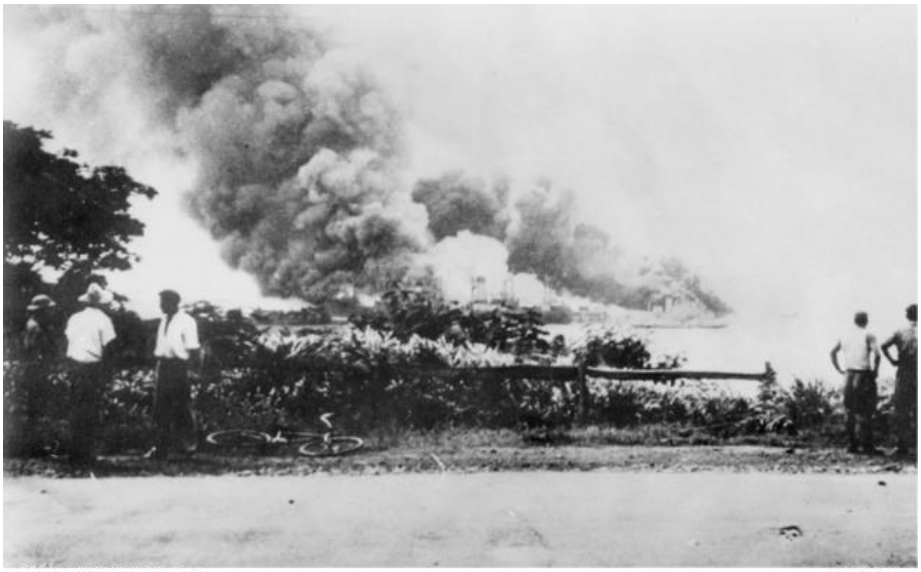
‘Somewhere North of Somewhere’

The Place of the 1942 Bombings of Darwin in Historical Memory



Darwin Raid, Australian War Memorial Photo Collection, P02625.005

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of History

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Abstract

On 19 February 1942, the town of Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia was bombed by the Japanese. This was the first time that Australia had been attacked on mainland soil. In the twenty-one months that followed, Darwin was attacked over sixty more times. Whilst there have been a significant number of works that focus on the attacks themselves, investigations into how they have been commemorated and fit into the Australian narrative are relatively few. As the first in-depth study of the commemoration events of the Bombing of Darwin, this thesis uses a chronological approach to chart the development of the commemorations over time and the factors that affect their changing nature. It explores ideas around immigration, war memory and identity, national identity and anniversaries, using these themes as a focus to explore the commemorations in different time periods. The thesis examines the way in which these commemorations and commemorative experiences have changed as those with first-hand memory dwindle in number, exploring how modern and technological developments have helped to capture new ways of commemorating. The overarching thread that weaves through this thesis is the idea that there is a difference and separation between the north and south in Australia. The thesis argues that this separation has affected the way in which the attacks have fitted into the wider Australian historical discourse.

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For our beautiful Ava – always loved and never forgotten

Darwin Defenders Memorial Poem

On the 19th February 1942 Darwin,
on our Australian soil,
was bombed by a foreign invader.

Brave young Australian soldiers
battled them courageously.
They fought and lives were lost.

Down the long, long ages glory shall ever shine
for those who fought and died
to save Australia for you and mine.

(By Alan Day KCSJ)[1]

[1] Day, Alan *Darwin Defenders Memorial Poem,* <https://www.darwindefenders.com/pdfs/darwin-poem.pdf>, accessed 30 April 2024.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Lists of Figures and Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

AADFA	Australian American Dutch Force Alliance
ACST	Australian Central Standard Time
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AEDT	Australian Eastern Daylight Time
AFL	Australian Football League
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANZAC	Australia and New Zealand Army Corps
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States
AR	Augmented Reality
ATC	Australian Tourist Commission
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWST	Australian Western Standard Time
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COFAC	Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee
DCA	Darwin Commemoration Association
DoDE	Defence of Darwin Experience
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO	General Post Office
HMAT	His Majesty's Australian Transport
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
MAGNT	Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory
MC	Master of Ceremonies

MP	Member of Parliament
MV	Merchant Vessel
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAWU	Northern Australia Workers Union
NCSTT	National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism
NLA	National Library of Australia
NT	Northern Territory
NTRS	Northern Territory Record Service
NTTC	Northern Territory Tourist Commission
NTTDMP	Northern Territory Tourism Destination Management Plan
RAAA	Royal Australian Artillery Association
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
RSL	Returned and Services League of Australia
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
SS	Steam Ship
UAP	United Australia Party
USAT	United States Army Transport
USS	United States Ship
VR	Virtual Reality
WAP	White Australia Policy
WWII	World War Two

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Introduction

Context of Research: Australia's Pearl Harbor

On 17 November 2011 Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, visited Australian and American troops based at Royal Army Air Force Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia. During his speech to the troops, he talked about the great partnership that existed between the two countries. As part of that speech, he stated 'it was here, in Darwin, where our alliance was born – during "Australia's Pearl Harbor". Against overwhelming odds, our forces fought back, with honor and with courage.'[2] Obama's speech came at an opportune moment, as it complemented a motion that was being taken through the Australian Parliament by the Member for Solomon, Natasha Griggs.[3] Griggs had tabled a motion on 20 September 2011 that held five key points requesting:

> That this House:
> 1) Acknowledges 19 February 1942 as the day Darwin was bombed and marks the first time Australia was militarily attacked by enemy forces;
> 2) Reflects upon the significant loss of life of Australian Defence personnel and civilians during the attacks and casualties of the bombings;
> 3) Recognises that the attack remained a secret for many years and that even today, many Australians are unaware of the bombing of Darwin and the significant damage and loss of life which resulted;
> 4) Also recognises the campaign of coordinated bombings against northern Australia involving 97 Japanese attacks from Darwin, to Broome and Wyndham in the west, to Katharine in the south, to Townsville in the east over the period February 1942 to November 1943; and
> 5) Calls for 19 February of each year to be Gazetted as 'Bombing of Darwin Day' and be named a Day of National Significance by the Governor-General.[4]

Griggs was not the first MP from the Northern Territory to campaign for this type of recognition – members had debated this topic from as early as the 1950s. Alan Griffin, the member for Bruce in 2011, noted that this topic had crossed his desk a number

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[2] Obama, Barack, Remarks *by President Obama to U.S and Australian Service Members,* 17 November 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-us-and-australian-service-members>, accessed 9 October 2014.
[3] Solomon Division is based in the Northern Territory and covers both the metropolitan area of Darwin as well as the wider surrounding district.
[4] Commonwealth of Australia 2011, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no.16, col. 1, p.12113.

of times during his time as Minister for Veterans' Affairs.[5] Just two weeks before Obama's visit to Darwin, Griggs' motion had been debated in the House. In summarising the events of 19 February 1942 to Members of the House, Griggs noted that 'sadly, the events of World War II, in terms of the bombing of Darwin and the northern coast, have not been remembered with the significance they should.'[6] Whilst the majority of respondents to the motion were supportive of the ideas put forward and commended Griggs for her determination in bringing this issue to the national scene, Alan Griffin – former Minister for Veterans' Affairs – held an alternative view. He believed that the events at Darwin were covered by one of the four already agreed national commemoration events – Armistice Day; Anzac Day; Battle for Australia Day and Merchant Navy Day.[7] He concluded his speech to the House by stating that:

> I have always been of the view, and it is consistent with the views of many in the ex-service community, that that was the best way to proceed. The bombing of Darwin was a very tragic series of events that I believe is covered best by the Battle for Australia, which covers more than one million Australians who served our country during that time of war.[8]

Despite the Honorable Member's reservations about the motion, the government were suitably persuaded on the matter and on the day following Obama's speech in Darwin – 18 November 2011 – the Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, released a media statement that indicated 'that the Government intends to recommend to the Governor-General that 19 February be proclaimed as 'Bombing of Darwin Day' to ensure the attacks across Australia's north are appropriately remembered and commemorated every year.'[9] Three weeks later the Governor-

[5] Commonwealth of Australia 2011, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 16, col. 2, p.12115.
[6] Commonwealth of Australia 2011, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 16, col. 2, p.12126.
[7] Armistice Day takes place on 11 November each year and marks the end of the First World War; Anzac Day takes place on 25 April each year and marks the Australian landings at Gallipoli and subsequent loss of life; Battle for Australia Day takes place on the first Wednesday in September and marks the first defeat of the Japanese at Milne Bay; and Merchant Navy Day takes place on 3 September each year and makes the contribution of the Merchant Navy to the defence of Australia. Both Merchant Navy Day and Armistice Day are both internationally commemorated events whilst Anzac Day and Battle for Australia Day are commemorated mainly in Australia and the Pacific region.
[8] Commonwealth of Australia 2011, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 16, col. 2, p.12127.
[9] Gillard, Julia, *National Plans to Commemorate the Bombing of Darwin,* 18 November 2011, <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=18276>, accessed 10 October 2014.

General, The Honorable Dame Quentin Bryce, ratified the Government's recommendation and 19 February 2012 – the 70th anniversary of the bombings – became the first national day of commemoration of these events. Gillard's media release acknowledged that Australia had, up to that point, glossed over the events that occurred in Darwin and indicated that by forming this day of commemoration, the Government were allowing Darwin to 'join Anzac Day and Remembrance Day as a date Australians pause to remember those who served and sacrificed their lives in defence of this country.'[10]

It has long been acknowledged that Australia has built its national identity out of its experience of war. Allan Gyngell states that 'the story Australians know best of their country's engagement with the world is one of wars and battles. From Gallipoli and the Western Front, to Kokoda and Vietnam, right through to Afghanistan, war is central to Australians' image of their nation in the world.' [11] Many people see the sacrifices of Australian servicemen at Gallipoli during the First World War as the event that gave birth to the nation's identity. Stephen Garton states that 'the exploits of the Anzacs during World War One were proclaimed as the moment of realization of the potential of the former British colony of Australia to become a nation.'[12] Erin Ihde, module coordinator for *Imagining Australia: Empire, Nation, Sovereignty* at the University of New England noted that many historians have seen both World Wars as critical periods 'in the history of Australian nationalism.'[13] By focussing solely on the sacrificial events of the Anzacs during 1915 in Gallipoli however Australia has, and to a certain extent, continues to exclude a large section of society which does not or cannot relate to the imagery portrayed. Much of the literature and imagery

[10] Gillard, Julia., *National Plans to Commemorate the Bombing of Darwin,* 18 November 2011, <http://pmtranscripts.dpmc.gov.au/browse.php?did=18276>, accessed 10 October 2014.
[11] Gyngell, Allan *Fear of Abandonment: Australia in the World Since 1942* (Carlton: La Trobe University Press, 2017), p.1.
[12] Garton, Stephen, Longing for war: Nostalgia and Australian returned soldiers after the First World War (2000) in Ashplant, T.G, Dawson, G. and Roper, M. (eds.), The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration, (London: Routledge, 2000).
[13] Ihde, Erin, (2009) *HIST554: Imagining Australia: Empire, Nation, Sovereignty,* Unit Handbook, University of New England.

surrounding the Anzac narrative focusses specifically on the brotherhood of the soldiers (largely young white men) and therefore automatically excludes groups such as women and Aboriginal soldiers, both of whom played important roles in the First World War. It also marginalises those who do not identify with the accepted image of Anzac. Alistair Thomson explored these issues in his book *Anzac Memories,* where his interviews with soldiers present at Gallipoli in 1915 differ vastly from the accepted narrative, thus marginalising their stories for decades.[14] Geoffrey Stokes contends that up until the 1980s, Australia's use of a single national identity was common even though the previous decade had seen a global rise in fighting for rights and identity in areas of race, gender and sexuality.[15] Focus on Anzac not only detracted from the history of the Second World War, but also failed to acknowledge Australia's early history of colonisation, the history of the Aboriginal people, and the history of Britishness that are integral to the make-up of Australia. Given all of this, it is perhaps therefore surprising that in a nation which has placed a strong influence on the sacrifice of their military heroes, it took almost seventy years for Australia to formally recognise events in Darwin as part of its national history.

The attacks on Darwin were not wholly unexpected but the severity of the raids still took people by surprise. After the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the people of Darwin had been on high alert, even more so when the British battlecruiser *HMS Repulse* and the battleship *HMS Prince of Wales* were sunk in the days that followed. Notices of impending evacuation began being circulated a week after the attacks on Pearl Harbor and women and children were the first to be moved. Peter Grose suggests that this was perhaps not as chivalrous as it might first appear, rather, the more people that remained in Darwin, the more people

[14] Thomson, Alistair *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend – New Edition* (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2014).
[15] Stokes, Geoffrey (ed) *The Politics of Identity in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.2.

there were to feed with increasingly stretched supplies.[16] This is a viewpoint supported by Rex Ruwoldt, a member of the Army based in Darwin at the time, who notes that 'most of the civilians who had not been evacuated left Darwin to move south to safer climes: they were told to leave because the army had insufficient means to protect them in the event of the expected impending invasion.'[17] There are also various accounts across many of the texts connected with these raids that indicate suspected Japanese planes were seen flying over the Northern Territory in the weeks and months preceding the attacks.

19 February 1942 was a day that was to change Australia's outlook on the Second World War forever. As a new day was dawning over the town of Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory, Japanese planes were taking off from carriers in the Timor Sea. Their destination was Darwin, and their objective was to render the allied -forces powerless in the face of their plans to attack and invade the Dutch East Indies. Shortly before 10am on that Thursday morning, 188 Japanese planes dropped the first of over 200 bombs on the town and harbour of Darwin.[18] This was the first wave of planes to attack Darwin that morning, with another 54 to follow later that same day. In that first raid, extensive damage was wrought on the harbour, the town, the airfields and the local hospital and resulted in the loss of some 243 lives with a further 400 plus being injured.[19] Eight ships were sunk in the harbour (more than in Pearl Harbor) with another thirty-seven being damaged in some form.[20] Amongst those ships were six United States Naval ships, three of which were sunk. The most serious of these losses to the Americans was the *USS Peary* which exploded with the loss of 91 of its

[16] Grose, Peter *An Awkward Truth: The bombing of Darwin February 1942,* (Crow's Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2009), pp.44-5.
[17] Ruwoldt, Rex Darwin's Battle for Australia Volume Two: Recording Those Desperate Days When Japan Attacked Australia, (Clifton Springs: Darwin Defenders 1942-45 Incorporated, 2009), p.12.
[18] The Bombing of Darwin: Fact Sheet 195: National Archives of Australia, <www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs15.aspx>, accessed 22 January 2014.
[19] Wurth, Bob *Australia's Greatest Peril: 1942* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2008), p.134.
[20] Darwin Air Raids: Australian War Memorial, <https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/air_raids/darwin/>, accessed 22 January 2014.

crew.[21] One of the most horrifically spectacular explosions on that day was that of the *MV Neptuna*, an Australian passenger ship serving as an ammunition freighter. She was docked at the wharf when the Japanese bombed and received a direct hit. As she was still in the process of being unloaded, the resulting detonations were vast. Forty-five people were killed as a result, a large number of them wharfies who had been working with the ship.

The town also suffered extensive damage with the Post Office completely destroyed and nine employees killed in the attacks. As the main hub of communication for the town of Darwin, staff in the Post Office had taken an ultimately fatal decision and refused to be evacuated, maintaining that they had a vital role in preserving communications for the town. The direct hit meant that, for a time, communication with the rest of Australia was virtually non-existent – a fact that will be important to remember throughout this thesis. The town was not the only place to be attacked on that first day of raids. No sooner had the first raid finished, then a second wave of planes were approaching Darwin, only this time they were heading for the Larrakayeh Barracks just outside of the main town. The barracks were home to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). On the day of the raid, the majority of their aircraft were on the base undergoing repairs. This meant that a few accurately targeted Japanese bombs were able to wipe out almost all of the planes available to launch a counter-attack. Newspaper articles did not reflect this destruction in their reporting, painting a picture of minor damage and everything carrying on as normal. *The Sydney Morning Herald* noted on Saturday 21 February 1942 that 'no vital damage was done to RAAF installations at Darwin in the two Japanese bombing raids on Thursday.'[22] The *Townsville Daily Bulletin* gave a more accurate account of what had happened at the RAAF base but still played down the exact cost of the attacks. Their reporter

[21] This is detailed in many of the texts used for this thesis. See Forrest and Forrest (2001), Grose (2009), Lockwood (2013).
[22] 'No Vital Damage to R.A.A.F. Establishments', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW: 1842 – 1954, 21 February 1942), p.11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17788984>, accessed 7 July 2018.

wrote that 'Service buildings and [aero]dromes were bombed and machine-gunned, and some damage was caused. There were four confirmed casualties among service personnel. Damage to dromes was not serious […] Some of our aircraft were damaged on the ground.'[23] This quote was largely taken from an RAAF communique that had been sent to Canberra and so is reflected in a number of newspapers that published in the week that followed the first attack. The final report of the Royal Commission into the bombings of Darwin reported the loss of aircraft from the two raids on 19 February as seventeen – six Australian and eleven American. In addition to those that were destroyed, a further three were severely damaged.[24]

Regardless of how this attack was portrayed to the people of the time, there was no doubt that this was an historic event in the life of Australia – the first time in which Australia had been attacked on home soil since the British settlement (or invasion, depending on your viewpoint) of 1788.[25] The full devastation of the day's events took some time to emerge in the aftermath of the attacks. Initial reports were distinctly vague. On the evening of 19 February, Prime Minister John Curtin made a statement to the House of Representatives in Canberra, informing them of the events in Darwin and that damage and loss of life had occurred. This statement was reported in Australian newspapers the following day. On Friday 20 February 1942 *The Argus, The Canberra Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* all reported that ninety-three

[23] 'The Darwin Air Raids', *Townsville Daily Bulletin (*Qld. : 1907 – 1954, 21 February 1942), p.5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article63566621>, accessed 7 July 2018.
[24] Lowe, Charles Commission of Inquiry Concerning the Circumstances Connected with the Attack made by Japanese Aircraft at Darwin on 19th February 1942, (Canberra: Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1945), p.8.
[25] Australian's viewpoint on how their nation was settled has been heavily contested through the History Wars. On the one side you have those who believe that Australia was settled by the British and that there were no previous settled inhabitants of the land. On the other side, you have those who recognise the Aboriginal inhabitants of the land prior to 1788 and view the arrival of the British as an invasion. In recent times, authors such as Keith Windschuttle in *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History, Volume One: Van Diemen's Land 1803-1847,* (Melbourne, Macleay Press, 2002) have caused significant controversy by suggesting that the evidence used to purport claims of invasion and genocide simply did not exist. Eminent Australian academics such as Henry Reynolds, Lyndall Ryan and Robert Manne came together to produce a collection of essays that refute Windschuttle's arguments in the book *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History,* (Collingwood: Black Inc. Agenda, 2003).

planes had attacked Darwin, with considerable damage to property but no details about loss of life.[26]

On Saturday 21 February, more details had begun to filter through about the impact on human life, though these reports still varied in number. *The Argus* reported seventeen had been killed with twenty-four wounded; *The Canberra Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported fifteen killed with twenty-four wounded while *The Courier-Mail* reported nineteen dead with twenty-four wounded. By Tuesday 24 February, *The Argus* and *The Canberra Times* were reporting that there were concerns from the House that not all the information concerning the attacks in Darwin was being released.[27] The Hansard records of that time show that the bombing raid was not discussed in Parliament until 25 February 1942, when Arthur Calwell, Member for the Division of Melbourne, raised the question as to whether the report authored by members of the Army and Air Force who had already visited Darwin by this stage would be presented to Parliament for consideration. Francis Forde, Deputy Prime Minister, stated that the Japanese were very keen to receive information as to how effective their attack might have been, and for this reason, the report would not be presented to Parliament.[28] Other than a brief set of questions on 5 March in the Senate, the bombings did not enter parliamentary discussion again. On 3 March 1942, Justice Charles Lowe was appointed to undertake a Royal Commission into the Bombing of Darwin and, in particular, 'the preparedness of the Naval, Military, Air and Civil authorities [….], the degree of cooperation between the various Services […and] whether the Commanders or other officers of the Naval, Military and Air

[26] *The Argus, The Canberra Times, The Sydney Morning Herald,* 20 February 1942, accessed through National Library of Australia Trove Digitised Newspaper Archive <https://trove.nla.gov.au>.
[27] '17 Killed in Raids on Darwin', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 – 1957, 21 February 1942), p.1, accessed 7 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8233872>; '15 Killed 24 Wounded In Darwin Raids', *The Canberra Times* (ACT : 1926 – 1995, 21 February 1942), p.1, accessed 7 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2561552>; 'No Vital Damage to R.A.A.F. Establishments', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 – 1954, 21 February 1942), p.11, accessed 7 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17788984>; 'Dramatic Stages of Darwin Raids: 9 Killed at Post Office', *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Qld. : 1933 – 1954, 21 February 1942), p.1, accessed 7 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article50140827>
[28] Commonwealth of Australia 1942, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 9, col. 2, p.44.

Forces or any civil authority failed to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to them.'[29] Lowe produced two reports – one on 27 March and a final one on 9 April – which concluded that a lack of leadership and organisation in the aftermath of the attacks led to confusion and abandonment and then subsequent looting within the town of Darwin.

It should be noted that although this thesis focuses specifically on the bombings of Darwin on 19 February 1942, this is not where they stopped. Bombings continued throughout 1942 and most of 1943 with more than ninety raids carried out across the northern part of Australia, stretching from Learmonth in western Australia to Townsville in Queensland (see Fig. 1). Over sixty of these raids focussed on the town of Darwin. The last raid on Darwin is recorded as 12 November 1943, when the powerhouse was attacked.[30] As the map below demonstrates, Darwin was one of the key targets, followed closely by Horn Island and Broome. It also shows that the Japanese attacks on Australia were not restricted to air raids on land, with the majority of attacks on the eastern coast being undertaken by sea. This can largely be explained by the fact that the centres of Australian industry were based along the eastern coast, where most of Australia's trading entrepots were located.

[29] Lowe, Charles Commission of Inquiry Concerning the Circumstances connected with the attack made by Japanese Aircraft at Darwin on 19th February, 1942, (Canberra: Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1942), p.5.
[30] Forrest, Peter and Forrest, Sheila *Federation Frontline: A people's history of World War II in the Northern Territory,* (Darwin: Centenary of Federation Northern Territory, 2001), pp.68-9.

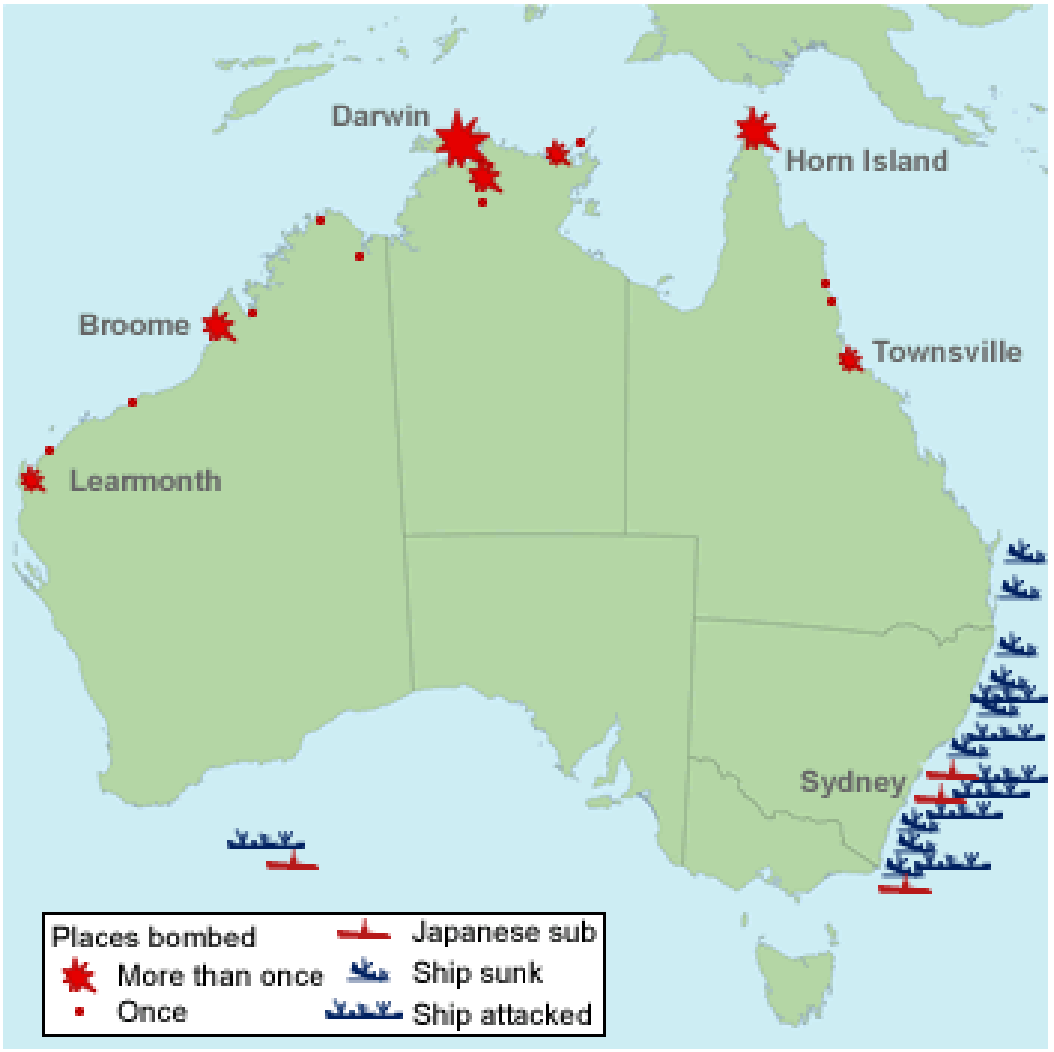

Figure 1. Map outlining places attacked by the Japanese during the Second World War

Literature Review

Much has been written about the raids since they occurred, although this has largely been undertaken by journalists and popular historians, rather than by academic historians.[31] Joan Beaumont observes that 'Australian war history for many years has been reliant on what might be called non-academic historians: namely, freelance historians and the amateur historian, often a veteran.'[32] In a separate article, Beaumont notes that in many of the earliest cases, journalists were the ones that were on the frontline with the soldiers, often having been commissioned by the government to act as war correspondents.[33] These first-hand experiences in the field meant that they felt able to speak with authority on events that occurred. Indeed, the Official Histories of the First World War were largely written by journalists, with C.E.W Bean leading the way on this. Jackie Dickenson notes that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of those who became academic historians had trained as journalists before moving into university life.[34] Their training in investigative research, reporting and writing to deadlines gave them the grounding they needed to move into the academic world. University-trained academic historians remained small in number until much later in the twentieth century.

The focus on journalists and popular historians taking the lion's share of the work is certainly the case with the history of the Bombing of Darwin. As we shall see, many of those who have authored works focused specifically on Darwin have come from journalistic or amateur backgrounds. In addition to the raids that were wrought on Darwin and the Northern Territory, journalists also played a key role in the Brisbane Line affair, drawing on Eddie Ward's election campaign claims that the north

[31] It is worth noting that the Anzac legend of the First World War, one of the key markers in Australia's national identity and historical narrative, was created by a journalist. C.E.W Bean was a journalist with the Sydney Morning Herald from 1908 onwards and was nominated by the Australian Journalists Association to become the official correspondent to join the Australian Imperial Force.
[32] Beaumont, Joan 'ANZAC Day to VP Day: arguments and interpretations', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial,* 40, 2007, p.7.
[33] Beaumont, Joan 'Australian military historiography', *War & Society,* 42:1, 2023, p.100-102.
[34] Dickenson, Jackie 'Journalists Writing Australian Political History, *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 56:1, 2010, p.106.

of Australia was to be abandoned in the event of invasion by the Japanese. Whether this was a genuine threat or simply a red herring fuelled by journalists and the like is something we shall explore in full detail in Chapter Two. Regardless of its status, the Brisbane Line continues to be a controversial topic for Australian academics and the historiography of the nation, potentially perpetuated by the ever-present issue of isolation between the north and south of Australia.

The earliest full text written about the attacks on Darwin was authored by Douglas Lockwood, a journalist with the *Melbourne Herald* and who was present in Darwin on 19 February 1942. His first-hand account of the raids has been described as 'a comprehensive report on the bombing of Darwin by a writer who was there himself when the bombs fell.'[35] As a result of his presence in the town, Lockwood's account was taken as an authoritative version of what had happened in Darwin. Across the two waves of strikes on the morning of 19 February, six hundred and eighty-one bombs were dropped on Darwin that morning and those who were left in the town – many had already been evacuated – were left in a state of bewilderment. Lockwood notes that 'a period of chaos leading to attempted dictatorship by military policemen' followed.[36] People were encouraged by the authorities to leave, with Lockwood noting that one of his interviewees remembered the military police telling people to 'Keep going! Don't come back here. We don't want bloody civvies in this town.'[37] He also describes the road from Darwin as being crammed with vehicles and restaurants in the town as having been abandoned. Lockwood includes a quote from Bruce Acland, a Civil Aviation radio operator that describes his view of the aftermath:

> the great stampede was on. People of all colours and creeds were fleeing in and on all sorts of vehicles. Soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians were simply 'going through'. They were walking, running, riding bikes, driving cars and some were even on horseback.[38]

[35] Lockwood, Douglas *Australia Under Attack: The Bombing of Darwin – 1942,* (London: New Holland Publishers, 2013), p.8.
[36] *Ibid.,* p.141.
[37] *Ibid.,* p.136.
[38] *Ibid.,* p.137.

The military drew particular criticism in his writings, with Lockwood observing that 'the Army's inability to control its troops culminated in a serious outbreak of looting.'[39] He also reported that one Army Officer admitted to authorising so-called looting as borrowing – the troops had limited supplies and food that had been abandoned would only go to waste if it was to rot in empty kitchens. Whilst it could be seen as taking practical actions in the circumstances, Lockwood also pointed out that the Army were responsible for burning down Chinatown – an action that was not deemed practical or resourceful. Lockwood notes in particular that 'rumours, lack of training, lack of firm leadership and garbled verbal orders all appear to have contributed to deplorable but perhaps understandable behaviour […] men unquestionably ran away, but they were not only airmen.'[40]

Lockwood tried to give a balanced view where possible, presenting alternatives to looting, desertion and chaos. An assessment of texts that have been written on the same topic since, however, demonstrate that it is the negative aspects of the bombing of Darwin that subsequent authors have focused on, perpetuating the ongoing belief that events in Darwin did not fit with the image of the Anzac Spirit. It is worth noting that much research into this subject was delayed as the government files that covered the bombings of Darwin and the Northern Territory were sealed for fifty years after the event. In his 1980 book *Darwin 1942: Australia's Darkest Hour,* Timothy Hall – a freelance journalist who has worked with the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Bulletin* – dedicates a whole chapter to the aftermath of the bombings using words such as stampede, exodus and panic – even titling the chapter Exodus. He also refers to a lack of leadership from both military and civilian officials.[41] Writing fourteen years later, Richard Connaughton – a former British Army Officer turned academic – also refers to a 'combination of poor morale, bad leadership, indifferent

[39] Lockwood, Douglas *Australia Under Attack: The Bombing of Darwin – 1942,* (London: New Holland Publishers, 2013), p.141.
[40] *Ibid.,* p.123.
[41] Hall, Timothy *Darwin 1942: Australia's Darkest Hour,* (Sydney: Metheun, 1980), pp.131-32.

training, and a message that became progressively distorted' as being 'the ingredients which dropped the flag on what came to be known as the "Adelaide River Stakes".'[42] Connaughton also refers to some two hundred and seventy-eight airmen who remained absent without leave four days after the raid, and later on in the text to the whole saga of events as a 'shameful débâcle', noting an 'orgy of drunkenness and looting that lasted for weeks.'[43] Branching into the reasons why such events might have been less well known, Connaughton points out that 'news of defeat at national level is universally unwelcome' – a nod towards how highly the Australian image of strength was held.[44]

Although not solely focussed on the Second World War like the previous two texts, former journalist and Professor of Journalism Phillip Knightley's book *Australia: A Biography of a Nation* chronicles that it was not so much the events of the bombing itself but rather 'it was the aftermath that turned the attack into Australia's day of shame.'[45] Knightley makes reference to panic and stampedes as people streamed south. He also points to the fact that military personnel were some of the worst behaved, with systematic looting of properties that had been abandoned in the rush. Appallingly, he refers to properties of those still working in the town as being prime targets, with the military nurses from the hospital coming home for a break from tending the sick and injured to discover their houses ransacked.[46] In 2005, the *Griffith Review* – a leading literary magazine in Australia – published an edition entitled *Up North: Myths, Threats & Enchantment.* According to the publishers, the review was a collection of writings that were to demolish 'some of the most potent myths about the north, and re-evaluate our understanding of the Japanese threat during the Second

[42] Connaughton, Richard *Shrouded Secrets: Japan's War on Mainland Australia 1942-44* (London: Brassey's, 1994), p.69. Adelaide River was a small township approximately 70 kilometre south of Darwin and the point where the railway system started at that time.
[43] *Ibid.,* p.70.
[44] *Ibid.,* p.71.
[45] Knightley, Phillip *Australia: A Biography of a Nation* (London: Vintage, 2000), p.189.
[46] *Ibid.,* p.190.

World War.'[47] Peter Stanley, who was at the time Principal Historian at the Australian War Memorial, contributed an article called 'Threat Made Manifest' where he noted 'the lack of clear official news fostered rumours that became folklore.'[48] He argued that although historians such as Alan Powell, Professor at Charles Darwin University, have undertaken research which demonstrates 'that reports of panic had been grossly exaggerated' folklore has failed to shake the widely accepted preconceptions of events in Darwin.

From 2005 onwards, historical literature has seen a surge in the number of texts published that focus on the Second World War, and in particular, around the battles fought in the Northern Territory. These have however continued to perpetuate this idea of shame and failure to act in a manner befitting Australians. Bob Wurth (a former ABC foreign correspondent), writing in 2008, referred to 'the absence of firm leadership' which led to panic, vehicles streaming southwards, abandoned houses and looting by both military and civilian leaders.[49] Peter Grose's book *An Awkward Truth: The bombing of Darwin February 1942* is perhaps the first book that openly acknowledges, from its very title, the difficult place that the bombing of Darwin holds within Australian discourse. Using the word awkward – defined as something that is difficult to deal with – automatically sets it up as something that has the potential to be controversial, but it is left to the reader to decide why. In his defence, Grose does present what, to the researcher, is perhaps the most balanced account of events - recognising the discord that followed the attack, but also praising the acts of heroism of some of the military personnel. There are two accounts in particular which start to provide a new perspective on the subject of looting. Gunner Jack Mulholland told Grose that he (Mulholland) had started the looting but with the best of intentions. After having manned the anti-aircraft guns through both raids, their equipment was in need

[47] 'Up North: Griffith Review' *Griffith Review,* August 2005, <https://griffithreview.com/editions/up-north/>, accessed 19 November 2017.
[48] Stanley, Peter 'Threat Made Manifest', *Up North: Myths, Threats & Enchantment* (Griffith Review: Griffith University, 2005), p.14.
[49] Wurth, Bob *1942: Australia's Greatest Peril* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2008), pp.134-135.

of some serious care and cleaning. The army-issue rags were not enough to deal with the mammoth task and so they came up with the idea that the Darwin Hotel would have plenty of serviettes and sheets going spare and it was essential to keep the guns in working order in case of further attacks.[50] The second account comes from a Captain Meiklejohn who was a medical supply officer. During the Royal Commission that took place in March 1942, he declared that whilst accused of looting, he was actually seeking out kerosene refrigerators to preserve medical supplies as several had already been stolen from the Cullen Bay hospital.[51] Both these stories reinforce the point that Grose makes – 'one person's looting can often be another person's resourcefulness.'[52] This fits with some of the accounts that Lockwood had recorded where some of the younger men who had been involved in civilian jobs prior to the raids made their way to the Larrakeyah Barracks to try and join up with the Army. Unfortunately, they were turned away by staff who were planning their own evacuation of the area.[53]

Positive stories of this type have still remained in the minority however, with many people continuing to focus on the more negative aspects of events in the aftermath of the bombing on 19 February 1942. For a nation that has built itself a collective identity based on the strength of its military image, the fact that military and civilian behaviour following the raids was seriously called into question is designed to help the reader understand why the events in Darwin have not been at the forefront of national commemoration for nearly seventy years. Michael Keren posits a general theory that could be used to explain this state of events. He argues that 'when the war […] fought is considered glorious and justified, state leaders may build memorials

[50] Grose, Peter *An Awkward Truth: The bombing of Darwin February 1942* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2009), p.154. Grose started his career as a journalist for the *Sydney Daily Mirror* before moving to *The Australian* as their Foreign Correspondent. On his website, Grose interestingly makes no claim to be an academic historian, focusing on what he believes provides accessible history.
[51] *Ibid.,* p.155.
[52] *Ibid.,* p.155.
[53] Lockwood*., Australia Under Attack: The Bombing of Darwin – 1942,* (London: New Holland Publishers, 2013)*,* p.143.

and organise ceremonies honouring veterans and themselves. When […] the war is controversial, veterans may have to fight hard battles to get memorials erected and ceremonies set.'[54] In this instance however, rather than the war being controversial, it is Darwin's place within Australia's national war memory that could be considered controversial.

Also writing in 2009 was Rex Ruwoldt, a member of the Darwin Defenders 1942-45 Incorporated. Rex had been based in Darwin during the Second World War and a member of the 19th Machine Gun Regiment defending the town. Rex's writings come from a different standpoint to many of the others who have written on the attacks in Darwin, with the book focussing on factual details of the attacks, the lead up to and the months of attacks that followed and his personal experiences. He does however comment on the perceived actions of panic and abandonment. Talking of the aftermath he states:

> To say they 'fled' is an unkind assessment; they were justifiably horrified and concerned, and in a considerable state of shock. They had just witnessed an enemy force slaughtering hundreds of servicemen and civilians, their town had been devastated, their homes and possessions destroyed, and they had to leave and go south with whatever they could carry, to avoid an even worse situation if the Japs invaded.[55]

He does accept that things were chaotic in Darwin in the aftermath. The trains were able to take some people south, but they could not cope with the numbers and so many people 'had to make their way by whatever means they could find' – be that walking, car, truck or honey cart.[56]

Dr Tom Lewis, Director of Darwin Military Museum, military historian and former naval officer, and Peter Ingman's 2013 work entitled *Carrier Attack Darwin 1942* takes a different tack in assessing the Bombing of Darwin. The authors specifically note that they do not cover the topics of the evacuation and the post-raid

[54] Keren, Michael *War Memory and Popular Culture: Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration* (Jefferson, North Carolina: Mcfarland & Company Inc, 2009), p.1.
[55] Ruwoldt, Rex Darwin's Battle for Australia Volume 2, p.12.
[56] *Ibid.*

looting. Instead they focus largely on creating a factual guide which draws on material that has not previously been available, although they do note in their first chapter that 'in the aftermath several accusations of unpreparedness and inefficiency were made towards the civilian and military forces of the north.'[57] They also include seven appendix chapters in their work which seek to dispel myths that have perpetuated over the years in relation to the raids, covering topics such as the supposed cover-up by the government, the suggestion that the raid was a prelude to a full-scale invasion and the issue of whether radio warnings from Melville Island had been ignored.

Also writing in 2013 was Bruce Scates, Professor of History at the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University. His monograph on *Anzac Journeys: Returning to the Battlefields of World War II* details the history of Australian pilgrimages to war-time sites of commemoration. Scates notes that, due to the nature of the conflicts that Australia had historically been involved in, the majority of these sites are based overseas rather than in Australia itself. He does however include one 'home-based' chapter that focuses on the sites of memory at Darwin. Like Lewis and Ingram, his references to 19 February are kept largely factual but he does refer to the military response as 'woeful'.[58] He also refers to 'contested memory' in relation to Darwin – a suggestion that the memories of the events of 19 February 1942 do not sit well with the national discourse of the Second World War.

Alan Powell's contribution to Peter J Dean's *Australia 1942: In the Shadow of War* attributes much of the negative literature on the Bombing of Darwin to the Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck who, in 1955, was seemingly the first to refer to 19 February 1942 as Australia's day of national shame. Powell (a former Professor of History at Charles Darwin University) also attributes these continuing perceptions to the three journalists who were discussed earlier in this chapter – Lockwood, Hall

[57] Lewis, Tom and Ingman, Peter *Carrier Attack Darwin 1942* (Kent Town: Avonmore Books, 2013), p.18.
[58] Scates, Bruce *Anzac Journeys: Returning to the Battlefields of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.256.

and Grose. Powell suggests that for all three of them, the desire to sell an interesting and exciting story clouded some of the accuracy of the narratives they constructed. Roland Perry's *The Fight for Australia* (2014) includes a five-page chapter on the attack on Darwin. Whilst, like many of the other authors above, he focusses on the details of the attack itself, Perry does include a half-page account on the aftermath of the bombings. Perry uses similar phrases to those already encountered, citing devastation and a chaotic exodus of people fleeing from the stricken city.[59]

Most of the texts discussed here in some way paint a negative picture of the aftermath of the attacks, providing few counterclaims of bravery, strength or fortitude – ideas that would have held true to the Anzac Spirit. Some would say that the reactions of the people to such an event were only natural – who would not flee from the possibility of further attacks and threat to life? Yet most of the authors examined do not even seem to offer this as a possible explanation, therefore adding further support to the case that people's actions in the aftermath of the Darwin bombing raids did not reflect the Anzac Spirit that Australians were renowned for. Australia was (and indeed still is) deeply protective of its identity and quick to dismiss anything that does not fit with the view of what it was to be Australian. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the events of Darwin were minimised on a national scale.

Collective Memory

The events in Darwin during the Second World War have straddled both the personal and public spheres of memory over the last eighty years. Memory is an essential part of our everyday lives and governs how we carry out our daily tasks and relationships. Michael Gazzaniga states that 'everything in life is memory, save for the thin edge of the present.'[60] While the memory of significant events is an individual process – or at

[59] Perry, Roland *The Fight for Australia* (Sydney: Hachette, 2014), p.126.
[60] Gazziniga, Michael in Foster, Jonathan K. *Memory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.2.

least has to be at the start – it is inevitably sculpted into a collective vision that is influenced by social and political structures. The interdisciplinary nature of collective memory studies covers a variety of areas of study including psychology, history, politics and sociology. These disciplines can help us to determine how the brain is affected by memory and how political, social and cultural influences shape the way in which a memory is formed. Green and Troup posit that 'advances in our understanding about the way in which our memories are constructed and narrated have begun to transform the methodology through which memories are elicited and preserved.'[61]

Throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, there has been an increasing academic interest in the study of collective memory and history. This has not been without its controversy, particularly in the field of military history, with many traditional military historians viewing the study of memory as soft, in the sense that they believe it lacks the thoroughness of empirical and archival research.[62] Collective memory has been defined as the memories of a group of people who have collected them through shared social experiences. Emile Durkheim was one of the early scholars who took on the concept of collective memory. For Durkheim, it was very much about how new generations could connect to the past. Only by the teaching of history could the stories of the past be carried forward for the future. Durkheim's theory refers more to the idea of collective consciousness and collective activity rather than a collective memory, talking about how knowledge cannot be created without the interaction of human activity and therefore a collective understanding of events has to occur first in order for the memory to be taken forward for the future. Durkheim's approach was more sociological than historical, but his ideas are often credited with the early beginnings from which the concept of collective memory grew. Maurice

[61] Green, Anna and Troup, Kathleen *The Houses of History: A Critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.236.
[62] Beaumont, Joan 'ANZAC Day to VP Day: arguments and interpretations', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial,* 40, 2007, p.7.

Halbwachs, who was a student of Durkheim, linked the idea more specifically to history and historical events, defining this understanding of the past as memory shared by those who lived the history, as opposed to just the study of history which he has coined as 'dead history'.[63] In Halbwachs definition, the collective history ends when the survivors are no longer here. Halbwachs also notes the interplay between the individual memory in the context of the group, and the group memory as contingent on the individual experience. As we see with the commemoration of many significant events however, collective memory of historical events embodies a much wider group than just those who lived the experience. Indeed, it is vital for the preservation and continued remembrance of events like the Bombing of Darwin that collective memory does not end at the point which Halbwachs defines. Wulf Kansteiner developed this approach even further in the latter part of the twentieth century, bringing in the concept of collective remembering as opposed to collective memory. With collective remembering, 'as memories are shared, different aspects of events are highlighted and incorporated with each telling. Even if a memory product is achieved, it is not a static memory, but is instead subject to later revision.[64]

The study of memory alongside history has seen a rapid growth over the last sixty years, in what is often referred to as the memory boom, although there are early periods that see memory and history linked together. Jay Winter refers to the period from 1890s to 1920s as the first memory boom, which stemmed from the creation of new national identities as, both in Europe and beyond, new nations were born.[65] The key developments in this field can be seen in the post-Second World War period from the 1960s onwards. This was a period that was having to deal with the explosion of witness testaments that contested previous accepted and understood views of events that occurred during the Second World War. The effect of survivor statements from

[63] Halbwachs, Maurice *The Collective Memory,* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950/1980).
[64] Kansteiner, W in Reese, E and Fivush, R 'The development of collective remembering', *Memory,* 16:3, 2008, p.202.
[65] Winter, Jay *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), p.18.

the Holocaust gave particular strength to this movement. In addition to this second memory boom, Perks and Thomson have identified what could be termed as the third memory boom – the period during the late 1990s and early 2000s which saw a digital revolution.[66] Historians – both professional and amateur – benefited from a wider availability of historical sources as well as new methods for capturing previously untold historical memories. Joan Tumblety argues that memory is now 'a familiar word in the vocabulary of academic history.'[67]

Collective memory in the field of history is recognised in many different guises – popular history, public history, social history and national history to name but a few. The essential concept is that collective communities – whether these be families, organisations or nations – have a shared understanding of their history, or a specific event within their history. These shared understandings are not always an accurate portrayal of the event concerned but are the accepted discourse that the collective is prepared to share with the wider world. A specific Australian example of this kind of conflict with accepted understanding is outlined by Alistair Thomson in his study *Anzac Memories.* He notes that many of the ex-servicemen that he interviewed for his study did not identify with the national understanding of the events in Gallipoli. Many felt that their experiences did not echo the nationally understood picture of the event and so they felt discouraged from speaking out about what they had been through. Thomson refers to this notion as composure, whereby we 'compose our memoires to make sense of our past and present lives.'[68] The sacrifices that had been made by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps were moulded into a heroic vision of what Australian boys and men should aspire to follow.

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[66] Perks, Robert and Thomson, Alistair (eds.) *The Oral History Reader second edition,* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p.1.
[67] Tumblety, Joan (ed.) Memory and History: Understanding memory as source and subject (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p.1.
[68] Thomson, Alistair, 'Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory Into Practice in Australia' in Green, Anna and Troup, Kathleen *The Houses of History: A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.240.

Joan Tumblety adds to this notion of composure by noting that memory can unconsciously be framed by social and political needs of the present day and can change depending on the period in which it occurs.[69] Collective memory is often referred to as the shared memory of nations and places but, as Jay Winter points out, nations in themselves cannot remember – it is the people within those nations who remember. Jay Winter therefore argues that the term collective 'memory' is not one that sits easily and it would be more accurate to use the term 'historical remembrance', which ties in with his definition of collective memory as being a process through which groups (families, communities, organisations and nations) remember an event via acts of remembrance.[70] This is a view that is supported by Roberts and Young who describe collective memory as a shared memory that creates community and a sense of belonging.[71]

Whether it be collective history or historical remembrance, it is not a static memory of an individual event. Shared understandings of events can change over time. There are several reasons for this – the people who experienced the event die; those who have been active in remembering the event move away and the politics of the time change. An international example of collective memory can be demonstrated through the commemoration of Armistice Day. Observed on 11 November each year since 1919, it is one of the few cross-border events that are shared between nations. It has also seen a great many changes over the years since 1919. Originally established to commemorate those who were lost during the First World War, it now encompasses the Second World War and every other major conflict that has occurred since then. While the principle behind the idea of Armistice Day remains – to

[69] Tumblety, Joan (ed.) Memory and History: Understanding memory as source and subject (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p.4.
[70] Winter, Jay *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century,* p.4.
[71] Roberts, Julie and Young, Martin 'Transience, memory and induced amnesia: the re-imagining of Darwin' (Journal of Australian Historical Studies, 32:1, 2008), p.53.

remember the fallen – the focus of the event has significantly changed or evolved, and will no doubt continue to do so in the future.

Academia also has a large part to play in collective remembrance as well. As a nation that has slowly seen an increase in the proportion of the population that go through university education, so we see research being produced that challenges previously accepted ideas of events in history – including histories outside of living memory. The study of history via the medium of memory presents more traditional historians of the academic community with many difficulties. Those of an empirical background and training are primarily concerned with the purity of the evidence they use to examine an event or period of history. The issue that empiricists have with employing the theory of memory to the study of history is that memory can change. Green and Troup describe this in the following way:

> memories […] maybe re-evaluated and re-contextualised throughout life, but they remain the basis upon which individual memory, and our sense of self-identity, is constructed.[72]

As well as academia, the growth of historical novels in the last ten years has added a new dimension to history as we know it. Authors such as Philippa Gregory, whose work focuses on the events around the period of the War of the Roses and the early Tudor period, have changed the way in which these events are understood. In the Australian domain, there are a number of historical novels that cover a whole range of topic areas from the settlement by the Europeans through to the gold rush and Aboriginal Australian themes. Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* is based on life in the Northern Territory and tackles a wide variety of themes around race, war and the systems of government.

One particular suite of historical novels of interest to this thesis is the *My Australian Story* series. Inspired by the original Scholastic series *Dear America,* this collection of forty-two books is written specifically for older school children and are

[72] Green, Anna and Troup, Kathleen *The Houses of History: A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.231.

written in the style of diary entries from children who experienced the event in question. *The Bombing of Darwin: The Diary of Tom Taylor, Darwin 1942* covers the period November 1941 to April 1942 through the eyes of a fourteen-year-old boy who was in Darwin at the time. If you were not aware of the fictional nature of this series, there is a real possibility that the reader could believe that the events detailed in the book happened exactly as written. While there is no denying that much of the book does take its lead from key official texts on the bombings, it is nonetheless a fictional work. Although works such as those described allow a wider public to engage with historical events that they may not have previously known about, it also shapes the way in which these events are understood. The responsibility that comes with this is immense, especially with the *My Australian Story* collection, which is specifically written for children who are in their formative years.

For an older audience, the actress-turned-author Judy Nunn has written a whole series of historical novels set in Australia. Covering the period from settlement right through to the turn of twentieth-first century, Nunn's novels cover a variety of themes including the gold rush, federation, the Second World War, nuclear testing in central Australia and the realisation of the Ghan railway project at the turn of the century. In respect of this thesis, Nunn's novels *Territory* and *Khaki Town* cover the period of the Second World War in Australia. The preface to *Territory* notes that Nunn's early schooling in Australian history failed to cover the bombing of Darwin and the subsequent battles that took place in the Top End. Nunn details that much of her research for the novel involved speaking to those who lived in Darwin and the Top End. Reading these as somebody who has studied the Bombing of Darwin and life in the Territory in quite some detail, Nunn adheres well to the history of the events that took place, and the use of dramatic license is minimal.

