

Serving Faithfully

Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services
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75th Anniversary of the end of World War II

Prime Minister Robert Menzies — 3 September 1939

On 15 August we celebrate the anniversary of the end of the Second World War when Victory in the Pacific was declared. This long war commenced on 3 September 1939 when Australia heard Prime Minister Robert Menzies, in a national radio broadcast:

Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war. No harder task can fall to the lot of a democratic leader than to make such an announcement. Great Britain and France, with the cooperation of the British Dominions, have struggled to avoid this tragedy. They have, as I firmly believe, been patient. They have kept the door of negotiation open. They have given no cause for aggression. But in the result, their efforts have failed and we are therefore, as a great family of nations, involved in a struggle which we must at all costs win and which we believe in our hearts we will win.

Prime Minister John Curtin — 8 December 1941

One hour after Japanese bombers struck at Hawaii on the morning of 7 December 1941 (8 December Australian time), Prime Minister John Curtin declared that, 'From one hour ago, Australia has been at war with the Japanese Empire.' He also made a national radio broadcast:

Men and women of Australia we are at war with Japan. That has happened as in the first instance Japanese naval and air forces launched an unprovoked attack against British and United States territory. Because our vital interests are in peril, and because the rights of free people in the whole Pacific are assailed, as a result the Australian Government this afternoon took the necessary steps which will mean that a state of war exists between Australia and Japan. ... This is our darkest hour, let that be fully realised, our efforts in the past two years must be as nothing compared with the efforts we must now put forward. ... God bless you all.'

On 26 December 1941 in a New Year Message, Curtin said:

The Australian Government, therefore regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the Democracies' fighting plan. Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength, but we know too, that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on. We are, therefore, determined that Australia shall not go, and we shall exert all our energies towards the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy.

The Prime Minister had a heart attack in November 1944 and his health deteriorated seriously. After leading the nation through most of the war, he died at The Lodge in Canberra on 5 July 1945 at age 60, just weeks before the peace was declared.

Prime Minister Ben Chifley — 15 August 1945

It was nearly six years before Victory in Europe was declared on 8 May 1945 with the formal acceptance by the Allies of Germany's unconditional surrender. While there were great celebrations across

the globe, the war with Japan continued ferociously. Only after the bombing by the United States of Hiroshima 6 August and Nagasaki on 9 August did Japan capitulate.

Prime Minister Ben Chifley broadcast to the nation on 15 August 1945, the day of Japan's surrender by Emperor Hirohito. *Fellow citizens, the war is over.*

The Japanese Government has accepted the terms of surrender imposed by the Allied Nations and hostilities will now cease. The reply by the Japanese Government to the Note sent by Britain, the United States, the USSR and China has been received and accepted by the Allied Nations.

At this moment let us offer thanks to God.

Let us remember those whose lives were given that we may enjoy this glorious moment and may look forward to a peace which they have won for us. Let us remember those whose thoughts, with proud sorrow, turn towards gallant, loved ones who will not come back. On behalf of the people and the Government of Australia I offer humble thanks to the fighting men of the United Nations whose gallantry, sacrifice and devotion to duty have brought us to victory.

Nothing can fully repay the debt we owe them nor can history record in adequate terms their deeds from the black days that followed September 1939 and December 1941, until this moment.

We owe, too, a great debt to those men and women who performed miracles of production, in secondary and primary industries, so that the battle of supply could be won and a massive effort achieved. Materials, money and resources have been poured out so that the fighting men would not go short. Australia's part, comparatively, in terms of fighting forces and supplies, ranks high and the Australian people may be justly proud of everything they have done ...

And now our men and women will come home; our fighting men with battle honours thick upon them from every theatre of war. Australians stopped the Japanese in their drive south, just as they helped start the first march towards ultimate victory in North Africa. Australians fought in the battles of the air everywhere and Australian seamen covered every ocean. They are coming home to a peace, which has to be won. The United Nations' charter for a

world organisation is the hope of the world and Australia has pledged the same activity in making it successful as she showed in the framing of it.

