

THE BRIBIE “BUGLE”

DECEMBER 2021 A Newsletter of the R.S.L. Sub-Branch Library Produced and edited by Graham Bradshaw

It Happened in December

PEARL HARBOR 1941.

The sudden, dramatic, catastrophic attack on Pearl Harbor which occurred on the **7th of December 1941** (Hawaii time) brought America into the War with a vengeance. This was followed on the **7/8 December** with attacks on The Philippines, Guam, Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong. 350 Japanese carrier borne aircraft destroyed 188 aircraft, sank or damaged 19 naval vessels and caused around 3500 casualties which included 2300 who died. It is interesting to note that by the end of the War the Americans had destroyed every Japanese ship which had taken part in the attack on Pearl Harbor and all American vessels except the “USS Arizona” were raised, repaired and returned to service.



Ref: Wiki

The USS West Virginia on fire and sinking

OVER PAID & OVER HERE

The Americans moved quickly after Pearl Harbor and the first contingent arrived in Brisbane on the **22nd of December 1941**. They were from the 8 ships of the “Pensacola Convoy” which had been enroute to The Philippines. In early January 1942 the Americans had established their HQ in Somerville House, South Brisbane after the school children had been re-located. In July 1942 General MacArthur moved his HQ to Brisbane and chose

the AMP building in Queen Street. This building is now known as MacArthur Chambers and houses the Brisbane MacArthur Museum which is well worth a visit.



H.M.A.S. ARMIDALE SUNK

The Corvette, H.M.A.S. Armidale was sunk by Japanese aircraft off Betano Bay near East Timor on the **1st of December 1942** with the loss of 100 crew out of a compliment of 149.



H.M.A.S. ARIMIDALE

AWM: 026612

Ordinary Seaman, Edward “Teddy” Sheean, who had been wounded in the initial attack, strapped himself into one of *Armidale*’s Oerlikon Guns and opened fire on the enemy aircraft. Sheean forced one Zero to crash into the sea and damaged at least two others. He continued to fire until he went down with the *Armidale*. In 2020, he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia for his actions. You can read more about “Teddy” Sheean on the Memorabilia Page.



Edward "Teddy" Sheean VC

AWM: 28160



20mm Oerlikon Gun

The above painting can be seen in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Largest Air to Air Battle

December the 1st 1941 saw the largest air to air battle of the Korean War involving the RAAF when 12 Meteors Jets of 77 Squadron were engaged by over 20 Soviet Mig15s. The Meteors proved to be no match against the superior performance of the Migs and were thereafter relegated to ground defence work. Many larger air battles involving up to 800 aircraft took place between the Soviet Migs and mixed varieties of aircraft flown by pilots of the RAF and the USAF. The Migs were again superior and took a heavy toll, although the Americans claimed victories and then issued false figures now disputed by the Russians.



Gloster Meteor F-8, Amberley Air Show 2008

Photo: Graham Bradshaw

AUSTRALIA AT WAR WITH JAPAN

Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Australia had officially declared War on Japan by the **9th of December 1941**. This War in the Pacific, which continued for another 3 years and 9 months, forced Australia to reassess its relationships with the rest of the World. At that time Australia forged a strong relationship with the United States which continues to this day. Casualties in the Pacific amounted to around 17,500 who were killed in action, died of wounds or died as POWs. Approximately another 14,000 were wounded in action.

Jerusalem Surrenders

On the **9th of December 1917** the Mayor of Jerusalem waved the white flag and surrendered the city to save the historic holy buildings from being destroyed by Allied shelling. General Allenby walked into the city on foot, (as a respect to the holy place) on the **11th of December** accompanied by the 10th Light Horse Regiment and a New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade amongst other mounted troops.

The now Christian rule of the Holy City was a huge



Christmas boost to the morale of the British Empire and troops.

The Mayor of Jerusalem, Hussein Bey al-Husayni, at the surrender of the city. He is the man with the cane.

