

Dispatches March 2024

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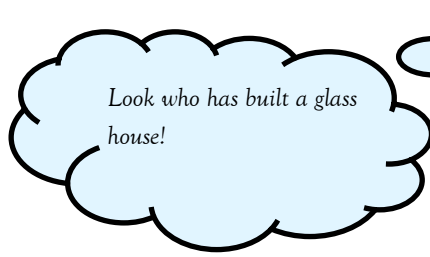
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Wed Arvo Monthly lunch Welcome Friday General Meeting Monthly Dinner COM Reg 7



March 2024

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Appeals Update – Mar 24

Greetings everyone. Welcome to the March 2024 Appeals update.

First, a bit of admin

After many years managing our appeals, Phil Morgan has completed the handover of the appeals portfolio to Gary Fisher. Gary will be assisted by Tim Healy. Please refer all appeals matters to either Gary (0411 111 630) or Tim (0451 775 370).

On behalf of veterans and their families everywhere, I would like to congratulate and thank Phil for the hard work and great results he has achieved whilst managing our appeals over many years, and the assistance he has given me during our transition. Thank You Phil

Phil will continue as our membership member, with the assistance of Deb Williams.

2024 Anzac Appeal

Planning is well advanced for the 2024 ANZAC Appeal being conducted Fri 12 to Wed 24 Apr. EFTPOS machines (10) have been requested and delivery is expected in early Apr. We still have our Power Packs which extend the operating time of the machines. Intro/Training on EFTPOS machines and the power packs can be conducted as required as soon as they arrive.

Appeals Forums

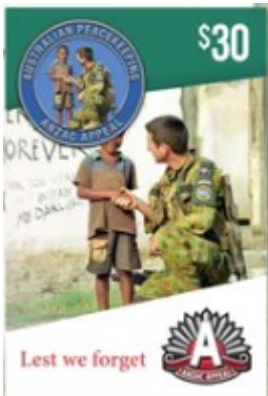
Once again, we had two teams attend the Summer Appeals Forums conducted in February. Tim and Carol Healy went to Shepperton, and Phil and Jacky went to Anzac House. These are a great chance to get updated on the latest appeals news and meet members from other branches to discuss strategies and general RSL issues. There will be another series of Forums conducted in Winter so if you are interested in attending, discuss it with Gary or Tim.

2024 Badges

Our badges have been ordered, and as usual we eagerly wait to see what we actually get. There is a wide range this year; the \$20 Nurse Bullwinkle returns, as well as the \$5 RAN and RAAF Caps. There is no \$1 badge.

Dispatches

For the collectors, there are two new badges for 2024; \$30 INTERFET 25th Anniversary and \$50 Bull Allen.



Appeal Roster

Thank you to all those that have already volunteered your time to sell badges. Our aim is to have 2 people per table (3 between Big W/Woolies). There are still plenty of spots empty at most of the venues. A copy of the roster will be displayed at the RSL for you to check and update your availability as you are enjoying the company and a beverage of your choice on a Monday night / Wed arvo / Friday night as may be. Please have a look or give us a call and let us know if you can fill some spots.

You can give Gary (0411 111 630) or Tim (0451 775 370) a call anytime to discuss the roster or any other appeal issues.

See you all soon.

Regards

Gary and Tim

Dispatches

February Lunch was at Italia

13 noisy RSL folk were there having a great time, the food as always was hot and good value.

I really look forward to Friday lunch out. No cooking that day.



If I had known Kenny Rogers was going to be there, I would have worn cowboy boots, hat, and taken my autograph book



***Next: The Royal Hotel
12 midday
March 22nd.2024***



I don't know what is happening in this pic, and I'm not about to ask



From 1pm every Wednesday





February dinner @ foaty club



These two probably won't be invited back





Good Afternoon

This year is set to be a big year for the Victorian veteran community. We are looking at hosting seven veteran community networking events across Victoria. These events are opportunities for groups of veteran organisation’s to come together build relationships, networks, and discover what services and programs are available to support the veteran community.

Much consideration has gone in to the proposed calendar to try to connect and build relationships with regional locations. In order to reduce the burden on travel, we are proposing Sale and Wodonga Sessions around transition seminars to assist with this.

