

**ANZAC DAY
WEDNESDAY
25 APRIL 2018**



APRIL 2018

Compliments of
GREG PIPER MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER
FOR LAKE MACQUARIE





A message from Greg

The end of the First World War 100 years ago was a momentous occasion for world peace.

On the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, the guns fell silent at 11am (Paris time) and the world rejoiced.

It was deemed the “war to end all wars” but just over 20 years later the outbreak of the Second World War put young Australian lives back on the front lines.

This war ended with the announcement on 15 August 1945 that the Japanese would surrender and end all hostilities. It was a great relief to Australians at home and abroad.

The dates the two World Wars ended – Armistice Day and VP Day – will forever remain significant in Australian history.

This year's *Spirit of ANZAC* publication carries a story about a Catalina crew which performed vital air-sea rescue missions throughout the last year of the war. They were photographed on VP Day, knowing they still had many more missions to fly. None of those missions was more important than returning prisoners of war back to Australia. They carried some very precious cargo during those weeks after the war.

Their story is one of many which involves Catalina flying boats and other aircraft which is close to the heart of our region and Rathmines. It has been said that Catalinas were to Australia what the Spitfires were to Britain.

ANZAC Day is our chance to pause and remember all the men and women who have served, fought and died in defence of this great country. Take the opportunity on ANZAC Day to attend a service and pay respects to all our service personnel, past and present, who have given so much for the freedom we all enjoy today.

Greg Piper MP
Member for Lake Macquarie



COVER PICTURE: Consolidated Catalina flying boat taking off on a patrol. In a 1943 letter to Lieutenant Colonel John Treloar, Officer in Charge of the Military History Section and administrator of the official war art scheme, Denis Adams wrote about this painting: *“The painting of the Catalina taking off is one I have been keen to paint for a long time. It was done after carefully studying their wave formations and from a sketch I did on the slipway at Rathmines. In this also I have endeavoured to capture the movement and vibration and roar of the motors just before the flying boat becomes airborne.”*

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Rathmines pilot went on to become ASIO officer



A 30-year career in Australia's spy catching agency followed Brian Bracegirdle's military career which included time spent with the RAAF at Rathmines.

In December 1944 he was posted to 11 Squadron at Rathmines and was engaged in maritime patrols along the Australian coast.

This posting was one of many throughout his air force career.

Brian fulfilled administrative roles after the war until being demobilised in 1949 when he was recruited into the newly formed Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

He served with ASIO until his retirement in 1979. Brian Bracegirdle died in 2005.

Brian Leighton Bracegirdle was 13 when the family moved to Canberra when his father, distinguished naval officer Leighton Seymour Bracegirdle, was appointed Military and Official Secretary to the Governor-General.

He later worked as a jackaroo and had flying experience with the Canberra Aero Club before joining the RAAF in January 1939 and being commissioned as a Pilot Officer in October.

His postings then included:

- ▶ 3 Squadron at Richmond, NSW, and promoted to Flying Officer in April 1940. Deployed to the Middle East in August 1940. Served in North Africa and Palestine through 1940-41.
- ▶ 4 Squadron in Canberra until January 1942, promoted to temporary Flight Lieutenant. Trained pilots at Point Cook.
- ▶ 75 Squadron in south-east Queensland in May 1942, as a liaison officer between RAAF fighter units and the US Army Air Force.
- ▶ 4 Fighter Sector Headquarters in Port Moresby in September 1942. Commanded Port Moresby's fighter sector. Promoted to Squadron Leader.
- ▶ 11 Squadron at Rathmines in December 1944. Engaged in maritime patrols.
- ▶ 42 Squadron in east Arnhem Land in May 1945. Engaged in mine laying and armed reconnaissance over the Netherlands East Indies until October 1945.



TOP: ASIO Medal presented to Brian Bracegirdle after his retirement.

ABOVE: Squadron Leader Brian Bracegirdle's WWII service medals

BELOW: Australian and English Air Force officers on the verandah of the main building at Lydda Airport in Palestine in 1941. Brian Bracegirdle is pictured sitting on the wall at the right.





And the guns finally fell silent ...

At 11am on 11 November 1918, the Armistice which was signed by Germany earlier that morning, came into effect.

It was the end to World War One, also known as The Great War of 1914-18, or "the war to end all wars".

As news filtered back to Australia that fighting had stopped, cities and towns around the country erupted into celebrations.

Troops remained on active duty at the Front and with the news of the ceasefire came a numb sense of disbelief ... could it really be true?

Soldiers were still surrounded by devastation, death and terrible memories.

It took many days for the impact of the Armistice to become "real", to fully believe the war had ended, that they had survived, and would soon return home – albeit without many of their mates.

