



Special Interest Articles:

- Aircraft mystery resolved
- High Tea, a delight.
- Long Tan Cross
- Sandakan day
- The Forts

The Price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance

Mystery Aircraft in Geoffrey's Bay...

War historians confirmed that the propeller and engine block found at Geoffrey Bay by Townsville divers belonged to a US Army Airforce plane and believed to have gone down due to engine failure during World War II on December 5, 1943.

American pilot, Captain Richard Sansing was thought to have been the pilot of the Wright-Curtiss CW-22B aircraft, which was used as a civilian sport or training monoplane.

Initial reports claimed the wreckage could've been an Avro Anson, a training bomber used in during the WWII, however experts said the propeller and distinct make of the plane matched a Wright-Curtiss.

The wreckage is believed to have been known to local snorkellers and residents of the Island for years - it was rediscovered by scientists three weeks ago when they were mapping a self-guided snorkel trail.

Since the Bulletin reported the finding on Tuesday, author of the web site,

www.ozatwar.com, Peter Dunn has revealed the model, which he believes is consistent the aircraft of the 45th Service Group.

"I had quite a few emails from contacts since the article went in the paper and one of those people in Cairns gave me a clue and told me the serial number," he said.

"I searched my records and the internet to find crashes in the area and linked it all together."

RAAF Squadron leader Greg Williams who was leading the investigation said the plane was thought to have belonged to the Mount Louisa Depot and suffered a crash on Cape Pallarenda in the January before crashing for the second time near Geoffrey Bay.

"We absolutely think it was a US Army Airforce plane and that is what we were looking at from the beginning," he said.

"The RAAF only had 1028 Avro Ansons and 1025 had a very distinct engine and they didn't match the remains."

(Courtesy Townsville Bulletin, 2nd Aug '12)



A Wright-Curtis CW-22B

RSL HIGH TEAS A SWEET SUCCESS!

Congratulations are in order to all for the first High Tea on Sunday – what a lovely function! We raised some \$870 from the tickets and the raffle combined, and a further \$140 was donated by Pam from sales of her book.

Thanks also to Jenny for helping Michelle, Lyn for helping with the raffle etc, Greg for the great music and Pam for her wonderful address, Chris and Geoff for their support, Anton for donating a ticket as a prize – and everyone who attended for being there.

Our second HIGH TEA event was very successful, with over 30 people attending who were entertained by our guest speaker, Pam Franzman, and our guitarist, Greg Simpson, and royally fed with the delights of Michelle's delicious pastries and cakes. Thanks to all who assisted, especially Michelle and Bill, Jenny, Trish, Jan and Greg, Martyn and of course Pam. Best of all, we raised funds for the RSL to continue its

welfare work - thanks so much, Michelle, for all your efforts, and thanks also to those who attended. We hope you enjoyed yourselves.



"A fine tradition settling in well!"

THE LONG TAN CROSS...



Vietnam veterans Peter Slack-Smith, Peter Dinham and Adrian Roberts look over the cross before it went on public display. Photo: Jay Cronan

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, has joined the Governor-General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce AC CVO, and veterans of the Vietnam War for the unveiling of the Long Tan Cross at the Australian War Memorial.

In 1969, the Long Tan Cross was installed at the site of the Battle of Long Tan, where 108 Australian and New Zealand soldiers primarily of Delta-Company 6RAR fought a pitched battle against more than 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers three years earlier.

The battle saw the loss of 18 Australian soldiers and another 24 wounded, entering military history as an example of overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds, like the campaigns at Gallipoli, Tobruk, Kokoda and Kapyong.

The Australian War Memorial, the Department of Foreign

Affairs and Trade and the Australian Embassy in Vietnam have worked to secure the cross on loan from the Dong Nai Museum until April 2013.

The loan of the cross coincides with the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in country.

Next year will mark the 40th anniversary of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Australia and Vietnam.

