-a-half-years of war against Japan, some 17,000 Australians would die, 8,000 as prisoners of war.

Also remembered are the Peacekeeping Operations, in which 14 Australians have died. This month we remember the loss of Australian Federal Police Service Officer **Adam Dunning** as a result of an ambush**,** while on a Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands on 22 December 2004.

January to March 2021

100 years ago, on 31 March 2021, the **Australian Air Force** was founded, and on 13 August that year became the **Royal Australian Air Force**

From 30th January to 3rd February 1942 Ambon fell to the Japanese, capturing predominately Dutch and Australian forces. We particularly remember a small group from 13 Squadron who remained to repair its last remaining Hudson on the Island. This was unsuccessful, and the group was captured making their escape by boat. Within a fortnight they, and more than 300 other allied servicemen were executed. One of those from 13 Squadron was Pilot Officer Frank Meyer, age 21, the elder brother of our member Jack Meyer - who also served with 13 Squadron.

On 3 March 1942, the Japanese air raid on Broome came when the port was crowded with refugees fleeing the invasion of the Dutch East Indies. About 70 people, including many civilians were killed.

April 2021

This month is the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong for which 3 RAR was awarded the Presidential Citation, and the 106th anniversary of the landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. However, we particularly remember **Operation Sumatra Assist.** This was the ADF's contribution to disaster relief in Indonesia following the *Indian Ocean Earthquake* that struck 26 December 2004.

Following a subsequent earthquake on the 28 March 2005, at about 09:30 on the 2nd of April 2005, Sea King helicopter with call sign "Shark 02" crashed on the Island of Nias off the west coast of Sumatra, killing 9 ADF personnel - 6 Navy and 3 Air

Force. Two others were recovered alive from the site by the other Sea King operating from HMAS Kanimbla.

May 2021

Since 2001, 39,000 Australians were deployed in Australia's contribution to the war in Afghanistan. During that time 41 killed and many more injured – both physical and or mentally.

On 31 May 2011, an Australian Army Chinook helicopter crashed in Zabul Province killing 27 year old Lieutenant Marcus Case, a qualified Army Pilot, and injuring five others.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement in April that the Australian ADF would leave the country by September we remember all those who have served and are serving in Afghanistan.

June 2021

The **Battle of Binh Ba,** Operation Hammer**,** occurred on 6–8 June 1969 when D Company, 5 RAR, fought a large, combined force of the People's Army of Vietnam and the Viet Cong who were attempting to capture the village of Binh Ba, 5 kilometres north of Nui Dat in Phoc Tuy Province.

The battle involved close-quarter house-to-house fighting by 5 RAR, supported by armour, helicopter gunships, heavy artillery and air bombardment. Heavy losses by the communists forced them to temporarily leave the province.

Jack Panossian was part of the Mobile Advisory Training Team attached to the ground forces of the South Vietnamese military bordering Binh Ba. Kingsley McGuire was with B Squadron 1st Armoured during this Battle. During mid-August, Paul Risinger of the same Squadron was involved in a midnight offensive that prevented the reformation of an attacking force.

From Binh Ba we remember Private Wayne Teeling of 10 Platoon, D Company, 5 RAR who was killed on 6 June 1969, after less than 1 month in Vietnam, and the 10 other diggers who were wounded.

Also, we remember 25 years ago on 12 June 1996 the crash of Black Hawk 1 and Black Hawk 2 from the Army's 5th Aviation Regiment that were carrying members of SAS on an anti-terrorism exercise at the High Range training area near Townsville.As a result 15 SAS and 3 Aircrew were killed.

This disaster remains a sobering reminder of the inherent dangers faced by Australia's armed forces as they train for the unthinkable, the communities that support them, and the terrible price that can be paid.

Of Interest

Members of the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit entered Binh Ba on 8 June to find a scene of utter devastation. It organised the distribution of food, water and aid to villagers, and went on to oversee repair and reconstruction work in the village. Reconstruction efforts, borne mainly by Australian engineers, lasted for a month. The village school was rebuilt by B Squadron, 1 Armoured Regiment, and re-opened in November that year.

July 2021

It is timely that I take a moment to remind us of just some of the stories of sacrifice.

In July 2009 Australian troops ceased an operational role in Iraq which began in March 2003 and involved Australian Army, Air Force, and Navy.

We remember the 4 Australians who died as a direct result of their service to Australia in this theatre of war.

· Matthew Millhouse 36 died in 2015 as a direct result of injuries he sustained by an IED blast in 2004.

· Paul Pardoel, 35, who transferred from the RAAF to the RAF and was serving as a Navigator when his C-130 Hercules crashed in Iraq in January 2005 killing all on board.

· David Nary, 42, a Warrant Officer with the SAS Regiment was accidently killed in November 2005 during a training exercise in Kuwait prior to his deployment to Iraq.

· Jake Kovco, 25, 3 RAR, in April 2006 who was part of the security detachment in Baghdad when he was accidently killed.