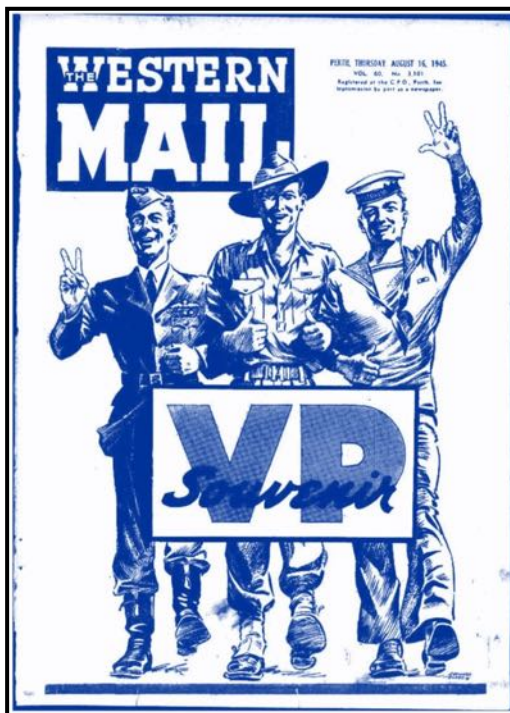
(Full speeches can be listened to on the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia at:

tinyurl.com/ww2-menzies — tinyurl.com/ww2-curtin — tinyurl.com/ww2-chifley

WE CARE – WE REMEMBER – WE APPRECIATE

During the course of the war nearly one million Australians were in the armed forces or merchant navy. Over 20,000 service members were wounded or injured in action and a further 120,000 in non-operational areas. Taking account of those who served, and civilians who were in areas overrun or bombed, the number of Australians who lost their lives as a result of the war is in the order of 40,000.

On this 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, we remember those who have died in the defence of Australia; we especially remember those who mourn the death of loved ones; and we pray for the wellbeing of those who have survived and for those who so selflessly care for our veterans.



Peace and Justice in our own Time



In this issue, as we humbly mark the 75th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, we are paying particular tribute to all involved in that dreadful time. We remind ourselves that it is called a 'world' war because it involved almost the entire world in conflict and it is the second major global conflict to have that inglorious title. In our own time of course there have been other conflicts that have also been distressing for us even though involving smaller numbers of people. Our very sad experience of these smaller conflicts can only help us to realise the magnitude of the disturbance that conflict on a global scale brings. In addition to those actually involved in conflict there are those who support them on operations and at home – families, friends, and society more generally are all involved to varying degrees.

One of the most profound documents that came from the Second Vatican Council is a Pastoral Constitution called *Gaudium et Spes* (from its opening words 'In Joy and Hope'). It is more commonly referred to also as 'The Church in the Modern World'.

This document covers the whole range of the Church's interface in human affairs. It is not surprising that of the 16 documents produced by the Council only 4 were defined as a 'constitution', which is the highest form of teaching from Councils. In *Gaudium et Spes* a significant portion deals with the subjects of 'peace' and 'war'. In addressing the term 'peace' the Council Fathers teach us that 'Peace is not merely the absence of war ... Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine Founder, and made real by men as they thirst after greater justice ... Peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly. Peace cannot be obtained on earth unless personal values are safeguarded and men freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their inner spirits and their talents.' (para 78)

'Those who are pledged to the service of their country as members of its armed forces should regard themselves as agents of security and freedom on behalf of their people.' (para 79).

I am not old enough to remember the Second World War. My father served in that war. I learned some things about his experience from what he said and did when I was very young. One of those things was that our spiritual heritage – our faith – is absolutely important for each of us. He often reminded me that the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific theatre (which brought the Second World War to an end) happened on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady. He believed that our prayers for peace made through Our Lady were answered because of her intercession. He looked to her to provide comfort and calm in the midst of sorrow and pain. He often indicated that he prayed for – and missed – those who had died or were injured. He would never be anywhere without his rosary in his pocket – in fact there were times when we would start off from home to go somewhere and have to turn around and go back because he had gone out without his rosary. It helped me to understand his devotion to her.

As we observe this anniversary we keep in prayer all those involved. We pray for the happy repose of the souls who have died. We pray for those still affected by injuries sustained. We pray for all the families and friends of those who died and who were injured. We pray for peace in our own time – especially in these days of challenge and international disharmony. We pray for our colleagues currently or recently serving that they too may find peace and healing.

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Bishop Max Davis AM, DD
Military Ordinary

A Gift in Your Will

Making a gift to the Catholic Military Ordinariate is a meaningful way to fund the education of future priests and deacons and to support our clergy in providing spiritual guidance to our service men and women and their families.

