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COURIER

2/2 COMMANDO ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

<https://doublereds.org.au/>

President Peter Epps, Secretary Colleen Thornton-Ward, Editor Ed Willis

JULY 2016

TIMORESE VETERANS VISIT 2016



<http://veteranvisit2016.org/blog-1/>

29 veterans of Timor-Leste's struggle for national liberation visited Australia to meet with members of Australia's veteran community and participated in events commemorating ANZAC Day on the 25th of April.

Delegations were based in Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra with a small delegation travelling between key cities. Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment, and Chief Negotiator for Maritime Boundaries, HE Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão led the visit.

In each location, including Perth, the veterans visited facilities that have been developed to support ex-service personnel, participated in ANZAC Day commemorations and met with members of the Timorese Community.

A group led by Colonel Falur Rate Laek representing the Defence Forces of Timor-Leste investigated walking treks in two National Parks to assist in planning the development of similar treks in the mountains of Timor-Leste. This group will be assessing the tourism potential of this idea and the opportunities it can provide for veterans to share the story of the Resistance.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

2/2 Commando Association of Australia

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Suite 35, 18 Stirling Highway, Nedlands

Date: 3 August 2016, 6 p.m.

All current and prospective members are urged to attend

2/2 PARTICIPATION IN ANZAC DAY PARADE, PERTH



Robert McDonald leads out the 2/2 contingent

In extremely wet conditions it was great to have 20 or so 2/2 Commando Association members, family and friends participate in the Anzac Day Parade.

A smaller number of those who marched had earlier attended the Dawn Service in King's Park followed by the RSL Highgate Sub-Branch Gunfire Breakfast at Anzac House. At the breakfast HE Xanana Gusmão launched the attractively illustrated book 'Enduring memories' that covers the 2015 Timorese Veterans visit.

KEITH HAYES PRESENTED WITH GIFT

The Association was honoured to have HE Xanana Gusmão march in the ANZAC Day Parade with Keith Hayes, as one of the 2/2 contingent.

HE Xanana Gusmão presented Keith with the flag of FALINTIL to express appreciation for his 'lifetime of kindness toward Timor-Leste'.

Keith was the only survivor of the infamous ration truck massacre on the outskirts of Dili following the Japanese invasion of Portuguese Timor in February 1942. Keith would not have survived without the care provided by a local



<https://www.facebook.com/2nd2nnddoublereds/>

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Timorese woman, Berta Martins, who tended his wounds and assisted him in re-joining his comrades.



Keith Hayes being presented with gift by Xanana Gusmão

Mr Gusmão said later, 'I had the privilege of walking behind this honourable and remarkable man, in the ANZAC parade in Perth'.

KEITH HAYES STORY ON ABC 7.30 REPORT

Complementing the events at the Anzac Day Parade, journalist Paul Cleary (author of 'The men who came out of the ground') presented a report featuring Keith on that evening's ABC 7.30 Report (see links below).

Keith was interviewed about his experience in the story along with the another surviving 2/2 veteran Norm Otway. See the following items on the ABC web site:

abc.net.au/news/2016-04-25/remembering-the-diggers-who-stopped-the-japanese-in-timor/7356020

<http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/7-30/NC1605H081S00#playing>

JOHN ('JACK') HANSON - WX12804



Recent photo of John ('Jack') Hanson

Although it was fantastic that the 7.30 report story brought national attention to the men of the 2/2, the story was incorrect in stating that only Keith Hayes and Fred Otway survive.

The family of John 'Jack' Hanson of Queensland pointed out to the Association that he is another 2/2 veteran and he's alive and well.

The Association was not asked to review the story before it was broadcast. Nevertheless, we apologise to Jack and his family, and to Bob Smyth and his family, for not correcting the assertion that Keith and Fred are the only surviving members of the unit.

Jack's story 'The White Ghost' can be found on the Doublereads web site:

<https://doublereds.org.au/files/JackHanson-TheWhiteGhost.pdf>

'FOUNDATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP' – VIEWING OF ITEMS FROM THE 'DEBT OF HONOUR' EXHIBITION



Curator Steve Anstey presenting to guests at viewing of items from the 'Debt of Honour' exhibition

On the afternoon of 26 April a special viewing was arranged of selected items from the 'Debt of Honour' exhibition at the Western Australian Museum for the Timorese Veterans delegation and members of the 2/2 Commando Association. It was a moving experience for all those in attendance.

The curator of the exhibition Stephen Anstey, assisted by James Dexter, used the items to tell the story of the Commandos experience in Timor in 1942.

After the presentation the visiting delegation met with Museum officials and members of the 2/2 Commando Association to discuss ongoing cooperation between the W.A. Museum and the Timor-Leste government and the future of the exhibition which is uncertain because of funding limitations.