

IT HAPPENED IN JUNE

OPERATION BARBAROSSA

Several major battles and events occurred during the month of June during World War II which influenced the direction and final outcome of the war. Perhaps the first and certainly one of the most significant was Operation Barbarossa, the code name for the German invasion of the Soviet Union, which commenced on the **22 June 1941**. Barbarossa was the greatest clash of arms in history, ultimately involving almost ten million men from the German and Soviet armies. The figures are mind boggling—both sides totalled 10 million men, 408 divisions. The Germans deployed 4,000 aircraft, almost 7,000 armoured vehicles (including 3,800 tanks), 600,000 horses and motor vehicles and massive amounts of artillery. The Soviets had around 16,000 tanks and 8,000 aircraft at the outset. By **December 1941** the Soviet casualties amounted to 5,000,000 men, they were, however, in a better position to replace their armies and by **January 1942** were mounting massive

counter attacks which drove the Germans back. The war on the eastern front cost the Germans 5,000,000 dead out of a war total of 6,000,000. This had a profound effect on the effectiveness of the German war machine and undoubtedly became a major feature in the defeat of Germany in World War II.



German troops at the Soviet border June 1941

NORTH KOREA INVADES SOUTH

The Korean War began on the **25th of June 1950** when North Korean troops crossed the border and attacked the South. The war lasted three years. 17,000 Australians served and 339 Died. Another 1,200 were wounded.

CRETE EVACUATED

The evacuation of Crete over four nights was completed on the **1st of June 1941**. Around 16,000 allied troops were evacuated to Egypt leaving Crete occupied by the Axis forces until the end of the war. On the **5th of June 1941** Australian troops re-enforced Cyprus, however, because the Germans had suffered such serious losses on Crete they abandoned the attack on Cyprus.

VICHY FRENCH IN SYRIA

The Australian 7th Division attacked the Vichy French in Syria on the **8th of June 1941**. The Vichy French forces offered fierce resistance and it was mid July before the British, Australian and Indian attackers forced the enemy to surrender. Lieutenant Cutler, who later became a NSW Governor, was awarded his VC during action against the Vichy French in Syria. Although it was a short localized battle it did cost 416 Australian lives and 1,136 were wounded.

POWs RELEASED IN KOREA

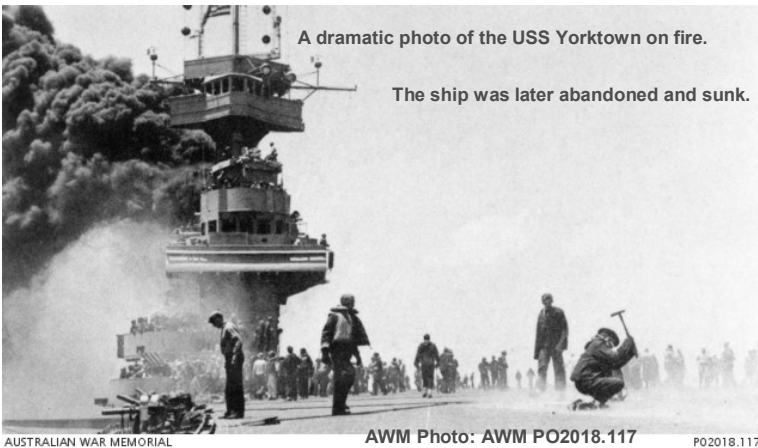
At the end of the Korean War twenty nine Australian Prisoners of war were released at Panmunjom on the **18th of June 1953**. One other Australian prisoner had died in captivity.



RAAF Ex Prisoners of war are happy to be on the way home.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

The South Pacific Battle of Midway inflicted the first defeat upon the Japanese's Navy and was another significant battle which changed the direction of the war in the Pacific. This decisive battle was fought between the carrier fleets of America and Japan near the Pacific atoll of Midway from the **4th to the 7th of June 1942**. The Japanese lost four large carriers in this battle and never recovered during the remainder of the war.