To make a bequest, you should consult your solicitor or trustee company. It may be sufficient to make an addition or amendment to an existing will by adding a codicil.

A useful website for more information is: includeacharity.com.au

Serving Faithfully

is a newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services.

It is published quarterly by the Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia.

The Diocese comprises members of the Australian Defence Force and their families, wherever they may be serving.

Its people are scattered widely across Australia and overseas.

Serving Faithfully aims to be a means of sharing events and experiences from across the whole Diocese.

Articles are welcome to be submitted for publication to
The Chancery, Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia

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Deacon Gary Stone OAM

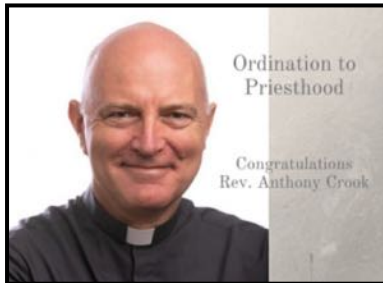


Deacon Gary Stone retired from the Army in November 2014 after 44 years of service, including peacekeeping in Iran, as an Infantry Officer and subsequently as a chaplain for 21 years.

For some years he has supported the health and wellbeing of veterans through the Veterans Care Association. Over 300 veterans and partners have undertaken a two-week 'Timor Awakening' rehabilitation program in Timor and have used the opportunity to help many Timorese veterans and families. In the March 2020 issue of *Serving Faithfully* there was an uplifting article on the experience of participating in a 'Timor Awakening' activity.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours Deacon Stone was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, 'For service to veterans and their families.' This is a richly-deserved award and is widely welcomed by Gary's many colleagues and those veterans and families he has supported.

Fr Anthony Crook RAN



Rev Anthony Crook RAN was ordained priest on 11 July 2020, at St John Vianney Co-Cathedral, Fairy Meadow by Bishop Brian Mascord DD, Bishop of Wollongong. Previous to Anthony's Ordination, he was a Lay Pastoral Associate in the Military Diocese from 2010. Then in December last he was ordained Deacon.

We look forward to Fr Anthony's continuing service in the Royal Australian Navy Reserve as a priest of this Diocese and warmly congratulate him on his Ordination to Priesthood.

Fr Damian Styles CSM

In the last issue of *Serving Faithfully*, Fr Styles related his experience of COVID-19 at his current posting at 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka. He said, 'So while COVID-19 has come with challenges, it has also opened opportunities to realise what is really important in the life of a person.' During his previous posting to the 1st Brigade in Darwin his priority was certainly to service members, families and the wider Defence community in the Darwin.

In the June Queen's Birthday Honours, Chaplain Styles was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal, 'For meritorious devotion to duty as the Coordinating Chaplain of the 1st Brigade'.

Explanatory notes to the award state that, 'Chaplain Styles has tirelessly and selflessly dedicated himself to his pastoral care and support needs of the Defence community in Darwin. His unwavering support to soldiers, their families, various supporting agencies, veterans and the wider Defence community in Darwin has provided immeasurable support to those in need, often in traumatic circumstances. Chaplain Styles' extraordinary efforts have brought enormous credit to the Army Chaplain's Department and enhanced the reputation of the Australian Defence Force.'

The award of the CSM is well-deserved and Chaplain Styles is congratulated on recognition of his achievements.

Chaplain Graham Swan RAN

On Saturday 22 August at 10am at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney, Bishop Max will ordain Chaplain Graham Swan as a Deacon. The ordination will be live streamed.

Graham has been studying through the Archdiocese of Sydney's Permanent Diaconate Program. He became a full-time Chaplain as a Lay Pastoral Associate last September. A full report of the occasion will be in the next issue of *Serving Faithfully*.



Operation COVID-19 Assist

On 1 April the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, announced the launch of Operation COVID-19 Assist. Since then Defence has provided nation-wide support to combatting the virus. As was shown with the Tri-Service support to Operation Bushfire Assist earlier this year, Defence provides valuable support to the community in an emergency.

The ADF has established a three-star-led COVID-19 task force to coordinate Defence's internal response to COVID-19 and support the whole-of-government effort. Over 3,000 personnel have been allocated to tasks that include contact tracing and planning support teams to all state and territory governments and supporting law enforcement agencies with mandatory quarantine arrangements.