The interest in this specific research project was first generated following the release of Baz Luhrmann's film *Australia,* which I first saw in December 2008. The film's screenplay was directly influenced by the works of Xavier Herbert and details

the period of the late 1930s and early 1940s in the Northern Territory. As the film ended, those I was watching with commented, 'well that was a bit of dramatic license wasn't it. Australia wasn't bombed in the war.' They genuinely had no idea that Australia had been bombed in the war and as I talked with friends and colleagues in the weeks that followed, it became apparent that many people shared this view. As part of my Master's research, I explored the British understanding of events in Australia during the Second World War, including the Bombings of Darwin. Whilst approximately seventy-seven percent of participants were aware that Australia had taken part in the Second World War, only twenty-seven percent were aware that some events actually happened on Australian soil. Some respondents who were direct participants in the Second World War indicated in their qualitative answers that their focus was on events in the European sphere, often concerned with loved ones who were seeing active service overseas.[73] This viewpoint of the Second World War is reinforced by the British education system, government and, indeed, the academic world. Owing to the perceived impact in the United Kingdom of the events occurring in Europe, Russia, the Mediterranean and North Africa, these theatres of war have undergone a much larger academic scrutiny than most. Even though the general public at the time might have had loved ones deployed in the Far East, the updates they would have received were few and far between. Thus, the shared memory and understanding of operations in the Far East (Burma, Malaya, Dutch East Indies) have not been so thoroughly explored by the British popular culture and academic communities.

This is an approach that is replicated within the British Education system. The National Curriculum Framework covers the Second World War at Key Stage 3 – ages eleven to fourteen – with the simple line 'the Second World War and the wartime

[73] Gibbons, Fiona 'To what extent is the Australian perception of abandonment by the British during World War Two supported by a British lack of knowledge, both at the time and now, of events that happened in Australia?', (MA Thesis, University of New England, 2011).

leadership of Winston Churchill.'[74] In some ways this is not completely unexpected. Events that affected the British population the most are important in understanding where we have come from. School projects often involve going to speak to relatives who have lived the experience as part of our homework. The idea of being able to learn from those who had experienced that time is designed to ensure that history did not repeat itself. The importance of memory was at the forefront of this sentiment.

The field of war and collective memory is a particularly interesting one as inevitably, there are at least two sides to every memory that is recalled, if not more. War memory must also contend with individual grief as well as public mourning, which adds extra complexity to the concept of remembering historical events. A prime example of where individual and public mourning came together is the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra. As Ken Inglis notes, originally, the Australian government sanctioned an Australian War Museum – a place where mementoes, souvenirs and relics could be housed so that the nation had a place where they could remember events of the First World War.[75] For the majority of Australian families however, the ability to visit the final resting places of their loved ones following the First World War was almost impossible. The graves were thousands of miles from home and therefore only the richest of families could make the journey. C.E.W Bean, who conceived the idea of a national war memorial, wanted there to be a place within Australia where not only the individual could remember their loved one, but where the public could come to pay their respects as well. It was to be a place of both commemoration and learning. The Roll of Honour Courtyard holds the names of all those who have died fighting for their country. Initially, Bean envisioned this as a place that could hold both photographs and names of all those who fell in the First World War.[76] It was quickly realised that photographs and names would be impossible to

[74] Department for Education History Programmes of Study: Key Stage 3, National Curriculum in England, (Department for Education: 2013), p.4.
[75] Inglis, Ken *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape,* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998), p.334.
[76] *Ibid.,* p.336.

achieve in the space, but names were kept in the central courtyard. The AWM was not finished until two years into the Second World War, and this changed the original vision to encompass all those who had died in battle fighting for Australia.

In more recent years, the Australian War Memorial has been substantially challenged on its definition of those who had died in battle in respect of its portrayal (or lack thereof) of the Australian Frontier Wars. The commemoration of the conflicts between Indigenous Australians and European settlers during the nineteenth century have had a significant repercussion on Australian history in the years since. To date, the Australian War Memorial has not included the Frontier Wars in their exhibitions but with the current refurbishment and expansion of the overall memorial, moves are being made to finally incorporate these conflicts into their halls. This is not without controversy, with opposing views being quite openly aired in the media. Whilst Indigenous communities are supportive of a move for these events to be part of the national story at the memorial, they are also conscious that this should be undertaken in a meaningful way, rather than as a token gesture. Meanwhile, there are those who contend that the inclusion of Frontier Wars goes against the founding constitution of the AWM which indicated that it served to commemorate those who had died in overseas or uniformed action. This tension of balancing both the public and personal need to remember is likely to continue for some time whilst the renovations at the AWM continue.

The influence of public commemoration on private memories of war links into the concept of composure discussed earlier in this section. Ashplant, Dawson and Roper outline the importance of understanding and being aware of the structure through which events are remembered. They argue that much of the work carried out in the field of war memory focuses on how the 'relationships of individual subjects to national memory' affect recall.[77] This links well with Alistair Thomson's work, *Anzac*

[77] Ashplant, T.G., Dawson, Graham and Roper, Michael *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (Oxon, Routledge, 2000), p.12.

Memories, in which he notes that the national memory of ANZAC soldiers in Australia has helped veterans to construct a memory they are comfortable to associate with.[78] Soldiers prefer to recall comfortable memories and often block out memories that are simply too traumatic to think about. Some remember all too well but refuse to talk about events in their past. Others remember in a certain way, focussing on memories that are relevant to their experience of a particular event. Ashplant et al make an important point when they question whether a nation-state allows for more than one version or interpretation of a national history. This is an issue that memory-based historians have, often inadvertently, addressed by uncovering personal remembrances that portray a new version of a previously understood event. Memory historians also actively seek out the voices that have previously been excluded from mainstream history, in order to redress the balance of historical recall. Women, children, indigenous communities, aliens and the lower classes have all had their stories incorporated into national histories in more recent years as a result of new interpretations of the national story.[79] In relation to the situation in Darwin and the Northern Territory, Norman Cramp has written a book that covers Indigenous service in the First World War, Second World War and Vietnam War, whilst Elizabeth Mason has published on the history of nursing within the Territory, linking it to both the local area as well as service seen during the First World War.[80] Both of these texts have provided a new narrative to the idea of military service within the north of Australia, offering the voices of minority groups that were not previously heard.

[78] Thomson, Alistair in Ashplant, T.G., Dawson, Graham and Roper, Michael, *ibid.,* p.14.
[79] Whilst there are a number of works written in these areas now, examples include Oppenheimer, Melanie *Australian Women and War* (2008); Rees, Peter *Anzac Girls* (2014); Beaumont, Joan and Allison Cadzow *Serving Our Country: Indigenous Australians, War, Defence and Citizenship* (2018); Twomey, Christina *The Battle Within: POWS in postwar Australia* (2018); Grant, Lachlan *The Changi Book* (2015)
[80] Norman Camp published *Worth Fighting For: Indigenous Territorians in the Defence of Australia,* (Darwin: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 2021) and Elizabeth Mason has published a number of texts including *Connecting Darwin and the Eastern Front: Anzac Nursing Stories*, (Casuarina: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 2019).

The use of collective memory within Australian history is widespread. Not only can it be seen through the events that this thesis focuses on, it can also be seen through other key themes within the national history. The collective, national remembrance of the history of the Stolen Generations (Aboriginal children who were removed from their families and taken away to mission stations) has undergone a major shift over the last two decades. The more conservative parts of society have tried to deny that this happened or, have tried to acknowledge the forcible removal of children from their families as something that had to be undertaken for their own good. As Aboriginal people have gained a stronger voice within society, they have spoken out and challenged the accepted view of history.

The settlement of Australia in 1788 by the British is another area in which collective memory is challenged. The date of 26 January each year has been set aside as Australia Day, when the nation stops to remember the day in 1788 when Captain Arthur Phillip sailed into Botany Bay in order to establish that first colony. The Aboriginal people of Australia first challenged this in 1938, on the 150th anniversary of settlement. They declared 26 January as a Day of Mourning, when Aboriginal people across Australia would mourn for all they had lost and all that they had been through in the time since settlement occurred in 1788. The designation by Aboriginal peoples of the 26 January as a Day of Mourning, and the settlement of Australia as an invasion by the British are sentiments which have continued to maintain a place within the national discourse and with many Australians in the present day – both Aboriginal and those of other cultural backgrounds – who choose not to celebrate Australia Day in the way that has been historically accepted. Interestingly, during the 1980s-1990s, Aboriginal culture and imagery was adopted as part of the national image, particularly by the tourist industry. Even the national airline, Qantas, adopted an Indigenous livery during the 1990s and to date has had five different liveries across both domestic and international routes.

The adoption of indigenous images for commercial and promotional purposes has been seen as controversial as many people feel that the recognition of the culture and imagery has not gone hand in hand with a recognition of the people. Organisations such as the Australian War Memorial have worked hard to specifically cover Indigenous servicemen and the contribution they have made to conflicts within their exhibitions, stretching as far back as the Boer War. During the Second World War in particular, the Northern Territory saw significant indigenous participation in military arrangements. The Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit (NTSRU) in Arnhem Land, latterly merged with the North Australia Observer Unit, used Indigenous soldiers to assist with expeditions into more remote areas, utilising not only their tracking skills but also their knowledge of the land in order to help them survive when deployed on manoeuvres for long periods of time.

Understanding collective memory in both general terms, as well as its specific role within the narrative of the Bombing of Darwin not only helps to shed light on how communities and groups interpret the past but also allows us to question how these interpretations shape our individual and collective narratives. In order to explore these questions and how they have affected the narrative of Darwin, the following section outlines the key questions and methodologies that make up this thesis, alongside the approaches used to examine them.

Research Questions, Methodology and Sources

With the context of collective memory and collective remembering in mind, this thesis seeks to identify ways in which the events of the Bombings of Darwin and subsequent attempts to remember and commemorate this event have developed over the years. After setting out the existing literature pertaining to the Bombings of Darwin alongside some of the established ideas around collective historical memory and commemoration in the previous section, this part of the thesis outlines the research questions and the methodological approach to answering them. The questions seek

to assess both the specific context of how the commemoration of the Bombings of Darwin have changed over time, as well as the wider context of the need for memorial events to change over time.

1. How have the differences between the north and south of Australia affected the way in which the Bombings of Darwin have been remembered?
2. Is there a sense in which a cultural notion of the so-called Brisbane Line exists – where lines were drawn on a map denoting anywhere north of Brisbane was expendable in case of a Japanese invasion – which influenced the way decisions relating to the Northern Territory are made?
3. How have the events surrounding the Bombings of Darwin affected the way in which war and commemoration have developed within Australia?
4. How do social, political and cultural factors influence how events are remembered and commemorated?
5. How and why do commemorative events and places change over time to ensure the continued remembrance of events once survivors are no longer around?

The research and analysis in this thesis seeks to demonstrate that Darwin's position within, and in comparison, to the rest of Australia – politically, geographically and culturally – has played a major role in the way in which the Bombing of Darwin has been remembered as part of both the national and international picture. The chapters follow a chronological format, analysing the commemoration events that have occurred since 1942 right up to the present day. It examines how those commemoration events have changed and developed over time, looking at themes pertinent to the time period which might have influenced the way that events have been carried out such as immigration, national imagery and tourism. It also assesses to what extent a cultural notion of the Brisbane Line myth could have been a

contributing factor in how these particular events are commemorated. Where imagery is used within the thesis, copyright permission either rests with the author through personal photographs, or appropriate permissions have been sought from image owners and responses are held on file.

Chapter One outlines Darwin's early beginnings and the history of its establishment and development up to the point of the bombings that took place in 1942. It will demonstrate that, despite the numerous challenges that it has faced as a town, Darwin has continuously recovered– highlighting the adaptability of the town and the people as they navigated their place in the Australian story. This chapter uses a combination of primary and secondary sources relating to Darwin and the Northern Territory, as well as key military reports reflecting on the importance of the north within defence plans and key articles from contemporary newspapers that contained coverage of Cyclone Tracy (1974).

Chapter Two provides an overview of the way in which the Brisbane Line story developed. Starting at the point where a motion of 'want of confidence' in the Australian government was raised in June 1943, it analyses the issues that led to this motion. It explores the Royal Commission that investigated the Brisbane Line issue and also assesses the defence and foreign policy of Australia during the Second World War. This chapter focuses largely on primary sources from Hansard and the National Archives of Australia to analyse the events that took place during that period.

Chapter Three assesses the period during the 1950s and early 1960s when the Japanese returned to raise the ships that their compatriots had sunk during the Second World War. Focusing on the aspect of immigration, the chapter outlines how post-war relations with the former enemy affected the way in which the people of Darwin sought to commemorate the bombings of 1942. Utilising the Japanese salvage operations files from the National Archives of Australia (NAA), the chapter analyses the attitudes of the various government departments in their handling of the reintroduction of Japanese workers to the Northern Territory. The NAA files comprise

the Department of Immigration records on the Fujita Salvage company, although they are made up of correspondence between various government departments. These records are important to help understand the perspective of Canberra on the affair, although they do not contain so much detail on the views of those based in Darwin and the Northern Territory. An example of Territorian perspectives can be located in newspaper records from the time, which have been accessed through the Trove Newspaper Archive, based at the National Library of Australia (NLA).

Chapter Four examines the changing approaches to war and conflict in Australia, starting in the late 1960s and spanning a time period up to the early 1990s. The late 1960s and early 1970s were a period of significant global change, which saw Australia participate in its first non-imperial conflict by joining the Americans in the Vietnam War. It focuses on the evolving image of the military within the Australian discourse, examining the importance of the Anzac and how changing views towards Anzac affected commemoration practices of not only Anzac Day itself, but also wider ceremonies such as those in Darwin. The chapter takes an in-depth look at the Darwin Commemoration Association (DCA) files from the Australian War Memorial to understand some of the motivation behind the organisation to ensure events of the Second World War were remembered and acknowledged for future generations. Comprising of meeting minutes, event programmes and general correspondence, the files give a rich and detailed insight into the history of the Association. It highlights the importance that commemoration held for the veterans who had been based in the north and the efforts they made to ensure events were incorporated into the national discourse. The records also outline the struggles the DCA faced in gaining recognition on the domestic front, as well as documenting an intriguing incident that questions the ownership of history, the role of alternative interpretations of events and who has the right to tell a story.

Chapter Five focuses on the development of contemporary commemorative practices, with a focus on the importance of anniversaries within that process. The

chapter starts in the 1990s with the fiftieth anniversary of the bombings of Darwin. The lead-up to the anniversary saw an increase in tourist ventures to the Territory that focused on the impact of the Second World War. The first part of this chapter assesses the role tourism plays in commemoration and Darwin's development of tourist opportunities related to events of the Second World War by examining the files of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. The second half of this chapter brings us to the dawn of the new millennium and another anniversary - the Australian Centenary of Federation - which saw a renewed battle for statehood in the Northern Territory. These events presented an opportunity for Darwin (and the Northern Territory) to find new ways in which to emphasise their place within the Australian discourse. Examining the archival records of the government plans for the Centenary of Federation, it evaluates where Darwin and the Northern Territory fit into the national discourse, as well as the ways in which Territorians tried to ensure that their story was heard. The archival records again detail much of the government-based approach to the Federation at both a local and national level. Accessing the reactions and responses of ordinary Territorians for this chapter has been more challenging as more recent newspaper articles are not yet covered by the Trove archiving policy. Limitations to the research for this chapter in particular, as well as the thesis as a whole, have included the restrictions placed by the geographical location of the researcher in relation to the topic. This particularly relates to accessing archives of more recent newspaper publications from Australia. Whilst Trove – the National Library of Australia's digitised Newspaper and Gazettes repository - has provided access to a wealth of resources, the digitisation strategy means that they do not hold more recent copies of newspapers that would have been useful for the later chapters in the thesis. Sites such as Gale Newspapers have provided some access to more recent publications, however their repository is slightly more sporadic in nature and therefore does not give a full picture of the topics concerned with this thesis. This

however does not take away from the reflections that it has been possible to make on the research that has been completed, including a trip to Australia in 2018.

The conclusion will bring these threads of defence, immigration, the Cold War world and developing commemorative practices together to understand Darwin's place within the Australian story of the twentieth century. It will argue that through the medium of commemoration it is possible to chart Darwin's exclusion and later inclusion within the evolving national narrative. In that vein, the cultural notion of a Brisbane Line as well as the new methods of commemoration that have emerged over the years since the end of the Second World War, especially as survivors and those with lived experience pass on, will form the lens which we assess Darwin's place in the Second World War as a battleground in a military, diplomatic, political and social sense that echoes through to the twenty-first century.

Chapter One: Darwin – The Beginnings

The position of Darwin and Northern Australia within the wider Australian national imagination has always been viewed as 'other' or 'different'. Indeed, there was a physical disconnect with the rest of the country until 2004, when the Darwin rail link was finally completed. Frank Bongiorno states that 'the tropical North has all too frequently been the object of political fantasy, especially among southerners who have viewed it as a place of danger as well as promise.'[81] This idea is shared by Lyndon Megarrity who notes that 'the northern frontier and its people were often abstract notions in the minds of urban-based federal politicians…'[82] Speaking specifically of Darwin, Leslie Haylen – the Member of Parliament for Parkes in New South Wales – stated that:

> Any Australian who has been abroad and returned by air must be animated by the desire to have at Darwin a greater spirit of progress and cleanliness than is evidence by a staggering line of josshouses, with a tired dog leaning against a pub wall. Entering Australia after the spick and span Dutch aerodromes and cities, an Australian who is proud of his country find Darwin a slap in the face.[83]

Ideas such as these are exemplified for the general public by tourist travel literature that describes Darwin as the last frontier and visitors are asked to 'think of it as the Paul Hogan of Australian cities'.[84] In another guide Darwin and the Northern Territory are described as embodying 'the anti-thesis of the country's cushy suburban seaboard'.[85] The same book also refers to Darwin as 'simply a convenient base for trips into the surrounding area' and notes that alcohol consumption is an issue in Darwin.[86] The renowned humorous travel writer Bill Bryson, in his book *Down Under*,

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[81] Bongiorno, Frank in Megarrity, Lyndon *Northern Dreams: The Politics of Northern Development in Australia,* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2018), p.ix.
[82] Megarrity, Lyndon *Northern Dreams: The Politics of Northern Development in Australia,* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2018), p.3.
[83] Haylen Leslie in Lockwood, Douglas *The Front Door: Darwin 1869-1969,* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1969), p.262.
[84] Powell, Gareth *Touring Australia: Making the most of an Australian holiday by car, train, bus and plane* (Peterborough: Thomas Cook Publishing, 1997), p264. Paul Hogan played the character of Crocodile Dundee in the franchise movies produced by Rimfire Films between 1986 and 2001.
[85] *The Rough Guide to Australia* (London: Rough Guides Ltd, 2009), p.561.
[86] *Ibid.,* p.573.

covers Darwin over approximately ten pages. Apart from one brief reference to the Second World War however, Bryson mentions little of the destruction caused by the Japanese and instead focuses on the devastation wrought by Darwin's other catastrophe, Cyclone Tracy in 1974. Even the former Administrator of the Northern Territory, The Honorable Charles Abbott noted in a speech in 1947 that 'there is a very general impression that the Northern Territory is a vast expanse of sandy waste and that little of it is fertile.'[87] The images conjured up by these travel writers are far from inviting, giving the impression that Darwin is not the place to visit. Darwin sits outside the national psyche not just for tourists but for Australians too. The tropical north is so vastly different to the south where the seats of national power are based, that they struggle to understand life in the north. One resident of Darwin noted that in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, it took the government two years to realise that the people were not going to abandon the city. As the people began to rebuild their lives, the government realised that if it wanted to have any say in how Darwin was rebuilt, then they needed to act swiftly.

It is interesting to note however, that Darwin is also referred to as one of the most multicultural of Australian cities. Tony Chapman notes in *The AA Key Guide: Australia* that 'Darwin's distance from other cities and its frontier history have given it a distinct character – part Asian, part Australian'.[88] As the crow flies, it is as far from places such as Sydney and Canberra as it is from places such as Singapore and Manila. It is therefore no surprise that Darwin has not featured prominently in the lives of most Australians. While the rest of Australia is portrayed as having golden beaches, soaring mountains and stunning scenery, the north – in particular Darwin – has represented an inconsistency with the national discourse surrounding the national vision of immigration and foreign policy, which I shall explore further in Chapter Three.

[87] Abbott, C.L.A 'Australia's Frontier Province' *The Geographical Journal*, 111:1/3, 1948, p.22.
[88] Chapman, Tony *The AA Key Guide: Australia* (Basingstoke: AA Publishing, 2006), p.125.

The environment north of the Brisbane Line area, particularly in the Northern Territory is also significantly different to the rest of the country, seeing vast areas of desert and open expanses of land. Australia is, without question, a large country. At just over 7.6 million kilometres square, it is listed as the sixth largest in the world.[89] The majority of its inhabitants live in the southern and eastern coastal towns and cities, making the towns and cities of the North, like Darwin and Broome, very much outposts of the Australian Commonwealth. Jon Stratton opines that whilst the rest of Australia has been situated as the 'real' Australia, the north has typically been cast as the 'other' in the national story.[90] The very fact that it took so many attempts to establish a northern settlement indicates something about how difficult the place of Darwin was within the Australian geography and discourse. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the importance of the north was finally starting to be recognised. Charles Barrett noted that 'the neglected "backyard" of Australia has become a "front doorway" of vital importance. And the old days of Southern folks' indifference to the North have gone for ever.'[91]

The lands that surround Darwin have, for thousands of years, belonged to the peoples of the Larrakia nation. According to the Larrakia people, their lands run 'from Cox Peninsula in the west to Gunn Point in the north, Adelaide River in the east and down to the Manton Dam area southwards.'[92] There is evidence that the Aboriginal communities of the northern coastal areas first came into contact with Europeans in the 1500s when Dutch explorers first charted those waters. The Dutch did not actually settle these areas and so the Aboriginal nations of the north were largely restricted to contact with Malay and Macassan traders from within the Pacific rim area. The Larrakia peoples' first prolonged contact with European settlers was in the early

[89] 'Australia Size Compared: Australia Geoscience', < https://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/national-location-information/dimensions/australias-size-compared>, accessed 6 June 2020.
[90] Stratton, Jon 'Deconstructing the Territory', *Cultural Studies* 3:1, (1989), p.38.
[91] Barrett, Charles, *Up North: Australia Above Capricorn* (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1943), p.7.
[92] 'The Larrakia People – Larrakia Nation', <www.larrakia.com/about/the-larrakia-people/>, accessed 13 April 2020.

1820s, and it would still be over forty years before Palmerston (or as we know it today, Darwin) was established as a successful northern settlement. Founded in 1869, Palmerston was one of the last state/territory capitals to be established – only Canberra is newer in age and that was founded as a federal capital in 1927. There were forty-four years between Brisbane being founded in 1825 and Palmerston in 1869 – the largest gap in the nineteenth century developments. Palmerston was not the first attempt at founding a settlement in the Northern Territory. Robert Reece notes that 'no less than four expeditions were despatched by the South Australian government between 1863 and 1868 (see Fig. 3).'[93]

[93] Reece, Robert 'Palmerston (Darwin): Four Expeditions in Search of a Capital', in Statham, Pamela (ed.) *The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.292.

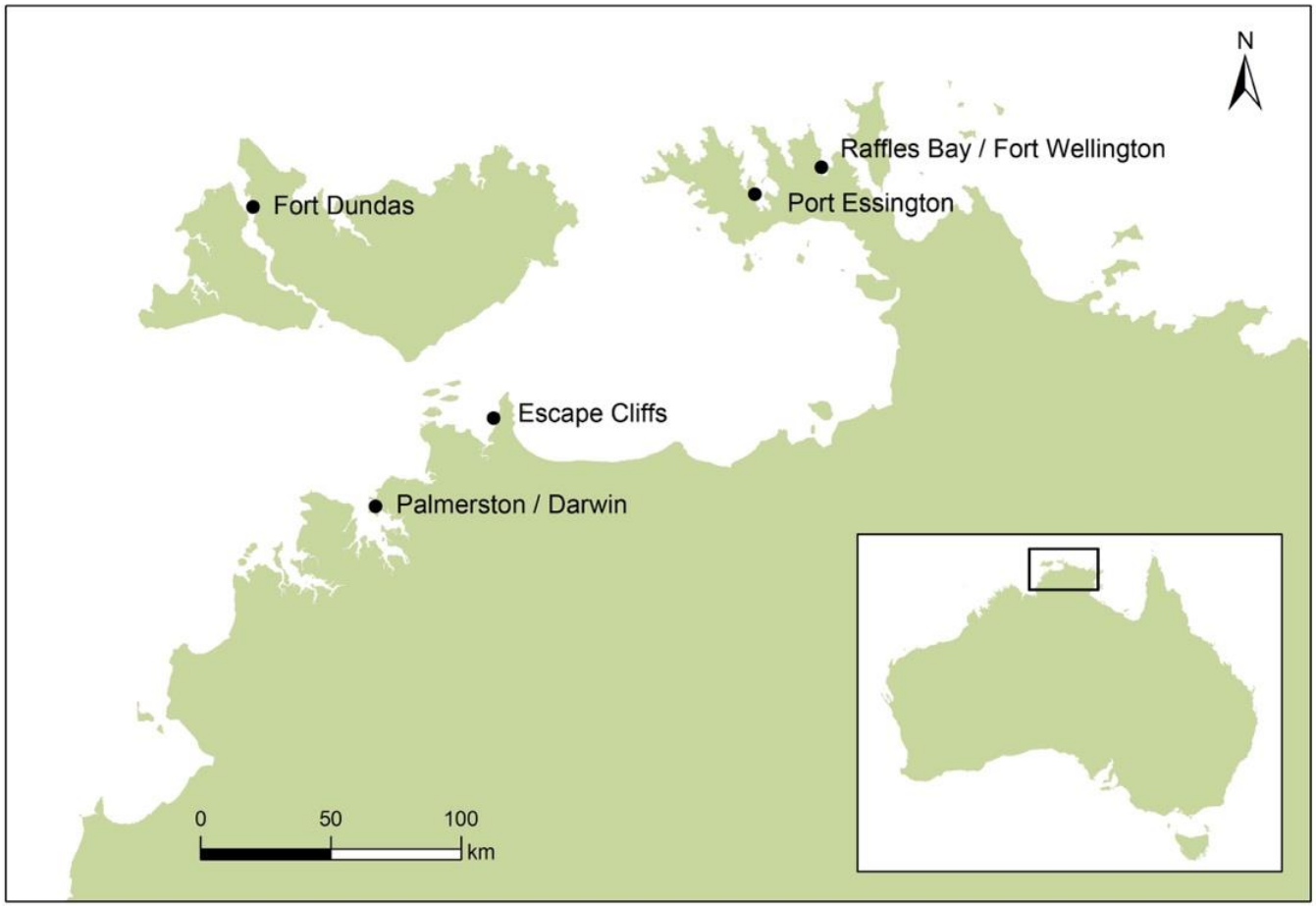

Figure 2. Map detailing the five locations of attempted settlement in Northern Territory

One of the difficulties of establishing an outpost in the north was the issue of distance. Geoffrey Blainey notes that 'when the first fort was built on the north Australian coast, it was as marooned as a beetle in a bottle.'[94] The first attempt at settlement was in 1824 at Fort Dundas, on the north-western edge of Melville Island. Established in response to concerns about the increase in Dutch trading in the Gulf of Carpentaria by Captain J. J. Gordon Bremer, the fort was named after the First Lord of the Admiralty at the time, The Right Honourable Robert Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville. Captain Bremer displayed great enthusiasm for Fort Dundas in the early days, causing people to think that it could become the next Singapore.[95] The base lasted only four years – suffering from issues with weather, termites and Aboriginal skirmishes. Lockwood notes that 'a cyclone swept the fort, dispersing the huts and inundating the gardens, which had to be rebuilt and replanted. Cattle and more sheep brought from Port Jackson were targets for Tiwi spears.'[96] Although there was an attempt to restock the settlement after the cyclone, it was ultimately something that the settlers were unable to recover from.

As Fort Dundas was coming to an end, a second base was established at Raffles Bay located on the northern side of the Cobourg Peninsula in 1827. The Raffles Bay settlement (also known as Fort Wellington) was established as a military fort with soldiers, marines and a handful of convicts. Unfortunately, like Fort Dundas before it, the settlement lasted only a couple of years; suffering from disease as well as persistent attacks from Aborigines in the area. Although it had been reported that there were spices growing in the bushes that could attract the Malay traders, they could not be identified, and the settlement struggled to forge its way. The Iwaja people around Raffles Bay were seen as particularly challenging and this was not helped by Captain Henry Smyth, leader of the settlement, who was not in favour of cultivating

[94] Blainey, Geoffrey The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History Revised Edition (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1983), p.89.
[95] Powell, Alan *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2nd edn, 1988), p.47.
[96] Lockwood, Douglas *The Front Door: Darwin, 1869-1969* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1969), p.9.

relations with the Aboriginal people.[97] There was a general feeling that despite all this, the settlement could have been successful given enough time.

After the failure at Raffles Bay, it was another eleven years before a third attempt to settle the north of Australia was attempted. This time, in 1838, the government in New South Wales settled on Port Essington on the southern side of the Cobourg Peninsula. This was not the first time that Port Essington had been suggested – it had been considered in both 1824 and 1827. It had been hoped that Port Essington would become a vital trading base within the Pacific region. Major John Campbell, who had been governor at Fort Dundas, was known to believe that Port Essington could be a second Singapore.[98] Its isolation, however, from the rest of Australia and lack of ready supplies meant that, like the two attempts before it, it struggled to attract new settlers. Port Essington was certainly more successful than the previous two attempts to settle the north, getting as far as building both a hospital and a Catholic mission, but the lack of settlers meant that this was not sustainable, and Port Essington was abandoned in 1849.

The fourth attempt to establish a settlement on the north coast was at Escape Cliffs in 1864. This attempt was different to the previous ones in that it was led by the South Australian government who had taken control of the Northern Territory area in 1863 under the *Northern Territory Act of 1863*. This annexation followed the successful attempt by John McDouall Stuart to cross Australia from Adelaide in the south to the Arafura Sea in the north. Having traversed these northern lands, the South Australian government was aware of the pastoral opportunities that it could offer and won the battle with Queensland to include it within its state borders. The Northern Territory act provided land orders of 160 acre blocks along with a half-acre block within the new town that would be established. The idea was that these blocks

[97] Lockwood, Douglas *The Front Door: Darwin, 1869-1969,* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1969), pp.11-12.
[98] Cameron, James 'The Northern Settlements: Outposts of Empire', in Statham, Pamela (ed.) *The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.282.

could be sold to pastoralists and investors in advance of development and that the money raised from the sale of these blocks would pay for the survey. Offices were to be established in London and Adelaide to deal with the sales, with both offices being apportioned one hundred and twenty-five thousand acres of country along with seven hundred and eighty-one town lots each.[99] Successful landowners were then expected to 'select' their land within five years. Despite this new attempt to settle the north being led by a different government however, it did not make the Escape Cliffs site any more successful than previous attempts. The local Aboriginal people were particularly volatile towards the settlers and that, combined with tidal flooding and poor leadership saw the settlement abandoned in early 1867. Pastoralists in the south who had purchased lands in the hope of relocating and beginning new lives were bitterly disappointed with its failure and the South Australian government were desperate to find a solution to the situation they were left with.

A Town is Born: 1869-1911

The solution they were seeking lay with George Goyder, the surveyor-general for the South Australian government, who led the final settlement attempt. Goyder had achieved various successes in helping the government identify lands within South Australia that were suitable for pastoralists and grazing. Building on his successes in the south, Goyder took a team of men north to survey the lands for a suitable permanent base. Arriving in Darwin Harbour in February 1869, they established the township of Palmerston as the main centre as well as smaller bases at Daly, Southport and Virginia – all of which still exist today. Goyder completed the survey of the area in a record six months, identifying not only agricultural lands, but also lands with significant mineral deposits.[100] The supply of freshwater, in addition to the

[99] The Northern Territory Act of 1863 (SA) [transcript.pdf] <https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/nt2_doc_1863a.pdf>, accessed 10 April 2021.
[100] Biography – George Woodroffe Goyder – Australian Dictionary of Biography <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/goyder-george-woodroffe-3647>, accessed 4 July 2020.

potential that was seen in regard to keeping links with the rest of Australia via both land and sea meant that the settlement survived where earlier ones had not.

The first official settlers arrived in 1870 on *The Kohinoor,* ready to begin their new lives in the north. Darwin's survival was boosted by two key factors in those early days – the first was the discovery of gold in 1872 in the Pine Creek area, which saw an increase in European settlers moving to the region. In turn, this discovery saw the growth of the mining industry in the Northern Territory, not only for gold, but also for copper, mica, tin and wolfram.[101] The second factor was the success of the Australian Overland Telegraph Line, which finally connected Darwin to Port Augusta in South Australia in August 1872. The undersea telegraph from Java had made land at Darwin in December 1871 and by the end of 1872, connected Australia to the rest of the world. The digging of holes for the telegraph poles to take the Telegraph Line through Australia saw another gold discovery at Pine Creek in the 1880s. This triggered a gold rush which saw an influx of Chinese settlers to the area and therefore continued to boost the developing settlement. Both miners and pastoralists however struggled to maintain industrial success in the north, facing issues with the climate, the high cost of supplies caused by the isolation of living in the north – both to support the industries as well as supplies to support daily life; and continued skirmishes with the Aboriginal people whose lands they had taken over. There were also issues with landowners who rented out their selections for high prices which struggling pastoralists could not afford to continue paying as they strove to adjust to the effect of the climate on their crops.

Another industry that contributed to the success of Darwin was the pearl-fishing industry, which brought settlers from areas such as Japan, Timor and the Philippines. The industry received little support from the governments of the day, primarily because it was an industry that employed very few Europeans and therefore

[101] Ling, Ted *Commonwealth Government Records about the Northern Territory,* (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2011), p.11.

sat against the restrictions that the government imposed on migrant workers from the Pacific region. Pre-Federation, South Australia (who were responsible for the Northern Territory at that time) introduced an Act of Parliament in 1857 that restricted the number of Chinese nationals who were allowed to enter the state, with a levy of ten pounds per individual over the permitted numbers. This was particularly directed at the Chinese as a result of the influx that had occurred following the discovery of gold in South Australia. Further restrictions were introduced with the 1857-58 Act of Parliament 'to authorize the appointment of an Emigration Agent and to encourage and regulate Immigration into the Province of South Australia.'[102] Restrictions such as these were grouped together with those of other states at the point of Federation in 1901 and became the White Australia Policy.

The rate in which Darwin expanded is tricky to measure through census data, as the early statistics are grouped under South Australia, with the Northern Territory combined as one reporting area. The first census came just two years after the establishment of Goyder's settlement, and the population of the Territory was still regarded as relatively small.[103] From 1871 to 1876, the population nearly quadrupled in size, prompted by the initial discovery of gold along the Overland Telegraph Line. By 1881 the population had increased by a further 4.6 times, largely driven by the significant discovery of gold at Pine Creek and the influx of Chinese gold prospectors. The 1881 census was the first time where foreign states started to be broken down to be more specific, although this still did not include every country, as noted by the Japanese figures in the table below.

[102] Immigration 21 Vic., 1857-58, No. 4 Government Printer, accessed 28 March 2025 <https://fac.flinders.edu.au/items/8f08a01d-ca6f-4a65-acc2-45aa256c69af> It should be noted that 1857 is the year that South Australia was granted self-government from Great Britain.
[103] It should be noted that the early census data did not automatically count Aboriginal communities within its numbers, Therefore the numbers listed here only represent settler and immigrant communities.

Table 1: Overall Population of Darwin from 1871 – 1947.

Year	Overall Population	Chinese	Japanese	Other Foreign States
1871	201			5
1876	743			227
1881	3451	2723		15
1891	4898	3507		49
1901	4096	2572	38	
1911	2734	1165	89	
1921	3867	466	35	
1933	4850	144	77	
1947	10868	69	0	

Through tracking the change in occupations in the pre- and post-war census documents, records show that whilst agricultural and primary production industries occupied a significant proportion of inhabitants in the Northern Territory, by 1947 public authority and defence related roles held a larger share of the occupation split, alongside building, construction and transport. The drive to rebuild Darwin would have fuelled these industries, whilst the increase in military personnel had not diminished following the end of the war.[104]

[104] Census Bulletin No. 4: Summary for the Northern Territory, *(Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1947),* p.9 and Census Bulletin No. 4: Summary for the Northern Territory, *(Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1933),* p.9.

The Government Takes Charge: 1911 – 1941

Administration of the Northern Territory was eventually transferred from South Australia to the Commonwealth of Australia in 1911, although there had been early suggestions that Great Britain might take on responsibility for the Territory, but this was not to be. Despite having made significant strides in developing the Northern Territory, the financial pressures on the South Australian government had continued to be immense. The transfer of the Territory had been a long time coming, with the first takeover being suggested as early as 1901. The negotiations took a number of years to finalise, partly due to the numerous changes of the Commonwealth government, and also because parliament was nervous about taking on the Territory's financial obligations. Ted Ling notes that there was one crucial difference between South Australia's administration of the Territory and the future Commonwealth administration – political representation.[105] The change from State to Commonwealth Administration in 1911 resulted in Territory workers losing their representation and voting rights. P. F. Donovan notes that 'prior to 1911, Territorians were able to elect representatives to the South Australian House of Assembly, and they were able to cast votes for representatives in the state's upper house, and in the federal parliament. They lost any parliamentary voice in 1911.'[106] Workers were frustrated that administration was being now run by southerners who had no idea what it was like to live and work in the Territory. Strikes and protests occurred with the Trade Unions during the First World War, with protestors fighting against unemployment, taxation, industrial disputes as well as political representation. Although there were a number of government departments based in Darwin, they were often staffed by southern ministers who had no specific loyalties towards the north.[107] These protests culminated in the 'Darwin Rebellion' which took place on 17 December 1918.

[105] Ling, Ted *Commonwealth Government Records about the Northern Territory,* (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2011), p.14.
[106] Donovan, P.F. *At the Other End of Australia,* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p.7.
[107] Ling, Ted, *ibid.,* pp.26-27.

Hundreds of workers marched on Government House demanding that John Anderson Gilruth, government-appointed Administrator of the Northern Territory, resign his office with immediate effect. Whilst he stood his ground on that day, within two months he was on a ship back to Melbourne and Gilruth's term as Administrator came to an end.

Another boost to Darwin's growth was the development of air services in the 1920s and 1930s and, in particular, the extension of the Imperial Airways routes and the foundation of the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services (QANTAS). The first flight from London to Australia was successfully completed in under thirty days in 1919 by Captain Ross Smith and his brother. Flying via India, they made use of the already charted London to Delhi routes, and then extended their explorations via Rangoon and then on to Darwin.[108] The Northern Territory Administrator at the time, Staniforth Smith, claimed the landing of the Smith brothers in Darwin as 'the most important event in the history of Darwin since 1872.'[109] Yet, issues of finance meant that it was some time before any permanent service was established. Robin Higham notes that these were initially established as mail services, linking up the London to Delhi services with services through to Singapore and across the islands to Darwin. Negotiating these early routes was not simple, and there were a number of issues related to who had permission to fly in the different areas, which Higham suggests as more political rather than geographical issues.[110] Both Dutch and Portuguese interests in the Pacific region were still high, and they were keen to develop their own routes rather than allow Australia to gain the monopoly, and this delayed progress further. A regular mail service between London and Brisbane was eventually started in 1934, and Darwin was a key stopping point in this journey, one

[108] Higham, Robin *Britain's Imperial Air Routes 1918-1939,* (Croydon: Fonthill, 2016), p.131.
[109]Donovan, P.F. *At the Other End of Australia: The Commonwealth and the Northern Territory 1911-1978,* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), p.85. 1872 was the year that the underwater cable came ashore at Darwin and connected Australia to the rest of Asia and to Europe for the first time.
[110] Higham, Robin, *ibid.,* p.136.

of the next significant stops on from Singapore. The first passenger flights started in 1935, flying from London to Brisbane, but the use of flying boats as part of this meant that in Darwin (a city renowned for its tropical cyclones) bad weather would easily disrupt flight plans. Developments in air services continued until the outbreak of war in 1939, during which time flights were severely disrupted.

Darwin Prepares for War: 1918 – 1939

As we shall discuss in more detail in Chapter Two, a significant proportion of Australia's interwar decision around defence were shaped by the British strategy of establishing a base at Singapore and holding a strategic position within the Pacific. As the key conurbation on Australia's northern coastline, Darwin was used as a strategic trading port during much of the 1920s and 1930s. Whilst not initially seen as a defensive base, imperial strategists saw Darwin as a base for naval fuel oil reserves. As part of the 'World Cruise of the Special Service Squadron' in 1923-24, Admiral Sir Frederick Field visited a number of countries around the world and spent significant time in the dominions. The cruise arrived in Fremantle on 27 February 1924 and departed from Sydney on 20 April 1924. Whilst in Australia, Field gave many speeches and attended various dinners. By 22 March 1924, newspapers were reporting on Field's views on Darwin as a potential naval base, though there was much discussion in naval and defence circles as to whether this was to substitute Singapore or to complement it.[111] On 14 April at the Millions Club, he gave a speech in which he stated that it was 'evident that the nearest base for protecting cruisers would be at Port Darwin, where the ships navigating the Pacific could enter and be refuelled and refitted in the shortest possible time.'[112] These views fitted with

[111] 'The Darwin Base.' (1924, March 22). *The Age (Melbourne, Vic. : 1854 - 1954)*, p. 15. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204088380
[112] 'Admiral Field.' (1924, April 15). The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954), p. 11. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16137560

proposals that had previously been put forward by the likes of Jellicoe and Kitchener, but were more direct about the service Darwin could provide.

The practicalities of such a decision, however, were not solely linked to installing the oil tanks in Darwin – they would need to be protected as well, and this would require the establishment of a military base. The first tanks were started in 1926, and it took 30 months for the first shipment of oil to arrive. There were four tanks by 1928 with a further two added by 1933 and the last tanks were installed in 1939. They had a capacity for over 96,000 tonnes of fuel. The initial tanks were built in plain and open view because at the time, the threats posed by air bombardment were not fully appreciated.[113]

The first troops arrived in Darwin in September 1932 who were based at the abandoned Vestey's meat-works. The temporary garrison was made up of the Royal Australian Artillery and the Royal Australian Engineers and moved from their original base on Thursday Island.[114] One of their first jobs was to establish a gun point up at East Point, the modern-day site of the Darwin Military Museum. By 1933, a permanent garrison had arrived in Darwin and formed the 9th Heavy Battery. The work to establish permanent barracks and military defences in Darwin was hard work. The lack of readily available equipment and the environmental challenges such as hard rock, weather variances and fever and disease, presented the troops with a demanding task. With the basic military features of the town established, the remaining services began to create bases there as well. In 1935, the Naval Reserve Depot was re-opened and by 1937 the Naval wireless telegraphy station was constructed. Work commenced on a new RAAF base in 1938, whilst the Larrakeyah Barracks were finished by 1939. The installation of an anti-submarine boom in the harbour began during 1939-40, and was designed to allow for protection from

[113] Powell, Alan *The Shadow's Edge* (rev'd edn), (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2007), p.5.
[114] Powell, Alan *ibid.,* p.7.

Japanese midget submarines, whilst also permitting regular harbour traffic to continue its daily business.

Northern Territory residents were concerned about the rate at which the military establishments were springing up across Darwin. They were seen as taking over or impinging on communal recreation areas within the town. There were also concerns that military developments were stifling local businesses who were anxious about the expansion. Whilst the population was growing, there were not necessarily the jobs for the people who were flooding into the town, or the services available to accommodate them. Indeed, in 1938 it was reported in the *Northern Standard* that troops were continuing to be trained down south whilst the town's water supply was improved to cater for such a large increase in usage.[115]

Military restrictions and discipline began to govern life in Darwin, and this did not go down well with its original citizens. There were strikes which disrupted the military developments and the wharfies, who were renowned for their militant behaviours, refused to unload any of the military cargo ships, which resulted in the troops having to do it themselves. Troops were already often frustrated about being sent to Darwin, as they felt that this was not likely to be an active conflict zone, and they often could not see what they were contributing to any potential war effort. Tensions with the wharfies only added to this sense of frustration.

In addition to the military developments in Darwin during the 1930s, the town also played an important role in diplomatic matters, particularly pertaining to ongoing relations with Japan. Alan Powell writes that:

> In June 1936 the four-masted training ship, *Kaiwo Maru,* sailed into port. Captain Miyamoto and his officers attended a civic reception, dined with the town's dignitaries at the Victoria Hotel amid speeches of friendship and reciprocated with dinner on board the following night.[116]

[115] 'Naval Plans for Darwin' *Northern Standard (Darwin, NT : 1921 - 1955)* 29 July 1938: 9. Web. 19 Jan 2025 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article49449471>.
[116] Powell, Alan *ibid.,* p.11.

A similar visit occurred in 1937 with the *Hakuyoh Maru* and the townsfolk of Darwin were generally happy to entertain and ensure formalities were upheld. Within Darwin itself, relations with the Japanese appeared to be harmonious. A change in policy in the 1930s allowed Japanese seaman to buried on shore for the first time, instead of just at sea. When the policy was put forward, Darwin officials did not raise any objections. Concerns were however starting to be highlighted in Federal Parliament about Japanese pearlers and the possibility that they might be spying in northern waters. These concerns grew quicky and were raised not only in the Australian parliament but also in the British parliament and at the Imperial Conference. In a memorandum prepared by the Department of External Affairs for the conference, attention is drawn to 'the activities of the Japanese along the coasts of Queensland….generally amongst the whole of the Western Pacific Islands, the North coasts of Australia and the Dutch East Indies.'[117] It also notes that the Japanese had announced their intention to extend their trawling activities which was a significant concern for Australia. Minutes from the Imperial Conference delegates meeting on 22 May 1937 note that in addition to Australia, Lord Zetland – the Indian Secretary of State – was also expressing his concern regarding the penetration of Japanese fishing fleets into Pacific waters[118]

By the time that war arrived in the Pacific in December 1941, the threat of invasion appeared to be a real possibility. The War Cabinet ordered a mass evacuation of over two thousand women and children under the National Security (Emergency Control) Regulations. Douglas Lockwood reports that by 18 February 1942, only sixty-three women and children remained in Darwin, with all the others having sailed south to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.[119] The *Northern Standard*

[117] Memorandum prepared for Delegation to Imperial Conference: Unoccupied Islands in the Vicinity of Australia, AA: A981, Imperial Relations 145A '4.
[118] Meetings '29 Minutes of Fourth Meeting of Principal Delegates to Imperial Conference', FA: Imperial Conference 1937,
[119] Lockwood, Douglas *The Front Door: Darwin 1869-1969,* (Melbourne: Angus & Robertson, 1969), p.254.

published a statement from C. L. A. Abbott – the Northern Territory Administrator - on 16 December 1941 that the Federal War Cabinet had made the decision to compulsorily evacuate the women and children as soon as possible.[120] Some women managed to avoid the compulsory order by either already being employed in, or securing employment in, essential services such as the Post Office, and as secretarial support for the military services. An article in the *NT News* in 2016 detail recollections of those who were evacuated, with one individual recalling that their mother refused to go until the ARP warden indicated she would be arrested and forcibly evacuated.[121] The same article also details how evacuees found the general public in the south to be ignorant of the impending arrival of evacuees, due to the lack of publicization in the press of the potential threats.

Darwin and Its Challenges

Darwin is a city that has seen more than its fair share of challenges over the years from both nature and enemy forces. Unlike the previous settlements in the north that were often abandoned at the first sign of trouble, Darwin managed to secure itself a vital place in the nation's infrastructure, meaning abandonment was not an option in the same way. The Overland Telegraph linked with the sub-marine Java-Darwin telegraph cable at Darwin, and in the early years it quickly became a door to Asia for both trade and military defence. Darwin had to be maintained and so despite the many challenges that came its way, each time it was rebuilt and its future secured. The devastating impact of Cyclone Tracy on Christmas Eve in 1974 is known the world over, but what is perhaps less well known is that the city had been flattened by cyclones four times - in 1897, 1917, 1937 and 1974, as well experiencing damage in a number of other tropical storms in both intervening and subsequent years.

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[120] 'Evacuation Order' (1941, December 16). Northern Standard (Darwin, NT : 1921 - 1955), p. 1. Retrieved April 2, 2025, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article49470013

[121] 'The day Darwin was ordered to be evacuated' *NT News* (Darwin: NT News, 19 February 2016) retrieved April 1, 2025, from <https://www.ntnews.com.au/news/northern-territory/the-day-darwin-was-ordered-to-be-evacuated/news-story/7106e28348695e09b8254a57ff5e78e2>.

The cyclone of 1897 saw 28 people killed, although newspaper reports interestingly note that it was not anyone from the white population. It does state however that considerable damage had been wrought across the city with A J Collier, the Port Officer in Darwin stating that 'the devastation caused by the cyclone has been so tremendous and far reaching that in the present confusion it is difficult to assess the exact amount of the damage done.'[122] In the days that followed the cyclone, the people of Darwin were keen to allow skilled Chinese carpenters to come and begin the process of rebuilding the town, but the Commonwealth government opposed the proposal to import Chinese labour and so sent a fleet of carpenters from Sydney to assist with the rebuild.[123] Reports note that the Commonwealth government were particularly keen to have their own-approved men repairing Government buildings, albeit those in Darwin would have been happy with Chinese labour.[124] The *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette* also reported that during this time, Chinese labourers who were already in Darwin increased the day rate of their services, which in turn caused tension with European carpenters who felt they should be able to demand the same rates.[125] The cyclone of 8 April 1917 saw 7 people killed and these were reported as Chinese men on a fishing boat out at sea. Details are somewhat sketchy on the effect of this particular cyclone but given that this occurred in the midst of the First World War, it perhaps did not afford as much coverage as might have normally been the case.

