A cultural heritage overview of significant places in the defence of north Queensland during World War II
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Howard Pearce
Environmental Protection Agency
Brisbane January 2009
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About this report

This report was written and produced by Howard Pearce of the Cultural Heritage Branch, Environmental Protection Agency, Brisbane. The project was funded by the EPA as part of a State Wide Survey of cultural heritage places in Queensland.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the distribution and typology of surviving places that played a significant role in the defence of north Queensland during World War II and to prepare a report which would provide an historical context in which to assess the cultural heritage significance of these places for their entry in the Queensland Heritage Register. The study was also intended as a reference resource for further research in this field. The report identifies 300 wartime places of cultural heritage significance, including 60 places assessed at a state level of significance.

Field work for the report was undertaken in north Queensland between August 2006 and September 2007. Surveys extended northward from the Proserpine district, through Bowen, Townsville, Cairns, Atherton Tableland, Cape York Peninsula, and the Torres Strait; and westward through Charters Towers to Camooweal on the Northern Territory border and Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria.

During surveys, invaluable assistance was received from experts including Ray Holyoak at Townsville; Bill Henderson at Charters Towers; Vera Bradley and Stephen Fowler at Cairns; Ian Holloway, Don Locarnini and Graeme Heppell on the Atherton Tableland; Ian McRae at Cooktown; Michael Musumeci at Lockhart River; Dale Young at Bamaga and Vanessa Seekee on Horn Island. Valuable research information was obtained from publications by Roger Marks, Peter Nielsen and Peter Wilson. Archival assistance was provided by Margaret Daley at Australian Archives, Brisbane and the staff at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. In Brisbane, administrative support was provided by Munevera Karcic of the Cultural Heritage Branch and the project was managed by Fiona Gardiner.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAD</td>
<td>Advanced Ammunition Depot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAMWS</td>
<td>Australian Army Medical Women's Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AANS</td>
<td>Australian Army Nursing Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>American British Dutch Australian Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACH</td>
<td>Australian Camp Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGH</td>
<td>Australian General Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIB</td>
<td>Australian Infantry Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIF</td>
<td>Australian Imperial Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOB</td>
<td>Advanced Operational Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOD</td>
<td>Advanced Ordnance Depot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARO</td>
<td>Aircraft Repair Depot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Advanced Supply Depot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AW</td>
<td>Air Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWAS</td>
<td>Australian Women's Army Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWC</td>
<td>Allied Works Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWLA</td>
<td>Australian Women's Land Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG(M)(H)</td>
<td>Bombardment Group (Medium) (Heavy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brig</td>
<td>Brigadier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Bombardment Squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Civil Construction Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMF</td>
<td>Citizen Military Forces (Militia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COD</td>
<td>Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>Department of Civil Aviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOC</td>
<td>General Officer Commanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSR</td>
<td>General Service Regiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAA</td>
<td>Heavy Anti-Aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFDF</td>
<td>High Frequency Direction Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMAS</td>
<td>His Majesty's Australian Ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNIL</td>
<td>Royal Netherlands Indies Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCVP</td>
<td>Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGen</td>
<td>Lieutenant-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L of C</td>
<td>Line of Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LW AW</td>
<td>Light Weight Air Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGen</td>
<td>Major-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Queensland Main Roads Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEI</td>
<td>Netherlands East Indies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOC</td>
<td>Naval Officer in Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBU</td>
<td>Operational Base Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMG</td>
<td>Postmaster-Generals Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner of War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QMIB</td>
<td>Queensland Meat Industry Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAC</td>
<td>Royal Australian Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAA</td>
<td>Royal Australian Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAE</td>
<td>Royal Australian Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAN</td>
<td>Royal Australian Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNC</td>
<td>Royal Netherlands Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPL</td>
<td>Radiophysics Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sqn</td>
<td>Squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWP</td>
<td>South West Pacific Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSLI</td>
<td>Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAP</td>
<td>United Australia Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>United States Army Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAFIA</td>
<td>United States Army Forces in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USASOS</td>
<td>United States Army Services of Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USN</td>
<td>United States Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS</td>
<td>United States Ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAD</td>
<td>Voluntary Aid Detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Volunteer Defence Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAF</td>
<td>Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRANS</td>
<td>Women's Royal Australian Navy Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men's Christian Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chronology 1918–1945

Chronology of World War II with reference to events in north Queensland in bold type.

November 1918


June 1919


[28] Townsville police fired on striking meat workers.

1919

Report on Australia’s naval defences by Admiral of the Fleet, John Jellicoe, identified an emerging threat from Japan: recommended construction of a British naval base at Singapore.

1921

Britain terminated the Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty, part of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

February 1922


1923

Cairns proclaimed a city.

February 1923

[9] Stanley Bruce elected Prime Minister of Australia with Country Party support.

August 1923


October 1923

Admiral Jellicoe’s Singapore naval base strategy adopted in a modified form at the Imperial Conference of 1923.

1924

The Bruce government announced a five-year defence plan with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as the chief beneficiary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Work began on a naval oil fuelling installation at Darwin replacing the outmoded Thursday Island coaling station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1924</td>
<td>World War I battle cruiser <em>HMAS Australia</em> sunk off Sydney Heads to comply with the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1924</td>
<td>North Coast Railway completed between Brisbane and Cairns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Italian immigration to north Queensland peaked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Gillies Highway opened between Gordonvale and Atherton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Completion of first four tanks of naval oil and fuel installation at Darwin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>End of first five-year defence development program. County class heavy cruisers <em>HMAS Australia</em> and <em>Canberra</em>, submarines <em>Otway</em> and <em>Oxley</em>, and seaplane carrier <em>Albatross</em> added to the fleet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1929</td>
<td>Labor Party under James Scullin elected to govern Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930–32</td>
<td>Cuts in defence spending, fleet strength and military personnel forced by Great Depression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Thursday Island Garrison withdrawn from Torres Strait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1931</td>
<td>Japan invaded Manchuria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1931</td>
<td>Joseph Lyons' United Australia Party (UAP) elected to govern Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Thursday Island Garrison barracks dismantled for erection at Darwin. Thursday Island rifle club formed a Wireless Station Guard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Urgent need for extensions in defence activity noted in defence estimates for 1933–34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Cook Highway between Cairns and Port Douglas completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Commencement of a three-year program to enhance naval defences including acquisition of a modern Leander class light cruiser <em>(HMAS Sydney)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935–36</td>
<td>Federal relief works provided employment for about 55,000 of the 300,000 jobless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Second three-year defence program announced including allocation for increased armour on <em>HMAS Australia</em> and <em>Canberra</em> and recommissioning of ships in reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1936</td>
<td><strong>Barron River hydro-electricity project opened.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1937</td>
<td>Japan invaded China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Three-year defence program announced including acquisition of two more Leander class cruisers <em>(HMAS Perth and Hobart)</em> by 1939, and the building of two modern Tribal class destroyers in Australia <em>(HMAS Arunta and Warramunga)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1938</td>
<td>Singapore Naval Dockyard opened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1939</td>
<td><strong>Townsville City Council established an aerodrome on the Town Common near Garbutt rail siding.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1939</td>
<td>Australian scientists invited to London to be briefed on British radar technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1939</td>
<td>Women's Voluntary National Register established through the Department of Defence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1939</td>
<td>Robert Menzies elected leader of the UAP and sworn in as Prime Minister of Australia after the death of Joseph Lyons on 7 April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1939</td>
<td>Department of Defence began early development of Townsville aerodrome for RAAF use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June 1939

RAAF began search for a suitable Advanced Operational Base site on Cape York Peninsula near Coen.


August 1939

Australian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research established the Radiophysics Laboratory at Sydney University with radar research a high priority.

[22] First written consideration for the importation of chemical war gases.

[31] Approval for construction of Horn Island airfield announced.

September 1939


[3] Britain declared war on Germany. Prime Minister Menzies broadcast that Australia was at war with Germany.


[4] Far North Queensland Regiment (51 Infantry Battalion) and the Kennedy Regiment (31 Infantry Battalion) of 11 Brigade CMF entered camp at Townsville Showgrounds.


[15] Prime Minister announced formation of a volunteer Australian Imperial Force for service at home and abroad. Militia forces called up.

[17] Australia, New Zealand and Canada signed the Empire Air Training Agreement in Ottawa to provide air pilot trainees for service with the RAF.

[28] RAAF 11 Sqn flying boats moved base from Richmond to Port Moresby.

October 1939

Australian Army restructured into four new regional commands — Northern (Qld), Eastern, Southern, Western.

[13–14] Newly acquired HMAS Hobart and five RAN destroyers from World War I sailed for service overseas with the Royal Navy.

[19] Conscription for home defence introduced. Militia forces called up.

November 1939


December 1939

Construction of Horn Island Airfield commenced.

January 1940

[10] First contingent (16 Brigade) of 6 Division AIF sailed from Sydney for the Middle East.
February 1940

Cairns City Council selected a civil aerodrome site on salt pans alongside Tom McDonald’s private strip at Aeroglen.


[12] First contingent of 6 Division AIF arrived in the Middle East.

[28] Decision to form 7 Division of the AIF.

March 1940


[23] 51 Battalion entered Miowera camp near Bowen, joining 26 and 31 Battalions of 11 Brigade.

April 1940


[10] Neville Chamberlain resigned as British Prime Minister; replaced by Winston Churchill.

May 1940

Australian Defence Committee sought advice on coastal battery sites for Torres Strait.

[3] Britain closed the Mediterranean Sea to shipping.

[5–15] 17 and 18 Brigades of 6 Division AIF sailed from Melbourne and Sydney for the Middle East.

[9] First German bombing raids on Britain.

[10] Germany invaded the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Luxembourg.


[17] 7 Division AIF under MGen John Lavarack arrived in Middle East.

[22] Decision to form 8 Division of the AIF.

[28] Evacuation of British forces from Dunkirk began.

June 1940

[3] Evacuation of 337,000 British, French and Belgium troops from Dunkirk completed.

[10] Italy declared war on the Allies.


[22] France signed an armistice with Germany.

[26] Federal government implemented special powers to take control of resources, production and manpower.

July 1940

Cairns civil aerodrome under construction by MRC.

Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) formed by the RSL with WWI ex-servicemen and other men aged between 40 and 60.

**September 1940**

RAAF officer posted to Britain to examine tactical use of radar.

London Blitz began. Start of sustained German bombing to 10 May 1941.

The UAP, under Prime Minister Menzies, narrowly retained government in the federal election.

Decision to form 9 Division of the AIF.

Signing of Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan.

**October 1940**

Construction of Goods Island coastal battery in Torres Strait commenced.

Petrol rationing introduced in Australia (in place until February 1950).

RAAF 24 Sqn moved from Amberley to Garbutt, Townsville.

7 Division AIF sailed for the Middle East.

Italy invaded Greece.

**December 1940**

8 Division of the AIF sailed from Sydney to Malaya and Singapore.

Garbutt aerodrome transferred from Townsville City Council to Department of Defence for RAAF use.

**January 1941**

6 Division AIF captured Bardia in Libya.

Australian troops captured Tobruk in Libya.

**February 1941**

North-south runway on Horn Island completed as a gravel strip for RAAF units.

6 Division AIF captured Benghazi in Libya.

Brigade group of 8 Division AIF arrived at Singapore.

Army HQ call up half of the militia force for 90 days full-time duty and manning of all coastal and anti-aircraft defences. Infantry detachments sent to reinforce Thursday Island, Port Moresby and Rabaul.

Establishment of first high frequency direction finding (HFDF) station at Garbutt aerodrome.

**March 1941**

Lend-Lease Bill signed by US President Franklin Roosevelt.

Militia troops of 49 Battalion reinforced Thursday Island and Port Moresby.

Troops of 51 Battalion entered Cairns Showgrounds for 90-day training camp.

WAAAF established.

Qld Labor premier William Forgan Smith elected for fourth term.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| April 1941 | Work commenced on survey and grading of the Mount Isa–Tennant Creek supply road to Darwin.  
[22] Evacuation of Allied troops from Greece began.  
[31] Lark Force 2/22 Battalion reinforced the Rabaul garrison. |
| May 1941   | Army HQ took over control of the VDC.  
[3] Approval given for raising a company of Torres Strait Islander troops.  
[8] RAAF Area Combined HQ moved from Port Moresby to Townsville (Commonwealth Building, 42 Sturt Street).  
| June 1941  | RAAF 24 Sqn (Wirraways) arrived at Garbutt aerodrome, Townsville.  
[13] HFDF station Garbutt transferred to RAAF.  
[22] Germany invaded the Soviet Union.  
[26] Federal Department of War Organisation of Industry established. |
| July 1941  | Proof firing of coast defence guns at Goods and Milman Batteries, Torres Strait.  
[12] MRC upgraded and sealed Cairns airfield.  
| August 1941| RAAF 20 Sqn formed at Port Moresby (Catalina and Empire flying boats).  
[17] Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) established.  
[28] Robert Menzies resigned as prime minister; replaced by Arthur Fadden. |
| October 1941| Horn Island airfield second runway completed as a gravel strip.  
Japanese Cabinet resigned. General Hideki Tojo became Japan’s prime minister and war minister.

Moscow under siege by German forces.

RAAF selected Woodstock area near Townsville as a suitable site for an airfield.

November 1941

Urgent upgrading and sealing of Garbutt aerodrome commenced with MRC teams working around the clock.

RAAF selected Antil Plains area near Townsville as a suitable site for an airfield.

War Cabinet agreed to a US request to upgrade RAAF air bases at Townsville, Darwin and Port Moresby.

*HMAS Sydney* sunk by German raider *Kormoran* off the Western Australian coast with the loss of all 645 men aboard.

Work began on upgrading Cooktown civil aerodrome for completion by end of December.

December 1941

German assault on Moscow defeated. Soviet counter-offensive launched.

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and Malaya.

US President Franklin Roosevelt signed a declaration of war on Japan.

Australia declared war on Japan. Militia units placed on full-time duty.

Netherlands East Indies declared war on Japan.

All Japanese residents and nationals on Thursday Island detained behind barbed wire in the Japanese quarter.

Japanese aircraft sank *HMS Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* off Malaya.

Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

First experimental air warning (AW) radar set installed at Dover Heights, Sydney.

North Queensland VDC units warned for duty.

Australian and Dutch forces occupied Portuguese Timor.

Mid-December

US confirmed that Australia would be developed as a base to support American forces in the Philippines.

First US servicemen arrived in Brisbane on the *USS Pensacola* convoy, diverted from the Philippines.

British forces on Hong Kong surrendered to the Japanese.

Australian civilians evacuated from Rabaul to Townsville.

Prime Minister Curtin declared Australia would look to the US rather than Britain for support.

LGen George Brett arrived in Australia to take command of all US forces in the region.

All Japanese on Thursday Island were shipped south to internment camps.
January 1942

Radiophysics laboratory at Sydney University designed experimental AW radar sets for protection of Darwin, Port Moresby and Torres Strait.

[1] RAN Port War Signal Station commenced operation at Archer Point near Cooktown. Other naval signal stations were established at Goods, Booby and Wednesday islands in the Torres Strait.


[9] Construction began on Project No.2 Job 25, US Air Command operations and signals building (3 Ramsay Street) Garbutt, Townsville. This became US Army HQ.

[9] US Base Section 2 Engineers commenced operations from AML&F Building (Denham and Walker Street) Townsville.

[10] Royal Netherland Indies Army (KNIL) HQ ordered destruction of oil installations on Tarakan Island, Borneo, ahead of the Japanese landing.


[13] Road-making machinery arrived at Cloncurry to continue airfield construction.


[19] Australian and NEI governments reached agreement on the evacuation of Dutch civilians from Java with Australia only accepting white evacuees.


[20] KNIL HQ ordered NEI troops to demolish Dutch oil installations at Balikpapan, Borneo.

[23] Cairns City Council urged internment of all enemy aliens and evacuation of women who wished to leave.


[24] ABDA Area extended to include Darwin and Broome in north-west Australia.

[26] First US troops arrived in Britain.

[27] 116 AGH established at Charters Towers racecourse.

[29] Manpower Directorate established.


[31] Women and children evacuated from Thursday Island.
February 1942

Construction started on 16 HAA Battery gun stations at Mount St John and Rowes Bay, Townsville.

RAE mined the Gillies Highway for demolition in event of invasion.

Branch of the Australian Army Hiring Service established at Townsville to compensate for requisition of private property.


[4] LGen Iven Mackay, GOC Home Forces, recommended concentrating Australia's forces between Melbourne and Brisbane, giving rise to the Brisbane Line controversy.

[14] US ordered construction of an airfield at Charters Towers as a dispersal strip for Garbutt setting a deadline of 14 days to complete.


[17] Prime Minister Curtin asked Britain for return of AIF troops from the Middle East for defence of Australia.

[17] Federal government created Allied Works Council (AWC) to organise defence and infrastructure works in Australia.


[19] Darwin heavily bombed in two raids by Japanese carrier-borne and land-based aircraft to isolate the NEI: first of 64 air raids on the Darwin-Katherine region.

[19] First nine USAAF B-17s of 22 BS arrived at Townsville.

[19] MRC started construction of the Inland Defence Road from Ipswich to Charters Towers via Duaringa and Emerald.

[21] First USAAF B-17s landed at Cloncurry.

[22] First US heavy bombing mission out of Australia staged from Garbutt to attack Rabaul.

[23] First group of Italian-Australians from north Queensland were railed south to internment camps.


[24] Evacuation of ABDA troops from Java began with Qantas, KLM, RAAF and USAAF aircraft flying to Darwin and Broome.


[26] AWC assumed control of all defence projects for Allied forces in Australia under national director, EG Theodore. JR Kemp appointed deputy director for Queensland.

[27] State government closed all schools in coastal and far north Queensland.

[28] HMAS Perth and USS Houston were sunk in the Battle of Sunda Strait. Allied naval defeat off Java.
March 1942

RAAF 36 Radar Station formed on Thursday Island.

RAAF 1 Wireless Station at Townsville, monitor Japanese kana code signals.

[2] North Queensland schools allowed to reopen if equipped with bomb shelters.

[3] Japanese aircraft attacked Broome to close the evacuation route between Java and Australia. Wyndham and Derby also attacked. 23 Allied aircraft destroyed.

[3] Construction of civil defence control room for Cairns approved (Scout Shop).

[8] North Queensland schools allowed to reopen if equipped with bomb shelters.

[8] Japanese aircraft attacked Broome to close the evacuation route between Java and Australia. Wyndham and Derby also attacked. 23 Allied aircraft destroyed.

[8] Construction of civil defence control room for Cairns approved (Scout Shop).


[9] HAA gun station at Rowes Bay, Townsville became operational.

[9] US proposed the creation of a South West Pacific Area (SWPA) of command.

[9] AIF troops from the Middle East began returning to Australia.

[12] Dutch and Australian (Blackforce) troops in Java surrendered to the Japanese. The loss of the NEI cost the Dutch 85 RNN ships and the entire KNIL (121,000 troops).

[14] First of eight Japanese air raids on Horn Island. Three Zero fighters and a P-40 Kittyhawk lost in air combat. One Hudson bomber destroyed and another damaged.


[17] Roosevelt and Churchill decided that the Pacific was a US responsibility.

[17] Gen MacArthur arrived at Batchelor airfield, Northern Territory, after escaping the Philippines to take command of Allied forces in SWPA.

[17] 116 AGH moved into Mount Carmel College, Charters Towers.


[18] US 12 Station Hospital moved to Townsville from Brisbane.

[21] Charters Towers gravel airfield first used for dispersal by B-17s from Townsville.

[22] Stockroute airstrip cleared as a gravel dispersal strip near Garbutt aerodrome, Townsville.

[22] Two fighter strips cleared as gravel runways at Antil Plains siding near Townsville for immediate use.
Japanese air raids caused the evacuation of all non-essential civilians from Thursday and Horn islands.

Japanese reconnaissance aircraft reported over Townsville.

UK responded to Australia’s request for supply of chemical war gases.

Bohle River airstrip cleared as a gravel dispersal strip near Townsville.

US 12 Station Hospital took over all houses in Chapman Street, Townsville.

LGen Thomas Blamey returned from Middle East: appointed C-in-C Allied Land Forces SWPA.

B-26 Marauders of USAAF 19 BS, 22 BG(M) arrived at Stockroute airstrip.

Weir airstrip (Aitkenvale) cleared as a gravel dispersal strip, Townsville.

US 46 Engineer GSR shifted from the Woodstock airfields to commence construction of three gravel strips at Reid River between Townsville and Charters Towers.

Cloncurry Shire hall converted into USAAF station hospital surgical theatre.

April 1942

Dept. of Interior, Works and Service Branch, Townsville, completed drawings for Project No.81, RAAF NEA Command communications centre (Green Street).

Drawings completed for Project No.W142, RAAF No.1 Wireless Station, Stuart, Townsville.

Australian 1 Field Survey Corps began mapping the north Queensland coast and Cape York Peninsula.

Australian Army proposed the establishment of a Chemical Warfare Experimental Research Station in north Queensland.

USAAF 8 Fighter Group squadrons equipped with P-39 Aircobras commenced operations from Townsville and Woodstock strips.

36 Radar Station installed experimental AW radar at Hammond Island; first RAAF radar station in north Queensland.

US 41 Infantry Division arrived in Australia.

Weir airstrip Townsville occupied by P-40 Kittyhawk fighters of RAAF 76 Sqn.

Construction of Breddan airfield commenced as dispersal strip for Charters Towers.

US 91 Engineer GSR including 1200 African-American troops disembarked in Townsville to undertake airfield construction projects.

Federal government established Civil Construction Corps (CCC) under the AWC.

Gen MacArthur appointed LGen George Brett Commander of Allied Air Forces SWPA.

US 91 Engineer GSR commenced construction of Giru airfield extending an existing pre-war gravel strip.
Gen MacArthur formally assumed command of Australian forces and established GHQ SWPA in Melbourne. Allied Land Forces were under command of Gen Blamey.

RAAF 104 Radar Station established on Castle Hill, Townsville.

B-26 Marauders of 408 BS, 22 BG(M) staged strikes against Lae and Rabaul from Reid River.

Japanese kana code intercept revealed plans for raid by carrier based aircraft against targets on east coast (Townsville) by 2 May with landings at Port Moresby and Solomon Islands.

Airfield site selected on Augustus Downs station, Gulf district.

Heavy Japanese air raid on Horn Island. One Australian soldier killed and another wounded. One Wirraway aircraft destroyed; another damaged.

Australian 5 Division troops assumed defence of Townsville from 11 Brigade militia. Civilians were encouraged to evacuate; preparations were made for a ‘scorched earth’ retreat and demolition of vital facilities.

MAY 1942

Drawings completed for US Command Post under Castle Hill Road, Townsville.

RAAF 11 and 20 Catalina Sqn withdrawn from Port Moresby to Bowen.

Gravel airstrips cleared on Augustus Downs, Carpentaria Downs and Wrotham Park cattle stations, Gulf country.

Initial shipments of UK-manufactured chemical warfare stocks arrived in Australia.

Townsville HAA batteries opened fire on Japanese reconnaissance aircraft.

Japanese carrier strike force left Truk for Coral Sea. Port Moresby invasion force assembled at Rabaul.

*HMAS Australia* and *Hobart* ordered to Coral Sea by 4 May.

Japanese force landed at Tulagi, Solomon Islands.

Battle of the Coral Sea began.

LGen Brett established HQ 2 US Air Command at Operations and Signals Centre, Building 25 (Ramsay Street), Garbutt, Townsville.

Aircraft from *USS Lexington* and *Yorktown* sank Japanese light aircraft carrier *Shoho* in the Coral Sea.

