



*Australian American Association
Queensland Division, Brisbane.
News Flash108 - 23rd July 2025*



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



*Visit by the Delegation of Senior Navy Members from the United States
of America , Japan and Australia to the Australian American War
Memorial at Newstead Park, Brisbane on 11th July 2025.*

The Delegation of 13 persons included the US Navy 3 Star Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon (Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Installations and Logistics), 2 Star Rear Admiral Naoya Hoshi (Director General of Logistics Department, Maritime Staff Office, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF)) and Commodore Catherine Rhodes (Director General Logistics, Royal Australian Navy (RAN)), Naval Captains and Staff Members.

The Delegation was welcomed by 3 members of the Australian American Association, Brisbane Board of Directors: - First Vice-President Tony Chau, Secretary Teresa Pokoj, and President Mike Harris, who informed them about the history of the Australian American War Memorial and the adjacent War Memorials located along the Newstead-Hamilton Section of the Brisbane River. Captain Kasper Kuiper, Chairman of the Maritime Museum of Queensland, also attended this welcoming occasion.

Following their visit to the memorial, the Delegation and Association Board members, attended a much-enjoyed luncheon together at the 'Breakfast Creek [Brekky Creek] Hotel'.

On the afternoon of that day, the US Navy's Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon, the Japanese Navy's Rear Admiral Naoya Hoshi and the Royal Australian Navy's Commodore Catherine Rhodes, took part in the *Signing Ceremony* of the Three Nation's "**Trilateral Naval Logistics Arrangement for Further Cooperation**" aboard the US Navy Carrier "*USS America*" during the ship's visit to Brisbane.

The following 6 photos show the Delegation members being informed about the history of the Australian American War Memorial, located at the very picturesque Newstead Park.





The above 2 photos show the Delegation of Senior Navy Members from the United States, Japan and Australia with their staff, and the Board of Directors of the Australian American Association, Brisbane, enjoying their lunch together at the Breakfast Creek Hotel.

The following 3 photos show the US Navy's Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon, the Japanese Navy's Rear Admiral Naoya Hoshi and the Royal Australian Navy's Commodore Catherine Rhodes, taking part in the Signing Ceremony aboard the US Navy Carrier "USS America".



United States Navy - 3 Star Vice Admiral Jeff Jablon (Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Installations and Logistics).



Signing Ceremony aboard the US Navy Carrier "USS America".

History of the Australian American War Memorial at Newstead Park, Brisbane.



US Navy 7th Fleet Band and Royal Australian Navy Band Qld. performing at the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea Event, held in 2017 at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park, Brisbane.



US Navy 7th Fleet Band and Royal Australian Navy Band Qld. performing at the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea Event, held in 2022 at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park, Brisbane.

In 1951, the Australian American Association Brisbane, erected the Australian American War Memorial at Newstead Park in grateful memory of the contribution made by the people of the United States of America, to the defence of Australia during the 1939 -1945 War.

The memorial was funded totally from Queenslander's contributions, designed and built by Queenslanders as a genuine and heartfelt thanks to our American Allies.

This one-of-a-kind and first-ever Australian American War Memorial has been the heart and soul of every memorial service held at the Newstead Park site, continuously since 1951. Although, it is believed that earlier Battle of the Coral Sea Memorial Services were held at this site, beginning from 1946, some 5 years before the memorial was constructed. Therefore, this tradition is believed to have been followed at Newstead Park, without a break, for the past 79 years.

The foundation stone for the memorial was laid by Professor John Bostock, President of the Australian American Association Brisbane, on the 3rd of May 1951, during a week-long commemoration of the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The Memorial was unveiled by the Governor of Queensland, Sir John Lavarack on the 3rd of May 1952 in the presence of United States - General Robert L Eichelberger, a famous General who commanded the Eighth United States Army in the Southwest Pacific Area, during World War 2.



Sited on the Brisbane River at the mouth of Breakfast Creek, the Memorial was constructed with a 'Helidon Sandstone' Column with an American Eagle surmounted on its top.