NSW CITIES SHELLED

On the **8th of June 1942**, barely one week after the midget submarine raid on Sydney Harbour, Sydney and Newcastle were shelled by four Japanese submarines. Damage was minimal because most shells did not explode and the subs quickly disappeared beneath the surface. It is believed that the Fort Scratchley guns were the only land based guns to fire on the enemy.

2 RAR ARRIVES IN VIETNAM

The 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, recently reinforced with national servicemen from Australia, took over from 6 RAR on the **2 June 1967**.

MALAYAN EMERGENCY DECLARED

After three European estate managers were murdered by the MCP (Malayan Communist Party) a state of emergency was declared on the **16th of June 1948**.

The conflict then became Australia's longest military commitment



which also cost 39 Australian lives.

D DAY LANDINGS

The "D" Day landings by allied forces on the **6th of June 1943** were another major event in eventual defeat of Germany which had by this time suffered irreparable damage at the hands of the Russian on the eastern front. Seven thousand ships and 12,000 aircraft headed for the Normandy coast and by the end of June almost 900,000 personnel, 160,000 vehicles and half a million tons of supplies had been unloaded in France. The Australian commitment was close to 3,000 men attached to the British Navy and Air Force.



ITALY DECLARES WAR ON ALLIES

Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, hoping to profit from Germany's early successes in the War following the collapse of France, declared war on the Allies on the **10th of June 1940**. Mussolini lost power in 1943 and was shot by Italian communist partisans in 1945.

HMAS NESTOR SUNK

HMAS Nestor was a destroyer commissioned as an Australian Vessel and owned by the British Navy. The ship was on escort duties in the Mediterranean when she was hit by enemy aircraft fire and, unable



to be saved, was scuttled on the **16th of June 1942**. It is interesting to note that HMAS Nestor was the only Australian ship to have never served in Australian waters.

RMC DUNTROON OPENS

The Royal Military College opened at the Duntroon sheep station, owned by the Campbell family, on the **27th of June 1911**. Brigadier General Bridges was appointed as the first commandant. He later died at Gallipoli.

HMAS WATERHEN SUNK

HMAS Waterhen was an old destroyer recommissioned of service at the outbreak of World War II. Like the Nestor, she served on escort duties in the Mediterranean, and served on the Tobruk Ferry Service. The ship was attacked by dive bombers and immobilised. It was apparent that she could not be saved so the crew evacuated and HMAS Waterhen sank on the **30th of May 1941**. She was the first Australian ship lost during World War II.



Photo: RAN.gov.au

1st RAN AIRCRAFT IN COMBAT

Off the coast of Germany in the Heligoland Bight aircraft of the RAN engaged in combat for the first time on the **1st of June 1918**. Aircraft launched from HMAS Sydney and HMAS Melbourne attacked two German aircraft.

RAAF LAST MAJOR BATTLE

During the Battle of Biak Island in the Dutch East Indies, 15 P-40N Kittyhawks of 78 squadron, RAAF, attacked 15 Japanese aircraft on the **3rd of June 1944** in what



A 78 Squadron P-40N—Photo: 78 Sqn Hawkeston

was their last major battle of the war. They shot down 8 enemy aircraft for the loss of one P-40 and pilot.

AUSTRALIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the Boer war, men of the 1st Horse and New South Wales Lancers took part in the battle of Diamond Hill, South Africa on the **11th of June 1900**. It was a battle described by commanders as a turning point in the war.

VICTORIANS ATTACKED

Squadrons of the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles were camped at Wilmansrust Farm, Transvaal, South Africa, when they became trapped in a surprise attack by the Boers on the **12 of June 1901**. In the short, vicious fight, 18 Victorians were killed and 42 wounded.



Victorian Mounted Rifles

JAPANESE AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN

Flight Lieutenant Baker, flying his 78 Squadron P-40 Kittyhawk, 'Black Magic' shot down the last Japanese aircraft in the New Guinea campaign on the **10th of June 1944** over Yapen Island.