On the 10 – 11 March 1937, a further cyclone struck Darwin, killing one Aboriginal person and leaving countless people homeless. An extract from the *Melbourne Herald* on 16 March 1937 reported that 'many buildings were blown flat,

[122] 'That Terrible Cyclone' (1897, January 8). *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922), p.2 (One O'clock Edition). Retrieved June 26, 2021, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209081380.
[123] 'The Port Darwin Cyclone' (1897, January 13). *Evening Journal* (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912), p.2 (One O'clock Edition). Retrieved August 3, 2020, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207887235.
[124] The Port Darwin Cyclone (1897, January 13). South Australian Register (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900), p. 6. Retrieved April 1, 2025, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article54475902
[125] 'Notes and News' (1897, March 30). Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette (Qld. : 1868 - 1919), p. 3. Retrieved April 1, 2025, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171533307

and scarcely one escaped harm.'[126] Another extract from the *Melbourne Herald* reported that the cyclone had left 'a unique opportunity of rebuilding a town that will mark more fittingly the air gateway to Australia.'[127] The article described Darwin as a shanty-town, suggesting that Government should provide a framework for rebuilding that would turn it into something much more befitting of its gateway status. The article ended with the words 'Darwin cannot be rebuilt in a day, but the cyclone has accomplished the useful purpose of scrapping much that was ugly and useless' – another insight into how people in the south viewed Darwin.[128]

Later on in that same year, it was reported in *The Age* that Government buildings had been prioritised for repair over those belonging to private and indigenous individuals – entitling their article 'Officialdom First'.[129] It was yet another demonstration of how the south did not fully understand or engage with those in the north. The article noted that a mere £120 had been made available to private individuals whereas over £4000 had been spent on Government House and a further £30,000 on other government buildings, and five months on from the cyclone, there were still areas of Darwin where repairs had not been made to ensure water was available. In addition to the damage that was caused in the city, there were also 50 pearling luggers with nearly 500 men aboard out at sea when the cyclone struck. It was a few days before the fate of the pearling fleet was known and fortunately, the fleet had managed to survive the cyclone, sheltering in the Liverpool River some 500km east of Darwin.[130]

These cyclones all occurred before the Second World War, when the town was again destroyed – this time by Japanese bombers. Yet Darwin once again rose

[126] 'Graphic Pictures of Darwin Cyclone' *Melbourne Herald,* 16 March 1937, p.16. NAA/A1/1937/4701 – Cyclone at Darwin March 1937, Government Properties Repairs to.
[127] 'After the Cyclone' (1937, March 12). *The Herald* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1861 - 1954), p.6. Retrieved June 27, 2021, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article244651006
[128] *Ibid.*
[129] 'Officialdom First' (1937, August 27). *The Age* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1854 - 1954), p.9. Retrieved June 27, 2021, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205571110
[130] Telegram from Darwin to Canberra, NAA/A1/1037/4701 – Cyclone at Darwin March 1937, Government Properties Repairs to., p.445.

from the rubble – demonstrating the importance that was being placed on Darwin's role within Australia. The post-war period was not the only time in which Darwin had to be rebuilt. Christmas Eve 1974 saw what is perhaps the most infamous cyclone that devastated Darwin, as Cyclone Tracy bore down on the city whilst people slept. The destruction caused by Tracy saw a total of 65 people killed. Many of the fatalities were caused by either being crushed in falling buildings or being killed by flying debris. The way in which buildings had seemingly just folded and collapsed was alarming, and it saw the long-term creation of a building code for all of Australia that included guidelines on building in cyclone-prone areas. The number of fatalities was carefully investigated in the period that followed – why had there been so many deaths; why were people not more prepared? One of the key influencing factors seemed to have been that Tracy had changed direction very late in the day, and essentially caught people unawares. Heavy rains and some fairly brisk winds had been expected, but the last-minute change of direction with no time to evacuate saw the city take the full force of the cyclone. There have, of course, been cyclones since Tracy struck in 1974, but the effects have not been as damaging perhaps because the city has learnt much since that time. Cyclone Max hit in 1981, whilst in 2008 Cyclone Helen rolled in and in 2017 and 2018, Cyclones Blanche and Marcus also struck Darwin.

This summary chapter, that outlines the early days of Darwin, has demonstrated the trials that have been faced in settling the Northern Territory, but also the incredible determination of those charged with this task. Time and time again, people have persisted against the odds – and often against the government – to make the settlement work. The difficulties in communication between north and south, as well as a lack of understanding in the corridors of power of what life in the north was actually like has been a pervading issue throughout the years. Through the chapters that follow, this thesis will situate Darwin within the broader Australian story and how the cataclysmic event of the Second World War influenced and moulded that story

through the political, military, diplomatic, social and cultural discourse associated with conflict and commemoration.

Chapter Two: The Brisbane Line – Political Myth or Cultural Reality?

The cultural notion of 'The Brisbane Line' has cast a long shadow over an understanding of how Darwin, specifically, and the North, more broadly, fit into Australia's discourse around the Second World War. As well as examining the chronological development of the commemoration of the 1942 Darwin bombings, this thesis will also consider whether Darwin and the North's place in the national discourse affect the way events were handled at the time and have been commemorated since. One aspect of this is the cultural notion of 'The Brisbane Line' and whether this has influenced the way in which the events of the Second World War in the Northern Territory have been incorporated into the national discourse. In order to analyse the information that may support, or indeed, refute this claim, it is important to first understand where 'The Brisbane Line' fits into the discourse of the Second World War, as well as contextualising it in terms of the Australian domestic situation during the early 1940s.

Military and Defence Overview

It is fair to say that whilst the government was keen to refute the existence of a formally approved plan called the 'Brisbane Line', there was certainly a basis from which the story grew. In a time of conflict, it is only natural for nation-states to carefully examine their defence policies and to assess the likely threats that might be posed by enemy forces. For a government to fail to do this would be seen as negligent and questions would naturally be asked at the highest level. In examining their military policies, nations are also forced to consider options that are not necessarily favourable to all areas or people. David Horner states that 'for the first and only time in Australian history the government and its military advisers were involved in making

decisions on matters of strategy that directly and immediately affected the safety of the nation.'[131]

One such consideration for Australia during the Second World War was a plan to evacuate the northern and western desert states as they were deemed harder to defend but also harder to infiltrate by the enemy. They were also less densely populated than the industrial south-east heartland of Australia. Once these states were evacuated, they could potentially be left with little or no defence. In addition to the report put forward by Sir Iven MacKay, other military officials also offered their views. Major H.V. Howe, who worked in the office of the Minister of the Army, recalled that Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee, Chief of General Staff 1940-1942, had submitted a suggestion that called for a two-part defensive line to be drawn from Maryborough in Queensland to Geraldton in Western Australia in the first instance, followed by a secondary line that tracked from Maryborough to just north of St Vincent's Gulf in South Australia, if it became necessary to retreat from the original position.[132] When recalling this proposal, Howe indicated that there was limited provision for the evacuation of civilians within the area north of the line. This was of great concern to some members of the War Cabinet. Richard Connaughton opines that the Chief of General Staff was in fact resurrecting ideas that had originally been suggested by a committee headed by Lieutenant-General John Monash during the early 1920s following his return from Europe in the First World War.[133]

Regardless of the proposed positions of the lines, the overwhelming issue for Australia was that they did not have the military forces to be able to engage the enemy

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[131] Horner, David 'Australia under threat of invasion' in Mckernan, M and Browne, M *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace,* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1988), p.245. Horner also notes that the politicians had no experience or training in making such decisions and that the military leaders were also faced with a new situation that they had not previously experienced.

[132] Burns, Paul The Brisbane Line Controversy: Political Opportunism versus National Security, 1942-45 (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), pp.47-48.

[133] Connaughton, Richard *Shrouded Secrets: Japan's War on Mainland Australia 1942-44* (London: Brassey's, 1994), p.20-21 and p.101. The report that Connaughton is referring to is AWM 1: 20/7 'Report on the Military Defence of Australia, by a Conference of senior officers of the Australian Military Forces, 1920, Volumes I and II'. Whilst the report considers various options for providing defence to Australia, paying particular attention to the potential future threats from Japan in the north, there is no direct evidence to suggest that the committee directly recommended the idea of the Brisbane Line.

at all possible points of invasion. Therefore, they needed to consider the most realistic course of action if faced with invasion. The harshest of plans (that proposed by MacKay) would see over ninety percent of the country abandoned, with focus for defence given to the areas that held the majority of military bases and key industrial areas. The claim of abandonment of the areas above the proposed line were not as clear-cut as Eddie Ward, MP for East Sydney and Minister for Labour and National Service, made out. Plans suggested that guerilla warfare was more likely in the northern areas, with the evacuation of civilians to make this a more practical task to accomplish. In his book *Reminiscences,* General MacArthur noted that it was his understanding that 'industrial plants and utilities in the Northern Territory would be dynamited, military facilities would be levelled, port installations rendered useless and irreparable.'[134]

[134] MacArthur, Gen, Douglas *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 152.

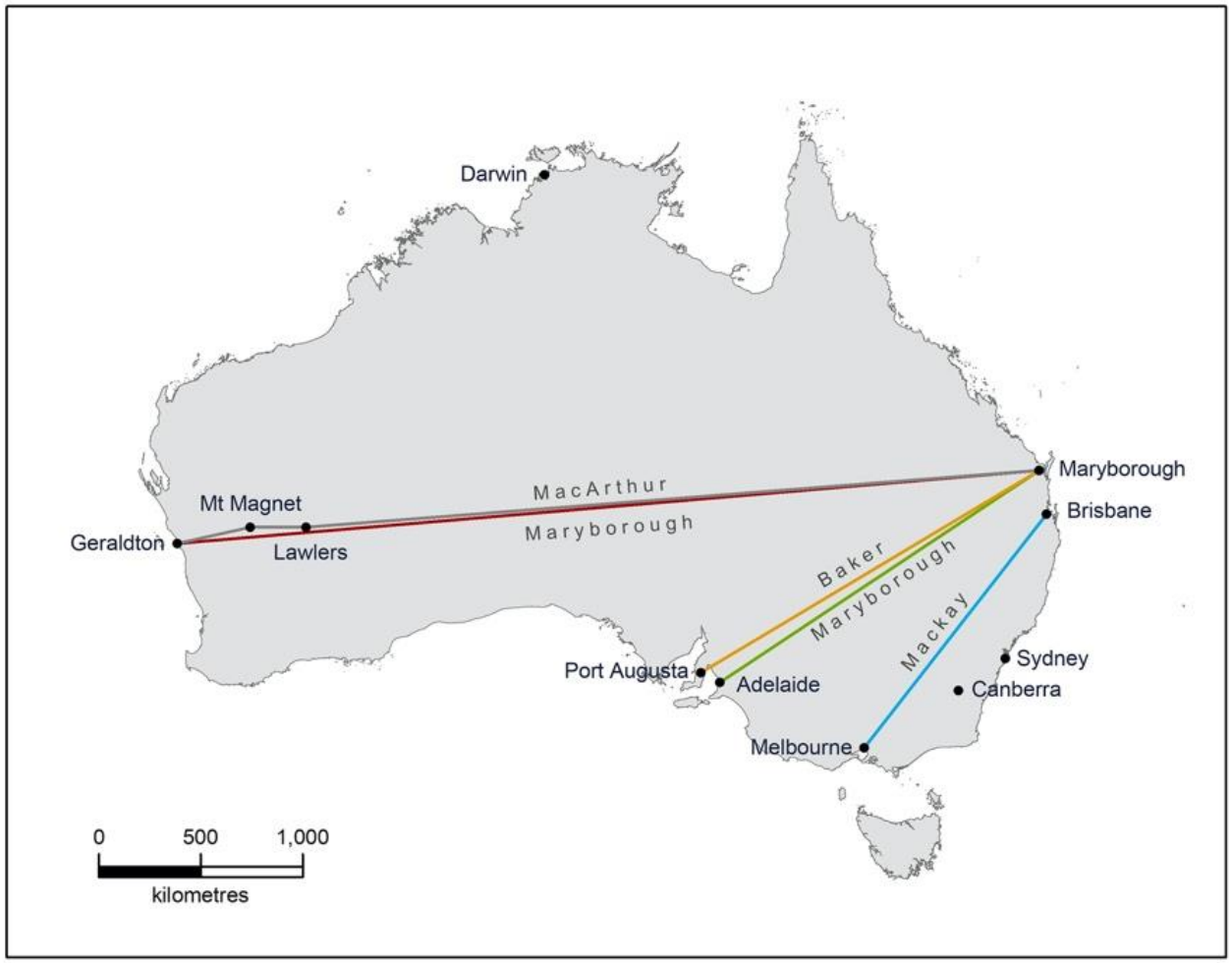

Figure 3. Map outlining potential locations for the Brisbane Line proposal

In addition to the military-led ideas outlined above, the government had also instructed each state 'to draw up "Scorched Earth" schemes […] to come into effect in the event of an invasion.'[135] This instruction came prior to the attack on Darwin but was informed by events that had occurred in Asia. Sue Rosen notes that 'wherever the Japanese invaded Asia, they plundered local resources from forests to oil fields and used locals and captured troops as slave labour.'[136] The Scorched Earth schemes that the Commonwealth government instructed states to consider were designed to 'deprive the enemy of every resource that might aid its war effort.'[137] Prime Minister Curtin was keen to ensure however, that this idea did not signify abandonment, but rather a plan of action if invasion were to occur. The state of New South Wales took this request particularly seriously. Harold Swain, State Forestry Commissioner, became chair of the sub-committee that was tasked with drawing up the State's response to the government's request. Swain had previously drawn up a document called *Total War! and Total Citizen Collaboration* which outlined how the general public could fight the enemy in simple, mundane ways. Swain's initial document became the basis of the first draft of the New South Wales Scorched Earth Code.[138]

The Code was formed of two parts – a General Citizen Code for everyday Australians, and an Industrial and Services Code for all kinds of trades and businesses. The documents gave basic ideas as to what to have ready in case of evacuation, how to stockpile and, most importantly, how to destroy or significantly damage items that might aid the enemy if they were to get hold of them. It also suggested places to which city-dwellers, particularly those in Sydney and the

[135] Rosen, Sue (ed.) Scorched Earth: Australia's Secret Plan for Total War under Japanese Invasion in World War II, (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2017), p. xvi.
[136] *Ibid.,* p. xvi.
[137] *Ibid.,* p. xvi.
[138] *Ibid.,* p.87. Rosen fastidiously reproduces the NSW code in her book. A search of the National Archives of Australia demonstrates that they hold documents relating to many of the other states.

surrounding area, could retreat to. Although the government wanted to avoid mass evacuation, they had to plan for all eventualities.

Whilst records refute that ideas such as Monash's and Howe's never became formal military policy, it was proposals such as the Brisbane Line, as well as that of the Scorched Earth Code that were grasped by Eddie Ward, MP for East Sydney and Minister for Labour and National Service as part of the election campaign in October 1942, The controversy caused by the allegations made by Ward were eventually presented to the House of Representatives for parliamentary debate in December 1942. As a member of the Cabinet, Ward sat on the Advisory War Council and saw confidential proposals and used their content as a scare-mongering tactic in public debates and parliamentary discussions. Ward claimed that the previous government had adopted a plan to abandon the majority of the north of Australia in the event of an enemy attack. This plan was, according to Ward, known as 'The Brisbane Line'. Ward's accusations led to one of the most serious domestic crises of the Second World War.

Parliamentary Background

On 22 June 1943, Arthur Fadden, Leader of the Opposition in the Australian Parliament, tabled a motion of want of confidence in the government of the day. Fadden moved that 'the government no longer possesses the confidence of this house', stating that 'the Curtin government has shown itself unfitted adequately and impartially to govern Australia in the circumstances of today.'[139] The motion was largely concerned with the fact that the Labour Party refused to form a national government. Labour had adopted this position when in Opposition – refusing to join forces with Robert Menzies, leader of the United Australia Party, and the Country Party – and maintained this once they were in Government. Fadden was clear that in

[139] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no.25, col.2, p.7.

a time of war, Australia should be presenting a united front to its allies as well as its enemies, as the issue of national security was a matter for all parties and people, and not just the government. It was felt that the contribution to the war effort by the government did not do enough to protect the interests of the Australian citizen.

Parliamentary records indicate that the debate on 22 June 1943 was a culmination of months of accusations levelled by Ward against both the government of the time and the previous two governments. Since October of 1942, Ward had publicly stated that Prime Ministers Menzies and Fadden had actively prepared plans to abandon the northern half of Australia in the event of an invasion by the Japanese.[140] This plan was referred to as 'The Brisbane Line' because, according to Ward, if the invasion had occurred, national defences would have drawn a line at Brisbane and left the rest of the country to the Japanese. The abandoned towns would have included Cairns, Rockhampton, Broome and Darwin, to name but a few. Curtin freely admitted in the parliamentary debate of 22 June that his government 'was faced with the fact that all the strategic areas which previously had been regarded as buffers against the Japanese had, in fact, become stepping stones in the enemy's progress towards Australia.'[141] Curtin went on to note that Australia's whole strategy had to be changed when the Japanese attacked because the majority of Australian forces were in fact fighting the war overseas. Menzies openly supported Curtin in this view, stating that 'when you have an unprecedented task, you must resort to unprecedented measures' – a statement that could also be seen as a means of defending actions he

[140] The *Advocate* newspaper records the first occurrence of this at a meeting of Labor members in Hobart Town Hall in Tasmania on 20 October 1942 – 'Our Defences Never Better', *Advocate* (Burnie, Tas. : 1890 – 1954, 22 October 1942), p.2., accessed 30 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article68785555>. He went on to make these allegations again at Preston Town Hall, Victoria on 26 October 1942 prompting Mr Menzies to publish a retort in the *Weekly Times* on 28 October – 'Mr Menzies Answers Mr Ward', *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1869 – 1954, 28 October 1942), p.3., accessed 30 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article225567223> . It should be noted that Fadden's government lasted for a grand total of 40 days. This was not through any great fault of his own, rather a reflection on the unsettled nature of parliament at the time. Therefore, although Eddie Ward aimed his claims at both leaders, Robert Menzies came under far greater scrutiny for his part in the debacle.

[141] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 25, p26, col. 1.

and his government may have previously taken.[142] The statements made on that day in June 1943 by Eddie Ward, coupled with the refusal by Prime Minister Curtin to deny these statements, resulted in what became known as *The Royal Commission into Statement by Mr Ward MP that document relating to "Brisbane Line" was missing from official files,* of which more shall be discussed later.[143]

In his statement on 22 June, Fadden referred to the Brisbane Line as a 'much discussed, vexed and misrepresented subject.'[144] During his speech, he noted that Ward's earlier statements on the subject made 'no mention of what has become known as "the Brisbane line" all previous references had been to an alleged plan to abandon portions of northern Australia.'[145] Fadden's personal view of the situation was that Ward had grasped the term of the Brisbane Line as a political strategy to turn the people of Queensland against the Country Party. If the Country Party lost their hold on Queensland, then the coalition opposition would be broken. It would not only change the face of the national parliament but also the state government of Queensland. The Country Party prided themselves on representing rural, farming communities, something that they believed was at the heart of what made Australia.

Queensland was renowned for being a stronghold of such communities. Fadden held a seat in Darling Downs, and so perhaps felt this attack more keenly than former Prime Minister, Menzies, who was MP for the inner Melbourne seat Kooyong in Victoria. Indeed, Fadden stated before the House that Ward had 'branded [him] as a traitor to [his] native State, the State of which [his] wife and family, and a great many of [his] associates, are natives – a traitor to the State where all [his]

[142] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 25, p33, col. 2.
[143] Hansard records from 11 December 1942 show that Ward bought the matter before the House during a debate on International Affairs and a review of the war situation. Records from 22 June 1943 show John Curtin listing the dates on which Ward had publicly discussed the Brisbane Line matter, the first of these occurring in Hobart in October 1942.
[144] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no.25, p.20, col. 1.
[145] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 25, p.20, col.2.

affiliations are, and which is the home of [his] constituents.'[146] Fadden also noted that he had expressly written to the Prime Minister during May 1943 requesting that he (Curtin) publicly denounce Mr Ward's accusations against both the Menzies and Fadden governments. Curtin's response, however, failed to address this and instead introduced the name of a Menzies appointed advisor, Sir Iven MacKay, into the debate.[147] Fadden saw this as a less-than-subtle way of pointing the finger firmly back at the previous governments.

During the process of the debate, Ward made one particular claim that became the trigger for the Royal Commission that was established. Ward stated that 'I am most reliably informed that one important report is now missing from the official files.'[148] This statement was made to support his claim that a plan had been in place prior to the February 1942 scheme which was documented in the official files. Ward also made statements which contained information that had been previously discussed at the secret meetings of the Advisory War Council. These meetings were held outside of parliament so that matters of military defence and war strategy could be discussed without the risk of them falling into enemy hands. Yet now, here was a member of the Cabinet quoting details from these meetings to the whole of the House of Representatives, as well as to the journalists who covered events in the House. It would be fair to say that Ward's actions during this debate, as well as in the preceding months, did nothing to instil confidence in the government with the general Australian population. Ward was well known as a rebel within parliamentary circles. Suspended a total of fifteen times over the three decades of his career, Ward had begun his

[146] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 25, p.24, col. 1.
[147] Sir Iven MacKay strongly objected to his name being connected to the idea of the Brisbane Line and wrote to Curtin in August 1943 to request that 'steps be taken to discontinue the use of the term "Brisbane Line" in connection with his memorandum of 4th February 1942.' NAA A5954 568/2, *Royal Commission relating to Brisbane Line statements. 1943,* p.24.
[148] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 25, p.58, col. 1. The document that Ward believed to be missing was a report that had been supposedly written by Lieutenant-General Vernon Sturdee, Chief of the General Staff, 1940-41, and submitted to Percy Spender when he was Minister for the Army.

militant behaviour in his early school years. This continued throughout his life and in 1931, he was part of the Langite walk-out from government which eventually toppled the Labor Party and saw the United Australia Party (UAP) win the following election.[149] Percy Spender, former Minister for the Army, described Ward as 'a formidable antagonist, a supremely confident demagogue, and an outstanding rabble-rouser.'[150] In his biography of Ward, Elwyn Spratt opens his first chapter by stating 'never in the history of the Commonwealth Parliament had this phrase [Order, order, The Honourable Member for East Sydney will resume his seat] been directed as frequently at one member as at the Honourable Edward John (Eddie) Ward.'[151] Ward demonstrated all these traits during the Brisbane Line affair.

The debate on the Motion of Want of Confidence lasted some three days before a vote was finally held. Whilst the motion was defeated when the parliament next sat on 24 June 1943, the Independent member Arthur Coles had made it clear to the Prime Minster that his vote could only be guaranteed if the government were to establish a formal investigation into the accusations of missing reports so as to bring the matter to a close once and for all. Paul Burns noted that, although it was Coles who is recorded as calling for this inquest, it was largely through encouragement by the Leader of the Opposition as well as by many members of the opposition party.[152] After many backroom negotiations, Curtin announced to the House that he was 'ready to constitute a royal commission to inquire into certain matters' and that he had also 'relieved [Ward] of his administrative duties until such

[149] Langites were those who followed the political ideology of Langism, which was centred around the governing style of Jack Lang. Lang was Premier of New South Wales (1925-1927 and 1930-1932) and Leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales. His ideals focused around economic populism, anti-austerity, Australian nationalism and anti-communism. Many of his policies were in direct opposition to those of the Australian government, with Lang believing that many of the federal policies aimed at cutting government spending were, in effect, making the whole situation worse. Langite members of the House of Representatives voted against their own party in the 1931 vote on cuts to government spending, eventually toppling the Scullin government of the day.
[150] 'Biography – Edward John (Eddie) Ward – Australian Dictionary of Biography', accessed 4 March 2023, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ward-edward-john-eddie-11959>.
[151] Spratt, Elwyn *Eddie Ward: Firebrand of East Sydney,* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1965), p.1.
[152] Burns, Paul The Brisbane Line Controversy: Political Opportunism versus National Security, 1942-45, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), p.161.

time as the report of the royal commission is tabled in Parliament.'[153] In order to keep things moving swiftly, on 30 June 1943, Curtin informed the house that Justice Charles Lowe, who had also served in the Royal Commission into the bombings at Darwin, had been appointed as Chair of this new Royal Commission. He also announced the terms of reference for the Commission:

1. The statement 'I am most reliably informed that one important report is now missing from the official files' made by the Minister of State for Labour and National Service in the House of Representatives on the 22nd June, 1943, in the course of the debate in that House concerning the matter known as 'The Brisbane Line'.
2. The question whether that Minister was informed in the terms or to the effect specified in the statement set out above.
3. If that Minister was so informed –
   a The particulars of the information given to that Minister and referred to in the statement set out above; and
   b The questions as to the person by whom, the circumstances under which, and the reason why, that information was given to that Minister.
4. The question whether any document concerning the matter known as 'The Brisbane Line' is missing from the official files specified in the statement set out above, and, if so, the particulars of the document.[154]

The terms were heavily criticised by the now-suspended Eddie Ward, who felt they were too narrow. Curtin had chosen to focus specifically on whether a document was missing from official defence records as opposed to the wider issue of whether a plan to abandon parts of Australia had existed and been presented to the government. Ward saw this as a deliberate act to deceive the Australian public and unsuccessfully called for the terms of the commission to be widened.

The Royal Commission sat between 5 – 7 July 1943 and evidence was presented to Justice Lowe on the matter of missing documents relating to the Brisbane Line. Interestingly, Eddie Ward decided to claim Parliamentary Privilege in respect of giving personal evidence to the Commission, which meant he did not have to appear in person.[155] He did however have legal representation present at the

[153] Commonwealth of Australia 1943, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no. 25, p.333, col. 2.
[154] NAA A5954, 568/2 *Royal Commission relating to the Brisbane Line statements. 1943,* p.42.
[155] Parliamentary Privilege is a kind of legal immunity which allows Members to make statements within the confines of Parliamentary debate that they do not have to answer questions on outside of parliament. In this case, the Royal Commission was seen to be independent of parliament and therefore there was no legal duty for Ward to give evidence.

Commission. His counsel argued strongly that the Commission should not go ahead on the basis that Ward had since withdrawn his statement about missing documents and therefore nothing was left to investigate. They also argued that without the presence of Ward at the commission, the terms were null and void as there was no way to answer the questions without him. Justice Lowe weighed up these statements but decided that although the Commission could not call Ward, it did not prevent him from investigating the truth (or not) of statements that he had made.[156] Lowe noted that the statements that had been made could have implications under either the Defence Act or the Commonwealth Crimes Act – particularly if documents were missing from files. Lowe also felt that the statements had called into question the integrity and ability of Commonwealth officials to undertake their duties.

Despite all the protestations from Ward's counsel, the Commission proceeded on 5 July 1943, with an investigation of Question 4 of the Terms of Reference. Frederick Shedden, Secretary to the Department of Defence, was cross-examined in detail about the methods for recording documents that were presented to the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council, Shedden acted as Secretary to both of these bodies, and therefore it was not only himself but also his team and their abilities that were being scrutinised, Shedden confirmed that the documenting of key war decisions was based on the British system for the same purposes, and that he had spent time in London with Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), where he gleaned advice on such matters. When considering the specific document that Ward had claimed was missing from the files, Shedden noted that Frank Forde, Minister for the Army 1941-46, stated he had heard talk of the document, but had never seen it, whilst Lieutenant-General John Northcott, Chief of General Staff 1942-45, had not been able to identify any such report ever coming from his offices. Shedden stated that for anything to become policy, such as the

[156] NAA A5954, 568/2 *Royal Commission relating to the Brisbane Line statements. 1943,* p.46.

strategy Ward was suggesting had been in the missing report, it would have needed to be presented to the Minister for Defence and the War Cabinet. Given that meticulous records were kept in relation to any kind of submissions, the fact that there was no record of this confirmed that no report had ever been presented for further consideration.[157] Evidence that was presented on 6 July was done so in private, due to the potential risk posed by divulging issues surrounding the security of classified defence documents. Analysis of the statements given to the Commission is therefore complicated by the fact that a transcript for this day does not exist in the Royal Commission files. The information given across the three days, however, did allow Lowe to present his findings on 8 July 1943 which found that 'no document concerning the matter known as the "Brisbane Line" was on 22 June 1943, or is now missing from the official files.'[158]

Domestic and Foreign Policies

From the coming together of the Australian colonies in 1901, both Australian domestic and foreign policies focussed significantly on reducing uncertainty and stabilising interests, largely by securing great and powerful friends who would support them against Japan, should the need arise.[159] The north of Australia had been identified early on as an area of risk. Lord Jellicoe, Lord Kitchener and General Monash had all separately recognised that the north could be a target in the event of an attack upon Australia. As the largest township in the north and a re-fuelling stop for many ships enroute through the Pacific, it was a prime target. All three senior military figures were clear that, at the time they reviewed the defence situation, Australia was woefully lacking in many areas. Lord Kitchener was Commander in Chief of the British Army,

[157] NAA A5954, 5682 Australian Defence Plan – Aide Memoire, *Royal Commission relating to the Brisbane Line statements. 1943,* p.162.
[158] NAA: A432, 1956/3036 Royal Commission into Statement by Mr Ward MP that document relating to "Brisbane Line" was missing from official files, part 1, p.99.
[159] Widmaier, Wesley W. 'Australian Foreign Policy Stability and Instability: Imperial Friendships and Crises from the Great Depression to the Fall of Singapore', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 70:3, 2024, p.532.

and he was sent to Australia prior to the First World War to review Australia's military capabilities. He authored the *Report on the Defence of Australia* by Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener 1910. Although Kitchener spoke well of Australian troops, he was clear that without resources and training, they would be unable to defend Australia should the need arise.

Preparing for War: 1918-1939

At the Imperial War Conference in 1917, it was agreed that following the end of the First World War, the Admiralty would be asked to 'consider the most effective scheme of naval defence of the Empire.'[160] Whilst the Admiralty initially believed that a single imperial Navy, under the control of the British Navy was the way to proceed, the Dominion governments were not in support of this viewpoint. The First World War had demonstrated that individual Dominion Navies could still operate as one with the motherland, but that it was important to be able to maintain their own forces. After the Imperial War Conference of 1918, the Dominion Ministers indicated that they 'would welcome visits from a highly qualified representative of the Admiralty who, by reason of his ability and experience, would be thoroughly competent to advise the naval authorities of the Dominions in such matters.'[161] Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the Admiralty at this time, noted in a letter to Walter Long, Colonial Secretary, that Australia seemed to be the most keen for such a visit to occur, and that Lord Jellicoe was prepared to undertake such a trip.[162] Lord Jellicoe was Admiral of the Fleet of the British Navy and had commanded naval forces at the Battle of Jutland. Jellicoe's eventual Empire Mission took him to India, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The

[160] Patterson, A. Temple (ed.) The Jellicoe Papers: Selections from the private and official correspondence of Admiral of the Fleet Earl Jellicoe: Volume II 1916-1935, (London: The Navy Records Society, 1968), p.284.
[161] *Ibid.,* p.287.
[162] *Ibid.,* p.288.

overall mission lasted more than a year, with Jellicoe reaching Australia three months into the mission, and the Australian portion lasting for three months.

Jellicoe's correspondence with the Admiralty indicates that there were deep rooted problems that needed to be considered within the Australian remit, not least the significant threat that could be posed by the rapidly expanding Japanese Navy.[163] In addition, Jellicoe had been urged by the Admiralty to try and persuade the Australian government of the value of an Imperial Navy, however correspondence between Jellicoe and Long, and Jellicoe and Sir Oswyn Murray, Secretary of the Admiralty, indicates that it quickly became apparent that this would be a futile exercise. There is also a strong undertone within Jellicoe's letters that suggests his views of the discipline and pageantry of his Australian counterparts left a lot to be desired. In the covering letter that accompanied his report to the Admiralty, Jellicoe writes that 'the greatest difficulty with which Australia is at present faced with regard to naval affairs is without doubt the absence of discipline.'[164]

In his formal report to the Admiralty, as well as to the government of Australia, Jellicoe made a number of references to the northern coastlines and their importance to any future defence efforts. He recognised that the most likely target of any invasion would be from the north and therefore defences should be based in this area. He was very clear though, that this was not without its problems:

> The undeveloped state of the Northern Territory, and the lack of railway communication to that portion of the Commonwealth, make the establishment of a northern repairing base at present out of the question. As soon as circumstances admit, and railway communications with the rest of Australia is established, a repairing base should be constructed capable of docking and making good defects to the largest ships.[165]

Not everything was lost however, and Jellicoe recommended a temporary re-fuelling base on the north coast, though the location recommended initially was not Darwin, but Bynoe Harbour, about 25 miles south-west of Darwin. Jellicoe noted that although

[163] Patterson, A. Temple, *ibid.,* p.312.
[164] *Ibid.,* p.314.
[165] Report of Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa on Naval Mission to the Commonwealth of Australia (May-August 1919), Volume III, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1919), p.165.

a base at Darwin had been considered, the expense of protecting the large harbour against submarine attacks would be significant.

Following Jellicoe's visit to Australia and his subsequent report on future naval requirements, the Australian Commonwealth Government commissioned Lieutenant-Generals Chauvel and Monash to chair a review of the military defence of Australia. General Chauvel was the first Australian to reach the rank of Lieutenant General and had commanded the Desert Mounted Corps in the Middle East during the First World War, whilst General Monash was the first fully Australian commander of Australian Forces. He had played a significant role at Gallipoli and also commanded the Australia Corps on the Western Front. Their review resulted in the *Report on the Military Defence of Australia by a Conference of Senior Officers of the Australian Military Forces 1920.* Holding a similar viewpoint to Lord Jellicoe, the military officers at the conference were clear that Australia was not ready to face enemy attack and that Australia could not guarantee that any enemy would wait until they were ready to face such a confrontation.[166] Also, in line with Jellicoe's thoughts, the officers recognised the importance of the north in any future defence plans, stating that 'a Northern Naval Base or Bases are an ultimate requirement. In the present state of our communications with the North and having regard to the sparseness of population in the area, the Conference is forced to the conclusion that any increased provision of fixed defences in the North is impracticable in the near future.'[167] They also noted challenges, such as a lack of railway connections not only within the Northern Territory, but also across Australia. Resolving some of these issues would be key to any plan for the defence of Australia.

As early as the end of the nineteenth century, the defence of the colonies and Dominions of the British Empire was that the Royal Navy would provide the first line

[166] Chauvel, H. G., Report on the Military Defence of Australia by a Conference of Senior Officers of the Australian Military Forces 1920, AWM1 20-7.
[167] *Ibid.,* p.11.

of defence in any conflict. Local forces would be used to provide manpower for localised conflicts, but if there was a full global conflict, all areas of the Empire would cooperate for the good of the common cause.[168] There were concerns even in these early days as to how much this could be relied upon, but with few other options due to domestic financial constraints, Australia and New Zealand had to go along with the plan.

In the period following the First World War, defence policies across the British Empire were revisited. Australia and Britain both adopted the ten-year rule, believing that a major conflict such as had just concluded was unlikely to be seen in the next decade and therefore they should economise with defence expenditure accordingly.[169] Allan S Walker reflected on this in his contribution to the Australian Second World War Histories when he said that 'neither a war-experienced generation nor its sons and daughter were willing to believe that the madness of war could be repeated.'[170] He also goes on to note that 'in the face of the resultant inertia it is hard

[168] Dennis, Peter 'Australia and the Singapore Strategy' in Farrell, Bryan and Hunter, Sandy (eds.) *Sixty Years On: The Fall of Singapore Revisited* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003), p.29. There are a significant number of texts written on the strategy around Singapore and its subsequent fall from varying points of view. These include Bell, Christopher *Churchill and Seapower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Best, Anthony *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbor: Avoiding War in East Asia* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995); Callahan, Raymond *The Worst Disaster: The Fall of Singapore* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1977); Cowman, Ian *Dominion or Decline: Anglo-American Naval Relations in the Pacific 1937-1941* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997); Day, David *The Great Betrayal: Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War 1939-42* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Field, Andrew *Royal Navy Strategy in the Far East, 1919-1939: Planning for War Against Japan* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004); Haggie, Paul *Britannia at Bay: The Defence of the British Empire against Japan 1931-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Hamill, Ian *The Strategic Illusion: The Singapore Strategy and the Defence of Australia and New Zealand, 1919-42* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1982); Kennedy, Greg *Anglo-American Strategic Relations in the Far East 1933-1939: Imperial Crossroads* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013); Marder, Arthur J *The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy – Strategic Illusions, 1936-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Marder, Arthur J, Jacobsen Mark and Horsfield, John *Old Friends, New Enemies. The Royal Navy and the Japanese Imperial Navy: Volume 2: The Pacific War 1942-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); McIntyre, David W *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base 1919-1942* (Beeston: Shoe String Press Ltd., 1980); Neidpath, James *The Singapore Naval Base and the Defence of Britain's Eastern Empire, 1919-1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Reynolds, David *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-1941* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1981); Thompson, Peter *The Battle for Singapore* (London: Portrait Books, 2005); Warren, Alan *Singapore: Britain's Greatest Defeat* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002); It is interesting to note that the spread of author backgrounds link in with Beaumont's assessment that a large part of Australian history is written by journalists and amateur historians.

[169] Cuffe, Honae *The Genesis of a Policy: Defining and Defending Australia's National Interest in the Asia-Pacific, 1921-57,* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2021), p.15.

[170] Walker, Allan S. *Second World War Histories: Australia in the War of 1939-1945: Series 5 Medical: Volume II: Middle East and Far East: Part 1: Chapter 1: The Inter-War Period, 1919-1939,* 3rd edn, (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1962), p.1.

to stir interest in military affairs, and to maintain it takes great singleness of purpose and tenacity.'[171] This worked well for the British who owed significant amounts of money to the US following wartime loans, but struggled to get appropriate reparations from Germany to cover these. This meant that the US was able to use the financial situation as a means of leveraging future policies to their advantage – had they called in the loans, Britain would have been ruined.

The Washington Naval Conference in 1921 further reined in potential defence spending, at least on naval matters. The Five-Power Treaty was essentially seen as a disarmament agreement and set limits on the tonnage of ships allowed for each member, placed a ten-year holiday on shipbuilding and also prevented new naval bases from being constructed, and existing ones from being expanded.[172] It was designed to allow for parity of naval strength amongst its key members – Britain, the US, Japan, France and Italy. For Britain, this seemingly eased the pressure for them to continue with their Singapore plans. For smaller countries such as Australia, this had a more significant impact as they were seen to have a smaller requirement. Australian Naval Defence was scaled back considerably, with ships being placed in reserve, their submarine force being paid off and their base closed and even having to sink one of their battle cruisers in 1924.[173] These restrictions were hardly going to allow Australia to improve its home defence policies. From 1923 onwards, following on from decisions made at the Imperial Conference of that year and under the guise of preserving security of the existing fortifications, the British government proceeded to establish what they envisaged as being an impenetrable base in the Far East at Singapore. Australia had believed that this base could provide the necessary support

[171] Walker, Allan S., *ibid.*
[172] Cuffe, Honae *The Genesis of a Policy: Defining and Defending Australia's National Interest in the Asia-Pacific, 1921-57,* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2021), p.21.
[173] Grey, Jeffrey *A Military History of Australia 3rd edn.,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.129.

in times of need and, in return, Australia undertook to support Britain in its conflicts overseas.[174]

The Washington Naval Treaty was followed up by two London Naval Treaties, signed in 1930 and 1936 respectively. The first London Naval Treaty provided more regulation for submarine warfare and further controlled cruisers and destroyers and the armament they could carry. The Second London Naval Treaty was further designed to limit the maximum size of ships and the calibre of guns they could carry. A key difference with the Second Treaty was that Japan withdrew from the conference and refused to sign. Although the British were keen to pursue the route of disarmament and peace, the Australians were keenly aware of the threat the Japanese posed to the Pacific region. It did not go unnoticed that these restrictions were confined to naval capabilities and somewhat glossed over air power, despite the fact that any future wars were likely to be dominated by capabilities in the air.

There were several critics of the Australian reliance on Singapore within Australian ranks. Numerous defence officials questioned just how feasible Britain's plans were, with early criticism actually coming from a naval officer – Rear Admiral Percy Grant. Grant was particularly concerned about the long lines of communication that would connect the base in Singapore with both Australia and Britain.[175] Major General John Lavarack of the Australian Army was also a strong critic of the strategy, often clashing with Frederick Shedden over the misplaced reliance on the British Navy. Lavarack was clear that it was impossible for Britain to fight a two-ocean war. Shedden, who was an ardent navalist, believed that the presence of a naval base at Singapore was enough to deter Japan from any designs they might have had over the Pacific region. Questions from key officials such as Grant and Lavarack led both

[174] For a good overview of the history of the Singapore strategy, see Murfett, Malcom H. 'Living in the Past: A Critical Re-examination of the Singapore Naval Strategy, 1918-1941', *War & Society,* 11:1, 1993, pp.73-103. He assesses whether it could ever have been successful and also examines why it was held to for so long.

[175] Cuffe, Honae *The Genesis of a Policy: Defining and Defending Australia's National Interest in the Asia-Pacific, 1921-57,* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2021), p.27.

former Prime Ministers Stanley Bruce and Billy Hughes to openly question the strategy at Imperial Conferences. Stanley Bruce (1923-1929) is reported as stating that 'while I am not quite clear as to how the protection of Singapore is to be assured, I am quite clear on this point, that apparently it can be done.'[176] Bruce was right to have his concerns, and progress on the base was not swift. The initial plans for development that were laid out at the 1923 Imperial Conference were cancelled when Ramsey MacDonald and his British Labour government won the General Election in 1924. His first term in power was however short-lived and when Stanley Baldwin regained power in October of that same year, he reinstated the programme of works, albeit with a reduced scope and costs being contributed to by New Zealand, Hong Kong and the Malay States. Successive British governments slowed progress at various points, and the base at Singapore was finally completed in February 1938, although there were no battle fleet available to be stationed there.

Australia's continued reliance on the base at Singapore shaped how they approached their defence spending. Grey notes that in 1926, the Australian expenditure on defence per annum, per head of population was 27s and 2d. Breaking this down to how this related to each of the forces shows the stark reliance on naval defence, with 17s and 2d for the Navy, 5s and 2d for the Army, 2s and 8d for the Airforce and 2s and 2d for munitions.[177] Grey also notes that whilst Australia were clearly expecting attack to come from the sea, there was no real pursuance of coastal defence strategies – possibly because they believed that with a base at Singapore, the enemy would not get close enough to require such defences.

It is important to consider both Australia's domestic situation as well as their relationship with Britain prior to and during the Second World War as these had a significant impact on how policy and strategy were decided upon. Australia's economy

[176] Dennis, Peter 'Australia and the Singapore Strategy' in Farrell, Bryan and Hunter, Sandy (eds.) *Sixty Years On: The Fall of Singapore Revisited* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003), p.30.
[177] Grey, Jeffrey *A Military History of Australia 3rd edn.,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.128.

was still recovering from the Great Depression of the early 1930s when war broke out in 1939. Some would say that full recovery from depression did not occur until well into the 1950s. The nation had been severely affected by the depression with thousands of ordinary Australians losing their jobs and the export market almost collapsing. At its peak in 1932, unemployment reached over 30% and those who were self-employed had incomes that were well below the minimum wage.[178] Frank Bongiorno states that 'a small export-dependent economy had no prospect of avoiding disaster.'[179] Australia was heavily export-dependent on Great Britain, as well as owing large amounts of money to the Bank of England. Otto Niemeyer, a representative of the Bank of England, visited Australia in 1930 to offer some advice to the government on its economy and how they should move forward to address the ongoing issues caused by the Great Depression. His advice revolved around ensuring that Australia honoured its ongoing commitments to Great Britain by developing an austerity plan. With reduced national budgets, Australia was not in a financial position to adequately defend themselves in the face of an attack. In fact, Australia had reduced its armed services during the inter-war period in order to save costs. Kate Darian-Smith notes that 'in 1939 the standing army numbered only 4000.'[180] Australia was also in the midst of an internal dispute about how their defence services needed to develop. The navy felt that Australia could and should rely on Britain whilst the army and the air-force felt that Australia should seek to build up her own defences. This resulted in a stalemate with no real decisions being made. This lack of ability to agree on a defence strategy contributed to a willingness on Australia's part to support the Imperial war effort, on the basis that, if they were prepared to support Britain's

[178] Unemployment statistics are discussed by a number of authors in Bashford and Macintyre, *The Cambridge History of Australia Volume 2: The Commonwealth of Australia* including Stuart Macintyre and Sean Scalmer; Frank Bongiorno, and Simon Ville.
[179] Bongiorno, Frank 'Search for a solution, 1923-39' in Bashford, Alison and Macintyre, Stuart *The Cambridge History of Australia Volume 2: The Commonwealth of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.75.
[180] Darian-Smith, Kate 'World War 2 and post-war reconstruction, 1939-1949' in Bashford, Alison and Macintyre, Stuart *The Cambridge History of Australia Volume 2: The Commonwealth of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.89.

immediate need, Britain would then come to Australia's aid when the time came. Graham Freudenberg notes that 'at the political level, Australian defence thinking was crippled by a sense of Australian weakness and absolute reliance on Britain's strength.'[181] Conscription was introduced early in the war but was extremely unpopular. There was a sense that Australians should be looking to their own defence first before once again kow-towing to the wish of the British.

Australia was not the only country struggling to deal with the financial impact of the Wall Street Crash in 1929. Neville Chamberlain was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1931 and had the responsibility for seeing Great Britain through the economic crisis caused by the collapse of the stock market in the United States. One of the areas that was heavily affected by austerity was that of imperial defence. Ann Trotter notes that the 'imperial conference [in] 1926 agreed that [the] dominions would be kept informed of imperial defence policy.'[182] British defence strategists however were having difficulty in agreeing on what their policies would be – especially in regard to naval strategy. Chamberlain was clear that current strategies, including the base at Singapore, were too expensive and the navy, as well as other services, needed to find cheaper alternatives, particularly for defence in the Pacific. Chamberlain saw Germany as a far bigger threat to the immediate safety in Britain and therefore was cautious not to commit limited finances to a strategy that would have no direct benefit to Britain. In a sign of what was to come in future years, Chamberlain advocated a policy of appeasement with Japan in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of hostilities in the Pacific.[183]

With British defence policy makers struggling to see how they could defend such a vast empire if world-wide conflict occurred, and the dominions wanting to be reassured as to the commitment of support that the imperial motherland was prepared

[181] Freudenberg, Graham *Churchill and Australia* (Sydney: Macmillan by Pan Macmillan, 2008), p.188.
[182] Trotter, Ann 'The Dominions and Imperial Defence: Hankey's Tour in 1934' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 2:3, 1974, p.320.
[183] *Ibid.,* p.321.

to provide, Great Britain decided to send Sir Maurice Hankey on a tour of the dominions in 1934. This was viewed as controversial in both Britain and Australia, as Hankey was not a military officer. Questions were raised in the British parliament as to the level of political influence he would have in his discussions with dominion ministers. Australia had been keen to receive first-hand advice directly from senior military officials from each of the services in Britain, but the British refused this request, claiming chiefs of staff could only advise on local defence matters. R.G. Casey, the Treasurer and also a Brigadier Major in the Australian Imperial Force during the First World War recommended Hankey as the perfect ambassador, being able to speak on behalf of all the services through his role as Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence.[184] Australian Prime Minister Stanley Bruce had stated in 1926 that 'the guiding principle on which all our defence preparations are based […] is uniformity in every respect […] with the fighting services of Great Britain.'[185] With Chamberlain's concern about the Pacific reliance on the Singapore strategy of defence, he was keen for Hankey to put forward the suggestion that the far-eastern Naval base would essentially act as a stop-gap land-based fortress in the event of war, until such time as other ships made their way to aid defence.[186] In his final report to the Defence Committee back in Britain, Hankey pointed out the significant of a number of coastal settlements that would be important as part of a future defence strategy. This included Darwin, of which his report states:

> In a war with Japan, Darwin will be of considerable importance as an operational base at which is established a strategic reserve of fuel oil. It is anticipated that a force of cruisers, armed merchant cruisers and fleet auxiliaries will be based on this port. Commercially, the harbour is of little importance in peace although considerable development is possible in the

[184] Hankey's visitation was not without its challenges. In a letter home to Prime Minister Ramsey Macdonald, Hankey notes that during the tenure of his stay in Australia, the government changed twice, and with so much of his visit veiled in secrecy, it was tricky to balance this against the multitude of changes that took place while he was there. CAB 63/74 *Australian Defence: Report by Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence, 15th November 1934,* p. 138. He does however go on to note that all those he did meet welcomed him with open arms and worked together to discuss difficult problems.

[185] Bruce, Stanley in McCarthy, J.M. 'Australia and Imperial Defence: Co-operation and Conflict 1918-1939' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 17:1, 1971, p.19.

[186] Trotter, Ann 'The Dominions and Imperial Defence: Hankey's Tour in 1934' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 2:3, 1974, p.323.

> future. In time of war it would be a naval control base, a contraband control base and a refuge port. Darwin is nearer than any other Australian port to a possible Japanese base and to Japan. The probability of attack in the early stages of a war is considerable.[187]

Ann Trotter states that 'when he left Australia, Hankey felt that he had won the battle for Australia's cooperation in an imperial naval programme.'[188] McCarthy opines that 'the most important figure in Imperial defence planning to visit Australia between the wars was, however, not a serving officer but a civil servant; Sir Maurice Hankey […]'[189] Even though Hankey's trip was deemed to be successful from a naval point of view, Australian military leaders continued to disagree on their defence strategy, which was largely indicative of the situation the government later found itself in during the Second World War. In a report entitled *The Defence of Australia: Remarks of Australian Chiefs of Staff,* the Chief of Naval Staff is clear that there is no reason to suppose the British Main Fleet would not proceed to the Pacific if needed, and therefore Australia had nothing to fear.[190] The remarks on the report provided by the Army were much more critical, stating with certainty that they did not believe that the base at Singapore would be ready and insisted that appropriate funds be put towards local defences as well as the imperial defence strategy.[191]

This misjudged reliance on Singapore was a key reason why Australian defence was not developed as fast as it could have been. By the time the Second World War commenced, the Australian Navy only had enough resources to undertake missions within its own waters and the RAAF resources were deemed too old and not up to the task of modern warfare. The strategy officially fell apart in June 1940 when the British government told Australia that the Singapore strategy was no longer viable,

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[187] CAB 63/74 *Australian Defence: Report by Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence, 15th November 1934,* p. 109.
[188] Trotter, Ann 'The Dominions and Imperial Defence: Hankey's Tour in 1934' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 2:3, 1974,, p.329.
[189] McCarthy, J.M. 'Australia and Imperial Defence: Co-operation and Conflict 1918-1939' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 17:1, 1971, p.22.
[190] CAB 63/71 *Memoranda on various aspects of Australian defence, enclosed in a letter from Sir George Pearce, Minister of Defence,* p. 60.
[191] CAB 63/71 *Ibid.,* pp. 62-64.

but this was too late in proceedings for Australia to be able to fully pull together the defences that it needed to defend the nation on its own. In addition to the misjudged reliance on Singapore, Douglas Ford argues that British defence planning (and by extension the influence on Australian planning) had completely underestimated the importance of the aircraft carrier and the threat that was therefore posed by the Japanese Naval Air Arm.[192] Britain was used to being the superior naval force in the European theatre and did not have much experience in carrier combat. It was also incredibly difficult to obtain suitable and reliable intelligence information, as the Japanese maintained significant secrecy around all their naval and military matters.

