

Great Escaper Dies

Squadron Leader Bertram Arthur "Jimmy" James MC (RAF)

Passed away on the 18/1/08 aged 92. Sqdn. Ldr. James was one of 76 men who tunnelled out of Stalag Luft III in March 1944. This escape was immortalised in the film *The Great Escape*. Out of the 76 airmen, only 3 managed to return to England, and 50 of those recaptured were executed. Mr James was shot down over Rotterdam while he was flying Wellington bombers. During his time as a POW he managed to escape 13 times! At one time he was asked about the *Great Escape* film and remarked that it was a lot of Hollywood fantasy as "There were no Americans in the escape"

Fallout from Nuke tests hits families

Australian and British soldiers used as guinea pigs in nuclear tests in Australia 50 years ago have found out that new tests show the families of these servicemen are at a higher risk of major health problems for up to 20 generations. 50 of these servicemen are dying each year from cancers. While a House of Commons group have recommended an interim payment of \$10,000 each for these men, the British Ministry of Defence has begun a High Court appeal to delay any compensation until 2011. New Zealand and the U.S have already started paying compensation to their veterans. There were 22,000 British, 14,000 Australian, 500 New Zealanders and an assortment of U.S, Canadian and Fijian servicemen involved in over 21 nuclear tests between 1952 and 1958, as well as the thousands involved in the clean-up duties that went on until the 1960's.

Injured Soldier returns to duty

An Australian soldier who lost his right arm and right eye in a bomb blast is returning to duties. He was badly injured defusing a road side bomb while serving in Afghanistan on the 3rd November 2007. Sergeant Michael Lyddaird said: "the way ahead for me is forward, and the best way to do that is as a combat engineer". He was full of praise for the wonderful work done by all of the medics and hospital staff who have helped him recover. Sgt Lyddaird will be based at Townsville with the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment.

Still no Action on Fromelle's Soldiers

Government inaction seems to be the reason that not a lot of work has been done in efforts to recover and identify the remains of missing Australian and British soldiers who are buried in mass graves at Pheasant Woods near the French town of Fromelle's. We owe it to these Soldiers that their sacrifice should never be forgotten and every effort should be made to identify these brave men. A discussion group (MSFDG) Missing Soldiers of Fromelle's Discussion Group will open a web site shortly to help raise awareness of this issue. More details will be published as they come to hand.

Holocaust answers from old Nazi files

A Museum in the U.S. has started helping people search a vast German archive to find documents on their persecution and the fate of missing relatives. Over 100 million digital images from the files will be available to

search. The US Holocaust Museum will be the first of 3 museums to make available the files from the International Tracing Service of the International Committee of the Red Cross. People will be able to request files on the following sites

<http://www.its-arolsen.org> or <http://www.ushmm.org>

Finding your ancestors with DNA

Australians for the first time can find their ancestry through DNA testing, A Melbourne company, DNA Solutions has developed a DNA database with data from the worlds racial regions. A simple mouth swab and \$295 will tell you what area in the world your ancestors came from.

World War Two movie made in Melbourne

The new world war 2 movie "The Pacific" is based on the story of the 1st US Marine Division, that was sent to Melbourne for R & R after fighting in battles at Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands. The streets of Melbourne were turned back to look like the 1940's for the movie. A group of Veterans from the 1st US Marine Division visited the filming as part of a tour organised by Greatest Generations Foundation, an organisation dedicated to helping veterans revisit places they served.

Military websites

Crimean war www.crimewar.org

Army Children of the British Army www.archhistory.co.uk

New Military books and DVDs at Eastern Regional Libraries

Books

The faces of World War 1 – Max Arthur

Vietnam : A Complete Photographic History – Michael Maclear

The Regiment: The first 50 Years of the SAS – Michael Asher

Sniper One – Sgt Dan Mills

Nemesis: the Battle for Japan, 1944-45 – Max Hastings

Armed Action: 847 Naval Air Squadron – Lt-Comdr James Newton DFC

Turn Around and Run Like Hell: Unconventional Military Strategies – J. Cummins

Storm & Conquest: Battle for the Indian Ocean, 1809 – Stephen Taylor

The Salient: Ypres, 1914-18 – Alan Palmer

DVDs

The Land Girls

Flags of our Fathers

Letters from Iwo Jima

Some of our airmen are no longer missing

Military History Training on the Internet is Here at Last!

Yes, at long last we have the resources available to offer internet training on Military History sites. The training will be held on the same day and time as we hold the MHG meetings. The training will last for 2 hours and there is a charge of \$30 per person. Places are limited to 3 people each meeting, so hurry, get in early and make a booking now! Some knowledge of computers and the Internet is necessary. If you are not familiar with the Internet, then Basic Internet training is available for \$30. Basic Internet + Military History on the internet training sessions can be booked together for only \$50.

Enquiries for Military History: Kathy at Ringwood Library 9870 0177 Alan at Croydon 9294 5640

Enquiries for Basic Internet: Maryanne or David at Administration 9800 6438

Meeting dates for 2008 at Croydon Library

29th February, Friday 2pm.

18th April, Friday 2pm.

27th June, Friday pm.

29th August, Friday 2 pm.

31st October, Friday 2pm.

5th December, Friday 2pm.

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