



COURIER

2/2 COMMANDO ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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

President John Denman, Secretary Rob Crossing, Editor Ed Willis

OCTOBER 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

2019 Annual General Meeting

The Association's 2019 AGM will be held at 5.30pm on 29 October 2019 at Suite 35, 18 Stirling Highway, Nedlands WA.

The agenda, minutes of last year's AGM, nomination form and proxy form can be found at:

<https://doublereds.org.au/forums/forum/10-meetings-official-business/>

Please send any apologies to the Secretary, Rob Crossing at secretary@doublereds.org.au.

70th Annual Commemoration Service



Lovekin Drive, Kings Park, 3pm, Sunday 17 November 2019

Association members, their families, friends and other supporters are reminded and encouraged to attend this year's commemoration ceremony.

The ceremony will again be live streamed online for those that cannot attend and for later viewing. Save the link and make sure you subscribe to our YouTube channel while you're there: <https://live.doublereds.org.au/>

Colleen Thornton-Ward will give the address at the service.

After The Commemoration Service ...

The committee of the 2/2 Commando Association also invites you for a drink, a bite to eat and a chat at the Captain Stirling Hotel. We expect the ceremony to finish at around 4pm. Drinks will be from 4.15pm.

Hope you can join us.

Venue: Captain Stirling Hotel, 80 Stirling Highway, Nedlands in the alcove section of the bar.

ANZAC DAY 2019 – Perth



Noel Strickland and Colleen Thornton-Ward carry the 2/2 banner at the Perth Anzac Day march



Family members and supporters of the 2/2/ and 2/8 Commandos gather together for the Anzac Day lunch

Graham Brooks of the 2/8 Commando Group invited family members and supporters of the 2/2 to attend a post Anzac Day march at the Ambassador Hotel. About 33 people attended including 2/2 Committee members Rob Crossing, Geoff Payne and John Cramb. Rob e-mailed Graham after the event and said 'Our members very much enjoyed the event. It's good to be able to mark such an important day by dining with family and friends of our commandos'.

TIMOR 1942 COMMANDO CAMPAIGN TOUR

Timor 1942 Commando Campaign Tour

16 family members of former 2/2 soldiers participated in the 2019 tour which took place 24 April – 4 May. This followed on from the successfully completed 2018 tour.

A report on the tour can be found at: <https://doublereds.org.au/forums/topic/192-timor-1942-commando-campaign-tour-report/>

Strong interest has already been expressed in the 2020 tour. If you are interested in touring in future please contact Ed Willis (ew988662@bigpond.net.au or 0438907480) for more information.

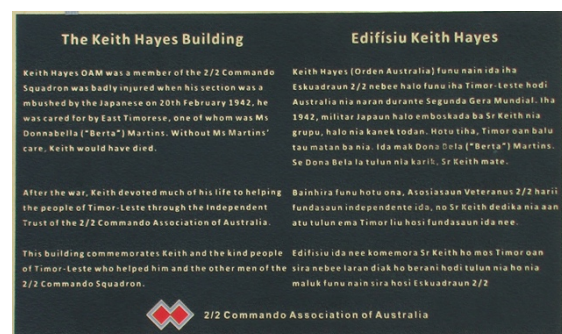
OPENING OF KEITH HAYES BUILDING, ST ANTHONY'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, DILI

On 24 April 2019 the Timor 1942 Commando Campaign Tour group along with Leonie Robson, Hylton Hayes and Trevor Hayes attended St Anthony's International School, Dili for the formal inauguration of the 'Keith Hayes Building' (see Courier April 2019 for the background).



Leonie, Hylton and Trevor along with John unveil the commemorative plaque at the opening

The ceremony was opened by Snr Cesar Dias Quintas, General Manager of the school, and speeches followed by HE Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta (former President of Timor-Leste, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and school Patron), HE Mr. Peter Roberts OAM (Australian Ambassador to Timor Leste), John Denman and Ed Willis (on behalf of the Association), Mrs. Gail Barker (Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of NT) and Leonie Robson on behalf of the Hayes family.



The commemorative plaque

The year 5 – 7 students performed a dance which was loudly acclaimed by the audience.

A year 3 Timorese student, Eria Maeva Menezes Mesquita, stole the show with her expression of gratitude for the funds donated for the classroom.

There was a formal blessing of the school, the plaque was officially uncovered, this was then followed by classroom tour and afternoon tea.

Posters from the 'Debt of Honour' exhibition regarding the Ration Truck Massacre and Keith's survival story, and the old Association's long history of support for the people of Timor-Leste were displayed outside the new classrooms along with information about the new Association's continuing supportive efforts. These may be placed on permanent display in that location and encourage future visitors to the school who have a WWII history interest.

ANZAC DAY 2019 - Dili

The Timor 1942 Commando Campaign Tour group attended the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Cristo Rei, Dili.



Murray Harrington with the family wreath at the service

The MC for the Dawn Service was Lieutenant-Colonel Martin Dransfield, from the New Zealand Defence Force. Martin is currently the Strategic Advisor to Chief of Staff of the Falintil – Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) or Timor-Leste Defense Force.