Prime Minister Robert Menzies (1939-1941 and 1949-1966) embarked on a controversial overseas trip in early 1941. His primary focus was to travel to London to advocate to Churchill directly on behalf of Australia. His route to London was not direct, stopping in Singapore and the Middle East to visit Australian troops and speak with key military figures in these areas. Menzies had been alarmed by the report that had come out of the Singapore Conference in October 1940. In his memoirs, Menzies writes that 'the whole reason why I went to England was to discuss the Japanese menace and to urge the strengthening of the defences of Singapore!'[193] It is clear from Menzies writings that he was acutely aware of the weaknesses present in the Singapore garrison, with comments in his diaries concluding that the garrison was 'grievously short of aircraft', that the absence of a naval presence could only encourage the Japanese, that the Far East problem should be taken seriously and that generals seemed to be ignorant of 'the broad principles of international strategy.'[194] These concerns were echoed by Sir Earle Page, resident minister to London during the Second World War, when he made his journey from Australia to London towards the end of 1941. In his personal diaries, Page details the concerns

[192] Ford, Douglas 'British Naval Policy and the War against Japan 1937-1945: Distorted Doctrine, Insufficient Resources, or Inadequate Intelligence', *International Journal of Naval History,* 4, 1, (2005).
[193] Menzies, Robert *Afternoon Light: Some Memories of Men and Events* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1967), p. 20.
[194] *Ibid.,* p.21-22.

raised by senior British officials around the central government coordinating all Far Eastern and Pacific interests.[195] On 29 September 1941, Page's diary notes that he 'prepared notes for conference, emphasizing importance of battle fleet at Singapore', and follows up by saying that 'unanimous decisions were made to ask for battle fleet, and wire was sent to UK Government indicating this.'[196] Page, like many of those in senior authority within the Australian government, supported the blue-water rationale and echoed Hankey's earlier pre-war views on the defence of Australia.

By the time Curtin took power of the government in September 1941, some developments in Australian defence had been made, such as increasing their aerial stock, but they were not enough. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 changed the way in which Australia interacted with Great Britain in time of war. Horner writes that:

> the defence of Australia was no longer a local matter, but one that directly affected Allied strategy. Until this time Australian defence planners had been on the periphery of global strategic decision-making; now they believed that they had a vital role to play.[197]

Freudenberg reflects that, 'for the first time, Australia had declared war ahead and independently of the British Government.'[198] Curtin, a conscientious objector who was jailed during the First World War, was now responsible for leading Australia's wartime defence strategy. It also encouraged Curtin, steered ably by Frederick Shedden who had been Secretary to the Department of Defence for the duration of the First World War and had accompanied Menzies' to London in 1941, to demand of Winston Churchill that overseas troops be returned to Australia, or at the very least the Pacific region, immediately.

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[195] Fedorowich, K and Gifford, J *Sir Earle Page's British War Cabinet Diary, 1941-1942* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2021), p.35.
[196] *Ibid.,* p.37.
[197] Horner, David 'Australia under threat of invasion' in McKernan, M and Browne, M (eds.), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace,* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1988), p.247.
[198] Freudenberg, Graham *Churchill and Australia* (Sydney: Macmillan by Pan Macmillan, 2008), p.327.

Shedden was all too aware that Churchill was full of bluster and that his promises might not hold fast.[199] When Churchill made his trans-Atlantic visit to President Roosevelt in the US in December 1941, Curtin cabled both of them directly, requesting that the importance of the Pacific situation be fully considered in light of Japanese actions since the attacks on Pearl Harbor earlier in the month. Curtin was all too aware that Churchill's main aim was likely to be securing of US support for the war in Europe. Freudenberg observes that Churchill was furious that Curtin should cable Roosevelt directly, believing that as an imperial matter, the Pacific situation should be left to him to negotiate.[200] This was the beginning of a number of explosive exchanges between Curtin and Churchill. Curtin had long held the opinion that 'the dependence of Australia upon the competence, let alone the readiness, of British statesmen to send forces to our aid is too dangerous a hazard upon which to found Australian defence policy.'[201] Curtin's long-held view was coming to pass, and Australia lacked the equipment with which to adequately defend itself. It was this lack of preparedness and the resulting need to consider all available options that gave Ward the ammunition to launch his attack on the previous governments.

The failure of Australia to form a national government in a time of war was particularly pertinent in the issue of the Brisbane Line as well as in their relations with Great Britain. As already outlined, Labour's persistent refusal to form a national government was a frustration to politicians on both sides of the house. It also greatly troubled Winston Churchill in Britain. This failure to recognise the importance of national governance in a time of war was the major drive behind the Motion of Want of Confidence put before Parliament on 22 June 1943. Freudenberg notes that the issue of a national government also 'rankled with Churchill, who had a poor

[199] Day, David *John Curtin: A Life* (HarperCollins*Publishers,* 1999), p.432.
[200] Freudenberg, Graham *Churchill and Australia* (Sydney: Macmillan by Pan Macmillan, 2008), p.336.
[201] *Ibid.,* p.200.

understanding of Australian politics.'[202] It was Churchill's frustration in this matter that was to be the basis of the rather explosive relationship between Curtin and Churchill.

As the Second World War progressed, the manner in which the north was to be defended underwent continual review. On 4 February 1942, General Iven Mackay submitted a report to government that actively proposed to exclude Darwin and other far lying outposts from active military protection.[203] Mackay recognised that at this advanced stage of the war, there was simply not the military resources to protect the whole of Australia, and Mackay was keen to highlight this to the government. Mackay's report is seen as one of the key documents in what became known as the Brisbane Line affair, which would have seen the focus of defence forces in the south-east corner of Australia in the event of invasion. The details and feasibility of this plan were still being debated by the cabinet on 18 February – just one day before Darwin was attacked.[204]

The fall of Singapore a few days earlier, on 15 February 1942, has been deemed by many to be one of the worst defeats in Australian military history. The battle lasted for eight days, with nearly 1800 soldiers killed and just over 1300 wounded. Even more significantly, 22,000 Australian soldiers and military nurses made up part of the over 130,000 prisoners of war that were captured as part of this defeat. Australian military campaigns had historically been overseas in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Suddenly, with the fall of Singapore, Australia was faced with the prospect of having to fight a war in their own backyard. This was a psychological mind shift for Australia as a nation, with the recognition that frontline defences were woefully lacking. This was compromised further by the fact that, whilst Australia had sent significant amounts of military equipment to support their soldiers in Singapore, much of this was lost when the Japanese invaded Singapore Island. The speed at

[202] Freudenberg, Graham *Churchill and Australia* (Sydney: Macmillan by Pan Macmillan, 2008), p.224.
[203] Ross, Lloyd *John Curtin: A Biography,* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), pp.310-312.
[204] *Ibid.,* p.312.

which the Japanese had moved through the Malayan peninsula gave rise to anxiety at the very real prospect (at least in Australian minds) that an invasion was imminent. Australia had rushed troops to Malaya, as they believed that if this fell, their next defensive line would have to be in Australia itself, even though there was an Australian base on Papua New Guinea. It was felt that New Guinea had a tricky terrain in which to wage any kind of defensive strategy.[205]

Although fears for invasion were heightened in Australia, this was not the overall aim of the Japanese. Their plan was to establish a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which would allow them to dominate the Far East. The key target for them was South-East Asia and the Dutch East Indies, which they viewed as the 'southern resources area'.[206] The oil fields and other mineral resources in these areas would supply factories back in Japan, thus sustaining their ever-growing military forces. In order to do this however, they needed to ensure that the allied forces could not interfere with their movements through South-East Asia, and they did this by using a strategy of disruption. Taking out Pearl Harbor was the first part of this plan, albeit the impact was not quite as severe as they had hoped. Pearl Harbor was still able to operate as a repair base in the months that followed although their ability to offer a counter-offensive was delayed for a number of months. Similar to Pearl Harbor, the attack on Darwin was also designed to cripple refuelling and repair facilities, thus leaving large gaps between allied bases. The second part of this plan was to take the Philippines, which would ensure further that the United States could not interfere with the oil supply that they intended to take from the Dutch East Indies and Borneo. Taking the Malayan Peninsula as the third part of the plan would ensure that Britain could not attack from Singapore.[207]

[205] Reedy, J. Lee *World War Two: Nation by Nation,* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1995), p. 229.
[206] Dupuy, Trevor Nevitt *The Naval War in the Pacific: Rising Sun of Nippon,* (London: Edmund Watts, 1966), p.14.
[207] Pike, Francis *Hirohito's War: The Pacific War 1941-1945,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 215.

The Japanese did not stick solely to the Pacific region, with Admiral Nagumo striking out into the Indian Ocean with the British naval bases in Ceylon in his sights. The fleet at Ceylon had been increased during 1942, but the ships that were there were considered old and slow. Ashley Jackson states that Ceylon was an important part of allied operations due to 'its status as a global transport and communications hub essential for supporting Allied battlefronts in the Western Desert, the Caucasus, China, and South Asia.'[208] The Indian Ocean was particularly important to the allied forces as the Mediterranean became unpassable for their ships. Ceylon had significant port facilities that could support the British Fleet and was a key refuelling and stopping off point for troops travelling out the Far East. It became even more vital once Singapore fell to the Japanese. In addition, Ceylon was one of the biggest suppliers of rubber and allied forces were keen that this did not fall into the hands of the enemy. Like Pearl Harbor, the attack on Ceylon was not as successful as expected, with much of the fleet at sea when the Japanese initially attacked. The attacks however did result in the Eastern Fleet retreating to the east coast of Africa, where they were perceived to be out of range of further Japanese interference. There was concern that the Japanese could set their sights on the Mediterranean if the British retreated further.

Andrew Boyd highlights that the British planning staff believed that focus on the Pacific should be directed at 'holding the "outer ring" of India, Ceylon, Australia and Fiji,' stating that anything 'sent beyond this line [was] likely to be wasted.'[209] Boyd indicates that it was believed Britain could not expect to win the war unless it was able to keep hold of its assets and resources in the Middle and Far-East.[210] Of all the areas identified by the planners, Ceylon was viewed as key in order to protect the oil supplies in Abadan, which were vital to the Imperial war effort. Redefining the Eastern

[208] Jackson, Ashley *Ceylon at War 1939-45* (Warwick: Helion, 2018), p. x.
[209] Boyd, Andrew *The Royal Navy In Eastern Waters: Linchpin of Victory, 1935-1942,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword books Ltd, 2017), p.477.
[210] Boyd, Andrew *ibid.,* p.528.

Fleet at Ceylon was required in order to stave off the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN). Boyd notes, however, that whilst the Admiralty viewed the IJN as its most likely opponent in any future war, it underestimated the advances it had been able to make, as well as the circumstances they might be facing when the time came. The Admiralty was also prone to comparing Japanese developments to those they were making in Europe – an assumption that woefully underestimated their true power. In addition, and as highlighted earlier in this chapter, the Japanese as a whole operated under an air of secrecy which made intelligence hard to obtain.[211] A prime example of this was the proposed designs that were seen for the IJN battle cruisers – the designs included six-inch guns, but had been designed in such a way that a upgrade to eight-inch guns could be made very easily. Therefore, British calculations were based on inaccurate information, and only when they faced some of these cruisers in battle, did they realise that these upgrades had already been made.[212] It took until at least mid-1941 before the Admiralty had a more accurate understanding on what they were facing, but this was too late to make any significant upgrades to the Royal Navy fleet.

The Brisbane Line Legacy

In 1943, it was finally established that no formally adopted policy called the Brisbane Line had been adopted. Yet, the afterlife of this concept reverberated for decades. In 1944, only one year after the Royal Commission published its findings, Lieutenant-General Gordon Bennett (Commander of the 8th Australian Division in Singapore) told a journalist that he was overlooked for an operational command following his evacuation from Singapore because he had suggested there were

[211] Anthony Best has written many works around relations with Japan during this time including *British Intelligence and the Japanese challenge in Asia, 1914-1941* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbour: Avoiding War in East Adia, 1936-1941* (London: Routledge, 1995) and *Imperial Japan and the World, 1931-1945: Critical Concepts in Asian Studies* (London: Routledge, 2010).
[212] Boyd, Andrew *The Royal Navy In Eastern Waters: Linchpin of Victory, 1935-1942,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword books Ltd, 2017), p.312.

weaknesses in the proposed Brisbane Line plan.[213] Bennett was not renowned for his diplomacy in military circles, and whilst he may have criticised such a proposed plan, the more likely reason for his being overlooked for operational command following Singapore was his controversial escape, while many of his counterparts were surrendering to the Japanese. Comments about his sidelining were likely made to bolster his standing in the public eye. In 1945, when key senior officers such as Lieutenant General A.E. Percival and Brigadier Cecil Callaghan were released from captivity by the Japanese, they were keen to hold Bennett accountable for his actions in abandoning his troops. It was their belief that Bennett had disobeyed a direct order to surrender to preserve himself. A Royal Commission found that Bennett had been unjustified in relinquishing his command of Australian troops in Singapore. The report also observed that Bennett had a tendency to seek to attribute blame to others for his own military failings.

Bennett's comments in 1944 came as he resigned from the Western Australian Command in Perth, which largely sat outside of operational areas. Bennett had resigned himself to the fact that he would never see full active service again and so relinquished his charge to the Minister for the Army. Bennett's comments are therefore not surprising given past behaviours. He was however keen to ensure his story was actively available and so published his own account of the events of February 1942 in a book called *Why Singapore Fell.* Whilst a similar newspaper article was published by *The Sydney Morning Herald,* they failed to include the point that Bennett had mentioned in relation to the Brisbane Line.[214] The differences between the newspaper reports were picked up by supporters of Eddie Ward and, in particular, noted the omission from *The Sydney Morning Herald* article. In a letter to Ward in May 1944, a friend observed that this statement from Bennett, and the omissions by

[213] 'Gen. Bennett Defends Malaya Escape', *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, NSW : 1931 – 1954, 2 May 1944), p.5. , accessed 7 July 2018, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article248890055>.
[214] 'Frozen Out of Army', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 – 1954, 2 May 1944), p.3, accessed 7 July 2018 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article17905952>.

the *Herald* could be just what was needed to get the Brisbane Line issue back on the national scene, whilst at the same time accusing the *Sydney Morning Herald* paper of a cover-up.[215]

In the lead up to the 1946 federal election, the Brisbane Line was still being used as ammunition by the Labor Party, to demonstrate that the previous Menzies government had adopted a defeatist strategy as part of their defence policy.[216] In June 1946, an investigation into the preparations for the defence of Australia was being debated in parliament. Ward was very active in these debates, querying yet again why there was no proposal to include the Brisbane Line strategy as part of the review. Opposition members found this incredibly ironic, noting that Ward had foregone his opportunity to speak on this matter back in 1943, and stated that he should leave the debate in the past.[217] The issue arose again in 1954 when Major General Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain published their book *MacArthur 1941 – 1951.* In it they argued that 'it was planned to sacrifice the great western and northern regions of the Australian continent if necessary. The Australian chiefs had drawn a line in front of Brisbane, halfway up the eastern coast, and they planned to defend that line to the death.'[218] Willoughby had been General MacArthur's Chief of Intelligence and so had been close to the heart of the American operations within Australia. Ward released a statement in October of 1954, stating that he found it 'very gratifying […] to obtain complete confirmation of the charges which I first made some years ago, that there existed in the early years of the last world war a defeatist plan whereby large areas of Australia's territory were to be abandoned to the Japanese enemy without the firing of a shot.'[219]

[215] NLA MS 2396 *Papers of Edward John Ward, 1914 – 1963,* Series 13, Folder 2, Item 45-46.
[216] NAA A5954, 568/2 *Royal Commission relating to Brisbane Line statements. 1943,* p.7.
[217] *Ibid.,* p.11.
[218] NLA MS 2396 *Papers of Edward John Ward, 1914 – 1963,* Series 13, Folder 2, Item 63, Excerpt from 'MacArthur 1941-1951' – Major General Charles A Willoughby and John Chamberlain.
[219] NLA MS 2396 *Papers of Edward John Ward, 1914 – 1963,* Series 13, Folder 3, Item 140, Statement from The Hon. E. J. Ward, M.P. 12 October 1954.

Australia had witnessed a complex Federal Election in May 1954 and, whilst Robert Menzies was returned to the Prime Minster-ship, the electoral campaign had not been without its difficulties. Just a month before the election, the Petrov affair had culminated at Darwin Airport.[220] Robert Menzies was accused of liaising with intelligence services so that the timing allowed for the maximum amount of damage to the Labor campaign and would ultimately secure victory for his Liberal-Country Party. To Ward's mind, Menzies and his government held a significant amount of responsibility for the Brisbane Line plan. Ward's private papers contain a leaflet authored by James Larcombe, the Labor Member for Rockhampton. The leaflet, titled *Defence of Australia,* presents a summary of statements from anti-Labor supporters and emphasises the issue that the government failed to provide adequate defence strategies for the state of Queensland. As the Member for Rockhampton, this argument was highly emotive as the seat was at the centre of lands that could, according to plans, be abandoned in the event of war. Given Ward's arguments of 1943, it is not surprising that Larcombe furnished him with a copy of this leaflet. It is therefore unsurprising that at the end of his statement in October 1954 responding to the claims in Willoughby's and Chamberlain's book, Ward suggests that it was time Mr Menzies spoke again on the issue rather than remaining silent. There is no doubt that Ward was keen to repair his reputation and defend his character which, he stated, had been 'maligned by Liberal and Country Party speakers from one end of this country to the other.'[221]

[220] Vladimir Petrov had worked for the Soviet KGB within Australia during the 1950s on the orders of Lavrentiy Beria, the Soviet Security Chief. Following Stalin's death in 1953 and Beria's subsequent assassination in the same year, Petrov knew that it would be difficult for him to return to the Soviet Union. He therefore arranged to defect to Australia but failed to inform his wife, Evdokia Petrova, of this decision. She was taken by KGB officials who tried to transport her back to the USSR. When the plane they were travelling on stopped for refuelling at Darwin Airport, she was seized by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation officers, in a now highly publicised image of the 1950s, and offered asylum in Australia.

[221] NLA MS 2396 *Papers of Edward John Ward, 1914 – 1963,* Series 13, Folder 3, Item 140, Statement from The Hon. E. J. Ward, M.P. 12 October 1954.

The notion of the Brisbane Line was by no means confined to the second half of the twentieth century. Even as recently as 2015, the *Northern Star,* a newspaper serving the area of Lismore in New South Wales, published an article titled 'Constant fear of living next to the Brisbane Line in WWII.'[222] The author described the Brisbane Line as 'an idea, then a plan, then a disaster, and eventually no-one wanted to believe that it really existed.'[223] This demonstrates how the Brisbane Line idea might have affected Australia on a more social and cultural level. Peter Stanley states that 'millions of Australians still believe it was a reality, regardless of the findings of a Royal Commission.'[224] Whilst understanding how the concept might have evolved, Stanley is one of many historians that are satisfied that the Brisbane Line was never an actual policy. Even in more recent times however, it is still viewed by some, such as Richard Connaughton, as a truth that was hidden away in secret government files. In *Shrouded Secrets: Japan's War on Mainland Australia 1942-44* (1992) he notes that there was 'irrefutable evidence of the strategy.'[225] Hugh MacMaster also claimed in 1992 that a leaked document from the Army proved not only that the Brisbane Line existed but that it was still in fact part of current military strategy.[226] While these claims have largely been dismissed by government officials, it could be said that the notion of a Brisbane Line remains today but in a more cultural or imagined sense.

Stanley notes that a number of Australian novels that focus on this time period use the plotline of the northern part of Australia being abandoned.[227] He also details that 'roadside signs near Inverell even tell motorists that they are driving past it' – the

[222] *Northern Star,* 'Constant fear of living next to the Brisbane Line in WWII', 28 September 2015, accessed 7 December 2016 <http://www.northernstar.com.au/news/the-infamous-brisbane-line-plan/2788066/>.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Stanley, Peter *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942* (Camberwell, Victoria: Viking Penguin, 2008), p.214.
[225] 'Dirty Washing on the Brisbane Line' *The Canberra Times,* Wednesday 12 April 1992, p.17.
[226] 'Brisbane Line Strategy still policy, says author' *The Canberra Times,* Monday 29 June 1992, p.3.
[227] Stanley, Peter *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942* (Camberwell, Victoria: Viking Penguin, 2008), pp.219-220.

Brisbane Line.[228] Signs of this kind are normally associated with heritage trails, marking the post at which events happen. This research must therefore take into account the role of the so-called Brisbane Line in Australian national identity and popular historical memory and it must examine the factors that resulted in Darwin being viewed as different from the rest of Australia, as Australia's northern periphery.

[228] Stanley, Peter *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942* (Camberwell, Victoria: Viking Penguin, 2008), p.216. It is interesting to note these sites in between Inverell and Tenterfield. In the NSW Scorched Earth Code, Tenterfield was cited as one of the bastions of withdrawal in the event of an invasion on Sydney – see Rosen, Sue (ed.) *Scorched Earth,* 2017, pp.18-19.

Chapter Three: Reconciliation on the Ocean Floor?

Halfway down Smith Street in Central Darwin lies the Memorial Uniting Church. Opened in 1960, the former Second World War American Forces headquarters now serves as a memorial to all those who fought for Australia during the Second World War. Inside the church are seventy-seven crosses – one giant cross as a focal point at the front of the church, and the remainder embedded in the end of the pews (see Figs 4 and 5).

At first glance, this may not seem significant. It is not unusual for churches to have crosses in them, and the Uniting Church is no different in this respect. It is however the story behind the crosses that makes them significant not only to Darwin, but also to relations in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The crosses were crafted from metal salvaged from some of the ships that were sunk by the Japanese during the first attack on Darwin on 19 February 1942. Perhaps even more significant than this is the fact that the ships were salvaged by the Fujita Salvage Company, a Japanese organisation, less than twenty years after they were originally sunk in the bombing raids.

Figure 4. Darwin Uniting Memorial Church (photo by F. Gibbons)

Figure 5. Cross in Pew End at Darwin Memorial Uniting Church (photo by F. Gibbons)

Up to this point, this thesis has examined the origins of the city of Darwin, the bombing attacks of the Second World War and the policies (or lack thereof) of the Commonwealth government and the notion of the Brisbane Line, highlighting the many ways in which the north and south differ in their approaches to various aspects of policy affecting the Northern Territory and its citizens. This chapter will examine the post-war relations between Australia and Japan during the 1950s and 1960s. Using the salvage of the sunken ships as a focus, it will explore Australian immigration policies both pre-and post-war and the challenges they posed for the north, the long-term effects of the destruction caused by the bombings and the specific contribution made by the Fujita Salvage company to post-war relations in the north. The chapter will conclude by assessing how the commemoration process was influenced by the re-introduction of Japanese citizens into areas that had been directly affected by events of the Second World War.

Early Australian-Japanese Relations

In any post-war period, relations between former enemies inevitably have to be rebuilt step by step. As Jiaping Wu and Hilary Winchester note, Australia has a geographical proximity to Asia that meant the former enemies had to reintegrate themselves for the benefit of trade and their respective economies:

> Even though the city has no land adjoining the two continents, there is no other Australian city like Darwin so near Asia. This location, where Australia and Asia and the colonial Australians and the Indigenous people meet, has determined and remains an important element in Darwin's development.[229]

In the post-war era, as well as incorporating Australia back into Asia, there was also an issue of uniting north and south within Australia. Northern Territory residents were still very bitter that the government had supposedly made plans to abandon

[229] Wu, Jiaping and Winchester, Hilary P.M 'Globalisation and Border Dynamics: impacts on the urban development of Darwin, Australia' *Australian Geographer*, 46:2, 2015, p.255.

them to the Japanese with the Brisbane Line Strategy. Although a Royal Commission had determined that the Brisbane Line was not a formal policy, feelings still ran high in relation to decisions being made in the south. The re-introduction of Japanese citizens into the Australian population, particularly in Darwin and the Northern Territory, was a political decision taken by those in the corridors of power in Canberra. It was a decision which, as this chapter will show, no one department particularly wanted to take responsibility. It was also a decision that had far-reaching implications for the relations between the two countries and for the evolution of the commemoration process to the events of the Second World War in the Northern Territory.

Australian-Japanese relations are often thought to be a relatively recent occurrence. Yet records show that relations between the two countries began shortly after the Americans ended the Edo period of Japanese history in the 1850s. Up until the 1850s, the Japanese people had lived in virtual isolation, but the arrival of the Americans forced the Japanese to open up some of their ports to western traders in accordance with the Treaty of Kanagawa. Pam Oliver notes that 'Australian traders were among the first to take advantage of these new arrangements' although trading agreements were formally established during 1865, when Australia began to export coal to Japan.[230] The Japanese were more active in their pursuit of trade markets than Australians, and began to see through these interactions with Australia that they were vastly outclassed in areas such as defence and modern living. The period between the 1850s and 1890s saw a rapid growth in Japanese infrastructure and this began to concern the Australians. The 1894 Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty, signed by Britain and Japan, allowed the Japanese to move freely and settle within the British Empire. As the Japanese grew to experience western technologies and developments, they were able to learn how to move forward in their own country.

[230] Oliver, Pam *Allies, Enemies and Trading Partners: Records on Australia and the Japanese*, (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2004), p.13.

Each colony or state within the Empire was left to ratify the Commercial Treaty according to their own wishes. In Australia, where they were still separate colonies, the governments took differing views on how this should be ratified. Queensland accepted the terms of the treaty and all the benefits that it brought them. The government of New South Wales, however, were not so open-minded and instead of ratifying the treaty, they introduced the Immigration Restriction Act. This act extended previous versions of the law to include restriction of those beyond Chinese immigrants including not only the Japanese, who were a major concern at that time, but all non-European subjects and any British subjects of non-European descent. It was the New South Wales Immigration Act that would subsequently form the basis of the federal Immigration Restriction Act which was introduced in 1901.

One of the key factors in the Federation debates of the 1890s was the issue of national security. The rise of Japan (and China) led Australia to re-evaluate the threats they faced. In a speech in Parramatta Town Hall on Friday 21 June 1895, Sir Henry Parkes – founder of the Federation movement – stated that 'Japan had taught China a severe lesson; and now, having tasted excitement of almost unexpected victory, she might be tempted to try her prowess against the rest of the world'.[231] Parkes was referring to the victory Japan had won in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Although the Japanese army was half the size of the Chinese army, a convincing victory by the Japanese saw around 35,000 Chinese soldiers killed or wounded. Parkes was not the only politician to note the threat that was facing Australia from the north. E. W. O'Sullivan – MP for New South Wales – commented in an interview in January 1895 that 'the war now proceeding between China and Japan shows the necessity for an immediate organisation of the Australian provinces into a federation.'[232] This threat from the North became a key motivation for those in

[231] 'Address by Sir Henry Parkes' *Evening News* (Sydney, NSW: 1869-1931), 22 June 1895, p.4, accessed 6 June 2016, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title508>.
[232] 'Politics in New South Wales' *The Mercury* (Hobart. Tasmania: 1860-1954), 2 January 1895, p.3, accessed 6 June 2016, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title10>.

favour of Federation. They argued that only as a federated nation could they seek to establish immigration restrictions that stopped non-European migrants from entering the country. Neville Meaney notes that 'fear of an Asian invasion, whether migratory or military, was a major theme in Australian literature as it was in Australian politics.'[233] The images created by the imagination led to the idea of the 'Yellow Peril' and the threats that could be realised by Asian nations if Australia was not careful.

Even though Australia successfully federated to become one nation in 1901, its foreign policies were still largely governed by the British parliament in London. The aforementioned Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894 was renewed and renamed in 1902 as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. This Alliance was renewed twice more in 1905 and 1911 and assisted in further establishing Japan's place in the Pacific, albeit it did not sit comfortably with Australia, who were becoming increasingly concerned by Japanese expansion. Although Britain was keen to support Japan in their growth and development, they were not geographically positioned to understand the threat that Australia (and indeed New Zealand) felt. Japan had already won the First Sino-Japanese War and in 1904-5, they successfully defeated the Russian military. The world was surprised by this victory as Japan was far smaller than the Russian Empire. For Australia, this victory heightened their fears even further and highlighted the need to have a strategic defence plan regarding developments in the Pacific. Japan was a nation that was clearly staking its claim on the Pacific region and yet Australia's north was still reliant on Japanese migrants to support some of their key industries. Pre-federation migration policies within the colonies had continued to permit Japanese migration as part of the treaties that had been signed.

In 1906 Alfred Deakin, the then Prime Minister, invited the Japanese fleet to Melbourne as representatives of the recently renewed alliance as well as members

[233] Meaney, Neville ''The Yellow Peril': Invasion Scare Novels and Australian Political Culture' in Meaney, Neville, Curran, James and Ward, Stuart (eds.) *Australia and the Wider World: Selected Essays of Neville Meaney* (Sydney University Press: Sydney, 2013), p.73.

of a growing nation.[234] It was a controversial visit that many ardent racial purists who wished to see Australia remain a white, European nation, were extremely angry about. Deakin had hoped to try and move past the difficulties that had been experienced historically, perhaps with the notion of 'keeping your enemies closer.' Cees Heere argues that the conflicts between Japan and China and Russia had 'given rise to new anxieties about Australia's exposure to the imperial rivalries in its oceanic vicinity.'[235] With global politics expanding, and Asia becoming ever stronger, Australia needed to forge its own way in the world. This required not just domestic immigration policies but also development of its strategic defence policies.

Immigration Policy: 1900s – 1970s

One of the key drivers in reducing foreign immigration in the early twentieth century was the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act by the newly federated Australian government, which became more commonly known as the White Australia Policy. The Act had been implemented by New South Wales, as noted above, as a countermeasure to the British government's signing of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1894. With the arrival of Federation in 1901, the government was able to begin the process of introducing this across all states. The Act 'effectively ended all non-European immigration' to Australia.[236] Manning Clark notes that 'the aim of the Barton Government was to preserve the structure of society which existed in Australia.'[237] In the election campaign of 1901, Barton campaigned that 'national manhood, the national character and the national future were at stake.'[238] The key areas of concern were not only defence, but also the economy and public health as

[234] Heere, Cees *Empire Ascendent: The British World, Race and the Rise of Japan, 1894-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.130-1.
[235] *Ibid.,* p.132.
[236] White Australia Policy, accessed 27 August 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/event/White-Australia-Policy>. Also see Nish, Ian 'Australia and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1901-1911', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 9, 2, 1963: pp.201-212.
[237] Cathcart, Michael (ed.) *Manning Clark's History of Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998), p.418. Edmund Barton was the first Prime Minister of the newly federated Australia and took office in January 1901. He retained office later that year in the first federal election of the new Commonwealth of Australia.
[238] *Ibid.,* p.418.

well. It was widely accepted that labourers from Asia and the Pacific Islands were often prepared to work longer hours for less pay, which was perceived to result in less jobs for the white Australian. There was also a long-standing belief – albeit not necessarily a correct one – that Asian immigrants were purveyors of disease.[239] According to the radical anti-immigration groups, by allowing these immigrants to continue entering Australia, the health of every white Australian was at risk. It favoured immigrants from countries of Aryan background and particularly those who could speak good English. In the early days of the policy – which was legally in force until 1975 – entry examinations were introduced which included dictation tests in the English Language. Although this policy was designed to prevent further immigrants from non-European countries entering Australia, it did not provide the means with which to remove those who had already settled in the country. There were many Japanese-born citizens who already had established businesses in Australia or were married to Australian citizens, and it was not possible to just eject them from the country as some radicals would have wished.

The Northern Territory was just one area where Asian people had already built up their own communities. Stuart Macintyre notes that the impact of the White Australia Policy – and various restrictive laws that were introduced to prevent the further development of migrant communities – was widely felt in the Northern Territory.[240] Julia Martinez, who works extensively on the use of Asian labour in key Australian industries in the north, notes that the Port of Darwin relied heavily on Asian labour on the pearling and fishing boats as well as on the wharves.

Their presence in Darwin presented a problem for the government of the newly federated Australia. When the White Australia Policy was first implemented 'the pearl-shelling industry had been exempted from the provisions of the Immigration

[239] Bashford, Alison in Knightley, Phillip *Australia: A Biography of a Nation* (London: Random House, 2001), p.48.
[240] Macintyre, Stuart *A Concise History of Australia: Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.144.

Restriction Act, making it the only industry to be allowed indentured "coloured" labour in Australia.'[241]Asian labourers had lived in Darwin for a long time and were economically vital to the survival of industries such as pearl-shelling in the pre-Federation era. By 1911 however, the government were quick to put in place measures that would tighten up the White Australia Policy, particularly in the north where it was seen as an embarrassment that government rule could be so easily flouted. Introduction of these tighter laws did not go smoothly, and the government faced strong criticism from the white pearling-masters, who successfully campaigned that their industry should remain exempt from the rules of the White Australia Policy.[242] While the presence of the Japanese and other Asian labourers in the north became part of everyday life, their presence in the southern, more industrial states of Australia continued to cause consternation. Pam Oliver notes that Japanese communities 'were watched closely by the Army, Navy, Security Services and Police forces who became suspicious of Japanese activities.'[243] There was particular concern around the Japanese sampans which were surveying the northern coastlines and inlets, creating up-to-date maps of the area. Whilst some would argue that the Japanese sampans were uniquely placed to survey the shallower inlets and provide accurate and up-to-date surveys of these areas, Australian military forces were not so open-minded to this viewpoint.[244]

The arrival of the First World War in 1914 brought further uncertainty and fear into the Asia-Pacific region. Japan had already established itself as a strong military force and war on such a large scale made Australia feel very uneasy. Japan was theoretically on the same side as Australia, having both declared war on Germany.

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[241] Martinez, Julia 'Asian Workers in Pre-War Port Darwin: Exclusion and Exemption', *Maritime Studies,* 109, 1999, p.19.
[242] *Ibid.,* pp.19-20.
[243] Oliver, Pam 'Interpreting "Japanese activities" in Australia, 1888-1945', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial,* 36, 2002 <https://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j36/Oliver.asp>, accessed 5 September 2016.
[244] Oliver, Pam *Allies, Enemies and Trading Partners: Records on Australia and the Japanese*, (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2004), p.126.

Yet Japan took this declaration one step further, making a claim on all the German territories in the Pacific region. This further reinforced the idea for Australia that the Japanese could potentially find the power to move south and make a claim on their territories. Oliver notes that at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 long negotiations took place between Australia and Japan over the South Seas islands. She states that 'Australia wanted to confine Japan to north of the equator and succeeded.'[245]

It should be noted that Australia and New Zealand were not the only countries to have immigration restrictions on those from Southeast Asia. The United States and Canada both introduced restrictions in the early part of the twentieth century, with America introducing the 1917 Literary Test, the 1921 Emergency Quota Act and the 1924 Immigration Act. Canada had introduced the Chinese Immigration Act in 1885 and then two further Immigration Acts in 1906 and 1910. Various amendments were made in the pre- and post-war period following the First World War. Sean Brawley reflects that international historian Arnold Toynbee highlighted that America's introduction of the 1924 Immigration Act was likely to be a potential cause of conflict for the future, and while this did not end up being an immediate consequence, Toynbee believed this was a contributing factor when the time came in 1941.[246] Brawley goes on to highlight that this area of Pacific relations has been largely omitted from studies into the origins of war.[247]

With the arrival of the Great Depression in 1929, the world at large went through unprecedented upheaval. It was not solely restricted to the United States and Britain – everywhere experienced the effects of the global financial collapse and Australia did not escape. Australia's long-standing dependence on Britain meant that they too were subject to the restrictions imposed by London. The Commonwealth

[245] Oliver, Pam *ibid.,* 2004.
[246] Toynbee, Arnold in Brawley, Sean *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America 1919-1978,* (University of New South Wales Press: Sydney, 1995), p.110.
[247] Brawley, Sean *ibid.,* p.110.

Bank refused to allow any further overseas borrowing by the Australian states. Restrictions were also placed on the import and export trades. The Ottawa Agreements of 1932 allowed for preferential treatment of certain import items from Britain and in return, certain Australian exports were prioritised in Britain as well as around the Empire. Despite these trade deals that were intended to help boost the Australian economy, the everyday Australian citizen suffered immensely. Wages were cut, food became an expensive commodity and one-time successful businessmen suddenly found themselves without jobs and sometimes without homes. Australia knew that it had to do something to try and get the economy back on an even keel. For Australia, this meant looking somewhere other than Britain. Exports of wool and wheat appeared to be the key to Australia's economy with David Lee noting that 'Japanese purchases of wool kept Australia's national economy solvent' in the early 1930s.[248]

The Northern Territory and Australia

To understand why these policies had so much impact in the Northern Territory, it is important to examine the make-up of Australia's identity compared with its most remote political entity. Table 1 shows that while the rest of Australia was ardently clinging to the White Australia policy in the early part of the twentieth century, Darwin was one of the more multicultural parts of the nation. The summary of the 1933 census below demonstrates that 8.9% of the population of Darwin had been born in Asia, while in Sydney this was only 1.2%. While the population of Sydney could lose this 1.2% in its back streets and alleys, for Darwin – whose population was fifty-six times smaller than Sydney – 8.9% represented a significant figure. It stood out in the community. Yet on the whole, in the pre-war period, it worked. Relationships were good and people got on with everyday life. The Asian communities were vital to a

[248] Lee, David Australia and the World in the Twentieth Century, (Beaconsfield, Circa: 2006), p.51.

number of key trades in Darwin, such as pearling and mining, which meant that both Asians and European Australians had to interact on a daily basis. With the distinct lack of physical connection with the south at that time (i.e. no road, no rail), the community had to be self-sufficient. In contrast to the southern states of Australia, where Asian communities had semi-segregated areas such as China Town, the people of Darwin – both European and Asian – lived alongside each other in relative harmony.

Table 2: Birthplace according to 1933 Census of Australia[249]

	Darwin	**% of population**	**Sydney**	**% of population**
Australasia	1,211	77.3	67,503	76.4
British Isles	118	7.5	14,408	16.3
Rest of Europe	78	5.0	4,057	4.6
Asia	139	8.9	1,062	1.2
Africa	9	0.6	293	0.3
America	8	0.5	493	0.6
Polynesia	3	0.2	143	0.2
At Sea	0	0	37	0.04
Not Stated	0	0	312	0.4
GRAND TOTAL	**1,566**	**100**	**88,308**	**100**

It is perhaps not surprising that the number of Asian people noted in the census drastically fell in the post-war period. Japanese citizens, along with nationals from other countries who fought on the opposing side during the Second World War, were

[249] 'Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1933', *Australian Bureau of Statistics,* <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2110.01933?OpenDocument>, accessed 30 April 2024.

deported from Australia back to their home country.[250] The government was nervous, and they wanted to remove any opportunity of risk from within the country. This change is reflected in the 1947 census statistics where the percentage of Asian nationals in Darwin declined to 1.7%.

Table 3: Birthplace According to 1947 Census of Australia[251]

	Darwin	**% of population**	**Sydney**	**% of population**
Australasia	2,203	86.8	77,940	81.3
British Isles	195	7.6	10,461	11.0
Rest of Europe	86	3.4	4,898	5.1
Asia	42	1.7	1,566	1.6
Africa	7	0.3	271	0.3
America	5	0.2	559	0.6
Polynesia	0	0	210	0.2
At Sea	0	0	20	0.02
Not Stated	0	0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	**2538**	**100**	**95,925**	**100**

The impact of the Second World War on the Darwin population can be more clearly demonstrated by examining the nationality statistics from the 1947 census. The breakdown of figures shows that there were no Japanese recorded in either Darwin or Sydney. The Japanese population had been jettisoned from the Australian cultural

[250] Hiroshi Yoneyama from the Ritsumeken University is currently undertaking a project that examines the forced removal of overseas Japanese nationals and the reconstruction of post-war Japanese society.
[251] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947, *Australian Bureau of Statistics,* <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2109.01947?OpenDocument>, accessed 30 April 2024.

landscape through the interning of Japanese nationals during the war and the subsequent deportation back to Japan after the war. Even those Japanese-Australians, who had been born in Australia, were returned to Japan, despite having never lived there.

Table 4: Nationality according to 1947 Census of Australia[252]

	Darwin	**% of population**	**Sydney**	**% of population**
British	2,497	98.4	92,779	96.7
Foreign	41	1.6	3,146	3.3
(Chinese)	*16*	*0.6*	*848*	*0.9)*
(Japanese)	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0)*
GRAND TOTAL	**2,538**	**100**	**95,925**	**100**

Nonetheless, links have remained between Australia and Japan and, as the distance of time from the events of 1942 increased, so these links have been re-established. Studies of Australian geography, urban policy and economic development have all acknowledged the importance of Asia in the growth of Darwin.[253] The importance of Asia in Australia continues to be noted in the present day, most notably displayed in the Australian Government commissioning a White Paper in 2012 entitled *Australia in the Asian Century.* This paper proposed that Asia

[252] Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1947, *Australian Bureau of Statistics,* <https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/03ADB135690D5CB3CA25784100199ADA/$File/1947%20Census%20-%20Volume%20I%20-%20Part%20XIV%20Nationality.pdf>, accessed 30 April 2024.

[253] Examples of these studies include Instone, Lesley 'Northern belongings: frontiers, fences and identities in Australia's urban north' *Environment and Planning A,* 46, 2009, pp.827-841; Carson, Dean, Doris Schmallegger and Sharon Harwood 'A City for the Temporary? Political Economy and Urban Planning in Darwin, Australia' *Urban Policy and Research,* 28:3, 2010, pp.293-310; Wu, Jiaping 'Between the Centre and the Periphery: the development of port trade in Darwin, Australia' *Australian Geographer,* 42:3, 2011, pp.273-288; and Wu, Jiaping and Hilary P.M. Winchester 'Globalisation and Border Dynamics: impacts on the urban development of Darwin, Australia' *Australian Geographer,* 46:2, 2015, pp.255-270.

was the future of Australia and identified ways in which Australia could, and should, embrace these developments. It noted particularly that 'Darwin has great opportunities to become a world-leading centre for engineering, financial, medical and education services.'[254] It also noted the historical context in the region, indicating that in the 1960s Japan was actually Australia's largest trading partner. Even in the short twenty years since the end of the Second World War, former enemies had become highly successful trading partners.

It is also interesting to note that in Julia Martínez's study of the dominance of White Australia from 1911-1940 in the narrative of Australian history, she argues that, even in a society where a dominant white discourse prevailed, the use of non-white labour – in particular Asian labour – was common. She notes that her study highlights 'the complex and varied dynamics of Australian "race" relations.'[255] This is a trait that was confirmed by my interviewee, Tony Sheldrake, during our discussions.[256] Sheldrake was originally posted to Darwin in the RAAF in 1965, and then when he was demobbed in the early 1970s, he settled in Darwin permanently. He told me that Darwin was one of the few places where no one particular race could claim the town as their own. English, French, German, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Timorese and Filipinos all lived alongside each other in Darwin. He noted that his children were brought up alongside children of all cultural backgrounds and when they brought friends home from school, he would not know what nationality they were until they turned up on the doorstep. This was, he felt, in direct contrast to places like Melbourne and Sydney, where he had Vietnamese friends who lived in suburbs that were so separate that you could think you were walking through Saigon.[257]

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[254] *Australia in the Asian Century,* (Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra: 2012), p.184.
[255] Martínez, Julia Plural Australia: Aboriginal and Asian labour in tropical white Australia, Darwin, 1911-1940, (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Wollongong, 1999), p.149.
[256] Although in my initial research planning, I had hoped to do more interviews, it became clear that using this kind of methodology was going to be impractical given the distance from the majority of those in my target group. Sheldrake spent six months of the year in the UK, and therefore interviewing him was much more possible, and provided some useful cultural pointers.
[257] Interview with T Sheldrake, resident of Darwin 1971-2011, 6 September 2015.

This fact was made abundantly clear in 1961. The people of Darwin played a significant role in challenging aspects of the White Australia Policy in the early 1960s, with the case of the 'Stay-puts' – three Darwin-based Malay pearling operatives. As the pearling industry began to decline, the operatives were laid off by their employer. Under the terms of their permits, they could only remain in Australia if they were employed and so Alick Downer (Minister for Immigration) confirmed that they would have to be deported as per the terms of the permit. Over 2,500 residents of Darwin put their names to a petition that asked the government to allow the Malays to stay in Australia and to cancel the deportation orders.[258] An Anti-Deportation Committee was established and campaigned for over four months to plead the case for the Malays.[259] The campaign was eventually successful, and at the last minute, the deportations were cancelled and the Malays were allowed to stay. Riddett argues that 'Darwin as a community stands proudly different to the rest of Australia especially in the area of race relations.'[260] Dick Ward, a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Council stated at the time that the Northern Territory was 'so often treated as separate from the rest of Australia there appeared no reason why the men should not be allowed to remain among friends.'[261]

An open statement such as this from those responsible for government in the Territory was a clear sign that Darwin and the north were happy to stand separately from the rest of Australia and, where necessary, against policies such as the White Australia Policy. In this particular case, the people of Darwin protested in the streets, students refused to undertake lessons and people were willing to physically hide the Malays during the time that they went into hiding. The government decision to overturn the deportation order came as a significant surprise and was an early sign that the White Australia Policy's time was limited. The deportation situation occurred

[258] Lockwood, Douglas *The Front Door: Darwin, 1869-1969,* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1969), p.184.
[259] Riddett, Lyn, The Gateway and the Gatekeepers, *ibid.,* p.61.
[260] *Ibid.,* p.62.
[261] Ward, Dick in Riddett, Lyn, ibid., p.62.

just at the beginning of the 1961 election campaign and, as the story became more well-known across Australia, students and union workers interrupted public appearances by the Prime Minister and the Immigration Minister, using the case to highlight flaws in the country's immigration policies.[262]

On 27 September 1961, the Sydney-based *Tribune* reported that as well as a march on government house in Darwin, over 3000 people signed a petition asking the Prime Minister to reconsider the decision to deport the workers. The article also listed a number of national organisations who had come out in support of the Malay workers.[263] On 16 November 1961, *The Canberra Times* reported that an election campaign meeting at which Prime Minister Menzies was speaking in Melbourne, was interrupted by students protesting against immigration and the White Australia Policy.[264] Menzies was quick to dismiss the protestors, suggesting that they could hardly be university students as they would need to be smarter than the individuals who were protesting in front of him. Menzies did not believe in the loosening of the White Australia Policy, even though many around him were beginning to see the wisdom of relaxing some elements of the regulations.

This failure to understand the mood of the nation set him in opposition to many, but particularly those living in the Northern Territory. The eventual shift of Whitlam's government to fully embrace multiculturalism in some ways brought Australia closer to the image that Darwin had held for a long period of time. P. F. Donavan notes that 'it was a time, too, when Australians generally became more outward-looking, and conscious of affairs in neighbouring regions' whilst also noticing 'an increasing questioning of the status quo, and the championing of the causes of

[262] Neumann, Klaus 'Stayputs and Asylum Seekers in Darwin, 1961-1962 Or, How three Portuguese Sailors Helped to Undermine the White Australia Policy', *Journal of Northern Territory History*, (16, 2005), pp.4-5.
[263] 'Darwin Rebuff to Menzies' (1961, September 27). Tribune (Sydney, NSW : 1939 - 1991), p.1. Retrieved September 21, 2023, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article236254856.
[264] "Yahoos" In Hall Scenes (1961, November 16). The Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995), p.1. Retrieved September 21, 2023, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105899249.

oppressed minorities.'[265] Such changes were to challenge, if not alter, the way in which many countries viewed their identity, their history and their future.

It is through this dynamic of juxtaposition with the national discourse of White Australia that this chapter seeks to examine the early years of post-war commemoration in Darwin, looking at how the commemoration ceremonies of 19 February 1959-1961 were affected by the rebuilding of relationships with Japan. It will seek to assert that Darwin's multicultural background, both pre- and post-war, set it aside from the rest of Australia when it came to policy making, in as much as although Canberra may have set policy, this did not translate into practice in the north of Australia. This will be undertaken by first briefly outlining the historical background to the wrecks in Darwin Harbour. It will then summarise the political situation at the time, particularly focusing on relations between Japan and Australia at that point. Thirdly, it will examine the national discourse that surrounded the appointment of a Japanese company to undertake the salvage work. Finally, it will examine how the act of salvage and the presence of Japanese in Darwin at the time affected the commemoration ceremonies during that period.

Australian-Japanese Relations during the 1950s

The 1950s and 1960s were an interesting time for Australia and for Australian-Japanese relations. Robert Menzies – an ardent royalist – had been back in government since 1949 and was to lead Australia until 1966. The Labor government that preceded Menzies had begun to make steps towards embedding Australia into the Pacific region. David Lee argues that Menzies' Liberal-Country party coalition took a step back from such policies on election, claiming that the Labor Party had forgotten their imperial heritage.[266] Although Menzies – once described as 'British to the

[265] Donavan, P. F. *At the Other End of Australia,* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1984), pp.184-5.
[266] Lee, David *Australia and the World in the Twentieth Century*, (Beaconsfield: Circa, 2006), p.93.

bootstraps' – was keen to bolster links between Britain and Australia, his term in office also oversaw the development of pro-Asia policies such as the ANZUS Treaty, the Colombo Plan and the SEATO Treaty.

The ANZUS Treaty was designed to fortify security in the Pacific region; the Colombo Plan was aimed at providing economic aid and education training to developing countries in Asia and the SEATO treaty was intended to provide a joint agreement of defensive support against any threats made to the signatory countries. The Colombo Plan was instrumental in bringing 'more than 20,000 Asian students […] to Australian educational institutions between 1951 and 1980.'[267] Thomas Crump notes that a key factor behind the educational strand of the Colombo Plan was to provide an alternative to the free education system that was being offered by the communist Soviet Union. The resulting impact was that, as Crump notes, 'long-entrenched attitudes had to change.'[268]

A cursory glance at these policy summaries could indicate that Australia was finally beginning to stand on its own two feet. Yet, a more considered examination of these policies reveals the turmoil that Australian foreign policy faced in respect of Great Britain and the United States of America. The majority of Australian decisions in respect of Asian relations at this time were guided by the views of at least one of these countries. Respecting old relationships whilst recognising a changing future in the Pacific often resulted in conflicting ideas. Britain struggled to understand the situation in the Pacific and its resulting influence on Australia's decisions. The perceived threat from the Japanese continued to be an ever-present issue for Australia. Yet Australia was seemingly not ready to stand solely by herself, instead letting America guide them on many of the big decisions in the Pacific region. This included participation in the Korean, and more notably, the Vietnam wars.

[267] Lee, David, *ibid.,* p.99.
[268] Crump, Thomas *Asia-Pacific: A History of Empire and Conflict,* (London, Hambledon Continuum, 2007), p.317.

The question of Japanese citizens being let back into Australia in any form, particularly to the northern part of the country, was fiercely debated throughout the 1950s. Australia was the Pacific nation that struggled the most to forget the events wrought upon them by the Japanese during the Second World War.[269] Indeed the Fujita salvage case was not the first time the issue had been raised. Tensions between businessmen, tradesmen and community members, who remembered the impact of the Japanese during the Second World War, were first felt in 1954. The forced removal of Japanese citizens from Australia in the immediate post-war period had had an enormous impact on the pearling industry in the north. J.P.S. Bach notes in 'The Pearlshelling Industry and The "White Australia" Policy' that 'the Japanese who had been engaged in the industry as early as 1885, were highly efficient and their virtues were praised by their employers.'[270] The Japanese were viewed as essential to the industry and Bach notes that they had the 'monopoly of diving and tending […] until World War II.'[271] In Darwin in particular, the Japanese had revived the industry of pearl shelling in the late 1890s. In the post-1945 period, the financial strain of having to rebuild a whole city could be alleviated if the pearlers were allowed to revive the industry once more.

