



Respect, Gratitude, Admiration

TRIBUTE

The Newsletter of the Military
Historical Society Australia,
Queensland Division

President: Neil Dearberg
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SPECIAL- TRIBUTE No 21
Queensland@War



Sergeant Reg Saunders and members of 2/7th Battalion wait at a troop train in 1943

(Source: Australian War Memorial)



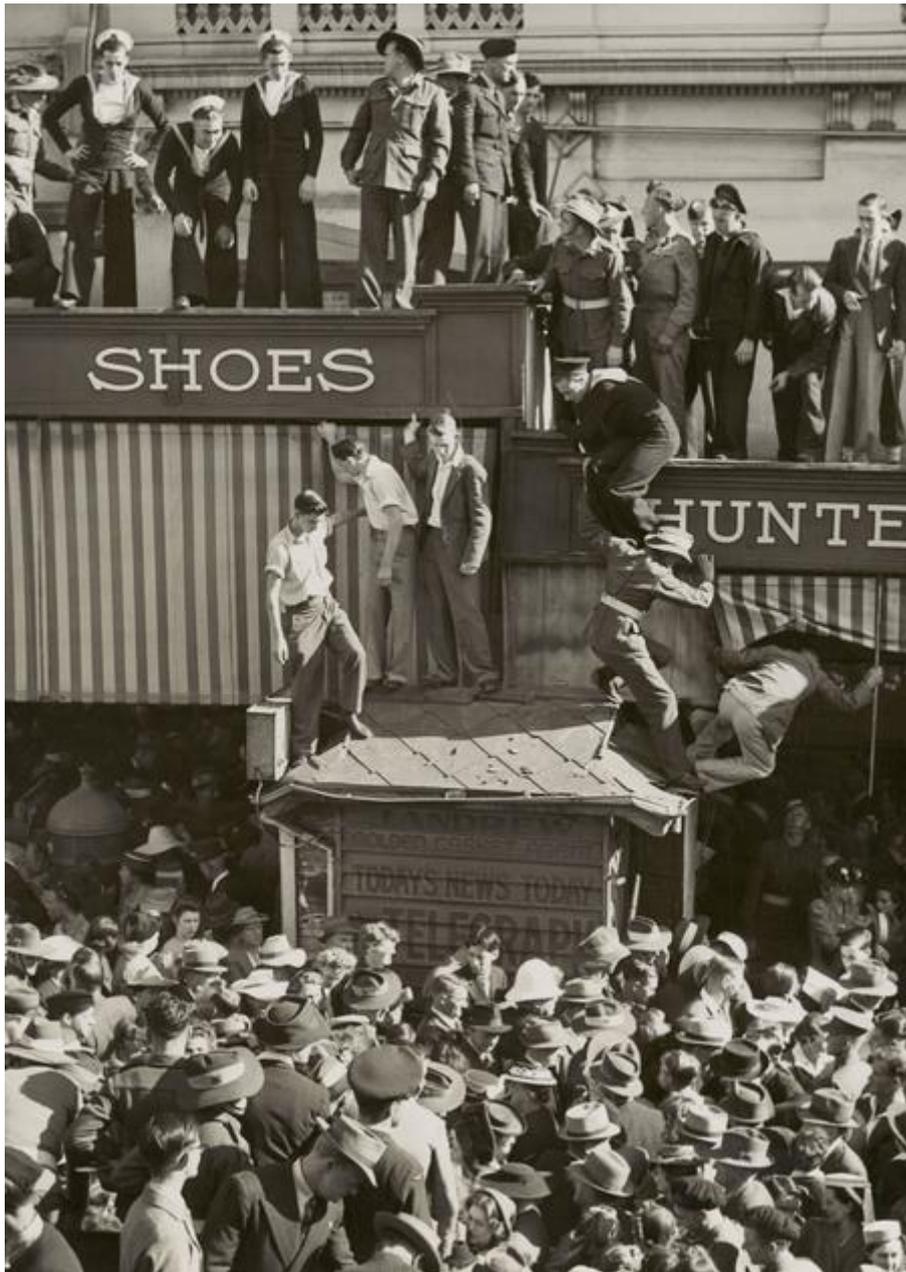
AB-397 at Ross River airfield

(Source: www.0zatwar.com)



HMAS Maryborough (1)

(Source: www.navy.com.au)



WWII veteran Bob Lominga recalled the scenes in Brisbane city as people celebrated in the streets: “Oh, they were all going mad... When you go across Queen Street, well, you just imagine what was going on; Queen Street and Mary Street and all those streets there in Brisbane itself. All the excitement, they couldn't get over it.”

(Source: Australian War Memorial)

President Report

Unbelievable - no rain for 3 months and on the day we planned an aviation and military jeep open day the forecast predicted a 95% chance of 50mm of rain. Therefore, the Warbird aircraft that have a lot of fabric that is easily damaged and expensive to repair, decided not to come. The open jeeps would have filled with water making it unviable to come. So, the day has been postponed to 22 April when we'll have another crack.

Horn Island and Thursday Island are great places to visit and reflect on their wartime history and modern amenities. The boat ride between islands is also a pleasure - see Ian's lead article for some of the story - great museums and fortifications still there.

I've been reading several books about our Special Forces in Afghanistan and they make enlightening reading about our modern soldiers. Of great interest is *The Ledger* by David Kilcullen and Greg Mills. It details the political and administrative aspects of the war, including local warlord, tribal, village life, roles of the Afghan leaders, corruption, drugs, allied failures, some good things but above all - it was never a winnable war. Makes great reading. The collective books show why young men want to be soldiers but they are undermined by political influences and intelligence failures - no surprise there.

Stay well and see you at Gympie airfield 22nd April

From the Editor

Who new that Horn Island was Queensland's most regularly target location in World War Two?

Welcome to this Special Edition of *TRIBUTE* featuring some of the more less unknown stories of World War Two in Queensland. The lead story is about Horn Island thanks to Vanessa Seekee who for more than two decades researched the Islands World War Two history.

Queensland Schools@War is an ongoing topic of interest to the editor so if you can contribute or no of any other schools that can be added to the list at the end of the article please contact me. It also reminded me of the Queensland Governments reactions to COVID. Augustus Downs Landing Ground was one of the many developed across the state which has its own tail to tell.

I ended up with a few extra stories that cannot fit to this edition so I am saving them for later editions in the year.

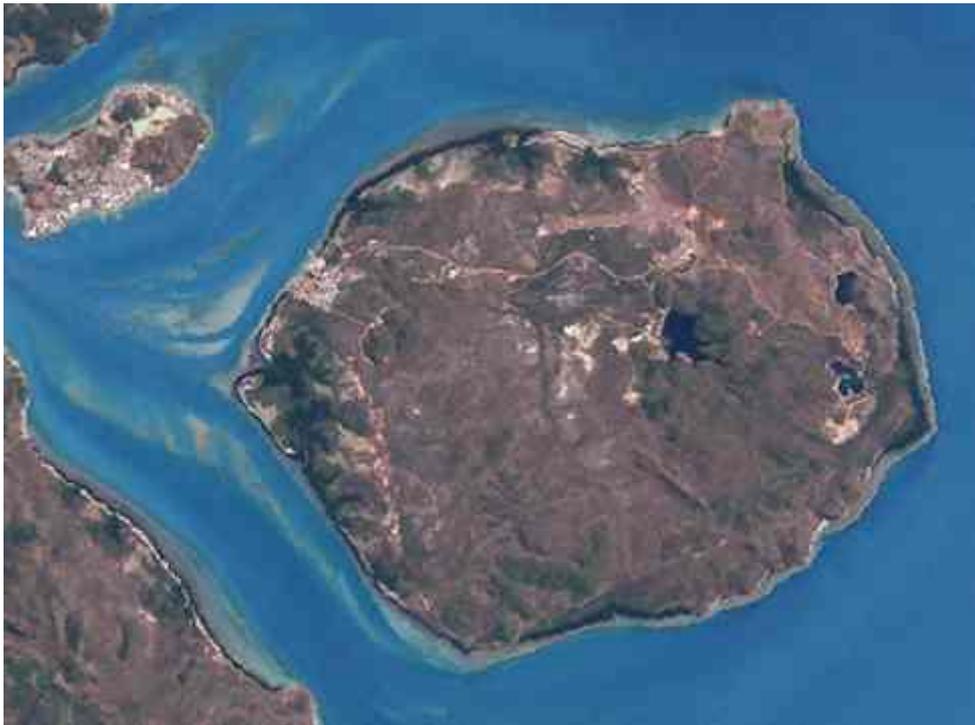
Hope you enjoy the read and as always feedback is always welcome. We will return to the normal format in April.