The Long Tan Cross is an important part of Australia's military history, it represents not only those D-Company soldiers who were lost in the rain-saturated rubber tree plantation in 1966, but it symbolises the bravery and determination of all those who fought in Vietnam.

Vietnam Veterans' Day will be held to give all Australians a chance to pay their respects to the 521 Australians who died during the war, and to honour the Navy, Army and Air Force personnel who fought there.

Almost 60,000 young men were sent to Vietnam, many of them conscripted into the armed forces. Those who returned often bore the physical and mental scars of conflict, many of which still persist today.

Their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

A SIGNIFICANT CHAPTER IN AUSTRALIA'S WAR

On Sandakan Day, Australians are encouraged to remember the fate of thousands of our servicemen during one of the worst atrocities of the Second World War, the Sandakan death marches of 1945.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, said some 2,400 Australian and British Prisoners of War (POWs) lost their lives in Borneo at the Sandakan prisoner of war camp, in Ranau and in the death marches towards the end of the Second World War.

"Sandakan Day, 15 August, is an opportunity to reflect on the immense suffering endured by Australian and British servicemen, as well as recognise the efforts of the local people who often put their own safety at risk to help the prisoners," he said.

"Today, as we mark the end of the marches, we honour the spirit and courage of the men who endured brutal conditions and for most, a tragic death."

Between January and June 1945, surviving POWs undertook three forced marches of more than 260 kilometres from Sandakan to Ranau POW camp. Around 500 prisoners died of illness or starvation, others were killed by Japanese guards. The remainder died at the Ranau or Sandakan camps. By the end of August 1945, only six Australians remained alive, after escaping from the Japanese.

"Far from those terrible POW camps and the horrendous suffering of those few remaining survivors, the world was on the cusp of peace. 15 August also marks Victory in the Pacific (VP) Day, when the surrender of Japan signalled the end of the Second World War," Mr Snowdon said.

"VP Day is an opportunity to remember the almost one million Australians who served in the Second World War, and to honour the more than 39,000 who made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight for

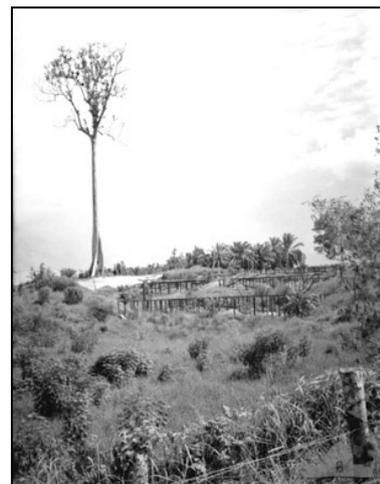
peace."

"The Victory in the Pacific and the earlier Victory in Europe ended almost six years of Australian involvement in the Second World War.

"Today's anniversaries act as a timely reminder of the importance of remembering the contribution of those who served during the Second World War, and the anxiety and grief faced by families and friends during and after the war."

Victims of the death marches, and the POWs who died at Sandakan and Ranau, are buried at the Labuan War Cemetery in Borneo. Those with no identified grave are commemorated on Memorials to the Missing at Labuan and Singapore.

A service will be held at the Sandakan Memorial Park, Sabah, to commemorate the local people and POWs who died.



"Sandakan POW camp on October 24, 1945, a few months after the camp was destroyed by the retreating Japanese troops. In No. 1 compound (pictured), graves containing the bodies of 300 Australian and British prisoners were later discovered. Photographer: Frank Burke"

MAGENTIC BATTERY

Your Magnetic Island RSL, through Pat Trewin, is actively contributing to the efforts currently underway to give the Forts a bit of tender loving care. We thought it fitting to publish a bit of its history for those who may not know that much about these iconic structures and part of our island history. Enjoy and feel free to share whatever information you might have with us.

The Magnetic Battery, Fort War or The Forts, as it is commonly referred, is a former Australian Royal Navy artillery battery in the hinterland of Horseshoe, Florence and Arthur Bays on Magnetic Island. Built in 1942/1943, the battery operated from July 1943 until the end of World War II. The remains of the facility are now maintained by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service as part of the Magnetic Island National Park and are open to visitors year round.