Japanese carrier aircraft attacked navy oiler *USS Neosho* and her escort destroyer *Sims* in the Coral Sea: *Sims* sunk; *Neosho* left ablaze.

Japanese land-based aircraft attacked Allied Task Group led by *HMAS Australia*, including *HMAS Hobart* and *USS Chicago*, in the Coral Sea.

Japanese heavy carrier *Shokaku* badly damaged by aircraft from US carriers, and heavy carrier *Zuikaku* depleted of aircraft and pilots in combat in the Coral Sea. Both withdrew to Truk.

US 84 Station Hospital took over St Gabriel’s school, Charters Towers.

Survivors taken off the burning Neosho in the Coral Sea; crippled oiler sunk

Japanese air raid on Horn Island. A damaged Wirraway and huts destroyed.

Work began on the Stuart Ordnance Project, later known as Koala.

MRC commenced construction of Mareeba airfield.

Macrossan airfield under construction as a fighter strip between Townsville and Charters Towers.

War Cabinet considered joint US/Australian works projects for Advanced Operational Base (AOB) development and approved expenditure of £500,000 for military airfields in Queensland.

RAAF 12 Repair and Salvage Unit established at Breddan.

Army interned Lutheran pastor Schwarz and Aboriginal people at Eight Mile mission farm near Cooktown. Farm commandeered for airfield construction.

Mareeba airfield first gravel strip used by RAAF aircraft.

Ground survey of Iron Range undertaken for suitable airfield sites.

Japanese midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour.

**June 1942**

It was decided to make Mareeba the main operational airfield in far north Queensland.

US 46 Engineer GSR and MRC commenced Iron Range airfield.

Construction of Cooktown Mission Strip began, using AWC labour.

RAAF 108 HFDF Station at Julia Creek became operational.

Battle of Midway Island began.

Battle of Midway Island ended with the defeat of Japan’s carrier force, removing any immediate threat of invasion of Australia.

Sydney and Newcastle shelled by Japanese submarines.

B-26 Marauders of 19 and 33 BS, 22 BG(M) departed Woodstock airfield for raid on Lae with US congressman Lyndon B Johnson as an observer.

Bad weather forced back an intended Japanese air raid on Horn Island.

US 13 Station Hospital established at Aitkenvale, Townsville.

Cairns-Kuranda Road completed; opened to military traffic.

Clothing and footwear rationing introduced.

RAAF requisitioned construction of a flying boat base at Bowen.

Survey of Cape York (Red Island Point) carried out to locate a suitable dispersal airfield for Horn Island.
July 1942

Units of US 46 Engineer GSR began clearing Jacky Jacky airfield near Red Island Point, tip of Cape York. Later named Higgins Field.


[6] 2/2 AGH established at Watten siding near Hughenden.


[8] US 2 Station Hospital established at Mareeba State School.


[17] RAAF 3 Replenishing Centre established at Townsville.


[21] Japanese landed at Buna-Gona area and began overland march on Port Moresby along the Kokoda track.

[26] Three long-range Japanese flying boats operating from Rabaul dropped six bombs on Townsville outer harbour.

[27] Australian Women’s Land Army formed in Queensland.


[29] Another Japanese flying boat raid on Townsville. Eight bombs were dropped: seven exploded in sea and one in a paddock at Oonoonba.

[30] Horn Island raided by a Japanese flying boat. Seven bombs dropped with slight damage to a Hudson bomber.

[31] Mossman area raided by a Japanese flying boat. Eight bombs dropped. Bomb fragments injured a child near Miallo. This was the last Japanese raid on Queensland mainland.

August 1942

Gen MacArthur appointed MGen George Kenney as Commander of Allied Air Forces in the SWPA and the newly-formed US Fifth Air Force, replacing Brett.

PMG linemen and Australian Army Signal Corps started erecting an overland telephone carrier system from Townsville to Thursday Island.


[1] Bowen flying boat base became operational. RAAF 11 and 20 Catalina Sqn and 22 OBU took over the town’s hotels and houses for workshops and accommodation.

US forces landed on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

_HMAS Canberra_ and three US cruisers sunk in Battle of Savo Island. Allied naval defeat off Guadalcanal.

Australian militia troops involved in fighting withdrawal from Kokoda.

RAAF 26 Radar Station established at Cape Cleveland near Townsville.

RAAF took over Kurrajong House, Pimlico, Townsville, as a hospital.

Germans crossed the Don. Battle for Stalingrad began.

Japanese landed at Milne Bay in an attempt to capture RAAF airstrips.

Sugar rationing introduced in Australia.

**September 1942**

RAA officers inspected sites for additional coast defences in Torres Strait. Turtle Head on Hammond Island identified as a battery site.

RAN shore station _HMAS Magnetic_ commissioned at Townsville.

Cooktown mission airfield scheduled for completion as a gravel strip.

Gordon strip at Iron Range completed.

Australian troops defeated Japanese forces at Milne Bay: Japan’s first land defeat in the Pacific.

USAAF 19BS, 22BG(M) arrived at Iron Range airfield and began operations from gravel-surfaced Gordon strip.

Queensland premier William Forgan Smith resigned; replaced by Frank Cooper.

Japanese advance along Kokoda track halted at Imita Ridge, near Port Moresby.

US 2 Field Hospital established at Woodstock.

Australian troop reinforcements began a counter-offensive on the Kokoda track.

RAAF 1 Wireless Station moved from houses at French and Sycamore streets, Townsville, to reinforced concrete building at Stuart, Project W142.

Magnetic Island PWSS and coastal battery constructed.

Approval for RAAF Explosive Reserve at Talmoi wool scour, west of Richmond.

**October 1942**

US Kangaroo ammunition depot established at Kurukan, near Townsville.

Construction commenced on Horn Island gun stations 442 and 443 for 34 Australian HAA Battery.

19 Field Ambulance established Rocky Creek hospital site in readiness for 5 ACH.

5 ACH arrived at Rocky Creek.

RAAF HFDF station established on a farm between Tolga and Kairi.

RAAF 9 Filter Sector took over Edge Hill Hall, Cairns.

Jacky Jacky airfield gravel runway became operational.
November 1942

Gen Blamey ordered survey of Atherton Tableland for combined recuperation and jungle warfare training facilities for Australian troops of the 6 and 7 Divisions AIF, heading for New Guinea — known as the Atherton Project.

First three tanks under construction at RAAF 9 Inland Aircraft Fuel Depot, Charters Towers.

RAAF 23 Inland Aircraft Fuel Depot (IAFD), Cloncurry, under construction.

RAAF 11 and 20 Catalina Sqn left Bowen for Cairns.


[4] Allies broke through German-Italian lines at El Alamein in North Africa and forced an Axis retreat to Tunisia.

[9] RAAF 27 Radar Station established on Dunk Island.


[16] Army conducted chemical warfare trials near Townsville with 25pdr gas shells.

[16] Major accident at Gordon strip, Iron Range airfield, which involved aircraft of USAAF 90 BG(H), during a midnight departure.

[18] RAAF 45 Radar Station established on Stanley Island, off Cape York Peninsula.

[20] Mount Isa butchering yards and cold rooms were nearing completion with work delayed by non-arrival of essential machinery and fittings.

[23] Cape York telephone carrier system completed to improve communication between Townsville and Thursday Island with repeater stations at Mount Surprise, Fairview, Coen and Cape York.


[28] Detachment of US 2 Station Hospital took over hotels and shops at Gordonvale.

December 1942

Headquarters of the Australian Army in north Queensland transferred from Townsville to the Atherton Tableland. Major program of construction planned.

Australian Army Medical Women’s Service (AAMWS) formed from Voluntary Aid Detachments.

[1] HMAS Armidale sunk by Japanese aircraft off Timor with the loss of 40 crew and 60 embarked KNIL troops.


[3] Women between 18 and 30 years called up for war work.


[12] 2/14 AGH established at Cape Pallarenda, Townsville.

[17] Cabinet approved expenditure on facilities for two AIF divisions and ancillary troops on the Atherton Tableland. Approval given for commencement of works.

[22] Federal Department of Post-War Reconstruction was established.

January 1943

Work began on the Atherton Project. Construction contractors were required to plant vegetables to provide fresh produce for their workforce.

Bitumen sealing commenced on the Mount Isa–Tennant Creek road. Completed May 1944 as the Barkly Highway.

Commonwealth Prices Commission officers visited Townsville to investigate profiteering by civilian traders.


[1] HMAS Platypus sailed from Darwin to Cairns: served as depot ship until May 1944.

[1] Units of the 6 Division AIF encamped at Ravenshoe and Millstream.


[5] 5 ACH moved from Rocky Creek to North Cairns State School. 2/2 AGH from Watten took over Rocky Creek hospital. Major development began.

[6] RAAF 3 Replenishing Centre moved from Townsville to Towers Hill, Charters Towers.

[10] RAAF 44 Radar Station established on Grassy Hill, Cooktown.


[17] Australian 12 AOD moved from Hughenden to Baronta Explosives Reserve; joined by 7 AAD.


[22] RAAF 43 Radar Station established at Portland Roads near Iron Range.

[24] Units of 7 Division AIF encamped at Ravenshoe.

[27] First major US bombing raid on Germany.

[29] Introduction of limited conscription for overseas service.
## February 1943

**USAAF units departed Iron Range for New Guinea.**

**[10]** RAE commenced a base camp at Kairi for occupation by 9 Division AIF.

**[15]** US engineers and boat maintenance units arrived in Cairns to establish amphibious training facilities for 9 Division AIF.

**[16–18]** 3000 Queensland CCC workers took strike action over dismissal of an official. Strike called off after promise of inquiry by Prime Minister John Curtin.

**[18]** 9 Division AIF returned to Australia from Middle East.

**[19]** Legislation passed extending the SWPA area in which militia were able to serve.

## March 1943

**‘Q’ Battery, RAA, moved to Turtle Head on Hammond Island for coastal defence of the Torres Strait — known as Turtle Battery.**

Gravel airfield constructed at Inverleigh station near the Gulf of Carpentaria.

**[1]** Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion formed on Thursday Island.

**[1–5]** Units of 6 Division AIF moved camp from Ravenshoe to Wondecla.

**[2–4]** Large Japanese troop convoy, attempting to reinforce Lae, destroyed from the air in Battle of the Bismarck Sea.

**[4–13]** Units of 7 Division AIF moved to camp to Ravenshoe and Millstream.

**[5]** RAAF 42 Radar Station established at Cape Edgecumbe, near Bowen.

**[19]** Units of 6 Division AIF joined camp at Wondecla. Other units camped at Wongabel.

**[16–20]** Battle of the Atlantic peaked as German U-boats sank 27 merchant ships in five days.

**[20]** Troops returning to Townsville from New Guinea entered Julago staging camp.

**[22]** Gen MacArthur’s GHQ produced the Moultrie Plan for defence of the Torres Strait area.

**[23]** Queensland government promised respirators for use in gas attacks would be issued to 500,000 coastal residents, from infants to the aged.

**[29]** RAAF 52 Radar Station established at Mutee Head on Cape York Peninsula.

**[30]** RAAF requisitioned construction of buildings and services at Karumba flying boat base.

## April 1943

**Copper smelting began at Mount Isa Mines.**

**Units of 9 Division AIF encamped at Kairi on return from the Middle East. Other units camped near Danbull and Tinaroo.**

**RAAF 15 Replenishing Centre commenced operation near Cairns.**

**[2]** RAAF requisitioned construction of two large igloo warehouses at 8 Stores Depot, Macrossan airfield.

**[6–13]** ‘Gulf Scare’ — False reports and rumours that a Japanese force had landed on the north Queensland coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria.
First LCVP boats launched at 411 Engineers assembly plant, Cairns. Barron Valley Hotel requisitioned as officers’ club.

Townsville Ordnance Depot at Stuart designated Koala Ordnance Depot. Ten large igloo stores constructed during 1943.

Aircraft carrying Japanese Admiral Yamamoto shot down over Bougainville.

Australian 2/6 AGH moved to Rocky Creek from Middle East.

Australian Army HQ Qld line of communication signal office cipher section temporarily established at Stuart State School.


May 1943

RAAF 43 Catalina Sqn formed at Bowen.

Work began on degaussing testing range at Orpheus Island.

Guns of Turtle Battery, Hammond Island, were proof fired.

German and Italian troops surrendered in North Africa.

Japanese submarine sank the hospital ship Centaur off Moreton Island.

RAAF 55 Radar Station established at Queens Beach, Bowen.

June 1943

Work proceeded on construction of concrete igloo chemical warfare stores at RAAF Replenishing Centre, Talmoi, near Richmond.

RAAF 28 Radar Station established on Fitzroy Island, near Cairns.

Jacky Jacky airfield on Cape York tip, renamed Higgins Field by the USAAF.

Butter rationing introduced in Australia.

RAAF 136 Radar Station established at Alligator Creek, near Townsville.

Last air raid on Horn Island by a Japanese flying boat. Bombs jettisoned in sea.

Land Headquarters Medical Research Unit engaged in malaria research, sharing North Cairns State School with 5 ACH.

Gen MacArthur and Blamey visited north Queensland in MacArthur’s B-17 Bataan.

A US general hospital planned at Black River, near Townsville.

Gen MacArthur launched Operation Cartwheel, the bypassing of Rabaul and other Japanese strong points on the road to the Philippines. US forces landed on New Georgia, Solomon Islands.

July 1943

Units of the 6, 7 and 9 Divisions embarked from Cairns for New Guinea.

Magnetic Island Port War Signal Station (PWSS) completed.

Allies invaded Sicily.

US 63 Station Hospital occupied hotels, theatre and shops at Gordonvale.

RAAF planned to store 40 per cent of North Eastern Area (NEA) chemical warfare stocks at Talmoi.

**August 1943**

1. RAAF 57 Radar Station established at Kissing Point, Townsville.
2. Ten igloo stores built at Tolga for 13 AOD.
16. 2/1 Australian Convalescent Depot established at Lake Barrine.
17. RAAF and USAAF aircraft brought Japanese air superiority in New Guinea to an end with a surprise raid on airfields at Wewak.
21. Curtin Labor government won the Australian federal election and gained control of both Houses.
24. RAAF 43 Sqn Catalinas moved from Bowen to Karumba in the Gulf.

**September 1943**

Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of US President, visited US troops in north Queensland.

Palm Island US Naval Air Station became operational.

RAAF 19 Replenishing Centre became operational at Talmoi siding for the storage of mustard gas and other chemical warfare agents.

Defence Committee approved the establishment of a chemical warfare field experimental station near Proserpine (Gunyarra siding).

Jungara US Army hospital established near Cairns.

3. Allies invaded Italy.

5. Amphibious landings near Lae and parachute drops in the Markham Valley completed by Australian 7 and 9 Divisions AIF and US 503 Parachute Infantry Regiment.

8. USAAF 336 Service Sqn arrived in Townsville to start work on No.2 Depot of 4 Air Depot Group, Mount Louisa.

16. Allied forces captured Lae and Salamaua.

22. 9 Division AIF landed near Finschhafen, New Guinea.

24. RAAF 220 Radar Station established at Bones Knob, Tolga.

27. 6 Division AIF encamped at Wondecla on return from Wau and Salamaua.

**October 1943**

Italian POW's began growing vegetables for the military under the Home Hill Vegetable Project.

1. Government released workers from the army and munitions industry to assist new Manpower priorities.

2. 9 Division AIF captured Finschhafen, Huon Peninsula, New Guinea.

22. Construction commenced for USN hospital, Rowes Bay, Townsville.

30. RAAF 58 Radar Station established at Paluma.

30. RAAF 53 Radar Station established at Mount Surprise.
November 1943

- Chemical Warfare Research and Experimental Station operational at Gunyarra siding, near Proserpine.
- Construction of Australian Defence Canteen Services igloo store at Atherton showgrounds. Now Merriland Hall.
- Completion of Karumba flying boat slipway and workshop hangar.


December 1943

- US forces landed on New Britain.
- USN hospital completed at Rowes Bay, Townsville.

January 1944

- Chemical warfare trials on North Brook Island: aircraft dropped bombs containing liquid mustard gas.

[31] US 83 Station Hospital at Woodstock closed.

February 1944

- Cape River Meat Works in operation with 2/1 Field Butchering Company.

[16] RAAF 211 Radar Station established at Charlies Hill, near Home Hill.

March 1944

- First major US bombing raid on Berlin.

[1–6] Mustard gas trials on Hinchinbrook Island and North Brook Island.
[16] Units of 9 Division AIF encamped at Ravenshoe.
[28] 2/14 AGH at Cape Pallarenda destroyed in cyclonic storm.
[31] Campaign to eliminate dengue fever in the Townsville area began.

April 1944

- Closure of US 84 General Hospital at St Gabriel’s school, Charters Towers.
[22] US forces landed at Hollandia and Aitape, New Guinea.
May 1944

Australian 1 Parachute Btn encamped at Mareeba airfield.

[HMS Kuranda] naval shore base commissioned at Cairns.

[16] AGH moved from Charters Towers to Jungara hospital, Cairns.

[Malaria Research Unit moved from North Cairns State School to Jungara hospital.]

[US 63 Station Hospital at Gordonvale closed: patients transferred to Black River hospital.]

June 1944

Amphibious landing exercises carried out at Cairns’ Trinity and Clifton beaches for assaults on Tarakan, Labuan and Balikpapan in Borneo.

[Allied forces captured Rome.]

[D-day: Allies landed at Normandy, France.]

[US 13 Station Hospital at Aitkenvale, Townsville, closed: patients transferred to Black River.]

[Battle of the Philippines Sea: Japanese naval and air defeat.]

July 1944

[US forces landed on Guam.]

August 1944

Australian Women’s Land Army involved in vegetable growing at Home Hill and Ayr.

[Japanese POWs attempted mass breakout from Cowra camp, NSW.]

[US established advanced HQ at Hollandia.]

[Paris liberated.]

September 1944

US forces captured Morotai Island: it became a staging point for Australian and US landings on Borneo and the Philippines.

[9 Division AIF began amphibious training at Cairns.]

[Major brawl in Cairns between US and Australian troops.
All leave cancelled.]

October 1944

[131 Australian HAA Battery withdrawn from Horn Island.]

[6 Division AIF moved from Tableland to Cairns in preparation for departure to Aitape.]

[Australian troops landed on New Britain.]

[Gen MacArthur and 80,000 troops of US 6 Army landed on Leyte, Philippines. Battle of Leyte Gulf began.]

[HMAS Australia hit by Japanese suicide aircraft in Leyte Gulf.]

[2/6 AGH at Rocky Creek closed.]

[Australian troops embarked from Cairns for Aitape.]
November 1944

[7] 6 Division AIF embarked at Cairns for Aitape and Wewak to relieve US forces.

December 1944

Iron Range airfield placed on care and maintenance.

January 1945

[5,6,8,9] HMAS Australia repeatedly hit by Japanese suicide aircraft in Lingayen Gulf, Philippines.

February 1945

Mustard gas trials at Mission Beach, near Innisfail.

March 1945

[16] Australian troops left Cairns for Morotai, for assault on Borneo.
[31] 9 Division AIF left Ravenshoe for Cairns to embark for Tarakan Island, Borneo.

April 1945

Australian troops embarked from Cairns for Morotai for assault on Borneo.
Cairns waterside workers went on strike, demanding danger money: replaced by troops of 6 Division AIF.
[12] US President Roosevelt died.
[16] Soviet assault on Berlin began.
[25] 1 ACH at Thursday Island closed.
May 1945

[1] Troops of 9 Division AIF landed on Tarakan Island, Borneo, to secure oil installations.

June 1945

[10] 9 Division AIF landed at Brunei Bay, Borneo.

July 1945

[1] 7 Division AIF landed at Balikpapan, Borneo, to secure oil installations and port facilities. Last major Australian ground operation of the war.
[16] United States, Britain and the Soviet Union drew up terms for Japanese surrender at Potsdam, Germany.

August 1945


September 1945

[30] 2/2 AGH at Rocky Creek closed.

October 1945

[18] Disposal by burning of chemical warfare stocks at 1 Field Experimental Station, Gunyarr.

November 1945


December 1945

Introduction

News that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor and Malaya came as a shock to most Australians. Initial fears were tempered by the belief that, with America now in the war and the Singapore Naval Base forming a seemingly impregnable barrier to the Japanese, victory was certain. While the surrender of Hong Kong and news of the sinking of British battleships off Malaya shook that confidence, it took several months — and the fall of Singapore — to move the Australian public and its government out of their complacency and realise that the Japanese actually threatened the survival of the country.

On the eve of war with Japan, Australia’s defences were thin. The Australian Navy had only five warships in Australian waters. Only three weeks earlier, the cruiser Sydney had been sunk by a German armed merchant ship off Western Australia. The Australian Air Force possessed about 370 aircraft, mostly outmoded trainers. The Australian Army was split with about 80,000 untrained part-time militia troops concentrated in the southern capital cities, but thin on the ground elsewhere. Only three local militia battalions were on hand to defend the whole of north Queensland. Meanwhile, some 155,000 men of the Australian Imperial Force were fighting overseas in the Middle East and most were gaining experience in battle that would be vital to the future defence of Australia.

Japan’s entry into the war caused the speed up of defence works throughout Queensland and the enforcement of nightly black-out regulations in all coastal centres north of Mackay. In March 1942 the United States established the South West Pacific Area (SWPA) as part of the Pacific theatre of war and US General Douglas MacArthur was appointed supreme military commander of the region. Townsville became the central supply base for SWPA and the town aerodrome at Garbutt rail siding underwent massive development to become the largest Allied military air base in the Southern Hemisphere. For its protection, a string of roadside fighter strips were hurriedly constructed along the inland route to Charters Towers. What soon became a flood of US personnel, equipment and supplies began arriving in Townsville aboard a fleet of American-built Liberty ships.
The military build-up in north Queensland imposed severe demands on accommodation and storage and led to the seizure of civilian homes and warehouses by US and Australian authorities. People evicted from their homes were often forced to leave the region as evacuees. Fear of invasion and plans for a ‘scorched earth’ withdrawal forced the evacuation of women and children from north Queensland’s coastal centres during the early months of 1942. Up to 7000 civilians moved from Townsville; a similar number left Cairns. Italian-Australians working in the region’s cane and banana growing industries often had no choice but to leave: many were arrested and interned as ‘enemy aliens’, leaving families with the task of continuing on alone.

During 1943 the headquarters of the Australian Army in north Queensland was transferred from Townsville to the Atherton Tableland, above Cairns. This became a rehabilitation area and jungle warfare training ground for troops of the 6th, 7th and 9th Australian Divisions returning from North Africa. The largest concentration of Australian forces on the Tableland occurred during late 1943 before the troops were fully committed to the final phase of the New Guinea and Island campaigns. Within a year of Japan’s surrender in August 1945, military occupation of north Queensland ended and the civilian population was left to return and recover. Homes, hotels, factories and sheds were handed back to their owners and all military infrastructure and plant that could be dismantled and removed was auctioned in disposal sales. Soon, all that was left were concrete slabs, overgrown airstrips and memories.
The Singapore strategy 1921–1929

In the aftermath of Germany’s defeat in World War I, an uneasy alliance between Britain and Japan in the Pacific came to an end with Britain’s termination of the Anglo-Japanese naval treaty in 1921. That year the United States acted to circumvent a new naval arms race led by Japan, by proposing the adoption of a treaty limiting naval armament among five of the ‘victorious’ powers: the United States, Britain, France, Italy and Japan. The Washington Naval Treaty also bound the dominions of the British Empire such as Australia and New Zealand. Over this period, the shift of power in the Asia-Pacific region with Japan’s increasing military strength prompted consideration of the need for an Imperial British naval base in the region. Despite recommendations that such a base be established in Australia, the British government chose Singapore as the site for its major Far Eastern presence.¹ Doubts were expressed about the concept of the Singapore naval base even before construction commenced. Britain’s Singapore strategy, and the subordinate defence role accorded to Australia and New Zealand, influenced Australian military thinking for much of the inter-war period.