HORN ISLAND

The only Queensland military installation that was regularly targeted

by Ian Curtis

During the 19th century colonial defence planners had recognised that the Torres Strait was strategically and commercially important, and Thursday Island was fortified in the early 1890s. Concerns about Japan's intentions, even before that country entered World War II on 7 December 1941, led to additional coastal artillery defences in the Torres Strait, and in addition Horn Island (Ngurapai) was chosen as the site of a RAAF Advanced Operational Base.



Horn Island (the airstrip can be seen at the northeast corner of the island)

The RAAF undertook aerial surveys over north Queensland during 1938 in response to a plan for the establishment of an Advanced Operational Base network in the region as the likelihood of war with Japan increased. A decision was made to develop an airfield on Horn Island despite the twin difficulties of poor water supply and the lack of adequate wharf facilities. Approval for construction of an all-weather landing ground with limited facilities for RAAF supplies was announced on 31 August 1939, three days before the commencement of World War II in Europe. The Queensland Main Roads Commission was made responsible for the construction of the airstrip.

Ships carrying Main Road Commission engineers and surveyors began arriving at Horn Island in late 1939 and early 1940. Assisting them were Torres Strait Islanders employed on the project. By May 1940 clearing of the north-south 136 degree runway (today known as Runway 32) had been completed and earthworks and grading were proceeding. Runway 136 was completed and ready for use as a gravel runway by February 1941 and clearing had begun on the east-west 81 degree runway (today known as Runway 26), which was ready for

use by late 1941. The two runways were each over 1200 metres long. The first dispersal points were constructed in November 1941, along with bomb dumps, machine gun posts and petrol storage installations. After Japan entered the war the Main Roads Commission also built aerodrome obstructions and splinter-proof traverse walls around key buildings, including the wireless receiving and transmitting huts.

The strategic importance of Horn Island was emphasised in January 1942 when the Japanese captured Rabaul and made it their main South West Pacific base. On 14 March 1942 Horn Island Airfield received its first Japanese air raid. In the late morning, coast watchers on the southern shores of New Guinea in the village of Kerema, just west of Port Moresby, radioed RAAF Thursday Island that they had seen a large formation of silver twin-engined planes and escort fighters at about 20,000 feet heading towards Cape York. There were eight Mitsubishi G4M1 heavy bombers escorted by twelve A6M2 Zeros of the 4th Kokutai in this bombing raid. The eight G4M1's had taken off at about 0555 hrs from both Rabaul and Lae airfields, while the twelve Zeros had taken off at about 8.30am from Lae airfield.

The alert was passed on to the RAAF base at Horn Island where Captain Bob Morrissey, Commanding Officer of the United States 7th Pursuit Squadron, of the 49th Fighter Group, received the 'scramble call'. His pilots had just finished their morning patrols by 11.30am. He ordered them to *"Take off together. Stay together. Don't wander from your wingman. Take off to the northwest and make a left climbing turn at full power. Form up on me."*

They took off at 15 second intervals. At 10,000 feet to the south of Horn Island they charged their guns, but Morrissey (Flight Leader A Flight) found that his gun switch was dead. He handed the Squadron over to 2nd Lt Bill Reddington (Flight Leader B Flight) and made a quick landing where RAAF ground staff cleared and recharged his guns. 30 minutes later he was in the air again and regrouped with his Squadron another 15 minutes later. Reddington then advised that his guns had also failed. He was ordered back to the airfield and 2nd Lt C T Johnson was placed in charge of "B" Flight.

At this time bombs started to hit the western end of the airfield. An RAAF Hudson bomber was destroyed along with a fuel dump and some damage to the RAAF bivouac area. Several Zeros then started to strafe targets on the ground.

2nd Lt Hal Martin became separated from the other aircraft. He had set off alone before Morrissey returned, to intercept the Japanese raiders. At maximum range he opened fire on the three Japanese aircraft to the left of the formation. Finally when he had approached an optimum firing distance, he targeted the big brown and green bomber at the far left and expended all his ammunition at this bomber. He rolled away to the left as the Japanese returned his fire. He then immediately headed back to Horn Island.

Morrissey had arrived on the scene to witness Martin firing at the Japanese bomber formation. However he was not aware at the time that it was Martin. At 1:00pm precisely, as Morrissey and his group were about to attack the formation of bombers, he spotted a group of 6 light grey Zeros coming in from their right. He ordered "A" flight to attack the Zeros.

A dog fight persisted for 10 minutes above the Torres Straits. Morrissey shot down a Zero in flames when he fired on it from 200 yards. The Kittyhawks of 2nd Lts Claude Burtnette and Stephen Andrews were both riddled by machine gun fire. They both returned to Horn Island.

2ndLt A T House fired at a Zero which rolled away sharply trailing smoke. He followed the Zero, but then his guns jammed due to the "G forces of his sharp turn. Another Zero started to attack Morrissey and House, despite his lack of guns, deliberately drove his right wingtip into the Zeros cockpit. This tore away three feet of his wingtip. House witnessed the Zero spiral away towards the sea.

2nd Lt House made a forced landing with 3 feet of his wing tip missing. Back on the ground Morrissey scolded Hal Martin for leaving the formation but praised him for his bravery for his single handed attack on the Japanese formation. Japanese records indicated that only two zeros were lost during the air raid.

Between March 1942 until June 1943 eight bombing raids were made on Horn Island Airfield, which became the only military installation in Queensland to be regularly targeted by the Japanese. As a result of the raids a dispersal field for Horn Island was cleared on the tip of Cape York at Jacky Jacky Creek in late 1942, and was later named Higgins Airfield.

Responsibility for the overall administration and operation of Horn Island as an Advanced Operating Base was performed by RAAF No.28 Operational Base Unit , formed in May 1942. The unit was responsible for rearming, refuelling and wireless telegraphy communications. Both RAAF and USAAF aircraft used the airfield as a stopover for fighters flying to Port Moresby, and as a staging strip for refuelling and rearming in preparation for raids on targets further north. Some squadrons were based at Horn Island, (6th, 7th, 23rd, 32nd, 75th, Squadrons) while others flew in, stayed overnight and then flew out the next day to complete their mission. The Consolidated Catalina flying boats of RAAF 11 and 20 Squadrons also used Horn Island for refuelling and repairs.



Small craters pockmark the surface of the Horn Island airstrip following a Japanese bombing raid.(Source: Torres Strait Heritage Museum)

The Allied Works Council was formed in February 1942 to step up construction of defence works and ensure a coordinated national approach to projects. The Civil Constructional Corps was established in April 1942 to provide the manpower, while the Allied Works Council

organised the heavy equipment and contractors. Works were supervised by the Main Roads Commission or commercial building contractors. During June 1942 a requisition was made for substantial improvements to Horn Island Advanced Operating Base. Company 'A' of the US Army's 46th Engineer General Service Regiment arrived at Horn Island on 24 June 1942 to work on a western extension to runway 81, which was lengthened to 7000 feet, or 2134m. During August the United States Army Services of Supply organisation requested the Allied Works Council to complete the sealing of both runways at Horn Island as an urgent priority. Runway 81 was sealed by December 1942. However, by September 1942, as the threat of invasion lessened, airfield demolition works at Horn Island were cancelled. By this period one demolition tunnel had been constructed part way under the intersection of the runways and other tunnels had been commenced.

In June 1942 the first moves had been made to provide anti-aircraft defence for the airfield when A and B batteries of the US 104th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) were deployed to the island. However, the gun crews were only equipped with light .50 calibre machine guns which were ineffective against high flying bombers. On 23 June 1942, detachments of the US 94th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft), equipped with searchlights and 3-inch guns, were moved to Horn Island.

The anti-aircraft defence of Horn Island was augmented by the 34th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, which arrived at Thursday Island on 14 October 1942. The 34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery was accompanied by the 157th Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, equipped with 40mm Bofors guns to provide low level protection. The men of 34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery commenced unloading guns, equipment and camp stores at Horn Island jetty on 15 October 1942.



