



*Australian American Association
Queensland Division – Brisbane
News Flash 69 - 24th August 2023*



Patron: Her Excellency the Hon. Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Qld.



**Australian American Association, Brisbane.
Our History, including Present and Upcoming Activities.**

Founding of the Association in 1936.

The Association was founded in Sydney NSW in 1936, by Sir Ernest White, an Aussie Veteran of World War 1, who was greatly distressed over events happening in the World at that time. An eroding world-stability had arisen, brought about by the rise in power of Nazi Germany and the expansion of the Japanese Empire into South East Asia.

Sir Ernest rightly felt that Australia had become increasingly isolated and vulnerable to attack [a familiar sentiment in our present times]. He believed that the solution lay in getting the English-speaking World, to take a stand and work together to avert another World War catastrophe. So, Sir Ernest formed an organization known as “*The British-American Cooperation Movement for World Peace*”. This title was later changed to ‘*The Australian American Association*’.

Establishment of our Brisbane Association in 1941.

Our Brisbane Association was established in 1941, some 2 years after the commencement of World War 2. At that time, our Aussie Forces were deployed overseas in North Africa, the Middle East and Mediterranean regions and, due to the attack on Pearl Harbor and the fall of Singapore, Australia swiftly realised that she could no longer look to Britain for protection. As well, the United States of America had already demonstrated its sympathy for the Allied cause, and sent a flotilla of 7 US Navy Ships to Sydney and Brisbane, where it was welcomed and entertained by members of our Association.

In 1942, General Douglas McArthur established his Head Quarters in Brisbane and the Association extended its friendship to visiting US service personnel on a massive scale. Functions were arranged, visiting US Navy Ships were met, welcoming literature was distributed, and the 4th July Independence Day was celebrated, as it would have been in the US. All these activities were part of the fundamental objectives of our Association in securing American friendship at grass roots level.

Following World War 2, the Association raised over 60,000 Pounds [\$A25 Million value in 2023] to build the Australian American War Memorial in Canberra, completed 1954. An interesting but generally unknown fact is that the fund-raising was started by Richard Casey, as Australian American Association National President, just after the USAT Goucher Victory departed Australian shores with 1,881 coffins of American Servicemen. Because of Queensland’s outstanding fund-raising effort, it was decided that a uniquely Queensland Stone Memorial should be erected at Newstead Park in Brisbane.

The Foundations were laid for the Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration in 1951, with the completed Memorial being Australia's "First". The Memorial was unveiled in 1952 at the 10th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. Newstead Park was also the birthplace of the first Australian "Minister to the US" in 1939, who was Richard Casey. He was the prime-mover for the Pensacola Convoy [which arrived in Brisbane on 22nd December 1941] and later, as Australia's "Governor General" for the naming of "Lyndon Baynes Johnston Place" where the Memorial is located at Newstead Park.

Since World War 2 onwards, the Association has held continuous *Annual Battle of Coral Sea Commemorations*, with the US President sending an official representative to take part in the activities on his behalf.

During the Vietnam War, the Association performed unparalleled work in providing rest and recreation for many US service personnel, who came to Australia, particularly to Sydney and Brisbane.

Over the years, Aussies and Americans have become genuine and resolute friends, and our Association aims to ensure this solid relationship continues and further strengthens. We foster the reality that the Australian American relationship is strongly linked across both sides of the Pacific Ocean, with a common heritage and many countless and cherished ties.



Our Association is a not-for-profit voluntary organization:

We hold gatherings to welcome Australian and American Navy ships visiting Brisbane, and arrange for ship-tours for our members. We also organize BBQ's for visiting US and other service personnel, where they can enjoy some good Aussie hospitality, so they can better understand our culture and our people.

Members of our Association are able to:

- Have contact with VIP's such as our Patron the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young, Governor of Queensland, the US Consul General the Honourable Christine Elder and Consul Generals of many other nations. As well, Australian Federal and State Government Ministers and officials, Australian Defence Force and US Armed Forces leaders and service personnel, as well as the many members of our Veterans and kindred organizations.

- Enjoy the pleasure of meeting new friends and gaining social contacts at our Monthly “Meet & Greet Nights” as well as our organized dinners and luncheons,
- Get discounted prices for our organized events,
- Receive timely Newsflashes and Quarterly Newsletters and
- If they so wish, the opportunity to lay wreaths at Veteran’s commemoration events, for any friends or relatives who may have served their country.



