



Australian American Association Queensland Division – Brisbane



Twenty Seventh Issue Newsletter

26th December 2024

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Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland.



2024 – 2025 Board of Directors,

Australian American Assoc, Brisbane:

- ❖ Mike Harris - President & Life Member,
- ❖ Tony Chau - 1st Vice President,
- ❖ Helen Stanley - 2nd Vice President,
- ❖ Alice Langford - Secretary,
- ❖ Dr Peter Glazebrook - Legal Advisor,
- ❖ Teresa Pokoj - Treasurer, Assistant Secretary & Life Member.



Board of Directors, from left: Tony Chau, Helen Stanley, Dr Peter Glazebrook, Teresa Pokoj, Alice Langford and Mike Harris.

*The Australian American
Relationship
is linked across both sides of the
Pacific Ocean, with a common
heritage and many countless and
cherished ties.*

*We also remember those who paid the
price for our freedom.*

Lest we forget.



Report by the Association's President

Mike Harris. at the AGM held on 29th Oct 2024 at Coorparoo RSL Club -

My report covers the Association's activities and achievements, since the last AGM held at the Coorparoo RSL Club on 18th Oct 2023. I have enjoyed the 9 years continuous service as your Vice President from 2015 to 2019, and your President from 2019 to 2024.

I extend a special thanks to our Patron Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM Governor of Queensland, her husband the Honourable Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD, for their continued support of our Association.

I also acknowledge the support given to our Association by the US Consul General to Australia the Honourable Christine Elder, the US Navy 7th Fleet and Australian Defence Force Personnel. I thank HMAS Moreton's Commander and staff, for their magnificent participation, organization and support in making our Annual Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration a most commendable service.

My thanks to the Association's members for their support, as well as the Board of Directors, namely - our 1st Vice President Tony Chau and his wife Jill McKeon, who attended and represented our Association at wreath laying and other events, and to Tony for his continued maintenance of our office computers, printers and webpage, our 2nd Vice President Helen Stanley and her husband Maurice Hand for their generous raffle donations and attendance at wreath laying and other events, our Secretary Alice Langford and Treasurer & Assistant Secretary Teresa Pokoj for their work in the preparation

and submission of our grant applications and the organization of wreath laying and other events. Also, Dr Peter Glazebrook who represented our Association at wreath laying and other events and for his checking of the final draft of our Constitution, prior to its submission to the Qld State Office of Fair Trading.

I am thankful for all the important work completed over the past 12 months, including the operation of our Website, Facebook, and our Quarterly Newsletters and timely News Flashes. These undoubtedly serve to promote a greater awareness of our Association particularly in the advertising of forthcoming events, highlighting our past events, as well as helping to broaden our friendships and promote our Association.

Use of such social networking sites and publications has proved most successful in promoting our Association's activities - we have been invited to events that provided us the opportunity to promote our Association through the distribution of our main promotional flyer - "Who We Are". From such promotions, we have again increased our list of contacts with many kindred organizations.

Many of the successful activities organized by our Brisbane Association, include the following events:

- Nov 2023 - Thanksgiving Dinner held at the United Service Club attended by 50 guests. The USC is one of the premium clubs situated in Brisbane City.
- Dec 2023 - Christmas Luncheon held at the Coorparoo RSL Club, was most enjoyed by the 28 guests who attended, and the raffles were again a great success.
- Jan 2024 - Australia Day Luncheon held at the Coorparoo RSL Club, was greatly enjoyed with the "Australiana Quiz Contest" and various games played, such as the "Thong-Throwing Competition" where contestants were awarded prizes for their efforts. The raffles were also much enjoyed with great prizes awarded.
- May 2024 - The 82nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea was held at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park. This event was a great success and well-attended by the representative of the US Ambassador, the Consul-Generals of the USA, Britain, Japan,

Italy, France, Philippines, India, Papua New Guinea and the Netherlands, and the representatives of the Prime Minister, Queensland Premier, Brisbane Lord Mayor, State and Federal Governments, the US and Australian Armed Forces, Returned Services Organizations, Veterans and their families, numbering some 250 invited guests with 66 wreath-layers. Again, my thanks to the US Navy 7th Fleet Band and HMAS Moreton's Commander and the RAN Band, for their magnificent participation in making this event such a success.