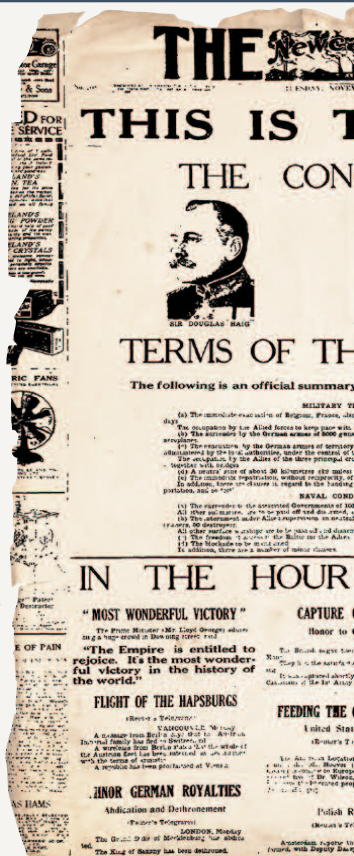
Colonel Percy Dobson wrote:

It was hard to believe the war was over. Everything was just the same, tired troops everywhere and cold drizzly winter weather – just the same as if the war were still on.



ABOVE: The Newcastle Sun's front page on 12 November 1918.

LEFT: A painting depicts the signing of the Armistice in a railway carriage at Compiègne, in northern France, on 11 November 1918. The war ended at 11am that day.



This year marks many significant anniversaries in Australia's military history:

WORLD WAR ONE

100th anniversary of ...

- * The Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, France
- * The Battle of Hamel, France
- * The Battle of Amiens, France
- * The Battle of Mont St Quentin, France
- * Allied troops occupying Lebanon and Syria
- * The First World War Armistice

WORLD WAR TWO

75th anniversary of ...

- * The Battle of the Atlantic

It was fought along thousands of miles of shipping lanes by submarines, ships and aircraft, by code-breakers, intelligence operatives and thousands of civilian seamen and merchant mariners. It started in September 1939 and continued until Germany's surrender in May 1945.

- * Australian work on Hellfire Pass and completion of Thai Burma Railway. Hellfire Pass is the name of a railway cutting 75 metres long and 25 metres deep on the former Burma Railway in Thailand. It was built with forced labour made up of Allied Prisoners of War. Between 180,000 and 250,000 South-East Asian civilian labourers and about 61,000 POWs worked on the railway's construction. About 90,000



The final day of The Great War



- ◆ The very last person on record to die in World War One was American, Private Henry Gunter, shot dead at 10.59am. His unit was ordered to take an enemy machine gun post. It's said the German soldiers, who knew the ceasefire was moments away, at first tried to stop them by shouting and waving - but as the attack developed, the Germans fired back.
- ◆ Australians were not in action on November 11 – yet many died in hospitals on this day, from injuries and illness. Artilleryman Sydney Harper drowned on November 11 at the French port of Le Havre. The last Australian deaths resulting from battle were recorded on November 4. Three airmen and three engineers were among them.
- ◆ A Canadian killed at 10.58am – he was the last Commonwealth soldier to die, shot by a sniper. The last Brit killed was Private George Edwin Ellison, a 40-year-old father, shot dead at 9.30am, at Mons.
- ◆ The last German to die was shot just after 11am as confusion still surrounded the ceasefire.

civilian labourers and more than 12,000 Allied prisoners died.

KOREAN WAR

65th anniversary of ...

* The Korean War Armistice

A ceasefire was agreed to on 27 July 1953 after two years of negotiations. Almost a million military personnel from both sides, and two million civilians, died. Australia lost 339 personnel killed and 1216 wounded, with 44 still listed as missing.

VIETNAM WAR

50th anniversary of ...

* The Battles at Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral.

Australian, New Zealand and United States forces were involved in a series of intense fighting between May and June 1968 at Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral.

A total of 26 Australians died at FSB Coral and Balmoral.

Estimates suggest more than 300 North Vietnamese died.

45th anniversary of ...

* The formal end of Australian military hostilities in the Vietnam War. Australia's involvement was officially over when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January, 1973.

More than 3000 Australians were wounded, and 521 died.



Spies in the skies

A group of RAAF photographers are reunited at RAAF Base Rathmines in 1942 after serving in various postings attached to the navy and air force.

Their job in reconnaissance was invaluable. The photographers were sent out in unarmed planes to plot enemy positions over land and sea.

No. 1 PRU and No. 87 PR Squadron, which operated from Coomalie Creek, flew over the South West Pacific area of the Pacific War Theatre.

Planes modified for reconnaissance included Buffalo, Wirraway, Lancer, Lightning and Mosquito aircraft – the latter two types particularly known for their exceptional speed.

Pictured below are (from left) Cecil Drew (returned from the Middle East); Dick Morris (returned from Singapore); Roy Lown (returned from HMAS Australia); Frank Smythe (returned from HMAS Manoora); Warrant Officer John Newton (returned from HMAS Westralia); Ron Caswell (returned from the Middle East); Bill Glendenning (returned from HMAS Westralia).



VP Day: T

It was a historic day around the world but particularly for Australians at home and abroad, and especially those suffering in the prison camps.

Victory in the Pacific Day (15 August 1945) was the day hostilities officially ended against the Japanese.

This picture (right) of a Catalina crew from Squadron 113 was taken on VP Day.

The squadron was Air Sea Rescue Flight and was based at Labuan in North Borneo - the RAAF's most westerly base in the South West Pacific area.

