



AUSTRALIAN NURSES MEMORIAL CENTRE

Spring 2020 Newsletter

Welcome to our Spring edition of the Australian Nurses Memorial Centre's newsletter. I trust that you are all fine and that the lockdown hasn't been too difficult for you. Hopefully, the lockdown restrictions for those of us in Victoria will begin to ease as the cases decrease.

75th Anniversary end of World War II



Although we haven't been able to meet in person, there has been quite a few things happening at the ANMC.

On the 15th August a wreath was laid at the Memorial to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II. There was no fanfare, nor people to watch it being laid. It was nice to see that someone had also placed a bunch of flowers at the memorial.

There was a wonderful service held at the Australian War Memorial which aired on the ABC on the 15th August. It showed photographs of Shirley Gardham and Matron Irene Drummond and also Dorothy Gwendoline Elmes (Bud) who lost their lives during World War II. Vivian Bullwinkel was remembered for having survived the Bangka Island Massacre and a subsequent three and a half years of

captivity. She was noted to have been instrumental in establishing the Australian Nurses Memorial Centre to be a place to remember all of her fallen comrades and friends. The service also mentioned that, from its inception, one of the major activities of ANMC was the awarding of scholarships to nurses with the aim of furthering both the recipients knowledge and improving health care delivery to the community.

A letter of thanks has been sent to Mr Matt Anderson at the Australian War Memorial in appreciation of the acknowledgment of Vivian Bullwinkel and the mention of the scholarships which the ANMC administers.

75th Anniversary of Liberation of the POW Nurses

The 16th September marks the 75th anniversary of liberation of the nurses from the POW camp at Belalau, Sumatra. The war ended on 15th August, and the first they knew would be nine days later, with a short speech from the Japanese Captain Seki when he announced "War is ended. Americano and English will be here soon. We are now all friends."

Betty Jeffrey's diary entry on the 11th September 1945 "*Cheers and more cheers. We have been discovered by two young Australian paratroops who visited our camp today and came straight past everybody until they landed on the doorstep of our Hut 13. Viv who is usually unmoved and very quiet came rushing in, face positively crimson, and panted, "Australians are here!" They were about five yards behind her. To see that rising sun badge on a beret again! It did us more good than anything we have experienced so far. One fellow said he was 'Bates from Thornbury' and the other was 'Gillam from Perth' and the first thing we noticed, after their youth, was their very white teeth. We made these boys sit on our bali bali and we fired them with questions - Who won the war? Who won the football in Melbourne? Will we be home for the Melbourne Cup?* Excerpt from Betty Jeffrey's book *White Coolies*

Matron Annie Moriah Sage came to collect the girls. She had lipsticks for them all so that they could look their best but when she arrived, she would be met by only 24 of the original 65 nurses. They were wearing what remained of their uniforms – they had saved them for this very day. The nurses were taken to Lahat to board a plane bound for Singapore, where they recuperated prior to departing for home on the AHS Manunda.



Arrival at Singapore carrying their precious belongings; Betty Jeffrey, centre, looking to her left with Vivian Bullwinkel on the far right wearing a spotted scarf on her head.

Anniversary Dinner celebration cancelled-

Almost 75 years to the day, we were to have had a dinner to celebrate the liberation of the nurses. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and physical distancing restrictions this special event has been cancelled. Whilst it makes us sad, we might ask ourselves how would the liberated nurses react? I suspect they would say that we must follow the health rules, and not to worry about cancelling the dinner. There will be another time. What we are feeling now pales into insignificance in comparison to the ordeals they endured. If there was one thing that we could learn from the liberated nurses, it would be resilience.

The ANMC 70th AGM postponed.

Our 70th AGM was to take place on Monday 26th October at the ANMC. We envisage this will take place virtually in late November.

Details will be advised as soon as we have been able to finalise the audit.

Christmas Fair cancelled

Along with all of our other events this year, the Christmas Fair which was scheduled for 15th November, is cancelled. This event is always well attended and is a great fundraiser for the ANMC. Should you wish to donate, please visit our website or contact Liz Allwood our Centre Manager to process your donation via credit card.