Also it is timely that we remember that since 2001, 39,000 ADF personnel were deployed in Australia's contribution to the war in Afghanistan. The final 80 ADF personnel have now left, as the 20 year mission draws to a close.

We remember the 41 killed in Afghanistan and the many more of those involved who are living daily with physical and or mental injuries.

A list of those 41 ADF personnel killed in Afghanistan. See our website under:

Remembrance and Symbolism / Other Days of Remembrance.

Afghanistan 2001 to 2021

Andrew Russell, 33, a sergeant in the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR). On 16 February 2002, Russell was travelling through southern Afghanistan with four other Australian soldiers when their Long Range Patrol Vehicle struck a land mine, severely injuring him. He was taken to a US military hospital, where he succumbed to his wounds.

David Pearce, 41, a trooper from the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment, serving with RTF-3, was killed while serving in Orūzgān Province on 8 October 2007.

Matthew Locke MG, 33, a sergeant in the Special Air Service Regiment. On 25 October 2007, Locke, who was serving a second tour of duty in Afghanistan, was engaged in a firefight with members of the Taliban militia, when he was injured in the chest by small arms fire. Other soldiers in his unit provided first-aid care prior to and during evacuation to a medical facility, where he died a short time later. Gurkha Lance Corporal Agnish Thapa, serving in the 1st Royal Gurkha Rifles, British Army was awarded the Military Cross for running 100 metres (110 yd) through enemy machine gun and RPG fire and extracted Locke by physically dragging him back to cover. Locke was killed while serving in Orūzgān Province. During his first tour of duty, Locke had been awarded the Medal for Gallantry.

Luke Worsley, 26, a private in the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando), serving with Special Operations Task Group. He was shot and killed by small arms fire on 23 November 2007 during an attempt to take a heavily defended Taliban position.

Jason Marks, 27, a lance corporal in the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando). He was killed after an intense firefight with Taliban insurgents on 27 April 2008, when an RPG landed near the patrol vehicle he was taking cover behind whilst reloading his weapon. The attack occurred 25 kilometres south of the Australian base at Tarin Kowt in Orūzgān Province. Four other Australian soldiers were wounded in the attack. All five were flown to a nearby US military hospital, where the wounded were expected to fully recover.

Sean McCarthy, 25, a signalman in the Special Air Service Regiment. He, two other SASR soldiers and a soldier from another country were wounded when the vehicle they were travelling in was attacked by a roadside bomb on 8 July 2008 during a patrol in Orūzgān Province. McCarthy died from his wounds after being evacuated to the SOTG's base at Tarin Kowt. He was on his 2nd tour of duty in Afghanistan. The two other Australians wounded in the attack returned to duty on 11 July.

Michael Fussell, 25, a lieutenant in the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando). As he and his team were conducting a dismounted patrol on 27 November 2008 they were struck by an improvised explosive device (IED), killing Fussell. Two other soldiers received minor wounds but returned to duty a few days later.

Gregory Michael Sher, 30, a private in the 1st Commando Regiment, Australian Special Operations Command was killed by a rocket attack in Uruzgan province, on 4 January 2009.

Mathew Hopkins, 21, a corporal in the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. He was attacked and fatally injured on 16 March 2009 while on patrol as part of a mentoring and reconstruction taskforce patrol operating with members of the Afghan National Army, near a village 12 kilometres (7.5 mi) north of Tarin Kowt.

Brett Till, 31, a sergeant and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician from the Incident Response Regiment. He was killed on 19 March 2009 while trying to defuse an IED.

Benjamin Ranaudo, 22, a private in the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, serving with MRTF 2. He was killed on 18 July 2009 by an anti-personnel explosive device during an operation against a compound of interest in the Baluchi Valley.

Jacob Moerland, 21, a sapper in the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment, serving with MTF 1. He was killed on 7 June 2010 by an improvised explosive device while participating in an Australian patrol conducting operations in the Miribad Valley region of Oruzgan province.

Darren Smith, 25, a sapper in the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment, serving with MTF 1. He was injured on 7 June 2010 by an improvised explosive device in the same incident as Moerland while participating in an Australian patrol conducting operations in the Miribad Valley region of Oruzgan province. He subsequently

died of wounds after being evacuated to an International Security Assistance Force hospital. Also killed was his explosives detection dog Herbie.

Scott Palmer, 27, a private in the 2nd Commando Regiment, serving with SOTG. He was killed in the crash of a US UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter on 21 June 2010, during operations in the Shah Wali Kot.

Timothy Aplin, 38, a private in the 2nd Commando Regiment, serving with SOTG. He was killed in the crash of a US UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter on 21 June 2010, during operations in the Shah Wali Kot.

Benjamin Chuck, 27, a private in the 2nd Commando Regiment, serving with SOTG. He subsequently died of his injuries following the crash of a US UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter on 21 June 2010, during operations in the Shah Wali Kot.