A 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun used during World War II remains in situ on Horn Island. Recently added signage shows what the gun pit looked like with shells in the bays.

(Source: Gordon Grimwade Military Historian and heritage specialist)

On Horn Island the 34th Heavy AA Battery was split into 'A' and 'B' Sections each forming a 'Class A' Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Station of four Quick Firing 3.7-inch guns and one Quick Firing 40mm Bofors gun for close air defence. The first camp was formed on Double Hill, west of the airfield, which was initially known as Section 'A' and subsequently became GS 442. On 16 October the men began excavation of gun emplacements and the construction of kitchens, stores, ablutions and latrines. A supply of drinking water was another early problem faced by the unit. By November 1942, with the wet season approaching, priority was given to the completion of the reinforced concrete structures for the gun stations.

Each gun station would consist of four 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns on static mounts within in-ground gun emplacements of octagonal shape. The interior walls of each gun emplacement contained recesses where ready ammunition for each gun was stored. The guns were arranged around a reinforced concrete semi-underground Command Post. The standard Command Post design included a roofed plotting room plus open concrete pits outside for a height finder and predictor (a mechanical computing machine that predicted the future position of a target). Nearby were four magazines of reinforced concrete.

By 10 December GS 442, along with Section 'B' GS 443 at King Point north-east of the airfield, were operational and ready for action except that no ammunition had arrived. The 3.7-inch ammunition finally arrived at Horn Island on the last day of December 1942. The guns at GS 443 were successfully proof fired on 2 January 1943 and at GS 442 on the next day. All ammunition was stored on site under cover, until construction of permanent concrete magazines (which occurred by the end of May 1943). On 30 January 1943 the battery took delivery of an AA No.1 Mk II short range anti-aircraft radar transmitter and receiver (also known as GL 2 or AA Mk2 Radar) for GS 443. By the end of June 1943 camouflaging of GS 442 was well underway. Gun emplacements for GS 443 were completed during July and camouflaging commenced.

In late 1943 the 34th HAA Battery was reformed as 131st Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, 51st Australian Anti-Aircraft Regiment (Composite), Royal Australian Artillery. The redesignation combined the 34th Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, 157th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery and 74th Searchlight Battery together into one composite unit.

Meanwhile, work on the airfield had continued. After the US 46th Engineers moved on to Port Moresby in December 1942 the RAAF's 4 Works Maintenance Unit was directed to complete stump clearance and drainage works, and consolidation of the aircraft hardstands ahead of the approaching wet season. Heavy rain during January 1943 led to the failure of a timber log drainage channel and a bridge which carried the western extension of runway 81 over a creek. Failure of this extension put paid to plans for operation of a heavy bomber squadron from Horn Island and underscored efforts on the mainland to complete Higgins Airfield on the tip of Cape York. However, 5000 feet (1524m) of runway 81 remained serviceable.



Kittyhawk fighter aircraft were based on Horn Island during WWII.

(Source: Australian War Memorial)

By January 1943 detached units of RAAF 7 and 75 Squadrons (Beauforts and P-40 Kittyhawks respectively) were based on Horn island. RAAF 6 Squadron, with Lockheed Hudsons, had been present in late 1942. Other squadrons based on Horn Island included RAAF 32 (Lockheed Hudsons) during 1942 and RAAF 23 (Vultee Vengeance dive bombers) during 1944.

USAAF units which spent some time based at Horn Island included the 71st and 405th squadrons of the 38th (Medium) Bombardment Group in late 1942. Most aircraft of the US 5th Air Force passed through Horn island at some point.

On 8 January 1943 1st Australian Camp Hospital moved from Thursday Island to Horn Island to use the American hospital that had been vacated for the Australians to use. The hospital had 36 beds and was canvas, with the tents leaking so much that the nurses had to put umbrellas over the patients during the wet season. The nine nurses were the only females amongst the 5000 men on the Island. The unit remained on the island until disbanded on 10 August 1944.

Water storage remained critical on Horn Island and water storage was high on the list of works to be completed. Men were being rationed to one water canteen a day. On 14 May 1943 men from the 17th Field Company commenced constructing 1,295,000 gallon wooden tanks. Grouped in sets of four they were situated near the wharf (today in Wasaga Village) halfway to the airport, a third set near Vidgeon Creek all being supplied by pipeline from Vidgeon Creek. The first successful bore was sunk on Horn Island during July 1943. A second successful bore was sunk during November 1943 and a 13 million gallon dam was

finally completed by the 17th Field Company in late 1943. Although recently supplemented by a much larger dam, the wartime Army Dam still provides water for Horn Island residents.

By July 1943 the need for splinter proofing of aircraft dispersal bays was receding and Horn Island and Higgins were the only Advanced Operating Bases in Queensland where this remained a priority. At Horn island, 18 splinter proof pens were constructed in late 1943. Almost every type of aircraft then in service used the base, and thousands of aircraft used Horn Island at its busiest between early 1942 and late 1943.

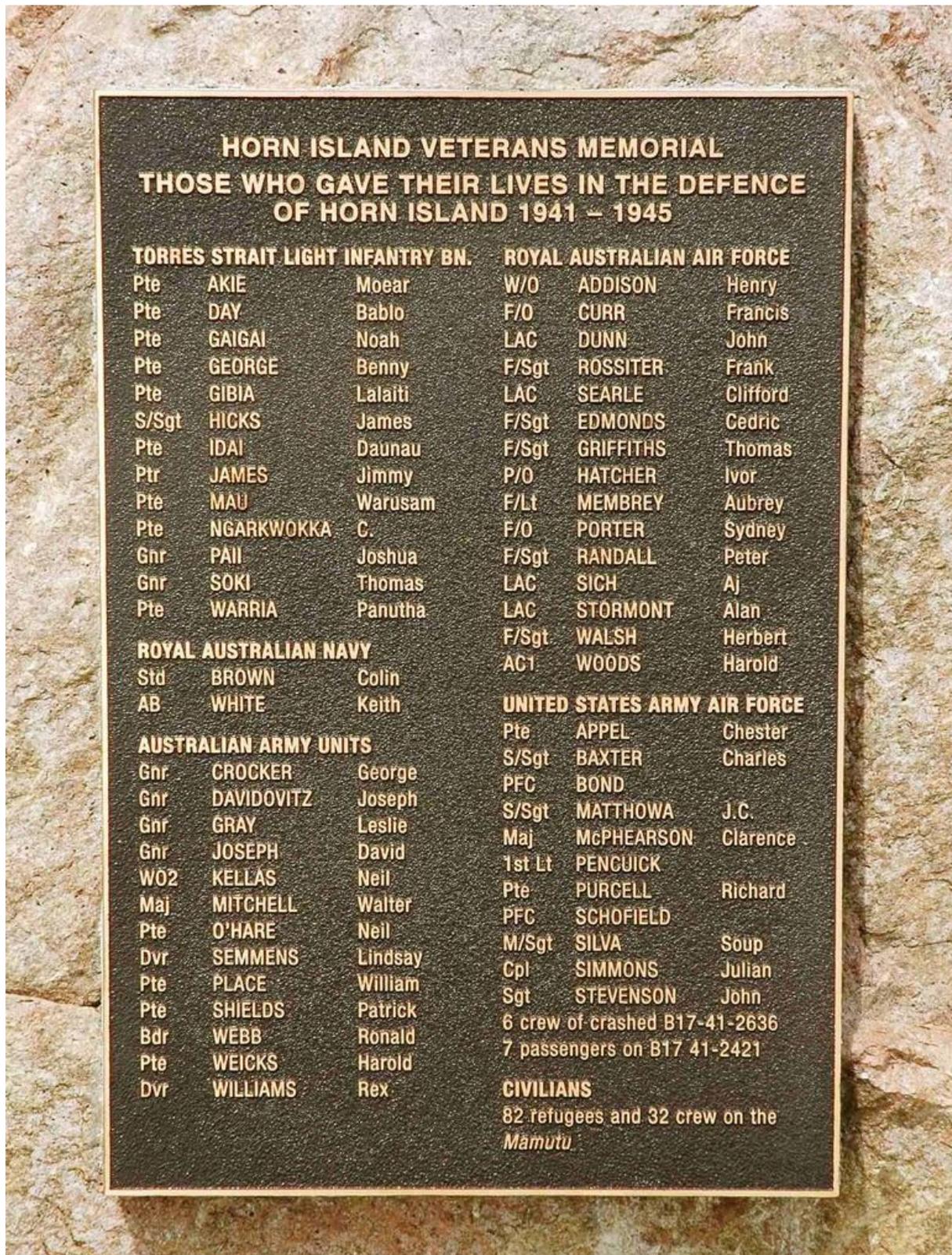
Other units that served on Horn Island included Detachment 4th Australian Division 'G' Branch (Intelligence) 5th Machine Gun Battalion, 26th Infantry Battalion and the 31st/51st Infantry Battalion.