This caused major upset, not only in Darwin but also in the corridors of power in Canberra. In January 1955 Arthur Calwell, the deputy leader of the Opposition, stated that 'if Japanese pearl divers were allowed to come to Australia they would combine spying with pearl fishing, as they had always done.'[272] He argued that the people of government, based in Sydney and Melbourne had no comprehension of what it meant to let Japanese divers back into Darwin. His comments followed on from a leading article in *The Argus* in which the paper reported the Returned

[269] Crump, Thomas *ibid.*, p.317.
[270] Bach, J.P.S 'The Pearlshelling Industry and The 'White Australia' Policy', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, 10, 38, 1962, p.204.
[271] *Ibid.,* p.206.
[272] 'Calwell Support Argus 'Jap Divers will be spies, too', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic: 1848-1957) 25 January 1955, p.5, accessed 30 May 2015 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page6556186>.

Servicemen's League (RSL) opposition to such an action. The RSL secretary had written to the government asking for a delay in approving the policy to allow Japanese citizens back into Australia. The Secretary is reported to have warned of the potential for 'fighting all over Darwin' if it was approved.[273]

The Argus continued in the week that followed to present arguments both for and against the policy, although it would appear that the editorial board were firmly opposed to the proposed policy. On 27 January 1955, they collated a summary of some of the letters they had received from their readers. It appears that their readers had a more balanced view on the situation, with many welcoming the move as a way to break down the image of Australia as an anti-alien nation as well as a chance to build up the economy in the north of Australia.[274] It could be said that memory composure played a part in these debates. Although there was a recognition of the impact of the events of the Second World War, there was also an understanding that in order to move forward and recover, holding on to the image of the 'Yellow Peril' was not constructive for anyone. Memories were therefore either erased or composed in a certain way, in order to make sense of both the past and the present.[275]

The struggles surrounding the White Australia Policy were not only being felt in the corridors of Australia's parliament buildings. Ambassadors who were based in Asian countries – China, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia in particular – found that the task of negotiating new trade links in a post-war period were compromised. Australia was seen as a country that had elitist and racist policies. Why should these Asian countries consider building up trade links when Australia was not even prepared to

[273] 'We Don't Want Japs Back, Says Angry North', *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic: 1848-1957) 24 January 1955, p.2, accessed 30 May 2015 <http://nla/gov.au/nla.news-page6556161>.
[274] It is interesting to note that a document entitled 'Celebrating Acts of Peace and Reconciliation', the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church (DMUC) notes that it was the people of Sydney and Melbourne who expressed the most anger about the arrival of the Japanese. The people of Darwin, according to the DMUC, made the Japanese very welcome. This could be seen as an active representation of a cultural 'Brisbane Line'.
[275] Thomson, Alistair 'Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory Into Practice in Australia' in Green, Anna and Troup, Kathleen *The Houses of history: A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999), p.240.

accept Asian citizens into their country? These issues were not new to Australia. In the early part of the twentieth century, Britain was negotiating an alliance with Japan that related to trade and defence. As Ian Nish notes, the White Australia Policy and its restrictions in regard to Japanese immigrants caused much debate during the time that the alliance was being negotiated.[276]

The ships at the bottom of Darwin Harbour

As with all wars that come to an end, there is the inevitable task of reconstruction. The end of the Second World War in the Pacific in September 1945 was no different. For the people of Darwin there was a delay in beginning this process of rebuilding, as the civilian population were not allowed to return to Darwin until February 1946. Darwin had been placed under military control in the aftermath of the attacks and this remained in place until 1946. Once the civilians were allowed to return to the city, that process of rebuilding began. Not only did they need to rebuild the town, clearing it of the rubble of destroyed houses and buildings, but there was also a great deal of work needed in the harbour itself.

[276] Nish, Ian 'Australia and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1901-1911' *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 9:2, 1963, pp.201-212.

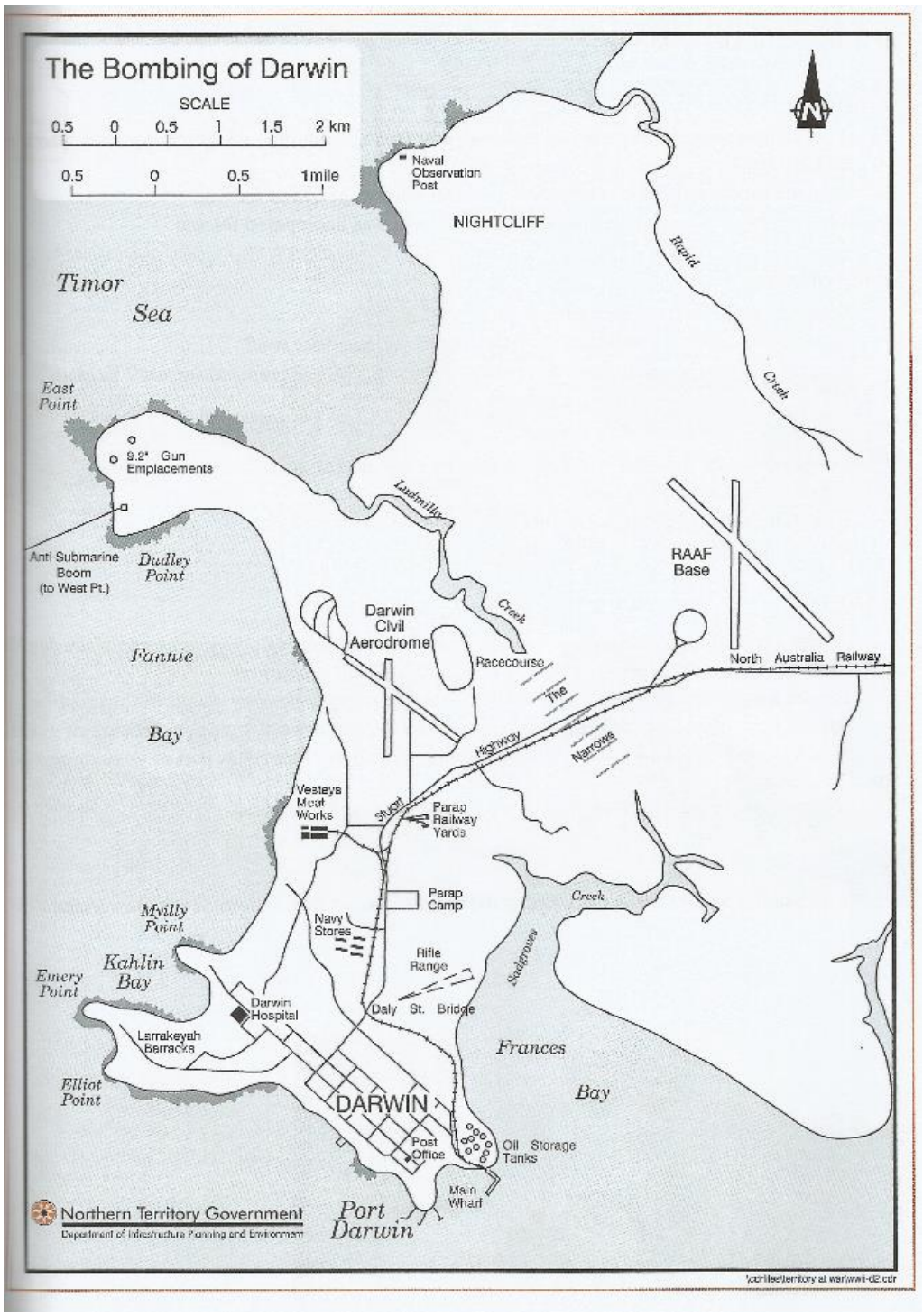

Figure 6. Map of Darwin Town in 1942
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, Northern Territory Government.

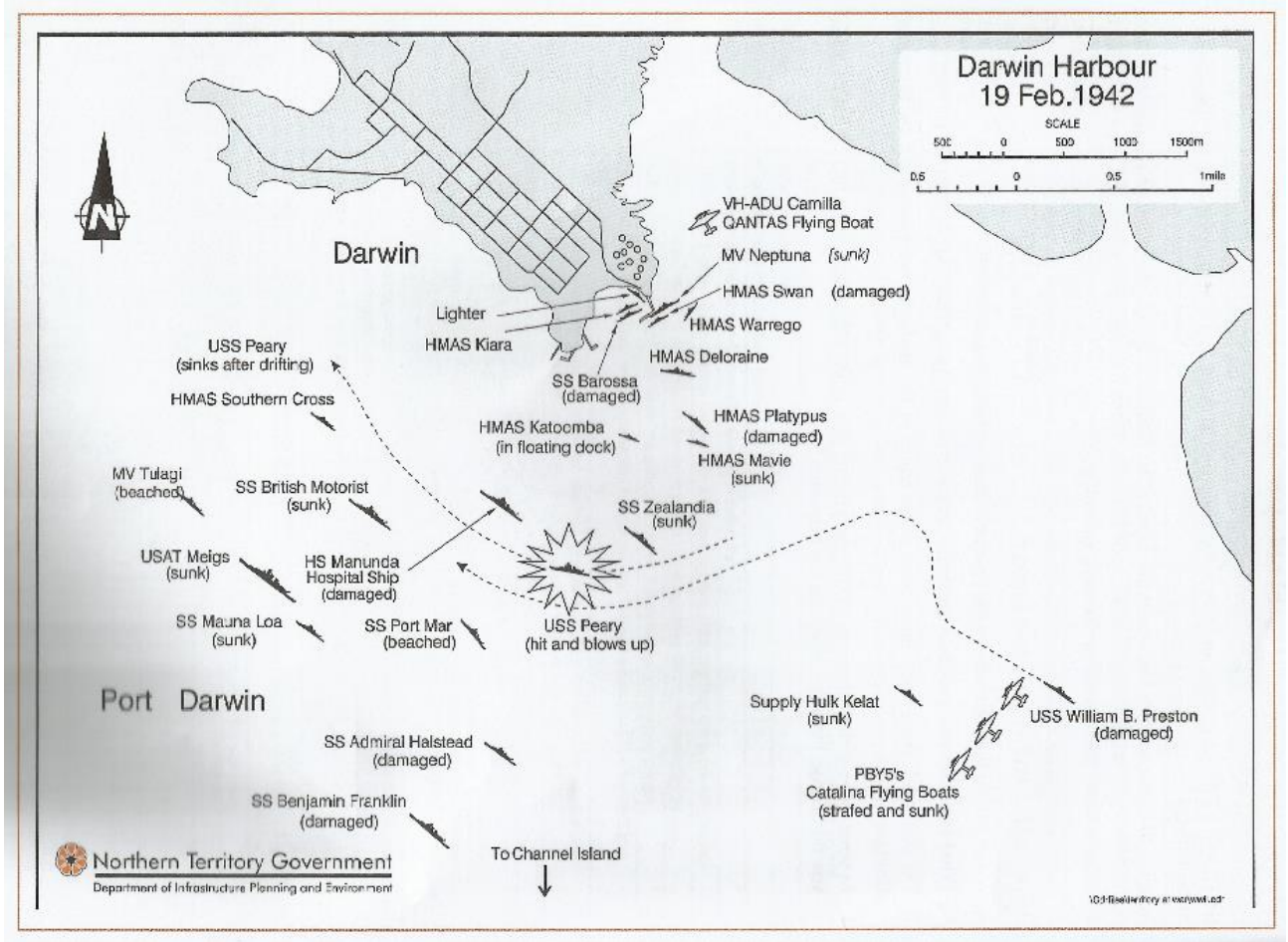

Figure 7. Position of Ships in Darwin Harbour, 19 February 1942.
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, Northern Territory Government.

The first attack on Darwin on 19 February 1942 had focussed primarily on the harbour. In the twenty minutes that it took to complete that first attack, around 150 bombs were dropped onto the ships and wharfs.[277] The primary aim of those first attacks was to take out those places which the Japanese felt the Allied forces could launch their counter-offensive from. There were also a number of oil tanks at Stokes Hill which the Japanese had hoped to destroy in order to limit refuelling options. Although that part of the operation achieved limited success on 19 February 1942, the damage wrought in the harbour area realized Japanese aims. With attention focussed on the destruction caused at Darwin, the Japanese were able to commence an assault on Timor the next day, without the risk of counterattacks being launched. The bombings had damaged or sunk twenty-six of the sixty-four ships that were in the harbour that morning.[278] While some ships were able to be repaired and re-floated, there still remained eleven ships at the bottom of the harbour. These included the *USS Peary*, *SS Mauna Loa*, *USAT Meigs*, *HMAT Zealandia*, *MV Neptuna* and *MV British Motorist*. Some of the ships were considered to be hazardous to the shipping movements within the harbour area since some protruded from the water at low tide while others lay in inconvenient positions. The *MV Neptuna*, in particular, was a major hazard. When the Japanese attacked, she had been moored at the Stokes Hill Wharf, unloading her cargo. As the attack began, there was nowhere for her to go and so when she received a direct hit, she sunk in that spot, still attached to the wharf (see Fig. 8).

It was clear, even before the end of the Second World War, that the harbour would need to be cleared of its war debris for normal life to resume. As early as 1943, newspapers such as *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate* were reporting that local salvage was being carried out on some of the wrecks. These local salvage

[277] Lewis, Dr Tom, and Ingman, Peter *Carrier Attack Darwin 1942: The Complete Guide to Australia's Own Pearl Harbour*, (Kent Town: Avonmore Books, 2013), p.286.
[278] *Ibid.*, pp.275-277.

attempts were, however, more about retrieving items that might have been on board the ships rather than the actual ships themselves. Even this was not without controversy as local salvage teams faced issues of Custom's taxes for items they salvaged. Local diver Carl Atkinson undertook salvage on the *USAT Meigs* but when he was told he would have to pay heavy taxes on the items he recovered, he promptly returned them to the bottom of the harbour.[279] The full salvage of the wrecks themselves was put out to tender as early as 1947 but, after multiple tendering processes for the salvage work, it was found that Australian based companies simply did not have the facilities or technology to undertake such a large salvage operation.[280] The size of some of the ships, as well as the tidal variations in the harbour would be challenging for any salvage company, and Australian dive experts were few and far between. One source notes that:

> Divers would descend into the water to cut and blast the scrap metal into large sections using dynamite and underwater gas torches. The skills of these professional divers were often intergenerational and their craft was greatly respected by Darwin locals. But it was dangerous work and one diver died during the salvage operation.[281]

David Steinberg further notes that the Commonwealth Salvage Board, founded in 1942, had not been able to raise the wrecks during the time that they 'remained viable vessels' which meant that the outsourcing of the salvage operations became inevitable.[282]

[279] *The Argus,* Saturday 9 July 1949, p.6.
[280] Steinberg, David 'Raising the War: Japanese salvage divers and allied shipwrecks in post-war Darwin' *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology*, 2009, 33, p.12.
[281] The Fujita salvage operation Resources Package 15/05/2019, (Northern Territory Library: Darwin), p.5.
[282] *Ibid.,* p.13.

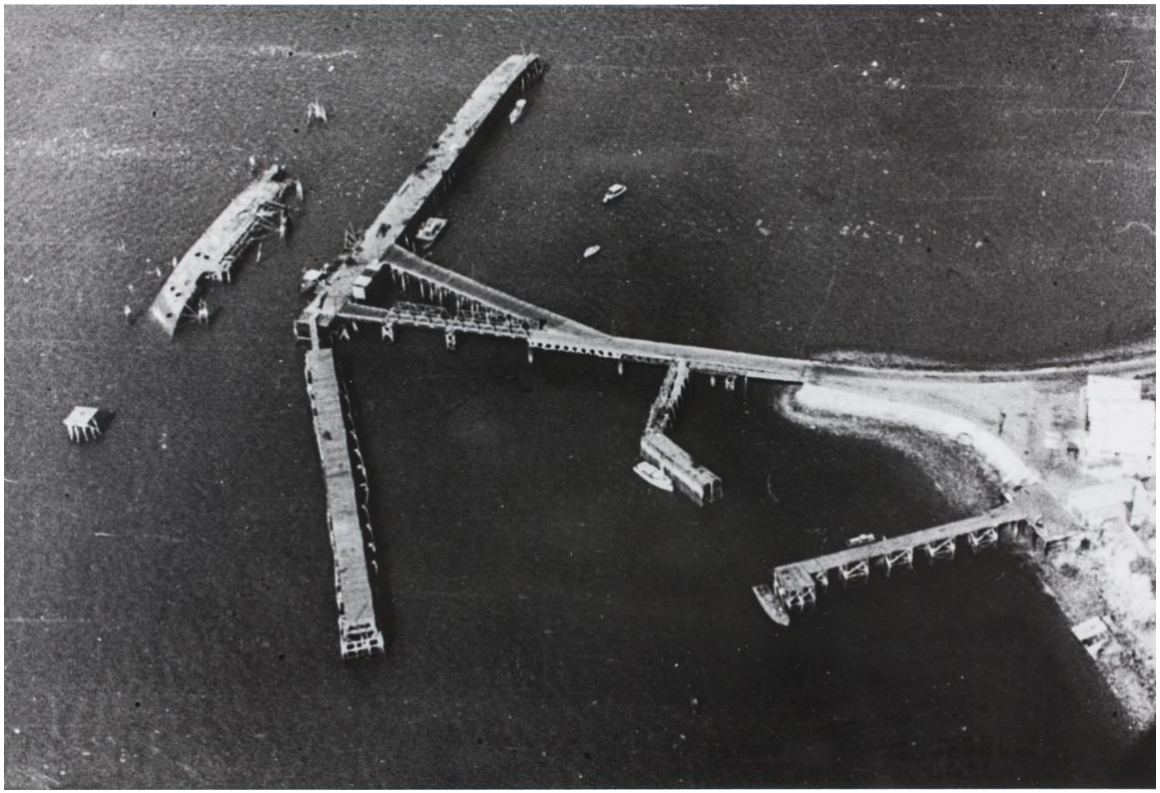

Figure 8. Aerial view of Stokes Hill wharf area - shows Neptuna lying on side near wharf; flying boat base on north side of wharf.[283]

[283] Library & Archives NT. Litchfield, Jessie, 1883-1956 (1946). Stokes Hill wharf. Christa Roderick Collection, PH0110/0479. https://hdl.handle.net/10070/308720, accessed 12 March 2023.

The Japanese Return to Darwin Harbour

The proposal to use a Japanese company to salvage the wrecks in Darwin Harbour came at an important time for Australian-Japanese relations, as well as the wider relations between Australia and Asia. The Fujita Salvage Company, trading as Nanyo Boeki Kaisha Ltd., first appear in government files in 1954. A Sydney-based company who owned some of the wrecks in Darwin Harbour appealed to the Minister for Territories to be allowed to employ a Japanese company to salvage the vessels in the harbour. Although the Department of Territories were keen to see the removal of the wrecks, they were concerned about the political implications this might have in relation to immigration. The White Australia Policy was fervidly adhered to and the move towards relaxation of the regulations did not come until the very late 1950s and early 1960s. T.H.E. Heyes, the Secretary to the Minister for Immigration (and an ardent supporter of the White Australia Policy) noted in a memo to the Minister, Harold Holt, that 'there may, however, be political considerations connected with this case which you wish to take into account.'[284] The files indicate that the Minister for Immigration took the request to Cabinet on 12 February 1954 and the Cabinet minutes of that day noted 'cabinet disapproved the use of Japanese salvage teams in Darwin harbour.'[285]

Correspondence continued over the next couple of years and in 1956, a request was made for a group of Japanese salvage experts to be allowed to examine the wrecks in Darwin Harbour. This same group were already in the process of surveying the harbour at Rabaul in Papua New Guinea, which at the time was under Australian Government control. The request noted that such a salvage operation if approved would bring great economic benefit to Australia. Given that the nation was suffering from an economic depression at the time, a request that had the potential to alleviate the financial problems that faced the country was seen as an attractive

[284] Heyes to Holt, 5 February 1954, National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA], A6980/S250368.
[285] Cabinet Decision No. 929, 12 February 1954, NAA, A6980/S250368.

proposition. Consequently, by July 1956 the Department of Territories, after thorough discussions with the Departments of Immigration and of External Affairs and the Administrator at Darwin, the government approved the group to survey the wrecks. They were very clear to state that the approval was for survey only and any salvage requests would be considered at a later time. The Administrator communicated his views to Heyes who noted that 'the view is held by the administrator that the salvage work concerned is long overdue and it is essential, in view of the expanding shipping situation in the port and the further increased use of berthage which will follow the opening of a new wharf, that this risk should be removed with as little delay as possible.'[286] The Administrator had also noted to Heyes that pearling operatives from Japan had been 'introduced without resurgence of racial animosity' in the early 1950s and that he felt certain 'that public opinion [would] tend to the view that these salvage teams [would] be performing an essential service.'[287]

By the end of August 1956, the survey had been completed and it was determined that the wrecks were readily salvageable. C. R. Lambert, the secretary to the Department of Territories, communicated to the Administrator of the Northern Territory that they should make clear to the company any conditions that applied to their stay from the start. Although the use of the Japanese had been approved, there was clearly still some anxiety about having them physically within Australian borders. In September of that year, the views of both the Departments of Defence and Navy as well as the Department of Health were sought in order to consider the request of allowing the Japanese to salvage the wrecks in Darwin. The Department of Navy were very supportive of the suggested salvage operation and provided no objection to the request. Indeed, they informed the Department of Immigration that 'some of the wrecks constitute navigational hazards and advantage would derive from their

[286] Heyes to Holt, 12 July 1956, NAA, A6980/S250368.
[287] *Ibid.*

removal.'[288] Some members of parliament had suggested that allowing the Japanese into Darwin Harbour could pose a threat to national security, but the Navy disagreed. Additional correspondence between Carl Atkinson, the local salvage expert and the Northern Territory Chief Immigration Officer, Mr Liveris, pointed out that the residents of Darwin would not object to such an operation being approved on the basis that there had been 'no objection to the fact that more than EIGHTY Japanese and Ryukuan operatives have been based in Darwin for almost a year with the local pearling industry.'[289]

The Department of Customs and Excise was where the most objections were raised. The objections were not so much about the use of Japanese operatives to undertake the salvage but about the export permits and profits resulting from any salvaged materials. Correspondence relating to this particular matter went back and forth between the Departments throughout the period of the salvage operations. A change of Administrator in July 1956 led to differing opinions to the previous incumbent that were not as favourable towards the Japanese. On 22 October 1956 the new Administrator, J.C. Archer, informed the secretary at the Department of Territories that the 'proposed salvage project […] is fraught with administrative difficulties and very real social problems, and that very little, if any, economic benefit will accrue to the Northern Territory or the Commonwealth as a result of it.'[290] In November of 1956 the Department of Trade raised issues over salvage rights and export profits as well. The letters in the file give the impression that the decision was being passed around between departments because, although they could see the benefits to having the operation completed, no department wanted to take ultimate responsibility for making the decision. Heyes even suggested to the newly appointed Minister for Immigration that he might be seen as responsible for allowing the

[288] T.J Hawkins to Heyes, 23 October 1956, NAA, A6980/S250368.
[289] Atkinson to Liveris, 19 October 1956, A6980/S250368.
[290] J.C Archer to Lambert, 22 October 1956, NAA, A6980/S250368.

Japanese into Darwin Harbour and questioned whether he was ready for such a controversy to be landed at the door of his department. Alick Downer, who was Minister for Immigration from March 1958, was clearly rattled by this suggestion and replied to Heyes asking him whether there were any other companies who might wish to undertake the work in Darwin, noting that it was 'a time when wise men would wish to avoid escapable controversies.'[291]

A federal election in November 1958 interrupted discussions and meant that these political wranglings continued until February 1959 when permission was finally granted for visas to be issued to the Japanese operatives. Despite visas being approved, there were strict conditions under which they would be issued. The Department of Immigration suggested that security checks should make sure that:

a) No operative undertook a prominent role in the recent war with allies
b) No operative constitutes a security risk
c) No operative took part in operations against Northern Australia during the war

The Department of External Affairs suggested in March 1959 that they were of the view that 'because of the lapse of time since the war and the now improved and friendly relations between Australia and Japan, it would not be advisable to apply this [last] provision.'[292] In addition, there was concern about how they could practically administer the checks required for the last check in the embassy in Japan. The Minister for Immigration agreed to this suggestion in April 1959.

By 23 July 1959, all the Japanese operatives had arrived in Darwin and were living on their fleet in the Harbour (see Figs. 9 and 10). The arrival of the Japanese in Darwin seemingly passed off with little event. Newspapers at the time acknowledged their arrival but said little else on the subject. This lack of comment perhaps demonstrates that by the end of the 1950s, Australia was beginning to accept that

[291] Downer to Heyes, 18 September 1958, NAA, A6980/S250368.
[292] Sir James Plimsoll to Mr McGuinness, 23 March 1959, NAA, A6980/S250368.

Japan was going to become part of their everyday life once more – at least in the north if not in the south.

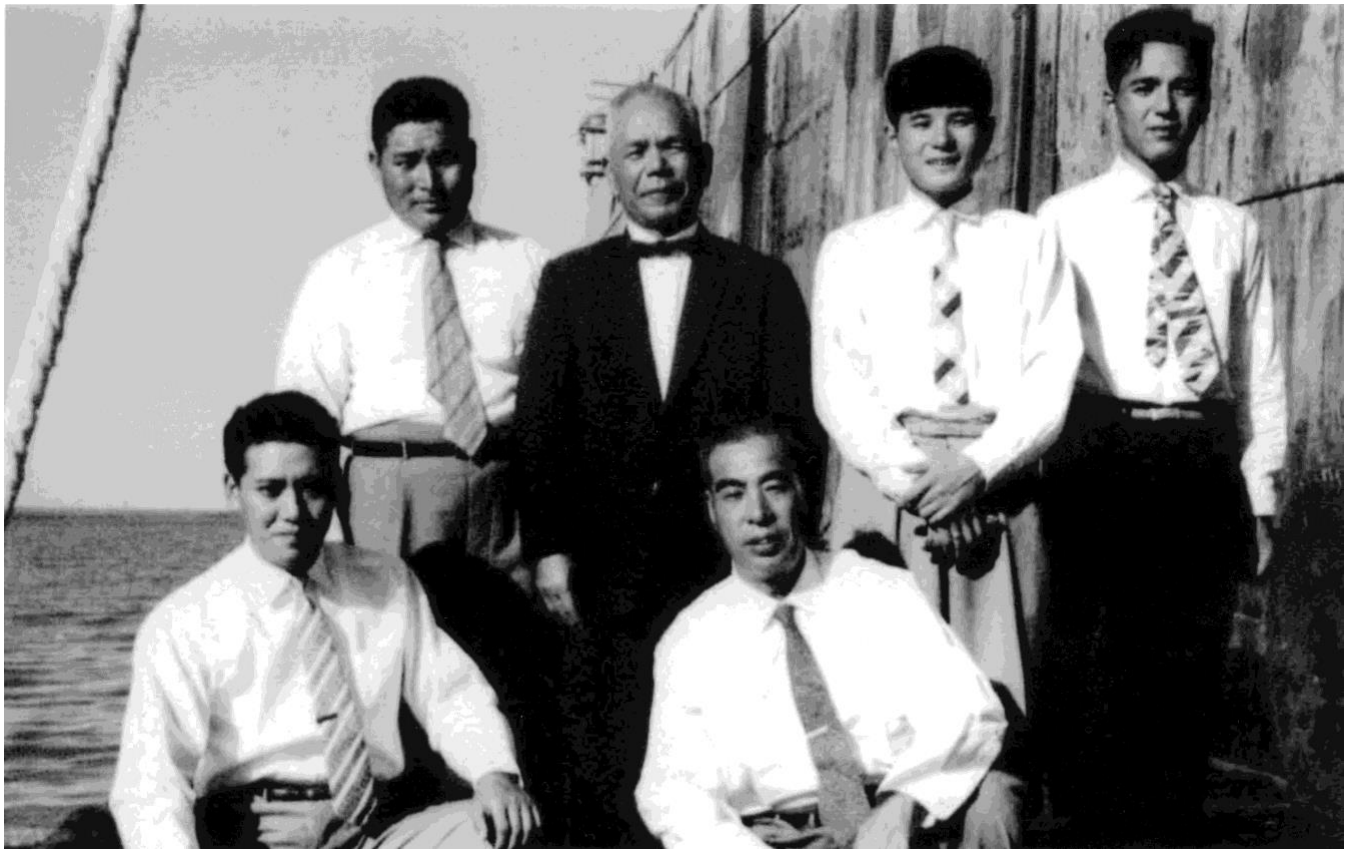

Figure 9. Mr. R. Fujita, President and staff of Japanese Salvage Company.[293]

[293] Library & Archives NT. Fujita Salvage Company (1960). Mr. R. Fujita, President and staff. Senichiro Fujita Collection, PH0874/0017. https://hdl.handle.net/10070/641779, accessed 12 March 2023.

Figure 10. Fujita Salvage Company crew New Years Day 1961[294]

[294] Library & Archives NT. Fujita Salvage Company (1961). Fujita Salvage Company crew. Senichiro Fujita Collection, PH0874/0136. https://hdl.handle.net/10070/641619, accessed 12 March 2023.

The issue was not at an end with the arrival of the Japanese in Darwin; the Darwin Migration Officer was kept extremely busy, reporting every movement of the Japanese to the Department of Immigration. Those who left Darwin and those who joined the fleet as replacements were all documented. Officials still appeared to be nervous about the decision they had made to allow the Japanese into Australia.

Relations between the Australians and the Japanese regained a level of complexity when the Fujita Salvage Company won the tender to break up the old rolling-stock of Commonwealth Railways. This was a major issue for the Department of Immigration. The strict rules around the granting of permission for Darwin Harbour had meant that the Japanese were only permitted to live on their fleet in the harbour and not on land. To break up the rolling-stock, twenty operatives would be required to move to an inland site. An article in the *Northern Territory News* on 23 February 1960 expressed the concern of the people of Darwin that the Japanese workers were now going to be allowed to work on the mainland. In less than twenty years since the threat of a Japanese invasion had seemed like a very real possibility in the minds of northern Australians, the Japanese were now not only being welcomed onto terra firma – having previously been restricted to the harbour – but were also being paid to remove items that had become redundant following a war in which they had been the enemy. It is interesting to note that objections were not specifically related to the war – in fact the articles mentions that people '[…] did not object to the Japanese coming here to take away the ships they sank during the war.'[295] The main issues were related to fairness of competition within the trade industries of Northern Australia. This is perhaps not surprising given that Australia had been experiencing difficult economic times. Seeing a large-scale contract awarded to an overseas company caused much anguish amongst locals at a time of high unemployment.

[295] *Northern Territory News*, 23 February 1960, NAA, A6980/S250368.

The article was sent to the Department of Immigration, causing great unease in Canberra. Once again, the question of allowing the Japanese to undertake work in Australia was being passed between departments, except this time the work would be undertaken on land and some distance from Darwin. The request was eventually approved, and, like the first request, strict conditions were enforced. These included using European workers in the first instance, only employing Japanese workers if no others could be found and their employment regulations also had to meet those of the Northern Australia Workers Union (NAWU).

The disgruntlement of people in Darwin continued apace through 1960. On 23 May, the Federal Minister for the Northern Territory, J. N. Nelson, wrote to the Minister for Immigration stating that the Australian Labor Party (ALP) had made a complaint regarding the employment of Japanese outside of Darwin, stating that it was contrary to the original permit and therefore quite possibly illegal.[296] Downer replied on 7 June 1960 assuring Nelson that full consideration and examination of the issues was given and the necessary departments had been consulted before permission was granted. Canberra was not going to be caught out on legalities.

The Fujita Salvage Company continued to bid for contracts across Australia that were connected with the dismantling of wartime vestiges. This included the salvage rights for ships based in Sydney, with a plan to tow them to Darwin and then disassemble them for scrap metal. These additional contracts caused much consternation in Darwin, with some critics going as far as to say that the Fujita Company were undoing the relation-building that had been achieved whilst they worked in Darwin Harbour. An article in the *Northern Territory News* on 11 November 1960 noted that the 'Fujita Salvage Company won considerable respect here and did a great deal to patch up old sores.'[297] It was understood that they had been the most qualified to carry out work on the wrecks in Darwin Harbour but tendering for land-

[296] Nelson to Downer, 23 May 1960, NAA, A6980/S250368.
[297] Northern Territory News, p.12, 11 November 1960, NAA, A6980/S250368.

based contracts was seen as disrespectful. Heyes notes in a letter in January 1961 that 'there are emotional and sentimental aspects which could cause adverse public reaction, for although the war is long over, to have former units of the Royal Australian Navy broken up in Darwin by our former enemies could cause an outcry from ex-service organisations.'[298] The memory of events in 1942 was still prevalent for many of the population of Darwin. Although the government seemed to note the emotional impact such an agreement could cause, in many ways they seemed more concerned about the issues that they could face directly in agreeing to such contracts.

The Japanese salvage workers finally left Darwin on 27 July 1961, just under two years since they had first arrived. On the eve of their departure the Administrator of the day, Roger Nott, wrote to Mr Fujita praising him and his workers for the tasks they had carried out in the Northern Territory. He concluded his letter by saying the following:

> Most of all you are to be congratulated upon the conduct of your men, coming as they did to a place of recent war between our two nations. I believe that their diligence and skill at work, and their good behaviour and friendliness ashore, and your own example of cooperation and goodwill have done much to create good relations. Indeed, my Assistant Administrator, Mr. R. Marsh, who has been in close touch with your work throughout has informed me that he has not heard of any instance to the contrary.[299]

Commemoration in Darwin during 1955-1965

As has already been noted earlier in the chapter, the presence of the Japanese in Darwin was not without controversy. But how did this affect the commemoration ceremonies that took place during that time? In the early days after the war, relatively small numbers turned out on 19 February for commemoration events each year. Bruce Scates notes that 'ostentatious displays of commemoration were shunned in the immediate aftermath of the war […]'[300] S.X. Allan meanwhile notes in an article

[298] Heyes, January 1961, NAA, A6980/S250369.
[299] Nott to Fujita, July 1961, NTL-MS52-1_6.
[300] Scates, Bruce *Anzac Journeys: Returning to the Battlefield of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.259.

for the *Centralian Advocate* in 1948 – the sixth anniversary of the bombings of Darwin – that 'Darwin folk are rather prosaic about it now.'[301] That is to say, the people of Darwin had come to accept that they had to commemorate the 19 February each year and they just got on with it. No fuss, no histrionics, just prayerful commemoration through church services.

In these early days of commemoration, it appears that the memories and events were still at the local level and were not linked to any sense of national remembrance. This is not uncommon in many areas across the international spectrum. Bombing raids in places such as Coventry, Hull, Plymouth and Norwich here in the UK are marked within the local communities but not necessarily linked to the national commemorations of the Second World War.[302] In Darwin, the wharfies gathered to remember colleagues who had been caught up in the raids; those in the GPO paused to remember their fallen employees and the Americans assembled to recall those who perished on board the *USS Peary*. It was the lost individuals that were the focus. The population might have come together collectively at church services, but they still largely focussed on the local impact of the events. It was not the display of collective memory on a national level that we see surrounding modern day events. The memories were still fresh in the mind, and the pain outweighed the need to focus on the wider story across the nation. The church often becomes a focal point at times of mourning and of commemoration, and in Darwin it was able to bring the sense of solemnity and reflection that the events of parades and large-scale commemoration ceremonies can often miss.

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[301] 'Darwin – Six Years After!' *Centralian Advocate* (Alice Springs, NT: 1947-1954) 20 February 1948, p.1, accessed 1 November 2015 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article59650881>.

[302] The linkage of events such as these to the national scene is not always necessary. They form an important part of local affairs and remembrance, but are not vital to the national discourse. Examples of this include *The Half Life of the Blitz* exhibition at Hull History Centre in 2024. This story made It to the Hull & East Yorkshire branch of the BBC website and was featured on Look North, but was not covered national. Similarly in Norwich, the story of their World War Two bomb map being restored was featured heavily in the local news in 2014, but did not have much impact on the national scene. Reviewing the literature on Darwin and the Second World War attacks, we see significant coverage through the NT News over a sustained period of time, as well as multiple articles in the *Journal of Northern Territory History,* latterly known as *Northern Territory Historical Studies: A Journal of History, Heritage and Archaeology.*

Scates notes in *Anzac Journeys: Returning to the Battlefields of World War II* that another influencing factor on commemoration was the distance from Darwin to the Adelaide River, the site where most of the victims of the bombings were buried.[303] Adelaide River is approximately 80 kilometres from Darwin and was the first muster point following evacuation in the immediate aftermath of the attacks on 19 February. In those early years after the war had ended, the journey to visit the graves of loved ones on the anniversary would have been a long and difficult journey. If relatives were to visit the graves in Adelaide River, then it was unlikely that they would be able to attend the commemoration events based in Darwin as well.

The Cenotaph[304] became a focal point for commemoration ceremonies in Darwin itself. It had been erected in 1921 as a memorial to those who had served in the First World War. Nowadays, it serves as a commemorative site for 'servicemen and women who have served in conflicts in which Australia has been involved.'[305] In 1952, the *Northern Standard* published a number of articles relating to the commemoration ceremonies on 19 February. In one article, a visiting Englishman described the service at the Cenotaph as one of 'simple dignity.'[306] The Minister for Territories, although not present on the day, sent a message to the people of Darwin that was read out by the Administrator. A separate article in the paper noted that Jock Nelson, the MP for the Northern Territory had debated in Canberra the possibility of 19 February becoming a National Day of Remembrance of the events in Darwin. The article stated that 'Mr Nelson deplored the fact that the day usually goes unnoticed in the South.'[307]

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[303] Scates, Bruce *Anzac Journeys: Returning to the Battlefield of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.258.
[304] Cenotaph comes from Greek and translates as empty tomb. A cenotaph is erected to honour those who have died and whose remains are buried elsewhere. Cenotaphs have become especially associated with the First and Second World Wars where thousands of soldiers were not repatriated to their home country.
[305] 'Darwin Cenotaph' accessed 2 January 2016 <www.monumnetaustralia.org.au/themes/conflicts/multiple/display/80128-darwin-cenotaph>.
[306] 'Blitz Victims Remembered' *Northern Standard* (Darwin, NT: 1921-1955) 22 February 1952, p.1, accessed 5 January 2016.
[307] 'National Day Urged' *Northern Standard,* ibid.

By 1954, numbers attending the ceremony at the Cenotaph in Darwin on 19 February had reached 250. For a town with a population of just over 8,000 this seems remarkably small. By comparison, the Anzac Day Parade on 25 April of the same year attracted many more people, including over 100 veterans as well as military, civic and civilian personnel. The *Northern Standard* reported that 'Anzac Day celebrations in Darwin this year have been claimed by officials […] to have been the most successful and colourful ever held in the Territory.'[308] This difference in size could be explained by the large number of military personnel who were stationed in Darwin. These would have boosted the numbers of the 1954 census, but they would not necessarily have been people who had been in Darwin at the time of the bombings or who knew people who had been involved at the time. Military postings to Darwin were generally for two years at a time and could be extended to four years in some circumstances. The majority of people simply did not want to stay in Darwin that long as they found it a hostile and uncivilised climate in which to live.[309]

Anzac Day was however a nationally recognised commemoration of Australia's military sacrifice. Therefore, military personnel were heavily involved in parades and services wherever they were posted. Anzac Day could be seen to have become an all-encompassing commemorative day, where those remembered are no longer just those that fought in the First World War, but those that fought in all wars – similarity perhaps to the British Armistice Day in November each year. The second reason that could explain such small numbers for the events in February is the fact that a number of people never returned to Darwin. In the aftermath of the first bombings, the town was placed under military control and remained that way until February 1946. People had been evacuated south to Melbourne and Adelaide in 1942

[308] 'Darwin Anzac Day Success' *Northern Standard* (Darwin, NT: 1921-1955), 29 April 1954, p.8, accessed 14 February 2016.
[309] Interview with T Sheldrake, resident of Darwin 1971-2011, 6 September 2015.

and some felt that it was just too painful to return north, so they began new lives down south.

1955 was a controversial year, and one that certainly did little to support Jock Nelson's wish for a national day to be established. In March of that year, the Minister for Territories – Paul Hasluck – said in a speech at the opening of the Northern Territory Legislative Council buildings that the 19 February was 'a day of national shame […] Australians ran away because they did not know what else to do.'[310] Such a statement from the Minister who was in charge of the Territories did nothing to support the way in which the event was commemorated. What makes this statement worse is that Hasluck spoke these words whilst unveiling a plaque in memory of those who were killed at the Post Office during the bombing raids on 19 February. The Post Office suffered some of the most severe losses amongst the civilian community, receiving a direct hit with a bomb that killed nine workers who were on duty at the time. It is interesting to note Hasluck's use of the word Australians when he refers to the national shame. He could have chosen a word that reflected the more Territorian or Darwinian nature of the event, but he chose a uniting word that reflected a shared responsibility. It could be said – and indeed has been – that a number of Australians were not aware of what had occurred in Darwin. Yet in this statement, Hasluck was beginning to highlight the notion that this event touched the nation as a whole, however shameful or brave it might have been.

There was however, one significant commemoration event that was heavily influenced by the presence of the Japanese in Darwin and is the story that opened this chapter. In 1960, Darwin opened the Uniting War Memorial Church on the site of the former US military barracks. The church was designed to be a lasting memorial to those who had lost their lives on 19 February 1942. Attending the opening ceremony was the Japanese Ambassador to Australia Katsushiro Narita, and his wife,

[310] 'Darwin's Day of Shame' *The Canberra Times* (ACT: 1926-1995) 26 March 1955, p.2, accessed 5 January 2016.

Mrs Narita as well as the Japanese attaché, Mr Hamamoto.[311] Also in attendance at this event was Mr Ryugo Fujita of the Fujita Salvage Company. To outsiders it might have seemed strange that such a large Japanese presence was invited to this event. Yet through this event, one of the strongest symbols of reconciliation was being formed. Ryugo Fujita had, during his time in Darwin, made a significant effort to engage with the citizens of Darwin and to make amends for the atrocities of the Japanese during the war. It was a quality that he also tried to instil on the crew who were working on the salvage. Fujita frequently invited Darwinians onto the *MV British Motorist* to find out more about the work that was going on and to share in meals with the crew (see Fig. 11). Over the period that they were based in the harbour, visitors also included Dame Pattie Menzies, wife of the Prime Minister, and Viscount Dunrossil, Governor General of Australia.

[311] 'Canberra Diary' *The Canberra Times* (ACT: 1926-1995) 20 July 1960, p.5, accessed 2 November 2015 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article137118984>.

Figure 11. Visitors have a meal onboard Japanese fleet vessel[312]

[312] Library & Archives NT. Fujita Salvage Company (1961). Visitors. Senichiro Fujita Collection, PH0874/0135. https://hdl.handle.net/10070/641626, accessed 12 March 2023.

Fujita forged a strong friendship with one of the local policemen who also happened to be involved in the church. Fujita had a strong Christian background, being a member of the United Church in Kyoto, and believed that he needed to atone in some way for the events of the Second World War.[313] His first act of atonement was to take on the salvage job as a way of helping the Port of Darwin to regain its full potential. In addition, he also wanted to leave a lasting message of peace in Darwin. Thus, was born the idea of the crosses and using metal that had been salvaged from the wreck of the *MV Zealandia.* Mr Fujita crafted a total of seventy-seven crosses that were to be placed in the church. One big cross was placed at the front of the church while the others were embedded in each of the pew ends. These remain today as a reminder of the events that happened as well as a sign of the peace that now exists. The Fujita family link with the Darwin Memorial Uniting Church has continued in the years since the 1960s and most recently, in 2017, a reconciliation garden was developed in the church grounds, noting all the ships that were salvaged by the company. The Fujita family also sent back to Darwin the propeller blade from the *USAT Meigs* which had previously acted as a tombstone marker for Ryuko Fujita in Kyoto. This now sits outside the front of the church in Darwin.

Reconciliation is a powerful part of the commemoration process. In the aftermath of such life-changing events as the bombing of a town or city, feelings of hatred towards the perpetrators will often run high. The involvement of groups like the Anglican Church, who preach messages of peace, hope and forgiveness can – over time – help those affected to move towards a more positive viewpoint of the descendants of those who inflicted the pain. The creation of the Church in Darwin was an outward symbol of the role that the Church played in this. While this apology was not going to undo the events of the past, it was a symbol of reconciliation and

[313] 'Celebrating Acts of Peace and Reconciliation', *Darwin Memorial Uniting Church,* August 2014, accessed 31 October 2015 < http://www.ns.uca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Brochure-Fujita-Peace-and-Reconciliation-Project-February-2015.pdf>.

unity. It was the symbolic nature of reconciliation that Mr Fujita hoped to achieve in the United War Memorial Church in Darwin.

This chapter has demonstrated that although the return of Japanese citizens to Darwin was not a decision that was taken lightly or without controversy, their eventual presence did not cause undue distress on the commemoration ceremonies at the time. The situation became the foundation from which Japanese citizens were reintegrated into daily Australian life. Whilst pearl divers had already started returning to northern waters, the dealings with the Fujita company were the first that had cut across such a wide spectrum of government departments. The use of a Japanese company to raise the wrecks also assisted in laying to rest some of the preconceived images of the Japanese as the 'Yellow Peril'. There was a recognition that holding onto this image was not constructive, and in order to move forward and build new links, a change of viewpoint was required. The inclusion of the Japanese in the service at the United War Memorial Church demonstrates an acceptance of the need to move forward and not dwell on past events.

In many ways, the 1950s were perhaps still too close in time for people to want to commemorate the events in anything other than a modest and honourable manner and although Fujita had helped to move relations forward, it would still be many years before official Japanese representatives would be allowed to come together again and mark the events of 19 February 1942. Indeed, it was only in November 2018 that Shinzo Abe became the first Japanese leader to visit since the attacks occurred. Whilst in Darwin, he laid a wreath at the war memorial to honour all those who died. A veteran present on that day noted that it was amazing how far the two countries had come in the last seventy years. In a joint statement released on the day, Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Morrison noted that 'the two leaders acknowledged the loss and sacrifices of World War II and their determination to work tirelessly to ensure a peaceful future for the region. They highlighted the immense progress made since the war, the speed and sincerity of reconciliation between the

two countries and the development of deep trust, reflected in the Special Strategic Partnership the two countries share today.'[314]

The visit also demonstrated the new role that Darwin was now playing on the national scene. No longer is the north forgotten and seen as a barren land; now it is celebrated for its natural wealth and for its strategic importance within Pacific relationships. Nonetheless, it took a long time for this to become the case and as we shall discover in the next chapter however, it was 1967 – the twenty-fifth anniversary of the bombings – before a formal organisation to commemorate the bombings of Darwin came into being. That organisation was the Darwin Commemoration Association, and its main objective was 'to commemorate an important historical event in the chronology of Australia; namely, the first belligerent act of warfare taken by a foreign power against the mainland of Australia.'[315]

[314] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 'Joint Press Statement: Visit to Darwin by Japanese Prime Minister Abe', 16 November 2018, < https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000420402.pdf>, accessed 12 March 2023.
[315] 'Darwin Commemoration Association: Constitution', 1968, AWM PR04552 1/8.

Chapter Four: Darwin and the Wind of Change

Through the previous chapter the research has demonstrated the disconnect between north and south Australia when it came to policymaking related to the Northern Territory. This disconnect left residents and policymakers in the North feeling that they did not fit with the rest of Australia and that it did not have a place in the Federal system. This notion was perhaps a continuation of the feelings of resentment which developed around the so-called Brisbane Line controversy and the belief that the North could simply be abandoned in the face of the enemy. Residents and those associated with the Territory were steadfast in their resolve to ensure the North's contribution to the Second World War was not forgotten. Achieving this was not without its challenges, however, and the extent to which the events of February 1942 had been restricted from public knowledge, meant that their place within the national discourse was problematic. Government documents relating to the Bombing of Darwin and associated action in the north of Australia were stamped with 'not to be released until 1995', which resulted in fifty years of restricted knowledge and research. As we have already read, Paul Hasluck referred to the aftermath of the attacks as a day of national shame – hardly something that would help Territorians to feel part of the wider narrative. Whilst the previous chapter ended at the beginning of the early 1960s, this chapter will link the continuing evolution around the idea of Anzac and how this was reflected in Australia's approach to war commemoration, the cultural shifts at both national and international level during the 1960s and 1970s through to the late 1980s, and how they were affected by not only the commemoration of war, but the reactions to the Vietnam War that took place during this time. Building on the ideas already explored around the commemoration of war in Australia and the importance it plays in the nation's image, this chapter will then examine how stories that sit outside of this narrative were incorporated into the public discourse. It will explore the endeavours during that period of one particular organisation, the Darwin

Commemoration Association, to redress the balance of Darwin's history in the national discourse of the Second World War, as well the challenges posed by the ever-decreasing numbers of veterans who originally served.

Australia and the Anzac Spirit

For many Australians, the whole idea of what it meant to be Australian was initially forged on the battlefields of the First World War – most notably for Australia at Gallipoli and the Somme – and was referred to as the 'Anzac Spirit'. This notion of 'Anzac Spirit' subsumed much of the first half of the twentieth century, as Australia sought to define itself as an independent nation away from Britain. Anzac represented something about fortitude, courage and bravery, of battling against adversity and of sticking together with your comrades. Charles Bean, in his book *Anzac to Amiens,* states that 'Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat.'[316] Ken Inglis' work in the 1960s very much links Bean's idea of Anzac and Anzac spirit to the notion of manhood within Australia, suggesting that the conditions of life in Australia had benefited them when it came to the battlefield.[317] Inglis was particularly interested in Anzac as being a form of civil religion that was instrumental in shaping Australian identity, but was equally clear that the Anzac spirit was not simply resigned to the battlefields – it was something that unified the nation, but could equally be shaped by political and cultural influences. In modern times, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) have described the representation of Anzac as:

> A stereotypical image of the Anzac soldier […] from the Gallipoli Campaign:
> - He was tough, inventive and loyal to his mates and to officers who had proven themselves, but sometimes undisciplined when not fighting.

[316] Bean, C.E.W *Anzac to Amiens,* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1946), p.181. C.E.W Bean was an official war correspondent based with the AIF in Gallipoli and the Western Front. He later became official historian for the First World War as well as a founding force of the Australian War Memorial. In many ways he is seen as the founding father of the image of the Anzac Spirit.
[317] Inglis, Ken 'The Anzac Tradition', *Meanjin Quarterly,* (24:1, 1965), pp.25-44.

- He was chivalrous, gallant, a good fighter but not a good parade-ground soldier.
- He was brave, able to endure discomfort with a grin, casual about dangers, accepting of the possible consequences of combat, good-natured, humorous, irreverent towards officers who insisted on military discipline.
- He thought himself better than the soldiers of most other nations and considered himself to be democratic and egalitarian.[318]

Whilst the DVA's description could be argued to be propagandist and central to sustaining some of the narrower views around Anzac, it is, alongside views of organisations such as the RSL, nonetheless one of the cornerstones of how Anzac and the Anzac Spirit have been portrayed within the discourse of the nation.