- 4th July 2024 - Independence Day Luncheon held at the Coorparoo RSL Club was well-attended with the "Americana Quiz Contest" and other games greatly enjoyed as well as many raffle prizes being won.
- Monthly Meet & Greet Nights held at the United Service Club. These functions allow our members and friends an opportunity to become acquainted and socialize with each other. This event has become very popular over the past couple of years.

War Memorial Services Attended:

Our Association's Board and members have attended and laid wreaths at over 20 War Memorial Services held over the past 12 months, and I thank our Association's Treasurer Teresa Pokoj for her outstanding efforts in making these wreaths from flowers grown in her garden, which saves us over \$4,000 per year in florist charges.

Successful Grant Application:

We have been successful this year in a grant application made to the "State Gambling Fund" for \$7,500 in funding to re-produce a set of 22 photographic display plates of the 1942 Battle of the Coral Sea - these plates give a running account of the battle including strategic maps and action photos. The photographic plates will be fitted to metal display-stands to be exhibited at our events, particularly our Annual Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration. I believe these display plates will be ready for exhibition towards the end of November 2024.

Our Association's Publications:

As the Association's Editor for over the past 11 years, I have produced numerous Quarterly Newsletters as well as timely News Flashes. The "Who We Are" Promotional

Flyer, which is our Association's main promotional hand-out for general distribution to kindred organizations and others, was again extensively updated this year.

Taking Our Association into the future:

I am most eager about holding more fund-raising events, attracting corporate sponsorship and in making further grant applications in the coming year. Unfortunately, we have so far, not been successful in attracting a corporate sponsor and this issue needs to be further addressed.

As well, we desperately need to have more active-members assisting us 'hands-on' with all the activities we have planned. Unfortunately, our membership numbers have decreased this year, and therefore, we need to think up more ways and means to increase these numbers through a planned membership drive in 2025.

As we continue our transformation journey into 2025, I am optimistic of building on our numbers and creating a greater rapport with kindred organizations and others. This will not only broaden our friendships but help to promote our Association's image and ensure our strategic plans are realized.

Our Facebook, website, newsletters and other communications are just some ways to share our story, but there must be other ways that we further need to consider.

I thank the following persons and organizations for their most generous donations of cash, raffle prizes, food and service which have greatly helped us in general fund-raising and in providing morning tea at our Annual Battle of the Coral Sea event:

Captain Kasper Kuiper Chairman of Qld Maritime Museum and AAA Brisbane Honorary Member, for his cash donations.

Hon Peter Russo MP State Member for Toohey, for his raffle prize donations.

Hon Tim Nicholls MP State Member for Clayfield and AAA Brisbane Life Member, for his cash and raffle prize donations.

Hon Di Farmer MP State Member for Bulimba, for her raffle prize donations.

Teresa Gambaro Former Senator, for her cash donation.

Dr Betty Lee AAA Brisbane Member & Australian Coastwatcher's Association, for her cash donation.

Dr Peter Glazebrook AAA Brisbane Board Member, for his cash donation.

Cr Julia Dixon BCC Hamilton Ward, for her raffle prize donations.

Wendy Siebrecht Naval Assoc and RSL Qld Member, for her donation of trays of cakes.

Peter Rasey AAA Brisbane Member, for his cash donation.

Alice Langford – AAA Brisbane Secretary, for her providing of sandwiches & wraps.

Teresa Pokoj AAA Brisbane Life Member & Treasurer, for making carrot cakes & biscuits.

Service Organizations Kedron Wavell RSL for their cash donations, Coorparoo RSL and the United Service Club, Brisbane for their raffle prize donations [**END OF THE 29th OCTOBER 2024 AGM PRESIDENT'S REPORT**].



I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas.

Cheers and best wishes,

Mike Harris. *President & Life Member,*

Photos of some of the events held throughout the year, which were attended by members of our Association and those of kindred organizations, to 26th Dec 2024.