The phasing down of Horn Island in favour of Higgins Airfield was underway by early 1944. However, in March 1944 the island still hosted a number of RAAF units including 28 Operational Base Unit, 36 Radar Station, 112 Mobile Fighter Sector Headquarters, 84 Squadron (P-40 Kittyhawks, previously Boomerangs), 75 Wing Headquarters, 1 Repair & Salvage Unit (detachment) and 7 Squadron (detachment).

131st Heavy AA Battery departed from Horn Island in October 1944 and was disbanded in Melbourne the following month. In October 1944 a decision was made to transfer the radio transmitter and aerial from Horn Island to Higgins. On 15 December 1944, 28 Operational Base Unit on Horn Island was disbanded.

By August 1945 Horn Island Airfield was being used by the RAAF for the aerial survey of Cape York. The airfield was taken over by the Department of Transport and maintained as the gateway to Thursday Island and the Torres Strait. Terminal facilities were upgraded during the early 1990s and in June 1995 the Torres Shire Council took over ownership of the facilities from the Commonwealth. The airfield is now known as Horn Island (Ngurapai) Airport.

Horn Island today is a Military History tourist attraction.



**HORN ISLAND VETERANS MEMORIAL
THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE DEFENCE
OF HORN ISLAND 1941 – 1945**

TORRES STRAIT LIGHT INFANTRY BN.

Pte	AKIE	Moear
Pte	DAY	Bablo
Pte	GAIGAI	Noah
Pte	GEORGE	Benny
Pte	GIBIA	Lalaiti
S/Sgt	HICKS	James
Pte	IDAI	Daunau
Ptr	JAMES	Jimmy
Pte	MAU	Warusam
Pte	NGARKWOKKA	C.
Gnr	PAIL	Joshua
Gnr	SOKI	Thomas
Pte	WARRIA	Panutha

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

W/O	ADDISON	Henry
F/O	CURR	Francis
LAC	DUNN	John
F/Sgt	ROSSITER	Frank
LAC	SEARLE	Clifford
F/Sgt	EDMONDS	Cedric
F/Sgt	GRIFFITHS	Thomas
P/O	HATCHER	Ivor
F/Lt	MEMBREY	Aubrey
F/O	PORTER	Sydney
F/Sgt	RANDALL	Peter
LAC	SICH	Aj
LAC	STORMONT	Alan
F/Sgt	WALSH	Herbert
AC1	WOODS	Harold

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

Std	BROWN	Colin
AB	WHITE	Keith

AUSTRALIAN ARMY UNITS

Gnr	CROCKER	George
Gnr	DAVIDOVITZ	Joseph
Gnr	GRAY	Leslie
Gnr	JOSEPH	David
WO2	KELLAS	Neil
Maj	MITCHELL	Walter
Pte	O'HARE	Neil
Dvr	SEMMENS	Lindsay
Pte	PLACE	William
Pte	SHIELDS	Patrick
Bdr	WEBB	Ronald
Pte	WEICKS	Harold
Dvr	WILLIAMS	Rex

UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE

Pte	APPEL	Chester
S/Sgt	BAXTER	Charles
PFC	BOND	
S/Sgt	MATTHOWA	J.C.
Maj	McPHEARSON	Clarence
1st Lt	PENCUICK	
Pte	PURCELL	Richard
PFC	SCHOFIELD	
M/Sgt	SILVA	Soup
Cpl	SIMMONS	Julian
Sgt	STEVENSON	John
6 crew of crashed B17-41-2636		
7 passengers on B17 41-2421		

CIVILIANS

82 refugees and 32 crew on the *Mamutu*

The plaques were unveiled by Major General J.P. Stevens AO (Retd) on 19 September 2007.

(Source: Memorialsaustralia)

On Horn Island there is a war Memorial with a series of plaques to commemorate those who served on the Island during the War and those who made the supreme sacrifice. The plaques

were unveiled by Major General J P Stevens AO on 19 September 2007. Above is the plaque to commemorate those who gave their lives on Horn Island during the war of the 5,000 who served on the island during the war.

Horn Island Veterans Memorial states;

Here you stand on Nurapai, Horn Island. During the Second World War this island was the most advanced allied airbase to New Guinea while still in Australian waters, and as such was vital to the allies northern offensive advance through New Guinea. During World War Two this island was the Japanese' primary target in Queensland, the second most attacked location in Australia, with the enemy bombarding the island base during eight air raids and performing constant reconnaissance flights overhead.

The Royal Australian Air Force, the Australian Army and the United States Army Air Force worked together on Horn Island to ensure that continuous, successful, attack, reconnaissance and supply flights into New Guinea were conducted, while constant refuelling, repairing and rearming of aircraft was completed. The Japanese did not have a base so strategically located as Horn Island forcing them to keep their aircraft close to the front line and thus open to destruction from allied raids conducted from Horn Island. Approximately 5000 Australian and American servicemen called the island home by the end of 1942.

Civilians also served on Horn Island, with these two runways built by the Civil Construction Corps and the Main Roads Department, while the Allied Works Council assisted with their maintenance. The Salvation Army and the Red Cross provided personnel support to the thousands stationed here.

Upon these stones are etched the names of those brave souls who gave their lives in the defence of Horn Island, Torres Strait and Australia during World War Two. These men were Australian, American, someone's sons, brothers, husbands, mates and fathers, they were warriors who volunteered to help defend our nation and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Torres Strait will forever be their home. Alongside their names are the units and squadrons, whose members spent their youth on this isle, and for whom Horn Island memories are ever present.

Lest We Forget

The author would like to commend Vanessa Seekee who after arriving to live on the Island spent more than two decades along with her husband uncovering and restoring some of the islands most significant military installations. She produced a book in 2002 'Horn Island- in their steps 1939 – 1945 which is currently out of print.

References

Torres News (Thursday Island) 21 August 1998 page 26

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QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS @ WAR

By Ian Curtis

Introduction

‘Civil Defence Instructions’ card intended for all workplaces and the back of every kitchen door at home. It advises,

“...During the war period do not bring children into the city if possible. Remember the city is the real danger.”



Students and staff of Townsville Grammar School at Rosslea, Hermit Park, their temporary campus during World War Two

The school had been taken over by the RAAF in January 1942

(Source: Townsville Bulletin)

The outbreak of war in the Pacific led to the release of Regulation 35A of the National Security (General) Regulations. This Regulation allowed Queensland Premier Forgan Smith to order the immediate closure of coastal schools from Thursday Island to Coolangatta under the Protection of Persons and Property Order 8A. Schools were to remain closed at the end of the summer holidays.

At the start of 1942 all schools closed for several months. This was at a time that the perceived threat of a Japanese invasion was very high. Things were very tense in Queensland at the time of the Battle of the Coral Sea in early May 1942. In some north Queensland

towns, trains were parked at railways sidings with their boilers at the ready, to evacuate school children in the event of an invasion.

Thousands of students from many State Schools as well as exclusive private secondary school were moved to scattered dormitories and classrooms either within the local area or moved to inland towns such as Stanthorpe, Dalby, Barcaldine, Gayndah, Roma, Ravenswood, Richmond, Cloncurry and Warwick.

Some schools were ordered to close due to their location near strategic targets such as fuel depots, airfields and military camps.

There was a shortage of teachers during the war years as many of them had enlisted in the services. Those who remained had to teach large class numbers. It was not uncommon for those who became pilots, if they could, they buzz their old school. This was the case at Bald Knob on the range behind Landsborough where Robert Eric Fraser the teacher between Jan – Apr 1941. He later crashed north of Toowoomba airfield 7 April 1942 and he and the rest of the plane crew were killed.