SAVE the Dates

- Tuesday 26th March 2024 Northern Suburbs - Epping RSL
- Wednesday 8th May 2024 Shepparton
- Tuesday 25th June 2024 Sale
- Tuesday 23rd July 2024 Albury/Wodonga

- Tuesday 20th August 2024 Peninsula/South East
- Friday 25th October 2024 Far West – Warrnambool RSL
- Tuesday 3rd December 2024 Surf Coast/South West



Who we help

Mental health support for Navy, Army and Air Force personnel, veterans & their families



Community and peer program

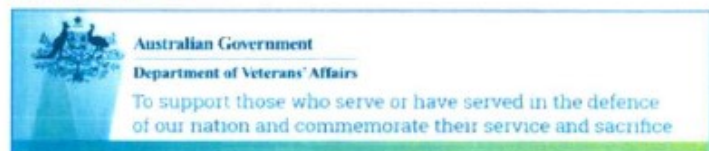
Open Arms Community and Peer Advisors have ‘lived experience’ and work collaboratively with veterans, family supports, community agencies and mental health clinicians.

For those who participated in 2023, I would like to say thank you for your support. I know that participants have found the session’s valuable and hope that this has led to greater supports to the veteran community.

As soon as I have more concrete information I will be in contact with you in relation to these sessions. If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to reach out to me.

Kind Regards

Karen Cain | Community Support Adviser (Victoria)
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Freedom Is Not Free

IT WAS THE VETERAN,
not the journalist,
who gave us freedom of the press.

IT WAS THE VETERAN,
not the poet,
who gave us freedom of speech.

IT WAS THE VETERAN,
not the campus organizer,
who gave us freedom to demonstrate.

IT WAS THE VETERAN,
those who salute the flag,
who serve beneath the flag,
and whose coffins are draped with the flag,
who purchased our freedom

If You Love Your Freedom
Thank A VET!

Well here we are – my last Dispatches Newsletter as Editor for our Sunbury RSL.

After 9 years – since that very first slim edition in February 2015 - there have been 109 Newsletters and countless flyers & posters and thank you certificates.

What started as a few print copies at the rooms monthly blossomed to an extensive email list for members including some outside the RSL including the Victorian RSL State President! I have managed to include photos, stories, recipes and the odd cartoon and funny meme and you have all probably become tired of hearing me stand up at meetings asking for contributions.

As your editor I also sent hundreds of emails to members to inform them of upcoming events, both happy and sad and also coordinated the popular COVID ZOOM meetings during those difficult times.

So it has been a personally fulfilling 9 years that I have enjoyed – thank you for your support.

And thank you to Judy Landau who has offered to take on the role going forward.

Deb



International Force East Timor

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

International Force East Timor



Also known as	INTERFET
Leader	Major General Peter Cosgrove
Dates of operation	September 20, 1999–February 20, 2000
Country	See list
Allegiance	 Australia
Status	Handed over command of military operations to UNTAET
Size	11,500 personnel (at the peak of deployment)
Battles and wars	1999 East Timorese crisis

Succeeded by: UNTAET

The International Force East Timor (INTERFET) was a multinational non-United Nations peacemaking task force, organised and led by Australia in accordance with United Nations resolutions to address the humanitarian and security crisis that took place in East Timor from 1999–2000 until the arrival of UN peacekeepers. INTERFET was commanded by an Australian military officer, Major General Peter Cosgrove.

Background

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed the former Portuguese colony. The annexation was recognised by few nations (including Australia and the United States) and was resisted by many East Timorese. Cold War security concerns were emphasised, while foreign powers also placed high importance on good relations with Indonesia and were largely reluctant to assist a push for independence as a result. However, following the fall of long-serving Indonesian President Suharto, the new president, B. J. Habibie, was prepared to grant East Timor special autonomy.

In late 1998, the Australian prime minister, John Howard, with his foreign minister, Alexander Downer, drafted a letter to Habibie supporting the idea of autonomy but incorporating a suggestion that the long-term issue of East Timorese self-determination could best be defused by providing the East Timorese with an opportunity for a plebiscite after a substantial period of autonomy. The explicit comparison was with the Matignon Accords involving France and New Caledonia. The letter upset Habibie, who saw it as implying Indonesia was a "colonial power", and he decided in response to announce a snap referendum to be conducted within six months.