Joan Beaumont explains this representation as being forged in the 'supposedly, […] egalitarian and classless nature of Australia, and the dominance of a rural (bush) ethos in pre-war society, had made its men intuitively resourceful, self-directed, and able to show initiative, to challenge authority and to ignore senseless orders'[319] Whilst this image had its foundations in pre-federation conflicts, its dominance grew out of the events in Gallipoli in particular, later coming to represent something more than just these events. It became a way of demonstrating the strength and resourcefulness of the Australian male, validating that the wilds of Australia created strong and gallant soldiers. This approach linked desirably to the already established bush tradition that had made up much of Australia's identity to that point. The bush tradition is a somewhat idealised image of life in the Australian outback and the values associated with that, taking the life of mateship amongst pastoral workers as its focus, who worked together against the elements to achieve their aims.

This view is supported by historians such as Bill Gammage, who writes that even before the dawn of Anzac 'the idea that bushmen had the natural ability to

[318] 'The Anzac Legend – Anzac Portal', <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/personnel/anzac-legend#0>, accessed 22 January 2023.
[319] Beaumont, Joan 'The Second World War in Every Respect: Australian memory and the Second World War', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies,* 14: 1, 2011.

become good soldiers was popular in 1890s Australia.'[320] He goes on to comment that 'from bush life men got strong and active physiques, great skills with horses, and well-developed qualities of self-reliance, resource, initiative, endurance and determination. The bushman was a natural soldier because, it was believed, his work in the bush and racial inheritance made him so.'[321] These images played well into the image of Anzac – indeed the iconic first and last scenes from Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* transition from Archy running in the Western Australian outback at the start of the film, to the final scene where he is seen recounting the same words and running across no-man's land at Gallipoli, linking the bush and Anzac together as one. Those who were by definition not seen to be an Anzac (be it women, children, the elderly, the conscientious objector) were deemed not to have the same level of patriotism and manliness as their Anzac counterparts.[322]

Marilyn Lake writes that 'the achievement of Australian manhood was proclaimed to be nothing less than the achievement of nationhood.'[323] It became the way in which many male Australians wanted to identify, allowing them to finally set themselves aside as different to their British ancestors. C.E.W. Bean (seen by many as the creator of Anzac with his work *The Anzac Book)* observed in his diary that 'this wild pastoral life of Australia, if it makes rather wild men, makes superb soldiers', whilst of the Englishman he wrote 'they lacked the resourcefulness required for any activity in open country.'[324] Both World Wars and subsequent conflicts have all been

[320] Gammage, Bill 'The Crucible: The Establishment of the Anzac Tradition, 1899-1918' in McKernan, M and Browne, M (eds.) *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1988), p.150. Russell Ward has also written much around the Australian bushman, whose qualities are very much reflected in the Anzac solider. Writings include *The Australian Legend* (1958) which drew on his previous works of *Bush and Backwoods* (1959) and *Moving Frontiers* (1947). *The Australian Legend* was written at a time when the events of the Second World War were still reasonably fresh in people's minds.
[321] Gammage, Bill *ibid.,* p.150.
[322] Dwyer, Bryan 'Place and Masculinity in the Anzac Legend'*, Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 1997, p.226.
[323] Lake, Marilyn 'The Power of Anzac' in Mckernan, M and Browne, M (eds.) *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1988), p.195.
[324] Fewster, Kevin *Gallipoli Correspondent: the Frontline Diary of C.E.W. Bean'* in Dwyer, Bryan 'Place and Masculinity in the Anzac Legend', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature,* 1997, p.226.

subsumed by notions of Anzac and its associated spirit. Veterans who served in Darwin would argue that they demonstrated many, if not all, of the attributes mentioned above, yet, for many years, they were not to be recognised in the same way as many of their counterparts from other theatres of the Second World War.

The notion of events in Darwin not fitting with the Anzac narrative was not new to the veterans. Ideas that did not fit with the notion of the Anzac Spirit have been an issue from the creation of this narrative in 1915-16.[325] Extensive research by David Kent revealed that C.E.W. Bean omitted significant numbers of contributions from soldiers because they did not fit with the notion of Anzac that he wanted to create. Kent argues that 'Bean's portrayal of the Anzac reflected his predilection for hero-worship and his anxiety to salvage something from grotesque failure.'[326] Kent therefore argues that the whole legend of Anzac has been constructed on an edited basis, with only the more palatable parts being presented to the nation. It was however Bean's book that cemented the legend of Anzac into the narrative of Australia and set it as an image against which all other actions, especially military actions, would be judged.[327] This made it extremely hard for those whose experiences did not match this ideology, both in the First World War and in later conflicts to gain the same recognition as their Anzac forebears.

In more recent times, academic historians have explored a variety of topics on the periphery of the Anzac narrative, with the aim of redressing the balance and honouring those stories which are less accepted. Already in the introduction of this

[325] In her chapter 'The Power of Anzac' written as part of the collection *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace,* Marilyn Lake explores the issues that were faced by repatriated soldiers during the First World War. She outlines episodes of riots and violence and behaviour generally unbecoming of the Anzac Spirit, that were commonplace on the streets of Sydney and Melbourne. Yet these stories tend to be overlooked in the wider Anzac discourse, with the national image focusing on the brave and heroic acts that had been carried out by their soldiers. Bruce Scates' MOOC *World War I in One Hundred Stories* which was launched in 2015 was another example of telling the Anzac story from all points of view, with a particular focus on those who did not fit with the wider discourse that is known to many.

[326] Kent, David 'Bean's 'Anzac' and the Making of the Anzac Legend', *Kunapipi* (18:2, 1996), p.27.

[327] Indeed, Beaumont argues that Bean has had somewhat of a stranglehold on the image of Anzac and the history of the First World War, which has meant few have felt able to challenge it in any substantial way. See Beaumont 'Anzac Day to VP Day: arguments and interpretations.'

thesis, the work of Alistair Thomson, and the idea of composure, was referenced in relation as to how veterans from the First World War shaped their memories to fit with the more widely understood narrative. In more recent times, Bruce Scates and his team at Monash University have undertaken a significant piece of work around the physical and psychological impact of the First World War. Through their work *World War One: A History in 100 Stories,* the team have explored the stories of one hundred men and women with 'narratives designed to capture the true cost of war to our community.'[328] The book details the stories of the men who were both physically and psychologically scarred on their return to Australia and the impact this had on their families. Many of these stories have far from happy endings, with suicide being a significant factor in the premature deaths of many soldiers of the time. In the introduction, Scates notes that when presenting the stories to the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board in Canberra, they were asked to remove one of the stories, because it went too far. Was there really a need to be brutally honest?[329] Scates and his team decided there was, and the story of Frank Wilkinson remained in the book.[330] The book also sought to capture other lost narratives – those of Indigenous soldiers who had been largely overlooked in the histories of the First World War, the stories of parents who lost their sons, and the stories of wives and children who paid a heavy price when the war was over. These were not necessarily comfortable stories for Australia to hear, but as the introduction states, 'the Centenary is a time to gauge the cost of war for our entire community, and we believe that far from building a nation, the great war tore us apart.'[331]

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[328] Scates, Bruce, Wheatley, Rebecca and James, Laura (eds.) *World War One: A History in 100 Stories,* (Penguin Books Australia, 2015).
[329] Scates et al., *ibid.*
[330] Scates et al., *ibid.,* Frank Wilkinson's story is a tragic one. Although he returned from the Western Front in 1919 as a decorated soldier, he was mentally scarred. Like many others, he took up a portion of land that was offered to returning veterans with the hope of running a farmstead. Unfortunately, this failed and with Frank suffering from debt and depression, he took his own life and the lives of his wife and four-year-old daughter in a brutal attack. They too became victims of war.
[331] Scates et al., *Ibid.* Also writing about the legacies of Anzac and how war commemoration moves on over time are Crotty, Martin and Larsson, Marina (eds.) *Anzac Legacies: Australians and the Aftermath of War,* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010) and Wellings, Ben and Sumartojo, Shanti

Scates and his team are not the only academics to explore the more challenging side of war. Peter Stanley explored the darker aspects of the Australian Imperial Force in his book *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and the Australian Imperial Force.* In his introduction, Stanley highlights that:

> hundreds of books have been written about the "good" – the most distinguished battalions, the best commanders, the most outstanding men from a force acknowledged as being among the most effective of the war…hardly anything has been published about the AIF's dark side – how war made men into criminals; how men let themselves and their mates down by going absent or wounding themselves.[332]

Stanley points out that he is not the first to explore the topic of discipline within the AIF, highlighting Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years* and Ross McMullin's *Pompey Elliot* as works that have tackled facets of this subject area.

In relation to the Second World War, much has been done in recent years to tell the stories of the prisoners of war. Christina Twomey's *The Battle Within: POWs in Post-War Australia* follows a similar format to that of Scates, by tracking the stories of Australian prisoners of war as they were released and highlighting how they struggled to reintegrate into normal life, as well as seek recognition from Australia.[333] The images of the men who were released from camps such as Changi did not fit with the idea of the Anzac soldier that had gained such status in the preceding years. The men were therefore reluctant to share their stories, often filled with horror, with their families or indeed the nation. The power of survivor testimony has been key to lifting

(eds.) *Commemorating Race and Empire in the First World War Centenary,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018). Crotty and Larsson collection explores the difficulties faced by returning soldiers and how these legacies last long beyond the conflict itself. Wellings and Sumartojo's collection explores the wider global impact of war through the lens of race and empire, analysing whether these two areas were commemorated or forgotten as part of the process. In Das,Santanu (ed.) *Race, Empire and First Worl War Writing,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), Peter Stanley argues in that despite the significant re-evaluation that has taken place in the modern era, race and empire had, at the point of writing, not been examined in any great depth.

[332] Stanley, Peter *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and The Australian Imperial Force,* (Miller's Point: Murdoch Books Australia, 2010), p.v.

[333] Twomey, Christina *The Battle Within: POWs in Post-War Australia,* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018).

the lid on some of the more distant or uncomfortable narratives of Australia's wartime background.[334]

The story of Darwin, albeit many would argue having a much smaller impact, fits in with the idea of uncomfortableness and lacking a sense of the Anzac spirit, in that it could be seen to display examples of cowardice, lack of discipline and lack of mateship which guided previous Anzacs to stick together. Why would the nation want to commemorate an event that did not demonstrate the Anzac Spirit? In order for the idea of Anzac to be incorporated a wider sphere of narratives from across Australia's war history however, some serious changes would be required within the re-imagining of the concept of Anzac.

The Wind of Change

The period from the 1960s and 1970s was one of significant change in the local, national and international spheres. Political and ideological viewpoints were changing during this period, and nations were looking to a new and hopefully brighter future – this was certainly the case for Darwin. Granted city status in 1959, local government officials in Darwin were keen to persevere with post-war developments. Throughout the 1960s, an ambitious programme of building works included a new post office (the original having been destroyed by the Japanese), new banks, new schools, a new power station, a new airport, new administration offices, a new cathedral and a new civic centre.[335] Much of this was to replace or repair sites that had been destroyed

[334] Beaumont, Joan, Grant, Lachlan and Pegram, Aaron (eds.) *Beyond Surrender: Australian Prisoners of War in the Twentieth Century,* (South Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2015) explores the experiences of POWs from a diverse range of conflicts, seeking to incorporate these one-time peripheral stories in the wider discourse of conflict during the twentieth century. Grant also has a chapter on this topic – Grant, Lachlan 'Monument and ceremony: The Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial and the Anzac legend', in Blackburn, Kevin and Hack, Karl (eds.) *Forgotten Captives in Japanese Occupied Asia,* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 41-56.

[335] Douglas Lockwood discusses the redevelopment of Darwin in his book *The Front Door: Darwin, 1869-1969,* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1969), pp. 261-266, detailing an unprecedented building boom as the key to Darwin's development during that time.

during the war, but there was also a sense of growth and development that had not previously been seen.

In 1963, the Commonwealth Film Unit produced a film for the Department of the Interior called *Darwin: The Friendly City*. The film was part of the Australian Diary series which was designed to demonstrate everyday life across Australia. The aim of the Darwin film was to show ordinary Australian citizens that life in the Tropics was, and could be, largely the same as life in other parts of the nation. Emphasis in the film was made to the substantial programme of building works, as well as to portraying the average family life. The outdoor life was celebrated, with multiple sports being shown throughout the film, as well as demonstrating the numerous places that local Darwinites could go for an evening or weekend picnic. It was hoped that this film, and others like it would attract families to want to move to and settle in the North. The film also normalised the notion of multiculturalism, with one quote from the film stating that 'informality and friendliness are typical of Darwin, and so is the mixture of races in its citizens'; whilst another quote stated that 'tolerance is a tradition here and the colour of your skin is a matter of supreme indifference to everyone.'[336] Darwin was being depicted as the doorway to Australia for both tourists and immigrants, demonstrating that this young cosmopolitan city was up-and-coming. This was seen as a significant shift in Australia's previously conservative approach to the north.

The second half of the twentieth century however also saw significant shifts in the world at large. Society was coming to terms with not only post-war society following the Second World War, but also post-colonial society and the continued move away from the motherland to which Australia had so long been tied. India had paved the way for many of the former colonies to seek independence and by the end of the 1960s, most African colonies had gained their independence with large parts of the Caribbean following in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

[336] Rogers, Jack (dir.), *Darwin: A Friendly City,* (Commonwealth Film Unit, Australia: 1963).

On the home front, both Australia and Britain were witnessing momentous changes in their political outlooks during the 1960s. In Britain, Winston Churchill had finished his second term as Prime Minister in 1955, although he continued as Member for Woodford until 15 October 1964. Whilst he maintained a presence in parliament during this time, his capacity for challenge and debate was much reduced from his former days of power.[337] In Australia, Robert Menzies came to the end of his second stint as Prime Minister in February 1966, choosing to resign both the Prime Ministership and his role as Member for Kooyong.[338] Both men could aptly be described as proudly ardent royalists and certainly held with traditionally conservative views during their tenures. With a change of guard in the leadership of both countries, so began the process of change and development of the respective governments and society more generally, which mapped onto the global shifts in society's attitudes.

In Australia, Harold Holt took over from Menzies and was instrumental in moves to relax the stringent immigration policies that had preceded in the first half of the century.[339] Meanwhile in Britain, after a turbulent couple of years under Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan became Prime Minister in 1957 and advanced the process of decolonisation across the British Empire. Indeed, it was Macmillan's 1960 speech in Cape Town that, whilst referring to the sea change in Africa, became linked with the groundswell of revolution across the world. Whilst addressing the South African Parliament, Macmillan stated that 'the wind of change is blowing through this continent, and, whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take

[337] Many books have been written about Winston Churchill over the years, but significant biographical works on his life include Gilbert, Martin *Churchill: A Life,* (New York: Holt Paperback, 1992) and Roberts, Andrew *Churchill: Walking with Destiny,* (London: Penguin, 2019).
[338] Likewise, several books have been written about the lifetime of Robert Menzies and his time in power. Significant works on this topic include Martin, A. W. *Robert Menzies: A Life: Volume Two 1944-1978,* (South Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1993 and 1999) and Hazelhurst, Cameron *Menzies Observed,* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1979).
[339] Bongiorno, Frank *Dreamers and Schemers: A political history of Australia,* (Collingwood, Victoria: La Trobe University Press, 2022), p. 256. Chapter Seven of Bongiorno's book explores the period 1966-1982 and offers further insight into this period of change.

account of it.'[340] The break-up of the Empire was a significant shift during the post war era, and for Australia, the loss of links with the motherland served as a trigger for Australia to redefine its outlook – no longer was there a 'traditional sense of mutual identification between the two countries.'[341]

Bill Schwarz notes that fear had been a dominant feeling throughout Australian history and holding onto British roots had maintained a sense of the familiar.[342] Although Harold Holt began the national shift to embracing Australian-ness and the relaxation of British traditions, his untimely death in December 1967 meant that it fell to others to move this forward. Stuart Ward opines that Australia went through a 'crisis of national self-definition that occasioned the collapse of Australia's self-styled Britishness – a problem that set Australia apart from the "post-colonial" experiences of the Asian and African empire.'[343] Australia had to re-orientate its political and cultural networks and during the 1960s, a new national culture began to develop.[344]

Menzies' successors recognised the need for change in a post-war era that Menzies himself had been reluctant to embrace. The late 1960s saw a relaxation and steady dismantling of the White Australia Policy that had governed the immigration laws of the newly federated nation since 1901, as well as guiding the approach that the government took towards Aboriginal Australians in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1967, Harold Holt's government brought forward a referendum vote in relation to the Constitution of Australia.

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[340] Macmillan, Harold 'Address to both Houses of the Parliament of the Union of South Africa', Cape Town, South Africa, 3 February 1960.
[341] Ward, Stuart '"Post-Imperial" Australia: Introduction', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* (51:1, 2005), p.1.
[342] Schwarz, Bill *Memories of Empire, Volume 1: The White Man's World,* (Oxford University Press: 2011), pp.119-120.
[343] Ward, Stuart, *ibid.,* p.1.
[344] For changing perceptions on the British see works such as Hassam, Andrew 'From Heroes to Whingers: Changing Attitudes to British Migrants, 1947-1977', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* (51:1, 2005), pp.79-93. Frank Bongiorno's *Dreamers and Schemers* is also useful in assessing the change during this period, and particular offers analysis on the shift of government away from Menzies anglophile persona to the stark contrast of John Gorton's more larrakin-based image.

The referendum comprised of two questions – the first relating to the size of the House of Representatives, and the second relating to an amendment that would change the language of the Constitution in relation to Aboriginal people, and to allow them to be counted in the reckoning of the population. It would also allow the Federal government to introduce laws specifically for Indigenous Australians that would recognise their place in the nation. The referendum was an overwhelming success in relation to the second question, and this was the first time Aboriginal Australians were formally recognised as part of the Australian population. This was particularly important for the people of the Northern Territory who had the largest population of Aboriginal people in the country.

The Administrator for the Northern Territory during the majority of the 1960s, Roger Dean, was particularly influential in advising government ministers in Canberra on Aboriginal matters. Dean had begun his association with Aboriginal communities during his tenure as Chair of the Select Committee in Canberra that looked at the grievances of the Yolgnu people from the Yirrkala mission.[345] Once he took over as Administrator, he travelled extensively in the Territory and built up many contacts within the Indigenous communities. It was these connections that saw his period as Administrator lauded as one that broke down barriers and led to progress within the Territory, as well as Australia more generally. It is interesting to note that Anzac Day was one of the few areas where indigenous people were included within national structures prior to the referendum. Indigenous soldiers, whilst often excluded from many areas of society, were often invited to march alongside their counterparts on Anzac Day – recognising their contribution to previous conflicts. This was particularly

[345] The Yolgnu people were one of the first indigenous communities to petition against the granting of mining rights by the government to private companies. They presented documentation to the government in 1963 that aimed to demonstrate that they were the traditional and rightful owners of the land. Although their land bid was not successful, they did bring about the realisation that indigenous communities needed to be included in discussions over land rights, particularly when it came to mining rights. The advocating of Indigenous rights in Canberra reflects on the wider point of their inclusion in Australian discourse in general, and in the context of this thesis, in their inclusion within the process of commemoration.

important in the north, where many indigenous people had volunteered during the Second World War to work alongside the army using their knowledge of the land to support military detachments.

In addition to the changes around Aboriginal policy, the shift towards a more multicultural approach to Australian policies was also underway. With the Labor Party taking power in 1972 under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, multicultural policies were implemented in a way that had not been possible under the previous Liberal governments. As Stuart Macintrye notes, 'the Whitlam government recast nationhood to remove official discrimination against non-British migrants and prohibit all forms of discriminatory treatment on the basis of race and ethnicity.'[346] Cities in the north were already far more multicultural in their make-up than most of the southern cities. In part, this was due to the close proximity to South-East Asia and the Pacific Islands, making them much more practical in terms of trading opportunities.[347] In addition, a number of the occupations that were common in the north such as pearling and gold mining, were more suited to those from the Pacific region. Lyn Riddett opines that 'attitudes within the community [Darwin] have shifted in response to events *in* the north, and in Southeast Asia, and have not always been governed or influenced by official policies developed in the south (Canberra).'[348]

Yet throughout all these shifts in opinion and outlook that were taking place across the globe, in Australia the idea of the Anzac Spirit remained strong even in the face of these modernising challenges; but that is not to say that it escaped completely unscathed. The strength of feeling around the Vietnam War had a wide-ranging effect on society as a whole. One area in which this was particularly noticeable was that of

[346] Macintyre, Stuart *A Concise History of Australia: Third Edition,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.238.
[347] During the period 1914-1975, Australia was intrinsically linked to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea in the Pacific region. In 1920, Australia formally took on administration of New Guinea under a League of Nations mandate. This transferred to a United Nations Trust Territory from 1946 onwards, and from 1949, Papua and New Guinea were formally linked. Darwin was frequently used as a key landing and departing point for those who were travelling to the Territories.
[348] Riddett, Lyn 'The Gateway and the Gatekeepers: An Examination of Darwin's Relationship with Asia and Asians, 1942-1993', *Journal of Australian Studies* (19:46, 1995), p.57.

wartime commemoration ceremonies such as Anzac Day and the commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin. Alan Powell notes that 'in the late years of the Vietnam conflict, anti-war activism in Australia had reached a high pitch: Anzac Day ceremonial attendance suffered and for the same reasons, it seems, so did attendance at the bombing of Darwin commemorations.'[349] This is a national view that is echoed by Beaumont who notes that 'as the protest movement against the war and the use of selective conscription to provide manpower polarized Australian society, attendances at Anzac Day ceremonies declined.'[350]

Newspaper records of the time show that Anzac Day parades became key targets for the protest movements during the late 1960s and early 1970s. As early as 1965, Anzac Day was being questioned in the public domain. The *Sydney Morning Herald* put together a discussion panel comprising of both First and Second World War veterans, a headteacher at a girl's school and an undergraduate student. Understandably, the panel had a variety of views on the subject, but they did conclude that the message of sacrifice was lost on the younger generation of Australians. They did not see the purpose of sacrifice for, and in, foreign countries for conflicts that were seemingly not their own. They also viewed Anzac Day as being too militaristic for a national identity.[351] Anzac Day was viewed historically as being governed or guarded by the Returned and Services League (RSL).[352] The perception (that was not unfounded) was that the RSL had conservative views about how commemoration

[349] Powell, Alan 'The Air Raids on Darwin, 19 February 1942: Image and Reality' in Dean, Peter J. (ed) *Australia 1942: In the Shadows of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.149.
[350] Beaumont, Joan 'The Second World War in Every Respect: Australian memory and the Second World War', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* (14:1, 2011), pp.6-7.
[351] 'Can Anzac Day Survive? Fifty Years after Gallipoli a Panel Debates', *Sydney Morning Herald, 17* April 1965 in Macleod, Jenny, 'The Fall and Rise of Anzac Day: 1965 and 1990 Compared,' *War & Society*, (20:1, 2002), pp.149-168.
[352] The Returned and Services League is the modern-day name for the RSL and was adopted in 1990 as a way of acknowledging those servicemen who had served in the Northern Territory during the Second World War. Previously, they had not been classed as "returned" and therefore were excluded from RSL membership. The RSL has had four names in total since its inception. It started in 1916 as the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA), changed in 1940 to become the Returned Sailors' Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA) before changing again in 1965 to become the Returned Services League of Australia (RSL) and gaining its current name in 1990.

should be undertaken and who should be allowed to participate in ceremonies. In addition, the Catholic Church also had quite restrictive guidelines around worshipping outside of the church, and also worshipping alongside non-Catholics.[353] With both the RSL and the Catholic Church being viewed as conservative and exclusionary in their approach to Anzac Day, it was no wonder that the children of First and Second World War veterans felt disenfranchised by the whole concept of war commemoration.

These feelings were not exclusive to Anzac Day, but the importance placed on Anzac within the Australian narrative meant that it experienced most of the controversy and anti-war sentiment. In April 1969, *The Canberra Times* reported protests at the Anzac Day parades in numerous locations that were made by anti-Vietnam campaigners.[354] These protests included vandalising war memorials in Perth, Fremantle and Newcastle; leafleting those at memorial services in Perth and students trying to lay wreaths to the Vietcong at the Brisbane Anzac memorial. Protests were not just outward physical actions – they also came in the form of written articles. In 1969, Alex Carey wrote in the *Tharunka* that 'Vietnam is certainly an offence against whatever deserves respect (and it is a great deal) in the "Anzac" tradition of the two World Wars.' He also noted that 'while Anzacs of earlier wars march in Sydney the Anzacs of today are compelled to degrade their traditions by the folly and cynicism of our political leaders.'[355]

Feelings were still running high in July 1971, with *The Canberra Times* running an article noting that an anti-Vietnam War march planned in Adelaide 'will be planned with as much precision as an Anzac Parade, and is likely to match Anzac numbers, between 10,000 and 15,000.'[356] The government was not unaware of the challenges

[353] Scully, Matt and Robinson, Rachael (prods.) *The Many Days of Anzac* (2022), Australia: Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
[354] 'Anzac Day – mainly solemn, but gay as well', *The Canberra Times,* (ACT : 1926 – 1995), 26 April 1969, p.3. Accessed 26 April 2019, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107090692>.
[355] 'Vietnam and the Anzac Tradition', *Tharunka* (Kensington, NSW : 1953 – 2010), 22 April 1969, p.7, accessed 26 April 2019, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article230417304>.
[356] 'SA's largest protest march', *The Canberra Times* (ACT: 1926-1995), 10 July 1971, p.12, accessed 26 April 2019, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110666907>.

and the questions that the protestors posed. In 1972 John Gorton, Prime Minister of Australia, used an Anzac Day speech to challenge those who questioned Australia's role in conflicts such as Vietnam.[357] At a ceremony in Concord, New South Wales (home of one of the largest repatriation hospitals in Australia) Gorton stated:

> You may say that experts tell us that there's no major threat to Australia in sight in the next few years. 'Why then' they ask 'Do we spend so much money on defence, why do we call-up some of our young men?'. 'Why are soldiers and sailors and airmen in Malaysia and Singapore?' The answer is simple; because we must be prepared. We have to demonstrate to all, that like the Anzacs, we are ready to stand with them, and if necessary, to fight with them. We have to remind a would-be aggressor that like the Anzacs we are ready to fight tooth and nail for freedom and the defence of our own country: It is better to prevent wars. The international bully will always think twice if he knows the other fellow big or small is in fighting trim and packs a pretty heavy punch.[358]

Australian leaders were acutely aware that, as an island nation, there were many potential threats to their security. The events of the Second World War had demonstrated how quickly an enemy could move through Asia and towards Australia, and the perceived threats posed by the communist movement felt very real to Australian leaders. Therefore, the importance of defence and security were of high priority.

Darwin and the Vietnam era

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, a large part of the idea of the Anzac Spirit came from the longer-standing idea that the ordinary Australian had from the very beginning been a fighter – fighting against adversity to gain independence. The story of the Bombing of Darwin chimed well with this concept of fighting against adversity – both at the time and in the years that followed – yet frustratingly for some, was not

[357] There are very few examples in the archives of Prime Ministers during this period addressing the protests in their speeches and statements. It may be that by avoiding commenting on the situations, they therefore were not giving credence to the actions of the protestors.
[358] 'Anzac Open Air Service – Concor NSW – 23 April 1972 – Speech by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon William McMahon CH MP', accessed 3 October 2023, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-2568>.

recognised on a national platform.[359] With the dawn of the Vietnam War, Australians were forced yet again to think about war, its role in their national identity and how previous experiences corresponded with the situation of the day. Jeffrey Grey stated that 'a nation's willingness to participate in war is predicated upon its population's perceptions of the national experience of previous conflicts.'[360] The Australian experience of the First World War had, as I have already discussed, established the basis of the national identity that Australia had been so desperate to carve out for itself. The Second World War had reinforced to Australia that their focus could no longer be the European theatre of war, but, rather, it had to be the Pacific theatre, which was on their doorstep. It is the importance of the Pacific theatre that led to Australia's participation in Vietnam.

The Vietnam War was the first significant conflict in which Australia participated independently from the British. Frank Frost describes it as 'the most significant commitment of Australian military forces overseas since World War II.'[361] Although independent from Britain, Australia was not completely standing on its own two feet – they were instead re-aligning their lot with America. The Australian government's commemoration website notes that 'Australia's contribution was small in comparison to America's but sufficient to show loyalty to the United States, Australia's most valued ally.'[362]

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[359] See Appendix One for recollections of veterans who served in Darwin. One of the themes that came through their recollections was the idea of fighting against adversity. This summary is drawn from two main sources – the book commissioned by the Darwin Commemoration Association, which now resides in the archives of the Australian War Memorial, and the University of New South Wales's *Australians at War Film Archive* – a set of interviews that were commissioned through the Department of Veterans' Affairs as part of the *Australians at War Centenary Federation Project* in 2000. Over 2000 interviews took place between 1999-2004 covering a diverse range of battlefronts and time periods and are all categorised accordingly. In respect of Darwin, one hundred and fifteen of these interviews pertain to action seen in Darwin.

[360] Grey, Jeffrey 'Vietnam, Anzac and the veteran' in Pierce, Peter, Jeffrey Grey and Jeff Doyle (eds.) *Vietnam Days: Australia and the impact of Vietnam* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1991), p.63.

[361] Frost, Frank 'Australia's war in Vietnam, 1962-1972' in King, Peter (ed.) *Australia's Vietnam: Australia in the Second Indo-China War* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p.57.

[362] 'Australia and the Vietnam War: Australia enters: 1962', <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/100721/20130921-0313/vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/vietnam-war/australia-enters-1962.html>, 21 September 2013, accessed 26 February 2018.

There had been a few questions around Australia's involvement in the Korean War, but nothing on the scale that would subsequently be seen with the Vietnam War. In the early days of the Vietnam War, objections were present but as the war progressed, these became more vocal and physical in nature. Large protests were held against the war and against national military conscription. The impact of the Tet Offensive in 1968 saw a groundswell of change as allied forces suffered heavy and seemingly unnecessary casualties. More and more troops were losing their lives and the public were struggling to see what benefit the involvement of Australian troops could bring. Grey argues that much of the opposition to, and perception of, the Vietnam War in Australia was influenced by the reaction within America who had a very active anti-war movement.[363] With the majority of the population ambivalent towards the war, it was not hard to garner support for the anti-war stance. In addition to this, media coverage of the conflict was more immediate and more vivid than in previous conflicts.

The effects of the use of chemical agents by the US against the Vietnamese in the latter part of the conflict was broadcast into people's front rooms in almost-live news coverage. Australians were horrified at what they were witnessing and took to the streets in protest. The Labor Party, who were in opposition for much of the war, campaigned specifically on an anti-war mandate, and successfully gained power in 1972. Some of their earliest priorities were to 'withdraw the last troops from Vietnam, end military conscription [and] establish diplomatic relations with China […]'.[364] Whilst this stance supported the ideals of the anti-war movement, it left veterans and returning soldiers feeling that they were returning to a country that was hostile towards them.[365] At the end of the war, the government of the day tried to distance themselves from the conflict and so its place in the national discourse became conflicted in itself.

[363] Grey, Jeffrey 'Vietnam, Anzac and the veteran' in Pierce, Peter, Jeffrey Grey and Jeff Doyle (eds.) *Vietnam Days: Australia and the impact of Vietnam* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1991), p.78.
[364] Macintyre, Stuart *A Concise History of Australia: Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.237.
[365] Grey, Jeffrey, *ibid.,* p.78.

How did these soldiers sit alongside their heroic Anzac forebears? Where did they fit into commemorations such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day? Their national 'Welcome Home' parade did not take place until 1987, which was over 10 years since the conflict ended and soldiers had returned to Australia. But where does Darwin fit into all of this?

Darwin's role in relation to Vietnam was created by one of proximity. As the closest Australian military base to the South China Sea, Darwin was ideally located from which supplies, as well as troops, could be shipped out. It was also the base to which wounded servicemen often first landed on their return home. In essence, Darwin had once again become a site of conflict. In the early stages of the war, most of the medical airlifts had to be completed in stages, with Darwin being the first stage in the Australian section of the airlift. Members of Parliament were also quick to draw parallels with the Second World War, noting similarities between the spread of Communism through Southeast Asia and the spread of the Japanese during the Second World War. Darwin had been in the sights of the Japanese, so what was to stop the Communist leaders from having similar thoughts? By this stage, the airbase at Darwin was of considerable size, and shared with American forces – the perfect target in many politicians' eyes.[366] Just as in 1942, Darwin was a central communication hub in the northern part of Australia and so had the potential to be neutralised.

Darwin also became the landing point for Vietnamese refugees in the latter stages of the war and after the fall of South Vietnam. Scores of people arrived, often by boat, trying to escape the horrors in their homeland. In May 1978, the *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* reported the mayor of Darwin as stating that the total number of

[366] The Foreign Relations of the United States papers shows evidence of meetings between Australia and the US where discussion of bases in South-East Asia. Considerable discussion was held around whether Darwin should replace Singapore as the base for F111s in the region, with a feeling that Australia was perhaps a safer option. See Foreign Relations of the United States,1964-1968, Vol. XXVII, Mainland South East Asia, Regional Affairs, Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OASD/ISA Files: FRC 70 A 6648, Australian 333, January 1966. Secret. Drafted on April 18 by McNaughton who also approved it.

boats to reach Darwin at that point was forty-one, with many of the boats carrying multiple families.[367] The people of Darwin were naturally concerned about the volume in which refugees were arriving and sought reassurances from the government around security and health and welfare. Journalists in the south viewed this as an unwelcoming reception. The leader of the Legislative Assembly was quick to set them straight on this matter noting that:

> it is all very well for the editor of *The Canberra Times*, securely located in an inland city well away from the arrival point of the refugees, to criticise the people of Darwin for seeking reassurances that effective precautions are being taken to safeguard the total Australian community against any threats [….] We in Darwin sometimes feel alone and isolated. The arrival of the refugees has at least had the effect of focussing attention on the Northern Territory and US position as the northern gateway to Australia and obtaining both necessary additional services and official reassurances.[368]

Commemorating Darwin in the Vietnam era: The Darwin Commemoration Association

As this chapter has already explored, the late 1960s were a period where Australia was being forced to consider the origins of its national identity and its association with war and conflict. War and conflict were no longer glorified in the way that they had been in the national discourse. Whilst the Anzac ideal had chosen to ignore, or gloss over, stories of defeat, the changing views of the new generation were challenging that ideal. At that same time, two ex-servicemen who had fought in the Darwin arena during the Second World War were considering how best they could ensure that the memory of events in Darwin were not forgotten by the march of time. George Collier and John Kent established the Darwin Commemoration Association (DCA) in 1967. In a notice to be circulated in newspapers and also amongst already existing military groups, former veterans from Darwin were invited not only to march and lay wreaths at the cenotaph in Sydney, but also to gather afterwards to meet and form new

[367] 'Darwin opposes refugees – mayor', *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* (Port Moresby: 1969-1981), 15 May 1978, p.6, accessed 26 April 2019, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article250334464>.
[368] 'Darwin's attitude to Vietnamese refugees', *The Canberra Times* (ACT: 1926-1995), 5 December 1977, p.2., accessed 26 April 2019 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110881204>.

friendships.[369] It was intended to link people together 'for the purposes of organising some special commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the first air raid.'[370] The timing of this event also coincided with the height of the Vietnam War. Although focussed on the anniversary year, the members were keen to ensure that they could establish an event which could be commemorated every year and invited people who were in Darwin during the war or interested in the events of the Second World War in the Northern Territory, to become members of the association. Their eventual hope was that 'what Anzac Day is to the Australian Forces that served overseas; Darwin Commemoration Day is to those personnel, both services and civilian who were present in Darwin on that memorable day in 1942.'[371] In addition to commemoration, the DCA were keen that their organisation should assist survivors and families who were present in Darwin during the first raids; that they could work with and support associations with similar interests to their own; and that they might, where finances permitted, make contributions to charities who supported those linked with the raids in Darwin.[372] There was hope that this would be one of many branches of the Association across all the states, although in the forty years of its existence, this part of the DCA's aim was never achieved. The Association was clear that in all its endeavours, it would seek to remain neutral. The final point of their constitution states that:

> The Association shall be wholly non-political and non-sectarian and nothing contained in the Constitution of the Association or its membership shall imply affiliation, in any manner, with any sect, creed or political party.[373]

In researching this thesis, I entered into correspondence with current-day members of the Darwin Defenders, some of whom are children and grand-children of the original defenders of 1942. One associate indicated that the original members all felt that what had happened in Darwin, not just on 19 February 1942 but also in the

[369] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Folder 1:1, p.4.
[370] *Ibid.,* p.4.
[371] *Ibid.,* p.6.
[372] *Ibid.,* p.8.
[373] *Ibid.,* p.20.

Second World War in general, had not been officially explained or correctly documented at the time they made this push to formalise commemoration. Their narratives of what happened greatly differed from the official histories, and they wanted their accounts to be made public for all to see. There was a feeling amongst the Defenders that the government of the time was embarrassed about what had occurred on 19 February 1942 and that it would show the country had not been properly prepared for an attack.[374] The censoring of events in Darwin sat counter to the approach that Australia had taken to previous war-time situations. This was the struggle that both the DCA, and latterly the Darwin Defenders, had on their hands – trying to show the nation that Darwin held just as much of the Anzac Spirit and ideals as any other conflict up to that point.

The DCA folded in 2007 due to dwindling numbers as a result of old age and the struggles faced by those continuing to try and organise commemorative events. The remaining members were transferred across to the Darwin Defenders 1942-45 Incorporated. Their aims and objectives were similar to those of the DCA, although the Darwin Defenders had a stronger focus on education, with the second aim of their constitution being 'that we do everything we can to reinstate the teaching of Australian history in our schools, so that those who come after us will understand that the preservation of our way of life and the heritage of our great country have not been achieved without sacrifice by those who have gone before us.'[375] This change in emphasis can perhaps be explained by the march of time from 1967 – when the DCA was first established – to 1995, when the Darwin Defenders were formed. Far fewer survivors were alive by 1995, and it was important for survivors to share information and experiences before it was too late. Correspondence with the Darwin Defenders Geelong branch suggests that the driving force for the formation of these associations

[374] Pleasance, Peter, Email to author, 29 March 2018.
[375] Ruwoldt, Rex *Darwin's Battle for Australia Volume 2* (Clifton Springs, Victoria: Darwin Defender's 1942-45 Incorporated, 2009), p.7.

was the need to ensure that the “truth” was told in regard to what actually happened in Darwin during the Second World War and their place in the security of Australia. Although the timing did perhaps not directly relate to the Vietnam War, there is a suggestion that the more general shift in national awareness of wartime events fuelled the desire of people like George Collier and John Kent to tell their stories, and this is something we will cover later in this chapter.

Records show that the DCA was based in Sydney and organised an annual commemoration ceremony at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney and a service of commemoration in Holy Trinity Garrison Church in Sydney (see Figs. 12 and 13). It could be argued that Sydney was an odd place to base an organisation that focussed on the commemoration of events in Darwin.

Figure 12. Martin Place Cenotaph, Sydney, NSW (photo by F. Gibbons)

Figure 13. Holy Trinity Garrison Church, Sydney, NSW (photo by F. Gibbons)

The reality is however, that this is perhaps more normal than it first appears. Many of those military personnel who were based in Darwin during the war did not originally come from there and so returned to their homes in the south once they had completed their service. One of those people was Rex Ruwoldt – an anti-aircraft gunner with the 19th Machine Gun Regiment and an active member of the Darwin Defenders organisation. Born in Murtoa, Victoria, Rex had joined the army in 1940. He completed his training down south and then was transferred to Darwin in mid-January 1942 and was present during the first attacks on 19 February 1942. Rex served in Darwin until 1944 when he was sent south to Caulfield and was then discharged from the army. In addition to those like Rex who served in the military, many of those who were evacuated from Darwin, both prior to and in the aftermath of those first attacks, were sent south to places like Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. Many of these people chose not to relocate back north after civilian control returned to Darwin, having established new lives down south. The commemoration ceremony and service were formal affairs, with the Prime Minister, State Premier and leaders of the national military organisations all on the invitation list to attend the ceremony, lay a wreath and then attend the dinner that followed.

An assessment of the papers from the Australian War Memorial Collection *Darwin Commemoration Association (1967-2007)* have highlighted the anxiety that the DCA held regarding the lack of knowledge that the average Australian had about events in Darwin during the Second World War. As well as discussing how they might contribute towards educational programmes and involving local schools and youth groups in the commemoration services, they were also concerned with the national understanding and recognition of events in Darwin and the Northern Territory. Their efforts to facilitate such a change however fell at a time when Australia was undergoing social and political transformation.

In the post-Vietnam War era, the shift of society's viewpoints on war continued to influence the way in which war-based events were commemorated. The Vietnam

War had reinforced in people's minds that war was far from the heroic, noble and victorious but rather demonstrated tragedy, sacrifice and a waste of lives. Anzac Day, as well as other commemorative events such as The Bombing of Darwin, continued to be a focal point for those who wished to protest against war and conflict. In part, this was because whilst commemorating a specific event, these days had started to morph into events that encompassed all returned soldiers, and thus all conflicts. Even as early as 1958, there was a sense among the younger generations that Anzac Day had become about meeting friends one had served with and getting drunk. This was portrayed in Alan Seymour's 1958 play *The One Day of The Year,* which was hugely criticised for daring to speak ill of the Anzac tradition. Indeed, it was banned from the Adelaide Festival of Arts and significant threats were made against both Seymour and the artists who dared to put on the show. This kind of attitude fuelled those who were keen to overturn the established values of war in Australian society. Ronald Conway wrote an editorial in *The Bulletin* in April 1980 that tried to analyse reasons why Anzac was, in his view, in decline. He came up with a few reasons as to why this might be happening, including changes in attitudes to war, disinclination to participate in patriotic rituals and the impact of recent wars.[376]

Other protest groups also linked into the anti-war movement challenged established views of society. In 1981, large protests took place in Canberra with feminist groups opposing violence and rape against women in wartime arenas. 1981 was also the year that Peter Weir released his blockbuster film, *Gallipoli.* The film has been seen by some as another significant turning point for the way in which Anzac was viewed. Writing ahead of the centenary anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, Dave Crewe wrote that 'Peter Weir's 1981 classic shifted our cultural conversation around ANZACs.'[377] The film helped to reframe in the minds of ordinary people that

[376] Conway, R 'Last Post for Anzac' in Haynes, J and Archibald, J.F. (eds.) *The Bulletin* (Sydney, 29 April 1980), p.55.
[377] Crewe, Dave *Gallipoli: Cheat Sheet,* https://www.sbs.com.au/whats-on/article/gallipoli-cheat-sheet/eh6yzx6ne, retrieved.9 June 2025. Crewe writes that Weir's film enjoyed a resurgence in the centenary year, with screenings being hosted around the country in theatres and cinemas.

Anzac was not just about those who marched and the bravery and heroism previously portrayed. It cemented the idea of tragedy and sacrifice within the Australian image of Anzac, showing that the cost of war was high, for both those on the front line and those left behind at home.[378] Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka echo this point, reflecting that the film *Gallipoli* 'identifies a responsibility to re-mythologise… it rejects the stale glory of the myth that these young men went knowingly to self-extinction on behalf of country, King and Empire.'[379] They also note that the film challenges the 'romantic discourse' that was established in the early days by people like C. E. W. Bean and Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett.[380] Brian McFarlane and Geoff Mayer observe that Weir's *Gallipoli* was critized for not taking a more anti-war stance, but as they point out, its success was in being 'a celebration of certain notions dear to the national psyche.'[381] They later on reflect that 'it is perhaps not too fanciful to read this…as a qualified rewriting of national mythology.'[382]

It is this new portrayal that has been argued in some areas to be the key turning point that led Australia to reimagine the ideal of Anzac. With a move away from the glorification of war, people began to feel more comfortable about commemorating the events of Gallipoli. There was finally a sense that the sacrifice of their forebears could be recognised. Bob Hawke, Prime Minister from 1983-1991, is regarded in many spheres to have grasped onto this renewed interest in Anzac Day

[378] Scully, Matt and Robinson, Rachael (prods.) *The Many Days of Anzac* (2022), Australia: Australian Broadcasting Corporation. This also ties to the works mentioned earlier in this chapter of Crotty and Larsson, and Scates, who focus on the cost of war to all Australians, not just the soldiers.
[379] Dermody, Susan and Jacka, Elizabeth *The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema,* (Paddington, Sydney: Currency Press, 1988), p.158. Other works that examine how Weir's film changed the way in which Anzac was viewed include Dobrez, Livio and Dobrez, Pat 'Old myths and new delusions: Peter Weir's Australia', *Kunapipi* (4:2, 1982), Bennett, James 'Interpreting Anzac and Gallipoli through a Century of Anglophone Screen Representations' in Collins, Felicity, Landman, Jane and Bye, Susan (eds.) *A Companion to Australian Cinema,* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), pp.205-227) and Freebury, Jane 'Screening Australia: *Gallipoli* – A Study of Nationalism on Film', *Media Information Australia,* (43:1, 1987), pp.5-8.
[380] Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett was an English war correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* and accompanied the Allied forces when they landed at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915. His was the first account of the landings to be published in Australian newspapers before Bean's.
[381] McFarlane, Brian and Meyer, Geoff (eds.) *New Australian Cinema: Sources and Parallels in American and British Film,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1992), p. 196. These views are also echoed in McFarlane's entry on *Gallipoli* in Murray, Scott (ed.) *Australian Film 1978-1994: A Survey of Theatrical Features'* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 74.
[382] *Ibid.,* p.196.

Commemoration and moved it into a more political sphere than previously. Hawke was the first Prime Minister to attend a service on the Gallipoli peninsula in 1990. Alongside him were fifty-eight veterans who had served in the campaign. His speech on that day recognised the change in mood that had beset Australia:

> For us, no place on earth more grimly symbolises the waste and futility of war this scene of carnage in a campaign which failed. It is not in the waste of war that Australians find the meaning of Gallipoli then or now. I say 'then or now' for a profound reason. For the meaning of the ANZAC tradition, forged in the fires of Gallipoli, must be learned anew, from generation to generation.[383]

Hawke also recognised through his speech the need for the Anzac tradition to change and develop through each new generation. Not all Prime Ministers viewed Gallipoli as the turning point for national identity. In the early 1990s the Prime Minister of the time, Paul Keating, made a concerted effort to refocus the minds of Australia from Anzac and Gallipoli in the First World War to Kokoda and action in the Pacific during the Second World War.[384] It was seen by some as part of his policies to promote engagement on all levels with Asia. Keating's attempt to move the nation's view on Anzac was met with significant resistance. Anzac veterans were outraged at Keating's attempts to reform ideas around Anzac and its meaning. Not only was it seen as trying to remove the original Anzacs from Australia's story, it also failed to recognise the conflict that actually made it to home soil, choosing to focus on other areas of battle in the Pacific.

In the post-Vietnam era, recognition of service was a significant issue for veterans. As already noted, it was not until 1987 that an official Welcome Home

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[383] Hawke, Bob 'Speech at Lone Pine Ceremony, Gallipoli – 25 April 1990', *Transcripts from the Prime Ministers of Australia – Transcript 8010,* <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-8010>, accessed 4 October 2023.

[384] Historians such as Liz Reed and James Curran have written extensively on the idea of refocussing minds away from Gallipoli, with Reed publishing *Bigger Than Gallipoli: War, History and Memory in Australia* in 2004, which sought to highlight how the *Australia Remembers* programme of 1995 attempted to reshape ways in which Australia's Second World War History was told. James Curran's articles on the reshaping of Australian identity include Curran, J. 'Australia Should Be There': Expo '67 and the Search for a New National Image. *Australian Historical Studies*, (39:1, 2008), 72-90 and Curran, J. The "Thin Dividing Line": Prime Ministers and the Problem of Australian Nationalism, 1972-1996. *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, (48:4, 2002), 469-486.

parade was held in Sydney. This was more than ten years after active service ended in Vietnam and did not go unnoticed by veterans. Vietnam soldiers were the first to return to Australia in a society where a large proportion of people no longer recognised veterans as the noble warriors of Anzac.[385] Lack of recognition was not a new issue with Vietnam – it had occurred throughout all previous conflicts in some way. This included lack of recognition for female and indigenous participants, lack of recognition for those who experienced PTSD and lack of recognition for those whose experience differed from the accepted norm. This was something that the veterans of Darwin were also familiar with and in 1993, the DCA took specific action in respect of this when the government established the Committee of Inquiry into Defence and Defence-related Awards.

The DCA recognised the importance of providing a submission to the committee in relation to Darwin. The Committee had announced that they would welcome 'submissions from interested parties regarding the non-recognition of service in certain areas.'[386] The Association submitted a case that requested the 1939-45 Star should be awarded to those who had served in the Northern Territory. The submission also suggested that the committee consider the possibility of awarding the Pacific Star as well. The Committee received many submissions relating to a number of awards and its final report acknowledged these ideas. In respect of Darwin, the Committee recommended that:

> the area of the Northern Territory north of latitude 14°30'S should be considered an operational area for purposes of the 1939-45 Star, for the period 19 February 1942 to 12 November 1943 [the period of the Japanese bombing] and that the Government examine whether there exists authority in Australia to issue the 1939-45 Star for service in this area in the designated period.[387]

[385] Lake, Marilyn 'The Power of Anzac' in Mckernan, M and Browne, M (eds.) *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1988), p.195.
[386] Australian War Memorial PR04552, 'Darwin Commemoration Association newsletter no.13', Folder 2, p.48.
[387] 'Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Defence Awards', Commonwealth of Australia, March 1994 <www.defence.gov.au/Medals/_Master/docs/Reviews-Reports/Report-Committee-Inquiry-Defence-Awards.pdf>, accessed 22 April 2019. In an interview in 2004 as part of the Australians at War Film Archive project, Rex Ruwoldt indicated that many people felt the dates of the designated period were

The committee recognised that, during the period of the Japanese bombings, Darwin faced circumstances that were akin to the RAF during the Battle of Britain in terms of air warfare, or those of the siege of Malta as regards isolation and access to food and external resources. One thing that struck the committee was the strength of feeling about this kind of acknowledgment. They noted in their report that:

> many of the submissions received by the Committee […] evidenced a passion and a depth of feeling which was, frankly, extraordinary […] It may seem a small thing to give a service medal, but the symbolism of such recognition is so powerful that it is coveted by some to the exclusion of all other forms of recognition.[388]

This strength of feeling can be evidenced throughout the DCA papers and was no doubt present in their submission to the committee. Although there were some legal wranglings to overcome, including putting the Committee's recommendations to Her Majesty the Queen for approval to expand the conditions under which campaign medals were awarded, Prime Minister Keating was finally able to announce on 27 February 1995 that the defenders of Darwin during the Japanese bombings were to receive the 1939-45 Star campaign award.[389]

The records show that the DCA, whilst pleased that the 1939-45 Star award finally acknowledged Darwin, still felt that further acknowledgement was due to their members and those who had served in the area. In May 2001, the DCA submitted a case to the Minister of Defence to 'request that consideration be given to awarding the Pacific Star for service in the Armed Forces in 7 Military District (7MD) in the Northern Territory during World War II.'[390] In their submission, they made the case

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not actually long enough and should span from December 1941 through to September 1944. A number of people that served with Ruwoldt were not entitled to awards or benefits because they only served two months within the criterion timeframe, even though their overall service period in the area was much longer. See: Australians at War Film Archive, <www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1596-rex-ruwoldt>, accessed 18 May 2019.

