



COURIER

2/2 COMMANDO ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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

Editor Ed Willis, Secretary Sharon Paul

NOVEMBER 2024

UPCOMING EVENT

75th Annual Commemoration Ceremony



Lovekin Drive, Kings Park, 3pm, Sunday 17 November 2024

Association members, their families, friends and other supporters are reminded and encouraged to attend this year's historic **75th annual 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/>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

The Association AGM was held at 45 Ardross St, Applecross commencing at 5.30pm on Wednesday 2 October 2024.

As a result of the election of officers and committee members, Noel Strickland continues as President; as will Colleen Thornton-Ward (Treasurer) and Sharon Paul as Secretary.

Committee members are Ed Willis, John Burrige, Louis Crossing, Rob Crossing, Peter

Epps, Sue Epps, John Denman, Chantelle Cummins, Geoff Payne, Murray Thornton, and John Cramb.

ELLA'S AUSTRALIAN JOURNEY

Like most strong friendships, the relationship between Timor-Leste and the 2/2 Commando Squadron began surrounded by tragedy. And, like most strong friendships, this created an enduring bond, as Ella Soares learnt during her trip to Melbourne.



Ella Soares with Major Guy Warnock at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne

Ella came of age during the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste. And she, like coal and like her country, faced this pressure and grew into a diamond.

Now, 22 years after Timor's independence from Indonesia, Ella has become the Balibo Women's Centre Coordinator. One of her many responsibilities is teaching local women how to sew. Not only does this provide disadvantaged women with income, but it's

another way she can give back to her community. During these lessons, Ella and the women sew curtains for hospitals and schools.

It was this talent for sewing that singled her out for the Royce and Abbey Jean scholarship. This scholarship flew her to Melbourne where she learnt how to make gold star standard Days for Girls kits.

Her trip was full of firsts – her first time on a plane, her first time petting a kangaroo, and her first time feeling so cold that she had to wear a beanie and scarf indoors. Visiting the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne was another first for her.

Major Guy Warnock, representing the 2/2 Commando Association, met Ella at the shrine. Here, she presented him with a locally made tais as a thank you for the association's generous donation to the Days for Girls program in Balibo.

Still cold, Ella was mesmerised by the beauty of the shrine and of everything it represented. She wore the Balibo 5 Community Learning Centre logo which features the flag painted by Greg Shackleton onto the front of Australia Flag House. This flag symbolises the connection between Australia and Balibo – a connection that is echoed in the relationship between the 2/2 Commando Association and Timor-Leste. Both have a dark genesis that soldered both countries together and both have used this soldering to create opportunities. Ella is one more body in a long line of people who have been touched by the helping hand the Timorese lent the 2/2 Commando Squadron all those years ago.

Days for Girls empowers women by destigmatising menstruation. This is done by delivering health information sessions and distributing sustainable menstruation kits. Ella, who is also a Days for Girls ambassador, was taught to make these kits during her time in Australia. Creating these kits to gold star standard is difficult, but Ella amazed everyone by becoming certified in no time.

Now fully trained, Ella plans to establish a sewing group dedicated to making Days for Girls kits. This would not be possible without

the kindness of the 2/2 Commando Association. Kindness, no matter how long ago it began, can lead to life changing opportunities that have long-lasting impacts.

Article contributed by Ella Soares & Angelica Rankin – Volunteer, Balibo 5 Community Learning Centre.

LA RENDE! (NO SURRENDER!) TREK REPORT

Association Committee member Ed Willis participated as a member of the vehicle-based support team in the second La Rende! (No Surrender!) Trek operated by Maddog Adventures - 11-21 September 2024.



Trekkers at journey's end

The Australian Embassy in Dili issued the following press release: "The trek, called 'La Rende!' (or, 'No Surrender!' in Tetum) is similar to the Kokoda Track in PNG in terms of its difficulty, beauty and history. The 92km trail allows hikers to follow in the footsteps of the 2/2 Independent (Commando) Company and their Timorese guides during World War Two. The trek is organised by Timorese tour company Magddog Adventures. La Rende! Trek Timor-Leste | Maddog Adventures.

SGT Heath Crotty said that walking in the footsteps of his predecessors in Timor-Leste was a privilege like no other. "This journey, which I consider the highlight of my time here, has been truly life-changing" he said.

CPO Christian Duncan agreed, saying that the opportunity to witness the "awe-inspiring" mountain trails of Timor-Leste was an experience he would never forget. "It's an amazing feeling to know you're walking through history. I believe this trek rivals the famous Kokoda Trail and everyone should have a go," he said.

Throughout the trek, Mr Ed Willis, author of 'WW2 in East Timor: An Australian Army Site and Travel Guide', was on hand, sharing insights from his book about significant sites and anecdotes from the 2/2 Commandos during the conflict".



2024 AFTER CEREMONY GET TOGETHER

The committee of the 2/2 Commando Association invites you for a drink and a chat.

After the commemorative ceremony in Kings Park on 17 November 2024, please join us for a drink and a bite to eat at the

SUBIACO HOTEL

465 Hay St, Subiaco

<https://www.subiacohotel.com.au>

We expect the ceremony to finish at around 4pm. Drinks will be from 4.15pm.

Hope you can join us.