Australia’s reliance on Imperial defence was reinforced by an economic dependence on Britain as its largest trading partner and main overseas investor.² With the prevailing desire for world disarmament, Australia was content to shelter behind Britain even though construction of the Singapore base was halted on a number of occasions and scaled down in scope and cost, even before the effects of the Great Depression intervened.³ Delays in the opening of the base prompted the Bruce government to begin a five-year naval construction program and to announce at the 1926 Imperial Conference that henceforth Australia’s defence contribution would be in ships: no further financial assistance would be made towards the cost of the Singapore naval base.⁴

None of the Australian governments during the early inter-war period saw the primary role of the Australian Army, Navy or Air Force as simply the defence of Australia. As in World War I, the defence forces of Australia and the other British Empire countries were essentially treated as components of Imperial defence, to be deployed in wartime wherever Britain decided that the need was greatest.⁵ Despite growing international tension in the region, within the Australian government there was a refusal to believe that the Japanese could invade the country because the Royal Navy at Singapore would prevent it.

¹ Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 127
² Jane Beaumont, 1996, p 3
³ Jeffrey Grey, 1990, pp 127-8
⁴ ibid., p 129
⁵ ibid., p 135
Japan’s disregard for the Washington Naval Treaty limitations and its invasion of Manchuria in 1931 encouraged work on the naval base to be speeded up, but even as it neared completion during the mid-1930s Britain no longer possessed the economic nor military power to maintain a permanent presence in the Asia-Pacific region. When the Singapore Naval Dockyard finally opened in February 1938, the fleet to occupy it did not exist.6

Depression defence 1930–1938

On gaining office in October 1929 on the eve of the Depression, Australia’s Scullin Labor Government suspended compulsory military training and in its place introduced a volunteer army system based upon the recruitment of a citizen militia. Volunteer militia men were part-time soldiers who enlisted for service in Australia and were not required to serve overseas. Training was minimal: the men had to attend camp only six days a year. Militia units were equipped with obsolete World War I weapons and equipment. In a single year, the strength of the Army dropped from 47,931 to 27,454 and continued to fall. As the Depression worsened, the government decided that the role of the Army would focus on the defence of Australian ports and harbours and the raising of an expeditionary force should Britain declare war overseas.7 In 1932 the deepening Depression caused the incoming conservative Lyons government to scrap all military training as a cost-saving measure while the economic situation remained grim.8 During the Depression the Australian Army became a minor service and even when the economic situation began improving after 1933 the small increase in defence spending went to the Australian Navy.

Japan’s invasion of Manchuria and China, and the unstable situation developing in Europe as Nazism and fascism took hold in Germany, Italy and Spain, finally prompted the Australian government to adopt a defence strategy that was less reliant on Britain. From 1934 Australia began to address the long neglect of home defence with an increasing emphasis on defence spending. However, the Royal Australian Navy continued to be the chief beneficiary despite the fact that the fleet would revert to Admiralty control in the event of war. In 1938 the government announced a doubling of militia numbers, the stockpiling of equipment and ammunition reserves, and the establishment of a permanent army that could be deployed overseas as an expeditionary force attached to the British Army.

In 1939 the Australian Army was reorganised in response to the urgency of the times and the seeming inevitability of war. Four new regional commands were established — Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western. The Darwin garrison was designated 7 Military District. Northern Regional Command covered the state of Queensland with headquarters in Brisbane responsible for the operation of units within that Command. Under the new arrangements, Army headquarters in Canberra dealt with the Command rather than individual units as had been the practice previously.9

6 ibid., p 129
7 ibid., p 136
8 ibid., p 137
9 ibid., p 139
Defence recruitment 1939–1941

Despite many warnings, Australia remained unprepared for war in 1939: none of the armed services were adequately equipped or staffed. The key to Imperial defence strategy in the Asia-Pacific region was British naval power and the ability of the Royal Navy to assemble a battle fleet at Singapore in the event of Japan choosing to move south. The small Royal Australian Navy (RAN) could not make up for the lack of British naval strength in the Pacific or act independently in the event of a threat to Australia’s north. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was equipped with obsolete aeroplanes and had little capacity to produce modern aircraft in sufficient numbers. Meanwhile the establishment of the Empire Air Training Scheme eventually deprived the RAAF of thousands of Australian aircrew who were trained in Canada to serve in the Royal Air Force Bomber Command over Europe. On the eve of the declaration of war, Australia had a permanent army of only 3572 personnel. Its peacetime militia numbered about 80,000 men; mainly civilians serving on a part-time basis. Not only did the Army lack equipment and training, but there was a deep-seated tradition in Australia against conscription for overseas service, an issue which had split the Labor Party during World War I. In enlisting men for overseas service, the only option available to the Australian government in 1939 was to limit any overseas expeditionary force to volunteer recruits.11

On 3 September 1939 Britain’s Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declared war with Germany in consequence of its invasion of Poland. Little more than an hour later, his Australian counterpart, Robert Menzies, made a radio announcement to the nation: as a result of Britain’s declaration, Australia was also at war.12 Within weeks, the Australian government declared its intention to recruit men for service overseas. On 15 September Menzies announced the creation of a special force of volunteers, but left its destination uncertain. Conscription for home defence was introduced on 19 October 1939. At the same time, the militia was called up in two drafts of 40,000 for one month’s training. Thus the government became more deeply committed to the problematic system of two armies: one, a volunteer force able to be deployed anywhere in the world; the other conscripted and able to be used only in the defence of Australia and its territories.13 In November 1939 Menzies announced the deployment of an expeditionary force of volunteers to Europe or the Middle East, hoping that Britain would agree to the purchase of the Australian wheat surplus in return.14 The first units of the newly-formed special force left for Egypt in January 1940.

10 Jane Beaumont, 1996, p 2
11 ibid., p 5
12 ibid., p 1
13 ibid., p 5
14 ibid., p 6
In agreeing to send Australian forces overseas, the Menzies government overlooked the first principle of national security: the need to ensure that home defence was secure before contributing to a global Imperial strategy.\textsuperscript{15}

Command of the special force was given to Lieutenant-General Thomas Blamey who had previously been in charge of recruitment. At first enlistment was slow for the 6th Division of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF), as the special force became known, however by July 1940, with the fall of France, over 102,000 men had enlisted and the government halted voluntary recruitment fearing its impact on militia conscription.

With Europe in crisis, in mid-1940 the militia was raised to 250,000 men, mostly conscripted as well as volunteers waiting to join the AIF overseas.\textsuperscript{16} Militia troops were derogatively referred to among AIF volunteers as ‘chocos’ (chocolate soldiers), and ‘koalas’ (because they couldn’t be shot at or sent overseas). By September 1940 a further three AIF divisions had been formed: the 7th, 8th, and 9th Divisions. All but one of these, the ill-fated 8th Division, was committed to the Middle East.\textsuperscript{17} A fifth AIF division, the 1st Australian Armoured Division, was raised in 1941. This force was retained in Australia.\textsuperscript{18}

As Japan increasingly loomed as a major threat to Australia, civil defence measures were stepped up. The Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) was formed in July 1940 to carry out home defence duties using World War I veterans. Ten months later, the VDC was absorbed within the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) militia, swelling its numbers nationally to 50,000 men.\textsuperscript{19} It reached its maximum strength in June 1942 when enlistments totalled 98,000, including 17,250 in Queensland. In north Queensland, the role of the VDC covered coast-watching duties in the Torres Strait islands and along the eastern coast, sentry duties at key installations, and the manning of beach defences, anti-aircraft guns and coastal batteries to free up regular troops for service in forward areas after 1943.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Recruits-marching-through-Brisbane-on-their-way-to-a-military-camp-August-1940.jpg}
\caption{Recruits marching through Brisbane on their way to a military camp, August 1940}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{15} ibid., p 7
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., p 10
\textsuperscript{17} ibid., p 9
\textsuperscript{18} Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 150
\textsuperscript{19} Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 8
\textsuperscript{20} Clem Lack, 1962, p 254
Women in the workforce 1939–1942

In Australia, as in other participating countries, the war brought an end to a decade of unemployment and social hardship. The rush by skilled workers to enlist for overseas service meant the Menzies government began to face the problem of labour shortages at home. Far-reaching measures were introduced during 1940 to control property and direct labour to meet targets in essential industries.21 By early 1941, the skills shortage was so severe that the government decided to look to women to meet its defence and industry needs. Such a move had been resisted for fear of women taking jobs from men after the war and causing unemployment. When the government was finally forced to agree to the employment of female workers in the munitions and aircraft industries, thousands of women signed up as factory workers. Within months of the outbreak of war with Japan, their numbers soared from 11,500 to 74,000.22

Early in 1942, the new Curtin government established the Manpower Directorate within the Department of Labour and National Service, to control, restructure and juggle labour. In effect, Manpower imposed industrial conscription on all Australian adults and could decide who worked where. Increasing industrial demands meant that Manpower turned to women — even those married with children — as an untapped labour source.23 While Manpower had the authority to conscript married women, it avoided doing so, preferring to rely instead on voluntary enlistment. By 1944, 855,000 women were in paid employment. This wartime peak amounted to about one-quarter of the total workforce and about one in three of all women aged 15 to 65.

Women were working in jobs that had been the domain of men only: they worked as railway porters, agricultural workers, bread carters and in white collar positions in offices, banks and the public service. Nevertheless the hierarchical structure of the Australian workforce remained unaltered with managers and overseers continuing to be predominantly male.

While women did men’s work, they did not get paid men’s wages. They received about half of the male rate of pay, based on a determination of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court which assumed that only men were responsible for the financial support of dependents.24 By 1942 women were protesting the disparity. Their wages subsequently rose to between 60 and 100 percent of the male wage for the same task.25

Just as women working in industry had been resisted, so too women’s role in the armed forces was at first restricted. The Women’s Voluntary National Register was established in Brisbane in March 1939 at the request of the Department of Defence. By May 1942, 15,000 women had registered. The organisation was transferred to the Manpower Directorate two months later. By then, the shortage of male recruits had prompted the formation of the Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF), the Women’s Royal Australian Navy Service (WRANS) and the Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS).

21 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 6
22 ibid., p 9
23 Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 63
24 ibid., p 64
25 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 552
The first female telegraphists began work for the services in early 1941. Clerks, typists, stenographers, drivers, cooks and waitresses soon followed. By mid-1942 AWAS members were being trained by the Corps of Signals and by the RAAF for anti-aircraft and searchlight battery duties. The function of women in the wartime workforce changed quite dramatically as the government began to encourage women not only to get involved in voluntary work, such as the Women’s Emergency Corps and the Voluntary Aid Detachment, but also to join the services.

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26 Clem Lack, 1962, p 256
27 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 551
Australia at war 1941–1942

Japan strikes 1941–1942

In the face of waning confidence in his wartime leadership within conservative parliamentary ranks, Robert Menzies handed over the prime ministership to the Country Party’s Arthur Fadden in August 1941. Within a month, the coalition government was defeated by the defection of two independent members during the passage of the Budget. On 3 October 1941 the Australian Labor Party took office and the party’s leader, John Curtin, was sworn in as prime minister of Australia.

Curtin inherited a severely stretched home defence. Three AIF divisions were engaged in the Middle East. Three brigades of the 8th Division AIF were stationed in Malaya. The third brigade was split into small forces on the islands of Ambon, Timor and New Britain. Defence of the Australian continent rested with the militia, which had no combat experience. Stability in the Pacific region continued to deteriorate during 1941. A United States-led embargo on oil supplies to Japan increased the pressure on that country to strike southwards towards the oilfields of the Netherlands East Indies and the rubber plantations of Malaya to satisfy its demand for essential resources.

On 7 December 1941 Japanese carrier-borne aircraft made a surprise attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. At the same time Japanese forces launched assaults on Thailand, the Philippines (then a US dependency) and the British colony of Malaya. Three days after Pearl Harbor, two capital ships of the Royal Navy, ill-advisedly dispatched for the defence of Singapore, were bombed and sunk off the coast of Malaya. This gave the Japanese almost total control of the seas to Australia’s north. Rabaul, the provincial capital of East New Britain, was captured on 23 January 1942. North Queensland was suddenly within bombing range of Japanese aircraft. Dutch oil installations on Borneo came under Japanese control by 24 January. The sudden fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 with the surrender of 80,000 defenders including 15,395 troops of the Australian 8th Division and the rapid, unchecked Japanese advance through the islands of the Netherlands East Indies raised fears of an invasion of Australia.

The speed of the Japanese advance even took their planners by surprise. The destruction and loss of life caused by Japanese air raids on Darwin from 19 February 1942, and on Broome, Wyndham and Derby on 3 March, underlined the inability of Australia to defend itself. The fact that Australia was not invaded and over-run by the Japanese owed nothing to its defence preparations.29

29 Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 164
30 ibid., p 163
The Japanese were simply overstretched: their army lacked the troops, ships and material support for an invasion. Commanders of the Japanese army and navy debated an invasion of northern Australia for some weeks during February. Ultimately the army’s view prevailed and the Japanese decided instead to isolate Australia by seizing Port Moresby, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and New Caledonia. Such a move would neutralise Australia as a potential base for an American counter-offensive against Japan. Of course none of this was known to the Australian people and their government in early 1942.

A US responsibility 1941–1942

In mid-December 1941 Colonel Dwight Eisenhower, newly appointed to the War Plans Division of the US War Department, recommended that Australia be developed as a base of operations from which to sustain and support US forces under General Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines. Planning for the establishment of United States Army Forces in Australia (USAFIA) got underway on 15 January 1942 with the creation of a joint command for cooperation between American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) forces in the South West Pacific. Although Britain and the US were to adopt a ‘Beat Hitler First’ policy, the outcomes that flowed from this decision were of great consequence to Australia’s defence and future foreign policy. When the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies fell to the Japanese, Australia became the only large landmass in the South West Pacific from which the US could launch a counter-offensive against the Japanese. Preventing the loss of Australia had become a declared objective of US president Franklin Roosevelt by mid-February 1942. The US dissolved ABDA Area Command on 24 February as the Netherlands East Indies was over-run.

The decision that the US should take primary responsibility for the immediate reinforcement and maintenance of the South West Pacific using Australia as a base was decided between Roosevelt and Churchill. In March 1942 a proposal was forwarded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the creation of the South West

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32 Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 171
Pacific Area (SWPA). Australia had no say in the decision although the Curtin government had indicated its preference for a US commander-in-chief rather than continuation of British command. General MacArthur was appointed supreme commander of SWPA and on 17 March 1942, he arrived in Australia having been ordered to leave the Philippines by President Roosevelt, before the islands fell to the Japanese. His command included all Allied land and air forces in the region, including all combat units of Australia’s defence forces. The Australian government retained the right to veto the deployment of its troops.

A week later, Lieutenant General Blamey was recalled from the Middle East and appointed commander-in-chief of Australian Military Forces. He was, in theory, commander of all land forces under MacArthur — US as well as Australian — but the American general saw to it that Blamey never exercised any command function over US land forces in Australia or SWPA.

In the first months of the Pacific war, Australia’s air force had sustained severe combat losses in Malaya and the Netherland East Indies, flying unescorted missions in poorly-armed Hudson bombers. During March 1942, the RAAF was integrated with the United States Army Air Corps (redesignated USAAF) and the Netherlands East Indies Air Force to form the Allied Air Force, while retaining its own system of command and groups.

Invasion fears 1941–1942

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the defeat of Allied forces down the Malay Peninsula heightened Australia’s fear of invasion. Even before the fall of Singapore, civilian residents had begun evacuating vulnerable regions of the north Queensland coast and the Top End of the Northern Territory. A rush to build public and private air raid shelters in main streets and backyards ensued throughout the north and radical ‘scorched earth’ strategies were planned in case of invasion. The threat seemed all the more real with the fall of Singapore in February 1942.

34 Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 172
36 ibid., p 31
Blamey had the task of preparing the defence of the country with the available force, predominately partly-trained militia. Japanese air raids were occurring in north Queensland, the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia and Australian forces were incapable of resisting a concerted Japanese landing on the mainland. The RAAF lacked effective aircraft, the RAN was too small and scattered to resist the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Army’s militia formations could not be speedily deployed around the country, particularly in north Australia where the lack of strategic road and rail networks demonstrated a legacy of inter-war disregard of mainland defence needs.

Strict censorship controls meant that most Australians were initially unaware that a crucial battle was taking place off the coast of north Queensland during early May 1942. However, with the exceptional increases in heavy bomber activity, many residents of Townsville, Charters Towers and Cloncurry guessed that ‘something was on’. Rumours circulated. As the conflict reached its climax on 8 May, Prime Minister Curtin finally confirmed that a major battle was in progress. At the time, the Battle of the Coral Sea was widely seen as the destruction of a powerful Japanese invasion force that was bound for north Queensland. However the Japanese Army had already vetoed its Navy’s proposal to invade Australia. The actual significance of the Coral Sea battle was in the strategic edge gained by US forces a month later in the Battle of Midway Island. In the Coral Sea, the US had lost one fleet carrier while the Japanese lost one light carrier and were forced to withdraw a heavy carrier for repairs to battle damage. Instead of facing six Japanese aircraft carriers, the three US carriers available, met only four. With tactics based on detailed knowledge of Japanese intentions, the Americans succeeded in sinking all four Japanese carriers for the loss of one of their own. Victory at Midway proved to be the psychological turning point in the Pacific war. In the minds of most Australians, the threat of immediate invasion was over.

37  Darryl McIntyre, 1992, pp 51-2
38  ibid., p 47
North Queensland defence 1870s–1941

North Queensland defence 1870s–1910s

Until the discovery of gold at Ravenswood (1867) and Charters Towers (1871), Townsville was no more than a small port servicing the large cattle runs in the hinterland. As Ravenswood boomed, Townsville benefited at the expense of the established settlement of Port Denison (Bowen) which was separated from the diggings by the Burdekin River. Although Townsville did not possess the most outstanding natural features for a harbour, the early establishment of wharves and warehouses on the banks of Ross Creek and the deepening and improvement of the harbour to accept increased tonnages, made survival and growth possible. Extension of breakwaters to create a harbour in Cleveland Bay was important in the early consolidation of Townsville as north Queensland’s principal town and port.39

A government decision during the 1870s to build a railway west from Townsville to the Charters Towers gold fields and the western pastoral districts strengthened the town’s position as the economic centre of north Queensland. In December 1880 the rail line from Townsville to Reids Creek opened. This was the first stage in what would become the Great Northern Railway, gradually extending to Charters Towers (1882), Hughenden (1887), Winton (1899), Cloncurry (1908) and Mount Isa (1929). With the formation of the Queensland Meat Export and Agency Company in 1890, Townsville was chosen for the company’s north Queensland freezing works. The Ross River meatworks remained a major employer for more than a century. Townsville’s capacity to produce and export frozen meat to other parts of Australia and the world made an important contribution to the local economy, and more importantly to the north Queensland pastoral industry.40

On separation from New South Wales in 1859, the first governor of Queensland, George Bowen, noted that the principal commercial and population centres of Brisbane and Ipswich were entirely defenceless following the withdrawal of the British military detachments. At Bowen’s request the colonial parliament approved the establishment of a small volunteer defence force based in Brisbane. The question of defending Queensland’s extensive coastline at first received little consideration. However, by the 1870s concerns about Russian and German territorial intentions in the Pacific prompted more careful deliberation of how to defend the Australian colonies from external threats. In 1877 the colonies obtained advice on regional defence from two visiting British military experts, Colonel William Jervois and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Scratchley. Their report identified Brisbane as a principal target for an attack; they also considered the defence of Townsville.41

39 Thom Blake, 1999, p 8
40 ibid., p 10
41 David Lawrence, 1989, p 5
A short-lived threat to the Turkish city of Constantinople by Russian forces in 1878 prompted the establishment of volunteer defence units in Queensland and protection of principal coastal towns became an issue of public debate.\textsuperscript{42} Townsville, as a centre of population and an important port and railway terminus, was seen as in need of protection and a local volunteer defence force was raised in June 1880. With the passage of the Defence Act of 1884, B-Company Townsville was created. In 1886 this company became the Kennedy Regiment. With Townsville becoming the headquarters of the colony’s Northern Military District in 1889, the colonial government agreed to build defences at Kissing Point and Magazine Island, to protect the approaches to the harbour.\textsuperscript{43} When completed in 1891, the forts were each equipped with two 6-inch breech-loading guns. Although a shot was never fired in anger, their presence created a sense of security for Townsville residents. A light breech-loading gun was installed at Cairns for the same purpose. Two other coastal artillery fortifications were built in Queensland during the late 19th century: Fort Victoria (Green Hill Fort) on Thursday Island where a coaling station had been formed, and Fort Lytton at the mouth of the Brisbane River.

In 1909 Prime Minister Alfred Deakin sought Britain’s advice on fixed defences. As a result, Field Marshal Herbert Kitchener was sent to inspect. His report, presented in 1911, included places at which effective defence could be made by a local military force. He selected the Maroochy River to the north of Brisbane as there were no bridges on the north coast road that could carry heavy armour or artillery and at that time, there were none at all across the Maroochy River where a series of tidal creeks made it an ideal spot at which a small force could hold a sizable army.\textsuperscript{44} He also recommended the installation of a 9.2-inch gun on Goods Island to strengthen the Torres Strait fortress. However, the proposals put forward by Kitchener were overtaken by the start of World War I.\textsuperscript{45}

Events in Europe in August 1914 led to concerns regarding the role of the German mandate territories on the north coast of New Guinea and in the Pacific. The Thursday Island Garrison was strengthened from September with the arrival of Townsville’s Kennedy Regiment. Thursday Island remained on full alert until the German raiders \textit{SMS Emden} and \textit{Cormoran} were taken out of action by early 1915.\textsuperscript{46}

A survey of Australia’s naval defences was undertaken by British Admiral John Jellicoe in 1919, a year after World War I ended. With Japan clearly identified as the likely danger, Jellicoe proposed that a naval threat from the north would be diverted around New Guinea towards either the east or west coast of Australia. As a result, Torres Strait would be bypassed and all that would be required at Thursday Island was an anchorage. Jellicoe’s recommendations eventually led to the disbandment of the Thursday Island Garrison. The Jellicoe report also proposed that Darwin, Port Stephens and Cockburn Sound be developed as ports for a large Far Eastern naval fleet with Singapore as its main base. This plan was modified and adopted by the 1923 Imperial Conference which called for a fortified naval base to be constructed at Singapore to receive a British battle fleet.\textsuperscript{47} The Singapore strategy continued to dominate Imperial defence planning in the Asia-Pacific region for more than a decade.

\textsuperscript{42} Thom Blake, 1999, p 11
\textsuperscript{43} David Lawrence, 1989, p 9
\textsuperscript{44} Clem Lack, 1962, p 220
\textsuperscript{45} Graham McKenzie Smith, 1995, p 2
\textsuperscript{46} ibid., p 3
\textsuperscript{47} ibid., p 4
North Queensland 1920s–1930s

Around the gold mining towns of the Charters Towers district, the stamp batteries and crushing mills began to fall silent after 1916 as the last pockets of payable ore were stoped out. At the Towers itself, as the mining companies went into liquidation, the steam pumps that had kept down the inflow of water in the deep mines were shut down one by one and waters filled the network of tunnels, shafts and drives beneath the town. Charters Towers survived the 1920s and 1930s as a transport centre for the pastoral industry, being on the road and railway to western Queensland, and as the location of church colleges such as Mount Carmel, All Souls, St Gabriel’s and Thomburg, which attracted boarders from the large cattle stations further out.