Nathan Bewes, 23, a private in the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR), serving with MTF 1. Private Bewes was killed and another wounded following an improvised explosive device on 9 July 2010 in the Chora Valley region.

Jason Brown, 29, a trooper in the Special Air Service Regiment. Brown was shot and killed on 13 August 2010 during a "disruption operation" in northern Kandahar.

Grant Kirby, 35, a private in the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, serving with MTF 1. Private Kirby was killed by an Improvised Explosive Device after dismounting from a Bushmaster PMV in an overwatch position during an operation in the Baluchi Valley on 20 August 2010.

Tomas Dale, 21, a private in the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, serving with MTF 1. Private Dale was killed by an Improvised Explosive Device after dismounting from a Bushmaster PMV in an overwatch position during an operation in the Baluchi Valley on 20 August 2010.

Jared MacKinney , 28, a lance corporal in the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, serving with MTF 1. Lance Corporal MacKinney was shot and killed in Deh Rahwod, in the western part of Orūzgān Province, during the Battle of Derapet on 24 August 2010.

Richard Atkinson, 22, a corporal in the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, serving with MTF 2. Corporal Atkinson was killed by an improvised bomb in the Tangi Valley, southern Uruzgan province on 2 Feb 2011.

Jamie Larcombe, 21, a sapper in the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, serving with MTF 2. Sapper Larcombe and an Afghan man employed as an interpreter were shot in the Mirabad Region on 19 Feb 2011.

Brett Wood MG, DSM, 32, a sergeant in the 2nd Commando Regiment, serving with the SOTG. Wood was killed by an improvised explosive device on 23 May 2011, during his third tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Andrew Jones, 25, a lance corporal in the 9th Force Support Battalion, was shot by a member of the Afghan National Army on his way to guard duty at a patrol base in the Chora Valley on 30 May 2011.

Marcus Sean Case, 27, a lieutenant in the 6th Aviation Regiment. Case was killed when an Australian Chinook helicopter crashed east of Tarin Kowt during a re-supply mission in Zabul Province on 30 May 2011. This was Case's first deployment to Afghanistan.

Rowan Robinson, 23, a sapper in the Sydney-based Incident Response Regiment serving with SOTG. Robinson was killed in action on 6 June 2011 during his second deployment to Afghanistan.

Todd Langley, 35, a sergeant in the Sydney-based 2nd Commando Regiment, serving with SOTG. Langley was shot and killed on 4 July 2011 during his fifth deployment to Afghanistan.

Matthew Lambert, 26, a private in the Townsville-based 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR), serving with MTF 3. Lambert was killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Khaz Oruzgan region on 22 August 2011. It was his first deployment to Afghanistan.

Bryce Duffy, 26, a captain in the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, serving with MTF 3 was shot and killed by a member of the Afghan National Army on 29 October 2011.

Ashley Birt, 22, a corporal serving as a Geospatial Technician in the 6th Engineer Support Regiment. Birt was shot and killed by a member of the Afghan National Army on 29 October 2011.

Luke Gavin, 27, a lance corporal from 2 RAR, serving with MTF 3 was shot and killed by a member of the Afghan National Army on 29 October 2011.

Blaine Diddams MG, 40, a sergeant in the Special Air Service Regiment serving with the SOTG was shot and killed during an engagement with insurgents on 2 July 2012.

Nathanael John Aubrey Galagher, 23, a private serving with the Special Operations Task Group was killed in a helicopter crash on 30 August 2012.

Mervyn John McDonald, 30, a lance corporal serving with the Special Operations Task Group was killed in a helicopter crash on 30 August 2012.

Stjepan Milosevic, 40, a lance corporal from 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment serving with the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment TG (3 RAR TG) was shot and killed by a member of the Afghan National Army on 30 August 2012. Robert

Hugh Frederick Poate, 23, a private from 6 RAR serving with the 3 RAR Task Group was shot and killed by a member of the Afghan National Army on 30 August 2012.

James Thomas Martin, 21, a sapper from the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER) serving with the 3 RAR Task Group was shot and killed by a member of the Afghan National Army on 30 August 2012. Scott

James Smith, 24, a corporal from the Special Operations Engineer Regiment, serving with the Special Operations Task Group, was killed in an IED explosion on 21 October 2012.

Cameron Stewart Baird VC, MG, 32, a corporal from 2nd Commando Regiment serving with the Special Operations Task Group, killed in small arms fire engagement on 22 June 2013. Baird was awarded the Medal for Gallantry in 2007 and a posthumous Victoria Cross in 2014.

Todd John Chidgey, 29, a lance corporal from the 2nd Commando Regiment attached to Australian Defence Force Headquarters Kabul, died from a non-combat-related gunshot wound on 1 July 2014

We Will Remember those 41 young men who were killed whilst on duty in Afghanistan

and those that still suffer as a result of their commitment to service.

August 2021

The Australian Air Force that was founded on 31 March 1921 and on 13 August 1921 the use of the prefix "Royal" came into effect. So to all our RAAF people, congratulations on being 100.

