



COURIER

2/2 COMMANDO ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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

Editor: Ed Willis

November 2025

UPCOMING EVENT

76th Annual Commemoration Ceremony



Lovekin Drive, Kings Park, 3pm, Sunday 16 November 2025

Association members, their families, friends and other supporters are reminded and encouraged to attend this year's **76th 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 2025

The Association AGM was held at Claremont Showgrounds commencing at 5.30pm on Tuesday, September 16, 2025.

Sharon Paul indicated that she would not continue as a committee member. The meeting thanked Sharon for her work as Secretary for the last three years.

Rob Crossing moved that all other continuing positions and committee members remain, seconded by Sue Epps. Carried unanimously.

As a result, Noel Strickland continues as President; as will Colleen Thornton-Ward (Treasurer).

Ed Willis was elected Vice President unopposed. The Secretary position remains unfilled.

Other committee members are: John Burrige, Louis Crossing, Rob Crossing, Peter Epps, Sue Epps, John Denman, Chantelle Cummins, Geoff Payne, Murray Thornton, and John Cramb.

THE W.A. PREMIER'S ANZAC STUDENT TOUR REPORT

A student from Kalbarri, with family connections to the 2/2, secured a place on the annual Premier's Anzac Student Tour. Dylan McKenzie's response to the question "using a Western Australian example, examine the significance of monuments and/or other modes of commemoration established to honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in war" drew on his connections to the 2/2 through both his paternal grandparents.

Dylan submitted the following tour report:

In April of this year, I was fortunate enough to be selected to travel to Japan with nine other students and three teachers for the 2025 Premier's ANZAC Student Tour. The purpose of the tour is to give Western Australian students the unique opportunity to investigate the ANZAC legacy and commemorate historical events by travelling to various destinations around Australia and the world. The 2025 tour visited Japan to recognise the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII, and remember in particular the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The

tour was an unbelievable experience that my peers and I will certainly never forget.

The ten tour participants chosen had to first write an essay on the effect of memorials to assist commemorating those that served in war, and also take part in an interview. I wrote my essay about the 2/2nd Commando Squadron's incredible efforts in Timor, and the "memorial" I related that to was the book *The men who came out of the ground* by Paul Cleary. I decided to write about them because two of my family members served in that squadron: my great, great uncle Gerry McKenzie, and my great grandfather Bob Palmer. After being selected, the other tour participants, including three teachers, and I spent a few days in Perth together on the pre-tour briefing, which allowed us to meet everyone and look at some of Perth's war history.



Nagasaki Hypocentre Cenotaph

On April 17th the tour itself finally began, and we departed Perth late in the afternoon, arriving in Fukuoka the next morning after a short stop in Singapore during the night. From there we took a bus ride to Nagasaki, the first city we were staying in and the second city to be devastated by a nuclear bomb during WWII. While we were there we

visited the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Walking through the different areas was a poignant and sometimes confronting experience. Some displays included melted coins and glass bottles, pieces of wood or stone with the shadows of other objects on them, and a student's lunchbox with charred rice inside. It was both interesting and saddening seeing the Japanese civilian perspective of such events. We also walked through the Peace Park, which consisted of many memorials from different countries, and walked past the hypocentre, the exact location where the atomic bomb was dropped almost eighty years ago. We were even fortunate enough to have met a Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor, 98-year-old Shohei Tsuiki, who told us of his experiences with the atomic bombing. He's an amazing man, having learnt English at age 90 to be able to tell us this story. We were also able to visit Mukiyudo Cave, a huge air raid shelter dug by school students and teachers during WWII. We were taken through the structure by a 92-year-old man who at the time was a student that helped construct the shelter. We met with students from Koyagi Junior High School and folded paper cranes with them. They were very kind and friendly, and after meeting them we held a short service with them at the nearby Fukuoka 2B prisoner-of-war camp memorial. Our time in Nagasaki was very special, and learning about the Japanese perspective during the war certainly left a big impression on me.