During its operation the battery consisted of a two searchlights in Horseshoe and Florence Bays, a radar screen in the hinterland of Arthur Bay, a permanent living encampment and a Command Post, Observation Post and two Gun Emplacements overlooking Cleveland Bay. While the majority of the buildings no longer remain, the fortified concrete command post, observation post, munitions bunker and gun emplacements still remain along with the foundations of many of the buildings within the living encampment. These remains form part of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's The Forts Walk, a popular 3.8 km environmental and heritage walk for visitors to Magnetic.

History

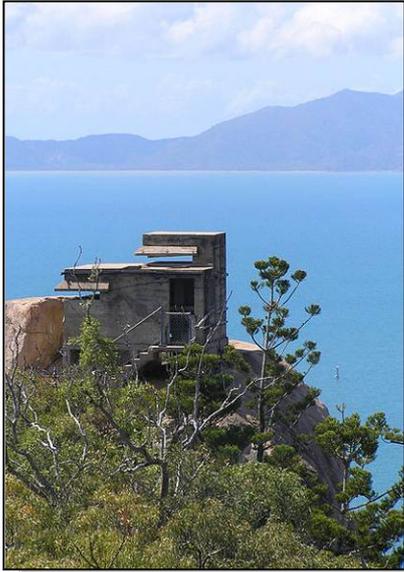
In 1942 Townsville became an important base in Australia for troops from Australia and the United States. Cleveland Bay, between Magnetic Island and Townsville, also became an important assembly point for supplies and military boats alike, with the bay

was providing temporary anchorage for up to 40 vessels assembling for convoys. To ensure the assembling fleets were able to be coordinated and safe from enemy attack, a large military facility, The Magnetic Battery was built on Magnetic Island.

Construction began on September 28, 1942, and the facility was built to a plan of a standard port war signal station by the Queensland Main Roads Commission. A road to the facility was constructed by a team of 25 men firstly constructing a road from Arcadia to what is now the Radical Bay turnoff on Horseshoe Bay Road, then continuing up into the hinterland ending at the camouflaged mountain-top facility.

Major Tom Sherman, a fortress engineer working on the project, on the advice of Tom Wetherell, a visiting officer from Townsville's Kissing Point barracks, extended the road onto Florence Bay as Wetherell "could not accept the [Japanese] would not have known all about it, the road stood out like a sore thumb and ended abruptly in a heap of camouflage nets and netting". The command post, observation post and gun emplacements were all heavily camouflaged with local foliage, camouflage netting and false rocks, constructed by laying concrete over a wire mesh structure to resemble the local granite boulders.

Most construction materials for the facilities were shipped to Arcadia by lighters or Hayles Ferry Service and transported up to the battery by road. The guns and materials for the Horseshoe Bay searchlight were shipped to Horseshoe Bay. The fortified structures were constructed of 12-inch-thick (300 mm) reinforced concrete poured into custom made forms on-site. The facility was completed on 1943-06-10 and promptly began operation under the Australian Royal Navy. The radar screen in Arthur Bay was operated by the 13th Australian Radar Unit. Battery



“Observation Post overlooking Cleveland Bay, Magnetic Battery”

Commander Major Nichol commanded the artillery detachment of over 100 people responsible for the Magnetic Battery.