News of the proposal provoked a violent reaction from pro-Indonesian militia in East Timor. The Indonesian army did not intervene to restore order. At a summit in Bali, Howard told Habibie that a United Nations peacekeeping force should oversee the process. Habibie rejected the proposal, believing it would have insulted the Indonesian military.

East Timor Special Autonomy Referendum

The United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was established to organise and conduct a referendum on the question of independence. It was composed of police and observers rather than military personnel. The UN-sponsored referendum held on 30 August 1999 showed overwhelming approval for East Timorese independence from Indonesia. After the result was announced on 4 September, violent clashes, instigated by a suspected anti-independence militia, sparked a humanitarian and security crisis in the region, with Xanana Gusmão calling for a UN peacekeeping force the same day. Many East Timorese were killed, with as many as 500,000 displaced and around half fleeing the territory.

On 6 September, Operation Spitfire commenced with Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) C-130 Hercules aircraft evacuating UNAMET staff, foreign nationals and refugees, including Bishop Belo, to Darwin from Dili and Baucau airfields with protection provided by unarmed Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) soldiers.

United Nations resolution

The violence was met with widespread public anger in Australia, Portugal and elsewhere, and activists in Portugal, Australia, the United States and other nations pressured their governments to take action. Australia's Opposition Spokesman on Foreign Affairs, Laurie Brereton, was vocal in highlighting evidence of the Indonesian military's involvement in pro-integrationist violence and advocated United Nations peacekeeping to support the East Timor's ballot. The Catholic Church in Australia urged the Australian Government to send an armed peacekeeping force to East Timor to end the violence. Protests occurred outside the Indonesia Consulate in Darwin and the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra.

The Australian prime minister, John Howard, gained the support of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and U.S. President Bill Clinton for an Australian-led international peacekeeping force to enter East Timor to end the violence. On 12 September, Clinton announced:

The Indonesian military has aided and abetted militia violence in East Timor, in violation of the commitment of its leaders to the international community. This has allowed the militias to murder innocent people, to send thousands fleeing for their lives, to attack the United Nations compound. The United States has suspended all military cooperation, assistance, and sales to Indonesia ... The Indonesian Government and military must not only stop what they are doing but reverse course. They must halt the violence not just in Dili but throughout the nation. They must permit humanitarian assistance and let the U.N. mission do its job ... We are ready to support an effort led by Australia to mobilize a multinational force to help to bring security to East Timor under U.N. auspice ... the eyes of the world are on that tiny place and on those poor innocent, suffering people.



Return of Xanana Gusmão from Indonesian prison (1999)

Indonesia, in dire economic straits, relented. Under international pressure to allow an international peacekeeping force, President B.J. Habibie announced on 12 September that he would do so. He told a press conference:

A couple of minutes ago I called the United Nations Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, to inform about our readiness to accept international peacekeeping forces through the United Nations, from friendly nations, to restore peace and security in East Timor.

On 15 September 1999, the United Nations Security Council expressed concern at the deteriorating situation in East Timor and issued its Resolution 1264 calling for a multinational force to restore peace and security to East Timor, to protect and support the United Nations mission there, and to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations until such time as a United Nations peacekeeping force could be approved and deployed in the area. The resolution also welcomed Australia's letter to accept the leadership of a proposed multinational force in East Timor and to make a substantial contribution to the force itself.

