



75th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin

The Melbourne Branch of the Darwin Defenders 1942-45 were honoured to be represented in Darwin by the President, Mr Alan Day KCSJ FAIM, and Vice-President Mrs Robyn Bell in Darwin during the commemoration ceremonies for the 75th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin.

Mr Day and Mrs Bell were among the many veterans and their carers who were acknowledged by the flight captain on their flight to Darwin – which was perhaps an indication of the honour and respect shown to them over the coming days during the many events in Darwin.

The National Day of Observance began on the 19th of February with the USS Peary Memorial Service on the Esplanade.

The Bombing of Darwin Commemorative Service hosted by the City of Darwin was dignified, respectful and witnessed by many who had travelled from all over Australia in the name of respect, honour and sacrifice. A highlight from the service was the flypast over Darwin Harbour of RAAF F/A 18A/B Hornets and RAAF AP-3C Orion - reminiscent of the first attacks on that fateful morning in Darwin.

At the conclusion of the service, all veterans and their carers were invited back to the Cenotaph where they were greeted by the Prime Minister, the Governor General, Mayor of Darwin, The Administrator of the Northern Territory, local politicians and other Defence personnel. This was the most moving and historical gesture – a moment will be never forgotten.

On Monday 20th February, Mr Day and Mrs Bell attended the Ecumenical Service at the Adelaide River Cemetery - a highlight was witnessing the interest and respect shown by the students of the local primary school towards the veterans.

There were many other wonderful highlights of this trip including interviews of the veterans by Channel 7 and full coverage of the service by ABC 24; a visit to Robertson Base, where displays of current military hardware were shown to the veterans with great enthusiasm.

It was a truly memorable trip for Mr Day and Mrs Bell and on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin – we hope that the sacrifices made and the hardships endured will continue to be commemorated by generations of young Australians who live with opportunities and peace, fought for them by those in Darwin in 1942.