In addition, the ADF is supporting the Department of Health with logistics and specialist staff; it has been supplying clinical and epidemiological support to the Department of Health National Incident Room since early February 2020; and ADF Defence Public Servants are embedded in various Australian Government agencies, including the Department of Home Affairs and Services Australia.

The wide extent of Defence support across Australia is illustrated by this information from the Defence website.

Victoria - 1510 personnel

- 336 ADF personnel are providing logistics support to the Department of Health and Human Services, including contact tracing.
- 177 personnel are involved in medical testing initiatives.
- 152 personnel are supporting Victoria Police checkpoints.
- 164 personnel are assisting in other logistics roles, including the Police Assistance Line call centre in Ballarat.
- 29 personnel are providing planning and coordination support to the Victorian Aged Care Response.

New South Wales - 710 personnel

- 491 ADF personnel are supporting New South Wales Police with border control checkpoints on the New South Wales-

Victoria border.

- 164 personnel are supporting state police quarantine, reception and repatriation efforts at Sydney airport and hotels.
- 12 personnel are assisting the New South Wales Government with contact tracing.

Queensland - 564 personnel

- 195 ADF personnel are supporting quarantine compliance management efforts, including at airports and hotels.
- 156 personnel are supporting state police with Queensland border controls.

South Australia - 122 personnel

- 94 ADF personnel are supporting South Australia Police border control checkpoints.
- 3 personnel are providing planning and liaison support.

Northern Territory - 151 personnel

- 67 ADF personnel are providing support to Northern Territory Police to protect Indigenous communities.

Western Australia - 39 personnel

- 15 ADF personnel are involved in quarantine assistance at Perth Airport.
- 2 personnel are providing logistics support.

Australian Capital Territory

- 8 personnel.

The Military Ordinariate salutes all ADF and Defence Public Servants who are assisting the States and Territories in this crisis.

These women and men bring their special skills to assist the national response and, in certain deployments, are being exposed to contracting the virus. At the same time they are separated from family and loved ones.

We all owe them a debt of gratitude for the valuable expertise and help they are providing to the community.

We remember 15 August 1945: the Australian Government gazetted a public holiday, declaring it as VP Day: Victory in the Pacific Day. Some other nations declared it as VJ Day: Victory over Japan Day. The official surrender took place on 2 September on the deck of the USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay. A number of other surrender ceremonies were held at locations throughout the Pacific, including Wewak and Salamoua in northern Papua New Guinea; Rabaul on New Britain; Bougainville; Kuching, Balikpapan, Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu) and Sandakan in Borneo; Hong Kong; Timor; and Nauru. Chaplain Aloysius Morgan (later Military Vicar from 1969 to 1984) was at the signing of the official Japanese surrender at Salamoua. These centre pages give some indication of how the end of the war was received in Australia.

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The Melbourne Listening Post of the Department of Information has picked up another Japanese broadcast stating that the Japanese reply to the Allied terms will be given at 1pm today, Melbourne time.

MOST POWERFUL
 THE ARMY NEWS
 Vol. 4—No. 1236

ARMY NEWS

Issued Free to all Services in the Northern Territory

CAMERA SERVICE
 CAMERAS, including 16mm and 35mm, are available for hire on a daily basis. The service is provided by the Army News, and is available to all members of the public. The service is provided by the Army News, and is available to all members of the public.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER BY JAPAN: WORLD AT PEACE

GENERAL MACARTHUR SUPREME COMMANDER

WASHINGTON, Wednesday.—The war is over. Japan has surrendered unconditionally to America, Britain, Russia and China. General Douglas MacArthur, appointed by the Big Four as Allied Commander in-Chief, will lead the Supreme Command staff to accept the Japanese surrender, and will order the Japanese Emperor to carry out all provisions of the surrender terms as declared at Potsdam in July.

The announcement of Japan's unconditional surrender was made simultaneously by President Truman, Mr. Attlee, Generalissimo Stalin, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek at 0900 hours today Australian Eastern Standard Time (0830 hours Darwin Time.)



"PEACE ON EARTH"

On this day of most historic significance, we give thanks for deliverance from mortal danger... rejoice in the triumph of right over the forces of evil... honour those who stood steadfast even unto death... and pray that the miseries of war may never again be visited upon the people of this world.