The Association's "82nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea Wreathlaying Event", held at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park, Brisbane on Sat 4th May 2024.



The RAN Band Qld from HMAS Moreton, Brisbane who combined with the Quintet Band from the US Navy 7th Fleet, playing at the Battle of the Coral Sea Wreathlaying Event.



Mounting of the Australian American War Memorial Monument, by the Royal Australian Navy Cenotaph Party from HMAS Moreton, Brisbane.



The 'Event Master of Ceremony' Former Senator and Association's Life Member - the Honourable Santo Santoro [left], seen welcoming the Association's Board Member - Dr Peter Glazebrook, who gave the "Acknowledgement of Country".



Welcome Address given by Australian American Association Brisbane President - Mike Harris. Mike is also a Member of the Australian Catholic Order of the 'Knights of the Southern Cross'. Members of the Order wear a Blue Sash with a White Cross, and lay a wreath at this event, in memory of their Members who have served with the Australian Defence Force, from World War 1 to the present time.

Mike and the Association's Treasurer - Teresa Pokoj, are co-organizers of the Annual Battle of the Coral Sea event and have been responsible for organizing the past 5 Annual Battle of the Coral Sea events, held from 2020 to 2024. [The 2020 event, held during the COVID Epidemic, was attended in strictly limited numbers in full compliance with the Queensland Government COVID Regulations].



Address given by Captain Tuan Nguyen – Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Engagements, and Representative of the Commander of the United States Navy 7th Fleet, at the Battle of the Coral Sea event.



The United States Seventh Fleet was established in Brisbane, Australia on 15th March 1943, during World War 2.

The United States Seventh Fleet

The 7th Fleet is the largest of the US Navy's forward-deployed fleets and has 50 to 70 ships and submarines, 150 aircraft, and more than 27,000 Sailors. The fleet has been commanded by Three Star Navy Flag Officer - Vice Admiral Fred Kacher since 15th February 2024.

The USN 7th Fleet's area of operations spans more than 124 million square kms from the International Date Line to the India - Pakistan border; and from the Kuril Islands in the North to the Antarctic in the South.

This encompasses 36 maritime countries and 50% of the world's population, including: the five largest foreign militaries: China, Russia, India, North Korea, and the Republic of Korea. The US Mutual Défense Treaty Allies are: the Philippines, Australia, the UK, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Thailand.

The RSL Southeastern Districts' - "Victory in Europe Day Commemoration" held at its Head Quarters, at New Farm on 11th May 2024.



Attending the VE Day Commemoration were from left - Consul General of France - Alain Etchegaray, Président of the Vétérans de l'Armée Française d'Australie - Frank Lamy, President of the Australian American Association, Brisbane - Mike Harris, Member of the Vétérans de l'Armée Française d'Australie - Keith Beardsmore and President of the British Ex-Services Association - Kevin Spink.

Evening Celebration of the "20th Anniversary of the Opening of the MacArthur Museum" held at its Brisbane location on 15th Aug 2024.

79 Years ago on 15th August 1945, Japan's Emperor Hirohito accepted the terms of the Allied Powers for the ending of the War in the Pacific. It was a decision greeted with wild celebrations in Europe, the Pacific and the Americas. General Douglas MacArthur would conduct the surrender aboard the Battleship USS Missouri surrounded by an armada of Allied ships at anchor in Tokyo Bay soon afterwards.

Another significant event was to occur on 15th August 2004 when a gathering of local and national dignitaries celebrated the official opening of the MacArthur Museum on the 8th Floor of MacArthur Chambers Apartments in Brisbane.

The Board of the General Douglas MacArthur, Brisbane Memorial Foundation and the volunteers of the MacArthur Museum - Brisbane, held a commemoration and celebration of these two events, and unveiled displays which tell of the bombing of Darwin and the history of the MacArthur Museum from its Official Opening to the present day.



