MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SENATOR THE HON. MICHAEL RONALDSON
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE CENTENARY OF ANZAC
SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE

Thursday 19 February VA012

REMEMBERING THOSE LOST DURING THE BOMBING OF DARWIN

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, today encouraged Australians to honour those who defended Darwin against Japanese air raids during the Second World War.

On 19 February 1942, Darwin suffered two horrifying air raids that caused widespread devastation. These attacks were followed by more than 60 raids over the next twenty months. Luckily none had the same horrific impact.

"The raids took Darwin by surprise, with Japanese fighters and bombers about to begin their first attack when air raid sirens sounded," Senator Ronaldson said.

"The raids claimed more than 240 lives including both civilians and defence personnel. Many others were injured and a number of ships sank as a result of the raids including three warships.

"The bombing was the first time Australia had been attacked during war time with later raids on Northern Australian towns and cities also inflicting causalities in Broome, Katherine, Wyndham Townsville and Horn Island," Senator Ronaldson said.

In 2011, 19 February was officially proclaimed as 'Bombing of Darwin Day', a national day of commemoration recognising this day as the anniversary of the war coming to Australia.

A memorial service takes place every year with a Second World War air raid siren to be sounded at 9.58am to mark the precise time the first attack took place.

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