



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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REMEMBER WHEN AUSTRALIA FACED ITS GRAVEST THREAT

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, today marked Battle for Australia Day and encouraged Australians to reflect on the period in our wartime history when the enemy arrived on Australia's doorstep.

"Today is an opportunity for all Australians to honour the efforts of those who served our country during the Second World War, on the frontline and the home front, at a time when our country's safety and freedom were threatened," Mr Griffin said.

Australia faced direct threat from Japanese forces from 1942 to 1943. Darwin experienced more than 60 attacks and Sydney Harbour was raided by midget submarines. Townsville, Katherine, Wyndham, Derby, Broome and Port Hedland were among those towns that also experienced Japanese air raids. The Australian Territory of Papua was invaded by the Japanese and parts of it were occupied for six months.

"The mood of the nation at this time may never be truly understood by our generation, but we know that the men and women in our armed forces, as well as civilians, were fighting for their nation's survival," Mr Griffin said.

In Europe for commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the start of the Second World War, Mr Griffin laid a wreath at the Australian War Memorial in London to mark Battle for Australia Day and announced that long-awaited repairs at the memorial had been completed.

"I have inspected the repairs on the Australian War Memorial at Hyde Park in London and am advised that we have fixed the problems which have plagued the memorial in recent years," Mr Griffin said.

"I encourage all Australians travelling to London to visit our memorial and pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the men and women who served us in both World Wars."

Etched into the walls of the memorial are the names of the 23,844 Australian towns who gave their sons and daughters to these conflicts and 47 of the battles they fought.

Information on Australia's involvement in the Second World War can be found at ww2australia.gov.au. An interactive display of the Australian War Memorial London, can be accessed at www.awmlondon.gov.au.

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