A group of 6, from the 60 Dignitaries attending the celebration [from left]: Professor Charles Sampford [Griffith University], Chris Johnson [MacArthur Museum], Mike Harris [President of Australian American Association Brisbane], Dr Betty Lee [AAA Brisbane member & Australian Coastwatcher's Association], Teresa Pokoj [Treasurer of Australian American Association Brisbane] and Dr Denver Beanland AM [Former MP, Chair of the National Archives of Australia Advisory Council and Chair of the Brisbane City Council's Heritage Advisory Committee].

Wreath Laying Service “Commemorating the loss of HMAS Sydney (II) during WW2” held at Navy Jacks Memorial Southbank, on 19th Nov 2024.

Tragically 83 years ago, on 19th November 1941, HMAS Sydney (II) was lost [with all hands] off the north-west coast of Western Australia, during a gun battle with the German raider HSK Kormoran. The German ship was also sunk in this battle.



Association's President Mike Harris and Treasurer Teresa Pokoj attending the Wreath Laying Service commemorating the loss of the HMAS Sydney (II) during WW2, held at Navy Jacks Memorial Southbank Brisbane, on 19th November 2024.

Cocktail Party Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Fulbright Program.

On 14th Nov 2024, members of the Australian American Association, Brisbane, attended a special celebratory Cocktail Party commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Fulbright Program. The event was held at the Griffith University Campus, Queensland College of Art, Southbank, Brisbane.

The Fulbright Program is the largest flagship "Foreign Exchange Scholarship Program" of the United States of America aimed at increasing bi-national research collaboration, cultural understanding and the exchange of ideas. Born in the aftermath of WW2, the program was established by US Senator Fulbright in 1946 with the ethos of turning "Swords into Ploughshares", whereby credits from the sale of surplus war materials were used to fund academic exchanges between host countries and the US. The Fulbright Program operates in over 160 countries including Australia, with more than 360,000 students, academics and professionals having received



Attending the Fulbright event were 5 Australian American Association Brisbane members – Mike Harris [President], Teresa Pokoj [Treasurer & Assistant Secretary], Jill McKeon [Member] Tony Chau [Vice President] and Brien Doyle [Member].

The Association's "US Independence Day Luncheon" held at Cooparoo RSL Club on 7th July 2024.



Association's Gold Coast President Carole Morris came along with her husband Dr Phil. Following a nice lunch, the fun began with an Around-the-Table Americana Quiz with prizes awarded for the correct answers. Then, the ever-popular Thong-Throwing Competition was held with more prizes awarded for the Thong landing nearest the Target. The First Prize in the Raffle was a lovely Hamper of US Goodies, which was won by Carole Morris. We thank our Brisbane Treasurer Teresa Pokoj for organising the Luncheon and for all the delicious Shortbread Biscuits she made to help raise funds for our Association.

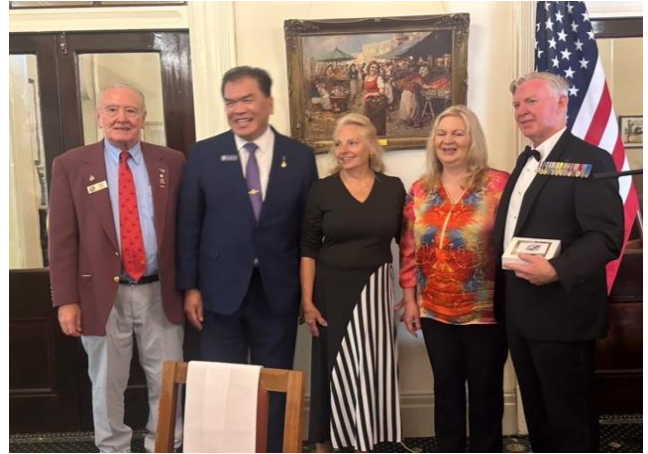
“Launch of American Airlines’ Direct Flights to Dallas - Fort Worth Texas Airport” starting October 2024, held on 2nd July 2024, at a Cocktail Party Organized by AmCham [American Chamber of Commerce] Manager – Mr Stuart Mansbridge.