RAAF 77 SQUADRON TO KOREA

No. 77 Squadron, RAAF became the first Australian unit committed to combat duties in the Korean War on the 30th of June 1950. They were equipped, at that time, with North American P-51 Mustangs.



North American P-51 Mustang - Photo: Graham Bradshaw 2008

ANIT-WAR DEMONSTRATION

The final anti-war rally against the Vietnam war occurred on the **30th of June 1971** when over 110,000 demonstrators gathered in cities around Australia.

ROMMEL ATTACKS EGYPT

Rommel's Panzerarmee Afrika attacked Egypt forcing the allies back to El Alamein on the **24th of June 1942** where the pivotal battle later took place.



Rommel's Afrika Corps

Captain Robert Cuthbert Grieve

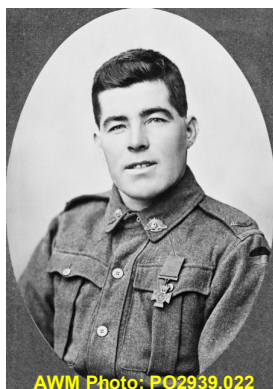


Photo: AWM H00038

Serving with the 37th Battalion, AIF, Capt. Grieve received his VC on the **7th of June 1917** at the Battle of Messines. His company had been halted by a machine gun firing from a pill box which caused heavy casualties. Capt. Grieve moved forward alone throwing grenades and was

able to reach the pill box where he threw more grenades through the firing slits killing all German occupants. He stood on the parapet to call his men forward and was severely wounded by a sniper.

Private John Carroll



AWM Photo: PO2939.022

Pte. Carroll was awarded his VC at the Battle of Messines Ridge on the **7th of June 1917** for his fearless courage in attacking the German trenches and machine gun positions during the 96 hours his battalion was in the line.

Lieutenant Arthur Roden Cutler



AWM photo: 134905

Lt. Cutler consistently placed himself in danger in order to direct artillery fire while serving with the 2/5th Australia Field Regiment as they fought the Vichy French in Syria. For his action between the **19th of June 1941 and the 6th of July** he was awarded the VC. He was

severely wounded by machine gun fire, lost his leg and was invalided home. In 1966 Sir Roden Cutler VC, AK, KCMG, KCVO, CBE was appointed Governor of New South Wales after several years of diplomatic service.

I would like to publicly thank Bob Wooton, the Sub Branch Board and all the other members who have emailed the Secretary and myself saying how much they enjoy reading the "Bugle".

Private Leslie Thomislav Starcevich

Private Starcevich was awarded his VC for his actions against Japanese positions on the **1945**. It was at Borneo, as a 2/43rd Battalion, Starcevich attacked Japanese positions which were advancing and retreating. He moved



AWM photo: 124956A

from the hip and killed the enemy. After this, he then attacked two more machine guns singlehandedly and disposed of seven more Japanese soldiers.

machine gun **28th of June** Beaufort, North where he attacked two machine gun positions holding up the advance causing casualties forward firing

Corporal Phillip Davey

Cpl. Davey was a member of the 10th Battalion, AIF in France when his platoon came under heavy fire and the commander was killed on the **28th of June 1918**. While the survivors sheltered in a ditch under almost point blank fire, Davey launched a solo hand-grenade attack on the enemy until forced to return for more grenades. He attacked again, killing the eight man crew, and then mounted a successful counter attack until he was severely wounded in the back, abdomen and legs.



AWM Photo: D000675

Private William Jackson

Earned his VC at Armentieres, France on the **25/26th of June 1916** when he entered No Man's Land several times while rescuing seriously wounded members of his platoon. He received a shell wound to the arm but still carried out his rescue work. His arm had to be amputated and he was invalided back to Australia. He was only 18 years of age at the time.