The north Queensland base metal industry survived World War I on inflated prices for copper, tin, zinc, lead and wolfram, propped up by the Chillagoe Company’s extensive network of railways, smelters and mining leases. With the end of the war, demand for copper and wolfram collapsed. The Chillagoe smelters closed, only to be reopened by the Queensland government in the 1920s in the interests of developing the north and providing jobs for the local constituents of the state’s Labor premier, E.G. (Red Ted) Theodore. A royal commission in 1930 found that Theodore had a pecuniary interest in the mining operations which became known as the ‘Mungana affair’. Among other unprofitable mining investment by government during the 1920s was the purchase of elements of John Moffat’s failed empire on the Herberton tin field, including the Irvinebank treatment works.

To fuel the Chillagoe smelters and the Queensland Railway’s steam locomotives, coal deposits at Mount Mulligan on the old Hodgkinson gold field were developed during World War I. Mount Mulligan gained notoriety in September 1921 when a coal dust explosion claimed the lives of all 75 miners working underground. Eventually the Mount Mulligan colliery was acquired by the state government. Hoping to provide competition for private enterprise and set north Queensland on the path of secondary industry, the Theodore government announced plans for the establishment of an iron and steel works at Bowen on Port Denison in 1920.

Blast furnaces at Chillagoe Smelters, ca.1930s

48 G.C. Bolton, 1963, p 316
49 ibid., p 317
50 ibid., p 318
Newly-discovered coal reserves of the nearby Bowen Basin coal field promised an unlimited supply of fuel for the smelting of iron ore from Western Australia. The town of Collinsville was founded on the coal reserves and a coking works was built at Bowen but the iron and steel works never came.

On the Atherton Tableland, timber milling, dairying, tobacco farming, pig raising, and peanut and maize growing supported communities of small family-operated farms clustered around rural centres including Atherton, Mareeba, Herberton, Ravenshoe, Malanda and Millaa Millaa. In many cases the marketing of Tableland produce had been controlled since the early 1920s by government boards elected by growers.  

The opening of the coastal rail link with Brisbane in 1924 assisted the development of northern ports, particularly Cairns, Townsville and Mackay. Arrival of the railway served to speed up the development of port infrastructure in Townsville and Cairns. The suitability of these ports for the mining, farming and pastoral activities of their respective hinterlands provided the initial impetus for their establishment and growth, with Bowen (north Queensland’s founding settlement) losing out to Mackay and Townsville, and Cairns replacing Cooktown and Port Douglas as the far north’s railway and shipping centre. By the 1920s Cairns and Townsville were the main ports for the state’s north, supporting customs houses, bond stores, warehouses and shipping offices. By 1933, when a meat works was established at Queerah on the outskirts of Cairns, the far northern town’s population stood at almost 12,000.

**North Queensland defence 1939–1941**

The latter half of the 1930s saw north Queensland recover slowly from the Depression. While sugar districts and local mill towns were quicker to recover than the larger towns, isolation, low population density and the dominance of seasonal industries, particularly cane and banana growing, held economic growth back. In 1939 Townsville was already the largest regional centre in north Queensland with a population of around 31,000. It was essentially a working class town with strong union traditions. Most men were employed either at the railway yards and workshops, on the wharfs or at the meatworks. Few homes were seweried and many streets were unsealed.

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51 ibid., p 326
52 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 1
Water shortage was a problem, particularly during the dry months. During the wet season, transport links were cut for weeks on end by flooding and the Burdekin River stopped all road and rail traffic beyond Home Hill. There were no defence roads and mapping of the north coast for military purposes did not commence until war with Japan.

Although north Queensland’s sparse population had long feared foreign invasion of its unprotected coastline, the region’s isolation had also insulated it from direct military threat. When World War II was declared in September 1939, the state’s north had only three local militia regiments: the 31st, 51st and 26th Infantry Battalions which combined to form 11 Brigade CMF. The 31st Infantry Battalion — the Kennedy Regiment — was recruited from the Townsville, Charters Towers, Ingham, Ayr, Home Hill, Bowen and Proserpine districts. The 51st Infantry Battalion was first raised in Egypt in 1916. It reformed in Cairns in October 1936, as the Far North Queensland Regiment, recruiting from the Cairns, Innisfail, Tully, Atherton Tableland and Mossman districts. The 26th Infantry Battalion recruited its personnel from the central and western Queensland districts of Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry, Mount Isa, Winton, Longreach, Bouli, McKinlay, Barcaldine, Alpha, Jericho, Blackall, Isisford, Jundah, Muttaburra, Aramac, Clermont and Emerald.

The north Queensland infantry battalions were mobilised in September 1939 and marched into encampments at Townsville Showgrounds and Kissing Point Barracks for training and guard duty. In early 1940, units of 11 Brigade moved to the newly developed Miowera military camp south of Bowen, to continue training. The 51st Battalion shifted to Parramatta Park in Cairns in mid-1940 while the 26th Battalion moved back to the Kissing Point Barracks in Townsville. In December 1941 on the eve of the Pacific war, the 31st Battalion was in Townsville, the 51st Battalion at Cairns, and the 26th Battalion was at Sellheim army camp near Charters Towers.

A national Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) was founded in July 1940 under the banner of the Returned Soldiers’ League. Members were mostly World War I soldiers who were over the age for frontline service. In north Queensland, units were soon established in Townsville, Cairns and most other larger towns in the region. Within weeks of the declaration of war, a Northern Centres Alert was issued for defensive preparations to begin at Townsville and Cairns, as well as on main road and rail links. VDC personnel were used on sentry duty in secure areas where access was restricted and workers and vehicles had to be checked in and out of establishments. Wharves were closed to the public and armed guards were posted at vital points such as oil depots, power station and bridges. In Cairns the military tension was such that in February 1940 a sentry at the wharves fired on a van when it failed to stop, killing a young passenger in the vehicle.

Civil defence duties were extended in June 1941 and brought under the control of the new Department of Home Security. Civilian volunteers were instructed in how to combat the effects of gas attacks and what precautions to take against high explosive and incendiary bombs. Since the declaration of war, the Queensland Premier’s Department — coordinating civil defence works in the state — had begun implementing home security policies outlined in the Commonwealth War Book.

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54 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 1
55 ibid., p 3
56 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 512
57 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 8
Plans for guarding strategic buildings and works were implemented. Air raid precautions were organised and all schools in north Queensland were required to provide slit trenches for pupils.58

Construction of public air raid shelters was planned throughout the main population centres considered vulnerable to air attack. The Queensland government undertook to build shelters on behalf of the local authorities unable to, with the adjustment of costs deferred. A special Act of parliament was passed enabling local authorities to obtain loans from the government for the purpose of air raid shelter construction and to levy special rates to meet interest repayments.59 The first black-out tests were conducted in July 1941. After Japan’s attack at Pearl Harbor a partial black out — known as ‘brown out’ — was enforced in all towns from Mackay north and up to 160 kilometres inland.60 Radio stations had to cease broadcasting at night to deprive enemy aircraft of direction-finding opportunities.61 Black-out restrictions were gradually relaxed after 1943 and removed altogether in late 1944.62

In February 1941 the federal government authorised the reinforcement of Thursday Island with some 160 militia troops of the 49th Battalion who had volunteered for tropical service. The personnel later became part of the Thursday Island Infantry Detachment.63 As early as December 1940 it had been suggested by the army that Torres Strait Islanders could be recruited to allow the release of the 49th Battalion troops for garrison service in New Guinea. Government approval for the raising of a company of Torres Strait Islanders was given in May 1941. The Torres Strait Light Infantry (TSLI) Battalion, formed in mid-1941, became the only indigenous army battalion in Australia’s military history. The Islander troops were commanded by an officer of the 49th Battalion. Training for the first intake of 107 Torres Strait Islanders began in late 1941. Initially the recruits were deployed in the defence of a number of vital points including Milman battery, the water reservoir and power house on Thursday Island, Goods Island coastal battery and Horn Island airfield. After a second intake of recruits in 1942, the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion contained a full complement of 830 men, including 40 Cape York Aborigines and Torres Strait Malays.64

Two years after the declaration of World War II, most of the north Queensland coast remained unmapped for military purposes. It was not until December 1940 that a Northern Command militia survey unit was formed to commence mapping the south-east Queensland coastal strip from Caboolture to Maryborough. By late 1941, in response to the imminent outbreak of war with Japan, a start was made on aerial photography and topographic mapping of north Queensland’s coastal hinterland. Japan’s entry into the war brought Australian and US survey personnel to north Queensland. In April 1942 topographical sections of the Australian 1st Field Survey Corps (later the 5th Field Survey Company) were moved north to the Townsville, Cairns and Atherton Tableland districts.65 The first ‘One Mile’ maps (printed on a scale of one mile to one inch) of the north Queensland coast and hinterland became available to Australian and US forces in early 1942. By 1944 a considerable volume of new maps had been issued for the region.66

58  Clem Lack, 1962, p 173
59  ibid., p 216
60  Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 22
61  Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 515
62  Clem Lack, 1962, p 247
63  Reg A. Boll, 1996, p 9
64  Vanessa Seekee, 2002, p 89
66  Clem Lack, 1962, p 221
From the declaration of war with Germany in September 1939 until the Japanese attack in December 1941, Australia’s few fighting ships were scattered around the world. In north Queensland, a former merchant ship, the *Bungaree*, was commissioned as a navy minelayer to position mines across all the major seaward passages of the Great Barrier Reef except the Grafton Passage off Cairns.67 An Area Combined Headquarters was established in Townsville in January 1941 to coordinate defence of maritime trade in the North Eastern Area of the Australian Station. It operated in parallel with a Combined Defence Headquarters for coordination of the defence of the port of Townsville, and the Combined Operations and Intelligence Centre for the gathering of intelligence from all sources. During the inter-war period, the RAN had been responsible for establishing a coast-watching service on the northern Australian mainland, the Torres Strait islands, Papua and New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. Coast-watchers were drawn from civilian administration officers, teachers, planters, missionaries and other coastal residents. By 1939 close to 700 volunteer coast-watchers had been recruited. Commander Eric Feldt, the officer appointed to coordinate the coast-watching service, moved to Townsville early in 1941 as Supervising Intelligence Officer, North Eastern Area. Naval intelligence officers under his command were appointed to Thursday Island, Port Moresby, Rabaul and to the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides.68

Until reorganisation of the Australian Army’s command structure in early 1942, the military defence of the country became the responsibility of Lieutenant General Iven Mackay who was appointed in September 1941 as General Officer Commanding Home Forces. Mackay was charged with the task of preparing Australia for defence against Japan. His proposal not to reinforce north Queensland was to give rise to the Brisbane Line controversy.

**Defence construction 1939–1941**

As the threat of war in Europe increased, Queensland Premier William Forgan Smith made a number of appeals to the federal government to fund construction of fortifications along the coast and provide for the deployment of additional troops to Queensland.69 Once war on Germany was declared, Queensland agreed that the whole of its constructional services should be made available to the commonwealth upon request.70

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67 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 9
68 ibid., p 6
69 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 515
70 MRC, 1949, p 1
Before the establishment of the Allied Works Council in February 1942, the Queensland Main Roads Commission (MRC) was the instrumentality best equipped, by virtue of its organisational structure and experience, to carry out major defence works. Other authorities that played an important role in north Queensland defence construction included the Queensland Railways, Public Works Department, Meat Industry Board, the harbour boards of Cairns, Townsville and Mackay and the local government councils. As in other states, the federal Department of Interior became the authority responsible for the coordination of defence works in Queensland. By the 1930s the operation of the north Queensland division was centred at Townsville. Staff of the Works and Service Branch of the department were located at the Townsville Customs House in the office of the district inspector and senior architect, O.A. Beattie.

Before the war, the branch had been responsible for maintenance and construction of federal government buildings in north Queensland, mainly post offices and commonwealth banks. An engineering works section was attached to the Townsville branch about 1940.

Involvement of the Queensland Main Roads Commission with defence construction commenced in August 1940 when the MRC combined with the road authorities of South Australia and New South Wales to build an overland supply road from the Alice Springs railhead to Birdum railhead in the Northern Territory. Queensland was allocated the central section from Tennant Creek to Larrimah siding near Birdum and the work was completed in October 1940. In April 1941 the MRC began upgrading the road from Mount Isa railhead to Tennant Creek. This was to form a key section of the overland supply route from Queensland to Darwin.71

By 1941 planning was underway for development of RAAF advanced operational bases (AOB) at Townsville, Cloncurry, Cooktown, Coen and Horn Island. Townsville Council had cleared a gravel runway for a civil aerodrome on the Town Common in January 1939. In May of that year, the newly-constructed airstrip was taken over by the Defence Department for development of a RAAF station. The council continued as the constructing authority during 1940 and part of 1941 in the early development of a permanent RAAF base. As at the Darwin RAAF station, which was also under construction, the concentrated building layout gave little consideration to the base having to operate under a combat situation.72 A permanent RAAF presence in Townsville was established by June 1941 when No.24 Squadron, equipped with Wirraway aircraft, transferred from Amberley to Garbutt. During late 1941, the USAAF arranged with the federal government for the upgrading of RAAF airfields at Townsville and Darwin to accommodate the movement of heavy bombers and supplies from Hawaii to the Philippines. At the time, the Townsville airfield was little more than a gravelled strip. Grading and sealing of double runways was carried out by the MRC during November and December 1941 with shift workers operating around the clock under flood lighting.73

The RAAF undertook aerials surveys over north Queensland during 1938 as part of a plan to establish a network of advanced operational bases in the likelihood of war. After investigating possible locations on Thursday Island and at Somerset at the tip of Cape York, a decision was made to develop an airfield on Horn Island.

71 ibid., p 3, p 9
72 Roger R Marks, 1994, p 61
73 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 32
This was despite a poor water supply and lack of adequate wharf facilities. Approval for construction of an all-weather landing ground with limited facilities for RAAF supplies was announced on 31 August 1939, three days before the commencement of World War II in Europe. The cost was split between the RAAF and the Department of Civil Aviation with the MRC supervising construction by a civilian labour force of about 90 men from Cairns and Townsville. Vessels carrying MRC engineers and surveyors began arriving at Horn Island in late 1939 and Torres Strait Islanders were employed to assist the MRC. Work began on extending an existing stone causeway and wharf to unload heavy equipment including a number of tractors, graders, and a bulldozer. Clearing of the north-south runway was completed by May 1941. By June, it was ready for use as a gravel strip. The east-west runway was completed by October. As the threat of war in the Pacific escalated, defensive installations were hurriedly added.

The RAAF started searching for a far northern AOB site on Cape York Peninsula in mid-1939 and a suitable location was identified near the old Coen goldfields about 20 kilometres north of the town. Construction of an airfield at Coen became an urgent RAAF priority during early 1941. Again the MRC undertook the job. Because there was no suitable road to Coen, the construction plant was sent from Brisbane by sea to Port Stewart on Princess Charlotte Bay.
From there it was unloaded and transported along rough bush tracks to the airfield site. Three runways were cleared and a handful of buildings erected. Although the station was occupied by July 1941, it was never developed because of its distance from port facilities and supply lines. Work also commenced on upgrading the runways at Cloncurry airfield in May 1941. Cloncurry was a key refuelling stop on the pre-war Sydney-Darwin air route, so its wartime importance was assured.

Prior to Japan’s entry into World War II, Australian defence authorities had recognised that the Torres Strait islands could provide potential operational bases for foreign forces approaching from the north. In early 1940 it was decided to establish a system of seaward fortifications. The Australian Defence Committee sought recommendations on the most appropriate site for mounting two 6-inch naval guns for Torres Strait. The guns were originally from the World War I cruisers HMAS Sydney and Melbourne and had been in storage since those ships were scrapped in the late 1920s. Tucker Point on Goods Island was recommended. From there, the guns could cover the Prince of Wales Channel and Normanby Sound as well as the eastern and western approaches to Thursday Island and the airfield on Horn Island. It was also recommended that a 4.7-inch gun be re-installed at Milman Hill on Thursday Island. Construction began on the Goods Battery gun emplacements in October 1940 under the direction of the Department of the Interior. The guns arrived at Goods Island in early January 1941 and were proof fired in July 1941.

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74 MRC, 1949, p 24
75 Roger R Marks, 1994, p 107
76 Graham McKenzie Smith, 1995, p 23
North Queensland at war 1942–1945

North Queensland defence 1942–1945

On Christmas Eve 1941 the first US troops to arrive in Australia began disembarking in Brisbane after their convoy, escorted by the cruiser USS Pensacola, was diverted from the Philippines. It was the beginning of a stream. From then until the end of the Pacific war thousands of US servicemen passed through Australia. 77 On 28 December 1941 Lieutenant General George Brett arrived in Australia to take command of all US forces and establish an organisational structure to distribute supplies and personnel throughout the country by setting up Base Sections for United States Army Forces in Australia (USAFIA). In early January 1942, US Army officers arrived in Townsville to investigate the development of airfields and the establishment of a Base Section — US Base Section Two — as the north Queensland headquarters of the giant United States Army Services of Supply organisation (USASOS). Headquarters for this group was in the Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Building on the corner of Denham and Walker streets, Townsville.

Townsville was chosen for an air base and for the assembly of crated aircraft and vehicles because of its good port facilities, allowing military ordnance to be delivered by ship. What soon became a flood of US equipment and supplies commenced with the arrival in Townsville of the first Liberty ships, discharging amphibious vehicles and jeeps, and an initial consignment of P-39 Aircobra fighter aircraft. 78 On 19 February (the day of the initial Japanese air raid on Darwin), the first B-17 Flying Fortresses of the US 19th Bombardment Group (Heavy) landed at Townsville. Having flown the Pacific, they were promptly dispersed to outback Cloncurry. The first US heavy bombardment mission out of Queensland left Garbutt air base on 22 February to attack Japanese installations at Rabaul.

77 W E Hughes, 1993, p 24
78 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 14
The 46th Engineer General Service Regiment arrived in Townsville in March with the task of constructing airfields in north Queensland and New Guinea. They were quartered in large tent encampments on the outskirts of Townsville, including Armstrongs Paddock at Aitkenvale. These were the first components of USAFIA: their numbers would reach 120,000 by September 1943 and eventually swell to more than 860,000 US personnel in SWPA. About ten percent were African-Americans who were mainly employed in transport and labour battalions. The Australian War Cabinet had tried to block their entry, in an effort to uphold the White Australia Policy.

Fears of invasion led to some extraordinary plans, the most controversial of which concerned the establishment of the 'Brisbane Line'. With the Japanese advancing through Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, Lieutenant General Mackay, responsible for the military defence of Australia, put a memorandum to the War Cabinet in February 1942, recommending that key industrial and population centres of south-east Australia be protected at the expense of the rest of the continent, including most of Queensland. The reality was that during the first months of the Pacific war, there were barely enough divisions to defend the east coast from Melbourne to Brisbane as well as threatened centres such as Darwin and Port Moresby. The Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, who held an electorate in north Queensland, argued that the whole of populated Australia deserved defending. Within weeks the matter was resolved by Britain's decision to return the 6th and 7th Divisions from the Middle East and news that the 41st US Infantry Division was to be allocated to Australia's defence.

During March 1942 the battle-hardened troops of the 6th and 7th Divisions AIF, who had been engaged in fighting Italian and German troops in the Middle East and North African campaigns, were withdrawn by Churchill and returned to Australia at the request of Prime Minister Curtin. The return of the Australian divisions and the deployment of growing numbers of US forces to Australia were followed in March 1942 by the arrival from the Philippines of General Douglas MacArthur and his appointment by President Roosevelt as Supreme Commander of SWPA. By April 1942 there were 46,000 men of the AIF back from the Middle East. A further 63,000 soldiers had completed their training, but not left Australia; to these may be added 280,000 militia and just 33,000 Americans from all services. By July 1942 when MacArthur transferred his headquarters from Melbourne to Brisbane, the bulk of these forces were concentrated in northern Australia, the majority in Queensland.

Although the Japanese landing at Port Moresby had been thwarted by a tactical victory in the Coral Sea battle, the threat to north Queensland was perceived as very immediate. This was particularly so in July 1942 when Japanese forces landed at Gona and Buna mission settlements on the north-east coast of New Guinea near the northern end of the Kokoda track and began an overland advance on Port Moresby. The small Australian force of defending militia troops conducted a fighting withdrawal over the Owen Stanley Range, suffering heavy casualties until September when a counter-offensive was launched from Imita Ridge, almost within sight of Port Moresby. Supported by artillery, units of the Australian 7th Division drove the over-extended remnants of the Japanese 17th Army back, taking Kokoda and control of the Owen Stanley Range in November.

79 Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 173
80 Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 74
81 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 39
82 P D Wilson, 1988, p 12
83 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 37
84 Jeffrey Grey, 1990, p 174
An attempt by the Japanese to outflank the Port Moresby defences by landing at Milne Bay at the eastern tip of New Guinea was repulsed by Australian forces on 7 September, after heavy fighting. This marked the first defeat on land for the Japanese in SWPA.

During late 1942 a US remount depot known as Rodeo was established at Rocky Springs near Townsville. Here troops were trained in the handling of pack horses for their use on the Kokoda track and the New Guinea highlands. Rocky Springs was selected because the hilly terrain around Mount Stuart and Mount Elliott was thought to simulate that in which the animals were expected to see service. The remount depot held about 1000 horses and provided accommodation for 1100 men, with Aborigines among those employed in the building of horse yards and in the mustering of the horses. The importance of the depot lessened with the Allied recapture of supply airfields at Kokoda and Buna. All that now remains are several stone weirs inscribed with graffiti by US servicemen.

The Queensland Labor premier, William Forgan Smith, resigned from office in September 1942 and was replaced as leader by the treasurer, Frank Cooper, who retained the office of premier until 1946. Cooper cooperated closely with Curtin, even when the Queensland Labor Party central executive unsuccessfully opposed the decision of the ALP Federal Conference in January 1943 to allow Australia militia to serve throughout SWPA.

As Japanese forces continued to hold out in New Guinea and on the Solomon Islands, vessels of all types including US Liberty ships, tankers and landing ships crowded into Cleveland Bay, Townsville, waiting to unload aircraft, plant and equipment for airfields, warehouses and workshops between Townsville and Charters Towers. At times as many as 60 cargo vessels were lying at anchor off the outer harbour, awaiting their turn to enter port to unload fuel and military supplies or embark troops for Port Moresby, Buna, Milne Bay, Cape York and the Torres Strait islands. During 1942 the port of Townsville handled about 328,000 tonnes of war materials as well as 55,500 vehicles and 63,500 tonnes of fuel. The city’s population swelled to around 100,000, of whom almost 80 percent were military personnel. Townsville Railway Station was also a scene of continuous activity with troop trains arriving around the clock from the south.

85 Hugh J Casey, 1951, p38
86 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 54
Shipping congestion at Townsville caused the main naval presence in north Queensland to be based further north, at Cairns. From June 1942, Cairns became US Sub Port Base Two and early in 1943 US Base Section Five of USASOS was also centred at the town. In January 1943 the ancient depot ship \textit{HMAS Platypus} steamed into Cairns and took up a permanent mooring near the shore station. The RAN and the USN concentrated their operations in Trinity Inlet which became the principal naval base for repair, refuelling, victualling and maintenance of minor naval craft such as Australian corvettes, Fairmile patrol launches, and US motor torpedo (PT) boats.