INSERTED BY MATE'S LIMITED.

ALL OVER FULLARS
 Deep Reverence Replaces Guilty-3
The Telegraph
 Greater Sales in Brisbane
 LAST MADE
 THE SERVICES MARCH IN CELEBRATION OF VP DAY

 Order to Japs On Surrender
 Forces' Victory March An Inspiring Spectacle

Events of Historic Day

Major events yesterday were:—

9 a.m. (Sydney time), British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, and President Truman announce Japanese surrender.

9.15 a.m., Admiral Nimitz orders cease fire.

11.25 a.m., Japanese ordered to give cease-fire order and send emissaries to General MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander.

11.55 a.m., Tokyo announces Japanese Cabinet has resigned, and War Minister, General Anami, committed hara-kiri.

1 p.m., Japanese planes shot down when they approach U.S. Fleet.

4.45 p.m., General MacArthur orders Japanese to cease hostilities immediately and send representatives to Manila for instructions. Also orders Japanese Government to place radio station at his continuous disposal for orders.

Metropolitan Forecast:
 Fine but cloudy and overcast at first with a few showers in the afternoon.

Daily Telegraph

FINAL

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SYDNEY, THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 1945

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NATION CELEBRATES ITS GREATEST DAY



HUGE CROWD IN GAY CITY CARNIVAL

The greatest crowd Sydney has ever assembled jammed the heart of the city last night to celebrate the peace.

Police estimate that by 10 p.m. more than 1,000,000 people were in the inner metropolitan area singing, dancing, and shouting.

Our World War II Chaplains

Following the end of World War II enormous numbers of men and women serving in the armed forces had to revert to normal life. This of course included the large body of Christian chaplains who had supported those forces throughout the war. This anniversary of the end of the war is an appropriate time to consider the story of such chaplaincy and its origins.

The South African war (1899-1902) established a precedence of Dominion troops going to the aid of 'the mother country' from which, as a matter of course, Australian involvement in successive wars of the 20th Century followed. It was that war then that provided the first real test of Australian chaplaincy in the field.

The Ordinariate sponsored the author Tom Johnstone to produce the publication *The Cross of Anzac - Australian Catholic Service Chaplains*, published in 2000. This article draws liberally on the text of the publication.

The Middle East

In 1940 in the Middle East Fr Tim McCarthy became the Senior Catholic Chaplain at 1st Australian Corps Headquarters while Fr Boland, who was the Senior Chaplain of 6th Division, organised a celebration in honour of Our Lady's birthday on 8 September. He said, 'We are to have a big Catholic show, General Communion for all Catholic men of the 6th Division ... We cannot hold the show until 9.30 — which straightaway raises the question of fasting, but Fr McCarthy will I hope be able to get permission to dispense the men from the Eucharistic fast, and the Comforts Fund will I think put on a cup of tea and biscuits for the men after the Mass.'

Before the capture in March 1941 of Giarabub, an Italian fortified oasis about 160 km south of Badia, Fr McCarthy visited 18 Brigade. The Brigade Major, Major Tom Daly (subsequently Chief of the General Staff in 1996), described how Fr McCarthy provided spiritual uplifting 'from a whisky bottle.'



Deputy Chaplain General
Fr Tim McCarthy CBE on his
retirement in 1955

Fr 'Paddy' Youll was with 16 Brigade in the evacuation from Greece to Crete in May 1941. While they were being strafed by German aircraft, the battalion medical officer saw that Fr Youll was about to go to aid those under attack. He said, 'Wait until the shooting has stopped.' Paddy replied, 'No, the priest must go down.' On Crete Fr Youll held a service of thanks for the evacuation. An officer wrote about the occasion, 'I've attended church services in many parts of the world and in outstanding