PLAQUE INSCRIPTIONS READ:-

The main plaque on the column on the western side, records the unveiling of the memorial in 1952:

THEY PASSED THIS WAY
THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED
BY THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND
IN GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF THE CONTRIBUTION
MADE BY THE PEOPLE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA
DURING THE 1939-45 WAR.
LONG MAY IT STAND
AS A SYMBOL OF UNITY
OF ENGLISH SPEAKING PEOPLES
IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM.

The plaque on the marble plinth at the base on the western side of the memorial, was added for the Australian Bicentenary in 1988:

AUSTRALIA 1788-1988
THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATES
200 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN
AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP, IN PEACE AND IN WAR.
MAY THE NEXT 200 YEARS
BRING ONLY PEACE.

The plaque on the marble plinth at the base on the eastern side of the memorial, was added in 1995 to remember the 50th year of Victory in the Pacific:

AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS 1945-1995
IN THE FIFTIETH YEAR
OF VICTORY
IN THE PACIFIC
THIS PLAQUE IS DEDICATED TO
THE AUSTRALIAN & AMERICAN
SERVICE MEN & WOMEN
WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES
SO THAT WE MAY ENJOY PEACE.
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

History of the “Pensacola Convoy Place” and “USAT Goucher Victory” Memorials.

The Opening Chapter being the arrival of the Pensacola Convoy, which berthed on the 22nd of December 1941. The story began with the first presence of US Forces in Australia, when a convoy of 7 cargo and troop ships (known as the “Pensacola Convoy”) was being escorted by the “USS *Pensacola*”, en-route to re-equip the US Base in Manila. However, following the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the convoy was diverted to Brisbane. The convoy was the first of the military forces (US battalions of men with their military equipment, including tons of ammunition and aircraft) to arrive from the US on Australian soil. The convoy discharged its men and equipment at a location at Hamilton Wharf - now known as “Pensacola Place” at Bretts Wharf. **See the full story at:-**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1hn_GjR6Nk&list=PLv0V6xrurq2kEbYXLAGjd6kIAzTfE_9WZ

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lsdudf3sY8&list=PLv0V6xrurq2kEbYXLAGjd6kIAzTfE_9WZ&index=4

The “Pensacola Convoy Place” Plaque

Installed at Kingsford Smith Drive, Bretts Wharf, Hamilton, Brisbane.

PLAQUE INSCRIPTION READS:-

This Place is dedicated to the memory of the vessels known as the Pensacola Convoy - and those who served on them - who found safe harbour in the Brisbane River on 22 December 1941.

Following the Japanese military attack on Pearl Harbour and other targets in the Asia-Pacific region, a convoy of seven cargo and troop ships escorted by the USS *Pensacola*, that had been en route to re-equip the US base in Manila, diverted towards the east coast of Australia. Near New Caledonia, the convoy was joined by the Australian Navy cruisers “Canberra” and Perth” and the New Zealand cruiser “Achilles”. The convoy and escorts arrived in Moreton Bay in the early hours of 22 December, 1941.

An excerpt from the official US Army history of World War 2 reads, “From Moreton Bay, a sheet of blue water broken by small green island and edged by palm fringed yellow beaches, Brisbane is 14 miles up the Brisbane River. As the *Pensacola* and her convoy steamed upriver, the men at the rails saw cheering crowds along the banks. This was because they were the first US soldiers on Australian soil, at a time when Japanese forces were seen to threaten Australia”.

Berthing at Newstead Wharf and Hamilton Wharves, soldiers and airmen transferred to tent city quarters at the racetracks of Ascot and Doomben.

The USS *Pensacola* was a heavy cruiser. The ships in the convoy under her protection that berthed in Brisbane were :

SS Admiral Hahtead

SS Coast Farmer (charted commercial freighter)

MS Bloemfontein (Dutch passenger - cargo liner)

USS Chaumont (US Navy transport)

USAT Meigs (US Army transport)

USS Republic (US Navy troopship)

USAT Willard A Holbrook (US Army troopship)

Brisbane was established as the base from which the Allied fight back in the Pacific was planned and executed, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur.

State Funeral Procession Held in Brisbane for an Unknown US Soldier.