Response



Digging trenches at Ascot State School, 1942.

(Source: Australian War Memorial)

When some schools reopened in March 1942, slit trenches were dug as Air Raid Shelters before the children returned to the school. The Rainworth State School put an add in the paper – Parents Come Along and dig!



No trench no school. Some called on the Militia to do the digging as in England this was the case, however a Northern Command spokesman said, *'In England there were millions of soldiers, but here man-power was limited, and it was essential that all military forces should concentrate on their training.'*

One mother and ex-school teacher, Louie Hench offered a protest against the closing of the schools. *'If parents are willing for their children to attend school they should not be prevented. Both the curriculum and discipline will suffer, and the children will be affected mentally and will incur many risks from the increasing military traffic. I say that correspondence classes will not be a satisfactory substitute. Numbers of children will not have the opportunity of listening to the radio lessons and many of them especially the older ones, will be seriously handicapped.'*

The ABC offered to give programme time to the broadcast of lessons.

The Leader of the opposition Mr Frank Nicklin was critical of the school closures, saying *'If an air-raid came during school hours, children could be much better controlled and protected. At present they are scattered all over the place away from their parents most of the day'*. He also called on the relaxation of the closure rules in country districts where there are no military targets.

When the schools did re-open more than 500 of them, State Cabinet had decided

1. No new pupils would be admitted to school in 1942
2. Pupils between 6 and 8 would go to school only at their parent's discretion

It was identified that two schools in Brisbane, were unable to open;

- Kangaroo Point – the school was built on solid rock
- East Brisbane – for other reasons, however trench work had commenced



Malcolm Moffatt with his sister Margaret, children of Doctor Moffatt (acting Medical Superintendent of Nambour General Hospital 1939-1942), trying out an air raid trench for size. At the schools, when the pupils had their air raid drills, each child wore a brown or green sou-wester style hat, reaching down their back to their waist, providing them with camouflage when they crouched one behind the other in the trenches. Nambour, 1942.

(Source: Sunshine Coast Libraries)

The official specifications for the trenches were: width – 3 feet, tapering to 2 feet at the bottom; depth – 3 feet; the spoil to be heaped along both sides of the trench, 1 foot from the edge. The length of the trenches depended upon the number of pupils to be accommodated, but at every 12 feet of their length they had to turn through angles varying between 90 and 120 degrees. Any two trenches had to be at least 25 feet apart. Three or four steps had to lead down into the trenches at the ends, and drainage had to be provided to prevent them from filling with water run-off from summer storms.

Local school committees responded to the call at once, arranging working bees to dig the trenches. At Mapleton State School, the Committee was particularly quick off the mark, the trenches being dug the day after Premier Forgan Smith's announcement. The Nambour Chronicle 6 February 1942 reported:

“Mapleton: Trench-Digging in School Grounds: Menfolk dug slit trenches in the school grounds on Saturday afternoon. A further working bee on Tuesday afternoon boarded the sides to prevent the earth falling. Ashes are to be spread over the bottom of the trenches.”

Evacuation procedures were taught and regularly practiced. Teachers were taught First Aid techniques. Infant classes remained closed until the end of 1942. Classes up to Grade 6 only

attended school for morning classes in general or because of resources split with some classes in the morning and the remainder in the afternoon. This was the case at Caloundra where their school was taken over as a Battalion HQ building and the children went to school in the small Scout Hall.

School Examples

1. Approximately 60 boarders at **St. Augustine's Marist Brothers School in Cairns** were relocated to the Lake Barrine Guest House which had been leased by the school. The school and household equipment was loaded by the Marist Brothers with assistance from the boarders and other helpers and sent in convoys to Lake Barrine on the Atherton Tablelands. The boarders had what they considered to be a fantastic 12 months "holiday" at Lake Barrine. This included numerous bush walks and fishing trips They would attend the picture theatre at Yungaburra and encounter the variety of animal life in the tropical rain forests of the Atherton Tablelands. Despite a small outbreak of dengue fever a great time was had by all. So much so that it was difficult for the Marist Brothers to maintain the boy's interest in school work.
2. 12 sisters, 130 girls and 2 large van loads of classroom and boarding school furniture were part of the wartime evacuation of **All Hallow's school in Brisbane**. 75 girls from All Hallow's went to Warwick, 47 others went to Stanthorpe. 8 went to Roma and 7 went to Dalby.
3. The girls of **Lourdes Hill school in Brisbane** were evacuated by train on 16 February 1942 to Gayndah convent.
4. The girls at **Stuartholme** in Brisbane were evacuated from their school to a small country hotel at Canungra near the bottom of Mount Tamborine. The hotel bar was turned into a study room. Stuartholme was then taken over by the Americans to establish the US Army's 42nd General Hospital. The Stuartholme girls were relocated to the Grand Hotel, at Southport when the Americans established Camp Cable in the Mount Tamborine area. The girls remained at the Grand Hotel until the end of 1944.
5. **Loreto girls school at Coorparoo in Brisbane** was evacuated interstate to the New England Boys' Grammar School in Glen Innes in New South Wales. Loreto was used by the Australian Army as a Convalescent Hospital for wounded soldiers.
6. **St. Rita's girls school at Clayfield in Brisbane**, was inspected by both the American and Australian military forces, but was used by neither. St. Rita's was very close to Camp Ascot at the Ascot Racecourse. Because of its perceived vulnerable location, the girls at St. Rita's were given an option to evacuate to Murgon for the year if they so desired.

7. **Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College for Boys at Whinstanes** was ordered closed due to its closeness to some petrol storage areas near the Brisbane River. The College was run by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The students were evacuated to two rented properties in Toowoomba. "Maranoa" a former guest house was used as accommodation and "Sonnenberg" a nearby house, was used as classrooms. In late 1942, the school was relocated to "Lyndon" which was a few blocks away. After the war the sisters stayed permanently in Toowoomba and the school at Whinstanes was sold to the Augustinian Fathers.

8. **Schools at Charters Towers were not ordered closed** and many reported record attendances due to the number of children from coastal areas being sent to western towns.

Many school buildings proved to be very suitable for military purposes during WW2. The Hirings Section of the Australian Army Hirings Service were involved in acquiring many school buildings for the Army and other military services. The schools were mainly used for two purposes;

- barracks and administration centres
- hospitals

9. The staff and students of the **Church of England Boy's School in Toowoomba** were moved eastwards to St. Hilda's School at Southport in April 1942. Captain Robert Sydney Melloy of Hirings Section, No. 1 Line of Communications (L of C), acquired the school on behalf of the Australian Army who set up their Headquarters, 1st Australian Army under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir John Lavarack.

The Catholic Church and the Church of England were starting to feel uneasy about the number of their schools being requisitioned by the Australian Army. The Australian Catholic Bishop's meeting in Sydney protested strongly to the Australian Prime Minister about the issue. Frank Forde, the Minister for the Army, then undertook to personally become involved in approving the requisitioning of all future schools. He indicated that there would be no exemptions for State-run schools.

The Army Hirings Section would take a full inventory of the schools that they were taking over and carry out an assessment of the school's condition immediately prior to occupation. The School Principal would countersign these documents.

10. **Mareeba State School** was taken over and the US 2nd Station Hospital was established as a 250 bed under tents in the school grounds. It was established by a detachment of the US Army 46th Engineer General Service Regiment and plans were prepared at the Townsville office of the Allied Works Council for the conversion of the school into permanent hospital facilities. The State School students were taught in the nearby Catholic School of St Thomas Villanova for the next two years. Staggered classes saw the convent children in the morning and state school in the afternoon.

11. **The Enoggera Boys Home** was relocated to Kilcoy and they were accommodated in the Memorial Hall till the end of the war.