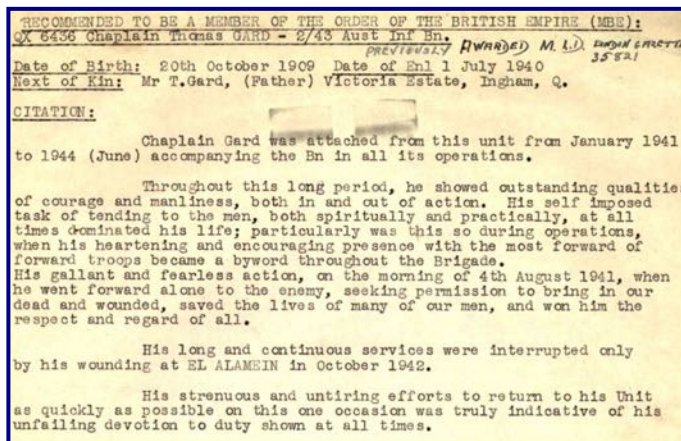
buildings but that little service under the olive trees in Crete will stand always in my mind as outstanding in its sincerity and impressive impact.' In commenting many years later about the successful German invasion of Crete, Fr Youll said 'We would have shot the bastards out of the sky only we ran out of ammunition.' He was posted as missing in action on 5 June. However, he escaped to Egypt with other survivors.

During the siege of Tobruk in 1941 Fr Cosgriff, in writing home, said, '...there is none to compare with the Aussie either as a Catholic or as a soldier. They have put up a marvellous show here in stopping the Jerry advance to Egypt ... As Catholics they are just as good. Every Sunday we have hundreds at Confession and Communion ... the hard part of the war — seeing the mess that bullets make of men that could have been of great assistance to Australia. None of us will be sorry to see the end of the war.' Fr Cosgriff was at the hospital when the survivors of a merchant ship from the harbour were brought in. The coloured crew were all badly burned or wounded. Fr Cosgriff thought that they might be Catholic. He said, 'So I asked one of them, and as soon as he found out I was a priest he began calling out to the others with the greatest excitement and, I anointed the lot of them ... yes they all died — 23 of them, but if I never do another thing I have justified my coming to this war.'

Fr Cosgriff eventually became a casualty himself. In a letter home he said, 'I came out of Tobruk on stretcher. A bomb-blast cracked my ear-drum and it became infected. I had five weeks in hospital and I do not want it ever again.'



During the Battle of Alamein Fr Tommy Gard (pictured at enlistment) was wounded. He insisted on returning to his battalion as soon as he was able as they were without a chaplain. He was Mentioned in Dispatches 'For Gallant and Distinguished services during the period November 1941 to April 1942'; and in Australia in 1945 he was awarded the MBE. He was recommended for the award by Brigadier Porter, Major General Wootten and Lieutenant General Morshead—three distinguished commanders.



In mid-December 1941 the Australians in the Middle East were conscious that they would be returning to Australia as a result of the Japanese attacks. In Jerusalem an altar was presented to a Benedictine Monastery. The Father Abbott said, 'The altar which you have concentrated is yours and remains yours; it is simple and staunch as your Faith. We pray for your comrades, fallen in the field of honour, for your wives, for your children who wait sorrowfully ... To all visitors who will come to this chapel, it will tell again that all the riches are due to the piety of the Australian Army.'

Malaya-Singapore-Thailand

The Japanese invaded the Malay Peninsula about an hour before the attack at Pearl Harbor and successfully concluded their campaign when the British forces in Singapore surrendered on 15 February 1942. Fr 'Paddy' Walsh was with the 2/30th Battalion during action at Gemas, almost 300km north of Singapore on the west coast of Malaya. The battalion CO, 'Black Jack' Galleghan — a Mason, insisted on a Catholic Padre. Although some officers were standoffish at first, once the enemy was engaged everyone was glad to have Paddy around. He was described as having plenty of common sense; besides giving spiritual solace, he administered Johnny Walker to wounded men!

In 1943 Fr Walsh was deployed to Thailand to accompany troops working on the death railway. The march from the railroad to to the working camps was an horrendous experience. 'Padre Paddy Walsh was continually helping any stragglers at the back, carrying their gear and doing everything possible to help them along.' He was always there when working parties went out '... in case anyone wanted to go to confession in case they died during the day.'

Lt Hugh Thwaites described his experience of attending Mass: 'As I looked at the columns of the trees disappearing into the darkness overhead, and at the faces of my friends ... I thought "St Peter's in Rome must be very fine, but surely this is what keeps the Church going."'

Fr Lionel Marsden also described Mass on the railway, 'In this veritable hell on earth God was not forgotten. On the first Sunday after our arrival Mass was offered on a table which had been hastily erected the previous day for an acute appendix operation ... Mass was celebrated whenever possible from 6 in the morning till 10 at night.'