[388] 'Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Defence Awards', Commonwealth of Australia, March 1994, p.93, <www.defence.gov.au/Medals/_Master/docs/Reviews-Reports/Report-Committee-Inquiry-Defence-Awards.pdf>, accessed 22 April 2019. The report also notes that an increase in historical interest in the Bombing of Darwin in the early 1990s following the release of classified information after fifty years had allowed for a new assessment of events, and subsequent eligibility for medals.

[389] 'Transcripts from the Prime Minsters of Australia - Transcript 9494', <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-9494>, accessed 22 April 2019.

[390] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 3, pp.46-47.

that heavy censorship in the immediate post-war period had made it difficult for those who had served in the area to speak openly in order to make a case when campaign medals were originally awarded. In light of the 1996 approval and classification of Darwin as an operational area, the DCA now felt that the Pacific Star should be considered for award. The request was considered by both the Minster of Defence and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, but the minutes of the DCA Committee meeting on 2 August 2001 noted that the request was considered and rejected.[391] Writing on 28 June 2001, the Minister for Veterans' Affair's stated that the Pacific Star was only awarded to those who faced invasion on the ground, resulting in the need to repel the enemy forces. He noted that other land areas such as Cocos Islands, Fiji and Samoa did not qualify for the Star and, as a result, the government were not prepared to review the award criteria any further.[392]

Another way in which the DCA hoped to promote the memory of the Bombings of Darwin was to commission a book that collected the stories of those who had been present in Darwin on the day of the bombings. In 1991, the DCA passed a resolution that:

> a) the Association undertake an oral history project on the 1st air raids on Darwin in February 1942
> b) Norma Reedy be appointed Historian for the Association with the responsibility of carrying out the oral history project, and
> c) that an advance of $30.00 be made for purchase of tapes, etc.[393]

The production of oral history accounts poses a number of challenges around collection, retention and ownership of the material and, by extension, an aspect of historical memory.[394] The project consisted of Mrs Reedy either posting tapes to willing participants, visiting them to interview them in person, or accepting written

[391] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association Minutes of Committee Meeting 2 August 2001, Folder 3, p.48.The rejection letter can be found on p.203 in Folder 5 of the PR04552 collection.
[392] Scott, Bruce to Arthur Kennedy, Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 5, p.203.
[393] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 8, p.84.
[394] See Appendix One at the end of this thesis, which highlights some of the key reflections that veterans who were based in Darwin have of their time 'up north'.

testimonies from those who had been present in Darwin during the raids.[395] The DCA files show that the project progressed well and reached a full-draft stage. In the summary document relating to the oral history project, it is noted that a member 'had complained about the abundance of incorrect information' within the draft.[396] The summary goes on to state:

> whilst checking the draft type setting a paragraph was found in one of the written submissions that was erroneous and believed to be defamatory. When approached by the President and Secretary the writer (a Vice-President of the Association) stated that "it was something told to him and he was unaware of whether it was fact or fiction, but that he had no objection to it being omitted".[397]

Whilst the author of the specific article was happy to make changes to his own submission, Norma Reedy refused to publish the manuscript with any changes other than those of a grammatical or spelling nature. Norma Reedy further compounded the situation by indicating that if the Association tried to publish the book without her, she would be forced to take action as the copyright belonged to her. A legal debate ensued, in which the DCA sought the advice of the Australian Copyright Council in regard as to whom ultimately held the copyright of the book. Due to the various ways in which the material had been collected, copyright appeared to belong to either the interviewee (where monologues or written statements had been provided independently), or potentially the interviewer (in this case Norma Reedy), dependent on how the interview had been conducted.[398]

Solicitors were instructed on both sides of the argument and the case rumbled on for nearly two years, with each side continuing to assert that they were the legitimate owners of the material in question. Evidence shows that Reedy appears to have ceased her claim for the material in 1993 and, as the handwritten version of the

[395] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 8, p.84.
[396] *Ibid.,* p.86.
[397] *Ibid.,* p.86.
[398] *Ibid.*, pp.90-04

book was amongst the files of the DCA, it would appear that the DCA held true to their promise and deposited the files with the Australian War Memorial.

The situation, whilst unfortunate, does raise some interesting questions in relation to the ownership of historical memory and who has the right to tell a story – the person who experienced the event or the person writing about the event. The specific issue that was disputed in this legal debate also highlights the issue of how easily hearsay can be transformed into historical "fact", regardless of whether this is right or wrong. It once again demonstrates the way in which history can be contested. Inga Clendinnen writes that 'in human affairs there is never a single narrative. There is always one counter-story, and usually several, and in a democracy you will probably get to hear them.'[399]

Contested history is a common theme within the Australian narrative – you only have to look at the History Wars and the Stolen Generations that have been particularly prevalent since the 1990s, for evidence of how differing opinions on historical facts can lead to substantial public debate.[400] Whilst the story of Darwin is not central to the history wars debate, it does demonstrate the inability of Australia to engage with controversial parts of its history. By not fitting with the commonly embraced narrative of Australian soldiers as brave and honourable, the story of Darwin was not one that the government were seemingly keen to embrace. As the literature review at the beginning of this thesis shows, the Bombing of Darwin is rarely included in overall Australian historical texts and if so, only in passing mention and usually in derogatory terms. Even those texts that focus more solidly on the bombings, or on war in the Northern Territory, do not paint the situation in good terms.

[399] Clendinnen, Inga 'The History Question: Who Own The Past?', *Quarterly Essay,* 23, 2006, p.3.
[400] The History Wars focus on the debates that surround the European colonisation of Australia and the opposing views on whether the treatment of Aboriginal Australians was tantamount to genocide or not. The treatment of Aboriginal people in Tasmania played a particularly key role in this debate with Robert Manne and Henry Reynolds supporting the argument that the truth had not been accurately reported through history. Keith Windschuttle playing a key role on the opposing side of the debate, arguing strongly that stories of mass killings and genocide were fabricated and untrue, despite there being significant evidence to the contrary.

The question of ownership of history and how a story is told segues nicely into the next chapter of this thesis, which seeks to examine the mass commercialisation of history through tourism and how this affects the way in which events are commemorated. Commercialisation of war memory is not a new concept, but it is a continually developing one. Linking first-hand memories of survivors with longer-term ways in which the commemoration of an event can continue to connect on an individual level with those in the future is something that has seen a global shift in modern times, embracing new technologies and alternative methods to keep the story alive.

Chapter Five: Remembering Darwin in Contemporary Commemorative Practice

The previous chapter examined how societal changes influenced the concept of the Anzac spirit and, as a result, how commemoration of events such as the Gallipoli landings and the Bombing of Darwin were shaped and reshaped into formats that were deemed palatable to the general public. Moving forward into the 1990s and the 2000s, societal changes continued to influence the way in which events such as these were consumed. This period was significant for the commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin, as it witnessed two key anniversary points that necessitated an evolution in the way the events of 1942 were narrated. The first of these was in 1992, with the fiftieth anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin, and the second was in 2001 with the celebration of the Centenary of Federation. Anniversaries provide an opportunity to both examine the way in which events are interpreted and to remember and commemorate in new ways.

Like the period of the 1960s and 1970s, the 1990s and 2000s represented a second 'wind of change': a societal transformation that saw the generations who experienced the First and Second World Wars slowly diminish; and rapid technological advances with the internet and the digital revolution it initiated, which changed how technology influenced everyday lives. The means by which people consumed knowledge and interacted with these kinds of events was undergoing a marked shift. The impact of these changes are summarised in the Five-Year Tourism Strategic Plan of 2008, published by the Northern Territory Government. It stated that the requirements of travellers in respect of what they wanted to gain from a holiday had significantly changed over the preceding decades.

- In the 1960s, travellers were after products and activities – places and things.
- During the 1970s there was a service differentiation, with travellers seeking niche indulgences.

- The 1980s brought product and emotions and travellers who wanted exhilaration and adventures.
- The 1990s saw a development of experiences with learning outcomes, with a focus on authenticity and sustainability.
- The 2000s saw the advent of experiences of meaning and purpose.[401]

Although these points were made in respect of the tourism industry I would argue, at least for the 1990s and 2000s, that these could also be applied to events such as the Bombing of Darwin. From a period in the 1970s and 1980s where the commemoration of war had become a controversial issue, a change had occurred which allowed society to focus more on sacrifice and honour, rather than on the glory of battle. People began to want to find a personal connection to these kinds of events – it was becoming a matter of pride to have an Anzac ancestor. Joy Damousi notes that personal and emotional reactions to Anzac Day 'de-politicise war commemoration by reducing the event to an emotional story of sacrifice and service,' later on suggesting that 'sentimentality and nostalgia are perhaps the prevailing modes of relating to Anzac Day.'[402] Damousi also goes on to state that 'those who speak from the perspective of a familial connection [to Anzac] seem to claim a special authority to speak – sometimes as those who inherit the Anzac tradition.'[403] The intention of this chapter therefore is to explore how those involved in the commemoration of Darwin's military history embraced anniversaries and societal changes during this time to promote the history of the Bombings of Darwin, utilising new methods and technology in order to appeal to a wider audience.

[401] NLA 4512705; NpF 338.47919429 T727 *Five Year Tourism Strategic Plan,* Northern Territory Government, 2008, p.8.
[402] Damousi, Joy 'Why do we get so emotional about Anzac?' in Lake, Marilyn, Reynold, Henry, McKenna, Mark and Damousi, Joy *What's Wrong with Anzac? The Militarisation of Australian History,* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), p. 86.
[403] Damousi, Joy, *ibid.,* p. 88. Damousi also writes that the increased link between family and military history has 'shaped a new sense of pride in the role of military sacrifice in shaping the nation, and in encouraging families to locate themselves in the national sotry.' p. 95.

Fiftieth Anniversary and Tourism

The 1990s witnessed the fiftieth anniversaries of various events that took place during the Second World War. 1992 heralded the fiftieth anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin whilst 1995 witnessed the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In Australia, 1992 was branded the *Battle of Australia Memorial Year* and 1995 was billed as *Australia Remembers 1945-1995.* As with most commemorative events, committees were established to organise the arrangements with State committees set up in addition to those at Federal level. For many years, Australia's intersection with war commemoration has been intimately linked with the ideas of tourism and pilgrimage. The majority of significant Australian conflicts were fought on foreign soil. In addition to the sites and memorials on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey, sites at Villers-Bretonneux in France and the Kokoda Trail in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea have all established themselves as key destinations for those wanting to follow in the footsteps of their Australian forebears. Although there are many sites that can be listed overseas, there are only a handful in Australia itself. For this reason, Darwin occupies a unique position within the framework of Australian war commemoration, as not only the first city on Australian soil to be attacked, but also the site of the highest casualties in Australia during the Second World War. David Weaver notes that 'the reality of major combat and casualty counts on Australian soil has arguably had a catalytic effect on the war tourism dividend in Darwin at least.'[404]

The government in Darwin were acutely aware of this fact and therefore set about establishing a committee to coordinate efforts for the fiftieth anniversary. Andrew Coward was appointed as the Director of the *Battle of Australia Memorial Year* committee.[405] The Northern Territory Government assigned a budget of approximately $80,000 to promote the bombings of Darwin through various outlets.

[404] Weaver, David 'Echoes of the Great Pacific Conflict: Australia's regional war tourism dividend', in Butler, Richard and Suntikul, Wantanee (eds.) *Tourism and War,* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p.198.
[405] Andrew Coward was a Special Projects Officer within the Office of the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory at this time.

The government seemingly picked up on this shift in the way in which society wished to engage in such events, and there was a huge push to encourage people to travel to the Territory, to have an authentic experience of being present where events took place. Marshall Perron, Chief Minister in the Northern Territory, circulated a memo to all ministers in the Legislative Assembly noting that 'the 1992 War Service Memorial Year has the potential for adding a new dimension to our tourism industry in terms of visitation patterns.' He continued: '1992 has also considerable potential as a major marketing vehicle for the Northern Territory.'[406] It is no surprise therefore, that the run-up to 1992 saw an explosion of tourist ventures that were designed to attract former veterans and their families back to the Northern Territory. It is pertinent to note that these tourist packages had a particular emphasis toward the American market. [407]

[406] NTRS 1945/P8/18/92/3420 Northern Territory Tourist Commission, General correspondence files, annual single number 1976-2002.
[407] Following the initial bombing raids in 1942, Darwin became one of the key American headquarters in Australia, and therefore a number of US veterans would have served in or around Darwin during this time.

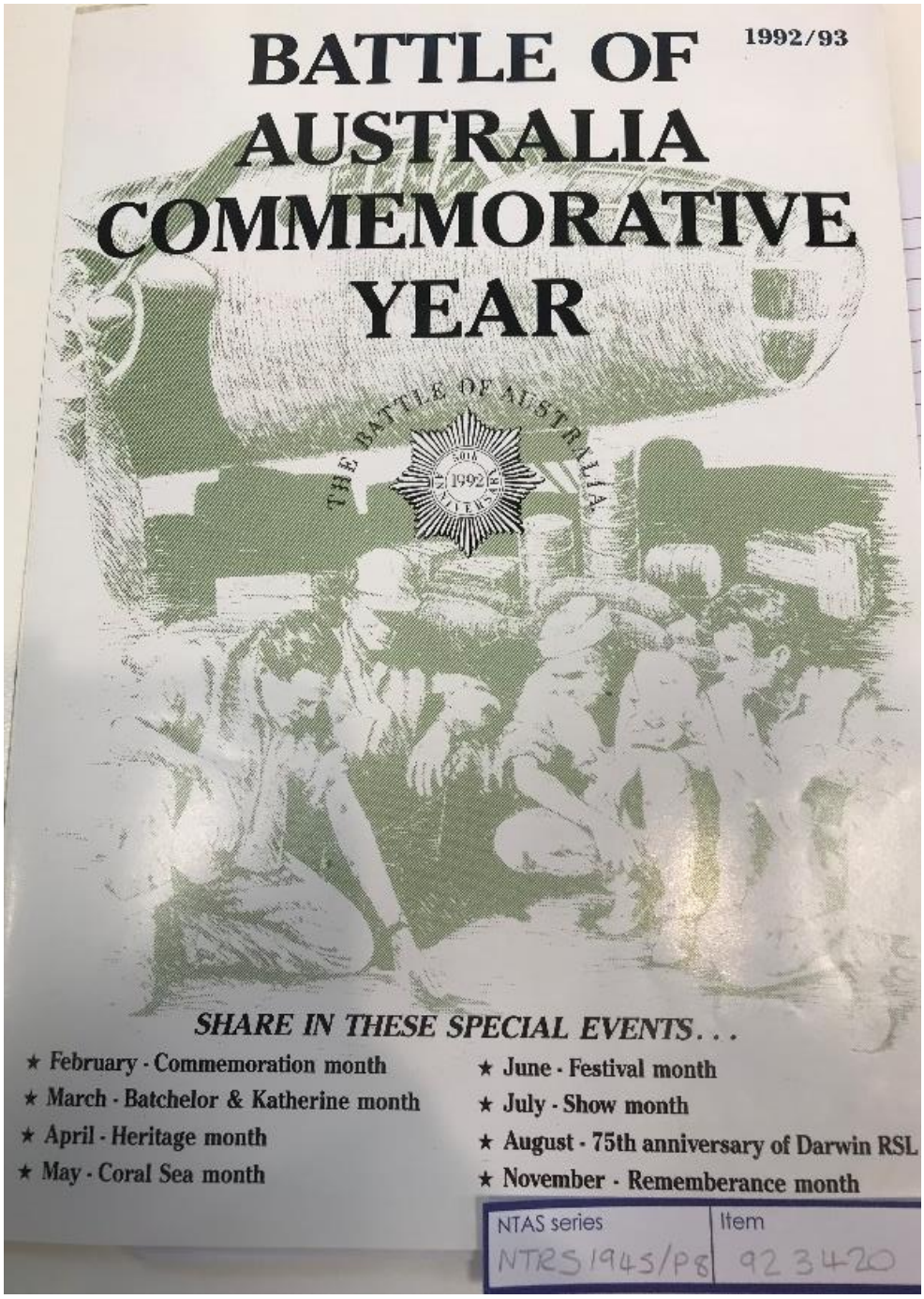

Figure 14. Battle of Australia Commemorative Year, Programme of Events, Northern Territory Archives, NTRS 1945/P8 92.3420.

Andrew Coward, Director of the *Battle for Australia Memorial Year* committee, travelled to America, attended briefings and veteran reunions to promote the Battle of Australia fiftieth anniversary commemoration events in the hope that they would return to Darwin and join in the memorial arrangements. In addition to Coward's visit to America to raise awareness of the commemoration events, a national call for evacuees from Darwin during the Second World War was made within Australia itself. The media release that accompanied the call noted that 'evacuees were a special group of people who suffered the most and yet were the least considered by the government of the day.'[408]

The *Battle for Australia Commemorative Year* programme outlined an eight-month programme of events, spread across the Territory from Darwin to Katherine and also out to the Coral Sea (see Fig. 14).[409] Inside the brochure, AAT Kings – one of the largest guided sightseeing tour companies in Australia – offered a wide-range of trips that presented opportunities to take in heritage sites of significance from the Second World War.[410] The tours ranged from a half-day sunset tour of Darwin to an eight-day itinerary that included Darwin, Kakadu and Katherine, as well as sites such as Adelaide River, where casualties from the first bombings were buried in 1942.

AAT Kings were not the only company to tap into this lucrative market. The Northern Territory Tourism Commission (NTTC) records from September 1991 show that even at that early point, eight companies had made provision for tours in the Darwin area. In a press release from the NTTC, their Chairman Robert Doyle stated that 'the travel industry has a real opportunity to meet a high demand for air and coach

[408] 'World War II Evacuees Plan to Invade Darwin', media release, NTRS 1945/P8/18/92/3420 Northern Territory Tourist Commission, General correspondence files, annual single number 1976-2002.
[409] NTRS 1945/P8/18/92/3420 Northern Territory Tourist Commission, General correspondence files, annual single number 1976-2002.
[410] AAT Kings started off life in 1912 as a small family run business called AAT, offering self-drive holidays in Australia. They expanded to guided sightseeing tours and in the 1980s merged with Bill Kings Northern Safari's and became one of the biggest guided tour companies in Australia. '100 Years of Experience: AAT Kings', accessed 18 August 2018 <https://www.aatkings.com/about-us/our-history/>.

tours of between five days and three weeks, packaged in conjunction with visits to the major history sites of the war.'[411] The release also stated that 'Ten Heritage Trails [had] been created, including one in Darwin and one Down the Track, and a number of key sites are being restored for the commemoration.'[412] At a Brennan and Palmerston RSL branch meeting in May 1991, Andrew Coward announced in his guest speech that 'we have every reason to expect that we can attract a minimum of 50,000 extra visitors to the Territory during 1992.'[413] In addition to the visitors he was hoping to attract in 1992, Coward also noted that the infrastructure they were helping to create would reach thousands more in the years to come.

As well as establishing a tourist infrastructure, the fiftieth anniversary also created tourist ephemera which contributed to the overall commemoration process. As part of the anniversary commemorations, Australia Post launched a set of commemorative postage stamps titled *Australians Under Fire.* These stamps portrayed five scenes of significant events of the Second World War during 1942 which directly affected Australia or Australians: the Bombing of Darwin; the Battle of Milne Bay; the Kokoda Trail; the Battle of the Coral Sea; and the Battle of El Alamein. Alongside the stamps a commemorative book was compiled titled *Australians Under Fire 1942.* Although only forty pages long, the book provided an overview of events leading up to 1942 as well as a summary of each of the battles. The majority of these battles took place within the Asia-Pacific region rather than directly in Australia, acknowledging again that much of Australia's action was seen overseas. Australia Post had a particular connection to the Bombing of Darwin however, as during the first raid, a bomb fell directly onto the slit trench which was being used by the post office staff.

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[411] '50th Anniversary of Northern Territory Bombing: 10,000 WWII Veterans and Families expected to visit during 1992', Press release from NTTC, September 1991, NTRS 1945/P8/18/92/3420 Northern Territory Tourist Commission, General correspondence files, annual single number 1976-2002.
[412] '50th Anniversary of Northern Territory Bombing: 10,000 WWII Veterans and Families expected to visit during 1992', Press release from NTTC, September 1991, NTRS 1945/P8/18/92/3420 Northern Territory Tourist Commission, General correspondence files, annual single number 1976-2002.
[413] 'Brennan/Palmerston Branch: Guest Speaker

Figure 15. Section of the original Post Office Wall located in Parliament House, Darwin (photo by F. Gibbons).

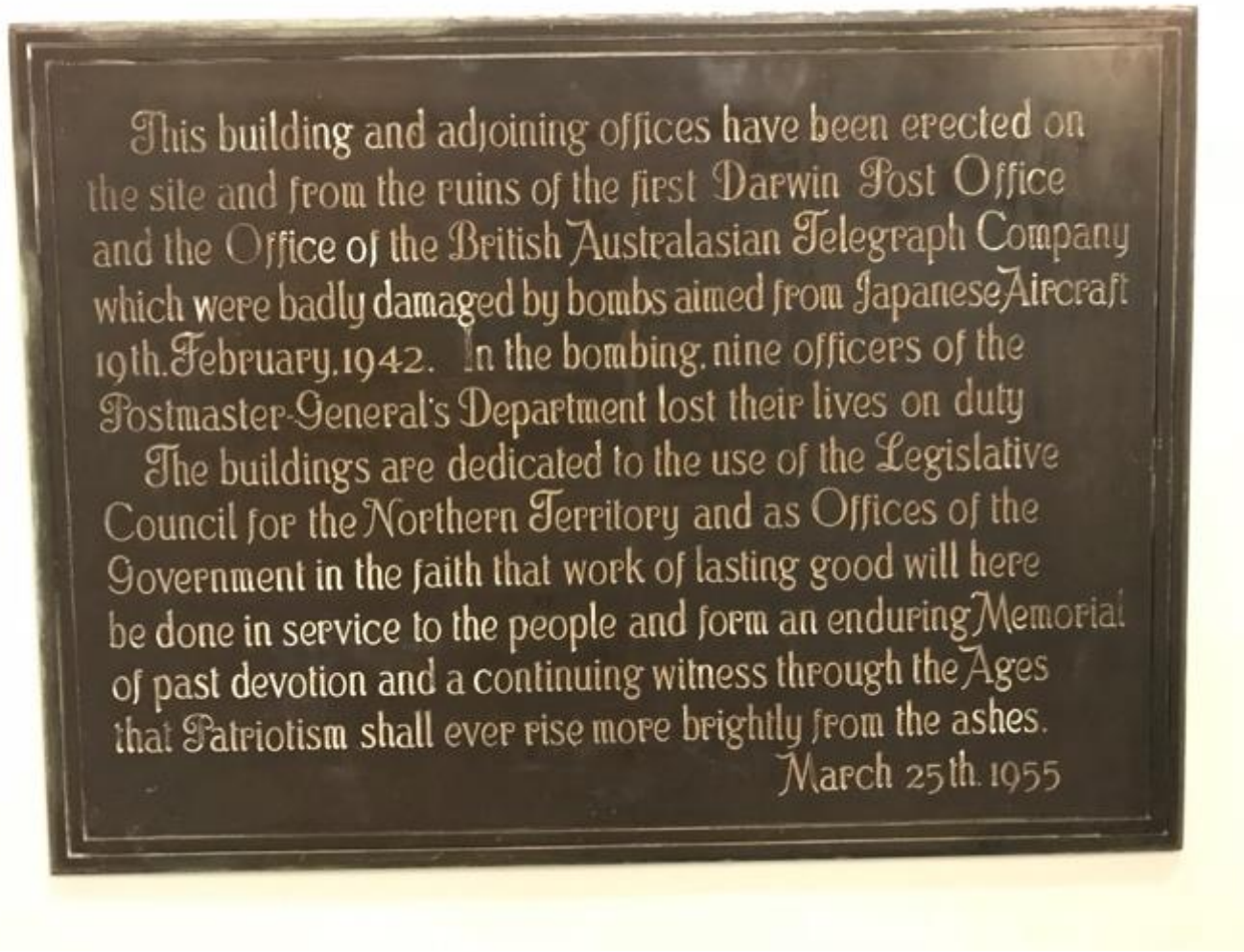

Figure 16. Plaque commemorating the Bombing of the Post Office, located inside Parliament House, Darwin (photo by F. Gibbons).

Figure 17. Location of the Post Office slit trench, now inside Parliament House, Darwin (photo by F. Gibbons).

Nine people were killed in total on the day: the postmaster; his wife and daughter; and six post office workers, with an additional loss of life due to wounds in the days that followed. The section on the Bombing of Darwin encompasses six pages, although perhaps surprisingly only dedicates one small paragraph to the events at the Post Office. The commemorative stamps went on general sale in Australia, which provided an everyday way in which to both remind Australians of events during the Second World War and a means by which to commemorate the Australian involvement in the conflict. The site of the Post Office has also become a feature within the Darwin heritage trail of Second World War events (see Figs 15, 16 and 17). Now housed in the modern-day Legislative Assembly, one of the remaining walls that survived the attack has been incorporated into the government building. In the main hall of the Assembly building, information panels summarise the events of the bombings as well as inform the reader about the individuals who were killed on that infamous day. The interesting point about this particular set of commemorative ephemera is that whilst Australia Post did have a national reach, they were one individual organisation that were including the events of Darwin as just one element of a wider project.

The *Australia Remembers* commemorative year was launched by Prime Minister Paul Keating on 14 August 1994 at an event at the Australian War Memorial. This was one year before the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. When commenting on the events of the year in the House of Representatives in February 1995, Con Sciacca, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, stated that:

> With the backing of parliament, and with the full support of the Australian people, the government has, over recent years, sponsored or significantly assisted with significant commemorative events aimed at reinforcing in the minds of all Australians […] the debt which is owed to ex-service men and women […] Now, in 1995, our commitment is to ensuring that the sacrifices

made by Australians during the six years of the Second World War are properly recalled and recorded.[414]

Sciacca was one of the key organisers of the national programme of events, with the focus being on linking the commemorations to the experience of the everyday individual. The objectives of the programme were:

- to encourage all Australians to remember and thank the veterans who fought in World War II campaigns;
- to recognise and appreciate the sorrows and difficulties of the widows and children of those veterans who either did not return or who died in the intervening years;
- to encourage all Australians to remember and thank all who remained at home and kept the home front running;
- to recreate the sense of relief and excitement which marked the end of the war in 1945;
- to educate the nation about the horrors and impact of World War II.[415]

In addition to the personal stories and imagery, Beaumont notes that Sciacca was keen to ensure that the events were also more ethnically and gender diverse.[416] The role of indigenous servicemen, as well as women, were particularly important in the events that were planned, for example, specific marches held on International Women's Day to mark the involvement of servicewomen in the Second World War. This is particularly noticeable in the Northern Territory programme of events, with Chairman Bob Alford specifically noting the contribution of indigenous personnel in his historical background, and the general programme containing events representing

[414] Commonwealth of Australia 1995, Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives: official Hansard, no.37, p.914, col. 2. Con Sciacca was born in Sicily just after the Second World War. His family moved to Australia in the early 1950s in the hope of securing a brighter future. During the Second World War, his family had actually fought against Australia, so taking on the role of Minister for Veterans' Affairs was a significant milestone for him. When he died in 2017, Paul Keating – who was the Prime Minister who promoted him to the role of Minister – was reported as saying that Con's personality was so big that he would win over the veterans (SBS News, ''Man of the people' Con Sciacca farewelled', 30 June 2017). In the Senate motion of 22 June 2017, many of the senators recalled the *Australia Remembers* programme of commemoration as one of Con's proudest achievements. As a recognition of his commitment to the representation of veterans, Sciacca is one of the few non-veteran individuals to be given full lifetime membership to the RSL.

[415] Northern Territory Archives Service, NTRS 1945/P2, 94.3081 *Australia Remembers 1945-1995,* Calendar of Events, p.2.

[416] Beaumont, Joan 'The Second World War in Every Respect: Australian Memory and the Second World War', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies,* 14:1, 2001, p.12.

women's roles in the Second World War and also the contributions of Indigenous people and other cultural groups.[417]

A key change in the *Australia Remembers* celebrations links to the discussions in the previous chapter surrounding Prime Minister Paul Keating's desire to shift Australian national identity away from Anzac and the Imperial links of the First World War, to recognising what he saw as the true building of an Australian national history in the battles that occurred in the Pacific during the Second World War. Keating had a particular focus on Kokoda and the conflict with Japan, feeling that this had been a true battle for the defence of Australia itself. This was not something he felt could be claimed by the Anzac tradition. Commentators of the time, and since, have linked Keating's promotion of Kokoda as part of a wider strategy to promote the idea of Australia becoming a republic, independent of Britain and its imperial past. On 15 August, which is traditionally known as Victory Against Japan (VJ) Day, Keating and his government chose to rebadge this as Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day. This was another subtle move to distance Australia from the imperial way of commemorating, although this did not pass without controversy, with many feeling that this rebadge was disrespectful to those who served in the European theatres of the war.[418]

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[417] Darwin's programme of events included a special service for Greeks on Greek Independence Day in March 1992, a reunion in June 1992 of ex-service women who served in Darwin, and a prisoner of war art exhibition held in August 1992. See NTRS 1945/P2, 94/3081 for full programme of events. Bob Alford, who was the Chair of the NT programme, is an Aviation Historian who served for many years in the RAAF with 75 Squadron. The squadron were relocated to Darwin in 1983, where Alford settled and became heavily involved in the Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory. Alford refers to himself as 'primarily a researcher and historian but am an accredited Professional Historian.' See interview with Alford on https://pacificwrecks.com/people/authors/alford/index.html, accessed 25 February 2024. Further details on the idea of professional historians can be found on the Professional Historians Australia website: https://www.historians.org.au/why-employ-a-professional-historian

[418] *The Canberra Times* reported that the rebadge was a victory for political correctness gone mad, designed to ease the path for modern day trading arrangements (Friday 10 March 1995, p. 6). In a response to a letter's query raised in June 1995, Con Sciacca – Minister for Veteran's Affairs – stated that VP Day was a term commonly used by Australians in the forces and that the choice of the name was never meant to preclude members of the ex-service or general community from referring to the day as they feel appropriate. (Wednesday 28 June 1995, p. 30). The RSL are reported as having varying opinions on the matter, with the Tasmanian branch slamming the use of VP Day, whilst the national RSL president said the focus should be on commemorating the event, not the specifics of what it was called.

The idea of focusing on battles and events that were more 'Australia specific' was beneficial to Darwin, in that it was able to focus on Keating's idea of fighting for the defence of Australia. The creation of the stamps mentioned earlier in this chapter, also linked Darwin with those great battles that were seen as key to Australia's defence. More significantly, these were items that were available across the country and not just restricted to the Northern Territory or Darwin. Although Darwin at this stage was perhaps not regarded in quite the same league as Kokoda, it was getting the story out there and paving the way for future developments.

Case Study: 'World War Two Oil Storage Tunnels'

One of the heritage sites that underwent restoration in the lead up to the fiftieth anniversary was the Oil Storage Tunnels site on Kitchener Drive in Darwin. The Oil Storage Tunnels are an excellent example of policy in action: of sites not only being restored ahead of the fiftieth anniversary but of engaging new audiences in innovative ways. A key factor in the targeting of Darwin by the Japanese during the Second World War was the city's role as a refuelling depot for allied ships travelling around the Pacific. The oil tanks on Stokes Hill Wharf were an easy target for the enemy and so, following the first attacks in February 1942, the Civil Construction Corps were tasked with building a secret set of underground tunnels. Ten tunnels were due to be built in total, but by the end of the war, only five had been completed and oil was never actually stored in them. They were used for the storage of jet fuel during the 1960s during the Indonesian-Malaysian confrontation, and during the 1970s and 80s, by the local Fire Brigade in their smoke rescue training.[419]

[419] Historical information taken from the heritage display boards inside tunnel number five which is now part of Darwin's Second World War heritage trail.

Figure 18. Entrance to the Darwin World War Two Oil Tunnels (photo by F. Gibbons)

As part of the fiftieth anniversary commemorations in 1992, the Oil Storage Tunnels were opened to the public for the first time. As well as being an educational opportunity to share the history of the tunnels and those who worked in them, this was also an opportunity to provide an authentic experience of what it was like to work in those tunnels, sometimes being stuck in the humid, dirty and slippery conditions for hours on end. This refurbishment was part of a wider government project to revitalise the whole of the Darwin Wharf Precinct and whilst the government focused on the development of the whole area for the local community, there was a conscious decision to emphasize the historical heritage of Darwin and the wharf site in particular.[420] As part of this research, I visited the site in May 2018, to experience for myself what it was like to be in the tunnels, as well as to find out more about their story.

On arrival at the tunnels, visitors are welcomed by enthusiastic volunteers, keen on sharing the story of the tunnels and of Darwin's Second World War history. On entering the tunnels, visitors are met by a large sculpture that has been constructed out of salvaged material from ships and aircrafts involved in the bombings on 19 February 1942 (see Figs. 18 and 19). The sculpture is designed to symbolise a machine man and is affectionally known as 'The Digger'. [421]

[420] 'Annual Report 1991-1992 Department of Transport and Works', (1992), accessed 23 October 2021, from https://hdl.handle.net/10070/339074.

[421] Digger is generally seen as a term of endearment to Australians, largely referring to Australian soldiers who served in the trenches of the First World War. It is linked to the concept of mateship discussed in Chapter Four, and the strong bonds of friendship that were seen amongst Australian soldiers. Although it is largely linked to the military context, there are examples of it being used amongst those who worked on in the gold fields, with the miners doing similar types of manual labour.

Figure 19. Sculpture at entrance of Oil Storage Tunnels made from salvaged materials from Darwin Harbour (photo by F. Gibbons).

The sculpture was designed to represent the linkages between not only the physical brokenness of war (seen in the scraps of salvaged materials) but also the brokenness left behind with those who served in the war, both military and civilian. The tunnel complex then winds round to the left before opening into the 172-metre-long Tunnel Five. As tourist facilities go, it is not easily navigable for the visitor. The floors are wet and slippery with constant need to pump out water. Industrial sized fans are sporadically located along the length of the tunnel, and it is not uncommon to see a group of visitors pausing in front of the fans to gain some light relief from the humidity within. This is a luxury that the soldiers working there at the time would not have benefited from. To coincide with the centenary anniversary of the Anzac landings during 1915, new interpretive signage was installed in the tunnels in 2015 and unveiled on 20 May that year by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Honorable Adam Giles. As well as updating the signage boards along each length of the tunnel, audio recordings from survivors, as well as news reels from the time echo round the tunnels. The signage boards detail the history of the Darwin Waterfront and the maritime industries including pearling and the flying boats – yet again bringing a further educational aspect to this site.

The manner in which the World War Two Oil Tunnels are presented to the public through the story they tell very much emphasise Darwin's difference to the rest of Australia. There is significant reference through the information boards to the hardships and difficult working conditions faced by the men who built the tunnels – the heat of the Tropics; the hardness of the rock – something that links in well with the recollections of the military personnel in Appendix One. There is also a clear prominence placed on the fact that many of the people connected to this installation were civilian, not military, personnel. This emphasis allows Darwin to tell its story away from the stronghold of Anzac and the military on this history. With the exception of the display boards in the tunnels, there is no sense that the tunnels have been spruced up to cater for tourists, save for a few health and safety issues. The tunnels

are displayed in the harsh reality of what it would have been like to be inside them. In the wet season, the tunnels are often closed due to excess water that make it too risky for the general public to navigate. This links in particularly well with the reframing of Anzac that has taken place, that separates wartime events from the image of glory and honour – life was tough in Darwin, and they are not afraid to show that.

The information boards in the tunnel make it very clear that those in Darwin hold the opinion that Darwin headed up Australia's defence strategy, clearly impressing upon visitors the importance they feel Darwin should hold within the national story. The boards also emphasise how the tunnels were kept secret until their opening in 1992 – something that links well with the fact that the attacks in Darwin as a whole were largely censored in archival files for a period of fifty years. It ties in with Paul Keating's idea that the Australian national identity should not be entirely bound up with Anzac, although I would argue it has some way to go in order to equal the importance he placed on Kokoda and the wider Pacific.

One Hundred Years of Australia

The fiftieth anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin was not the only anniversary to be considered during the 1990s and early 2000s. Plans to focus on the anniversary year of federation were implemented as early as 1994, but it was noted in preliminary discussions that these plans should remain separate from other debates relating to Australian nationhood.[422] The Centenary of Federation was therefore a time to bring the nation back together and to focus on the things that had made Australia what it was. Indeed, the strapline for the Federation celebrations was 'Australia: It's What We Make It' – a reference not only to what Australia had made of herself up to that point, but also of what they could conceive for themselves in the future. It was clear

[422] NAA: A11117 KCA1193 Part 1, Plans for Celebration of Centenary of Federation, Council of Australian Governments Agenda Paper, 8 June 1993.

that a celebration of the magnitude of Federation would need careful coordination. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) had been established in 1992 and were tasked with the initial scoping of the celebrations. Their prime motivation as an organisation was to 'initiate, develop and implement policy reforms of national significance [and] which require[d] cooperative action.'[423]

COAG was made up of the Prime Minister, Premiers, Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. In 1993, COAG recommended to the Australian Cabinet that a committee consisting of State and Territory representatives be established 'to develop an options paper identifying possible goals and strategies to celebrate the centenary of Federation.'[424] The Cabinet agreed to this proposal and the Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee (COFAC) was formed. COFAC produced a report in 1994 called '*A Report from Australia'* although it is often referred to as the *Kirner Report*, after the committee's chair, Joan Kirner.[425] This report drew together the findings of six months' worth of public consultation meetings as well as individual submissions from historians, politicians and other key organisations.

The report produced six key overarching goals that would inform how the people of Australia would mark the Centenary event, as well as some recommendations as to how those goals could be met.[426] The goals were:

1. To ensure that in the commemoration of the centenary of federation in 2001 all Australians know what they are celebrating so they can engage in shaping our national identity and nationhood.
2. To ensure Australians – especially the young – have access to information about Australia's achievements in the first hundred years since federation,

[423] Department of Communications and the Arts – Brief to Appoint Communications Consultant Attachment A, <https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/19980120102116/http://edison.dca.gov.au/responsi/cofeof.html>, accessed 28 April 2024.
[424] NAA A11117 KCA1193 Part 1, Plans for Celebration of Centenary of Federation, Council of Australian Governments Agenda Paper, 8 June 1993, p.8.
[425] Eggleton, Tony The Year in Review: Report on the Centenary Year by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001), p2. Joan Kirner was the first female Premier of Victoria between 1990-1992 having previously been an MP for the Australian Labor Party representing Melbourne West. She was instrumental in the Women Shaping the Nation Centrepiece Event that was held in May 2001.
[426] *Ibid.*

and about the people responsible for those achievements, through this, to build a greater sense of national pride and purpose.
3. To ensure that the celebration of the centenary strengthens democracy.
4. To ensure the celebrations of the centenary of federation are inclusive of all the peoples of Australia and contribute to a greater sense of national unity and purpose.
5. To promote the development of greater confidence in the future among Australians, therefore strengthening national unity and purpose.
6. To establish effective coordinating structures and funding programmes for the centenary celebrations which promote maximum participation.[427]

Following the COFAC report, the National Council for the Centenary of Federation was established in order that a coordinated set of events could be delivered for the nation as a whole. The council itself consisted of seventeen members, made up of State and Territory representatives; eight Commonwealth appointed representatives and a local government representative. The council had three chairmen over the course of its tenure – an entrepreneur, businessman and former Australian of the Year, Dick Smith AO; an Anglican Archbishop of Australia, Peter Hollingworth (another former Australian of the Year) and Professor Geoffrey Blainey AC, an eminent professor of Australian history with the University of Melbourne. Their objective was simple, if somewhat daunting – to design 'a program to engage people of all backgrounds, whether living in the cities, in provincial and regional centres, or in the outback.'[428]

Many of the recommendations that were received reflected people's experiences of the 1988 bicentenary celebrations of the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. The report makes clear that the feedback received indicated that the 1988 celebrations had not been fully understood by many Australians. In their report, the Advisory Committee included a quote from David Connolly's submission that noted 'one of our problems with the bicentennial was that it was seen by the rest of the

[427] Commonwealth of Australia A Report from Australia: A Report to the Council of Australian Governments by the Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994).
[428] Eggleton, Tony The Year in Review: Report on the Centenary Year by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001), p.2.

continent essentially as a Sydney Do […] The Beauty of the federation centenary is that it is an Australian do.'[429] The Advisory Committee's recommendation was that any future committee that was to be established to oversee the events of the centenary 'should be mindful of the experience of the Australian Bicentennial Authority. The bicentennial celebrations were seen to be produced and directed by an authority focussed almost exclusively on Sydney. The centenary of federation celebrations should be based throughout the nation.'[430]

Darwin's Place within Australia

The year of 2001 was to see a host of events, exhibitions and celebrations across the nation that marked the moment when the six individual colonies of the southern continent became one united federation as the Commonwealth of Australia. One of the key goals of the *Kirner Report*, therefore, was to ensure a greater understanding of the national story and to create a greater sense of national unity. Darwin now had an opportunity to tell its story in its own way, as part of the Federation year,

On 18 February 2001, the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, along with the Governor-General of Australia, Sir William Deane, and other dignitaries at both Territory and Federal level gathered at the Darwin Entertainment Centre.[431] The reason for the gathering was the premiere of Peter and Sheila Forrest's historical entertainment concert 'Somewhere North of Somewhere'.[432] The concert

[429] Connolly, David in Commonwealth of Australia, A report from Australia: A Report to the Council of Australian Governments by the Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), p.76.
[430] Commonwealth of Australia, A report from Australia: A Report to the Council of Australian Governments by the Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), p.76.
[431] Although the show ran for two nights, John Howard references his attendance at a concert the night before in his speech to the Country Liberal Party Dinner in Darwin on 19 February 2001, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-12324> , accessed 3 May 2022.
[432] Peter and Sheila Forrest are established historians for the Northern Territory. Although Peter grew up in inner Queensland, he has lived in Darwin for over forty years and written numerous books about the Territory. Sheila came to Australia from Scotland, but was manager of the Northern Territory Library for a number of years before joining Peter in becoming Territory historians.

had been commissioned as part of the Northern Territory's Centenary of Federation celebrations and sought to tell the story of Darwin and surrounding areas during the Second World War. The title of the concert paid tribute to the way in which military personnel based in the Territory referred to their positions when writing home to loved ones. Under military censorship laws, soldiers were not allowed to detail where they were based or anything that might give away military secrets should the letters be intercepted. In the preface to the concert programme, Forrest wrote that:

> After the tragedy and shock of the first air raids, after the early threat of invasion had subsided, the main enemy 'somewhere north of somewhere' was boredom. That enemy was defeated by training, drill and duty, and by organised recreation. Sport, cinema, race meetings – and 'concert parties' were the most effective weapons. This concert aims to revive the memory of those wartime concert parties. It draws on their spirit to evoke some of the feeling of what it was like to be 'somewhere north of the somewhere' during the war.[433]

Written over ten acts, it describes life in Darwin from July 1940 through to 1947, charting the preparations for the impending war, the drama of the attacks and their aftermath, and finally to peace and the eventual return of civilians to Darwin. The script of the concert covers some forty-three pages, although this does not include the full details of the musical numbers – which would have taken it to a far lengthier document. In the opening remarks Peter Forrest, who took on the role of narrator for the event, noted that 'the war in the Northern Territory shaped and built our nation in the most fundamental way. It was certainly one of the most important events in the whole history of our country, and yet, it has been neglected in the study of our history.'[434]

Although its primary focus was to commemorate the Bombing of Darwin, the play also highlighted some key themes linked to Darwin's place within the Australian

[433] NLA Ephemera Formed 14 (Centenary of Federation 2001) Collection, pts.37-38, Concert Programme.
[434] Forrest, Peter *Somewhere North of Somewhere,* unpublished, 2001, p.1.

narrative – defence, statehood and identities other than whiteness being just a few of these. Early on in Forrest's script he notes the following – 'one of the reasons why Australia became a nation in 1901 was to guarantee national defence of the open north. Darwin obviously had strategic significance, in those days it was Australia's back door, but possibly the front door for an invader.'[435] The play was stating up front that Darwin and the north did play a significant role in the defensive narrative of Australia – the intimation being that this therefore made it more important to the nation as a whole than may first have been recognised. This concert was, of course, not the only event scheduled to mark the Centenary of Federation year in Australia, and we shall explore some of these through the remainder of the chapter.

When focussing on Forrest's script in more depth, it is possible to see many references that denote the challenges faced by the Northern Territory when dealing with the rest of Australia. An early line notes that the concert includes photographs alongside the live performances – 'just to prove to you all that it really did happen.'[436] Later on in the script, there are references to the attitudes of those from Canberra who were sent up to the Territory to oversee different processes. For example, in Act Two, Scene Three, a government official is overseeing the training of anti-aircraft gunners and a heated debate ensues regarding training with live ammunition. The soldiers point out that the ammunition reacts differently in the tropics and so they need to test it out, but the official says that Canberra knows best – the attacks will come from the sea and they must not use the live rounds for training. The official points out that there are big guns up at East Point to see off air-attack and that the soldiers should be focusing on naval attack.

[435] *Ibid.,* p.2.
[436] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Interestingly, the soldier replies that the guns at East Point are only there for the Japanese to come and claim for scrap after the war – another controversial point from Territory history that was brought into the play, and one we have touched on in Chapter Three.[437] The official indicates that the soldiers should show him respect because he is from Canberra – a comment likely to wind up the tamest of Territorians.[438] In Act Ten, Scene Sixteen, we see reference to the Town Planners coming to Darwin from Canberra after the war, detailing how the city would be rebuilt, dismissing the devastation that had been caused to so many lives and referring to the destruction of Chinatown as a good thing. There is also a line delivered by the Town Planner which describes pre-war Darwin as 'a disreputable town of brawls, booze, and gambling dens, sunk in tropical inertia.'[439] They also deliver the line that 'all land has been compulsorily acquired, so that the government can completely re-plan and redevelop Darwin.'[440] All these references demonstrate the opinion that Canberra and the south held preconceptions about the north and in reality had no idea what life in the Territory was like, nor did they appreciate the multicultural way of life that Darwin embraced.

It was not however reserved solely for historical digs at the Federal Capital. In Scene One of the play, some very pointed contemporary references about the railway are made. In 2001 when the show was put on, there was still no railway that connected Darwin to the south of Australia, although one of the projects financed by the Federation Fund was the completion of the Alice Springs – Darwin rail link. The line in the script reads 'we have given thought to a railway, in fact, people have been thinking about a railway for a long time.'[441] The stage directions encourage the

[437] In Chapter Three, I examined the complexities that were faced when, in addition to the contract to salvage the ships from Darwin Harbour, the Fujita Salvage Company also won the tender to break up the old rolling-stock of the Commonwealth Railways, as well as dismantling other wartime vestiges across Australia. Evidence from archival files as well as the *Northern Territory News* support the idea that this proved problematic and therefore reinforce a line such as this being included in Forrest's play.
[438] Forrest, Peter *Somewhere North of Somewhere,* unpublished, 2001, pp.9-10.
[439] *Ibid.*, p.41.
[440] *Ibid.,* p.41.
[441] Forrest, Peter *Somewhere North of Somewhere,* unpublished, 2001, p.5.

actor to then look out to the 'silvertail' section of the crowd in the scene as well as those in the audience.[442] The reference did not go unnoticed by the Prime Minister who, in an address to the Country Liberal Party Dinner the following day, noted that 'since I've been here over the last couple of days a few people have said something about a railway. It emerges everywhere I go. I went to the concert last night. Got the biggest cheer. Come along here and there's a song. They've written a song about it. They don't write a song about me.'[443]

The opportunity to tell the Territory's story through the Centenary of Federation year was important for the story of the Bombings of Darwin too, and Forrest's play provided an active way of telling the story to a wider audience. With the Prime Minister and the Governor-General at the event, it was inevitable that media coverage would have also been present and, whilst not necessarily headline-busting in nature, would have enabled the story of Darwin to reach a few more people than it had before.

'Other' Identities other than Whiteness

Forrest's script is interesting in its representation of identities other than the white settler. It presents both an image of historic disdain for the minority ethnic communities, as well as a reconciliatory image of recognising the importance of the multicultural community that made up the city of Darwin. Within the first couple of pages of the script, Forrest writes that Darwin 'was a cosmopolitan community, with people from all sorts of racial mixtures being living proof of the town's diverse history.'[444] There was also an early recognition of the contribution made by some of

[442] Silvertail is an Australian phrase that refers to a person or persons who are socially prominent or are deemed to be rich and influential.
[443] Howard, John *Address to the Country Liberal Party Dinner Darwin, NT – 19 February 2001,* <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-12324>, accessed 3 May 2022.
[444] Forrest, Peter *Somewhere North of Somewhere,* unpublished, 2001, p.2

the indigenous communities to the war effort. As narrator, Forrest directed the following to the local communities:

> The Tiwi are splendid, resourceful people, and they proved that during the war. It's fair to say that they did more for the war effort than any other Australians. They watched the coasts, rescued shot down airmen and castaway seamen, supported radar bases on the islands, worked in a host of different capacities. And it should be known that several Tiwi actually went to Timor with resupply missions – they led patrols through hostile Territory to rendezvous with Australian guerrillas. The Tiwi were always out at the point of these dangerous patrols – because of their pre-war contact, they had an ability to smell the Japanese enemy long before they could be seen at night in the thick jungles and forests of Timor. Tiwi people, and I know some of your leaders are here tonight, we will not forget your service for your country.[445]

There were however also quotes within the play that were not so complimentary towards some of the minority communities. On page 9 of the script, soldiers are seen talking to an Aboriginal man as follows - 'come on Packsaddle, you're in it too. You can be a sergeant. (Throws him a shirt with three stripes). We'll feed you. But don't ask us to pay you.'[446] Later in the play there was also a reference to Chinatown from a Canberra-based town planner, in which he is heard to say 'Chinatown was burned down in 1943, one of the good things the war did. There will never be another Chinatown (emphatically).'[447] Forrest also makes note of the fact that many Japanese citizens were interned, even though they had been in Darwin for many generations and were not released until 1947.[448] All of these points demonstrate the challenging position that ethnic minority and indigenous communities faced within Darwin at the time of the Second World War. Although much had been done over the intervening years to address this imbalance, Federation was an opportunity not just for Darwin, but for the whole of Australia to recognise the contributions of the many communities that made up the nation of Australia.

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[445] *Ibid.,* p.18.
[446] *Ibid.*, p.9.
[447] *Ibid.*, p.41.
[448] *Ibid.,* p.12.