In late November 1942 General Blamey ordered a survey of the Atherton Tableland with the intention of developing facilities for a combined rehabilitation and training area for Australian troops recently returned from the Middle East. The Minister for the Army submitted a Cabinet request for expenditure on camp facilities. The initial submission set out three stages of development including camp accommodation for up to eight brigade groups, a 1200 and a 600-bed hospital, a convalescent depot, a staging camp at Redlynch near Cairns, a field bakery and field butchery, railway sidings, sewage and refrigeration facilities, an advanced ordnance depot and advanced supply depot, and provision for roads and electricity.\footnote{P D Wilson, 1988, p 14}

\textit{Known as the ‘Atherton Project’, the scheme had three key purposes: recoverate troops in a cooler climate while engaged in jungle warfare training; provide suitable hospitalisation for malaria and tropical disease cases; and locate personnel and maintenance installations close to the New Guinea frontline with access to railway and port facilities. From December 1942 the headquarters of the Australian Army in north Queensland transferred from Townsville to the Atherton Tableland with the main administrative base established around the town of Atherton and the nearby settlement of Tolga. A huge schedule of construction work commenced in January 1943 involving the building of tent encampments, hutments, stores, bakeries, mess kitchens, entertainment halls, hospitals, sewage plants, army farms and a war cemetery. Because of the difficulties in obtaining fresh vegetables, building contractors were required to establish vegetable gardens for their Civil Construction Corps (CCC) workforce.} \footnote{AWC Minutes, 1943}
Units of the Australian 6th and 7th Divisions arrived on the Tableland in January 1943 and began establishing tent encampments around the settlements of Wongabel, Wondecla and Ravenshoe. The 9th Division returned to Australia from the Middle East during February and the following month moved into camps around Kairi, Tinaroo and Danbullu. At Atherton, the army requisitioned the Barron Valley Hotel as an officers’ club. For a short time it also served as General Blamey’s headquarters.89 Jungle warfare training took place in rainforest country near Tully Falls, Longland Gap, Mount Edith near Mount Bartle Frere and on Rainy Mountain in the Kuranda Range. Following the capture of Buna and the end of the Kokoda campaign, Australian operations on the north coast of New Guinea continued with the advance towards Salamaua, the capture of Lae, the subsequent advance up the Markham and Ramu River valleys, the landing at Finschhafen, and the taking of Sattelberg. Cairns replaced Townsville during 1943 as the main port of embarkation for Australian troops engaged in the New Guinea campaigns. Amphibious landing exercises were carried out in Trinity Inlet and on the northern beaches.

Consolidated PBY-5 Catalina flying boats of RAAF Nos.11 and 20 Squadrons were initially based at Port Moresby in New Guinea, flying long-range ocean patrols. With Port Moresby under aerial attack and the loss of several flying boats, the squadrons moved to the comparative safety of Bowen in May 1942 and continued to stage north through Cairns. At Bowen, the squadrons took over the local picture theatre as a store for maintenance equipment. Hotels, houses and shops in Bowen’s main streets were also commandeered. The Denison Hotel in Herbert Street provided squadron headquarters and officers’ accommodation. Adjacent shops were used by accounts officers and also became an airmen’s mess, station headquarters, store and guard room. Private houses along Dalrymple and George streets became airmen’s barracks, electrical shops, carpenters’ shops, an instrument makers’ shop, a sergeants’ mess, transport sections and a photographic section. Elsewhere in the town, houses were converted into a hospital and dental clinic, a parachute store and general equipment stores. Many of the requisitioned buildings survive as private shops and dwellings.90

89 Peter Nielsen, 1993, pp 69-82
90 AWM, 22 OBU War Diary
The flying boats of Nos.11 and 20 Squadrons were based at Trinity Inlet, Cairns, from November 1942 with headquarters located on The Esplanade. From Cairns the ‘Black Cats’ continued to carry out a range of operational duties to New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, the Solomon Islands and New Caledonia: including search and rescue, clandestine insertions behind Japanese lines, long-range bombing and mine-laying missions and supplying Australian coast watchers. During August 1943, RAAF No.43 Catalina Squadron developed the remote Qantas flying boat refuelling depot at Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria as a base for operations in Indonesian waters that involved the mining of Balikpapan and Ambon harbours and regular long-range patrols over the islands of the Netherlands East Indies.91

Earlier that year the USN had decided to build a naval air station and flying boat repair base at Palm Island, north of Townsville. Construction began in July and included camp facilities for 1000 personnel, workshops, hangars, slipways and fuel storage facilities.92 By September the station at Wallaby Point had become a major base for USN patrol squadrons equipped with PBY-5 Catalina and PBM-1 Mariner flying boats. Palm Island Naval Air Station closed in May 1944.

At Innisfail and Proserpine, chemical warfare trials were carried out using volunteer service personnel who were known as ‘GPs’, or Guinea Pigs. Research into the effects of various poison gases, especially mustard gas, was conducted in the belief that the Japanese had chemical weapons in New Guinea.93 The research also studied the effects of chemical agents under tropical conditions. A British chemical warfare scientist organised the first trials near Townsville in 1942 before arranging for scientists from Britain’s Porton Down experimental station to supervise further tests at Mission Beach near Innisfail the following year. After exposure to gas, the burnt and blistered volunteers were hospitalised for further experiments on the best way to treat victims. A special ward was set up on the top floor of the Innisfail Hospital for the treatment of gas burns and nursing staff were required to maintain secrecy.94

A Chemical Warfare Research and Experimental Section was established by the Department of Munitions in an extensive complex of laboratories and barracks at Gunyarra railway siding, near Proserpine, in late 1943.

91 P D Wilson, 1988, pp 18-9
92 Hugh J Casey, 1951, p 42
93 Vera Bradley, 1995, p 323
94 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 113
The restricted camp was later renamed the 1st Australian Field Experimental Station. By mid-1944 Gunyarra accommodated about 600 personnel including AIF, RAAF, WAAAF, AWAS, AAMWS, RAMC, British and Australian scientists, and observers from the Australian Chemical Defence Board, US military, South African Army and New Zealand Navy. That year, mustard gas trials using volunteers were conducted at Gunyarra, Mission Beach, Hinchinbrook and North Brook islands, and in the Tully rainforest. North Brook Island served as a chemical warfare bombing range. About 120 bombs containing four tonnes of liquid mustard gas were dropped on the island in a major trial in January 1944. The island is now protected as an important nesting area for the Torresian Imperial-pigeon (Ducula spilorrhoa). North Queensland’s main chemical warfare stockpile was stored in concrete igloos at the remote Talmoi wool scour, beyond Richmond in the far west of the state.

Delays in acquiring British radar equipment, due to the demands of the Battle of Britain, spurred an innovative period of radar development by Australian scientists at the Radiophysics Laboratory (RPL) of the University of Sydney during 1941. On news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, scientists at RPL began building an air warning radar set by modifying the electronics of an experimental coast defence radar developed by the army. The rough but effective AW set was completed in less than a week. Installed at Dover Heights, it provided Sydney’s first air warning system. In January 1942 the Air Board asked RPL to design additional experimental sets that were urgently required for the protection of Darwin, Port Moresby and the Torres Strait. These were completed during February.

RAAF No.36 Radar Station was formed at Thursday Island in March 1942. Air warning radar coverage of the Torres Strait was essential to monitor aircraft movements and provide early warning of Japanese raids. Equipment and personnel were flown from Sydney in a Sunderland flying boat, arriving just after the first Japanese raid on Horn Island on 14 March 1942. The equipment was taken by barge to Hammond Island where it was installed during early April in a reinforced concrete building on Hammond East Hill, originally intended as an army signal station and observation post. The Hammond Island radar was one of the earliest experimental AW prototype sets manufactured in Australia.
It did not take long for the technology to prove itself. Soon after the set became operational, No.36 Radar Station detected the approach of a Japanese raid, 280 kilometres out from Horn Island. The warning provided sufficient time for 20 Boston bombers to take off from the airfield and fly to the comparative safety of the mainland.97

**Defence construction 1942–1945**

The perceived military threat to north Queensland by 1940, led to the establishment of an engineering design section within the Department of Interior’s Works and Service Branch which occupied space in the Townsville Customs House. The superintending engineer was Eric T Doig. During the crisis months from January to September 1942, Doig’s engineering design group were fully occupied with the preparation of design drawings, specifications and contract supervision for hundreds of defensive structures in north Queensland including airfields, reinforced concrete command posts, signal stations, gun emplacements, wharfs, ordnance depots, medical facilities and fuel installations. Doig’s methods of getting things done sometimes led to friction with his superiors at the Queensland Directorate of the Allied Works Council in Brisbane.98

As the superintending engineer in a wartime setting, he was able to expedite new construction without the usual constraints of red tape, often fulfilling the multiple roles of draftsman, design approver, contract selector and contract supervisor.

In January 1942 work began on a reinforced concrete building in Ramsay Street, Garbutt. It was to serve as the operations and signals centre of the US Air Command in Australia’s North Eastern Area (NEA) including New Guinea. Constructed by the Townsville Harbour Board for the Department of the Interior as Project No.2, Job 25, the building was designed with a thick reinforced roof and buttressed walls designed to withstand bomb blast. Abandoned at war’s end, the building was later adapted as an office.

Design engineers of the Works and Service Branch were at their busiest during April and May 1942 when drawings were prepared for additional reinforced concrete command and communication centres in Townsville. These included Project No.W142 to serve as the command and signals centre for the RAAF No.1 Wireless Station at Stuart on Townsville’s outskirts.

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97  AWM, 36 RDF War Diary
98  AWC Minutes, 1942-43
When completed in September 1942, the reinforced concrete building was painted and camouflaged to resemble a farm house from the air. It has since been demolished to make way for a copper refinery. Another reinforced concrete building, Project No.81, was constructed in Green Street at the foot of Castle Hill during May 1942. Known as Building 81, the concrete structure was designed as the Combined Operational Headquarters for the RAAF NEA Command. The building was camouflaged and disguised with the erection of a suburban house on its flat concrete roof to foil Japanese aerial reconnaissance.99 Building 81 is now the State Emergency Services centre for the Townsville area. Drawings for a US command post under Castle Hill Road were also prepared at this time. The concrete bunker remains beneath the road.

The Curtin government established the Allied Works Council on 26 February 1942. Former Queensland premier Edward Theodore became its national director. The AWC’s role was to coordinate large scale defence construction projects throughout Australia. The Queensland director of public works, John Kemp, was placed in charge of the AWC in Queensland. Under Kemp’s direction, major defence projects were undertaken with the resources of the state’s Main Roads Commission and US engineer regiments.100

The Civil Construction Corps (CCC) was established by the Curtin government on 14 April to provide a labour force of civilian tradesmen, plant operators and labourers to carry out construction work for AWC contractors. Men who were not enlisted in the armed forces or not in protected industries were conscripted into the CCC, which by November 1943 totalled a force of more than 60,000 Australia-wide. Local government authorities and harbour boards were also called on to undertake defence works and provide services such as drainage and road maintenance works. Council employees worked on a variety of projects at Allied military installations in north Queensland during the war.101

The huge construction program demanded the use of all existing organisations capable of carrying out works. Private contractors, both large and small, undertook work for the AWC. Most contracts were carried out under a cost-plus fixed-fee system (usually three per cent of cost). This ensured contractors were tied to terms that would result in the speedy completion of projects. Acute labour shortages in north Queensland placed great dependence on manpower and supplies from the south. It was particularly hard to get sufficient men, plant and materials to remote locations like Cape York and Torres Strait when urgent requisitions were received. The shortage of shipping space and uncertainty of shipping timetables added to difficulties for constructing authorities in meeting requirements.102 The main AWC engineering workshops were located at Townsville, near Oonoonba railway siding. Facilities included spare parts and material stores, blacksmith and welding shop and a carpentry shop for the production of furniture and fixtures.103 Bulldozers, road graders, tractors and other equipment used on AWC projects were repaired and maintained on-site. About 200 men were employed at the workshops.

From early 1942 considerable effort was put into the fortification of Townsville. This was in addition to aerodrome construction, extension of the naval slipway, navy workshops, base repair and maintenance facilities, and storage depots.
At Kissing Point, reinforced concrete coastal battery fortifications were built with searchlight stations, ammunition stores, a command post and anti-aircraft gun emplacements. Concrete fortifications including searchlight stations were also constructed on Signal Hill and an observation post was built on the crest of Castle Hill by the Australian 5th Division. Pallarenda Point was chosen as the site for a coastal battery to defend the entrance to Cleveland Bay. Heavy anti-aircraft gun stations were constructed in The Strand and on the harbour breakwater, with others located at Rowes Bay, Mount St John, the Ross River estuary, Aitkenvale, and around Garbutt aerodrome. Townsville’s popular weekend holiday resort of Magnetic Island was converted into a major fortress during 1943 with strong seaward defences including a coastal artillery battery, searchlight stations, magazines, war signal station, radar station and heavy anti-aircraft gun stations.104

Garbutt aerodrome was extended, duplicated, sealed and developed on a massive scale to serve as the terminus and operational base for heavy bomber aircraft on the ferry route from the US by way of Honolulu, Wake, and Midway islands. This led to Project No.1, the construction of US-designed igloo hangars and other buildings with taxiways, dispersal areas, bomb depots, fuel installations and splinter-proof aircraft pens. During February 1942, B-17s of the 435th Bombardment Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group (Heavy), arrived at Garbutt. They were the first of many USAAF combat squadrons to be based at the airfield. Development of Garbutt led to the need for nearby interceptor fighter strips. The US 46th Engineer General Service Regiment was ordered from Melbourne to Townsville in early March 1942 and assigned the task of constructing airfields from Townsville to Cape York.105 During the last two weeks of March, the 46th Engineers and MRC began clearing and building a string of gravel dispersal runways and fighter strips along the railway between Townsville and Charters Towers. At Woodstock on 18 March clearing began on three fighter strips for use by USAAF 8th and 35th Fighter Groups equipped with P-39 Aircobras. Ten days later, the 46th Engineers shifted to nearby Reid River to commence construction of three gravel strips. At the same time, strips were being cleared around Townsville at Stockroute, Antil Plains, Bohle River and Weir (Aitkenvale).

104 Clem Lack, 1962, p 281
105 MRC, 1949, p 20-6
Most of the strips were operational by April as more and more US combat aircraft began arriving. On 11 April, 1200 African-American troops of the US 91st Engineer General Service Regiment arrived to assist with the construction of airfields around Townsville, starting with the extension of Giru airfield.

In early October 1942, the US 4th Air Depot Group arrived in Townsville. It formed No.2 Depot of the Fifth Air Force Service Command in Australia, responsible for aircraft assembly, modification, engine overhaul and major repair. Spread between Mount Louisa and Stockroute airstrip, the depot comprised 35 large igloo workshops and warehouses, a battery of engine test stands and a double bore gun sight range. The residential section for US personnel comprised about 120 barracks buildings and three or four tent cities with sports fields, all connected by an internal road network.

RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector headquarters was first established in temporary accommodation at Townsville Grammar School in February 1942 to control fighter operations and the coordination of anti-aircraft defences throughout the region. However, the school was vulnerable to air attacks and in August 1942 a new location was selected at Wulguru near Mount Stuart where a specially-designed reinforced concrete operations and signals building was constructed into the rocky face of a quarry. The blast-proof building, which was completed in early 1943, was air-conditioned and contained a mezzanine floor in the main plot room. Because of its secrecy, construction was carried out under camouflage conditions. Nearby, at Roseneath, is a former army signals building of reinforced concrete construction. It was completed during 1942 as the communication centre for the 5th Australian Division Headquarters. The building was later occupied by AWAS signallers of 3-Company, 24 Line of Communication.

During 1942 new airfields were cleared and constructed at Charters Towers and nearby Breddan, and on the Gulf country cattle stations of Carpentaria Downs, Augustus Downs and Wrotham Park. The MRC pulled out all stops for the Charters Towers’ airfield. US Army engineering consultants Sverdrup and Parcel had identified the need for a heavy bomber airfield there in December 1941. Charters Towers was the closest inland centre that could provide strategic dispersal support for the main NEA air base at Garbutt, which was considered vulnerable to Japanese attack. The USAAF ordered the Charters Towers airfield late Saturday evening on 14 February 1942. They wanted it ready in just 14 days. Over the weekend two special trains were assembled at Garbutt siding. By Monday morning, hundreds of men and all available earth-moving plant were aboard. Work was in full swing at Charters Towers by day’s end and the first strip was completed in 17 days. Clearing of a second runway followed. The airfield became operational between 8 and 17 March with arrival of four bombardment squadrons of the USAAF 3rd BG(M), initially equipped with A-24 Dauntless dive bombers and A-20 Boston bombers. On 21 March, three USAAF B-17 Flying Fortress bombers dispersed to Charters Towers after an air raid alarm at Garbutt. Mine tailings were later used for sealing the two runways which were said to be ‘paved with gold’.

106 Roger R Marks, 1994, pp 61-100
107 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 29
108 CPP No.15, 1944, p 19
109 ibid., p 20
110 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 55
111 AWM Photographic Collection
112 Clem Lack, 1962, p 278
The arrival of the USAAF 3rd BG at Charters Towers in mid-March underscored the need for dispersal strips in the area. An earlier proposal for an airfield 20 kilometres north, at Sandy Creek, was revived. Runway clearing and construction at the new location, named Breddan, started on 10 April 1942. Sealing of an east-west runway was the priority with construction of a proposed north-south runway to follow. With the US victory at Midway Island in early June much of the airfield construction program west of Charters Towers was abandoned. At Breddan the partly constructed second runway was left to serve as a taxiway. The main runway was sealed by 22 August when the 71st and 405th BS of the USAAF 38th BG(M) equipped with B-25 Mitchell bombers, landed after flying from Hawaii. When the US squadrons moved to Townsville in early October, Breddan came under RAAF control for development of one of the most extensive aircraft salvage, repair and maintenance facilities in north Queensland. Prefabricated workshops and Bellman hangars for general engineering and engine repair sections were erected early in 1943 for engine dismantling, propeller maintenance, electroplating, instrument repair, blacksmithing, turning and fitting and re-assembly. Elsewhere on the base, concrete igloos were constructed for storage of aerial torpedos and torpedo warhead maintenance. By late 1943 more than 1200 RAAF personnel were stationed at Breddan.113

113  AWC Minutes, 1943-4

Surfacing Charters Towers airfield

Raid on Rabaul harbour by B-25s of 3 BG(M) from Charters Towers, November 1942
Development of RAAF No.8 Stores Depot at Macrossan airfield near Charters Towers commenced in April 1943 and involved the construction of two huge igloo ‘woolstore’ warehouses of a design type known as W3. The largest of their type in north Queensland, each measured 91.5 metres by 70 metres and had a floor space of about 8000 square metres. The depot also contained four large igloo warehouses and a number of steel-frame Bellman hangars used as stores.\textsuperscript{114} RAAF No.11 Stores Depot was formed at Macrossan as an extension of No.8 Depot. It comprised four igloo warehouses, motor transport workshops, barracks store, timber store, a boot maker, tailor and typewriter section.\textsuperscript{115} A large sick bay, fully serviced and seweried, was erected within camp facilities on ‘Hospital Hill’. One of the two woolstore warehouses was destroyed by fire in 1972. Macrossan depot continues in use as the army’s major north Queensland bulk store.

By early April, three squadrons of the USAAF 19th BG(H), equipped with B-17 Flying Fortress bombers, had begun operating from Cloncurry in far western Queensland. Group air and ground crews occupied all eight hotels in the town. They also took over the shire hall and RSL hall as a hospital and operating theatre.\textsuperscript{116} Plans to expand Cairns airfield were dropped in early May during the Battle of the Coral Sea. Instead the US decided to establish a new advanced operational base at Mareeba on the Atherton Tableland. Work on Mareeba airfield started on 12 May, four days after the sea battle ended. The MRC supervised construction, using plant and equipment from Mareeba and other Tableland shires. A north-south runway was cleared first. With just eight days to get the strip prepared for aircraft, about 700 men were employed working three shifts a day. A gravel strip more than two kilometres long was ready for Beaufort bombers of RAAF No.100 Squadron when they landed on 20 May. Mareeba was confirmed as far north Queensland’s main operational aerodrome in June: Cairns would be used as a relief field. Between May and July the 28th, 30th and 93rd BS of the 19th BG(H) began moving from outback bases at Cloncurry and Longreach to their new quarters at Mareeba airfield. From July 1942 to May 1943 up to seven heavy bomber squadrons from the US 19th and 43rd BG(H) made Mareeba their home. During this time they launched missions against Japanese targets in New Guinea and throughout the South West Pacific Area.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{114} CPP No.15, 1944, p 23
\textsuperscript{115} ibid., p 19
\textsuperscript{116} Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 25
\textsuperscript{117} Damian Waters, 2003, pp. 26-95
With the Port Moresby airfields regularly under attack by Japanese aircraft, Iron Range on the eastern side of Cape York was intended as a fall-back airfield for bombing strikes on the Japanese base at Rabaul. An advance party of the US 46th Engineer General Service Regiment left Townsville by sea for Portland Roads in early June to begin work at the AOB site in dense rainforest on the Claudie River near Lockhart River mission. During July more units arrived aboard US Liberty ships equipped with bulldozers, graders and trucks. The heavy equipment was put to use from the Portland Roads jetty, widening the track inland to Iron Range airfield. Once Gordon strip was cleared, the engineers turned to constructing taxiways and dispersal bays. Clearing of Claudie strip started soon after. Gordon strip was completed as an unsealed runway by 18 August when the first aircraft landed. On 9 September, ten B-26 Marauder bombers of the USAAF 19th BS, 22nd BG(M), arrived at Iron Range and two days later they departed on their first bombing mission. By October, aircraft of two BS(M) and seven BS(H) of the US Fifth Air Force operated from Iron Range. Heavy rainfall had slowed work by December and the US engineers were sent further north to Jacky Jacky airfield on the tip of Cape York, leaving the MRC and its CCC labour to complete Iron Range airfield.118 By May 1943, three strips had been cleared — Gordon, Old Claudie and New Claudie — although Old Claudie was abandoned as flood prone and New Claudie was never completed due to reduced activity.119 Gordon strip remains in use as Lockhart River Airport.

Just as Port Moresby was under regular attack in mid-1942, so too was Horn Island. A dispersal airfield was urgently needed on the tip of Cape York. An area of high ground near Red Island Point was selected as the site for two runways for a heavy bomber AOB to possibly replace Horn Island airfield. Units of the US 46th Engineer General Service Regiment were sent to Cape York in July. They set to work, clearing the way for the airfield, only to find they were at the wrong location: work proceeded regardless. By August two companies of the US 91st Engineer Battalion had arrived at Red Island Point to assist. Owing to the mistake, a single gravel airstrip more than two kilometres in length was cleared and constructed through coastal rainforest and swamp near Jacky Jacky Creek. The first B-17 bombers landed on the incomplete airstrip in October.

118 MRC, 1949, p 25
119 Roger R. Marks, 1994, p 19
All work ceased as the seasonal wet set in. The US Engineer units were transferred to New Guinea: the AWC took over the remaining construction work and maintenance at the airfield. In March 1943 the MRC was brought in to strengthen and seal the runway and construct taxiways, hard-standings and dispersal areas. RAFF No.52 Radar Station was established nearby at Mutee Head to provide protection for the airfield and its port facilities, and to assist in locating lost or strayed aircraft. The airfield was known as Jacky Jacky by the Australians and Red Island Point by the Americans. To avoid confusion, in June Lieutenant-General George Kenney, commander of the US Fifth Air Force in Australia, directed that the name be changed to Higgins Field in honour of Flight Lieutenant Brian Higgins, RAFF, killed in air operations on 25 May 1943. The runway remains in use as Injinoo/Bamaga Airport.