The Service was well attended by Timorese veterans and civilians; NZ, Australian and US defence personnel currently serving in Timor-Leste.

The excellent service was well led by Martin and during the service he mentioned the 2/2 and the tour group on a couple of occasions.

On completion of the service, the Timorese veterans requested they meet and shake the hands of all tour group members who were presented with traditional Timorese tais.

MURRAY AND COLLEEN'S TIMOR PILGRIMAGE

The commemorations during August and September this year have prompted much reflection on the events of 1999. This story, shared with us by Colleen Thornton-Ward and her brother Murray, reminds us that Timor-Leste and Australia's military history goes back many decades before that. Many thanks to Colleen and Murray for sharing their family's story of a 77 year old friendship with Timor-Leste.

In the darkest days of early 1942 a bond was created between the peoples of Portuguese Timor (now Timor-Leste) and Australia. With the Japanese Army swiftly conquering Malaysia, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), a small band of Australian commandos was cut off in Portuguese Timor,

with the Japanese controlling Dili and Kupang. Withdrawing to the mountains behind Dili, the Australian Commandos were able to ambush and harass the Japanese forces as they came out from Dili into the mountains. The Australians were able to fight successfully because of the assistance given to them from the people living in the villages, and more importantly the young Timorese who attached themselves to the Australian soldiers as Kriados.



Jill, Colleen, Murray and Hannah with Simeo and his family outside Suai Cathedral

These young Timorese, with their knowledge of languages, the mountain tracks and villages supported the Australians, helped carry the ammunition, found food and cared for the sick and wounded.

Nicolau Goncalves, my father's kriado, saved my father's life a number of times by leading him to safety along Timorese trails after they had attacked the Japanese and were being pursued.

In December 1942 it was time for my father's Commando group, the 2/2 Commandos to leave Portuguese Timor, so they walked to Betano, and waited for the ship to arrive. On the beach, the Australian soldiers and their

Timorese Kriados cried as they left and promised not to forget each other.

In 1969 my father, with the help of the Commando Association and the Government of Portuguese Timor, was able to bring Nicolau Goncalves to Western Australia for an Agriculture study tour and they were reunited after 26 years. Nicolau stayed at our house for part of his tour, and as children he made a lasting impression upon us.



Norman Thornton and Nicolau Goncalves. Nicolau came to stay with Norman and his family in Denmark, WA in 1968

During the invasion of 1975, Nicolau and two of his sons were killed, and we lost contact with the family. It was not until 1995 that we were able to visit the family again, when my sister Colleen and I met with Nicolau's wife Florentino Soares Nunez, and son Januario Nunez Goncalves at their house in Lecidere.

We returned to East Timor in 1999 as Voluntary International Observers at Suai on the South coast, and experienced firsthand both the joy of the election, and the traumatic aftermath as the militia destroyed much of East Timor. For us, volunteering as International Observers in 1999 was a small way of trying to repay a debt we as Australians owe the Timorese people.

Once INTERFET had landed I was able to return to East Timor to assist at a local NGO for nine months with the UNHCR shelter program.

Since then we have returned to Timor-Leste many times, being voluntary International Election Observers at National Elections, maintaining contact with Timorese students supported by an association in Denmark a small town on the south coast of Western

Australia, and every time meeting with Nicolau Goncalves' family.

We have also participated in four Tours de Timor (bike race) from 2009-2012, myself as a cyclist and Colleen, my sister helping support the race.

This year, 20 years after the joy of the vote and the violence in its aftermath, we were able to visit Suai, attend Sunday Mass in the new cathedral and meet again some of the Timorese UN staff. It was a very special time.

My father was very fortunate to have had Nicolau Goncalves as his kriado, and we are lucky to have so many Timorese friends. Without the assistance given to our father and all the 2/2 Commandos by the Timorese during WWII we would possibly not be here to tell this story – a friendship made 77 years ago continues today.



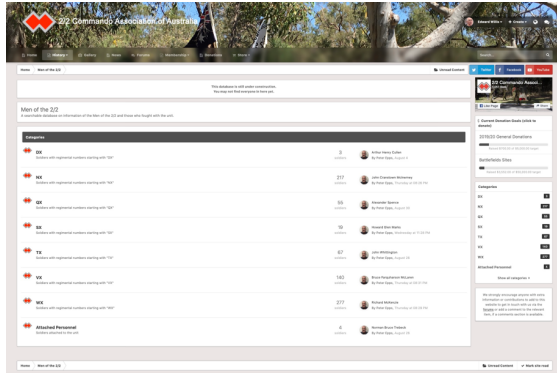
Colleen and Murray with HE President Francisco Guterres (Lú-Olo) at their meeting in Dili on 2 September 2019

Murray and Colleen interviewed HE President Francisco Guterres about his family's assistance to the 2/2 Commandos in the Ossu during WWII, an area close to where their father campaigned. Colleen and Murray presented the President with a copy of 'All The Bulls Men' and a 2/2 pin.

Thank you to Ted Graham, Hon Consul for Timor-Leste in WA for facilitating Colleen and Murray's meeting with the President.