On the 5th day of the tour we took the Shinkansen to Hiroshima. Here we visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Park, which had displays and memorials that were both amazing and saddening to look at. The museum had many artefacts similar to those in Nagasaki, but also many unique ones, including more letters and messages written by victims to loved ones, and the famous human shadow etched in stone. The Peace Park and its monuments were very impressive. The atomic bomb dome situated close to the museum provided both a picturesque photo opportunity, but also an important reminder of the tragedy that Hiroshima faced all those years ago. We

met more students in the nearby town of Kure, this time from Goko Senior High School. We walked around the local area with them, visiting multiple historical sights and talking with them while we were walking. One of the spots we visited was a memorial bench dedicated to Gordon and Cherry Parker, who were the first ever Australian-Japanese war brides couple. It was once again a huge privilege to meet the students, and we had a great time with them. Some media outlets went along with us while we were with the students, and we ended up being featured in multiple newspapers and national news broadcasts, which was really cool to see.



Atomic Bomb Dome Hiroshima

Next, we stayed in Tokyo for a couple of days. We were in Tokyo for ANZAC Day, and so we visited the Yokohama Commonwealth War Cemetery to participate in the ANZAC Day service being held there. It was very special to see representatives from so many countries come together in Japan to celebrate Australian and New Zealand servicepeople, and we were very lucky to be able to pay our respects at the service. On our final day in Japan, we went to the Center for Tokyo Raids and War Damage, the only museum dedicated to the Tokyo bombings, a lesser-known event in WWII that was largely overshadowed by the atomic bombings. The Tokyo bombing of March 9-10, 1945, was the deadliest single air attack in history, killing an estimated 100,000 people in one night. We were also lucky enough to hear from Shizuko Nishio, a survivor of the Tokyo raid of that night, which gave us a whole new perspective on the event. It was another sobering building to walk through, allowing us to relive the horror

and tragedy of that night more than 80 years later.

Although the tour's main purpose was to immerse us in Australian and Japanese war history, there were still plenty of opportunities to experience the amazing culture and scenery of Japan while we were there. All the meals we had were delicious and memorable, and every person we met, from our local guides to the general public, were all so kind to us. We spent one of our days on tour exploring Miyajima Island near Hiroshima, visiting famous Shinto shrines and appreciating the magnificent scenery of the island. Experiencing the culture of Japan was an interesting and unforgettable part of the tour.

For me, the Premier's ANZAC Student Tour brought to light the reality of war, both the tragedies and the triumphs. Travelling to Japan drastically changed my perspective on the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, giving me knowledge that is impossible to teach in a classroom. I'm very lucky to have been able to have gone on such an amazing tour with such incredible people, and I'll certainly never forget my experiences in Japan.

CONTAINERS FOR TIMOR PROJECT

This is a Rotary Project, established about 2009. It is now under the auspices of the Rotary Club of Como.

Donations from the WA community are packed into 40-foot sea containers and shipped to Dili, where they are distributed to organisations such as orphanages, women's refuges, hospitals and medical clinics, remote schools, and other bodies helping Timorese people in need of support.

Donations typically include clothing and footwear, bed linen, sewing materials, school furniture, stationery, reading and study books, educational aids, toys, sporting equipment, medical instruments, other hospital equipment, first aid items, disability aids and other rehabilitation assistance devices, homeware, gardening implements and other tools.



Unloading a container

The packing crew consists of volunteer Rotarians, members of the Timorese community and other committed volunteers from the WA community.

The packing site is now at Balga Senior High School, 2 Markham Way, Balga. Access to our container area is through Gate 2, Redcliffe Avenue. We accept and pack donations there after 9 am on most Saturday mornings.

On current indications our 46th container is expected to be on its way to Dili late this year.

We are very grateful to all the many donors of goods and also cash to meet container and shipping expenses, making such a wonderful difference to so many lives over the years. This support has included generous assistance from the 2/2 Commando Association. All cash donations are tax deductible through <https://directory.rawcs.com.au/112-2010-11>.

Further information is available on our 'Containers for Timor Project' Facebook page.