Telegraph communications in far north Queensland were limited before 1942. Cape York Peninsula was served by a single wire system that had been erected in 1886 as a link between Cooktown and Thursday Island and could only relay a small number of telegrams an hour. The work of upgrading telecommunications on Cape York began in August 1942 in a major undertaking involving some 1200 US Army signal corps troops, 600 Australian Army signalmen, and over 50 PMG linemen and line inspectors. In four months, they erected a three channel (voice) telephone carrier system from Townsville to Thursday Island, with loops into Cooktown and Iron Range. A similar system was installed from Townsville to Cairns through Charters Towers and Mount Surprise. Prefabricated steel frame telephone repeater stations were built along the route at Mount Surprise, Fairview (near Laura), Coen and Cape York. An undersea cable was also laid from Cape York to Horn and Thursday islands, with links to New Guinea.

General MacArthur’s headquarters produced the Moultrie Plan for the defence of the Torres Strait region in March 1943 in response to a Japanese build-up in the islands north of Darwin. The Moultrie Plan aimed at securing the western entrance to the Coral Sea and obtaining unimpeded use of the Cairns — Port Moresby—Darwin sea lanes. The army had identified the need for a coastal battery on Hammond Island to support the Goods Island battery in covering Thursday Island and Horn Island airfield.

Panama type gun mount, Turtle Battery, Hammond Island

AW tower at RAAF 52 Radar Station site, Mutee Head, Cape York

Wartime telephone carrier pole, Cape York telegraph track

Coen Telephone Carrier Station

120 ibid., p 14
121 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 537
An Australian Letter Battery — ‘Q’ Heavy Battery — was sent to Thursday Island in March and battery personnel and equipment were moved to Turtle Head on Hammond Island a month later. Turtle Battery, as it was known, was equipped with two 155-mm guns supplied by the US Army, and two Sperry searchlights. Work commenced on a reinforced concrete battery operating post, two Panama type gun mounts, magazines and searchlight stations. Both guns were proof fired during May. In two years of operation, Turtle Battery never fired a shot in anger. However, like the other coastal batteries of the Torres Strait and the Barrier Reef coast, it may have played a crucial role if the tide of war in the Pacific had slowed to a stalemate, or if the Japanese had continued their march south.\textsuperscript{123}

At Townsville, the arrival of increasing quantities of war materials direct from the US and the limited amount of existing storage facilities, made it an urgent priority to build warehouses for the receipt, storage and issue of ordnance. Soon after the Battle of the Coral Sea, a site for the main US Army ordnance depot in north Queensland was selected at Stuart, alongside the railway to Charters Towers. Work on the project began during November 1942 and took a year to complete. Facilities were provided for the repair of all types of ordnance equipment and the assembly of crated jeeps and trucks. In all about 60 buildings, including ten large igloo warehouses with individual floor areas up to 5574 square metres. One of these was the largest igloo warehouse built in northern Australia—a heavy maintenance repair shop 608 feet by 108 feet (185 metres by 33 metres) with warehouse supervisors using bicycles as a means of getting around.\textsuperscript{124} During April 1943 the depot complex was redesignated the Koala Ordnance Centre. It included all ordnance activities except ammunition storage and supply. To free up army personnel, Townsville civilians were employed as guards and warehouse staff. The depot also featured its own a nine-piece dance band and screened movies three times a week.\textsuperscript{125}

Post-war development has removed evidence of the extensive port facilities that were hurriedly constructed on the Townsville waterfront from 1942. Major wartime projects in the port of Townsville included: construction of the Townsville naval depot, \textit{HMAS Magnetic}, which was underway by November 1942 and contained about 50 buildings such as sleeping quarters, kitchens, mess halls and recreation huts for the accommodation of over 500 naval personnel; a 244 metre long dual purpose jetty, constructed to meet an urgent defence requirement to enable oil tankers to berth and discharge their cargo and free other wharves that were congested; an oil fuel installation with eight steel fuel tanks each of 500,000 gallons (2,273,050 litres), and two 1,250,000 gallon (5,682,625 litres) reinforced concrete tanks; naval victualling and armament stores on Ross Creek for the supply of dry goods, clothing and foodstuffs with cold rooms, meat chambers and an ice making plant; naval repair facilities on both sides of Ross Creek, including workshops and a slipway; a large boom defence net storage building and personnel accommodation; and the RAN headquarters building which accommodated the staff of the NOIC, Townsville.\textsuperscript{126}

US military personnel began arriving in Cairns in greater numbers early in 1943. They were led by the US 411th Engineer Base Shop Battalion which was responsible for major construction works around the town, including bridge building and road improvement. A staging camp for the 411th Engineers was set up at Edge Hill.

\textsuperscript{123} AWM, File 52 4/19/47  
\textsuperscript{124} Hugh J Casey, 1951, p 37  
\textsuperscript{125} CPP No.15, 1944, p 20  
\textsuperscript{126} ibid., p 18
The US engineers provided infrastructure for training Australian troops in amphibious landings. These exercises were carried out on Trinity Inlet and the northern beaches. Troops used landing craft built in Cairns, chosen as the most northerly centre in Queensland for the manufacture and ferrying of boats to forward areas in New Guinea.\textsuperscript{127} The 411th Engineers erected a warehouse and boat assembly factory for the construction of plywood LCVP landing barges for infantry and light vehicle use in the planned New Guinea and island campaigns. The first boats came off the assembly line in April 1943. Soon the factory was producing six boats a day. The hulls were assembled from kits shipped from the US and local plywood timber manufactured in Cairns. The Japanese were aware of the project and through ‘Tokyo Rose’ broadcast a welcome to the US engineers, promising them a ‘visit’ on the day the first LCVP was launched at the plant. Fortunately the improving war situation prevented such a visit.\textsuperscript{128} About 600 landing craft were produced at the Cairns plant before the production line was moved forward to New Guinea.

Like Townsville, Cairns’ wartime port development is all but gone today. Perhaps the largest US project planned for Cairns was the establishment of a major transhipment port to handle much of the total war materials arriving in Australia from America. USASOS approved construction of Cairns Transhipment Depot in June 1943 at a cost of US$10 million. Initially the project allowed for almost two kilometres of wharves, 12 wharf stores, more than 40 warehouses, and drainage, sewage and camp facilities for 40,000 troops. Construction entailed dredging to provide a depth of 8.5 metres at low water and a large turning basin together with roads and railway sidings.\textsuperscript{129} Grand plans were incrementally reduced as the war situation in SWPA improved. The scheme was abandoned after just 250 metres of wharf and construction of seven warehouses and a concrete access road (Aumuller Street).\textsuperscript{130} Other wartime facilities for the port of Cairns included: an oil tanker berth carrying the pipeline and terminals for the Edge Hill naval fuel tanks; Cairns USN Depot comprising US-prefabricated buildings shipped to Cairns for erection and a 363 tonne floating dock; and the RAN shore depot, \textit{HMAS Kuranda}, including naval stores and accommodation for about 400 personnel.\textsuperscript{131}
Coastal projects at Cairns also included jetties and anti-aircraft gun stations. Across Trinity Inlet at False Cape, a heavily fortified coastal battery and command post was constructed for the seaward protection of Cairns.132

NEA headquarters of the Australian Army in north Queensland was transferred from Townsville to the Atherton Tableland from January 1943. As construction of the army’s recreation and training facilities proceeded, one of the largest concentrations of troops, equipment and buildings on the Tableland was centred around Atherton, Tolga and Rocky Creek. Major construction projects included: Rocky Creek Australian General Hospital (AGH) containing a tent hospital of 2400 beds and a large sewage plant; Bones Knob radar station with its two massive timber towers; and Tolga Advanced Ordnance Depot. The depot contained stores, workshops, and stockpiles of plant and equipment, motor transport vehicles, and weapons, stored over a large area. Among the 170 buildings were 18 large igloo stores (each 61 metres by 33 metres), Armco ammunition stores and Sidney Williams huts. Extensive camp facilities were laid out on the surrounding fields, including accommodation for officers and other ranks with separate recreation, kitchen, messing and ablutions, as well as administrative huts and quartermasters’ stores.133

As the likelihood of Japanese raids on Townsville prevailed in early 1942, it was considered advisable to disperse the USAAF reserve ammunition depot in north Queensland to a safe inland location, away from the coast. Torrens Creek siding, west of Charters Towers, was initially chosen despite the inadequate rail service and the lack of water in the vicinity. By October 1942, the tactical situation had sufficiently improved to allow the important depot to be moved to a more accessible location. The new US ammunition depot, known as Kangaroo Ordnance Depot, was established near Kurukan on the North Coast Railway, just north of Townsville. The project took five months to complete with stores dispersed over 25 square kilometres of forest at the foot of the Paluma Range. Kangaroo comprised 87 hutted ammunition magazines and 35 kilometres of internal roads. Ammunition stored at Torrens Creek and aerial bombs from the Fifth Air Force Air Service Command warehouses at Garbutt air base were transferred to Kangaroo during 1943. Peak monthly stocks at the depot amounted to about 20,000 tonnes of ammunition.134

132 Clem Lack, 1962, pp 281-2
133 CPP No.15, 1944, p 22
134 Hugh J Casey, 1951, p 37
No.3 Replenishing Centre for the storage of RAAF reserve ammunition was initially established at a temporary site near Townsville. During 1942 work proceeded on construction of a major ammunition storage complex at a more secure location at Charters Towers. In January 1943, No.3 Replenishing Centre was transferred to Towers Hill in the middle of the historic goldfield. Ordnance was stacked in more than 30 reinforced concrete explosives stores built into the hillsides and partly covered with waste rock from the early mines. An early mine tunnel within the complex, known as Pugh’s Adit, was adapted for the underground storage of aerial bombs. The Australian Army’s ammunition reserves also needed safe-keeping. Construction began on Baronta Field Ammunition Depot near Hughenden in late 1942. Transfers from temporary depots at Torrens Creek and Hughenden golf links began in January 1943. When completed in mid-1944, the complex of 95 corrugated iron and fibrolite ammunition stores extended for five kilometres through dry scrub country. Served by a railway spur line, it contained camp accommodation and administrative buildings including a laboratory of brick construction.135

When USASOS discovered in April 1942 that Australian federal government plans for military fuel storage were based on training requirements only, with no provision for operational consumption, an aviation fuel storage program was urgently drawn up with a timeframe of just months. This job had to be done by major oil companies; the only ones with sufficient personnel trained in the welding and fabrication of steel storage tanks. Contractors for the Shell Company worked on RAAF Inland Aviation Fuel Depots (IAFD) at Charters Towers and Cloncurry from October 1942. Three tanks initially were constructed at No.9 IAFD, Charters Towers, encased with concrete to ensure they were bomb-splinter proof. At No.23 IAFD, Cloncurry, a lack of skilled workers hampered construction. Although fuel storage facilities at both locations were operating by mid-1943, they were inadequate. Additional tanks were required. 136 A third inland fuel storage depot in north Queensland was developed at Hughenden.

During 1942 the Queensland Meat Industry Board assisted with the urgent development of meatworks in Queensland as part of the war effort. Construction of army slaughter yards and cold rooms at Mount Isa was an early priority and this work was completed in late 1942. During the same period, the Board ordered the construction of a large meatworks on the Cape River near Pentland, west of Charters Towers. Construction of the Cape River meatworks started early in 1943.

135 AWC Minutes, 1942-4
136 Hugh J Casey, 1951, pp 39-40
The works were operated by the 2/1 Australian Butchering Company. Large mobs of cattle were railed from western Queensland for slaughter at Cape River and the frozen beef was then distributed through Townsville.¹³⁷

World War II saw a surge in demand for copper. A national review of base metal production in 1942 led to the closure of the rundown 40-year-old Chillagoe smelters in north Queensland, in favour of concentrated mining efforts at Mount Isa in the state’s far west. Large reserves of copper had been discovered in the Mount Isa Mines Black Star leases in 1941. By the end of 1942 the company was in the process of switching production from lead to copper in response to federal government demands. Disused smelting plant on the abandoned Cloncurry copper field was dismantled and railed to ‘The Isa’. Copper smelting commenced there in April 1943 using antiquated blast furnaces from the World War I copper boom to boost wartime production. After the Chillagoe copper smelters finally closed in mid-1943, many local workers were conscripted to the Mount Isa labour force.

With the increase in motor traffic in the early 1920s, surveys were conducted to find a suitable vehicle route from Cairns to the Atherton Tableland. This led to the opening in 1926 of the tortuous Gillies Highway linking Atherton to Gordonvale.¹³⁸ A coastal road connecting Cairns and Port Douglas was completed in 1933 as a Depression employment project while to the south, the unsealed Palmerston Highway ascended the range, providing a link between Innisfail and Millaa Millaa. By 1940 construction of a more direct defence road from Cairns to the Tableland was essential. Railway construction across the Kuranda Range from Cairns to Herberton had commenced in 1886. Until the railway, there was almost no way of getting anything larger than a dray up the range by way of the old Smithfield track. It was not until World War II that a road was begun to replace the dray track. The MRC built the Kuranda Range Road, opening it to military traffic in June 1942.¹³⁹ The route, which zigzagged through rainforest and dense tropical jungle, was among the most difficult sections of road constructed in Queensland during the war. The steepest sections were initially built for one-way traffic only.¹⁴⁰ Continuous use soon necessitated widening and sealing of the road. The Kuranda Range Road and railway became vital links in the military build-up on the Atherton Tableland from 1943.¹⁴¹

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¹³⁷ AWC Minutes, 1942-3
¹³⁸ Peter Marquis-Kyle, 1994, p 78
¹³⁹ Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 40
¹⁴⁰ MRC, 1949, p 15
¹⁴¹ Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 509
During 1942 the MRC surveyed an Inland Defence Road from Ipswich to Charters Towers through Duaringa and Emerald. Work started in February 1942. By March 1943 the road was finished. Even before its completion, the Inland Defence Road was heavily used by military convoys to take pressure off the overstretched coastal highway and railway facilities. During this time, the busy road between Townsville and Charters Towers was upgraded to carry the ever-growing volume of military traffic servicing inland stores depots, bomber fields and roadside fighter strips.

By April 1941 a military road had been surveyed from the Mount Isa railhead to connect with the North-South Road near Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory. These roads are now the Barkly and Stuart highways. Clearing and grading of an initial dirt road across the Barkly Tableland was undertaken from Queensland by the MRC. In January 1942, as Japanese troops swept south, the War Cabinet upgraded its construction to an all-weather road with provision for bores along the route providing water. The difficulties of building a road through dry sandy desert country with heavy wear on machinery was compounded by continuous military traffic which often amounted to 1000 trucks a day. The impossibility of maintaining the gravel surface under the concentration of traffic saw bitumen surfacing commence from Mount Isa in January 1943. Labour was initially provided by 400 CCC workers. Later, 540 internees of the Civil Alien Corps were put to work. Sealing of the 650 kilometre highway was completed in May 1944.

Forestry industries

The forestry and timber industries were among the first in Australia to be declared essential services in an attempt to exempt loggers, sawmillers and carpenters from military conscription. However the large enlistment of Queensland bush workers meant that the supply of timber from the northern rainforests fell as demand for defence purposes increased. At the same time, military authorities seized much of the logging and milling plant of north Queensland contractors. Export of northern rainforest timbers to the southern states ceased and almost all timber produced was absorbed in regional defence works. Native pines were almost logged-out to meet the extreme demand for round timber for piles, poles and girders as well as for prefabricated buildings.

142 MRC, 1949, p 10
143 ibid., p 9-10
The Railways Department also placed heavy demands on sleepers. The enormous wartime demands restricted the time available for seasoning the timber, forcing construction in green timber which had not previously been used for this purpose.

By late 1942 Australia could no longer meet the demand for timber for wartime construction programs. Before World War II, Australia had annually produced about 750 million super feet of timber. Manpower shortages had drastically reduced this production. The problem was compounded by an Australian government prohibition on timber imports from 1940. But the US prefabrication program required an estimated 2.5 million super feet of timber monthly. Consequently, the Controller of Timber agreed to the importation of Oregon pine and hemlock from the US and Canada, as long as it was used for military purposes.144

In north Queensland, timber supply began to recover during 1943 with the arrival of hardwood from the southern Australian states.145 On Cape York Peninsula, a sawmill was established at Iron Range, and also at Red Island Point to overcome supply and shipping shortages for timber needed to build wharves, jetties and buildings at Thursday Island, Horn Island and Higgins (Jacky Jacky). Australian and US units in the area made full use of the mill: sawn timber was shipped as far afield as New Guinea. Together with other sawmills taken over by the AWC in north Queensland, this resulted in the supply of several million super feet of timber being made available for milling or in the construction of bridges, culverts and jetties.146 Military sawmills were also developed at Bowen, Townsville, Charters Towers, Cairns and other centres on the Atherton Tableland.

Cairns had long been the centre of north Queensland’s timber milling industry. From mid-1942, the town’s sawmills and furniture factories operated full-time on defence works. A timber product in great demand was three-ply veneer, manufactured in sheets cut from large kauri pine logs from the Tableland which were delivered to Cairns by rail. The plywood was used locally in the manufacture of everything from bunk beds and prefabricated huts to barges, landing craft and aircraft propellers.147

144 Margaret Pullar, 1997, p 10
145 V Grenning, 1947, pp 10-6
146 CPP No.15, 1944, p 6
147 Vera Bradley, 1995, pp 79-81
Prefabricated buildings

As American equipment and stores began arriving in Australia, an initial handicap was the lack of standardised plans to assist the urgent requirement for operational storage warehouses and to guide contractors who adopted their own peacetime designs. As a result much early building work was found to be too over-constructed for wartime conditions. Problems also occurred with American building designs. From 1939 US Army engineers had prepared standard drawings for operational buildings to simplify overseas construction in time of war. However, when the drawings arrived in Australia it was found that design alterations were necessary as Australian hardwoods had stronger load bearing qualities and therefore much less timber was needed than the US drawings called for. Plans also had to be modified to conform to Australian material sizes. In fact such radical design changes were required that in some cases it was decided to switch to Australian designs or develop entirely new plans.\(^{148}\) It appears likely that before the Japanese attacked, a French architect in Singapore, Emil Brizay, developed a timber truss arch (or ‘igloo’) design for an aircraft hideout, but work did not proceed.\(^ {149} \) Brizay escaped to Brisbane to work for Hornibrook Construction and early in 1942 an Australian version of the igloo design was further developed for USASOS, SWPA. A drawing dated July 1942 acknowledges Brizay’s original design.\(^ {150} \)

To lower construction costs and reduce the drain on the critically inadequate stock of construction material, several types of warehouses were quickly developed by US engineers at GHQ SWPA. The igloo warehouse evolved from a hideout for fighter aircraft with the camouflage net top-cover replaced by a corrugated iron roof, with framed end walls and a concrete floor. Standard igloo warehouse dimensions were 104 feet wide by 197 feet long (31.7 metres by 60 metres). They stood about 25 feet (7.6 metres) in height. During August 1942 the design was adapted by the Townsville Works and Service Branch engineering section in development of a larger igloo warehouse spanning 170 feet by 200 feet in length (51.8 metres by 61 metres), for USASOS, SWPA. Thirty skilled workers could erect an igloo warehouse in just ten days once the concrete abutments for the arches had been poured. Ease of construction was a prime factor in reducing the cost as the timber truss arches could be built or assembled on site and easily raised into position.\(^ {151} \)

\(^{148}\) Karl C Dod, 1966, p 120  
\(^{149}\) Roger Marks, pers. com., 2008  
\(^{150}\) AA, Drawing Series BP378/1 (1942-58)  
\(^{151}\) Hugh J Casey, 1951, p 459
The igloo is the best known architectural legacy of World War II in north Queensland. Although not entirely prefabricated, the timber box truss arches were usually constructed on site or delivered pre-cut. The arches were of light nailed hardwood construction, made up of four main timber chords sprung into arch form, with light timber bracing nailed into position to form a curved open-lattice box truss. The initial design as an aircraft hideout was only intended to have a short lifespan, covered with camouflage netting. Iron sheeting came later. Silky oak, bull oak or hardwood timber was used for the timber trusses. Design modifications for the AWC created a stronger, more durable building capable of withstanding winds of up to 105 kilometres an hour.

In north Queensland during the war years, timber truss igloos were used for aircraft hangars, warehouses, maintenance and assembly workshops and recreation halls. Among major wartime projects featuring an extensive number of large timber truss igloos were the US No.2 aircraft assembly and repair depot at Garbutt, the US Koala Ordnance Centre at Stuart, and the Australian 13th Advanced Ordnance Depot at Tolga. Because their designed life-span was short, few wartime timber truss igloos now survive in north Queensland. Those that do include the former Igloo No.10 on the site of the Koala Ordnance Centre at Stuart, the Australian Canteen Services warehouse (now Merriland Hall) at Atherton, section of an igloo workshop at Charters Towers, a huge ‘woolstore’ warehouse of W3 type at Macrossan stores depot, and two former army theatre halls at Rocky Creek and Wondecla on the Tableland.

Prefabrication as a solution to military building shortages in wartime was not new. In World War I the Nissen hut with its semi-circular roof was designed in Britain as a portable building for use as offices, stores and hospital wards. The Nissen is generally regarded as a precursor of the World War II igloo warehouses and Quonset huts in terms of shape, though not in design. By the 1920s, Australian firms such as Stewart & Lloyd and Sidney Williams & Company were producing prefabricated steel frame buildings for use in northern Australia including aircraft hangars, community halls and storage sheds. From the late 1930s the Sidney Williams — or ‘Comet’ brand — hut began to serve as prefabricated workshops, warehouses and barracks at military bases, particularly in north Queensland and the Northern Territory.
The fundamental difference between these early prefabrication projects and those undertaken during World War II was mass production; a concept at the time foreign to Australian manufacturers but not to American engineers. US prefabrication was also technically innovative in terms of the size and span of the buildings constructed.

The US prefabrication program introduced innovation to the Australian building industry, in particular the development of line production and the application of bundling material for dispatch. In Sydney and Brisbane (St Lucia), the AWC established bundling depots where the many components of prefabricated buildings — pre-cut timber, steelwork, cement, bolts, electrical and plumbing items — were bundled and packaged ready for shipment to forward operational areas for assembly. To avoid problems in transporting the prefabricated materials to their intended destinations, the building contractors were only responsible for preparation of the components. The timber would be cut at the timber mills to predetermined sizes and transported to the bundling depots by the AWC. After the material was prefabricated, the AWC was again responsible for sending it to various destinations for assembly. With the system in place, operational bases and field hospitals could be quickly erected in readiness for planned offensives. Prefabricated buildings became a strategic component of forward operations.

During March 1943, in anticipation of the New Guinea and island campaigns, the US Army proposed that the AWC should embark on a program of building prefabrication on a massive scale on behalf of USASOS from where prefabricated and pre-cut buildings could be shipped in bundles for assembly by unskilled labour in northern Australia and the South Pacific. In addition to igloo-shaped hangars and warehouses, the US prefabrication program comprised gable roof warehouses, hospital wards, accommodation huts, power huts, transmitter huts, cool stores and aircraft control towers.

The AWC began experimenting within prefabrication in early 1942, providing prefabricated huts and storerooms for CCC workers when tents became unavailable due to a shortage of canvas. Construction workers were accommodated in camps close to the sites they worked on. For example, when building the northern section of the Inland Defence Road from Duaringa to Charters Towers, 13 camps were established along the road for 3000 workers. Virtual townships sprang up overnight, complete with internal roads, reservoirs and sewage facilities. Tents were suitable for north Queensland but had a lifespan of only 12 months: the wartime shortage of canvas made the erection of prefabricated huts preferable.