On 22nd December 1947, 30,000 people watched a State Funeral Procession held in Brisbane for an Unknown US Soldier, whose remains were transported on a gun carriage from the US Mausoleum No.4 at Redbank, to King George Square in Brisbane.

The soldier had been chosen to represent a total of 1871 US service personnel, who were being repatriated to the US from cemeteries in Ipswich (1406 souls) this site is now Manson Park, and also Rookwood in Sydney (465 souls). Their steel caskets were carried to the Newstead Wharf and were loaded onto the American ship – the “*USAT Goucher Victory*”.

It was during this time that calls were made for a memorial to commemorate America's WW2 assistance to Australia, and the presence of the Americans in Brisbane.

The “*USAT Goucher Victory*” Memorial Sign.



The Memorial Sign reads - “*USAT Goucher Victory*”

The US Maritime Commission built a class of merchant ships called Victory Ships and the “*USAT Goucher Victory*” was one of them named in honour of Goucher College which had a proud connection to WW2. In 1947, the “*USAT Goucher Victory*” collected and transported 1,871 coffins of deceased US service personnel back to the US who had been buried in Australia. A ceremony was held in the Brisbane City Hall on the 22nd of December 1947 to honour the American dead. A coffin containing the body of an Unknown Soldier was paraded through Brisbane to “*USAT Goucher Victory*” berthed at Newstead Wharf, watched by approximately 30,000 Brisbane residents. The 22nd of December 1947, echoing the arrival of Pensacola Convoy on the 22nd of December 1941 in Brisbane.

This Memorial Sign is located at the river-end of the Maud Street entrance, to the Park. The entrance was used by the “Parade of the Unknown Soldier”, which was the last coffin of a US Serviceman loaded onto the “*USAT Goucher Victory*”, on the 22nd of December 1947.



The coffin of the unknown US Serviceman being transported in a solemn procession through the Brisbane CBD to Newstead Wharves. The Procession was watched by over 30,000 Brisbane residents.



The coffin being transported through the gates of Newstead Wharves.

A mere six years to the day, since the Pensacola Convoy arrived on the 22nd December 1941 to render on-the-ground assistance to Australia, against the assault expected, following the bombing of Pearl Harbour.

The Memorial Sign follows the successful lobbying by our Australian American Association, Brisbane for the naming of "Pensacola Convoy Place". Our Association's particularly important request came from our Association's Special Projects Officer - Peter Rasey, for the lodgement of an E-Petition to the Brisbane City Council to name "Pensacola Convoy Place" after the first American WW2 Convoy into Brisbane.

You may further recall that Peter Rasey and our Association were similarly active in requesting the lodgement of a further E-Petition to the Brisbane City Council for the installation of the "*USAT Goucher Victory Memorial Sign*".

The "*USAT Goucher Victory Memorial Sign*" installed at Newstead Terrace Park, now locks-in the Closing Chapter of WW2 in Brisbane that ensued on the 22nd of December 1947. **See the full story at:-**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpQXVFDyLrE&list=PLv0V6xrruq2lCWuDcc7soBp8smVCZadhz>



The Heavy Cruiser - "USS Pensacola".



US National Guard soldiers marching along Racecourse Road Hamilton in Brisbane, after being discharged from their troop ships.



Victory Class Ship - "USAT Goucher Victory".

The Closing Chapter occurred a mere six years later on the 22nd of December 1947, as the last Americans left on the "USAT Goucher Victory". The coffins of the deceased US Service Personnel were transported all the way back home to the United States of America.

History of the United States Navy 7th Fleet.



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

The US Navy 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 US Navy 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.

It's now over 82 years, since the formation of the US Navy's 7th Fleet here in Brisbane on 15th March 1943, and on behalf of the Australian American Association, Brisbane Board of Directors and its Members, we wish to congratulate and thank the US Navy 7th Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Fred Kacher and all of his Service Personnel for their dedicated service.

May Australia continue to have a constant and a strong strategic partnership with the United States of America and Japan; one which can contribute to the peace, stability and security of our three Nations, including all those lying within the Asia-Pacific Region.

With our deepest respect and gratitude,



Mike Harris
*President, Life Member & Newsletter Editor,
Australian American Association, Brisbane.
23rd July 2025.*

*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.