Throughout all of the areas of Forrest's script that I have highlighted – attitudes towards authority and the Federal Government; attitudes to identities other than whiteness; the role Darwin played in the defence of Australia – it is clear to see a link to the common theme that over the years, Darwin has had to fight for its place in the national story. Up until the 1990s when archival records were finally opened up after the fifty-year time restriction, it was easier to sweep the events of 1942 under the carpet. Forrest's script illustrates that the people of Darwin are not prepared to go down without a fight when it comes to securing their place on the national stage and as we have seen throughout this thesis, have begun to achieve a steadier footing on the national platform. It could be argued that there is still some way to go, with arenas of the Second World War such as Borneo, Africa and Europe still having a more prominent focus when it comes to the Australian contribution to that conflict. Darwin however continues to fight for its place in that sphere.

The Digital Revolution

The Centenary of Federation anniversary was also occurring at a time when approaches to history were changing, and in particular, approaches to public history that were designed for, and consumed by, mass audiences. It has been argued on many fronts that this kind of history could be used as a tool by the establishment to promote certain agendas or ideologies.[449] One of the perceived strengths of public history is its ability to be relatable and reach a wider audience. Since the early 2000s, it has become apparent that when you are able to reach a non-academic on a personal level, their level of engagement increases. A prime example was the various commemoration practices that surrounded the one hundredth anniversary of the First World War, which took place during the writing of this thesis. Archives were

[449] Jordanova, Ludmilla *History in Practice* (London: Arnold, 2000), p.141.

developed specifically to allow people to research an individual. Family history sites such as Ancestry and FindMyPast offered free access to their War Service records around the time of key commemorative events. Academic institutions, such as universities, offered research projects into the First World War.

One example of this was Monash University, which led the project *World War One: A History in 100 Stories.* This project produced not only a book detailing the lives of those who were involved in the conflict, but also coordinated a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) through FutureLearn that told some of these stories through the archives of Australia. National television networks across the world provided coverage of memorial ceremonies. August 2017 saw the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele. Commemorative ceremonies for this event ranged from remembrance services attended by royalty and dignitaries to concerts that included music, theatre, comedy, dance and even a light show on the Cloth Hall in Ypres Market Square. Events such as these called into question what was deemed commemorative. Was it just sombre services to remember the dead? Or could it be more upbeat concerts and shows? In the case of the bombings in Darwin, Peter Forrest's *Somewhere North of Somewhere* certainly showed that alternatives were a possibility. As time had passed from the original events, creating an occasion that allowed people to relate to the event and be stirred by emotion in their own times was important to the continued commemoration.

The publication of the first ever website in 1991, the period just before planning for the centenary celebrations got underway, gave society a powerful new tool with which to communicate. Beaumont observed that 'the birth of the Internet provided the technology whereby individual memories and local memories could intersect with "national memories".'[450] The creation of digital archives and

[450] Beaumont, Joan 'The Politics of memory: Commemorating the centenary of the First World War, *Australian Journal of Political Science,* 5:3, 2015, p.530.

repositories such as the National Archives of Australia, the Australian War Memorial and Trove Digital Newspapers have allowed academics as well as the general public to access records and data that previously would have required a significant period of travel to gain access. Indeed, the three web-based archives mentioned above have been integral to this research project.

The early 1990s saw the ability for websites to be created for all occasions, and as the century moved towards its conclusion, the impending anniversary of the Centenary was no different. In drawing on this new technology, a sense of community could be created in a new way. In the early 1980s Benedict Anderson developed the idea of a nation as being an imagined community. One of his theories was that by being able to communicate to large numbers of people, a sense of nationhood could be created. The advent of digital communication on a global scale brought a power to this theory that had not previously existed. The Centenary of Federation would occur at a time when the world was witnessing the 'large-scale emergence of digital media' and with that 'an immense arsenal of new ways to present historical knowledge and to interact with the public.'[451]

The National Council were aware that as a country with far-reaching borders, the use of the internet would be key to disseminating their message as widely as possible. They established a national Centenary of Federation website which, at its peak, received over 4000 hits a day.[452] Many of the States and Territories followed suit, creating their own websites to highlight the events that were important to their story, as well as to the national narrative. Some key events were completely web-based. One was a website called the People's Voice. The website was a collection of local histories provided from across Australia that

[451] Danniau, Fien 'Public History in a Digital Context: Back to the Future or Back to Basics?', *Low Countries Historical Review,* 128:4, 2013, p.118.
[452] Eggleton, Tony, The Year in Review: Report on the Centenary Year by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001), p.6.

covered the period since Federation. The website allowed visitors to hear directly from the people who had experienced various events over those one hundred years from the First and Second World Wars, to Cyclone Tracy, to the bicentenary of settlement.

A second, more interactive event was the project called *Connecting the Continent.* This took place between 18 June and 1 July 2001 and was a joint, live, online venture between the Federation committees of South Australia and the Northern Territory. The event provided an opportunity for people from across Australia and the world to tune in to 'a day in the life of' the various communities that were based along the route that the original Overland Telegraph had taken between Darwin and Port Augusta. The communities were able to share their histories from throughout the Federation period, as well as share their hopes and plans for the future. As well as a roadshow that went into the communities on their 'live' day, there were opportunities to interact online with the School of the Air, chat forums and competitions. The collaborative event was designed to commemorate the development of communicative technologies within Australia, as well as bringing things right up to date with the online world and how that could link people not just within Australia but right across the world.

Easier forms of communication have allowed Darwin to tell their military heritage through this medium, although I would argue that more can be done to promote this outside of the city itself. Most of the websites and interactive experiences are unlikely to be picked up unless you are planning a trip to Darwin or are examining the Bombings of Darwin in extreme detail. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence that people are trying to embrace the modern era and the opportunities that this brings. Examples of embracing these developing methods of communication include the Royal Flying Doctor Tourist Facility in Darwin, who use cutting edge technology to offer a virtual reality viewpoint into events on the day the

harbour was bombed, and the Defence of Darwin Experience at the Darwin Military Museum, which is described as a 'powerful, immersive, interactive experience.'[453] The Museum also hosts an app that allows people to take a self-guided tour of Second World War heritage sites across the Northern Territory. Further examples of embracing new technology can be seen in the conclusion to this thesis, which brings the story right up to the present day.

Celebrating Federation in the Northern Territory

As already mentioned, in addition to the establishment of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, the State and Territory governments set up their own councils to address local concerns and provide events that related to the local experience of the first hundred years of Australia. In the Northern Territory, this committee was headed up by Katrina Fong Lim as Executive Director and included a Member of Parliament, a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, Australia's first Indigenous AFL player from the Territory, a radio broadcaster, a former manager of the Northern Territory Library, a historian and author to name but a few. Two of their members went on to be future Lord Mayors of Darwin – an indication of the types of community minded members that were on the committee.

[453] 'Defence of Darwin Experience Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory' https://www.magnt.net.au/defence-of-darwin-experience, accessed 5 July 2025.

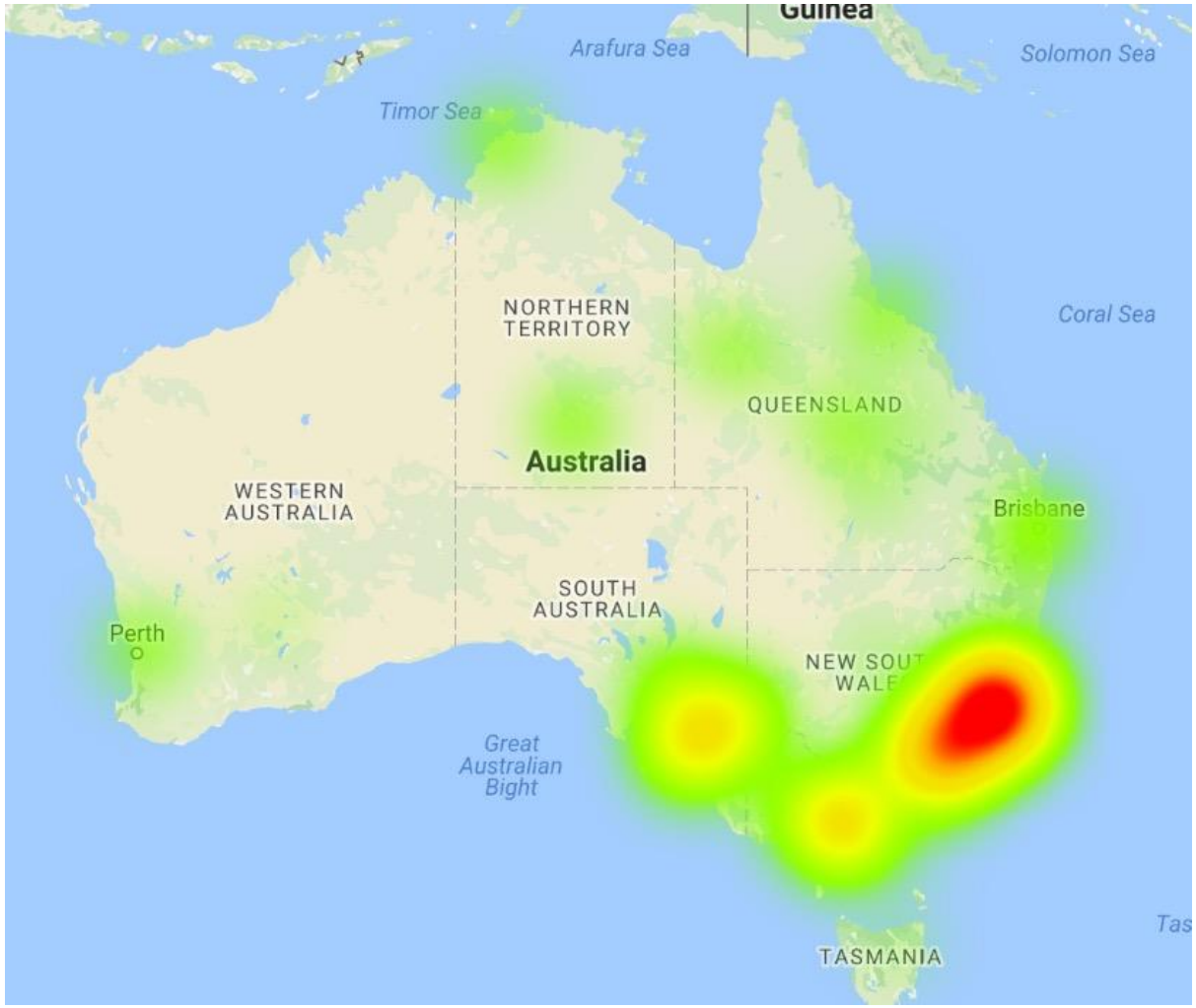

Figure 20. Heat Map showing locations of Federation celebrations and events

The National Council were keen to ensure that the National celebrations encompassed all States and Territories. To that end, they developed a range of 'Centrepiece' events which enabled a national event to take place in each location. The Northern Territory hosted three of these Centrepiece events with two taking place in Alice Springs and one in Darwin. The first of these events opened the year in January 2001, with 'an invitation being sent across the nation […inviting] all Australians to travel to the heart of their country for the Yeperenye Federation Festival in September.'[454] In addition, on 1 January 2001 a Centenary of Federation Parade took place in Sydney. Each state was represented in its own component of the parade, with the Northern Territory having floats that represented its part in the national story.

In February, the nation turned its focus to Darwin where they 'commemorated the distinctive contribution of the Northern Territory through Darwin's role in the defence of Australia and the bombing that began on 19 February 1942.'[455] Finally in September 'indigenous people from all parts of the nation came together for their biggest ever cultural gathering and corroboree.'[456] There were just over two hundred events recognised through the National Centenary of Federation calendar but only 2.5 percent actually took place or came to the Northern Territory, further reinforcing the belief that the North was separate and different. Plotting these events on a map highlights this separation more acutely, though not only for the Northern Territory but also for Western Australia and the city of Perth (see Fig. 20). Despite the warnings of the Advisory committee, the focus of many of the events under the national banner can still be said to be the south-east corner of the country covering New South Wales, ACT and Victoria.

[454] Eggleton, Tony, The Year in Review: Report on the Centenary Year by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001), p.10
[455] *Ibid.*
[456] *Ibid.*

The Northern Territory had its own calendar which saw 132 events being listed under the banner of the Territory recognised programme. These events were designed to represent the story of the whole territory over the hundred-year period since Federation. Of these events only 11 (8%) were related to the Bombing of Darwin while the majority of these events took place in the month of February. These events were wide and varied in their context, with some following the more traditional format of commemoration ceremonies, whilst others took an alternative look at the events that had happened in 1942, as we have already explored earlier in this chapter. Alternative commemorative events included the Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) hosting an exhibition entitled *Federation Frontline - The Bombing of Darwin: 19 February 1942.* The exhibition was 'drawn from the MAGNT collections' and was designed to recognise 'the endeavours of Territorians in wartime Darwin, through artefacts evoking the human face of war, and through scenes captured in paintings by official and unofficial artists from all services.'[457]

Australia Post created a commemorative First Day Cover of the 45c stamp which depicted Anti-Aircraft Gunners defending the town of Darwin. The cover came in a presentation folder that explained the events of February 1942. In addition to the First Day Cover, Australia Post's General Manager (SA/NT) unveiled a suite of commemorative boards in Parliament House, which had been the original site of the Post Office Building.[458] Postal workers who did survive the bombings were hailed as heroes for working through the tragedy to restore connections to the south, ensuring the news of the bombings could be transmitted. An additional artefact of commemoration was displayed at Parliament House for the Federation month – the flag that flew from Government House on 19 February 1942. Although damaged in

[457] NLA: Ephemera Formed 14 (Centenary of Federation 2001) Collection, pts.37-38, Exhibition poster. Despite many attempts to contact the MAGNT, I have not been able to establish any further information on this exhibition, save for the flyer contained in the ephemera box. It is not listed on their website as a previous exhibition, and I have been unable to locate any kind of exhibition guide. This perhaps demonstrates something in itself, suggesting that in the scheme of exhibitions, the gallery do not value the importance of this topic to the wider collection.
[458] NLA: Nlef994.29 C397, Centenary of Federation Northern Territory 1901-2001, p.5.

the original raids, the flag had survived and is normally on display at the Australian War Memorial. In what might be seen as an ironic arrangement, the flag was loaned back to the Territory during February 2001.

Nicholas Saunders highlights that as cultures move away from first-hand memory (survivors), the shaping of memory is guided by physical remains or ephemera and material items that were either present at the time, or have been created to support commemoration in the years since.[459] Items such as the flag in Darwin were a real tangible link to the day of the attacks and it conjures up direct imagery in the mind of how it came to be in the state that it is today. Making a personal link to the events, whether by telling the stories of those who died or those who survived, allows a further connection to the event for present day society. It should be noted that by using items such as the flag, history is being curated to a specific narrative that also fits with the views of the current day. This is particularly the case when it comes to museum exhibits that are curated to tell a story in a certain way, often to the cost of certain perspectives of the story being told.

On the actual anniversary of the bombing raids, on 19 February 2001, the Territory arranged a programme of events full of the pomp and ceremony traditionally associated with commemoration of wartime events. The official programme of commemoration *Commemorating The Bombing of Darwin in the Centenary of Federation* illustrated that military bands; drill teams; local, national and international dignitaries including the Prime Minster and the American Ambassador; an FA18 flypast; a youth choir and indigenous ceremonies were just some of the constituent parts of the overall ceremony.[460] On that fateful day in 1942, the bombings commenced at 9.58am. In 2001, the commemoration ceremonies were broadcast live

[459] Saunders, Nicholas *Material Culture and Conflict: The Great War 1914-2003* in Saunders, Nicholas (ed.) *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2004), p.5. Whilst the study of material culture largely started as part of the anthropology discipline, it has in more recent times overlapped into the field of public history, heritage studies and other such fields.
[460] NLA: Ephemera Formed 14 (Centenary of Federation 2001) Collection, pts.37-38, *Commemorating The Bombing of Darwin in the Centenary of Federation.*

to the nation via the ABC network from 8.30am (ACST). For those joining from the east coast, this would have been 10am (AEDT) in the morning, but the west coast viewers would have had to rise at 7am (AWST). This difference in time, although seemingly minimal, demonstrates the difficulty of trying to organise interstate events.

The 19 February was not a National Day at that stage and so for those on the east coast in particular, many would have been at work or school. In addition to the ceremony held in Darwin itself, the Darwin Defenders were responsible for organising commemorative events not only in each of the capital cities but also in various regional centres. The Federation Frontline leaflet notes that this was done 'in recognition of the many Australians who may wish to participate in a commemorative service.'[461]

Newspapers of the time seem to demonstrate that Victoria and South Australia were the states that put on the largest number of commemorative events, with South Australia holding at least eight services on 19 February at a mixture of military and public sites, including Keswick and Woodside Army Barracks, the National War Memorial in Adelaide City Centre and the Adelaide GPO.[462] This may be related to the fact that these two states had some of the strongest links to the Northern Territory. Many survivors of the bombings were evacuated south to Adelaide and Melbourne, with many never returning north. In an article published by *The Mercury* in Hobart, Tasmania, the Governor, Sir Guy Green stated in his speech to those assembled that the nationwide observance of the Bombing of Darwin was long overdue.[463] It is

[461] NLA: Ephemera Formed 14 (Centenary of Federation 2001) Collection, pts.37-38, Tri-fold Federation Frontline Leaflet.
[462] 'Darwin raid remembered.' *Advertiser* (Adelaide, South Australia, Australia), 19 February 2001, p. 006. *Gale OneFile: News*, <link.gale.com/apps/doc/A84484438/STND?u=univea&sid=bookmark-STND&xid=2c41f39c>, accessed 29 December 2022. It is difficult to explore Australian digital newspaper archives from recent times. At the time of writing, Trove's policy is only to digitise newspapers up to 1954. Newspaper publishers do not seem to hold online archives of their own publications. I have been able to locate some publications from the time via Gale OneFile:News which holds the text of articles published in over 2300 worldwide newspapers, although key players such as the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age do not have records for 2001.
[463] 'Remembering our `Pearl Harbour'.' *Mercury* (Hobart, Tasmania, Australia), 20 Feb. 2001, p.008. *Gale OneFile: News*, <link.gale.com/apps/doc/A100918782/STND?u=univea&sid=bookmark-STND&xid=17112379>, accessed 29 December 2022.

interesting to note however that some of the articles written about the bombings still referred to panic, desertion, incompetence and looting – reasserting the view that was first shared by Paul Hasluck that the events in Darwin should be viewed with shame. Perhaps not quite the view that the Centenary of Federation committee was hoping to give to the nation, and also another nod towards the fact that the south and north held very different viewpoints on the event. Is this the cultural notion of the Brisbane Line at play again?

As well as key individual events to commemorate the Centenary of Federation, the government had been keen to ensure that a lasting impression and legacy was created in conjunction with the celebrations. The Northern Territory as a whole had a number of these lasting legacies, including two that related specifically to the Bombing of Darwin. The first of these was *Federation Frontline: A people's history of World War II in the Northern Territory* written by Peter and Sheila Forrest. The book was crafted as a mark of respect to those who experienced the Second World War in the Northern Territory. Its authors note in the introduction that it is an area of history that has 'been neglected in the telling of our national story.'[464] Australia Post played an instrumental part in the publication, sponsoring the overall Federation Frontline initiative as a mark of respect to the postal workers that lost their lives in the raids, having vowed to serve their country and see communications continue via the north.

The second part of the lasting legacy scheme was an education package written by Elizabeth Mountford. Designed as a Secondary School Education resource, *The Bombing of Darwin* was intended to support Peter and Sheila Forrest's book. Separated into four units of study, it focussed first on the international context and build up to the Second World War, and the first bombing raids on Darwin. The second unit explored the stories of military personnel, whilst the third unit surveyed

[464] Forrest, Peter and Sheila Forrest *Federation Frontline: A people's history of World War II in the Northern Territory,* (Darwin: Centenary of Federation Northern Territory, 2001), p.6.

how civilians were affected by the bombings. The final unit looked at how the bombing raids have been commemorated, even containing a section on the Darwin Defenders. It is interesting to note that this section does not acknowledge the Darwin Commemoration Association which was first formed in the 1970s, and then later merged with the Darwin Defenders.

There is no doubt that the Northern Territory committee used the Bombing of Darwin as one of its key themes in the year of the Centenary of Federation to highlight to Territorians, as well as the rest of Australia, the important role that the Territory played in the defence of the nation. Although it was to be another 11 years before a National Day of Observance was formally observed across the nation, this could be seen as the starting point of a groundswell for such an event. Writing in the *Courier-Mail,* Rod McGuirk noted that the commemorative event on 19 February 2001 was the largest ever seen featuring a 21-gun salute, fighter-jet flypasts and appearances from veteran entertainers.[465] The Federation Frontline programme for the day also detailed an aeroplane dance by Tiwi Islanders, a Federation Guard drill display, the Australian Defence Force Band and appearances from two survivors of the raids. This was definitely an event that had started to move towards the spectacle rather than the solemn, something this research has touched on previously. Although there were still survivors around at this point in time, they were heading towards, or well into, their eighties and would not be around forever. An event that combined veterans, present-day servicemen, performers and civilians provided opportunities to carry on the commemoration into the future, albeit it in different ways.

[465] 'Heavens remember the dead.' *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Queensland, Australia), 20 February 2001, p. 002. *Gale OneFile: News*, <link.gale.com/apps/doc/A102357118/STND?u=univea&sid=bookmark-STND&xid=be561e71>, accessed 29 December 2022.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to trace the chronological evolution and development of the commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin from 1942 through to the present day. To bring the story of Darwin completely up to date, this conclusion starts by focusing on the last of the research questions, which sought to explore how and why commemorative events change over time to ensure the continued remembrance of events once original survivors are no longer around. As already noted, the commemoration of Federation was significant in helping to establish a new and more inclusive platform for the Australian discourse, and the dawn of the Twenty-First Century brought more new ways of commemorating and celebrating the events of February 1942. The rapid growth of digital media opened up a wealth of historical events to a new group of people. In conjunction with this was a development of a new level of creativity and imagination across the world, allowing historical events to be remembered in a way that allowed modern-day society to relate to what happened.

The seventieth anniversary of the bombings occurred in February 2012 and had a wide and varied programme of events as part of the commemoration. The programme provided in the *Northern Territory News* during February 2012 detailed commemorative football matches, concerts, art exhibitions, book launches, a play that followed a group of multi-cultural women in Darwin during 1942, and historical talks by survivors and experts in combat history, in addition to the standard commemorative services at the various sites affected by the attacks.[466] This comprehensive programme of events was perhaps in part due to the fact that, for the first time in its history, Australia was marking 19 February as a national day of commemoration for the Bombing of Darwin. The programme lasted for two weeks between 11 and 26 February 2012 and one of the most unique ways of

[466] 'Bombing of Darwin 70th Anniversary – Program of Commemorative Ceremonies and Special Events', *NT News Special Feature,* 10 February 2012.

commemorating the bombings of Darwin in this period was through the medium of fashion. Matilda Alegria (1989 -) is a Darwin-based designer who created the collection called 'A Minute's Warning' to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin.

Alegria describes the collection as one 'that represented the death, destruction and emotions that were a result of the air raids.'[467] Showcased in a theatrical performance at the Old Qantas hanger in Darwin in 2012, the pieces that Alegria designed each represented an interpretation of an event that took place on that fateful day. The images show Alegria's interpretation of the sinking of the *MV Neptuna* (see Fig. 22), the camouflage of the anti-aircraft personnel based onshore, the fires that burned in the harbour during the attacks (see Fig 23) and a representation of the loss of life on that day (see Fig. 24).

Alegria's novel way of marking the anniversary was heavily criticized, with a report in *The Saturday Age* suggesting that many people felt she was being disrespectful towards those who had lost their lives.[468] In response to these criticisms, Matilda commented that this was never her intention. Rather, she was 'trying to tell the story in an innovative and a very tasteful way.'[469] The manager of the Darwin Returned Serviceman's League (RSL) defended Alegria in the same article noting:

> here is a young person with a completely new idea to show what happened in Darwin […] some of us oldies could never imagine anything like it. But, we thought, she's showing that terrible time in a different light and a way that will attract a younger person – what the hell, we'll give her a go.[470]

[467] 'A Minutes Warning – Matilda Alegria', <https://www.matildaalegria.com/a-minutes-warning/>, accessed 20 July 2017
[468] The Saturday Age, 18 February 2012, p.3.
[469] *Ibid.*
[470] *Ibid.*

Figure 21. USS Peary by Matilda Alegria - Glenn Campbell - Saturday Age

Figure 22. Neptuna by Matilda Alegria - Glenn Campbell

Figure 23. Explosion by Matilda Alegria - Glenn Campbell

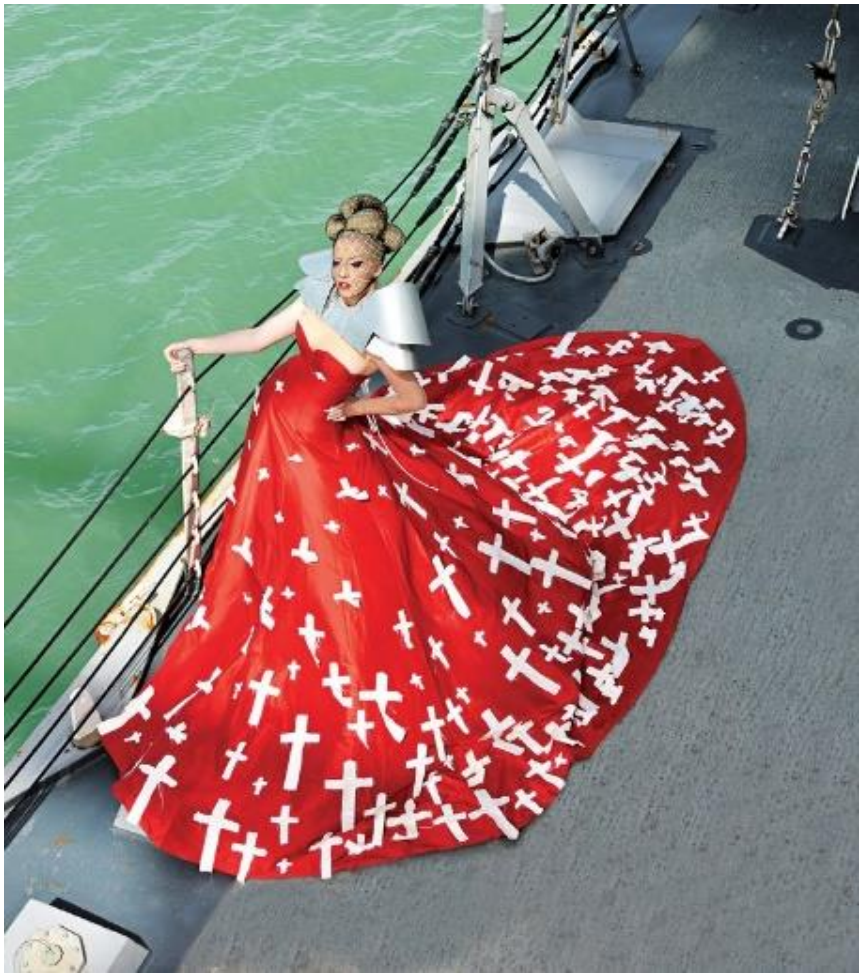

Figure 24. The Graveyard Shift by Matilda Alegria – Resident Magazine

Those responsible for preserving the memory of the events of the bombing of Darwin were all too acutely aware that the seventieth anniversary was likely to be the last significant anniversary where a large group of survivors would be able to gather in Darwin. In fact, the organizer of the Darwin Defenders had pointed out in 2002 that 'he did not think his members would come again because the average age is 80 and this is their swan song.'[471] The RSL eventually became one of the sponsors of the showcase, indicating that any initial reservations that may have been held had clearly been overcome. In the same article in the *Saturday Age,* Alegria demonstrated that she had undertaken careful research in the construction of the garments:

> Somewhere under the billowing skirts of her USS Peary gown, for example, a tiny '266', the number originally painted on the vessel that sank after five direct hits, is secreted between layers of silk. The collection also includes a mini frocklet with stiffened pink and grey silk 'flames' leaping from its bodice and shoulders. Another features an exaggerated bell skirt and circular bodice sculpted with boning and red silk to resemble a hybrid of the Japanese flag and a bomber's propeller.[472]

As this thesis was being finalised, another new and developmental way of commemorating the Bombings of Darwin was launched in July 2023 at the World War II Oil Storage Tunnels. Based on 'The Digger' sculpture highlighted in Chapter Five the tunnel owner, Robert Marchant, worked with Gareth Benson at True Blue Production – a Darwin-based digital production company – to create the AADFA Man Experience. Representing an Australian American Dutch Force Alliance serviceman (a term coined by the team at the Oil Storage Tunnels), the sculpture has been brought to life using augmented reality that is accessed through a smart phone, where AADFA Man tells the story of the tunnels as you explore them. Marchant described the installation as a 'a new tourism and education attraction' that would hopefully 'bridge the gap between today's youth and World War II history and bring these

[471] Powell, Alan 'The Air Raids on Darwin, 19 February 1942: Image and Reality' in Dean, Peter. J *Australia 1942: In The Shadow of War,* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.152.
[472] 'Darwin bombings inspire a woven lesson in history', *The Saturday Age,* 18 February 2012, p.3.

stories to life.'[473] AADFA Man was just the beginning of the planned developments at the tunnel. In November 2023, Marchant launched *The Darwin Digger* comic book at Tropicon in Darwin.[474] In an interview with *NT News,* Marchant stated that 'this ground-breaking comic promises to unearth a new era of storytelling…it builds on the immersive AR story to the tunnels, with QR codes throughout the comic launching backstories of its characters and military objects in augmented reality.'[475] Following the launch of *The Darwin Digger* at Tropicon, Marchant and team took the comic book to Comicon Singapore in December 2023, where an estimated 50,000 visitors had the chance to view their creation and learn more about the Bombing of Darwin. In the lead up to Anzac Day 2024, the AADFA man was given an artificial intelligence (AI) upgrade, allowing visitors to the tunnels to engage in 'conversation' with the character as well as influencing parts of the story.[476] Whilst this most recent development is perhaps more questionable in terms of ensuring an accurate reflection of events in Darwin during the Second World War, there is no doubt that Marchant and Benson have tapped into something that engages the public in new ways.

The Evolution of Commemoration

The development in the World War II Oil Tunnels storytelling highlights the recognition from those within the commemorative tourism sector that change is not only inevitable, but essential. Could those veterans who fought in Darwin have ever dreamt that they would one day be the foundation for a comic book? Probably not. This kind of development however is vital to the future preservation of the story of Darwin. In the ABC documentary *The Many Days of Anzac: A History of Anzac Commemoration in Australia*, Carolyn Holbrook stated that for things to stay the

[473] 'Tunnelling into great tech', *Northern Territory News,* 5 July 2023, p.22.
[474] Tropicon is the Territory's version of Comicon, aimed at those who 'love pop culture, getting dressed up, playing esports, trading cards, digital art, virtual reality, collectibles, tabletop board games and more', <https://www.ntgcca.com/tropicon>, accessed 20 November 2023.
[475] 'Comic joins augmented reality to honour heroes', *NT News,* 11 November 2023, p.3, (taken from the WWII Oil Storage Tunnels Facebook page, 12 November 2023.
[476] 'Tunnelling into history: WWII alive beyond the page', *Northern Territory News,* 25 April 2024, p.4.

same, things have to change – i.e., if you want to carry on celebrating or commemorating events such as Anzac Day or Bombing of Darwin Day, you have to change the way in which it is represented to the masses. The Bombing of Darwin fits into this same category and as this thesis has demonstrated has embraced the changes needed to give it longevity.

The primary objective for this research was to examine the place of the Bombing of Darwin in the historical memory of Australia, whilst also establishing whether a sense of difference and separation had affected how this developed. This thesis is the first in-depth study of the evolution of commemoration events relating to Darwin and has assessed this development through a variety of lenses including immigration, national identity and the effect of anniversaries on tourism and the wider narrative. Although examining the same event, these differing themes offer a unique perspective on the way in which commemoration evolves over time. This thesis has demonstrated that the commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin can be divided into two separate phases, the first being linked to a more personal approach to remembering and the impact that this had, growing in later years to a more public-focused commemoration. This latter period also links closely with the time in which survivors of the event were becoming smaller in number, and thus a focus on how to carry the story forward for future generations was integral to the memory and commemoration of the bombing raid.

Using a combination of archival and official documents alongside multi-media sources and referencing secondary sources has reinforced the interdisciplinary approach of this thesis. Such an approach has meant that it has only been possible to make brief reference to the theories associated with the themes that run through each chapter. To have undertaken a deep-dive into these theories could have resulted in a mini-thesis per topic, but holds potential for being the basis of future research into the commemoration of the Bombing of Darwin.

The introduction to this thesis laid out five key points for consideration that interlinked the various parts of the story of the Bombing of Darwin and their commemoration. With the final question already having been addressed at the beginning of this conclusion, in the pages that follow, I demonstrate how the remaining points have been considered and also how they link to the overall question of the place of the Bombing of Darwin in historical memory.

Differences between North and South Australia

The differences between the north and south have been evident throughout the majority of the chapters, albeit featuring more prominently in some than in others, and this was the basis for the first of my research questions. Right from its very inception, Darwin has faced struggles in being located so far from the rest of Australia. Chapter One explored the history of Darwin and the challenges faced in establishing a northern outpost, with four settlements being attempted across a range of locations in the Van Diemen Gulf. Even once it was fully established at Palmerston, the natural challenges of living in the Tropics proved difficult to master and the destruction of the city on multiple occasions due to cyclones demonstrated the different kind of life that came with living in the North. In addition to these challenges, Darwin struggled to find its place in the national framework, with struggles around finances and political rights featuring in much of its early history. Political representation was limited and for many years Territory leaders were individuals who had been sent from the southern states and lacked an understanding of what it meant to live in Darwin and the Territory. Whilst not containing significant new knowledge, this chapter was important in setting the scene of the challenges and differences that Darwin and the Northern Territory experienced.

The lack of understanding of political decision-makers was explored further in Chapter Three, which analysed the relationship between north and south during the 1950s and 1960s when the salvage work undertaken by Japanese personnel in the

harbour was carried out. The salvage work was essential in order for the Port of Darwin to reopen, but it was those in the south who ultimately made the decisions about how this would be undertaken. Politicians and civil servants were signing off on decisions and policies that were based on their comfortable lives in the south, without considering the needs of the north. At a time when the White Australia Policy was still enforced, immigration was a key area within this, and archival records demonstrate that some decisions were passed around departments as ministers were anxious about having their names associated with judgements that could impact the future of the whole nation.

This chapter reinforced the notions of difference between north and south, highlighting further the absence of empathy and consideration for how two parts of the same country could have such differing outlooks on similar policies. Whilst researchers such as David Steinberg, a maritime archaeologist, have focused on the archaeology and process of salvage, few have examined in extensive detail the government files on the matter, making this a unique lens through which to view the Bombing of Darwin and its commemoration.

The chapter also demonstrated that reconciliation could play a key part in commemoration, and although the actions of the Fujita company did not resolve all negative feelings towards the Japanese, it was clear that their time in Darwin was largely positive. It was perhaps Darwin's pre-war multicultural character that assisted it in adjusting to the return of the Japanese to the city. Commemoration during this period was mostly still at a local and personal level, with lost individuals as the focus. The idea of collective remembrance was restricted to church services, bringing a solemnity befitting the feelings of those who survived. The chapter also noted the continuing dominance of Anzac Day as a national day of military remembrance in that period, over and above anything linked to the Bombings of Darwin.

National War Commemoration and the Bombing of Darwin

The idea of how the Bombing of Darwin interacted with the national process of war commemoration links into another of the key research questions identified in the introduction and can be seen from two distinct positions. The notion of 'shame' that surrounded the aftermath of the bombings – and reinforced by Paul Hasluck in the 1950s – influenced the way in which this was then commemorated on a national scale. The perception of shame was reinforced by the way in which censorship laws were applied to the story of Darwin, preventing much of the information from being released into the public domain until fifty years after the event. Events and ideas that did not conform to the national image of war and commemoration were side-lined and omitted from the framework, again leading towards the separation that was mentioned in the previous section.

Transversely however, the shift in the 1970s and 1980s in regard to how war and conflict was viewed within the Australian context actually assisted veterans of Darwin and the Northern Territory in coming forward with their stories. Chapter Four explored the image of Anzac and how it moved from a position of glorifying war and the role that Anzacs played within that, to recognising the sacrificial nature of war and conflict. This coincided with the Vietnam War, which played an important role in changing the global approach to how war was viewed. Veterans who had previously sat on the periphery were emboldened to tell their stories and to change the way that people viewed war. There were many reasons for this – some felt it was important to mark particular events, that impacted on Darwin, so that they were not forgotten from the memory as survivors began to dwindle. Some felt it was important to show the side of war that much of the Anzac ideology tried to hide – the tragedy, the sacrifice, the mental anguish and suffering. Works such as Alistair Thomson's *Anzac Memories* did much to offer new insights into the experience of war. The veterans of Darwin were able to play into many of these shifts to highlight their story.

The Darwin Commemoration Association looked to embrace new ways of commemorating through its oral history project and resulting book, *Recollections – Darwin 1942*. Although this sadly was unable to come to full fruition, it was a sign that new ways of capturing and telling the story were important to the future ability to commemorate the attacks on Darwin. Whilst many of their stories continued to focus on the personal, there was a sense that a shift towards a wider recognition of the events in Darwin was important to preserve its longevity. This chapter made an important link between the shifting views of Anzac in Australian national identity on the place of Darwin's story in the national discourse, beginning the long process of establishing the Bombing of Darwin as a significant event in the life of the nation.

Social, Cultural and Political Factors

Whilst the earlier chapters in this thesis focused more on the political influences in the story of the Bombing of Darwin, Chapter Five focussed more on the impact of contemporary commemorative practices and how they affected the story of Darwin. Tourism has played an important role in how events such as the Bombing of Darwin are remembered. The significance of anniversaries is evident through both sites, with investment and experiences being marketed much more heavily around these times. Cultural experiences have gained momentum in the desires of tourists and tourists have, rightly or wrongly, taken advantage of this.

The first part of this chapter focussed largely on the fieldwork undertaken as part of this research. The fieldwork took a particular focus on the tourist experience in Darwin, examining how the people of Darwin tell the story of their Second World War experience. It identifies that much of the tourist provision is heavily linked to the idea of being immersed in the event as though the individual is present as it happens. It demonstrates the importance of the personal connection to maintaining the longevity of the story for the future. This links into the ideas of Durkheim and Halbwachs and the collective activities that allow generations to link to the past,

moving towards the stance of Kansteiner's collective remembering as survivors slowly decline.

The second half of the chapter focused on the period covering the turn of the century, the celebrations associated with the federation of the nation and the role that Darwin played within that. The Centenary of Federation was marketed as an opportunity for Australia to shape its story for the modern era. Embracing new technology and the digital world, telling the story of Darwin to a wider audience was becoming more accessible. There was also an importance for funding lasting legacies that could benefit local communities and the wider nation for years to come. It was important for new audiences and communities to be able to establish their own emotional, social and cultural links to the event. Events such as Peter Forrest's play took a unique approach to telling the story of Darwin and was a more open way for people to engage in the events that took place in 1942.

This chapter has charted the development of Darwin's story through new mediums, reinforcing its place in the Territory's history and branching out into ways in which a wider international attention can be garnered for the story. Historians and commercial tourism facilitators have continued to embrace these new methods of engaging as a means of drawing in modern-day Australians and visitors to the narrative. This chapter offers a new viewpoint from which to assess the commemoration process, focusing heavily on the collective and public nature of Darwin's story as the years march on.

The Brisbane Line as a Cultural Notion

The question of the Brisbane Line and the idea as to whether this existed as a cultural notion has a somewhat more nuanced argument within the thesis and was a key question that I wished to explore. I have already demonstrated that the differences between north and south certainly affected how decisions were made – this was highlighted particularly through Chapters Two and Three but has also been touched

on in other areas of the thesis. It is clear from the archives as well as through the works of people such as Connaughton, Rosen and Day that some notion of abandonment of the north in the event of invasion was considered as part of military strategy during the war, even if this did not become formal policy. It is also clear that the people of the Northern Territory were convinced that the Brisbane Line had existed as a formal policy, no matter what the Royal Commission had concluded. Whilst a cultural notion of a formal Brisbane Line is hard to prove, it is apparent that in the early days of the post-war period, the social, political and cultural differences between the north and south reinforced this idea of separation and disparity. The lack of understanding, for example, of the impact of Darwin's proximity to South-East Asia and the way in which they needed to interact placed a great deal of strain on political relationships. Darwin and its communities have often sat on the fringes of the nation's story, and this again reinforced the notion that things were different – and perhaps not so significant – in the north.

In more recent years, there has been a substantial shift in the way Darwin is viewed by Australia as a whole. It is seen as – and indeed branded as – the 'Gateway to the Nation'. Darwin is at the forefront of much of Australia's defence policies, having both Australian and American military bases in the vicinity. Since 2011, the US Marines have maintained a presence at Robertson Barracks in Darwin, cementing the importance of Australia's focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, a recent BBC article branded Darwin as 'the key to countering China.'[477] The article described Darwin as being 'at the heart of deepening ties between Canberra and Washington, and the focus of massive investment from both governments.'[478] This has not come without its challenges, and as the article explains, many of those who live in Darwin are concerned about the focus that is now being shifted in their direction by the

[477] 'The laidback Australian city key to countering China', BBC World News website, 23 October 2023 < https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-67166799>, accessed 24 October 2023.
[478] *Ibid.*

emphasis on its importance within the national defence strategy. These concerns bring the idea of the 'Brisbane Line' full circle. Whilst it is fair to say that in more recent times Darwin now holds a more prominent place in the stories and policies of Australia, the focus of national defence strategy on the north could be seen to reinforce the notion of those in Canberra not fully understanding the impact that their decisions have on the those in Darwin and the north. The idea of the 'Brisbane Line' therefore becomes more about lack of understanding as opposed to abandonment.

The overall title of this thesis invited the reader to look at the place of the Bombings of Darwin in historical memory. This research has clearly demonstrated that in the early post-war years the place of the bombings held a negligible place within the Australian discourse. More recent years have seen it become a firm feature of the national commemorative framework, with a formal day of recognition sanctioned by the Governor-General from 2012 onwards, and a standard Prime Ministerial statement on 19 February every year since. New ways of commemorating have ensured that its place is, at least for the foreseeable future, now firmly secured as part of Australia's wider war-based commemoration scene and formally recognised as the first place in Australia that saw direct action in time of conflict.

Appendix One: Recollections of Soldiers in Darwin

The recollections of soldiers and those who were based in Darwin give an interesting insight into their experiences of service in the north, as well as how their service in that area has been received by the nation. Their memories cover a vast range of topics including the general hardships of living in a tropical city, their understanding at the time of the threat the Japanese posed, as well as comments covering how actions have been perceived since. These recollections have been analysed from both Norma Reedy's unpublished *Recollections – Darwin 1942* – now housed in the Australian War Memorial's archives – and the University of New South Wales *Australian at War Film Archive* – an archive of interviews with veterans about their service in various battlegrounds. Some of these veterans' names can also be found in the membership listings for the Darwin Commemoration Association. The film archive consists of over two thousand interviews in total, covering a diverse range of battlefronts, with over one hundred of these interviews conducted with veterans who saw an element of their service based in Darwin.

In both sets of sources, the men talk of the struggles they faced with the environment. Victor Catchlove recalls that the journey north took nine days in rail cattle trucks, and then army trucks when the rails ran out. The tracks they travelled were rough and red dust got everywhere.[479] Donald Campbell compared the journey to Darwin as similar to those who were being taken to prison camps – a fact that he would not have been aware of at the time, but an image that has shaped his way of thinking about this since.[480] Wilfred Bowie recalls the differences in travelling depending on the season, with the road tracks being like mud with trucks often

[479] Transcript of Interview with Victor Catchlove, 10 December 2003 *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 1225), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1225 retrieved 17 May 2025.
[480] Transcript of Interview with Donald Campbell (Lofty), 3 December 2003, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 1339), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1339 retrieved 17 May 2025.

getting bogged down during the wet season, but with red dust everywhere which got into engines and the like when it was the dry season.[481] The journey to Darwin was clearly very challenging for the men, and that was before they even reached what can be referred to as the Australian Front Line.

Once the soldiers arrived in Darwin, recollections suggest that things did not get much better. Many of the soldiers mention a lack of functioning equipment and ammunition, with some referencing the fact that they only had enough live ammunition to last them five minutes. If equipment broke, which it frequently did, getting a replacement was almost impossible and so they had to rely on the repairs they could make themselves. Equipment based issues were not the only ones the men faced, with several of them recalling challenges with the environment. A number of them mention the difficulties of digging slit trenches in Darwin due to the ground being so hard. They often had to blast the trenches with dynamite in order to achieve the task at hand.[482] A number of interviews in the Film Archive refer to soldiers suffering with dengue fever or 'going troppo' – that is suffering from the effects of the heat and humidity, the constant work and the lack of sleep.[483] Wilfred Bowie recalls catching dengue fever because he had not been issued with a mosquito net, which was essential equipment up north.[484] In addition to mosquitos, a number of servicemen refer to sand-fly bites which often left them needing to spend a few days in the hospital. There are also a number of references to the heat and the dust so commonly associated with Darwin but not experienced by these soldiers until they were posted there. The tropical sun was burning hot, the water for

[481] Transcript of Interview with Wilfred Bowie (Wilf), 7 July 2004, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 2149), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/2149 retrieved 17 May 2025.
[482] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 8, p.16, p.20, p.29.
[483] Australians at War Film Archive, University of New South Wales, Transcripts of Interviews with Vincent Ravese, Edward Brooks, Neville Barnes, Ira Withers, Charles Skerry, Bob Crawford, Jack Hunt and Wilfred Bowie all contain references to the sicknesses experienced either by themselves or by colleagues whilst in Darwin.
[484] Transcript of Interview with Wilfred Bowie (Wilf), 7 July 2004, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 2149), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/2149 retrieved 17 May 2025.

the showers was transported through an above-ground pipe system, which meant that the option for a cold shower was virtually non-existent.

For those who arrived after the initial bombings, there was often a sense of shock on arrival. Edward Brooks reminiscences that many of them were surprised by the damage they saw, as they were not expecting to see it.[485] Censorship and down-playing of events played a significant role at the time and the true extent of the attacks had been shielded from the general public. More than one of the men interviewed remembers seeing great chunks removed from the letters they had sent home due to censorship rules. Rex Ruwoldt recalls speaking with a woman from Western Australia after the war who, when evacuated from Darwin as a little girl, was hauled into the teacher's office for lying about the Darwin raids that killed her father.[486] This lack of knowledge ties in with Vincent Ravese's comments that 'a lot happened up in Darwin. For 60 odd years nothing was said, Anzac Day would come along and the word Darwin was never ever mentioned for 50 years and I thought that was a big insult to the people who served up there.'[487] In Norma Reedy's unpublished *Recollections – Darwin 1942,* a postal clerk recalls his father being based in Darwin as a train driver but notes that he was 'one of many who didn't receive any recognition, even though he was in the area for a much longer period than most others.'[488] John Cameron reflects in the same collection that 'I am sick of "Day of Shame" rubbish. There was a tremendous lot to be proud of on that day and in the months that followed.'[489] Jack Knight notes that much of the stuff written about Darwin by journalists and others is sheer rubbish.[490]

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[485] Transcript of Interview with Edward Brooks (Russ), 14 May 2003, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 129), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/129 retrieved 20 May 2025.
[486] Transcript of Interview with Rex Ruwoldt, 16 March 2004, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 1596), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1596 retrieved 20 May 2025.
[487] Ravese, Vincent *Australians at War Film Archive Interview,*
[488] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 8, p.15.
[489] *Ibid.,* p.46.
[490] *Ibid.,* p.71.

In the *Australians at War Film Archive* interviews, the men were asked about their awareness of the threat from the Japanese and what they were being told whilst based up north. It appears that whilst there were lots of rumours going round, there were no formal updates from senior officials relating to the next move of the Japanese. Victor Catchlove, who arrived after the initial bombings, notes that 'they didn't tell us…that there were two hundred-odd thousand Japs in that strait just above Darwin.'[491] Bob Crawford and Wilfred Bowie, who were both in Darwin at the time of the raids note that when the Japanese bombed the harbour, Australia was caught with its pants down. Cyril Hough meanwhile remembers hearing stories about the Japanese waiting just outside the harbour ready to invade.[492] Jack Hunt, who served with the 6th Australian Auxiliary Topographical Survey Company as a mapper recalls that:

> Despite what people think, we were on a hostile coast, this is what people don't realise, and we were warned about it when we were going around the coastline of Northern Australia, that we were open to hostile action at any particular time. We learned later it was amazing how many times the Japanese landed on the north coast.[493]

In *Recollections – Darwin 1942,* a telegraph messenger tells that people were talking about invasion by the end of the first day of raids, and this was confirmed by Claud Leonard who also recalls that 'invasion was in all minds.'[494] Jack Knight, who was a cadet officer on the *M.V Neptuna,* reflects that after they had heard about the fall of Singapore:

> Later we consequently understood that Darwin must be getting to the top of the list of targets for the Japanese, there was little we could do about that, because except for two 303 rifles, we had no armourments and could not leave whilst we had cargo on board.[495]

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[491] Transcript of Interview with Victor Catchlove, 10 December 2003, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 1225), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1225 retrieved 17 May 2025.
[492] Transcript of Interview with Cyril Hough, 18 November 2003, *Australians at War Film Archive,* (Archive Number 1083), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1083 20 May 2025.
[493] Transcript of interview with Jack Hunt, 14 July 2004, *Australians at War Film Archive* (Archive Number 2110), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/2110 retrieved 20 May 2025.
[494] Australian War Memorial PR04552, Darwin Commemoration Association, Folder 8, p.29.
[495] *Ibid.,* p.57.

In some of the *Australians at War Film Archive* interviews, the veterans are asked about their feelings about Anzac and how they fit into that narrative. A number of them, particularly those that only saw service take them as far as Papua New Guinea, discuss the struggles they felt regarding feeling part of the Anzac narrative. Keith Walker poignantly notes that he did not feel he could match up to those who marched with loads of medals on Anzac Day when he had none – highlighting the issue of the non-recognition of Darwin as an active service area to qualify for the 1939-45 Star.[496] He also recalls hearing stories of Darwin veterans who had been sent white feathers, insinuating that service in Darwin did not count as real service and that somehow action in the Northern Territory was a cop-out and equivalent to being a coward in shirking what was deemed to be proper military service. Whilst this is the only mention of this discovered through this research, it suggests that a story of this kind has at some point circulated amongst veterans. Both Cyril Hough and Charles Skerry note in their interviews that it took them a very long time to feel part of the Anzac community and find their rightful place in parades on Anzac Day. Although in later years they seemed to embrace their positions in the parade, it is nonetheless interesting to note their initial reluctance, for fear of being seen as not worthy.

[496] Transcript of interview with Keith Walker, 16 June 2003, *Australians at War Film Archive* (Archive Number 503), https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/503 retrieved 26 May 2025.

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