I take a moment to remind us of the significance of the 18th of August during the Vietnam War.

On 18 August 1966

The **Battle of Long Tan** took place in a rubber plantation near Long Tan in Phuoc Tuy Province. The action was fought amid a tropical downpour between more than 2000 Viet Cong and the Peoples Army of Vietnam, and 108 diggers of D Company 6 RAR. They were supported by artillery, a timely resupply by the RAAF and the arrival of APC's carrying reinforcements.

Seventeen young Australians were killed, one died of wounds, and 24 were wounded.

and

On 18 August 1971

The Australian Government announced that the 1st Australian Task Force would be withdrawn before Christmas 1971, and the logistic support force shortly thereafter.

(Australia's participation in the War was formally declared at an end when the Governor-General issued a Proclamation on 11 January 1973. A platoon of combat troops remained to guard the Australian embassy in Saigon which was withdrawn in June 1973. RAAF was involved until 1975 which is commonly accepted as the end of the Vietnam War).

From the time of the arrival of the first ADF Team in 1962 almost 60,000 Australians, including Army, Air Force and Navy personnel, served in Vietnam.

521 died as a result, and over 3000 wounded.

We Remember all those who served in Vietnam.

September 2021

On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland and on 3rd September 1939 Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand declared war on Germany

On 21 September 1971 Soldiers of B Company and D Company, 4 RAR/NZ, fought an intense battle against a large enemy force from 33 North Vietnamese Army Regiment at Nui Le in the north of Phuoc Tuy province as part of Operation Ivanhoe. The North Vietnamese defended its well-constructed bunker systems and then attacked D Company for several hours.

Five Australians were killed in action, and 24 wounded in this battle.

This was the last battle fought by Australians in South Vietnam before the final withdrawal of the task force in early December 1971.

October 2021

The Fleet Air Arm, established in 1947, was formerly known as the Australian Navy Aviation Group. Its Roll of Honour consists of naval and other service personnel who lost their lives as a result of Australian naval aviation operations.

Since its inception 89 service personnel have been killed. Six of those occurred in the month of October as a result of non-combat and training operations.

This month we remember Sub Lieutenant **Leon Anthony Mauritz,** born in 1936, at Morawa, WA.

On 15 October 1959, he was practising single-engine landings when his aircraft lost height and crashed in bushland 6 km from Nowra, NSW. He suffered serious burns, and as a direct result of the crash died on 28 December 1959.

November 2021

I take a moment to remind us of just some of the stories of sacrifice, particularly in November. November has a special place in the memory of Australians, in both World Wars.

In November 1914 the AIF departed Australia and after several delays due to the presence of German naval vessels in the Indian Ocean, arrived in Egypt where they were initially used to defend the Suez Canal.

On 11 November 1918 the First World War came to an end at 11:00 hours with Germany signing an armistice, ending fighting on the Western Front. Australia, with a population of less than 5 million, had over 416,000 enlisted, 60,000 killed and 156,000 wounded or taken prisoner.

Also in November, 80 years ago on 19th November 1941 the entire crew of 645 from HMAS Sydney was lost off the Western Australian coast to the German raider Kormoran.

<p style="text-align:center">November is a significant month in Australia's military history</p>

December 2021

I take a moment to remind us of just some of the stories from our military history.

On 4 December 1990 approval given by the Australian Government for the Royal Australian Navy's involvement in the Persian Gulf. Australian forces were deployed in the Gulf War 1990 – 1991 under the auspices of the UN.

The RAN provided vessels for the multi-national naval force, acting as interceptors in the Persian Gulf to enforce the UN sanctions. A RAN clearance diving team was also dispatched for explosive ordnance and demolition tasks. In addition to naval units, some Australian personnel were attached to British and American ground formations.

Although the ships and crew were in danger from mines and possible air attack, there were no casualties.

A total of 1872 served during this time, none were killed or wounded. However, a number were affected by long term symptom known internationally as Gulf War Syndrome.

It is important for us to remember ALL those who served.

January – February 2022

January

Eighty years ago on 20 January 1942 RAAF Wirraways engaged Japanese fighter and bomber formations over Rabaul. In less than 10 minutes 3 of the 24 Squadron's eight Wirraways were shot down, one crashed on take-off and two damaged in crash landings killing 6 and wounding 5.

February

On 7 February 1968 after an initial victory, 3RAR returned to Ba Ria in response to further Viet Cong raids on the town. B Company experienced sporadic contacts and sniper fire. The next day 5 Platoon experienced a violent contact and three Australians, including Platoon Commander Len Taylor, a National Serviceman, were killed.

AND

80 years ago today, on 14 February 1942 the SS Vyner Brook was sunk. 2 days later the surviving 22 members of the Australian Army Nursing Service and other survivors were massacred on Banka Island. Sister Vivian Bullwinkel was the only survivor.