6th Division Prepares For First Battle Action By Second AIF.

On the **28 of December 1940** the 6th Division prepared for the first action by the Second AIF at Bardia. The main attack did not begin until 3rd of January 1941. The Division had moved into Libya on the **19th of December** after completing its training in Egypt.

Light Horse Brigades Capture El IRISH 21st December 1916.

After this battle in the Northern Sinai desert El Irish was used as a staging base as the advance moved forward for the attack on Magdhaba.

The Battle of Magdhaba

General Chauvel's Anzac Mounted Division which included the Imperial Camel Corps fought this battle on the **23rd of December 1916** against Turkish forces blocking the route to Palestine. This was the beginning of the end for the Turkish occupation of the Sinai. This Regimental Standard of the Turkish

80th Infantry Regiment was captured by QMSgt.

Dennis Walker of 404 Sqn. 2nd Light Horse Regiment.



The Battle of Shaggy Ridge

On the **27th of December 1943** the 7th Division captured "The Pimple" on Shaggy Ridge, New Guinea after a hard fought struggle lasting four months. Following this victory the Australians were able to drive the Japanese off their remaining positions on the ridge later in January 1944.

Members of the 2/16th Infantry Battalion resting on "The Pimple" after the battle.



The First AIF Arrive in Egypt.

After leaving Albany, WA, four weeks earlier the first units of the AIF disembarked at Alexandria on the **3rd of December 1914**. They moved into camp at Mena near Cairo with the Pyramids as a backdrop where training commenced. **The second convoy of the First AIF left Albany on the 31st of December.**



H.M.A.S. Perth Under Fire.

On the **17th of December 1968** H.M.A.S. Perth (II) was fired on by a Vietcong shore battery near Dong Hoi, Vietnam. Around 30 rounds straddled the ship but no damage was done. On a tour of duty the previous year the Perth was hit by a shell which wounded several crew members. During three tours of duty with the US Seventh Fleet off the coast of Vietnam H.M.A.S. Perth fired over 30,700 rounds in support of ground operations.

H.M.A.S. Perth (II)

Cite: RAN.gov.au



Benghazi Recaptured.

Having changed hands five times as the battles ebbed and flowed along the Mediterranean coast, Benghazi was recaptured by British forces on **24th of December 1941**.

Gona Beachhead Secured.

The long and bloody battle for the beach heads at Gona, Buna and Sanananda was coming to an end when the Gona beach head was secured on the **9th of December 1942**. Because of these defeats on the northern coastline of New Guinea

the Japanese had to abandon their attempts to take Port Moresby. The final cost to the Australians was 1,261 dead and 2,210 wounded. The Americans lost 734 dead and 2,237 wounded.

First Overseas Action by Australian Forces December 1860.

As strange as it may seem the first time any Australian forces saw action overseas was in New Zealand at the battle of Matarikoriko, Northern Taranaki, during what is commonly known as "The Māori Wars". The sailors from the Victorian warship "Victoria", took part in this action on the **30th of December 1860** as part of Major-General Pratt's attack on the Māori's fort.

The Battle of the Bulge

The Battle of the Bulge commenced on the **16th of December 1944** in the Ardennes Forest, Belgium and lasted well into January 1945. It was the last major offensive of the World War II by Germany. This battle on the western front involving forces from American and Britain became one of the most important battles of the war on a par with Stalingrad, Midway and D-Day.

90mm M36 American Tank Destroyer at the Battle of the Bulge.



2nd Conscription Referendum

Prime Minister Billy Hughes Government's 2nd referendum on conscription was defeated on the **20th of December 1917**.