John Cramb (Committee member)

SAFE DRINKING WATER FOR STUDENTS AT LOS PALOS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Max Bird (Project Manager for Rotary Projects Timor-Leste East, Kwinana Rotary Club

International Manager) advised on September 12: "Number 11 also done and dusted. A big thank you to the Rotary Club of Byford and the 2/2nd Commando Association for sponsoring [A\$5000 grant] the Installation [of a SkyHydrant water filtration system] at Ensino Secundarão Técnico Vocacional ESTV No1 Los Palos.



Some of the technical college students have been trained to install SkyHydrants and the project was carried out in partnership with Disaster Aid Australia (DAA).

SkyHydrants are purchased from the not-for-profit SkyJuice Foundation and are a robust, cost-effective water filtration system which removes 99 per cent of contaminants.

The system is capable of producing over 10,000 litres of water daily, meeting the needs of 500-1000 people and has a lifespan between five-10 years.

Max further explained: "Once you put them in, set people up, it's not a thing that we have to keep going back into. The communities where they go into, they take control and it really is life changing for them to have clean water on tap," explained Max Bird, of Kwinana Rotary Club (KRC).

The 2/2's H Force commanded by Lt Col Doig actively campaigned in the Los Palos area during August-December 1942.



2025 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 16 November 2025, please join us for a drink and a bite to eat at the

SUBIACO HOTEL

465 Hay St, Subiaco

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

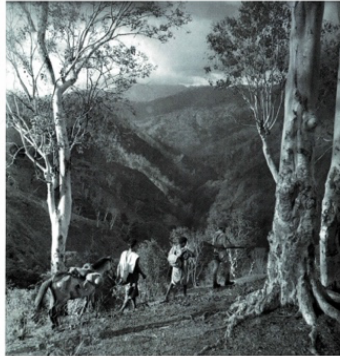
We expect the ceremony to finish at around 4pm. Drinks will be from 4.15pm.

Hope you can join us.



WWII IN EAST TIMOR

AN AUSTRALIAN ARMY SITE AND
TRAVEL GUIDE



Edward Willis

To Doublereds members and supporters:

In the lead up to Christmas, please be aware that a limited number of copies of the Guide are available for purchase from the Doublereds online store priced at \$100 per copy (this price covers production and postage costs in Australia and includes a small donation to the Association). Go to: <https://doublereds.org.au/store/product/24-wwii-in-east-timor-by-ed-willis/>

Some comments on the Guide:

“The original manuscript written by Edward Willis is an outstanding document that captures the Australian Army’s significant sites of World War 2 in East Timor as part of a comprehensive travel guide”. - [Luke Gosling OAM MP, Federal Member for Solomon, Special Envoy for Defence, Veterans' Affairs and Northern Australia](#)

“*WWII in East Timor: As a Travel Guide*, Ed Willis has merged historical accounts with geographic exploration, it gives readers a rare lens into a chapter of World War II, too often overshadowed. Through Ed's careful research and passionate narrative, he brings to life the sacrifices, struggles, and resilience of soldiers and civilians in this lesser-known theatre of war.

Ed does more than recount history-Each page invites us to walk the ground where courage was tested, and history was written. The result is a guidebook that is not only informative, but it also blends education with remembrance in a way that I found fascinating.

Ed: thanks to you for ensuring that the stories of East Timor during WWII are not only preserved, but experienced, which we did together during our recent trip together”. - [Richard Pelling, Australian Commando Association, Victoria](#)

“The Timorese people suffered greatly due to their support to Australian forces during WWII. The country was subject to Indonesian occupation for 24 years, culminating in the violence of 1999 which resulted in the Australian led INTERFET intervention. Timor-Leste needs a sustainable and diversified economy to be a prosperous and peaceful nation that is one of Australia's closest neighbours. The Travel Guide has informed the nascent tourism industry in Timor-Leste and there is potential to rival the Kokoda Track as a tourism draw card within the country. The Travel Guide is an essential enabler to the development of the military tourism industry in Timor-Leste and is a key part of the history of the Timorese people”. - [Col Paul Pembroke - immediate past Australian Defence Attache, Australian Embassy Timor-Leste](#)