The famous Catalina flying boats were a welcomed sight for many. This crew flew 160 missions (700 hours) and rescued 15 pilots from the sea.

VP Day was not an immediate ticket home for air crews. Catalinas soon after played a key role in bringing home the POWs who had finally been liberated.

The Flight was formed at Cairns on 10 January 1945 and was equipped with PBY Catalinas for air-sea rescue operations.

Its first operational missions were in February, providing support for air strikes and dropping supplies. The Flight departed Australia for the Netherlands East Indies in



ime to celebrate



Looking relaxed at the end of the war are (back row from left) Flight Lieutenant Wally Mills, Flying Officer Wal Hawthorne (Ardlethan NSW), Flt Lt Len Pozzi (Coffs Harbour NSW), Warrant Officer Bill Taylor (Albury NSW), WO Reg Crilley (Mackay Qld), Sergeant Sid Middleton (Toowoomba Qld), (front) Sgt Bob Ballingall (Coburg Vic), FO Ron Francis (Adelaide SA) and FO Col Darling (Maitland SA).

late February and continued in rescue and transport roles.

113 Air Sea Rescue returned to Australia in January 1946 and was disbanded at RAAF Base Rathmines on 31 January 1946.

The crew, some who had completed training at Rathmines earlier in the war, was captained by Flt Lt Wally Mills, from Papatoetoe in New Zealand, who was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross.

Celebrations erupted across Australia when the surrender of Japan was announced 73 years ago on 15 August 1945. The war was finally over.

Lois Martin had knitted this red, white and blue VP vest especially for the occasion. It was expected the war would soon end, so Lois got to work and was ready for the big day. Her friends are Betty Williams (left) and (who is believed to be) Carmel O'Connor (right). They all worked together at the Kodak factory in Abbotsford, Melbourne.

This picture of Lois appeared on the front page of the *Melbourne Herald* that afternoon, although her two friends were cropped out of the picture. Lois also pinned a bunch of red, white and blue ribbons to the front of the vest and applied the letters 'VP' to her face in lipstick.

Lois never wore the vest again after that special day. She later married William Drew who donated the vest to the Australian War Memorial upon his wife's death.





THE SPIRIT OF ANZAC

Patching planes at Rathmines

Corporal Audrey Hampson, of Bundaberg in Queensland, had her photo reproduced on this oval tin lid (pictured) which has cracked and worn over time.

Audrey enlisted as a fabric worker in the RAAF in 1942 and trained in Geelong before serving at Wagga, Rathmines and Bundaberg. She was discharged on 11 July 1945.

The 2 Flying Boat Repair Depot operated at Rathmines. It was a vital service to keeping damaged planes in the air. Fabric for patching was similar to parachute silk and used with what was termed "dope", a waterproofing substance which was painted onto the fabric.



LEFT: Cpl Audrey Hampson.

ABOVE: Repairing plane wings at Rathmines.

2018 ANZAC Day activities in the region

BOOLAROO-SPEERS POINT

- 5.30am: Assemble in the car park near the boat ramps.
- 5.45am: March will step off and proceed to the Rotunda in Speers Point Park with dawn service to follow. (Note that service has been moved from the Cenotaph for security reasons)

CARDIFF

- 5.00am: Dawn service at Cardiff RSL Club. March from corner of Main Road and Macquarie Rd to Cardiff RSL for the service. (Due to changes in traffic control this year, please plan to arrive a bit earlier at 4.50am.)

DOYALSON-WYEE

- 5.00am: Dawn service at Doyalson-Wyee Sub-branch Memorial. Breakfast afterwards at the RSL club.
- 8.30am: March from Raw Challenge course, south along the Pacific Hwy, turn left into Wentworth Ave, then left into the RSL grounds, proceed to cenotaph for service.
- 9.00am: ANZAC Service at cenotaph.

MORISSET

- 6.00am: Dawn service at Morisset Country Club followed by breakfast in the club's bistro (club to close at 8.00am)
- 8.30am: Form up for march at the top railway station car park, vehicles in parade to form up at the bus terminal.
- 9.00am: March to Morisset Country Club.
- 9.35am: ANZAC service.

RATHMINES

- 12.30pm: ANZAC Day remembrance service at the Flying Boat Memorial on the point overlooking Catalina Bay, adjacent to the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club. March from noon.

RYHOPE

- 9.00am: ANZAC service at Lake Macquarie Memorial Park, Ryhope.

TERALBA

- 8.00am: Service at the Teralba War Memorial in ANZAC Park. (No march this year.)

TORONTO

- 5.00am: Dawn Service at the War Memorial in Goffet Park. Breakfast available afterwards for gold coin donation.
- 10.45am: Form up at Diggers Club for march to the War Memorial. Step off at 11.10am.
- 11.30am: ANZAC Service at the Goffet Park War Memorial.

WANGI WANGI

- 5.30am: Dawn service at the War Memorial at Wangi Wangi RSL Club.
- 10.00am: March steps off at Puna Road for the War Memorial. Assemble and form-up at 9.30am. ANZAC service at the Memorial will follow march.