March 2022

The Australian Defence Force has served world-wide, and not all deployments received extensive coverage at the time, or since. Two such deployments were:

Somalia

In what began as a U N mission to monitor a ceasefire between warring militias soon became a desperate battle to prevent an imminent humanitarian disaster.

1 RAR was deployed to the town of Baidoa, 240 kilometres north-west of Mogadishu in January 1993. As the centre of non-government organisation (NGO) operations for the area, banditry and warlord intimidation were rife, with the area becoming known as the 'city of death'.

Almost 1500 Australians served in Somalia from 1992 to 1994, four were wounded and one Australian soldier, Lance Corporal Shannon McAliney was killed.

Indonesian Confrontation

The Confrontation 1963 – 1966 commenced as Indonesia launched a series of cross-border raids into Malaysian territory, and the undeclared war came to involve troops from Australia, New Zealand, and Britain. By March 1965 Australians were also involved in Borneo

Two infantry battalions, SAS, Royal Australian Signals, several artillery batteries, and the Royal Australian Engineers were involved. These were supported by ships of the RAN and several RAAF squadrons.

Because of the sensitivity of the cross-border operations, which remained secret at the time, the Confrontation received very little coverage in the Australian press.

Twenty-three Australians were killed during the Confrontation.

April 2022

April is a significant month in Australia's Military History, and I take a moment to remind us of just one of our stories from World War 1.

On the 11th of April 1917 the 4th Australian Division with the British attempted to penetrate the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt where they were unsuccessfully supported by tanks, resulting in over 3,000 casualties. Over 1,000 Australians became prisoners of war, the largest number in a single action in the First World War.

One of those taken POW was Captain Stan Hummerston of Kalamunda, a Gallipoli veteran. On the death of his CO, he took control organising his sector of the battle. He was wounded, taken as a POW and in 1919 was awarded the Military Cross for his action during Bullecourt in 1917.

His health was seriously impacted by wounds and gas exposure at Bullecourt, and he died in 1926 at the age of 36.

Read the story of Captain Stan Hummerston, Wayne Koch's grandfather, on our website.

A reason to reflect on ANZAC DAY

Australia

Percentage of Australia's Population Killed in WW1	1.2%
Total military deaths since Australia's involvement in Sudan 1885	102,966

New Zealand

Percentage of New Zealand Population Killed in WW1	1.6%

For all those who served

We Will Remember Them

May 2022

Brigadier Neil Weekes AM MC, then a National Service Platoon Commander with 1 RAR, recalled that the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral from the 12th of May to the 6th of June s1968, was Australia's largest and longest battle that involved more soldiers from both Australian and North Vietnam's forces than any other of the Vietnam War.

Neil Weekes' platoon was part of the Battalion sent to establish Coral, but the operation went from bad to worse from the start. The Americans had just been in a heavy contact in the area and arriving too late, the Australians had no time to prepare a proper defence. That night, the North Vietnamese Army attacked.

Though nearly overrun, the Australian force prevailed, 11 Australians killed and 28 wounded. Two days later it would happen again, and 5 Australians killed and 19 wounded. Later in the month Balmoral, just north of Coral, was attacked. 3 Australians from 3 RAR killed and 14 wounded. Two days later a second heavy assault on Balmoral took place but was driven off by combined infantry, armour, artillery and air support.

May 1968 for the U.S.A. forces is recorded as the highest number of casualties for a single month of the Vietnam War with 2,415 deaths.

June 2022

Between 10 to 14 June 2010 the Shah Wali Kot offensive in Kandahar Provence, Afghanistan was conducted by Australian Special Forces in conjunction with the Afghan National Army and US air support, in preparation for the coalition clearance of the province.

Fighting was intense on the second day of the operation when Australian and Afghan soldiers were fired upon by insurgents shortly after they disembarked from their helicopters, with the engagement lasting for 13 hours.

One Australian soldier and an Afghan soldier were wounded.

The valiant actions of 2 SAS Squadron on that day, as well as those of Alpha CCG, 2nd Commando Regiment at nearby Chenartu during the Battle of Eastern Shah Wali Kot, were recognised through the award of the first Australian Battle Honour since Vietnam.

Later, during further operations in the area on 21 June, three Australian commandos were killed, while another seven Australians and a US crewman were seriously injured when the US Army helicopter they were travelling in crashed.

July 2022

Eighty years ago on 1 July 1942 the Japanese transport *Montevideo Maru* was torpedoed and sunk, by the submarine USS *Sturgeon*, whilst transporting Allied prisoners of war and civilian internees from Rabaul to Japan. A nominal list transferred from the government of Japan to Australia in 2012 detailed that 1053 Australians were lost in the attack, including civilian and Navy Coastwatchers from New Britain and Anir Island east of New Ireland.

Each year on 27th July we commemorate Korea Veteran's Day and remember the contribution made by Australian forces to what is commonly referred to as 'the forgotten war'.

When the Korean War commenced on 25 June 1950 the Australian government under Menzies called for 1000 service personnel who had prior military experience in World War II to enlist in the army. These personnel were known as K-Force.