Among the most numerous and utilitarian prefabricated building of World War II were the Australian “P” series (named for Puckapunyal army camp in Victoria) and later “C” and “CA” type ‘Sleeping or Stores Hut’. These pre-cut huts were basically a simple timber box with a gabled roof and doors at each end which could accommodate an infantry platoon (20 men). The series was centred on the basic module which was then modified to produce messes, guard huts, canteens, medical aid posts, recreation huts, classrooms and offices. Further modifications produced ablution huts, latrines, laundries and stores.

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153 CPP No.15, 1944, p 6
154 Margaret Pullar, 1997, p 7
155 ibid., p 5
156 ibid., p 6
157 ibid., p 16-17
Although mostly supplied in pre-cut form, the huts were designed for construction by civilian contractors using available local materials in a manner familiar to all Australian builders. All the scantlings were common mill sizes and were the accepted dimensions for a building of that size. Stumps were anti-capped and floors were of tongue and groove hardwood boards. Walls were clad externally in whatever material was locally available, mostly horizontal corrugated iron. Each wall had five window openings. A pair of braced doors were at each end of the building. A ventilation gap covered with bird mesh was left on top of the walls. Roofs were clad with iron or fibrolite sheets. Tropical variations were introduced with wide overhanging eaves and open walls covered with mosquito netting. The series proved flexible and could be erected in any length in multiples of 9 feet (2.74 metres) with 47 feet (14.3 metres) width. Erection was much faster than any form of building which required setting out and carpentry.

Although plywood and masonite huts were developed as an alternative to tents, the subsequent shortages of plywood and hardwood and the difficulties of erecting the buildings made steel frame buildings the most practical alternative. Sidney Williams and Company of Sydney was the first to produce a prefabricated steel hut for the Department of Defence and continued to dominate the market even with the entry of Cyclone Fences and Gardener Constructions: by 1942 Sidney Williams were producing 40 huts per week compared with seven from Cyclone and six from Gardener. Following a conference in July 1942 between the Departments of Air, Army, Interior, Munitions and the AWC, it was agreed that prefabricated steel frame, iron clad, Sidney Williams huts were the most appropriate substitute for canvas in northern Australia. While defence authorities regarded the Sidney Williams hut as being suitable for northern areas, the heat and humidity of tropical Queensland and the Northern Territory made the internal conditions worse than the already unpleasant conditions outside. Although they were used for sleeping and messing, their original purpose was storage: the design was amended to provide better ventilation at top and bottom with high and low push-out shutters along both sides.

158 Patrick Miller, n.d.
159 Margaret Pullar, 1997, p 15
160 ibid., p 19
Several types of steel prefabricated buildings were imported direct from the
US, including the Quonset hut. The Quonset (named after the place of
manufacture, Quonset Point Naval Air Station, Rhode Island) developed out of
the booming lend-lease economy of 1941 when the US Navy’s Bureau of Yards
and Docks commissioned George Fuller Construction to submit a design for a
defence building which was prefabricated and could be erected quickly in
America or overseas to provide maximum protection.\textsuperscript{161} The original Quonset
measured 16 feet by 26 feet (4.8 metres by 7.9 metres) and could be erected in
day by a team of eight men. The proportions were later enlarged resulting in
the standardised Quonset, or ‘Steel Arch Rib Hut’ measuring 20 feet by 48 feet
(6 metres by 14.6 metres). The Quonset design was modified throughout the
war. Quonsets were shipped in the form of unassembled kits which included
pre-cut sheets of corrugated iron to be attached to arched steel ribs.

The most common steel frame prefabricated aircraft hangar employed in north
Queensland during World War II was the Bellman. Designed by the British
Directorate of Works in 1936, it was intended as a transportable, temporary
structure, easy to erect or dismantle. Bellmans were produced in Australia from
about 1939 to 1945: 283 were ordered and more than 200 manufactured by
Waddington Engineering of Sydney. Many were located in north Queensland as
aircraft repair and maintenance hangars, vehicle maintenance workshops and
storage warehouses. Because of their portability only a few now survive in the
region including two at Garbutt (RAAF Base Townsville); one at Jezzine Barracks,
Townsville (30 metres wide by 35 metres long); three at Macrossan stores
depot (possibly from Breddan); and one at Mackay airfield.

Another type of imported steel frame prefabricated building in wartime use was
the US-manufactured Butler hangar. Measuring 142 feet by 160 feet (43.2 metres
by 48.7 metres), it consisted of a prefabricated steel truss frame and was
originally erected with a canvas inner roof and entrance that could be drawn
back and forth like curtains. The steel trusses were bolted together, rather than
welded, to allow dismantling and portability. Butler hangars were later clad
with steel roofs and used for aircraft maintenance as well as the housing of
workshops and the storage of large items of plant and equipment.\textsuperscript{162} In Britain,
the few remaining Butler hangars are typically located at wartime airfields
where there was a US presence; so too at Garbutt (now RAAF Base Townsville).
This is the only example of the Butler to survive in north Queensland. It was
probably one of about 12 erected on the disused Stockroute airstrip early in 1944.
Several Butler hangars were moved from Stockroute to Garbutt about 1945.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{161} ibid.pullar 19
\textsuperscript{162} Hugh J Casey, 1951, p 466
\textsuperscript{163} Roger R Marks, 1994, p 68
Hospital services

The Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) was mobilised with the declaration of war in September 1939. AANS sisters were employed in Australian General Hospitals and Casualty Clearing Stations in Australia and overseas in the Middle East, and later in New Guinea and the Pacific islands. In December 1942 the Australian Army Medical Women’s Service (AAMWS) was drawn together from the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment, formed during World War I. Members served as nursing aides alongside army nurses. They also worked as cooks, clerks, mess-women, laboratory assistants, dispensers, radiographers, telephonists and in various other hospital duties.164

In north Queensland, the first Australian General Hospital, 116 AGH, was established in January 1942 at the Charters Towers racecourse. Nursing sisters and patients were later relocated to the requisitioned Mount Carmel college which adjoined Charters Towers airfield.165 St Gabriel’s school, also at Charters Towers, was taken over by the US 84 Station Hospital in May 1942: teachers and students were sent west to outback Richmond where classes continued in the Royal Hotel (now the Federal Palace Hotel). Meanwhile the 2/2 AGH returning from the Middle East in July 1942 was sent to an empty railway siding in western Queensland, named Watten. There a large tented field hospital had been established on the open plains of Afton Downs station near Hughenden. The remote location was considered safe from possible air raids on Townsville. Heavy rains flooded Watten only months later: the hospital was closed and the 2/2 AGH was transferred to Rocky Creek near Atherton.

By early 1942 the US had assumed that troop strength in Australia would be 100,000 men and a hospital program of 9000 beds — nine percent of troop strength — was planned. By 1943 this estimate had more than doubled. During the first year of the Pacific war, hospitals for US forces in north Queensland were obtained, wherever possible through the requisition of schools and private houses. In early 1943 USASOS ordered the production of prefabricated buildings by the AWC, based on a width of 20 feet (6.09 metres) and a variable length in multiples of 9 feet (2.74 metres). As prefabricated hospital buildings became available they were used extensively in Australia and in New Guinea. A standard general hospital site layout was prepared by the US Army in late 1944 by which time most hospital construction had moved from northern Australia to forward areas in New Guinea and the islands.166

164 Rupert Goodman, 1985, p 186
165 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 165
166 Hugh J Casey, 1951, p 472
In anticipation of mounting casualties from planned bombing raids against Japanese forces in New Guinea, the US Army moved to relocate 12 Station Hospital from Brisbane to Townsville in mid-March 1942. Establishment of the hospital was achieved in a week from 25 March: all 33 private homes in suburban Chapman Street were taken over by the Australian Army Hiring Service and the residents evicted. Walls were removed and ramps were constructed connecting all the houses on each side of the street. In a very short time the hospital was in full operation. Houses on one side of Chapman Street became wards while those on the other side were transformed into laundries, laboratories, kitchens and medical stores. The flow of casualties soon exceeded facilities and tents were erected in front and back yards to increase bed capacity. Awaiting completion of the 450-bed 13 Station Hospital at Aitkenvale, wards even opened under the houses to accommodate the sick and wounded. The private houses comprising 12 Station Hospital in Chapman Street were returned to the Australian Army Hiring Service in April 1944 and the 408 patients were transferred to Black River hospital.167

US station hospitals were also constructed at Woodstock (83 Station Hospital), Cloncurry (17 Station Hospital), Mareeba, Black River and Jungara. Located at Redlynch near Cairns, Jungara was designed by US engineers for 750-bed capacity and built by the AWC. The hospital contained over 140 prefabricated buildings including wards, operating theatres and staff accommodation, with the prefabricated components made in Sydney. Jungara hospital was later transferred to the Australian Army. At Black River, north of Townsville, the 1000-bed US 44th General Hospital contained about 150 prefabricated buildings shipped from Sydney. Work began on the hospital in November 1943. Hold-ups in the transportation of prefabricated sections meant the project, including roads and sewage, took seven months to complete. By April 1944 almost the entire US Army hospital program in Base Section Two (the Townsville region) was deactivated and consolidated into the 44th General Hospital at Black River which became the largest US military hospital in north Queensland.168

As work began on Mareeba airfield, the AWC was also busy converting Mareeba State School into a military hospital. US 2 Station Hospital was established in July 1942 and continued to operate from the school until after the departure of the USAAF heavy bomber squadrons in 1943. The school later became the headquarters of the Australian First Army in north Queensland.

167 ibid., pp 35-6
168 ibid., p 36
A detachment of US 2 Station Hospital was sent to Gordonvale in November 1942. It was joined in July 1943 by the US 63 Station Hospital which took over many of the buildings in the main street, including two hotels and a picture theatre. One of the hotels was used for surgical procedures and the other for ward space. A third hotel became the American Red Cross Services Club. The hospital closed in May 1944 when the patients were transferred to Black River.

At Townsville the 2/14 AGH was initially located in a 200-bed tent hospital on the foreshore of Cleveland bay near the former Cape Pallarenda quarantine station. Cyclonic winds partly destroyed the hospital in May 1943. It was later rebuilt beside the Ross River at Mundingburra at a location now known as Sheriff Park. US naval (Seabee) construction battalions constructed two hospitals during 1943 in the Townsville area with 100 and 120-bed capacities. Construction of the 120-bed hospital at Rowes Bay was completed in December. Both used prefabricated Quonset huts for wards.

The 1st Australian Camp Hospital was formed in April 1942 at Reid River airfield, west of Townsville. The unit was transferred to Charters Towers and temporarily attached to 116th AGH until November 1942 when 1st ACH nurses were flown to Horn Island to occupy a field hospital established by a US Army medical unit. The hospital was situated below Double Hill, beneath the guns of HAA Gun Station 442. Nine nurses staffed the 36-bed tent hospital. Their first patients arrived in January 1943, taking pressure off 6th ACH on Thursday Island. Cases mainly involved burns, gunshot wounds, aircraft and vehicle accidents, malaria, dengue fever, tropical ulcers and skin complaints. Severe cases were flown south to Townsville. During 1943, air raid alarms sometimes sounded twice in a night. On the alarms patients were taken to slit trenches and provided with blankets for their comfort. They returned to their beds on the all-clear. Horn Island camp hospital closed in August 1944 when the last rotation of nurses sailed for Brisbane.169

At Cape York, the 102nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station was established on Skull Creek, near Higgins (Jacky Jacky) airfield, during 1943. Eight nurses staffed the 90-bed hospital which dealt with casualties from Dutch New Guinea and the many units stationed around Jacky Jacky Creek and Mutee Head. Accommodation was in tents. Only the concrete slabs of the main ward and the patient’s kitchen, with a large iron stove, remain at the hospital site in tropical scrub south of Bamaga township.

169 Vanessa Seekee, 2002, pp 149-53
The Australian Army general hospital and convalescent depot at Rocky Creek rail siding, between Atherton and Mareeba, was the largest military hospital to be built in north Queensland during World War II. Rocky Creek hospital was a key component in the establishment of training and rest facilities for Australian Army divisions on the Atherton Tableland, in preparations for the planned New Guinea and island offensives that commenced in mid-1943. Preparation of the site began in October 1942 with the arrival of 5th ACH which established a small camp hospital and was joined by the patients of 1st ACH from Wondela. During January 1943 the 2/2nd AGH were transferred to Rocky Creek from Watten siding in western Queensland, replacing 5th ACH. This move signified a new phase in the hospital’s development and an intensification of building activity: the small tent hospital ballooned into a large 1200-bed general hospital.

In April 1943 the 2/2nd AGH were joined by the 2/6th AGH, recently back from the Middle East. At its largest, the hospital complex included No.1 Australian Convalescent Depot of 1000-bed capacity and 2/2nd AGH and 2/6th AGH, each with 1200-beds. Patients arriving at Cairns from the New Guinea forward areas were transported to Rocky Creek by the 4th Australian Ambulance Train. Early wards were canvas covered with earth floors. By March 1944 the hospital wards had been transformed from tents to prefabricated huts with concrete floors. When completed in mid-1944 the facilities included about 150 prefabricated buildings. Although general hospital services were provided at Rocky Creek, special emphasis was placed on treatment for malaria and other tropical diseases. The hospital finally closed in September 1945.

When the war in the Pacific reached Australia’s shores with the Japanese bombing of Darwin, the threat to the isolated western Queensland mining town of Mount Isa seemed very real: in February 1942 no defences existed across the Gulf district of northern Australia. The Mount Isa District Hospital decided to take precautions with the excavation of underground wards for the protection of patients. Mount Isa Mines supplied the equipment for the work which was carried out by the miners who volunteered their time. A site was selected on a hillside in the hospital grounds. Drilling and blasting was done during March and April 1942 during which about 100 metres of tunnel were excavated. Three parallel adits were driven into the face of the hill and connected with a crosscut to form a large underground shelter fitted out to provide male, female and maternity wards, a surgical theatre and a delivery room. Fortunately Mount Isa never experienced an air raid and the underground wards were later used for the storage of hospital equipment and files. The shelter was recently reopened as a public museum.

170 CPP No.15, 1944, p 22
Health and recreation

From December 1942 the Australian Army devised a system of troop rotation between far north Queensland and New Guinea. By mid-1943 large numbers of troops were passing through the Julago staging camp at Redlynch, near Cairns, either making their way to the jungle training and recuperation camps on the Atherton Tableland or preparing to embark for service in the islands. About 40,000 personnel were regularly quartered on the Atherton Tableland although this sometimes swelled to as many as 100,000 troops.171 Troop demands for fresh milk changed the local Malanda dairy industry from being cream-based to milk-based and started the longest milk run in the region to western Queensland, the Northern Territory and New Guinea.

The higher altitude of the Tableland was particularly beneficial for personnel recuperating from mosquito-borne illnesses, primarily dengue fever and malaria.172 An outbreak of dengue fever swept north Queensland in 1941. Its effect was still felt three years later, borne by the large-scale movement of American and Australian troops through the region. Benign tertian malaria also broke out, reaching epidemic proportions by mid-1942 when some 700 cases were reported among troops and civilians. Consequently, the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine established a laboratory in Cairns headed by Dr George Heydon, an Australian expert in medical parasitology.

The importance of tropical medicine in winning the war was recognised when, in March 1943, an advisory committee of scientific and medical experts was assigned to General MacArthur’s GHQ SWPA at Brisbane. Three months later, the Land Headquarters Medical Research Unit was established at North Cairns State School under the direction of Brigadier Neil Fairley. Cairns became the focal point for malaria research in Australia and the training ground for malaria control units before they were transferred to New Guinea and the islands. In Cairns, a drainage system was devised to clear the swamps surrounding the town so as to control the breeding of mosquitoes. It was acknowledged that a malaria control project of this magnitude would be an enormous task. However, in a cooperative program between state and local government and the Australian and US forces, more than 40 kilometres of anti-malarial drains were constructed in Cairns. By 1948 malaria had been eradicated in the town.173

Recreation and entertainment was an important component of the military presence in most north Queensland towns occupied by numbers of servicemen and women. Open air picture theatres were always crowded and the government allowed them to remain open on Sunday evenings for the entertainment of troops and girlfriends. Dances, cafes and canteens established by the Australian Red Cross and the Salvation Army were also popular. Segregated service clubs were operated by the US Red Cross for white and black American personnel. Magnetic Island, across the bay from Townsville, became a popular rest and recreation centre operated by the Australian Comforts Fund and YMCA. The cane town of Ingham between Townsville and Cairns was also used as a leave centre for Australian and US troops.174 The Grand and Eimeo Hotels at Mackay were used almost exclusively by USAAF personnel, usually flown in from Port Moresby.175

171 P D Wilson, 1988, p 14
172 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 548
173 ibid., p 549
174 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 92
175 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 75
Concert tours by American and British stars of stage and screen were popular with service personnel, particularly those stationed in the more isolated areas of north Queensland. Gary Cooper, John Wayne, Jack Benny, Carole Francis, Jerry Colonna, Frances Langford, Nat King Cole and Bob Hope were among Hollywood stars to tour US bases in the north during 1943 and 1944. Also present on tour was the famous Australian soprano, Gladys Moncrieff, who had entertained in north Queensland before the war.

Members of the Queensland division of the Australian Red Cross offered unflagging support to the war effort for the duration of the conflict. By day and night, under all conditions, north Queensland’s Red Cross workers maintained around-the-clock services: welcoming returning soldiers at the wharves or providing comforts (clothing, towels, writing paper, tea and cigarettes) at airfields, railway stations and hospitals. Almost every town in north Queensland had a Red Cross branch. Volunteers staffed milk bars, cafes, cake shops and handicraft shops. The Australian Comforts Fund became a national organisation, providing amenities to Australian and Allied service men and women. The fund was administered by the Red Cross in association with the YMCA, YWCA, and the Salvation Army.176

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176 Clem Lack, 1962, p 257
Provision of civilians

As the Japanese advanced south through the East Indies, New Guinea and New Britain, a stream of Dutch and British refugees began arriving by sea and air to the northern Australian ports of Broome, Darwin, Townsville and Cairns. Commercial aircraft, including those of Australian National Airways, KLM and Qantas flying boats, were commandeered to assist in the evacuation and all available passenger-carrying aircraft in the north were pressed into service. Empire flying boats of No.11 Squadron RAAF, which were flying reconnaissance and coast-watching patrols over New Guinea, were reassigned to evacuate civilians from Rabaul, Port Moresby, Lae, Salamaua and other threatened New Guinea towns. The Gulf district of north Queensland was so open to invasion that a group of Dutch vessels fleeing from the Netherlands East Indies was able to sail down the Gulf of Carpentaria to the port of Karumba at the mouth of the Norman River before the local Volunteer Defence Corps, the sole defender of region, became aware and sparked an invasion alarm.177

Evacuation of women and children from areas of potential invasion in north Queensland became an immediate concern during the early months of 1942. Planning for the evacuation of residents from vulnerable districts of northern Australia had commenced in July 1941, although the Australian Army considered that responsibility for civilian evacuation was a civil — not military — matter. Major coastal towns of north Queensland were deemed most vulnerable. Townsville was considered the most critical civilian evacuation centre in the invasion zone, because of its size. The army recommended evacuation inland to hinterland centres where there was greater scope for dispersal rather than congest important coastal transport routes.178

Police and local committees organised evacuation procedures in Townsville, Cairns and other north Queensland towns. Women alone with babies and children under 14 years were encouraged to leave. During the peak of the emergency in mid-February 1942, with the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin, it was estimated that in Townsville alone, up to 60 homes a day were being abandoned by their occupants.179 By mid-1942 with pressure from military authorities and police, some 5000 to 7000 civilians had been voluntarily evacuated from Townsville. Cairns, with a population of 15,700, became an empty outpost losing a similar number of residents including almost 80 percent of its children.

177 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 517
178 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 15
179 ibid., p 17
In early February 1942 troops of the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, newly-trained in demolition, began planning the destruction of essential services and infrastructure around Cairns in case of Japanese invasion. Included in the ‘scorched-earth policy’ were the Cairns gas works, oil tanks, water supply and the Barron Falls power station. However the local battalion was sent to defend Townsville; the job became the responsibility of the 17th Australian Field Engineer Company’s demolition experts. They mined the Gillies Highway and Kuranda Range Road and arranged for the destruction of other main transport installations including the railway and wharf facilities.

At Townsville, the infantry and field regiments of the 5th Australian Division arrived in April 1942 to actively encourage the evacuation of non-essential civilians and prepare for a scorched-earth retreat involving the demolition of airfields and other vital defence facilities. On the advice of the commander of the 5th Division, the Queensland government encouraged the voluntary evacuation of civilians from Bowen north to Burketown. Cairns became the first northern town to formulate and implement an evacuation plan which included reception centres on the Atherton Tableland. Other towns such as Charters Towers also made voluntary evacuation plans.

Entry of Japan in the war had a disruptive impact on education services in Queensland. As ‘scorched-earth’ preparations were made, the Queensland Government decided to close all state and non-government schools along the coast and in the hinterland districts of north Queensland. Although the Education Department did not call for the evacuation of children from primary schools in target areas such as Townsville and Cairns, the excavation of air raid trenches was made a condition of the continued operation of schools throughout the coastal districts. Air raid drills became a normal part of the school routine, especially during the first half of 1942. Schools in the coastal hinterland districts were increasingly pressured to send large numbers of children to Brisbane and the state’s south-east or to the Atherton Tableland, Ravenswood, Richmond and other western centres. Private colleges suffered more disruption when the Queensland Government ordered the closure of all coastal secondary schools. Many of the vacated school buildings, particularly those operated by religious orders, were singled out for requisition by Australian and US military authorities.

180 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 526
181 ibid., p 528
182 W E Hughes, 1993, p 34
183 Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 20
184 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 21
185 ibid., p 23
Under National Security Regulations, local councils were responsible for the provision of public air raid shelters and the enforcement of orders requiring their construction by commercial property owners. Hotels, apartments and boarding houses occupied by 15 or more people, or buildings in which 30 or more people worked, were all required to provide air raid shelters. They were also mandatory for wharfs and large government buildings. The Government Gazette published details of the air raid shelter requirements just two weeks after Pearl Harbor. Most public air raid shelters in north Queensland were constructed to a standard design with seating for 50. They were built in the shape of a rectangular box with 12-inch (300 mm) reinforced concrete walls and 6-inch (150 mm) thick roofs. Where there was the possibility of debris falling on the shelter, the thickness of the roof was increased to 300mm. Between Mackay and Cairns, 57 public shelters were constructed during early 1942; mostly in Townsville (15) and Cairns (9). Only one survives at Babinda as a public toilet. This building recently served most effectively as a community cyclone shelter.

**Requisition of property**

The effect of the Pacific war on north Queensland was quickly felt through a shortage of labour caused by increased enlistment in the services and the commencement of an assisted evacuation program for residents from coastal areas. The build-up of military personnel in the north during 1942 imposed demands on available accommodation and storage space and led to the requisitioning of private homes and warehouses. At first US and Australian military authorities simply seized civilian properties, offering the owners meagre compensation. In February 1942 an Army Hiring Service branch was established in Townsville to deal with the private property requisitions. The first priority was to accommodate all service personnel. This mostly involved private homes in Townsville. By 1943 the Army Hiring Service was involved in the requisition of homes at other north Queensland centres, particularly Mackay, Bowen, Cairns and Atherton. Prompt and adequate compensation was slow in coming: a groundswell of discontent arose as the backlog of claims for compensation from property owners grew to more than 700. People evicted from their homes also faced difficulty finding alternative accommodation and were often forced to leave the region for Brisbane or the southern capitals.