First Official RAAF Operation

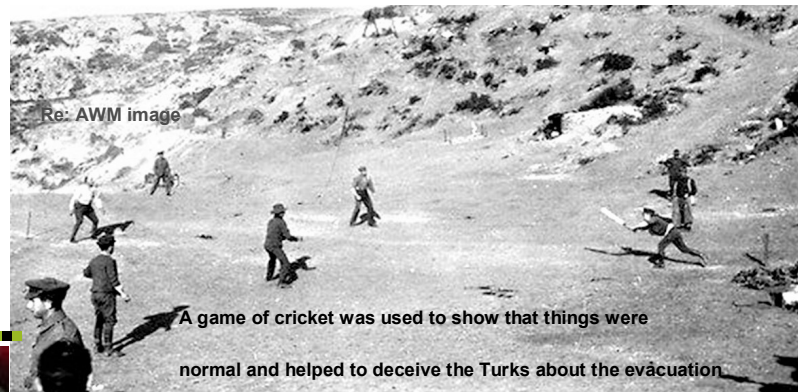
of World War II was an operation carried out by a 10 Squadron Sunderland flying boat on the **5th of December 1939**.

3 RAR Arrives in Vietnam

The main body of 3 RAR had sailed from Port Adelaide on board HMAS Sydney and disembarked at Vung Tau on the **27th of December 1967**. By the end of December the whole battalion had joined the Australian Task Force at Nui Dat.

Gallipoli Evacuation Completed.

The successful evacuation of Gallipoli was completed on the nights of **18/19 and 19/20 of December 1915** when the last of the Anzacs were ferried out to the waiting ships. Men's reactions varied, but a common sorrow was the thought of leaving behind their dead comrades. Many troops spent time in the small Anzac cemeteries tidying up the graves before they embarked.



Many thanks for the positive feedback on the first two issues of the 'Bugle'. It is good to know that members are enjoying the articles published. It gives me encouragement to continue into the new year.



MEMORABILIA - PAGE

Compiled and Edited by Graham Bradshaw with the grateful assistance of Col "Taffy" Phillips, Memorabilia Curator



The Bribie Island RSL Sub-Branch holds an extensive and valuable collection of "Memorabilia" which comprises very large items, such as the Leopard tank, down to the smaller artifacts like medals, badges, & buttons. It is not possible to display this extensive collection in full at all times due to a lack of available display cases etc. There are, however, many interesting artifacts displayed in the Anzac Room and in the display cabinets on the ground floor level of the Club. On this page, in every issue, we will display photographs and descriptions of various items.

Our largest, most visible "Monster" is the Leopard AS1 Main Battle Tank which sits in the Club grounds fronting Toorbul Street. This Tank was gifted to the Sub-Branch by the Australian Government in 2011.



Photo: Graham Bradshaw 2021

In 1977 the Leopards replaced the British Centurions and were operated by the 1st Armoured Regiment. In 2006 it was itself replaced by the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. The Leopard is a firm favourite with family photographers and I know of many who have been photographing their children with the tank every Christmas holidays. If you wish to know more about the specification of this machine see the plaque attached to the rock. When in Cairns pay a visit to the amazing Armour & Artillery Museum.

EDWARD "TEDDY" SHEEAN VC

On page one is the story about the sinking of HMAS Armidale and the painting of **Edward "Teddy" Sheen VC**. On display in the cabinet nearest the foyer are articles which have been donated by a relative of Teddy Sheean VC. These include a framed limited edition photograph of the original painting. Only five were printed. A copy of the Victoria Cross Citation and replica medals are also displayed with his

photograph. The fact that he could see Japanese planes firing on his shipmates in the water probably



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AWM2020.900.1

helped firm his determination to keep firing his ship's gun.

The medals of **QX34106 Major Donald Provan MC** include his Military Cross awarded after his actions with the 15th Infantry Battalion in New Guinea. He was also Mentioned-in Dispatches for a previous action. Major Provan began his military career as an Officer Cadet in the 1920's and was Commissioned before the Second World War.



Photo: Graham Bradshaw 2021

WE HOPE YOU LIKE OUR MEMORABILIA PAGE.

MORE NEXT ISSUE.