Eventually 17,000 Australians served, more than 330 lost their lives and over 1,500 returned to Australia wounded.

The story of Bill Ellis of North Beach, one of those killed while serving with 1 RAR, is contained in our Members' Stories. Although Bill was not a Member of the RSL it is a very touching story of a father, and daughter who did not know of his story for 40 years following his death.

August 2022

August is a significant month in the commemoration of the Vietnam War.

Sixty years ago, on 3 August 1962 the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) arrived in Vietnam and was operational until its withdrawal in December 1972.

A total of 1000 members served with AATTV during the conflict. This consisted of 990 Australians and 10 New Zealanders. Casualties were recorded as 33 Killed In Action and 122 as Wounded in Action.

Decorations awarded to Team Members were:

4 VC, 2 DSO, 3 OBE, 6 MBE, 6 MC, 20 DCM, 15 MM, 4 BEM, 4 QC, 49 MID.

On 18 August 1966 the battle of Long Tan was fought.

105 men from D Company, 6 RAR and 3 forward artillery observers from New Zealand's 161 Field Battery encountered a force of more than 2,000 Viet Cong.

The battle left one third of the Company dead or wounded, making Long Tan the Amy's most costly single engagement in Vietnam. 17 were KIA and 1 died of

wounds. Eleven of the dead were National Servicemen and seven were Regular Army soldiers - their average age was 21 years.

September 2022

On 8 September 2022 Elizabeth 11, the Queen of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms, the longest reigning British monarch, died.

Upon the Queen's death her eldest son Charles immediately became King of the United Kingdom and 14 other Commonwealth realms.

Governor General David Hurley has proclaimed Charles 111 as the ruling monarch of Australia in accordance with the Constitution. This was signed by General Hurley and countersigned by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The Oath of Allegiance for all members of the Australian Defence Force will now read along the lines of:

"I (name) swear that I will well and truly serve His Majesty King Charles the Third, His Heirs and Successors according to law, as a member of the   (branch of service)   and that I will resist his enemies and faithfully discharge my duty according to law"

This oath has been changed only slightly since the time of Australia's involvement in the conflict in Sudan in 1885.

The events of the last week have been significant in history, as the majority of Australians have only known one sovereign, and that was Queen Elizabeth 11.

We now look forward to a new era and I propose a toast: ***"To King Charles 111"***

October

On the morning of October 29, 1991, 5 RAAF aviators from 33 Squadron boarded "Wilberforce', a 4 engine Boeing 707 at RAAF Richmond for a training mission with the call sign 'Windsor 380'.

They conducted a landing circuit at RAAF Base East Sale before climbing off the Gippsland coast. The crew conducted a training sequence to simulate a double-engine failure while flying at minimum speed, but lost control of the aircraft and could not recover. 'Windsor 380' crashed a kilometre off the coast with the loss of all crew - Squadron Leader Mark Lewin, Flight Lieutenants Tim Ellis and Mark Duncan and Warrant Officers Jon Fawcett and Al Gwynne.

The accident investigation highlighted shortcomings in the Boeing 707 aircrew training syllabus, and subsequently a weakness in how bereaved families were supported by the Air Force, resulting in Squadron Leader Kay Ellis – the widow of Flight Lieutenant Tim Ellis – to drive change.

For the 5 RAAF crew lost on peacetime operations,

November

On **1 November 1914** the first Australian and New Zealand contingent sailed from Albany, Western Australia, bound for Egypt. Only one in three of those who sailed in the first convoy would return physically unscathed at the end of WW1.

On **11 November 1918** Germany signs an armistice ending fighting on the Western Front.

On **11 November 1941** after 2 years of conflict in the Second World War the Australian War Memorial, built in memory of the dead of the First World War, was opened.

For Australia, the First World War remains the costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than 5 million, over 416,000 (or over 8% of the population) enlisted, of which 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner. This does not include a significant number of those who survived but suffered during their life from the impact and trauma of that War.

December

On 7 December 1941 Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel was forced to abandon the siege at Tobruk, Libya.

The Nazi propagandist Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce) derided the tenacious defenders as 'rats', a term that the Australian soldiers embraced, and "The Rats of Tobruk" has now gone down in military history.

Australia's 2/13 Battalion was the last to be evacuated, and the only unit present for the entire siege.

Total Naval losses comprised two destroyers, including HMAS Waterhen, three sloops, including HMAS Parramatta, and 21 smaller vessels.

The total losses in the 9th Division and attached troops from 1st March to 15th December amounted to 832 killed, 2,177 wounded and 941 prisoners.

AND

81 years ago on 8 December 1941 Australia announced that it was at war with Japan. Some 17,000 Australians would die in the three-and-a-half-year war, 8,000 as prisoners of war.

January - February 2023

Early in 1941 Australia agreed that Allied troops would reinforce Dutch Timor ("Sparrow Force"), Ambon ("Gull Force") and Rabaul ("Lark Force") should Japan enter the war.