Military operations

The lead-up to the operation remained politically and militarily tense. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) re-deployed frontline combat aircraft—F/A-18s and F-111s—northward to Tindal in the Northern Territory to act as a deterrent against escalation of the conflict by the Indonesian military and provide close air support and air defence in support of the landing if required. P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft were also deployed. At peak strength the RAAF aerial support assets available to INTERFET included 10 F-111s, 12 F/A-18s, five P-3C Orions, three B707 aerial refuelling tankers, two B200 King Airs, three PC-9A forward control aircraft, and a Falcon F900 VIP jet.[16] Also in support was a significant airlift group, with Australian transport aircraft including thirteen C-130 Hercules and three DHC-4 Caribou. New Zealand deployed C-130 Hercules, Bell UH-1H Hueys, and A-4K Skyhawks to RAAF Base Tindal to support RAAF F-111s. In addition, a number of British, United States, Canadian, French and Thai aircraft were also deployed. On at least one occasion Australian P-3C aircraft were intercepted by Indonesian aircraft, while an Indonesian submarine was also detected by Coalition surveillance within the vicinity of Dili Harbour as INTERFET forces approached. Ultimately no serious incidents occurred and the intervention was successful; however, Australia–Indonesia relations would take several years to recover.



HMAS Jervis Bay in Dili in October 1999

Of the 22 nations involved in INTERFET, 10 provided naval assets. Australia was the single largest provider, with 14 ships deployed with INTERFET between 19 September 1999 and 23 February 2000: the frigates Adelaide, Anzac, Darwin, Sydney, Newcastle, and Melbourne; the landing ship Tobruk, the landing craft Balikpapan, Brunei, Labuan, Tarakan, and Betano; the fast transport Jervis Bay; and the replenishment vessel Success. The United States contributed seven ships: the cruiser Mobile Bay; the amphibious assault ships Belleau Wood, Peleliu, and Juneau; and the replenishment ships Kilauea, San Jose, and Tippecanoe. France supplied four vessels: the frigates Vendémiaire and Prairial plus the landing ships Siroco and Jacques Cartier. Singapore contributed the amphibious landing ships Excellence, Intrepid, and Perseverance. New Zealand deployed the frigates Te Kaha and Canterbury and the replenishment ship Endeavour. Other naval vessels deployed during the operation included the Canadian replenishment ship Protecteur, the Italian amphibious assault ship San Giusto, the Portuguese frigate Vasco da Gama, the Thai landing ship 13, and the British destroyer does not exist)" Glasgow.

The International Forces East Timor (INTERFET) coalition began deploying to East Timor on 20 September 1999, as a non-UN force operating in accordance with UN Resolutions. Led by Australia, who contributed 5,500 personnel and the force commander, Major General Peter Cosgrove, it was tasked with restoring peace and security, protecting and supporting UNAMET, and facilitating humanitarian assistance. The Australian Deployable Joint Force Headquarters provided overall command and control. The main Australian combat element included infantry and cavalry provided by the 3rd Brigade. Due to the nature of the operation the force deployed without its artillery and other heavy weapons and equipment; however, 105 mm and 155 mm guns and Leopard tanks were available and on standby in Darwin for rapid deployment if required. It was supported by the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, 103rd Signals Squadron, 110th Signals Squadron, and elements of the 3rd Brigade Administrative Support Battalion. Twelve Black Hawk helicopters from the 5th Aviation Regiment were also deployed. Other force level

troops included military police, an intelligence company, an electronic warfare squadron, elements of an artillery locating battery, and topographic survey personnel.

Special forces played a key role, with an Australian squadron from the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR), a troop from the New Zealand Special Air Service (NZSAS) and a troop from the British Special Boat Service (SBS) forming Response Force (RESPFOR). The SASR flew into Dili by RAAF C-130H Hercules securing Komoro Airport followed by NZSAS and SBS. With the airhead secured, infantry from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR) then flew in from Darwin supported by two M-113 armoured personnel carriers from B Squadron, 3rd/4th Cavalry Regiment. RESPFOR began vehicle patrols into Dili, including reconnaissance of Dili port, after which a rifle company from 2 RAR—borrowing Indonesian military trucks for transport—secured the port prior to the arrival of follow-on forces the next day, while the remainder of the battalion consolidated the position at Komoro. Meanwhile, an advance party of Gurkhas from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles (2 RGR) and British Royal Marines Commandos from the Fleet Standby Rifle Troop (FSRT) secured the foothills and areas to the south of the city. 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR) began landing the next day at the port, along with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment equipped with ASLAV light armoured vehicles and the remainder of the Company Group from 2 RGR arrived. No. 2 Airfield Defence Squadron (2AFDS) arrived the following day to permanently secure Komoro airport replacing 2 RAR. Additional Australian forces and support personnel arrived in the days that followed as INTERFET continued to grow, as did forces from a number of other countries, in particular from New Zealand.



