Ian Waters

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PROFILE

Born not long after the cessation of WWII hostilities, I was brought up with a deep respect for those who served from my childhood suburb of Tennyson, and this has driven me to research, write and lecture on the impact of war in the Australian community and, above all, to emulate the service of those I learned to revere in my youth, albeit by giving peacetime service to the community via leadership roles in Scouting, church, professional institutes, and various associations.

In August 2015 my respect for those who served our Nation in times of war was reflected in the unveiling and dedication of a monument by the side of the abandoned WWII RAAF Leyburn airfield on the Darling Downs. This project was instigated and financially supported by myself, and I was honoured when the Leyburn community asked me to chair the organising committee.

I was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1975 and have received recognition from the Attorney General of Queensland. In the 2014 Australia Day Honours, I received the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for service to youth, and I have also received several Scouting awards culminating in the Silver Emu, Scouting's second highest adult leadership award.

I am an Associate Fellow of the Risk Management Institute of Australasia (RMIA) and an Honorary Life Member of the Genealogical Society of Queensland, an organisation I founded in 1978.

I have extensive experience in leadership roles, public speaking, and adult leader training.

SPEAKING TOPICS

THE BLACK DAYS OF 1942

This is the flagship of my speeches. It is a moving 40 minute account of just how ill-prepared and vulnerable Australia, especially Queensland, was at the outbreak of the WWII Pacific conflict.

The presentation starts with Group Captain Grant's personal account of a February 1942 briefing to the senior officers of RAAF North East Area Command in Townsville, and includes far reaching and little known details of the position as determined by the Allied Joint Chief's of Staff.

It is hair raising account and compelling listening in these days of uncertainty when Sir Winston Churchill's term "The Gathering Storm" is all too relevant.

THE SPIRIT OF ANZAC

A moving 20 minute presentation covering the sacrifices and successes of our service men and women and their families who carried the baton in their absence.

TESTIMONIALS

Specializing in military history, Ian painted a poignant picture of Australia's dire situation in the early days of the World War Two Pacific conflict, particularly the harrowing events of 1942. His talk delved into intriguing details surrounding the loss of RAAF 20 Squadron's Catalina A24-20 and its crew in the lead-up to the Coral Sea Battle.

The reception of Ian's presentation was overwhelmingly positive; we were captivated by every word. The emotional impact of his heartfelt narrative about a lesser-known historical event took us by surprise. This wasn't a lengthy and dull monologue for only the die-hard military enthusiasts; instead, it unfolded as a revelation of a significant yet obscure episode that we unanimously felt should be shared with all Australians.

Christine Turner
Former President
Millmerran & District Historical Society Inc.

Ian told us about the book that he is writing on the desperate plight of Australia in 1942 at the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, and of the little-known story of the loss of the Catalina A24-20. He suggested that he could present a talk on the topic. In October, 2021, our Society was delighted to host visitors from other local history groups to hear his first talk on this topic. Despite the overwhelming heat, his obvious deep knowledge of his subject, and his emotional involvement in the implications of these events for Australia, brought to life a part of our history of which we should not be kept in ignorance.

I am delighted, on behalf of our society members, to recommend that Ian and his expertise and passion be shared with as many others as possible.

Frances Symonds
Former President
Leyburn & District Historical Society Inc.