



The Hon Michael McCormack MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC
Deputy Leader of the House
Federal Member for Riverina

19 February 2018

76TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOMBING OF DARWIN

TODAY marks the 76th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin and Australians are encouraged to pause to remember those who died during the attacks by Japanese aircraft.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Michael McCormack said on 19 February 1942 the Second World War was brought to Australia's shores for the first time when 242 Japanese aircraft bombed Darwin in two separate attacks, killing more than 240 people.

"Australia should remember with pride the many people involved in Darwin's defence on this day 76 years ago," Mr McCormack said.

"The Bombing of Darwin was believed by many at the time to be the prelude to a Japanese invasion.

"In reality it was aimed at eliminating the threat of an Allied counter-attack against the Japanese invasion of Timor which took place the following day."

Mr McCormack said the first attack on Darwin occurred just before 10 am on 19 February 1942.

"The targets were the harbour and town, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and civil aerodromes and the Army hospital," Mr McCormack said.

"Ten US Kittyhawk fighters were the only aircraft available to defend Darwin and all but one were shot down before they could engage the attackers. A second wave of Japanese bombers arrived just before noon and bombed the RAAF base.

"Other towns across Australia's north were also bombed including Katherine, Broome, Townsville, Wyndham and Cairns."

The Japanese bombed Darwin 64 times during the course of the war. The final raid against Darwin took place on 12 November 1943. The 19 February 1942 raids were by far the most destructive.

The Bombing of Darwin Day has been a national day of observance since 2011. The Northern Territory Government will recognise the anniversary by conducting a National Day of Observance Commemorative Service in Darwin on Monday, 19 February 2018.

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546). VVCS is a service founded by Vietnam veterans.

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