

LEST WE FORGET

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MILITARY ROLLS OF HONOUR VYNER BROOKE TRAGEDY

There are two memorials to the Nurses from the ship Vyner Brooke in Western Australia.

Kings Park

The Memorial in Kings Park is located at May Circle and its inscription reads:

On 12 February 1942 sixty five Australian Army Nurses were ordered to evacuate Singapore to escape the advancing Japanese Army. Along with many civilians they boarded the "Vyner Brooke", Two days later the ship was discovered by enemy aircraft, bombed, strafed and sunk. Twelve nurses drowned after the attack. The survivors made their way to shore at Bangka Island. A group of twenty two nurses came together on Radji Beach and The next day, 16 February, surrendered to the Japanese. They were forced to walk into the sea and were shot from behind. One Nurse. Vivian Bullwinkel, survived the massacre by feigning Death and spent three and a half years as a prisoner of war. Only twenty four nurses returned home to Australia. Of the five western Australian nurses honoured here, One was lost at sea when the ship was sunk and The other four were massacred by their captors at the beach.

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Bicton

The inscription from the Memorial at Bicton reads:

Our Nursing Heritage
The Vyner Brooke Tragedy

On 12th February 1942 sixty five Australian Army Nursing Sisters were ordered to leave Singapore in the wake of the advancing Japanese army. They boarded the ship the "Vyner Brooke" along with civilians.

Two days later the ship was discovered by Japanese aircraft and bombed. Twelve nurses drowned after the attack. Twenty two nurses, many of them wounded landed on Banka Island. The group was found by Japanese soldiers and forced to walk into the sea and were shot. One nurse named Vivian Bullwinkel although shot, feigned death, and later made her way to shore. She and the remaining thirty one nurses became prisoners of war for three and a half years. A further eight nurses died during this period of captivity. Twenty four nurses returned home.

This memorial was made possible by Cape Bouvard Investments and the City of Melville.

This memorial was officially unveiled on 2 May 1999 by Mrs Vivian Statham (nee Bullwinkel) AO MBE ARRC FNM and another PoW survivor Mrs Wilma Young (nee Oram) AM to celebrate the 100th year of Women's Suffrage in Western Australia.

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Places of Association or Rolls of Honour or Places of Birth for casualties are shown. Further biographical and Service information for each Sailor, Soldier or Airman Nurse may be found on the National Archives of Australia, the AWM, the Commonwealth Graves Commission, and the DVA Websites.

THOSE WHO DIED

Killed in the Air

Bombardment of the Vyner Brooke, off Bangka Island, South East Sumatran Coast: 14 February 1942

BATES Louvinia Mary Isabella WFX11169 Born Fremantle WA	BALFOUR-OGILVY Elaine Leonore SFX10596 PoW Renmark SA	SALMON Florence Aubin NFX70991 PoW Punchbowl NSW
CALNAN Ellenor QFX19072 Wagga Wagga NSW	BEARD Alma May WFX11175 PoW Toodyay WA	STEWART Esther Sarah Jane NFX70936 PoW Sydney NSW
CLARKE Mary Dorothea NFX70938 Rylstone NSW	BRIDGE Ada Joyce NFX76284 PoW Scone NSW	TAIT Mona Margaret Anderson NFX76281 PoW Newcastle NSW
DORSCH Hulda Millicent Maria SFX10597 Brighton SA	CASSON Florence Rebecca SFX13418 PoW Pinnaroo VIC	WIGHT Rosetta Joan VFX61329 PoW Fish Creek VIC
ENNIS Caroline Mary VFX38751 Born Swan Hill VIC	CUTHBERTSON Mary Elizabeth VFX38746 PoW Ballarat VIC	WILMOTT Bessie WFX3439 PoW Born Perth WA
KINSELLA Kathleen VFX61126 Born South Yarra VIC	DRUMMOND Irena Melville SFX10594 PoW South Australia	Other Australian Army Nurses taken prisoner in mid- February 1942 following the loss of Vyner Brooke
McDONALD Gladys Myrtle QFX22815 Brisbane QLD	ELMES Dorothy Gwendoline Howard NFX70526 PoW Melbourne VIC	Died during Imprisonment
PASCHKE Olive Dorothy VFX33812 Dimboola VIC	FAIRWEATHER Lorna Florence SFX13431 PoW Adelaide SA	RAYMONT Wilhelmina Rosalie TFX6012 (TX6012) PoW Illness: 8Feb45 Adelaide SA
RUSSELL Lavinia Jean NFX70571 Hurstville NSW	FARMANER Peggy Everett WFX3438 PoW Claremont WA	SINGLETON Irene Ada VFX48842 (Vx48842) PoW Illness: 20Feb45 Maffra VIC
SCHUMAN Marjorie NFX70520 Manly NSW	HALLIGAN Clarice Isobel VFX47776 PoW Kew VIC	HEMPSTED Pauline Blanche QFX22714 PoW Illness: 19Mar45 Brisbane QLD
TRENERRY Annie Merle SFX13419 Moonta SA	HARRIS Nancy NFX76285 PoW North Sydney NSW	GARDAM Dora Shirley TFX2183 (TX2183) PoW Illness: 4Apr45 Youngtown TAS
WILTON Mona Margaret VFX61225 Warrnambool VIC	HODGSON Minnie Ivy WFX11174 PoW Yealering WA	HUGHES Gladys Laura VFX61331 (VX61331) PoW Illness: 31May45 Auckland NZ
Executed on Radji Beach, Bangka Island: 16 February 1942	KEATS Ellen Louisa SFX1647 PoW Adelaide SA	
	KERR Janet NFX76279 PoW Woodstock NSW	
	McGLADE Mary Eleanor NFX76275 PoW Wallalong NSW	
	NEUSS Kathleen Margaret NFX70527 PoW Inverell NSW	