Fr Lionel Marsden

Continued p7

From page 6

The Cholera hut was out of bounds to all non-medical personnel. However, Father H Smith would crawl on his stomach through long grass when the coast was clear so that he could give the soldiers a shave and haircut. Fr 'Paddy' Walsh heard confessions at any hour or place. He buried Catholics, Protestants and Jews with the rites of their churches and always said the burial service in English, rather than Latin as was the custom. 2,646 Australians died as a result of the railway construction.



Changi Chapel at the Royal Military College, Duntroon—a national memorial to over 35,000 prisoners of war

When the survivors returned to Singapore Fr Marsden wanted a place where the Blessed Sacrament could be preserved. The challenge was taken up by Lt Hamish Cameron-Smith, a Scottish architect, assisted by English officer Lt Hugh Thwaites. The chapel was dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians. After the War, it was dismantled and returned to Australia where, in 1988, it was re-erected in the grounds of RMC Duntroon as the National POW Memorial.

Papua New Guinea

Fr 'Nobby' Earl MSC came to Port Moresby from his mission at the eastern end of Papua following the fall of Rabaul on 23 January 1942. As he felt that the war would be over within a week, he did not want to be evacuated to Australia with civilians. So, he was quickly signed up and was allocated to 39 Battalion, whose chaplain had died on the unit's deployment. As there was considerable looting taking place, Nobby took four cases of whisky into protective custody. When he marched in to his unit without paybook or uniform, the CO nevertheless shared a drink with him. The battalion's war diarist recorded, 'Padre Earl marched in. With these words the unit received a powerful spiritual reinforcement, destined to become the best-known and best-loved member of the battalion.'

Much has been written about Fr Earl's devotion to his soldiers and his bravery. The citation for his MBE illustrates these qualities. It reads in part:

'On Aug 8th and Aug 20th, Chaplain EARL carried out his duties among the forward troops at DENEDI. He risked his life to recover bodies forward of our position and inspired all ranks by his complete disregard for danger, when he accompanied attacking troops to break through besieging ENEMY. The officer commanding the patrol was wounded and missing; the sergeant acting as guide lay helpless with his thigh shattered by a burst of machine gun fire. Accompanying the R.M.O. out with a stretcher, Chaplain EARL helped him to carry the wounded sergeant back to our lines through jungle and creek, while the battle still raged around them. Throughout these actions and subsequent fighting to the end of the SANANANDA campaign, Chaplain EARL's devotion to duty was an invaluable aid to the battalion's morale.'

Fr Daly of the 2/14th Battalion 'endeared himself to the troops by his insistence on marching with them on the Kokoda Track in spite of his age (44 years) and impending illness (malaria).' Three weeks after being evacuated, although still ill, he returned to his unit and stayed through the furious fighting at Ioribaiwa. He only allowed himself to return to hospital when his brigade was relieved.

Following the defeat of the Japanese at Buna and

Gona, attention turned to preventing them from capturing Wau. Fr 'Paddy' O'Keefe arrived to the 2/6th Battalion as the battle for the airstrip was underway. He was not warmly received by the unit which was nearly 90 percent Protestant. But he charmed the unit after a compulsory service after the successful fighting at Wau. He said, 'I must congratulate this unit on its honesty. Last week I had a case of communion wine and 500 hymn books flown in from Moresby. Not a hymn book was missing.' He also linked the terrible life of soldiering and religion. He pointed out the things we valued



Padre Lynch saying Mass at Gona before going into battle
AWM 013738

as soldiers, our loyalty, our affection for each other, our concern for the sick and wounded, were also Christian values.

Fr 'Alo' Morgan, senior Catholic chaplain of 3rd Division, had two priests to cover a large area, Fr Jim English and Fr Paddy O'Keefe.

A fellow chaplain spoke warmly of Fr English, '... they loved Jim, they just had to. He was his own man, and he did his own thing. If ever there was a non-warlike, peaceful guy I think it was Jim English; and yet he settled down to that dreadful business of war, and did a great job as military chaplain.' In order to minister to the men as well as bury the casualties, Fr English often walked several hours from company to company, sometimes with the Anglican chaplain, but more often alone, along tracks in the jungle crossed by the Japanese. He was Mentioned in Dispatches.