Mr Matthew Nicholas [General Manager of American Airlines] standing beside AAA Brisbane President Mike Harris. [Mike and AAA Brisbane Treasurer Teresa Pokoj joined with Matthew and his staff for the photo]. Our Association has recently submitted a proposal to American Airlines and also Delta Airlines, for Corporate Sponsorship.

The Association’s “Annual Thanksgiving Dinner”, held at the United Service Club on 29th November 2024.

Invited guests at the Thanksgiving Dinner included: The Honourable Mr. Rau - Consul General of Papua New Guinea, and his wife Susan, The Honourable Hyun Seong Shin - Consular General of Korea, Former Senator the Honourable Santo Santoro - Life member of the Association, Councillor Vickey Howard - Civic Cabinet Chair for Community and the Arts, and Councillor for Central representing the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mr. Michael Hill - Immediate Past Chairman and current Treasurer of the Knights of the Southern Cross Queensland and his wife Kaye. Mr. Alan Chen - President of Universal Education and Multicultural Exchange Association, Mr Owen Grimes - Honourable Secretary, Queensland Navy League of Australia and Ms. Kaye T Morgan - Naval Association of Australia.



This photo taken at the Thanksgiving Dinner shows from left: Mike Harris - Association’s President & Life Member, Lewis Lee OAM - Dinner “Master of Ceremony”, Alice Langford - Association’s Secretary, Teresa Pokoj - Association’s Treasurer & Life Member and Major General Stephen Day DSC AM - President of RSL Queensland, who was Guest Speaker at the dinner.



This photo taken at the Thanksgiving Dinner shows Guest Speaker Major General Stephen Day DSC AM - holding a major raffle prize presented to him by the Association’s Treasurer Teresa Pokoj. [The prize had originally been won by the Honourable James P Lister - State Member for the Southern Downs, who requested that the prize be awarded to the Guest Speaker].



Association’s President Mike Harris thanking Lewis Lee OAM for doing such a great job as the Thanksgiving Dinner “Master of Ceremony”.

The Association's "Monthly Meet and Greet Evenings" held at the Military Room of the United Service Club.



Australian American Association Brisbane Members and Friends meet once a month at the United Service Club. Seen enjoying their evening together on Fri 24th May 2024, standing from left: Simon Cole [member], Jill McKeon [member], Tony Chou [1st Vice President], Teresa Pokoj [Treasurer], Lori Cartagena [member] and Mike Harris [President]. Seated from left: Helen Stanley [2nd Vice President], Maurice Hand and Brien Doyle [members].



Australian American Association Brisbane Members and Friends enjoying their evening get together in the Military Room of the United Service Club on Friday 19th July 2024,. From left: [back row] – Jill McKeon [member], Simon Cole [member], Teresa Pokoj [Treasurer], Moya, John Gates [member] and Tony Chou [1st Vice President]. From left: [front row] Lori Cartagena [member], the Hon Christine Elder [US Consul General] and Mike Harris [President].

The Association's "Members Christmas Party" held at the home of our Association's Treasurer - Teresa Pokoj, on Sat 14th December 2024.

A very happy group of 20 of our Association's fun-loving, party-going members attended our Christmas Party during a very severe storm. Some arrived just in time before the storm hit, and others arrived during the heavy rain, lightning and thunder, and afterwards. Then, our party area got flooded, and we mopped away the water. Finally, we got the party moving and we all had a fantastic time together after downing a few drinks and some tasty food. Santa duly arrived in the late afternoon, to give out all the Christmas presents.



After a very hazardous sleigh-ride through the storm, Santa Claus [aka Mike Harris] arrived at the party with a bagful of Christmas presents over his shoulder.

Santa had lots of lovely presents to hand out and was aided by his Faithful Elf [aka Teresa Pokoj]. Only those who had been good throughout the year, received a present from Santa, as the following extremely happy photos show:







Our Association's final event - the "Very Wild, Wet and Stormy Christmas Party" was our last lot of fun and excitement before the finish of 2024.....and now without hesitation, I'd like to wish you all lots of peace, joy, love, laughter, good health and prosperity for 2025!

*Mike Harris President & Life Member, Australian American Association, Brisbane. ****

Thanking our Members, Partners and Supporters.