Nudgee Junior College Indooroopilly, now known as Ambrise Tracey College was the US 172nd Station Hospital

12. **Nudgee Junior College, Indooroopilly** the 2 years of military occupation, the 5 Christian Brothers and 100 boys of the college lived and carried out their school duties in a hotel, 2 houses and a hut at Mount Tamborine. While they occupied the College at Indooroopilly, the Americans managed to sink the college's motor boat when it caught fire during one of their night parties on the Brisbane River. The boat had been given to the college by Monsignor Owen Hayes. At the end of 1943, the Americans moved out of St. Joseph's College. An American transport unit helped to relocate the school from Mt. Tamborine to Indooroopilly. The Americans repaired the damages to the school before the start of the 1944 school year. Several Negro prisoners were brought under guard from a military camp near the Indooroopilly Railway Station to carry out cleaning and repair work at the college. Brother J. K. O'Neill supervised the repair work and made sure the school was returned an excellent condition before the return of the students.

Many of the schools contributed to fund raising activities, such as collecting bottle, scrap iron, cakes, dances etc. They did their part.

Others remember the soldiers becoming involved with their communities. At St Bernard College, Herberton. St Patrick's School children and Mt St Bernard students went to the Church every morning around half past eight, to say the Rosary to Our Lady Help of Christians and to sing the hymn "**Mary help our valiant soldiers.**" The soldiers were very fond of it as we sang it also on Sundays at the special Benediction in the late afternoon.

One night after Benediction we changed this hymn, one of the soldiers came around after to say, "I brought another friend with me just to hear the hymn and you didn't sing it. So please don't change it because we love it".

Conclusion

From mid to late 1942 school restrictions were being lifted. In November 1942 in an address to parliament the Minister for Education Mr Jones criticised the military authorities for taking over so many school buildings in preference to others such as picture shows, halls and clubs. The government had initially intended to lift the school restrictions after 4 May but the military authorities had written to the Department strongly advising against it. The letter stated that more and more schools may be required for military use. Brisbane was the most effected area in the state. Many small schools remained closed and children were not receiving any education at all. When it became necessary to close a school the Education Department endeavoured to provide transport but they like everyone else was hampered by petrol rationing.

Schools in the North of Queensland remained closed into 1943. It also seems that the Education and the Military authorities at times were at war.

In closing the only school in Queensland to receive war damage was Townsville Grammar School that received minor damage after a Japanese (single plane) bombing raid at 12.30am (sirens at 12.10am) on the town 28 July 1942. The school archivist reported,

"Last Bomb was probably aimed at Rooney's Mill. Landed in the coconut grove at the Experimental Farm. Lightshade in the hall fell – First Townsville Grammar war damage."

We will never know the full impact on schools closed but,

'The students at the school during WW2 will remember the slit trenches they dug, the daily air raid drill, the water bottles, the rubber pegs to grit between your teeth, the ear plugs, the identity discs and the noisy air raid sirens. There were soldiers everywhere.'

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Attachment One

LIST OF SCHOOLSs COMMANDEERED BY THE MILITARY IN WW2

1. All Souls, Charters Towers, Church of England Boys School
2. Church of England Boys School, Toowoomba
3. Brothers Residence and Mount Carmel Christian Brothers School, Charters Towers
4. Downlands College, Toowoomba
5. Glennie Anglican Girls School, Toowoomba
6. Mareeba State School
7. Caloundra State School
8. Moorooka State School
9. Mother of Good Counsel School, Cairns
10. Our Lady's Mount College, Stanton Hill, Townsville
11. Sommerville House Girls School, South Brisbane
12. South Townsville State School
13. St Anne's Church of England Girls School, Townsville
14. St Augustine's Marist Brothers School, Cairns
15. St Hilda's School, Southport
16. St Joseph College, Nudgee Junior, Indooroopilly
17. St Joseph's Convent, Mount Isa
18. St Laurence's College, Brisbane
19. St Gabriel's School, Charters Towers
20. St Mary's Convent, Cooktown
21. St Mary's Marist Brothers College, Ashgrove
22. St Patricks Catholic College, The Strand, Townsville
23. The Southport (Boys) School
24. Townsville Grammar School
25. Townsville High School
26. North Cairns State School
27. St Lucia, University of Queensland
28. Delaney Creek State School
29. Sheep Station Creek State School
30. Belgian Gardens State School
31. Gatton Agricultural College
32. Weir State School

33. Wrights Creek State School

34. Loreto College, Coorparoo

Rationing of Food and Clothing

(Source; Queensland WWII Historic Places)



Not every Australian embraced the war effort, with some prepared to exploit and profit by selling scarce commodities at greatly inflated prices. The demand for controlled commodities created a 'black market' where commodities could be acquired without coupons but at high prices. Even coupons became a commodity with a negotiated price. However, rationing was policed and breaches were severely punished. Breaches of rationing regulations were punishable under the provisions of National Security Regulations. Fines of £100 or up to six months imprisonment were imposed. Responding to complaints that these penalties were inadequate, the government passed the Black Marketing Act at the end of 1942. This legislation was for more serious cases and could carry a minimum penalty of £1000.

Australia followed British procedures for the introduction of rationing. Shops were made ready for the change from a cash to a coupon economy. Each adult Australian citizen received a ration book with 112 coupons. All purchasable items had a coupon value, for example a man's suit cost 38 coupons whereas a pair of socks cost only four coupons. Used

coupon books were exchanged for new ones annually and people had to plan their expenses to avoid spending all their coupons within twelve months.

Regulation of rationed goods was based upon quantity and supply. The following table outlines how goods were initially allocated and the dates that the restrictions were imposed and removed:

Item	Dated gazetted	Date abolished	Quantity per adult
Clothing	12 June 1942	24 June 1948	112 coupons per year
Tea	6 July 1942	July 1950	1 lb per 5 weeks
Sugar	29 August 1942	3 July 1950	1 lb per fortnight
Butter	7 June 1943	June 1950	1 lb per fortnight
Meat	14 January 1944	24 June 1948	2 lb per week

In Queensland, the impact was lessened by larger suburban blocks allowing many families to grow their own vegetables and fruit. In some cases people had blocks big enough to support their own cow and supply themselves with butter, cream and milk. The government feared that rationing would result in deterioration in health on the home front but, in fact, the outcome was positive. Rationing resulted in a decline in diet related problems like obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Fish, sausages, chicken, ham and rabbits were not rationed. Recipes designed to cater for the lack of eggs, butter and meat appeared in newspapers and magazines on a regular basis. Animal parts such as brains, tripe, livers and kidneys were more readily available than better cuts of meat during the war and formed a significant part of people's diets. Shopping for essential goods and rationed commodities often meant standing in long queues.

The Austerity Campaign

Due to the war effort, supplies of non-military goods dwindled. There were shortages of civilian clothing. People were encouraged to reuse clothes. Cheaply-made 'austerity' garments replaced clothing stocks as they were sold out. Made from materials non-essential to the war effort, 'austerity suits' appeared for men and became a badge of pride in support for Australian troops fighting abroad.

The 'Austerity Campaign' meant going without luxury items and involved living as simply as possible. The campaign was launched alongside the Austerity Loan program. The message was 'Save' and 'Save Australia'. People were told to:

Smoke less—burn less money.

Drink less—satisfy a need not a habit.

Plan meals for their food value.

Give up cosmetics—it's smart to be natural.

Children's toys were often hand-made and the Country Women's Association of Queensland mounted an exhibition in Brisbane in 1943 to display the types of toys that could be cheaply produced.

The character of the ‘Squander Bug’ became a focal point for the campaign to restrict unnecessary spending in society. The bug was characterised by reference to the Japanese ‘Rising Sun’ emblem, on the fat belly and demonised by devil-like ears and a forked tail.

Petrol Rationing



At the start of World War II Australia was totally unprepared for an extended conflict and had sufficient petrol reserves for only three months of normal consumption, and limited storage capacity. The Commonwealth War Book simply noted that on the threat of war the Department of Supply should prepare a plan for the rationing of petrol. However, fuel rationing was not immediately imposed, with the government preferring instead to appeal to the community to be frugal with petrol.

As an alternative, the government encouraged motorists to use charcoal gas producers, which were fitted to the back of vehicles. However, gas producers were not popular with the public. They were in short supply, cumbersome and not particularly efficient. As well, refuelling with charcoal was a messy process. No amount of attractive propaganda could overcome these shortcomings.