USAF C-130 taking off from Darwin for a mission to East Timor

Most United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) personnel had already been evacuated from the region in the preceding months by the Royal Australian Air Force, although a small number had remained behind. With the withdrawal of the Indonesian forces and officials, UNAMET re-established its headquarters in Dili on 28 September and on 19 October 1999, Indonesia formally recognised the result of the independence referendum. Soon after, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established as a peace-keeping operation which was also fully responsible for the administration of East Timor to oversee its transition to independence. With only limited forces available, Cosgrove adopted the 'oil spot' concept of dominating key areas from which the surrounding areas could be influenced and then secured, moving quickly by helicopter to keep the militia off balance. The large airfield at Baucau was secured by two platoons from 2 RAR on 22 September, who were relieved by the Philippine Army non-combat contingent known as the Philippine Humanitarian Support Mission to East Timor (PhilHSMET) three days later.

On 26 September D Company, 2 RAR conducted an air-mobile insertion into Liquica, approximately 30 kilometres (19 mi) returning to Dili about 30 hours later. On 29 September, the first New Zealand infantry arrived in Dili with V Company from the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (1 RNZIR) together with four M-113 APCs from the Queen Alexandra's Mounted Rifles. With Dili secured INTERFET began moving into the western regencies.[24] On 1 October 2 RAR flew in to simultaneously secure Balibo and Batugade, near the western border. Mounted in APCs, elements of the battalion then secured Maliana, before clearing the remainder of the Bobonaro Regency.



Irish Army Ranger Wing (ARW) on patrol in East Timor

On 6 October, an armoured column of Gurkhas and RESPFOR entered Suai together with RESPFOR in Black Hawks, capturing 116 militia; however, a number of SASR personnel were later ambushed, resulting in two Australians wounded. In the counter-attack two militia were killed, while two escaped but were later found to have died of wounds. Meanwhile, a third Australian battalion—the 5th/7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5/7 RAR)—had arrived in Dili relieving 3 RAR. On 10 October, 3 RAR was inserted into Bobonaro and Maliana by helicopter and V Company, 1 RNZIR was inserted in Suai also by Black Hawks relieving the Gurkhas/RESPFOR. The same day a platoon from 2 RAR was fired on by Indonesian police near Mota'ain on the border, and in the ensuing clash one Indonesian was killed.

On 13 October, a major amphibious operation was launched at Suai with the bulk of Headquarters 3rd Brigade (renamed Headquarters West Force) logistic and support units landed. West Force (WESTFOR) consisting of 2RAR, 3RAR, and 1RNZIR, in addition to supporting aviation, engineer and armoured units, was tasked with securing the border region. By 22 October, the 1 RNZIR Battalion Group was fully deployed which included a Canadian infantry company from 3rd Battalion, Royal 22 Regiment and a platoon of Irish special forces from the Army Ranger Wing supported by No. 3 Squadron RNZAF Iroquois helicopters. From mid-October contingents from a number of other countries began to arrive, including battalions from Thailand and South Korea, which were deployed in the eastern part of the country.

The arrival of thousands of international troops in East Timor caused the militia to flee across the border into Indonesia. A major contact at Aidabasalala, 15 kilometres (9.3 mi) from the West Timor border, occurred on 16 October 1999. The action, involving an Australian covert reconnaissance patrol from the SASR, saw the Australians repeatedly attacked in a series of fire-fights by a group of more than 20 militia. The SASR patrol had been detected whilst establishing an observation post and were forced to fight their way to a landing zone, being attacked a further three times over a one-and-a-half hour period, killing a number of their attackers before they were successfully extracted by Black Hawk helicopter. Five militia were killed and three wounded, whilst there were no Australian casualties. Later, intelligence reports speculated on the involvement of Indonesian military personnel in the attempt to cut off and destroy the Australians, whilst conjecture as to the identity of the pro-Indonesian militias and the source of their arms and training increased in the media.