Detail of soldiers in profile from 5m x 4m stained-glass window in Fr Jim English's parish church, St Brigid's Mordialloc, Vic. Funds were raised for this by the 58/59th Battalion Association.

A server at a Mass celebrated by Fr O'Keefe said, 'He performed the most amazing acts of bravery, going out into areas where the enemy was known to be slinking, so that he might recover the bodies of fallen youths and give them a Christian burial.'

Fr O'Keefe was awarded an MBE. The award citation says in part, '(He) is always to be found where the fighting is the heaviest and where spiritual comfort and aid is required most ... He has fearlessly and needlessly exposed himself on innumerable occasions to render aid to the wounded and the dying in the forefront of the battle. His constant attention to the sick and wounded in the advanced dressing station was outstanding ... His complete lack of regard for his personal safety under all conditions has been an inspiration to all ranks.'

Reflection

There are so many more uplifting stories of the commitment of chaplains in World War II serving those on land, at sea and in the air. Invariably these inspirational men were sustained by their faith and drew comfort from the spiritual, moral and physical support they could give to those in their units.

Fr Pat O'Keefe of the 17th Brigade succinctly provided words of comfort to those who survived and to the families of those who died:

'It is the hard part of war that victories cannot be won without losses. And the price paid for their victories is the lives of some that have impressed me so much; young Australian lives, the cream of Australia's youth. Many fine fellows have fought and died under the banner of this Brigade. They have been left behind on the battlefields in which they have helped to earn the reputation it now enjoys.'

'To those at home who mourn their loss, I want to say just this: their bodies have received a Christian burial in the war cemeteries of the places in which they fought and died. Their souls have gone before a just and merciful God who will reward them generously for the sacrifice they have made in the interests of Christianity and civilisation. They have paid the supreme sacrifice that we, and the future generations that are yet to come, might have and enjoy those freedoms they valued so much ...'

In the Epilogue of *Cross of Anzac*, Johnstone summarises his views on Catholic chaplains:

'Catholic Chaplains, like their Service congregations, had their provenance in the broad spectrum of Australia's diverse population ... Most chaplains have been educated, trained and ordained in Australia ... Nonetheless, their shared common thread was forthright outspokenness for what they considered right, the love of humankind, and the service of all Jesus Christ. Together they epitomised the Catholic Church of Australia ... The vast majority of Australian Service chaplains served with distinction; many were decorated for distinguished service or bravery in action. Some chaplains became legends in the units they served, still remembered with affection more than half a century later ... At least five Australian wartime servicemen became priests; one of them Cardinal Sir Norman Gilroy: a telegraphist at Gallipoli became a Prince of the Church, a knight of the realm and Australian of the Year 1970.'

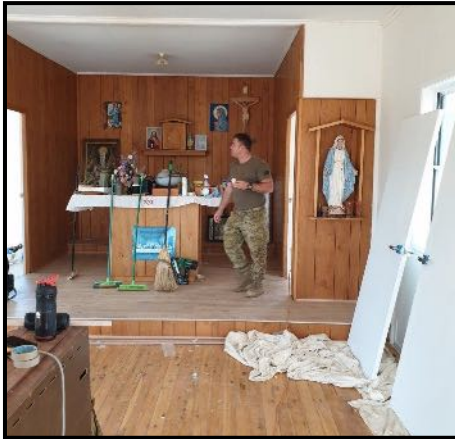
COVID-19 and Church Renovation

Windorah is a small outback town in Queensland 380km east of Birdsville and 315km south-east of Longreach. In the 2016 census, the town had 115 people, but now the population is down to 60.

In June soldiers joined police to establish a COVID-19 control point on the road from Birdsville and the South Australian border. Windorah Development Board treasurer Peta Geiger said, 'There's not much traffic passing through Windorah.' Since Queensland closed its borders there has been a lack of tourists and so the presence of the troops was a real morale booster for the town.

Among the projects in the town that needed work was Our Lady of Lourdes Church, particularly with internal painting, pews to be sanded and coated, the floor varnished and garden revitalised. As the troops had plenty of spare time they took on these tasks to give the church a facelift as shown in the photos.

(Photos with permission Windorah Development Board)



Refurbished Our Lady of Lourdes Church Windorah