Five days after Pearl Harbor "Sparrow Force" landed on Dutch Timor. It consisted of the 2/40th Infantry Battalion (Tasmania) and the 2/2nd Independent Company (recruited mainly from WA). It was supported by a Squadron of RAAF Hudson bombers, a battery of coastal artillery, and 1,000 Dutch troops. Also deployed was "Lark Force" to Rabaul and "Gull Force" to Ambon.

Lark Force at Rabaul was captured in January 1942 and over 1000 prisoners did not survive the War.

On 19 February 1942, the same day Darwin was bombed for the first time, Timor was attacked by the Japanese Army. On 23 February 1942 Sparrow Force surrendered and 1100 became prisoners. Over 200 avoided capture in neutral Portuguese Timor, where the 2/2nd was operational until being withdrawn at the end of 1942. Approximately 340 of Sparrow Force did not survive the War. Between 40,000 and 70,000 civilians from Dutch and Portuguese Timor died as a result of the occupation.

Ambon was attacked at the same time as Timor and 300 of Gull Force were killed, including the brother of our late member Jack Meyer, who with the crew of their stranded Hudson Bomber, were executed.

ALSO

59 years ago on 10 February 1964 the Daring Class Destroyer HMAS Voyager and the Light Fleet Carrier HMAS Melbourne collided off the coast of New South Wales at the cost of 82 Lives.

March 2023

I take a moment to remind us of just one event from March in Australia's military history.

Twenty years ago, on 20 March 2003, a combined force of American, British and Australian troops invaded Iraq in what was termed the "Second Gulf War" to locate "weapons of mass destruction".

Australian army, air force, and navy elements assisted the operation, and within three weeks Saddam Hussein was overthrown. No weapons of mass destruction were found.

A campaign of "nation building" and counter-insurgency followed to prevent Iraq sliding into civil war.

The following Australians died as a direct result of this conflict:

- David **NARY** WO2 SAS. Died of injuries 2005.Garry **DOECKE** Chaplain (Squadron Leader) RAAF. Died of illness 2006.
- Jacob **KOVCO** Private 3 RAR. Died of accidental gunshot 2006.
- Matthew **MILLHOUSE** Trooper 2nd Cavalry Regiment. Died of war caused Illness 2015

April 2023

I take a moment to remind us of the most significant event from April in Australia's military history.

On 25 April 1915 Australian soldiers landed at what is now called Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

For the vast majority of the 16,000 Australians and New Zealanders who landed on that day, it was their first experience of combat. By that evening, 2,000 of them had been killed or wounded.

Over 620 Australians died that day, and 59 were from Western Australia's 11th Battalion. Only 13 of the 59 who died on the day of the landing have known graves.

Supporting the troops were the Nurses, over 2000 served in WW1, 25 died and 8 awarded the Military Medal for bravery. Australian and New Zealand nurses were in Hospital Ships anchored off Gallipoli from the commencement of the campaign, and later on Lemnos.

Although the Gallipoli campaign was a military failure, the traits that were shown there – bravery, ingenuity, endurance and mateship – have become enshrined as defining aspects of the Australian character.

May 2023

I take a moment to remind us of significant events from May in Australia's military history.

Early to mid May 1943 the Radar Operators at Fort Lytton, on the mouth of the Brisbane River, identified echoes on the radar screen that they thought to be a surface vessel located east of Moreton Island. This was reported up the line only to be advised that it could not be substantiated so no defensive action was initiated.

Shortly after, on **14 May 1943** the hospital ship Centaur was sunk by a Japanese submarine east of Moreton Island. Only 64 of the 333 on board survived.

7 May 1945 Germany's surrender, signed at the French city of Reims, ended the Second World War in Europe

On the 13th, 16th and 26 May 1968 Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral, north of Saigon, were attacked by North Vietnamese forces resulting in Australian forces losing 19 men with 61 wounded.

June 2023

I take a moment to remind us of a significant event from June in Australia's military history.

On the evening of Wednesday 12 June 1996 during training for counter-terrorism operations, two Army Black Hawk helicopters from 5 Aviation Regiment collided in mid air and crashed at the High Range Training Area south west of Townsville, Queensland. Black Hawk 1 on crashing to the ground upside down, burst into flames and was quickly engulfed. The second helicopter, Black Hawk 2, crash landed and also rapidly burst into flames. The situation was made even more hazardous due to live ammunition and explosives being on board at the time.

The accident resulted in eighteen fatalities: fifteen from the Special Air Service Regiment and three from 5 Aviation Regiment.

Bravery awards and commendations for actions during and immediately following the crash included:

- 3 Stars of Courage
- 3 Bravery Medals
- 2 Commendations for Brave Conduct
- 4 Chief of the Defence Force Commendations
- 2 Chief of Army Commendations

The crash was a tragedy of great magnitude and reminds us all of sacrifices made in the service of our country.

July 2023

I take a moment to remind us of a significant event from July in Australia's military history.

