

AS IT HAPPENED

ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS



Photo: Australian National Museum

The first of Australia's anti war “moratoriums” took place on the **8th of May 1970** when around 200,000 people demonstrated against the Vietnam War and conscription. These demon-

strations were the largest ever conducted in Australia at that time and represented the growing discontent against the war and conscription within a portion of the Australian public and a wider range of people who began to object to the war on moral grounds. Author Paul Ham says: “Bit by bit, like a great ship turning at sea, Australia's support for the war gradually shifted direction. Like hundreds of little tugboats, the political misjudgments, draft resisters, death notices and protesters nudged Australian and American minds on a new bearing.”

ZAND RIVER, SOUTH AFRICA

The 1st New South Wales Mounted Regiment saw action in several engagements around South Africa during the year 1900. On the **8th of May 1900**, the Boers attacked the colonial forces, advancing through Transvaal, at the Zand River crossing and the NSW Mounted Infantry, which had been held in reserve, rushed on to help the New Zealanders escape from enemy fire. During the night the Boers destroyed the bridge over the crossing and withdrew.

Privates McCracken, Hayward and Neild
With a Pom Pom Gun. AWM Photo P00422.012

POWs SENT TO RAILWAY WORK

On the **15th of May 1942**, The Japanese began moving allied POWs to Thailand to start work on the infamous Thai/Burma railway. In all 60,000 POWs, (13,000 were Australians) and 200,000 mostly Malay and Burmese civilians worked on the project for twelve months. During that time around 12,000 POWs (2,800 Australians) and approximately 100,000 civilians died.



AWM Photo: P00405.030

Australian prisoners carrying railway sleepers watched by Japanese guards

GALLIPOLI TRUCE CALLED

The Ottoman army had launched human wave, frontal attacks against the ANZAC trenches on the **19th of**

Australians retrieve a Turk's body during
“The Truce” ... AWM Photo: P010815.010



May 1915. As a result thousands lay dead in No Man's Land and such great numbers caused the stench to become unbearable, therefore, a “Truce” was arranged to enable both side to bury their dead. This was the only officially declared truce (**21st of May 1915**) during the Great War.

NSW TROOPS FOR SUDAN



Troops from New South Wales comprising an Infantry Battalion and an Artillery Battery left the

Sudan on the **18th of May 1885** to return to Australia. They had been serving there for two months and although none were killed in action nine did die of disease.

The NSW contingent leaving for the Sudan—Photo: NSW Museum of applied arts

GERMANY INVADES CRETE

The German invasion of Crete began on the **20th of May 1941** after the Allied forces defeated in Greece had escaped to the Island. Around 40,000 Australian, British, Greek and New Zealand troops tried to defend the island. However, by the end of May they were forced to evacuate because of poor communications and lack of equipment. They had fought well with what they had and inflicted such severe casualties on the German invaders that Hitler decreed that paratroops should not be used this way in any future battle. Some 6,500 who could not evacuate in time became POWs.



German paratroops landing in Crete

4 RAR LEAVES FOR VIETNAM

HMAS Sydney departed Brisbane on the **21st of May 1968** ferrying 4 RAR to Vietnam for their 1st tour. They became ANZAC 4RAR/NZ when two companies of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment were attached to serve with them in Vietnam

The Australian War Memorial web pages and the Dept. of Veteran's Affairs Anzac Portal are cited as sources for information and photographs used to prepare stories and profiles which appear in the 'Bugle'. Some other information is freely available in the public domain and references are cited when known.

TURKS ATTACK QUINN'S POST

Much ferocious fighting took place at Quinn's Post from the time of the initial landing until June. Both sides dug tunnels and threw bombs and on the **29th of May 1915** the Turks exploded a mine at 3.30am in a tunnel under Quinn's and rushed in. After a desperate fight in the dark the Australians got the upper hand and took 17 prisoners although they lost 33 men, (including 11 smothered in the initial blast). The Post was named after Major Hugh Quinn of the 15th Battalion who died there that day.

Maj. Quinn was buried in the Shrapnel Valley Cemetery—Quinn's Post Cemetery—CWGC Photo



US CITATIONS RECEIVED

The **28th of May 1968** saw D Coy, 6 RAR receive the US Presidential Citation for the action at Long Tan. For service from July 1962 until August 1969, The AATTV received the US Meritorious Citation on the **28th of May 1970**.

1000 BOMBER RAID

The first 1000 Bomber Raid on Germany, (Operation Millennium), took place on the **30/31 May 1942** over Cologne. A total of 1,047 aircraft took part in what was one of 262 raids on that city. I have been to Cologne and visited their magnificent Cathedral and as I look at the photo of destruction I am amazed that the building seemed to miss most of the damage.



2013



1945

MONASH TAKES COMMAND

John Monash took command of the Australian Corps on the Western Front on the **31st of May 1918** with the rank of Lieutenant General. Under his command the Corps had major successes as they pushed the German Armies back across France to the Hindenburg Line. In recognition of his war service Monash was promoted to full General in 1929. General, Sir John Monash GCMG, KCB, VD passed away in 1931 aged 66.



AWM Photo: C358196

GENERAL BLAMEY PROMOTED



AWM
Photo:
107352

Sir Thomas Albert Blamey GBC, KBE, CMG, DSO, CStJ, Ed who had served as a commanding general in the 1st and 2nd World Wars was appointed to the rank of Field Marshall in the Kings Birthday Honours List dated the **8th of June 1950**. Sir Thomas passed away just under a year later. He remains the only Australian to have held the rank of Field Marshall.