[ANMC Donate HERE](#)



Scholarships for 2021

The 2021 Scholarship applications closed on the 31st August. We are pleased to have received over 70 applications which measures up to previous years. This year the ANMC is proud to be administering three Epworth Centenary Scholarships named in honour of Matron Ethel Grey, the much-loved Matron who was a veteran of World War I.

Thank you to Dr Beverley Wood Chair of the Scholarship Committee and the Committee members, who have met virtually to start the selection process, which will be followed by the interviews for those selected.

We wish all the applicant's the best of luck.

Our annual scholarship presentation evening held in March may take on a different form next year should physically distancing restrictions still be in place. Either way, it is always a celebration we look forward to, virtually and in person. We will keep you posted.

Air Commodore Rowan D Story AM, RFD is retiring at the end of a long and distinguished career in the Australian Defence Force.



AIRCDRE Story had the unique honour of serving in both the Army and the Royal Australian Air Force. He was commissioned into Australian Army 12 May 1979 into the RAADC. His career highlights in the Army Reserve included an attachment to the British Territorial Army as 2IC of No 1 (Royal Scots) Coy 2nd Battalion, the 52nd Lowland Volunteers in Edinburgh and later as 2IC B Coy 5th/6th Battalion Royal Victoria Regiment. AIRCDRE Story transferred to RAAF Reserve in 1986. His career highlights in the RAAFR included Director Air Force Health Reserves – Victoria and Tasmania 2003-2011, liaison duties with the US Army Hospital Landstuhl Regional Medical Center Germany in 2008 /09. In 2015 he represented the

RAAF at the NATO Air Reserves symposium in Switzerland

AIRCDRE Story was appointed Director General Health Reserves - Air Force on Dec 2011 until Dec 2015. In a busy civilian career AIRCDRE Story is a practicing oral and maxillofacial surgeon, teaches law and ethics to dentistry students, volunteers at a community legal service, sits on the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and leads an annual volunteer surgical team to Vietnam. We are pleased to have Dr Rowan Story as a valued member of the board of the ANMC.

Singapore Far East Moon Rose

A rose has been named in honour of the Australian Army Nurses from the SS Vyner Brooke and commemorates all victims of War in the Far East. The rose is called Singapore Far East Moon, a beautiful yellow rose symbolising Friendship, Mateship and Compassion which has been donated and registered for use by rose breeders Ruth and Richard Walsh, who are very pleased the rose can be used for this special purpose. It will become available for purchase in 2022, 80 years from 1942. The name Singapore Far East Moon was chosen because wherever the prisoners were, they and their loved ones at home all looked at the same bright yellow moon and thought of each other.



Article submitted by Dr Judy Campbell

Li Po, the Chinese poet wrote of the moon 1300 years ago

Quiet Night Thoughts

Before my bed There is bright moonlight
So that it seems like frost on the ground,
Lifting my head, I watch the bright moon,
Lowering my head, I dream that I'm home

ANMC gets into “hot water”



In the window of opportunity between lock downs a hot water urn has been installed in the kitchen of the ANMC.

This will eliminate the need to carry those large electric urns with cumbersome extension cords across the kitchen counter.

We have purchased two pump action airpots which are easy to carry and hold up to 5 litres.

ANMC Virtual catch up and cuppa invitation

We extend an invitation to join us for an informal virtual chat on Saturday 24th October 5.00-6.00pm. It will be nice to connect and share some memories.

When: Saturday 24th October

Time: 5.00 – 6.00pm

Where: in the comfort of your home via Zoom

Meeting ID: 853 8784 9203

Passcode: ANMC

Join Zoom Meeting – click on link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85387849203?pwd=L0d0dUxXVjBpMmhwK0tQMFZMMWZKZz09>



Any queries please feel free to contact Liz in the office 0429 602 144

Take care, stay safe, stay home, stay well.