The motor industry lobbied against any form of petrol rationing, claiming that it would lead to personnel dismissals and economic instability in the industry. Although the Federal government believed that rationing should only be introduced as a last resort, the Director of

Economic Planning, Ernest Fisk, subsequently announced that he would introduce a scheme to conserve petrol, which would ‘make a man ashamed to use his car unnecessarily’. All users were to be divided into classes, such as private cars, delivery vehicles, buses, taxis, trucks, industrial transport and farm machinery, and priorities determined for each classification. Ration scales took into account the horsepower of vehicles so that miles-per-gallon could be calculated before allowances were allocated. Finally, the various groups were divided into essential, preferred or ordinary user status. The task was enormous.

The scheme finally devised for petrol rationing was very complicated, and produced a large amount of paperwork. Over a million Australian civilians applied for petrol licences. To obtain ration tickets applicants had to complete and present an ‘Application for Ration Tickets’ every time tickets were required. Petrol rationing was introduced in Australia in late 1940 and early 1941, but was not strictly enforced until 1942.

The first ration tickets had a currency of six months. After that, issues were made every two months, to avoid forgeries and black market hoarding. Attempting better management of petrol supplies, the government proposed the pooling of petrol supplies under its control as this enabled more efficient use of the storages owned by the various oil companies. Under pooling, the use of company brand names was abolished. Storage facilities grew up all over Queensland and supplied civilian and military vehicles alike.

Victory over Japan in 1945 raised expectations that rationing would be abolished quickly, but rationing was only gradually phased out as Australia continued to support Britain with food parcels and exports for a number of years. In the United Kingdom, the meat ration had been further reduced and in an effort to support the British public, the Australian Government maintained meat rationing and price controls until 1948.

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www.wv2places.qld.gov.au

Australian War Memorial

Augustus Downs Landing Ground

by Ian Curtis



‘Augustus Downs? – oh yes all I remember of that is the CO sent me there to pick up the pigs for Christmas’

Jim Legge ex RAAF 78 Squadron

Representatives of the RAAF North Eastern Area Command Jim Trench and US Forces Lt McKenzie in Townsville ventured into the Gulf country in early 1942 to seek a suitable location for an Advanced Operational Base in the region. In April a landing ground site was chosen north of Augustus Downs homestead on the Leichhardt River. When Oscar de Satage resigned as a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly in 1887 he cast his eyes towards the pastoral lease known as Augustus Downs, acquiring the property in 1881. The property changed hands a few times including Sidney Kidman. Today it is owned by Stanbroke.

The cattle station was located over 160 road kilometres to the nearest railhead north of Cloncurry at Dobbyn, to which it was connected by an unformed track that was impassable in the wet season. However, a landing ground was urgently required in the region and construction was initiated by Burke Shire Council. By the end of May a single strip 6500 feet (1981 metres) in length had been cleared and graded. The powdery clay surface of the runway was consolidated with a thin layer of gravel and bitumen. A second runway running parallel to the main landing ground was cleared as an emergency strip for use during the construction.

Communications and camp facilities constructed at the Augustus Downs landing ground included a combined operational cypher and signals room and an underground building for wireless telegraphy; in addition to latrines, ablution block, mess huts and kitchen. Access roads were also built. As with other remote area aerodromes, the work was completed by the Queensland Main Roads Commission. The difficult supply route involving a ten hour truck journey from Cloncurry to the site contributed to the cost of the isolated project.

A ground staff detachment of RAAF 29 Operational Base Unit which was established to operate and administer the transit airbase as required (there were 61 across Australia) was stationed at the airfield. With operations ordered to commence from Augustus Downs in late November 1942, an inspection of the landing ground was carried out by officers of RAAF 7 Squadron who discovered that due to the lack of dispersed hard standing the main runway could not be used operationally in the wet because aircraft had to be parked virtually on the strip. Furthermore, although the camp was completed and well camouflaged the connecting road was impassable after rain, and the water supply from the Leichhardt River was contaminated by cattle.

Pilot Officer Campbell in a report dated 26 November 1942 makes it clear that the RAAF were having second thoughts about Augustus Downs. Campbell concluded in his recommendations, to make Augustus Downs an all-weather strip would cost many thousands of pounds more than Inverleigh. Abandon Augustus Downs and shift buildings immediately to Inverleigh.

A detached flight of three Beaufort bombers landed on 28 November for a mission the following day. Bombing up of the aircraft was carried out by the flight crews themselves with the use of a truck in the absence of bomb trolleys. Weather forecasts for their route were unavailable and the next morning only two aircraft could depart as all crew were affected by a form of dysentery from the water supply.

There was a final flurry of activity at Augustus Downs in April 1943 during what became known as the 'Gulf scare'. This incident is said to have originated from a report by a stockman of a Japanese barge landing men and equipment on the coast near Inkerman station, north of Karumba. Six Boomerang fighters were urgently dispatched from Townsville to locate the landing party. However, after several days of searching by aircraft and local Volunteer Defence Corps and the Northern Australian Army Observation Unit (NAAOU) known as the 'Nackeroos' units no evidence was found of such a landing taking place.

A NAAOU patrol led by Lieutenant Wallace Munro joined up with a VDC patrol led by Captain McIntyre at Vanrook Station, and borrowing horses from the station, headed towards Inkerman, the closest property to the landing sight. When they arrived in the area, they found

nothing, no landing site, no landing barges, no footprints, no Japanese. When they questioned some local Aboriginals that worked on the station they uncovered the real story behind the ‘landing’:

A black boy reported to the manager at Inkerman, that he’d seen a Japanese boat with Japanese on the beach to the north. The station manager got on his pedal radio and called wireless base at Cloncurry and that’s how the Army got to hear about it. Meanwhile the RAAF instructed three young pilots to fly their Wirraway aircraft over Inkerman. Seeing no one about, the pilots flew low and shot up a shed, and the station people who were hiding believed that they were being attacked by Japanese aircraft.

Munro believed that the sub had probably surfaced to recharge its batteries and fill up with fresh water. Although the Gulf of Carpentaria is shallow, less than 10m in places, it would be possible for a small sub to manoeuvre without detection. There are many verified reports of strange lights and diesel motor sounds from throughout the Gulf, and it is highly likely that they came ashore for fresh water. But the rumours of them cutting submarine bays into the mangroves and hiding out during the day, cannot be verified.

The 1943 wet season halted everything till a small party transferred from Augustus Downs in early 1943. It was not until July that 29 Operational Base Unit commenced full operations at Inverleigh.

By August 1943 the landing ground was abandoned except for several guards left to maintain the installations and a year later the RAAF had determined it had no further need for Augustus Downs. Since 1946 the Department of Civil Aviation has licensed the use of the airstrip to Augustus Downs pastoral station.

Inverleigh saw little action except white ants eating most of the buildings. It is interesting to note that the camouflage was done by Camouflage Officer with the RAAF Eric Jolliffe then Australia’s favourite cartoonist. The reason that it saw little use was that after a letter from General Douglas MacArthur to Prime Minister John Curtin all the construction was to halt and the workforce sent to Horn Island and Higgins to expedite those dromes. The airport was licenced in 1945 and remains as the stations airstrip.

In 1977 the Special Air Service Regiment planned an exercise in the Gulf Country and researched the reports made by the Nackerroos; they invited the wartime Commanding Officer Major Willian Edward Stanner to observe the exercise and re-discovered the vulnerability of our northern coastline. As a result of this exercise, the CO of SAS recommended that a land-based surveillance unit be formed and on the 1 July 1981 the North West Mobile Force (Norforce) was officially raised in Darwin, with a similar role and area of operations to that of the NAAOU, an AO that equals almost a quarter of Australia’s land mass, from the Kimberley Shire boundary to the southwest, and encompassing all of the Northern Territory. Other Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU) followed soon after, Pilbara Regiment in WA and 51st Far North Queensland Regiment in Cape York to continue the legacy left by the Nackerroos of WWII.