SANDAKAN CAMP BURNED

American aircraft had been bombing and strafing the Sandakan bay area and the nearby POW camp on several occasions during **May 1945**. It was on the **31st of May** that the Japanese moved the remaining sick and emancipated prisoners out of the camp area and burnt it to the ground. The POWs, thinking they were about to be rescued by the allies, soon found that they were to be marched to Ranau, the last group of the 3rd Death March. A total of 1,787 Sandakan POWs had perished and only six ever made it back to Australia at war's end.

9th DIVISION LANDS IN BORNEO

The Australian 9th Division landed at Brunei, Labuan and Muara, North Borneo, on the **10th of June 1945** in an operation codenamed "OBOE 6". Brunei was captured on the **13th**. Others landed at Weston, North Borneo on the **17th of June** and Beaufort was captured on the **22nd**. This followed on from the May "OBOE 1" assault on Tarakan Island by the 26th Infantry Brigade which captured the airfields and oil supplies. Japanese resistance on Tarakan ended on the **22nd of June** after more than 200 Australians had been killed. The Borneo operations were complex, involving members of Australia's Navy, Army and Air Force. The final operation of the Borneo campaign, "OBOE 2", commenced in July with the landing at Balikpapan in the south east. The Borneo campaign was the last to be planned and undertaken by the Australians. By war's end in August all objectives had been taken but there was great sadness at the loss of so many prisoners held at Sandakan.

TORRES STRAIT FORCE

Recruiting began on the **10th of June 1941** for the Torres Strait Defence Force from the indigenous population of the area. Initially, a Light Infantry Company was raised and later increased to a full battalion in September 1942. Almost all the members of the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion were Torres Strait Islanders making it the only Indigenous Australia Battalion ever formed.



AWM Photo: 119169

BATTLE FOR JEZZINE

The Battle for Jezzine on the **13th of June 1941** was part of the Australian 7th division's push against the Vichy French forces in Syria and Lebanon. Private Jim Gordon, 2/31st Battalion, won the Victoria cross in this action. The 21st Brigade then advanced west taking the town of Sidon by the **15th of June** and cutting the road



Maj. Gen. "Tubby" Allen with his 7th Division troops in Lebanon. AWM Photo: 101546

between Sidon and Jezzine. Jezzine Barracks at Kissing Point, Townsville are named after this battle.

BUILD UP IN PHOU C TUY

6 RAR arrived in South Vietnam on the **14th of June 1966** as the build up of Australian Forces continued in the Phouc Tuy Province where they joined 5 RAR as the other half of the First Australian Task Force. It was then only two short months before they found themselves in a fierce battle at Long Tan. Their twelve months tour saw the Battalion involved in quite a few other actions including "Operation Bribie" in February 1967.



U.S. TROOPS ARRIVE IN FRANCE

Better late than never, the United States Forces finally arrived in France on the **25th of June 1917**. However, because Maj. Gen. John J Pershing, the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, insisted that the



American troops were well trained before going to Europe, there were only 14,000 men on the ground on the Western Front by June. The A.X.F. had only minor participation in action at the Front until late October when numbers began to increase substantially. By May 1918 there were one million American troops in

France but only half of these ever made it to the Front.

DAMASCUS OCCUPIED



Allied troops arrive in Damascus. 21 June 1941

As the battles in Syria and Lebanon continued, the Syrian town of Damascus was occupied by British, Australian, Indian and Free French

Forces on the **21st of**

June 1941 after the Vichy French garrison surrendered.

THE RAAF IN MALAYA

Six Lincoln bombers of No. 1 Squadron and a Flight of Dakotas of No. 37 Squadron arrived in Malaya on the **27th of June 1950** as Australia's first contribution to the Malayan Emergency.

HMAS BATAAN IN ACTION

Australia's first commitment of RAN ships to the Korean War, saw the Australian destroyer, HMAS Bataan, and the frigate, HMAS Shoalhaven, arrive in Korean waters in July 1950. HMAS Bataan patrolled these waters on and off until mid 1952. Many patrols involved the shelling of North Korean shore batteries, infrastructure and industrial areas. In one such action HMAS Bataan bombarded the Chongjin area and other positions along the coast on the **15th of June 1952**.

Forecastle, winch and cables under ice, 1952
AWM Photo: 305189



There is a model of HMAS Bataan on display in the display cabinets on the ground floor of the Club.

LAST OUT OF SAIGON

The Australian Embassy Guard Platoon (Saigon) was the last Australian Army unit to serve in South Vietnam. The last remaining members of the platoon flew out on the **30th of June 1973**.

HMAS PERTH DAMAGED

HMAS Perth had been operating in the Mediterranean Sea since late 1940. In late May, HMAS Perth was sent to help with the evacuation of Crete. On the **30th of May 1941**, after Perth had collected 1,188 soldiers, the allied force was attacked repeatedly by German aircraft with Perth suffering several near-misses before being struck by a bomb which exploded in the forward boiler room. The ship temporarily lost power and came to a halt before it was quickly repaired. Four crew members and nine soldiers were killed in the bomb blast. HMAS Perth then limped off to Alexandria for emergency repairs.

CONGRATULATIONS DOUG

Congratulation to our Sub Branch member, Douglas Donald Marsen, on being recognized for his service to veterans with his OAM awarded in the King's Birthday Honours List for 2023. In addition, Doug will probably receive his RSL Life Membership at the AGM (24th.)