70 years ago this month the Korean War came to a halt on 27 July 1953 when an armistice was signed at Panmunjom, on the 38th parallel, close to where the war began.

Over 17,000 Australians from the Australian Army, Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force served in Korea during the Korean War; 340 Australians died, over 1,200 were wounded, and 30 became prisoners of war.

We also take a moment to commemorate the life of member Geoff POPE who passed away aged 97 on Saturday 24 June.

Geoff served with the 2/13th Battalion during WW2 and took part in the last major Allied campaign in the South West Pacific to liberate Japanese held Borneo.   He was involved in a number of fairly complex reconnaissance missions of POW camps to establish the number of Japanese forces and prisoners.

Following WW2 Geoff served with 66 Battalion, British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan based in Hiro, just south east of Hiroshima. He was discharged late 1947.

Geoff had been a member of the RSL in Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia since 1947.

August 2023

I take a moment to remind us of events from Australia's military history.

On 15 August 1945 Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's unconditional surrender, ending WW2.

In Vietnam on 18 August 1966, the Battle of Long Tan resulted in Australian losses of 17 killed, one died of wounds and 24 wounded - approximately one third of the initial force engaged. A high proportion were National Servicemen.

On 18 August 1971 the Australian Government announced that the 1st Australian Task Force would be withdrawn before Christmas 1971, and the logistic support force shortly thereafter.

A special mention is made of Troop Commander Captain Daniel Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer class 2 Joseph Laycock and Corporal Alexander Naggs who lost their life on the MRH-90 Taipan helicopter that went down near Lindeman Island on Friday, 28 July, 2023.

To all those who died and endured in serving their country

LEST WE FORGET

September 2023

I take a moment to remind us of events from September in Australia's military history.

On 2 September 2008, the **Battle of Khas Oruzgan** occurred when a combined Australian, American, and Afghan patrol was ambushed by up to 200 Taliban fighters near the village of **Khaz Oruzgan**. The battle was one of the most intense for Australian forces since the Vietnam war at the time.

The battle lasted over nine hours resulting in 1 American killed, 9 Australians and 1 American wounded, and the explosives detection dog Sarbi missing. Between 20 – 80 Taliban lost their lives.

The story of this battle and the aftermath is well worth reading, especially the account by SAS sniper Rob Maylor regarding the Dutch military controversy, the wounding of Sgt Troy Simmons, and the actions of then Trooper, Mark Donaldson.

The dog Sarbi was subsequently found some 14 months later and on 5 April 2011 was awarded an RSPCA Purple Cross Award at the Australian War Memorial

Also, **14 September** is **National Peacekeepers' Day**. It's the anniversary of the day Australia became the world's first peacekeepers to deploy into the field, in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) in 1947. Since then tens of thousands of Australians have served as members of a peacekeeping force, and 16 lost their lives.

I take a moment to remind us of events from September in Australia's military history.

October 2023

I take a moment to remind us of just one event from October in Australia's military history.

On 16 October 1999 the **Battle of Aidabasalala** was a small but hard-fought action between pro Indonesian militia and a six-man Australian covert reconnaissance patrol from the SAS Regiment, operating as part of the United Nations mandated International Force for East Timor (INTERFET).

The battle took place near Aidabasalala, 15 kilometres from the West Timor border, and saw the Australians attacking a group of more than sixty armed militia. The SASR patrol, lead by Sergeant Steven Oddy, had been detected establishing an observation post over a village, and had to fight their way to a landing zone - being attacked a further three times over a one-and-a-half-hour period, before they successfully fought back the Indonesian forces and were extracted by S-70 Black Hawk.

Intelligence found that there had been at least 60 armed militia with another 40 unarmed militia organised to search for the patrol.

Sergeant Steven Oddy, 3 Squadron SASR, was subsequently awarded the Medal of Gallantry (MG) for his leadership during the fighting.

November 2023

I take a moment to remind us of events from November in Australia's military history.

On **1 November 1914** the first Australian and New Zealand contingent sailed from Albany, Western Australia, bound for Egypt. One in three of those who sailed in that first convoy would return at the end of the War physically unscathed.

On **11 November 1918** Germany signs an armistice ending fighting on the Western Front.

416,000 from Australia's population of 5 million enlisted, 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner - and many more suffered lifelong from the trauma of that War.

On **11 November 1941** the Australian War Memorial, built in memory of the dead of the First World War, was opened.

December 2023

The 31st of December 2014 marked the conclusion of Operation SLIPPER, Australia's military contribution to the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan, and the International Coalition against Terrorism mission across Afghanistan and the Middle East which commenced in October 2001.

More than 34,500 Australian Defence Force personnel, Australian Public Service employees and Australian Federal Police deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations as part of Operation SLIPPER.

Operation Slipper included the first Australian combat deaths since Vietnam, and all casualties occurred during operations in Afghanistan.

41 Australian soldiers were killed and 261 wounded (including two sailors and one airman), the majority since October 2007. Another Australian was killed while serving with the British Army.