New Zealand Special Air Service (SAS) escorting a port survey

team in East Timor

On 21 October 1999, INTERFET launched a combined amphibious and airmobile operation into the Oecussi Enclave, which was the last part of the country to be secured. Following covert reconnaissance of militia activity in the previous weeks, a number of special forces teams from RESPFOR were inserted by Black Hawk helicopter around Port Makasa to secure the beachhead. Meanwhile, Australian Navy Clearance divers infiltrated the area aboard the Collins-class submarine HMAS Waller, conducting a covert beach reconnaissance ahead of the amphibious landing. The following day mechanised infantry from the 5/7 RAR conducted a beach landing at first light. RESPFOR subsequently secured Ambeno. Reinforced by Gurkhas from 2 RGR, the force then swept through the area, capturing a number of militia while the remainder were believed to have fled to West Timor. In mid-November, 3 RAR took over responsibility for the Oecussi Enclave.

On 28 February 2000, INTERFET handed over command of military operations to United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). A New Zealand soldier, Private Leonard Manning, was shot dead during a contact on 24 July 2000, becoming the first combat fatality since the United Nations-backed forces had arrived in September. Manning was killed in the south-west town of Suai when his patrol was attacked by a group of militia. Grenades and claymore mines had been withdrawn from New Zealand's forces after the UN took over, a change which was rescinded after Manning's death. Two Australian soldiers also died in East Timor in 2000—Lance Corporal Russell Eisenhuth through illness on 17 January and Corporal Stuart Jones after a weapon accidentally discharged on 10 August 2000.

Countries contributing to INTERFET



Commander INTERFET, Major General Cosgrove, joins hands with the new East Timor leadership during a celebration to mark the official handover to UNTAET.

Australia provided the largest contingent of troops, hardware and equipment for the INTERFET operation—5,500 personnel at its peak—followed by New Zealand. New Zealand's contribution peaked at 1,200 personnel. It was New Zealand's largest overseas military deployment since the Korean War. Eventually 22 nations contributed to INTERFET which grew to over 11,500 strong. Other countries to contribute include (in alphabetical order), Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Australia was refused US ground troops but was able to secure vital support for airlift, logistics, specialised intelligence, over the horizon deterrence, and "diplomatic muscle". Participants were awarded the International Force East Timor Medal by the Australian Government.

As lead nation Australia provided logistic support for a number of other nations in addition to its own requirements. A Force Logistic Support Group was deployed during October and November based on the 10th Force Support Battalion (10 FSB), which included supply, transport, port operators, water transport and maintenance personnel, while a forward surgical team, preventative medical section, signals squadron, and engineers from the 17th Construction Squadron and a section of the 19th Chief Engineer Works were also attached. Meanwhile, the 9th Force Support Battalion was deployed to Darwin to provide additional support, and later rotated with 10 FSB in East Timor.

Despite the proximity of considerable civilian and military infrastructure in Darwin, the provision of this support proved a major challenge for Australia, which had not been required to provide full logistic support for a deployed force since the Second World War. Reductions in defence spending over the previous decade had led to the run down of its logistic support force, resulting in the requirement to quickly implement a range of ad hoc measures to overcome these shortfalls. Despite relatively short lines of communication, low expenditure of ammunition, fuel and other consumables, and limited personnel and equipment casualties, the operation strained the ADF's limited logistic capability and it was questionable whether it could have sustained a more high intensity deployment.

LESLIE C. "BULL" ALLEN, MM, USS

One of the best known images of an Australian soldier in the Pacific War is that of VX12513, Corporal Leslie 'Bull' Allen. Bull Allen was born in 1918, in Ballarat, Victoria. As an orphan, he and his sister would grow up in an orphanage.

By the time the Second World War had broken out, Bull Allen had already been working for nearly a decade. In 1940 at the age of 21, Allen volunteered for service with the Second Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

Posted as reinforcement to the 2/5 Australian Infantry Battalion of the 17 Brigade. Allen would join the Battalion in Palestine where they were training and would be made a stretcher-bearer in 'Don' Company.