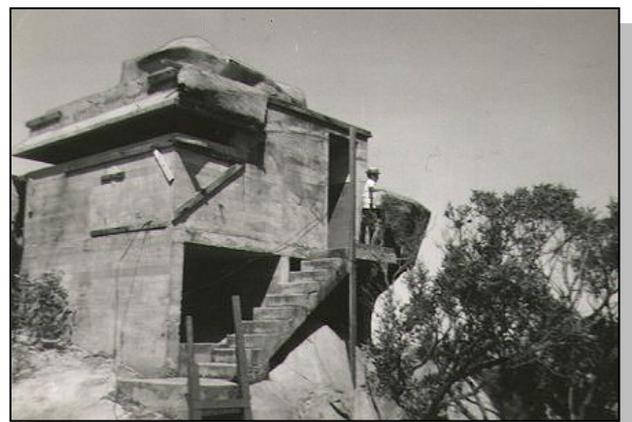
The two guns located at the Magnetic Battery, originally bound for Manila, were diverted to Magnetic Island by General McArthur along with a number of other guns that were requisitioned for use in Australian coastal batteries. The guns were based on the French Canon de 155mm GPF and had a set of rubber tyres at front of the gun that allowed it to be easily towed by a tractor. These were positioned at Magnetic Battery each on concrete Panama mount with a full outer ring of metal rail set into the concrete base allowing the guns a full 360-degree traverse. With a 26-foot (7.9 m) barrel the 155 mm gun could fire a 105-pound (48 kg) shell up to 18,000 yards (16,000 m) with a 6-foot (1.8 m) recoil. The guns were removed following the war but are one of the most controversial issues surrounding the history of Magnetic Battery. It is often contested whether either of the guns ever fired a shot. It is well known that the guns never fired on an enemy vessel; however, it is believed, although not confirmed, that the gun facing the harbour entrance did fire on an U.S. Navy PT boat "in mild astonishment" when it "arrived unannounced". It is also considered that four guns were deployed for emplacement at Magnetic Island during the war. However, in early 1999 a letter to the Townsville Bulletin from an Eric Hall claimed that his father, being the tug master of Townsville Port at the time, towed only two guns aboard a barge to Magnetic Island.

The two searchlights were manufactured by the Sperry Company and had dedicated diesel generators at both locations, one above White Lady, a rock formation in Horseshoe Bay, the other in Florence Bay. The fully automatic lights were 3000000 candle power, Carbon Arc and were capable of spotting aircraft at 30000 feet. 20 engineers supervised the operation of these searchlights.

Following the cease of hostilities in 1946 the battery was decommissioned. The guns used at the facility were disassembled, removed and shipped to Southern Queensland while construction materials from the demolished buildings as well as a



"The Forts in 1964"



large amount of remaining equipment, machinery and plumbing were auctioned to local residents.

The Forts Walk

The remains of The Magnetic Battery form part of the popular 3.8 kilometres (2.4 mi) environmental and heritage trail, The Forts Walk. The walking trail begins at the turnoff of the road to Radical, Florence and Arthur Bays from Horseshoe Bay Road and winds through the hinterland following the approximate route the original track to the battery followed. The track provides excellent views over Arthur and Florence bays and native wildlife can often be seen alongside the track. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service maintains the track and fortifications and has provided safe staircases to allow near-unrestricted access to the Command Post and Observation Post. It is important to note that the Command Post building is still an operational radio-repeater and navigational beacon, as such part of the second story of the building has been bricked off to house generators and radio equipment. The walking trail is a popular tourist activity and Magnetic Island Bus Service provides a regular bus service to the entrance to the trail.

(Article courtesy Wikipedia)

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IS THIS ONE OF OUR GUNS?



"Would it not be grand if we can get this installed at the Forts again?"

An article on page 19 of the Townsville Bulletin on Monday 25 January 1999 included the above photograph. It states that Eric Hall of Gulliver remembered seeing four large guns while riding his bike one day. His father was the Tug Master on board the boat "Marina". One Saturday, the "Marina" towed a wooden barge with two of these guns on board to the north eastern end of Magnetic Island to Rollingstone Bay. Being a Saturday, Eric went on board the Marina to help his father.

It is also suggested the Big Gun on top of the Big Gun Butcher in Logan Road at Springwood in Brisbane is one of the guns from Magnetic Island. This gun was once sitting in a wrecker's yard that used to be located in the same area many years ago. The Big Gun was removed from the top of the building that it was on in late June 2003, to make way for a new Big Gun Shopping Centre to be built.

Disclaimer...

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