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MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

Remembering the Broome Air Raid after 75 years

On the morning of 3 March 1942, nine Japanese Zero fighters and a reconnaissance plane swooped down over Broome in the far north of Western Australia, killing an estimated 88 people and destroying 22 Australian, Dutch and US aircraft.

The World War II Air Raid on Broome is the second-greatest wartime loss of life on Australian soil, and 2017 will mark its 75th Anniversary.

This tragic event also included amazing tales of survival and bravery, including the shooting down from the ground of a Zero by Dutch pilot Lt Gus Winckel.

The remote community of Beagle Bay rescued the crew and passengers of a Dutch DC3 that was shot down and crash landed at Carnot Bay. The passengers would surely have perished in the unforgiving environment if the Beagle Bay community had not come to their aid.

Now 75 years later, a solemn memorial service at 8am on Friday 3 March 2017 will mark this important chapter in Australia's WWII history.

The Shire of Broome is working with the RSL Broome Sub-Branch, Norforce, St Mary's College, Broome Historical Society and other community representatives to prepare for the commemoration that will be held in Bedford Memorial Park, overlooking Roebuck Bay where the attack took place and where the wreckage of Catalina flying boats still remain on the seabed to this day.

Those visiting Broome for the occasion will include descendants of both victims and survivors of the tragic events of 1942, along with representatives of the Dutch, US and Japanese Governments.

Other events planned to commemorate the anniversary will be hosted by the Broome RSL Sub-Branch and Broome Historical Society Museum.

Broome Shire President, Ron Johnston, said he encouraged the people of Broome to make sure they attended the memorial service.

"The Air Raid of 1942 marks a major chapter in the history of both our town and our nation, and the Shire of Broome is proud to join with others in the community to keep this memory alive," Cr Johnston said.

RSLWA Chief Executive Officer, John McCourt, said the significance of commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the raid could not be underestimated.

"To pay homage to those who perished, to honour those who defended Broome and to never forget the horrors of war is most important," Mr McCourt said.

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