By the time the famous image below had been taken, Bull Allen along with the 17 Brigade, had seen service in the Middle East, including Libya and Syria. It was during those campaigns that Allen would not only earn his nickname of 'Bull' but also gain a reputation as being 'cool under fire'.



Playing Australian Rugby League in Palestine he would 'charge' towards his opponents. This combined with his towering presence of 5" 11' (180 cm, tall for the time period) his rugged appearance and deep laugh would earn him the nickname 'Bull'. One of his fellow soldiers remarked:

'You could hear him a mile off! Bull was thus one of the battalion's most recognisable...and one of its most popular characters.'

Bull Allen also gained a reputation for having courage under fire. He carried many of his wounded comrades from the field of battle whilst enduring heavy enemy fire.

After fighting the Italians, French and Germans, the next enemy Bull Allen would face was the Japanese in the jungles of New Guinea. The 2/5 Australian Infantry Battalion would end up fighting all of the Kings enemies.

In January 1943, while involved in defensive operations in Wau, Allen would be recognised officially for his brave work as a stretcher-bearer. After carrying out many of his fellow soldiers under intense Japanese fire, he was awarded the Military Medal. The citation, in part reads:

'Private Allen's bearing and his untiring efforts in tending the wounded and helping with rations and stores were an inspiration'.

By 30 July 1943, Bull Allen would be alongside United States soldiers on Mt Tambu as part of the Wau-Salumua campaign. In the course of the battle, Allen went forward and carried to safety no less than twelve American servicemen. Ballarat historian and friend of the Allen family, Mr David Cranage states:

'Each time he went back for another rescue attempt, soldiers would make bets on whether he would return'.

The American upon Bull Allen's shoulders in the famous photograph was unconscious, having earlier being knocked out by a mortar bomb. During the action two other medics had been killed trying to bring in the wounded. Bull Allen showed no fear and although slightly wounded, his determination and dedication to his job allowed him to undertake the before mentioned feat.

For his heroism at Mount Tambu, he would later receive his second gallantry award, the United States Silver Star.

Although Bull Allen never showed fear in the front of his fellow soldiers, his war service undoubtedly affected him. As early as 1941 the signs were starting to show. Before his service in Syria or Wau, he had been admitted to hospital after his first campaign in Libya, suffering 'anxiety neurosis'. By the time Bull Allen performed his extraordinary feat on Mt Tambu, the experience of war had taken an enormous toll on Bull Allen's health.

Towards the end of 1944, Bull Allen was training with his battalion back in Queensland. It was here that his behaviour came to a head and after striking an officer, he was court-martial and demoted back to Private. Bull Allen's health continued to deteriorate. On top of bouts of malaria, he suffered from 'constitutional temperamental instability' with 'anxiety symptoms'. His military career soon ended as he was discharged 'medically unfit'.



A week before the action on Mount Tambu, Bull Allen (fifth from left) can be seen briefing his party of stretcher-bearers.

The post-war years may have seen the cessation of fighting but the war inside Bull Allen's head still raged on. Although he married Jean Elizabeth Floyd, a former army nurse in 1949, Bull Allen found it difficult to return to normal life. Bull Allen suffered long periods of post-traumatic stress, on one occasion he lost the ability to speak for a period of six months.

Bull Allen would see out his years working first as a labourer and then as a theatre nurse at Ballarat Base Hospital. With a little piece of land on the outskirts of the town, he raised pigs and broke-in horses. One of his joys in later life was manning the horse drawn quartz crushing stand at the re-created Sovereign Hill gold mining town. Bull Allen was a well-known and popular character around Ballarat.

On many ANZAC Day marches in Melbourne, Bull Allen could be seen carrying the 2/5 Battalion banner along St Kilda Road on route to the Shrine of Remembrance. In 2014 the author showcased the famous image of Bull Allen as part of the Friends of the Shrine program. The powerful image is a powerful reminder of mateship and dedication to duty.

Sadly, Bull Allen passed away on 11 May 1982 from complications associated with diabetes. He was survived by his wife, daughter and three sons.

Author, David Howell

Further reading:

D. Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives* (1961)

S. Trigellis-Smith, *All the King's Enemies* (1988)

P. Bradley, *Hell's Battlefield* (2012) \