2/2 SOLDIER'S SERVICE RECORDS

On Doublereds, we now have a bio page for each soldier who served with the unit, up to the end of WWII.



'Men of the 2/2 page' on Doublereds
(<https://doublereds.org.au/history/men-of-the-22/>)

We would like to ensure that each soldier's page has a photo and includes a summary of his war service record.

Family members of a particular soldier can help us to deliver these outcomes in a couple of ways.

Firstly by uploading a photo of the soldier, preferably in uniform and secondly by ensuring that his service record is available in digital format on the National Archives of Australia (NAA) database.

You can do the latter by following the instructions given on the NAA website related to 'Finding a service record' and 'Ordering a copy' if a digitised copy of a soldier's service record is not already available; see

<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/researching-war-service.aspx>

If you do order a digitised copy of a soldier's service record it may take up to 90 days for it to be delivered. The digitised record is then available for public access on the NAA database.

Please let us know when a digitised service record you have requested is

available or you wish to upload a photo of a soldier by posting a message on the 'Men of the 2/2 Public Forum' on Doublereds; see

<https://doublereds.org.au/forums/forum/21-men-of-the-22/>

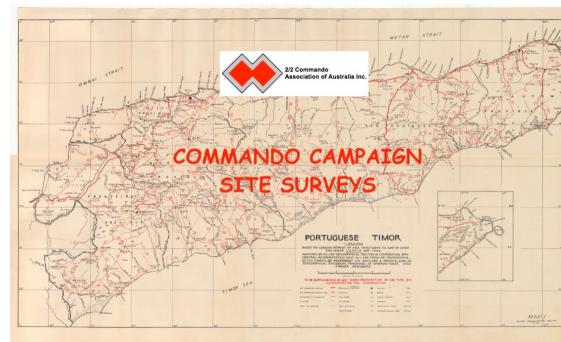
Include the man's full name and service number with your Forum Post and we will then access the digitised NAA record and add biographical information derived from it and/or the photo of him to his individual record on 'Men of the 2/2'.

Thank you for your assistance with these tasks.

COMMANDO CAMPAIGN SITE SURVEYS

The Association has been working to survey and record information about sites connected with the Commando Campaign against the Japanese on Timor during 1942-1943.

Those travelling to Timor-Leste to visit sites connected with the 2/2 and 2/4's campaign on Portuguese Timor would benefit greatly from the locations of those sites being better identified and documented.



There are a large number of potential sites, some of which can be accessed by vehicle and others by trekking. It is intended to have all such sites documented in a standard and succinct way. This will include each site's name, location (GPS coordinates), relevant history, with ready access to other information such as maps, photos, local contacts etc.

We are documenting these sites and will make the information publicly available through the Doublereds website (doublereds.org.au) and possibly by publishing a guidebook and releasing an app for smart phones and tablets.

For an example of one of the documented sites, see:

<https://doublereds.org.au/forums/topic/217-commando-campaign-sites---east-timor-ermera-district-ermera/>

The aim of the project is to economically assist Timor-Leste by encouraging more tourists with a family or other connection to the 2/2, 2/4 or Z Force, or those with a more general interest in WWII history and heritage, to visit the country and thereby also facilitate greater awareness and better commemorate the service of our soldiers and the invaluable support that they received from the Timorese people.

More on-the-ground site survey work in Timor-Leste needs to be done to complete the gathering of information and this will proceed as opportunities to get it done and resources permit.

FUTURE OF THE DARE MEMORIAL

The Timor 1942 Commando Campaign Tour group went to the Dare Memorial on Friday 26 April 2019 and participants were saddened to see the degraded state of the memorial site that is now essentially beyond repair.



Dare Memorial as seen on 26 April 2019

The site was last restored to a presentable condition for the official visit of former Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop to

Timor-Leste last year for a wreath laying ceremony. This attests to the significance of the site to both nations.

For 50 years since it was established by the old 2/2 Commando Association in 1969, this unique memorial has served to commemorate the men of the 2/2 and 2/4 Commando Squadrons and the Timorese people whose help was essential to their survival and success in their campaign against the Japanese during 1942-43.

Dona Theresa, the owner of the site housing the café and museum and memorial plinth and flagpoles is proceeding with redevelopment of the site as tourist accommodation, an expanded new café and a car park.

The expanded new café will be enclosed, and the owner wishes to incorporate the interpretive banners and other memorabilia in the new facility and potentially sustain its interest as a tourist attraction.

A new primary school is to be built on another site nearby. Once that is done the existing school that is on government land will be demolished and the cleared land used to establish a 'Dare Memorial Park' that will include the 2/2-2/4 memorial and flagpoles and thereby rehabilitate the tradition and ethos of the former Memorial Pool and Resting Place established by the old 2/2 Commando Association in 1969.

In relation to the matters raised here, given its long-standing connection with the foundation and subsequent history of the Dare Memorial, the Association has made written representations to the Timor-Leste President and other ministers that it should be contacted and involved as part of the consultation process for planning and preparing for the future development of the Memorial Park site.