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DAVIS Winnie May NFX70498 (NX70498) PoW Illness: 19Jul45 Ulmurra NSW	NFX76282 (NX76282) PoW Dis: 20Dec46 DELFORCE Cecilia May QFX19071 PoW Dis: 9Jan46	PoW Dis: 10May46 ORAM Wilma Elizabeth Forster VFX58783 (VX58783) PoW Dis: 5Jul46
FREEMAN Rubina Dorothy VFX39351 (VX393510) PoW Illness: 8Aug45 Melbourne VIC	DOYLE Jess Gregory NFX70499 (NX74099) PoW Dis: 8Apr46	OXLEY Christian Sarah Mary QFX19073 PoW Dis: 27Mar46
MITTELHEUSER Pearl Beatrice QFX19068 PoW Illness: 18Aug45 Bundaberg QLD	GREER Jean Keers NFX70937 (NX70937) PoW Dis: 23Sep46 GUNTHER Janet Patterson NFX70493 PoW Dis: 4Feb47	SHORT Eileen Mary QFX22911 PoW Dis: 4Apr46 SIMONS Jessie Elizabeth TFX6023 (TX6023) PoW Dis: 16Apr46 SMITH Valrie Elizabeth QFX22819 (QX22819) PoW Dis: 4Apr46 SYER Ada Corbett WFX11105 (WX11105) PoW Dis: 10Aug48
THOSE WHO SURVIVED	HANNAH Ellen Mavis SFX10595 (SX10595) PoW Dis: 2Dec46 HARPER Iole WFX11172 (WX11172) PoW Dis: 12May47	TROTTER Florence Elizabeth QFX19077 PoW Dis: 27Mar46 TWEDDLE Joyce QFX19070 PoW Dis: 27Jun46 WOODBRIDGE Beryl VFX53060 (VX53060) PoW Dis: 6Mar46
ASHTON Carrie Jean SFX13548 PoW Dis: 25Feb46	JAMES Nesta Gwyneth VFX39347 (VX39347) PoW Dis: 17Oct46 JEFFREY Agnes Betty VFX53059 (VX53059) PoW Dis: 6Nov46 McELNEA Violet Irene QFX22822 (QX22822) PoW Dis: 4Apr46	
BLAKE Kathleen Constance NFX70528 (NX70528) PoW Dis: 24Jul46	MUIR Sylvia Jessie Mimmi QFX22816 (QX22816)	
BLANCH Jessie Jane RRC (2nd Class) QFX19074 PoW Dis: 27Mar46		
BULLWINKEL Vivian RRC (2nd Class) VX61330 PoW Feigned Death and later Recaptured Dis: 30Sep47 Born Kapunda SA (Warden, WA State War Memorial: 1988)		
CLANCY Veronica Ann		

Endnote:

One British civilian woman was also massacred on Radji Beach. From the Commonwealth War Graves Commission record, she was possibly Helen Parfitt (40), recorded as injured from the air bombardment on 14 February, but her date of death is shown as 15 February.

Further information:

Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E302>

The names of the Nurses may also be listed on Local Memorials, and in addition, be shown on privately provided individual plaques located on the Honour Avenues in Kings Park, with the list of

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those names provided on the Botanical Gardens and Parks Authority Website at
<https://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/honour-avenues-plaques>

Please contact Website@highgate-rsl.org.au to advise of errors or omissions, or to suggest improvements to this document

RSL Highgate Sub-Branch