We organize events celebrated and honoured in Australia and the US, which include:

- **The 26th January Australia Day** and the **4th July Independence Day** - we organize a BBQ Picnic by the Brisbane River, or a Luncheon held at the Coorparoo RSL which has become very popular with our members and friends.
- **Battle of the Coral Sea Commemoration** - we organize an Annual Commemoration Wreath-laying Service held at the Australian American War Memorial, Newstead Park, Brisbane. Over 280 guests including many VIP’s, service personnel and veterans, have attended this Commemoration Service.
- **Thanksgiving** - we organize a Dinner Function on the evening of Thanksgiving,
- **Christmas** - we organize a Dinner Function a week prior to Christmas,
- **Monthly “Meet & Greet” Drinks Nights** - we organize these events held at the United Service Club - one of Brisbane’s Premium Private Member’s Establishments in Brisbane City.

We are regularly invited to events held by Kindred Organizations. The following are just 9 of the 22 most important memorial events that we attend annually:

- **HMAS Perth Association** - as guests of this Association, we lay a wreath at the Navy Jacks Memorial, Southbank Brisbane, to commemorate the sinking of HMAS Perth and USS Huston, during the Battle of Sunda Strait in WW2.
- **ANZAC Day** - we attend as guests of the RSL SE Districts at its ANZAC Day March held in Brisbane City.

- **Victory in Europe Day** and also, **Victory in the Pacific Day** - we lay wreaths at these 2 separate services organized by the RSL SE Districts.
- **Seafarers Service** - we lay a wreath at the service held at St John's Anglican Cathedral, to remember the achievements and sacrifice of the men and women of the Royal Australian Navy and Merchant Navy.
- **Memorial Day** - we lay a wreath as guests of the American Legion AU03, organizing this event, to commemorate those who fought or died in the defence forces of the United States of America.
- **Korean Veterans Memorial Service** - we lay a wreath at this service organized by the Korean Veterans Association and the RSL Gold Coast.
- **Chinese Veterans Memorial Service** - we lay a wreath at this service organized by the Chinese Veterans Association and RSL Sunnybank.
- **Remembrance Day - 11th November** - we remember those Allied servicemen and women who died or suffered in all wars, and we lay a wreath as guests of RSL SE Districts.
- **MacArthur Dinner** - we attend this Dinner Function held at Tattersalls Club Brisbane City, as guests of the MacArthur Museum Foundation.









Upcoming Activities Planned for the Remainder of 2023:

For the remainder of 2023, we plan to organize the following events:

- **The November 2023 Thanksgiving Dinner.**
Our Association's "Events [Planning] Standing Committee" headed by our Secretary Alice Langford, is now planning to hold this event at the United Service Club on Friday 24th November, 2023.
- **Proposed October Halloween Trivia or Bingo Night.** [Details yet to be advised].
- **The Christmas Luncheon.**
This Luncheon will be held about a week prior to Christmas,
- **Monthly "Meet & Greet" Nights.**
These events will be held at the United Service Club in August, September, October, and probably November.

Planning for the 2024 Battle of the Coral Sea 82nd Anniversary Wreath-laying Event to be held in Brisbane:

The Australian American War Memorial at Newstead Park Brisbane, will be booked for this event, to be held on Saturday 4th May 2024. Invitations will be sent out to all dignitaries, Government, US Navy 7th Fleet, the ADF, Veteran's Associations and our Kindred Organizations, well in advance of this event.

For all of these events and activities, we will need to have more active persons assisting us, "hands on". We thank all of our Association's Members, including, Standing Committees and helpers, your past support has greatly assisted us.

Anyone interested in joining our Association, please contact our extremely friendly Treasurer - Teresa Pokoj at email: admin@aaabrisbane.com





The Australian American Association, Brisbane - Board of Directors, shown in the above photo [from left] Dr Peter Glazebrook [Legal Advisor], Mike Harris [President], Teresa Pokoj [Treasurer], Helen Stanley [2nd Vice President] and Alice Langford [Secretary]. On behalf of our Association's Members we wish you all the very best in your endeavours as you move towards the close of 2023, and also, countless successes and good fortune in 2024.

*Mike Harris, [News Editor]
President & Life Member.*



*Address: PO Box 148 Coopers Plains Qld 4108
Email: admin@aaabrisbane.com Web: www.aaabrisbane.com*