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Interesting Facts

The Japanese occupied the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) in early 1942. A number of Dutch airmen escaped to Australia after surviving the fierce fight with the Japanese. They mostly ended up at either Archerfield airfield in Brisbane or Melbourne. These airmen were formed into a number of operational groups under RAAF control. All of their stores and equipment were supplied by the United States of America. The Netherlands East Indies Air Force (NEI-AF) had two combat squadrons and some Transport sections in Australia during WWII. They also occupied Camp Columbus

In 1946 numerous World War 2 aircraft were dumped into 200 metres of water off the Sunshine Coast, north of Brisbane. Scores of Voight-Sikorsky F4U-1D Corsairs, F6F Hellcats, a Fairy Barracuda, at least 12 Seafires, several TBM Avenger torpedo bombers, AT6 Harvards and Supermarine Otter seaplanes were dumped. They were dumped on the orders of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from the decks of HMS Pioneer, HMS Perseus and HMS Slinger. Apparently about 9 shiploads of aircraft were dumped with about 70 to 100 in each shipload. Thus there is potentially about 700 to 800 aircraft on the seabed in that area off the Sunshine Coast.

There are unsubstantiated reports that 20 to 30 Japanese military personnel landed on North Keppel Island during WW2. There have been many other unconfirmed stories of Japanese landings in the central Queensland region during WW2. Locations have included:-

- Cape Hillsborough
- Curtis Island
- Great Keppel Island
- Marble Island
- Marion Creek
- Rasberry Creek
- Rosewood Island in the Styx River near Ogmore
- The Templeton Island Group
- Townshend Island

In 1946, the RAAF compiled a list of “authentic” sightings of Japanese submarines off the Australian coastline. It is claimed that the above “authentic” sightings had some alignment with the above list of possible Japanese landings.

.....
In September 1942 a large Army camp was located on Norfolk Island to house a 1500-strong force of New Zealand infantry and artillery known as “N” Force (“Nuts-Force”) which was established from a Territorial battalion.

The 215 Composite Anti-Aircraft Battery sailed for Norfolk in October 1942. They had 4 x 3.7” guns, 8x 40mm QF, 4x 155mm guns, and a field troop of 25 pounders.

The 36th Battalion (A, B, C, and D Companies) relieved a company of AIF. From 29 March 1943 through to the 7 April 1943, the 36th Battalion were replaced by 1st Battalion of the Wellington-West Coast Regiment.

An airfield was constructed on Norfolk Island for use by the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF).

The 2nd Auxiliary Horse Transport Company of the Australian Army Service Corps (A.C.M.F.) was camped in the Townsville area during WW2. The Commanding Officer of the unit was Lieutenant "Harry" Morton.

The unit was also located in areas as far west as Hughenden and Sellheim near Charters Towers. They used limbers to transport material from the ships docking in Townsville. The Australians unloaded coils of barbed wire with their bare hands from the ships and the Yank Negroes used gloves to unload crates and put them on to lorries.

Q38825 Lieutenant Henry "Harry" Michael Alfred Morton was killed while riding his horse on the way back from entertaining wounded soldiers at the 2/14th Australian General Hospital at Pallarenda. He had ridden out to the hospital with two other troopers. Harry and his horse were hit by an RAAF Truck on New Year Eve 1942. His promotion to Captain and his transfer to New Guinea came through the next day. The horses were to be used in New Guinea to carry wounded soldiers to field hospitals.

Lieutenant Harry Morton was buried at the Townsville War Cemetery on 1 January 1943. Harry's wife and his young son, Clive Morton, travelled down from Gordonvale for the funeral in Townsville.

B-25C, #41-12910, "Suicide's Flying Drunks" of the 405th Squadron of the 38th Bomb Group, on its way to Port Moresby, was written off after it collided with an RAAF Kittyhawk A29-161 of 75 Squadron RAAF at Horn Island on 25 September 1942. The Kittyhawk was only slightly damaged.

There were no Air Traffic Control facilities at Horn island. The only semblance, was the raising of a yellow flag in the event of an air raid. All aircraft were required to keep away from Horn Island when an air raid was in progress.

Bill Pittman, the pilot of "Suicide's Flying Drunks", attempted to take off in a hurry when they saw the yellow flag go up. As they hurtled down the strip they realised that an RAAF Kittyhawk had taxied onto the runway. To avoid a collision, Pittman pulled back on the stick and lurched the Mitchell over the top of the Kittyhawk clipping it lightly and then fell back down to the runway very heavily. The B-25 veered across the runway into an upward rocky slant, and then went much further into some woody scrub.

The undercarriage was torn backwards and the B-25 came to a halt amongst a cloud of dust. The crew were shaken but not injured. The B-25 was wrecked. When the rescue teams arrived, they found Pittman and his crew leaning against the bent wing or sitting on the ground. Pittman was standing with his hands on his hips looking bewildered.

In shock, the Kittyhawk pilot, Sergeant Norman, shut down the engine of his Kittyhawk in the middle of the runway. He had to be lifted from his aircraft, incapacitated through shock but otherwise uninjured. His slightly damaged aircraft was then towed away to clear the runway.

There was no air raid. It was a false alarm!



The Everymans Welfare Service established an Everyman's Hut in Stanley Street, Townsville during WW2. It was located between Flinders Street and Sturt Street. To the right of the store in the above photograph was Lowth's Hotel. Heatley's Department Store can be seen behind

the Everyman's Hut. Old time dances were held on the first floor of the Heatley's building. Access was via Sturt Street. Heatley's Store itself was located on the ground floor and was accessed via Flinders Street.

The YMCA was located behind Lowth's Hotel. The Civic Dance Hall was located on the first floor of that building. It was accessed via a stairway entrance in Flinders Street.

Poetry and Humour

Frank Lundie was born in Port Adelaide on 21 August 1899, although he didn't think that the authorities needed to know that. At 17, he added 3 years to his age so he could enlist and serve in World War I in the Middle East. At 43 he subtracted 4 years from his age so he could enlist and serve in World War II in Papua New Guinea and Borneo.

During World War II Frank began to write poetry about his experiences. Below is an example of his work.

ANZAC PARADE

To the Stalwarts of World War I

Time has not yet stayed your marching feet,
 Tho' years have come and gone;
 Swinging steadily down the street
 Your thinning ranks move on.
 You leave the plough, the axe, the pen,
 These things are laid aside,
 Down through the years you march again
 With phantom feet beside.

Brave memories marching hand in hand,
 The years between grow dim,
 From Flanders' field and desert sand,
 Your memory calls to him;
 From frowning Anzac height and bay,
 From out the ageless past,
 He comes to you in bright array
 Before the shrine, at last.

His questioning eyes are asking this;
 Have you done as he would do?
 Have you carried on as he would wish?
 Have you been loyal and true?
 Then you can hold your head up high
 And meet him without shame.
 Or face him squarely eye to eye
 And know you've played the game.

1945.

Show and Tell



RHSQ Photo P53377

The photo shows a van equipped with a gas bag on its roof to provide fuel to reduce petrol consumption. Taken in a Brisbane Street c. 1944.

Petrol was rationed in Australia during WW2 and most people were not able to obtain petrol so they put their cars up on blocks in the garage for the duration. In some cases, vehicle owners donated their batteries and tyres to the army.

Some vehicle owners installed gas producers on their vehicles. Gas producers used a fuel made from wood ash or charcoal which was produced by burning large chunks of wood. The engine power delivered by the product of a gas producer was not very good.

The first time petrol rationing was enforced in Australia was in October 1940, a little over twelve months after the commencement of the war. Although the cuts were not very drastic, petrol was rationed with privately owned cars being restricted to travelling the equivalent of about 5000 km a year. This measure, however, had little impact on most people's lives until the restrictions were considerably tightened the following year commencing at the beginning of April 1941 when replenishment stocks from overseas supplies became increasingly difficult to procure.



Photos: - Daniel Hultgren

A one-gallon and a two-gallon Motor Spirit Ration Tickets

(Source: Royal Historical Society of Queensland digital Collection)

Military Historical Society of Australia, Qld Division Committee 2022 – 23

President	Neil Dearberg
Vice President	Russell Paton
Honorary Secretary	Ian Curtis
Honorary Treasurer	Ian Curtis
Committee Member	Scott Meares
Committee Member	

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>IMPORTANT EVENTS AND DATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 March – Bi-Monthly Meeting • 25 April – ANZAC Day • 13 May – Bi-Monthly Meeting • 8 July – AGM • 9 September – Bi-Monthly Meeting • 11 November – Remembrance Day • 18 November – Bi-Monthly Meeting 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>FELLOWS of MHSa</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Meyers (Deceased) • Anthony Staunton • Donald Wright <p style="text-align: center;"><u>NEW MEMBERS</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>VALE</u></p>
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