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186 Qld Public Works, Annual Report, 1942
187 Qld Government Gazette, 23-12-1941, p 2196
188 Darryl McIntyre, 2002, p 74
Education suffered as military authorities shut down and took over private and public primary and secondary schools, particularly in Townsville, Charters Towers, Mareeba and Cairns. Hotels in Townsville and Cairns and other towns including Gordonvale, Charters Towers, Atherton, Ravenshoe, Bowen and Mackay were closed and used for officers’ accommodation or American Red Cross service clubs.

Requisitioning extended beyond buildings. During mid-1942, the AWC took control of about 300 tractors and other farm machinery from cane growing areas in a bid to speed up the construction of bridges, roads, airfields, and accommodation for troops and civilian workers. This, along with shortage of farm labour and super-phosphate fertilizer, led to a slump in sugar production.189

At remote settlements on Cape York Peninsula, such as the Wenlock goldfield, the military dismantled and removed pumps and engines, flooding the shafts and forcing miners to leave the region.190 A directive was issued that all cattle on Cape York Peninsula that could not be brought south were to be shot to deny supplies of beef to the Japanese should an invasion occur. Scant regard was given to the impact these requisitions had on the future of civilians left behind.

189  Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 526
190  Joe Fisher, 1998, p 71
The requisitioning of civilian property and goods did not foster goodwill between civilians and service personnel or local councils and regional military headquarters. Australian servicemen and civilians alike resented the purchasing advantages enjoyed by US troops in north Queensland. These issues were most conspicuous in the larger centres of Townsville and Cairns.

The seizure of produce caused further concern. In September 1942 the Townsville City Council established a committee to report to the Queensland premier on problems arising from the war situation. The committee’s report focused on the shortage of essential commodities such as ice, fruit and vegetables, fresh milk and bread. The committee found that the military enjoyed priorities in the purchase of bulk quantities of foodstuffs from local merchants at inflated prices, disadvantaging families, particularly those with young children. It recommended that federal government price regulating inspectors be located in Townsville and that rationing of items in short supply be implemented, applicable to both civilians and military personnel. When the government ignored the committee’s findings, the Townsville council established municipal shops which sold fruit and vegetables at ‘normal’ prices thereby undercutting the profiteers.

To avoid riots, as had occurred in Brisbane, the recommendations of the Townsville committee were endorsed by Major General Lavarack, commander of the First Australian Army in Queensland. The Commonwealth Prices Commission responded to Lavarack’s comments by sending officers to Townsville in January 1943 to curb profiteering by traders. By mid-1943, public morale in north Queensland was partly restored with the massive scale of the build-up of allied forces and aircraft and the construction of roads, fixed defences and airfields in the region.

Enemy aliens

Since its early settlement, north Queensland had been a melting pot of cultures: Italians, Japanese, Malays, Kanakas, Chinese and Germans living and working alongside British descendents, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. War was to see that change. The Australian government’s initial response to the declaration of war was the introduction of emergency powers dealing with censorship, espionage, propaganda and the sweeping legislative powers contained in the Commonwealth War Book and enforced through national security regulations.

191 Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 75
192 ibid., p 77
193 Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 54
Australian residents of non-British origin were subjected to government investigation and categorised as ‘allied’, ‘neutral’ or ‘enemy’ depending on the military alignment of their ethnic background. In January 1942 a motion was carried at a special meeting of the Cairns City Council that all ‘enemy aliens’ be rounded up.\textsuperscript{194} If not interned, those branded as enemy aliens needed police permits to travel outside their residential district, their mail was intercepted and they were forbidden to work in strategic occupations. Of all states, Queensland had the highest proportion of its ethnic population interned during World War II with 43 percent held in southern Australian detention camps.\textsuperscript{195}

When war was first declared, Italians were the largest non-British group in Australia. Some 7000 people of Italian birth were living in north Queensland. Thousands more were of Italian descent. The first Italian workers had arrived in the region in the 1890s, followed over the next 40 years by relatives from their home villages. In north Queensland, they worked as cane cutters, fruit pickers and tobacco farm labourers. Immigration restrictions in the US after 1920 caused Italian farm workers to seek their fortune in countries like Argentina and Australia. Many were drawn to established Italian communities in north Queensland around Innisfail and Ingham, Cairns, Proserpine and on the Burdekin delta. As early as 1922 the Townsville Chamber of Commerce was critical of the reluctance of native-born Australians to take up cane farming, so leaving the field open to alien workers whose willingness to defend the North, could not be counted on.\textsuperscript{196}

When Italy entered the war in June 1940, this highly-visible minority group soon felt the deep-seated hostility of Australian locals.\textsuperscript{197} Italian community leaders in the cane-growing districts were quickly interned.\textsuperscript{198} Men were arrested regardless of whether their loyalty was proven or not. Families left behind were faced with the task of sometimes single-handedly looking after farms and businesses.\textsuperscript{199}

In February 1942, the first train-load of internees left for labour camps in Victoria. By September, 6780 Italian-Australians were interned.\textsuperscript{200} Internment was initially restricted to German, Italian, Yugoslav, Albanian, Austrian and Hungarian males suspected of subversive activities. From December 1941, after Pearl Harbor, men, women and children of Japanese origin from Cairns and the pearling ports of Thursday Island, Darwin and Broome were also rounded-up on the basis of race alone.

People of Japanese descent had worked and lived in the Torres Strait for decades; they played a key role in the pearling and beche-de-mer fishing industries that had expanded during the 1870s. Many of the pearl divers based on Thursday Island were Japanese, from the Malay peninsula. Others were ship builders, boat repairers and store keepers. By the late 1930s, the population of Thursday Island had reached 2200: about 400 were Australian and 600 were Japanese. The balance of the island’s population were a mixture of Torres Strait Islanders, Chinese and Malays.\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{194} Peter Nielsen, 1993, p 14
\textsuperscript{195} Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 57
\textsuperscript{196} G.C. Bolton, 1963, p 332
\textsuperscript{197} Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 56
\textsuperscript{198} Dianne Menghetti, 1984, p 195
\textsuperscript{199} Darryl McIntyre, 1992, p 12
\textsuperscript{200} Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 520
\textsuperscript{201} Vanessa Seekee, 2002, p 8
From 1938, the European minority on Thursday Island had their doubts about their Japanese neighbours. Fears mounted of a takeover of the island by the local Japanese community or of the island falling into the possession of a Japanese garrison force. The Japanese crews on the pearling luggers were known to hold charts of the area detailing reef access, anchorages and currents. On 30 July 1940, with the international situation with Japan still deteriorating, the Department of External Affairs wrote to the Prime Minister’s Department to advise that information had been received indicating that Japan was actively interested in the coastal area of northern Australia and the islands including Thursday Island. Five months later, coastal batteries were installed at Milman Hill on Thursday Island and Tucker Point on Goods Island, attended by 600 troops.202

As soon as war with Japan was declared, all people of Japanese descent on Thursday Island were detained in their homes. A barbed wire barrier was erected around ‘Jap Town’ or ‘Little Yokohama’ as the Japanese quarter of Thursday Island was locally known. Australian troops of the 49th Garrison Battalion stationed on Thursday Island acted as prison guards. After three weeks of internment, the members of the Japanese community were put on board the SS Zealandia. They were shipped to the mainland, possibly for their own safety as well as releasing the guard troops for their defensive role. Most of the community spent the war in No.4 camp at the Tatura internment centre in central Victoria. They returned in 1947 to nothing: those who returned on Thursday Island had to start again.203

After Japan entered the war, concerns regarding the loyalties of Aboriginal people led to claims by white Australians that Aborigines in north Australia would assist the Japanese. Racism was an important element in these claims. Cape Bedford mission near Cooktown was run by George Schwarz, a German-born Lutheran pastor who had arrived at the mission in 1887. By the early 1940s the mission station was located at Spring Hill on the Endeavour River. Schwarz and his wife owned a farm nearby at a place known as the Eight Mile. There he produced food for the mission population, assisted by the Aboriginal men.204

202 ibid., p 9
203 ibid., p 10
204 Don Sinclair, 1997, p 57
Because Pastor Schwarz was of German descent, Army Intelligence regarded the mission as a potential problem. When local whites claimed the mission Aborigines were disloyal, the army moved in. At dawn on the morning of 17 May 1942 the army and local police arrived with a convoy of trucks to arrest Pastor Schwarz and remove the Aboriginal people. They removed 254 Aborigines, mainly Guugu Yimidhirr people from the Eight Mile and Spring Hill, taking them to Cooktown, then onward to Cairns. The elderly were sent to Palm Island: 200 or more were dispatched to Woorabinda near Rockhampton. The Cape Bedford people found Woorabinda cold and inhospitable. Twenty-eight people died in the first month: by March 1943, 60 had lost their lives. Within weeks of their removal, construction of a RAAF airfield was underway at Schwarz’s Eight Mile farm. It was completed in September 1942. Cooktown mission strip now serves as Cooktown Airport. In 1949 the surviving Guugu Yimidhirr people returned home to Cape Bedford to a new mission site called Hope Vale.

Aboriginal missions

As the Japanese pushed south, army intelligence became concerned about the security of Aboriginal missions in north Queensland. On the east coast were Yarrabah, Bloomfield River (Wujal Wujal), Cape Bedford (Hope Vale) and Lockhart River; while on the west coast were Cowal Creek (Injinoo), Mapoon, Napranum (Weipa), Aurukun, Edwards River (Pormpuraaw) and Mitchell River (Kowanyama); with Mornington Island mission in the Gulf. In January 1942, a pastoralist near Cairns claimed Aborigines at Yarrabah could send smoke signals conveying information to invading forces and the mission stations were therefore a threat to national security. The threat was taken seriously. An army intelligence officer was appointed to investigate the missions. His report produced an alarming picture.

Lockhart River mission, for example, was claimed to have been used as a recruiting centre for the Japanese. In the absence of mission supervision, the Aborigines were wandering all over the Cape, the report claimed. In actual fact, when missionaries and other white civilians were evacuated in early 1942, the Aborigines had been told to go bush and fend for themselves. Lockhart River mission had been established by the Church of England. The Aboriginal people living on the mission came from all over the Cape, relocated eight years earlier after changes to the Aboriginal protection legislation.

The report noted that mission superintendents, who collectively controlled over 1000 Aborigines, were generally of the opinion that not one percent could be relied on to be loyal and that the presence of Aborigines in the Cape would doom to failure, any military operations in the area. The intelligence report also attacked the presence of Aborigines on the grounds of their threat to the health of servicemen. Concentrations of African-American troops were located at Iron Range airfield near Lockhart River, and at Cowal Creek mission near Higgins (Jacky Jacky) airfield. At Higgins it was claimed that a high incidence of venereal disease among these troops was caused by contact with Aboriginal women from the mission station and that the mission residents should be relocated to remove the menace.

205 Robert A Hall, 1997, p 116
206 ibid., p 118
207 ibid., p 119
The Church of England’s Bishop of Carpentaria (responsible for Cowal Creek, Lockhart River, Mitchell River and Edward River missions) and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland (responsible for Marpoon, Napranum, Aurukun, and Mornington Island missions) disputed the army’s findings as false and malicious. The churches claimed venereal disease among the Aborigines of Cape York was rare: they contended that the soldiers were more likely to get the disease when they visited the capital cities. Queensland Health Department surveys and statistics upheld their argument. As for the question of Aborigines assisting the Japanese, it was pointed out that the exclusion of all unauthorised visitors was both state government and mission policy.208

The army’s intelligence report on ‘Native Missions Thursday Island and Peninsula’ had grossly overstated the security and health risks posed by Cape York Aborigines. By January 1943, with the wet season making movement of any kind difficult, the army’s plans for the wholesale removal of all Aborigines on Cape York were dropped. It was considered that the Aborigines would resist the move, the cattle industry would suffer from the removal of its labour force, and the evacuation would be expensive.209 However, the removal of individual Aborigines for health reasons was a different matter. It was proposed to conduct medical examination of Aboriginal women at mission stations near troop concentrations and evacuate those found to be suffering from venereal disease. Only one mission station in Cape York was evacuated for health reasons: Cowal Creek mission near Higgins (Jacky Jacky) airfield and Mutee Head harbour was moved south along the coast to Vilya Point. The evacuation was in response to the presence of two US Army Engineer regiments including the 91st Engineer Battalion made up of African-American troops. The Aborigines were allowed to return once the US troops transferred to New Guinea.

Indigenous enlistment

Enlistment with the military forces offered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the first time, the opportunity to enjoy similar conditions, but not the same pay, to those offered to whites. The concentration of troops in the north meant there was considerably greater contact between black and white Australians during World War II than during the earlier time of the cattle stations and missions.

208 ibid., p 120
209 ibid., p 121
In some instances this contact had negative impacts on traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, including the sexual exploitation of Indigenous women. Though peace bought a return to pre-war white attitudes and low pay for Aborigines and Islanders, the army experience changed Indigenous outlooks and expectations and undoubtedly influenced the land rights movement in the post-war period.210

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labour from the missions and reserves of the region helped supplement the wartime shortage of farm workers in north Queensland. Aboriginal labourers from Yarrabah and Monamona missions assisted with the harvesting of essential crops on the Atherton Tableland and worked on cane and banana farms in Johnstone and Cardwell Shires. In Cape York and the Torres Strait, the AWC and MRC employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the construction of airfields and base facilities, paying award wages for their labour. Across Queensland, 3500 Indigenous people achieved wartime employment in jobs that whites normally occupied.211

The Defence Act and Australian military regulations prevented people classified as ‘not substantially of European origin or descent’ from enlisting in the armed forces. Torres Strait Islanders received special exemption from this regulation in 1941. Racial barriers to the recruitment of Aborigines relaxed as the war intensified with Japan’s involvement.212

Approval for raising a company of Torres Strait Islanders was given in May 1941, allowing white troops stationed in the Torres Strait to be released for posting to New Guinea. Recruitment commenced mid-year and training began on Thursday Island in late 1941. Men from outer islands were recruited in mid-1942. Between July and November, the group rose from company to battalion strength with 830 men. Some joined because they had no choice after their luggers and canoes were confiscated to prevent the Japanese from capturing and utilising them.213 An additional 41 mainland Aborigines and six Torres Strait Malays also joined the Battalion, which was designated the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion (TSLI).

The TSLI Battalion formed into four companies as part of a coordinated effort to defend the Horn Island airfield and fixed military installations during the early stages of the Pacific war. Horn Island had little in the way of infantry or anti-aircraft guns and no fighter aircraft. The TSLI was one of only two units available to maintain the defence of the island.214 From the beginning of 1943, as the Japanese were held in northern New Guinea, the TSLI worked at loading and unloading ships at Horn Island: the dispersal of stores became their primary role. Some TSLI members volunteered for the 4th Marine Supply Platoon, responsible for catching many tonnes of fish for 1st ACH and 6th ACH on Horn and Thursday Islands. During 1943, the TSLI Pioneer Company was formed to assist the 17th Australian Field Company with building and engineering construction works. They worked on such projects as the construction of the Engineers Wharf on Thursday Island and the Horn Island dam.215

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210 Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 57
211 Lynne Hume, 1991, p 19
212 Kate Darian-Smith, in Jane Beaumont [ed], 1996, p 60
213 Vanessa Seekee, 2002, p 92
214 ibid., p 94
215 ibid., p 95
Discontent grew within the Torres Strait Islands in 1943 — and among the TSLI soldiers. Pay and food shortages for their families were the prime issues. Even though the Australian Army encouraged racial unity within its ranks, it did not encourage unity in pay scales.\(^{216}\) The TSLI pay scales were based on a comparison with the Royal Papuan Constabulary; not with other units of the Australian Army. A white Australian private received about £8 a month, more than twice the earnings of a TSLI private. In January 1942 the federal government suggested a dependent’s allowance to help TSLI soldiers meet their family responsibilities. The Department of Native Affairs decided against the suggestion, even though other serving soldiers were granted such allowances. The problems at home were not helped by the rise in inflationary costs in the Torres Strait caused by the war. The increased costs meant that the Islander women found it increasingly hard to purchase foodstuff from the canteen and no marine hunting could be done without the men.\(^{217}\)

TSLI soldiers had witnessed CCC workers on Horn Island strike over inadequate conditions. They also had seen Torres Strait Islanders working for the AWC, paid the same as their white counterparts. Underpaid and worried about their families and other issues of inequality, A-, B- and C-Companies of the TSLI Battalion went on strike — or in military terms, mutinied — on 30 December 1943. The Fortress Commander explained to the soldiers the severity of their actions and promised that their case would receive an appropriate hearing. The still-disgruntled men went back to their duties the next day, after receiving extra duties, pack drill and fines. The issue of TSLI pay rates came up at a conference in Melbourne in February 1944. The conference, addressing the topic of ‘Natives in the Military’, noted that the TSLI men were enlisted in the normal manner but were not paid at the same rate as white soldiers. It was considered that paying them at a lower rate was illegal and serious repercussions might follow. While the conference agreed the TSLI soldiers were legally entitled to full pay, two key arguments persuaded a compromise: first, the size of the underpayment and repatriation liability was put at £30 million; secondly, the full rate was far above their civilian wages and could lead to trouble when the soldiers left the army. Instead it was decided to increase rates of pay for TSLI soldiers to two-thirds of their white counterparts’ earnings.\(^{218}\)

\(^{216}\) ibid., p 96  
\(^{217}\) ibid., p 96  
\(^{218}\) Robert A Hall, 1997, p 51
As operations of the Torres Strait Fortress were scaled down after November 1944, the men of the TSLI Battalion took over more specialist roles such as the operation of the docks area, port maintenance, transport of supplies, small ship maintenance and marine piloting. When the Battalion was disbanded in 1946, the war became a period referred to as ‘Army Time’. Although army service enabled Torres Strait Islanders to learn valuable trades and to accumulate savings, the most significant benefits were intangible. They had come into contact with white soldiers who regarded them as equals and they had been unified by the experience of their service. Although old inter-island rivalries remained, close ties built upon shared experience in the army had also been forged. Queensland government officials returning after the war found that pre-war relationships could not be re-established. The Torres Strait Islanders emerged from the war more aware of their potential within the Australian community and prepared to demand their rights.  

By the end of World War II, more than 3000 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders had enlisted in the armed forces. Another 200 had worked as guides on bush patrols and carried out other military duties along the north Australian coast, without formal recognition or pay. A third group of up to 3000 worked as civilian labourers. Despite the scale of this contribution, the federal and state governments consistently underestimated the Aboriginal and Islander contribution to the war effort in later years. For example, in 1947 the Queensland Government wrongly guessed that about 700 Torres Strait Islanders had enlisted — the true figure was closer to 830: the number of Aboriginal ex-servicemen in Queensland was unknown to the government. In June 1944 there were an estimated 76,000 Indigenous Australians nationally. On that basis, at least five per cent had made a direct contribution to the war, either in the armed services or as a labourer. 

**Food production**

Through the 1920s and 1930s north Queensland developed as one of Australia’s important food producing regions, especially for sugar, bananas, vegetables, meat and dairying. The seasonal nature of agricultural production meant that up until the early 1940s, the region was able to continue to take advantage of the cheap farm labour that had softened the impact of the Depression among local growers. The outbreak of war saw many rural workers enlist in the services, causing shortages in production.
However supplies remained generally adequate for both civilian and service populations into 1942. During 1943 heavy demand for beef from the growing Allied service personnel stationed in north Queensland outstripped supply from the region’s meatworks. Transport for cattle from western Queensland to coastal meatworks had become harder to find and more difficult to organise because of wartime demands on the rail network. A heavy demand for canned meat for combat troops accentuated the critical supply situation.\textsuperscript{221} The Queensland Meat Industry Board (QIMB) had regulated the state’s meat industry since the early 1930s and had helped establish a chilled beef export trade with Britain. The QMIB became responsible for the coordination of wartime meat production, particularly for military consumption. It established army-operated meatworks and cold storage facilities with access to western Queensland pastoral districts at Mount Isa and Cape River, near Pentland, west of Charters Towers.\textsuperscript{222} Meanwhile, meat supplies for north Queensland civilians were severely rationed and did not return to normal until 1949.

Supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to Australian and US service personnel was co-ordinated by the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing (COD). With large concentrations of troops at military camps throughout north Queensland, COD depots were established at Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns in December 1942, and Atherton in June 1943. Service demands required a substantial increase in the growing of vegetables in Queensland. Although local production was increased in the state’s central and northern regions, supplementary supplies had to be obtained from Brisbane and the southern states. At one stage during 1943, 109 tonnes of vegetables were railed weekly to Atherton. The US Quartermaster’s Depot in Townsville received a further 68 tonnes and Australian Army depots in Townsville and Cairns another 54 tonnes of vegetables weekly. South-east Australia’s rail system was overstretched, hauling heavy consignments of troops and munitions, as well as foodstuffs to Queensland and the Northern Territory. As rail transit time from Melbourne to north Queensland was seven to eight days, careful co-ordination was required between the COD, the Department of Commerce and Agriculture and the railways to ensure that fruit and vegetables arrived in edible condition.\textsuperscript{223}

Sugar production fell dramatically in 1942 and 1943. Labour shortages were only part of the problem: the overzealous internment of Italian farmers and cane cutters in 1940 followed by the enthusiastic enlistment of local farm workers into the military created shortages in the cutting gangs and crushing mills. Japanese occupation of Nauru and Ocean Island meant that, by 1943, phosphate for fertilizer was in short supply. The AWC, which had commandeered 300 farm tractors for airfield construction, had not returned them. Delays in rail transport held up cane supplies to the mills and the refining of raw sugar. The release of interned Italian farm workers following Italy’s surrender in mid-1943 brought some improvement in the north Queensland sugar industry. The discharge of experienced sugar workers from the armed services, improvements in fertilizer supply and the return of tractors by the AWC all contributed to an improvement in food production during 1944.\textsuperscript{224}

\textsuperscript{221} P D Wilson, 1988, p 28
\textsuperscript{222} AWC Minutes, 1942-43
\textsuperscript{223} Clem Lack, 1962, pp 257-8
\textsuperscript{224} P D Wilson, 1988, p 28
Dairy production on the Atherton Tableland also suffered with the enlistment of many farmers and farm workers. Increased government subsidies on milk and cream in 1943, together with the release of enlisted farm workers, resulted in a rise in milk production from 1944. Fresh milk from the Atherton Tableland was distributed by air to points across north Queensland, the Torres Strait, New Guinea and other SWPA centres.

During the war north Queensland civilians had difficulty in obtaining vegetables and fresh fruit normally supplied from south-east Queensland and the southern states. Both the Australian and US services had priority. Attempts by the federal government to remedy these shortages through the development of government farms were not successful. As with meat shortages, it took some years for normal supply to be restored.225

The Australian Women’s Land Army (AWLA) was formed in response to the need for hands to harvest crops and essential foods. The Queensland division formed in July 1942 and was based on a World War I British model. Land Army women were civilians. They worked a fixed number of hours weekly and received award wages direct from the farm owners. The Manpower Directorate paid any fares to and from work as well as work clothes and full dress uniform. At its peak, the Queensland organisation totalled about 700 women. ‘Land Girls’ were required to go anywhere in Queensland. They worked in groups of up to 20, from temporary billets or larger permanent quarters. Permanent AWLA camps were established on the Atherton Tableland, Home Hill and Ayr districts, and for a short time on Magnetic Island. Around Home Hill and Ayr, the Land Army women harvested tomatoes, potatoes, cotton and other vegetables. At Atherton they were employed on farms in ploughing, cultivating and harvesting to produce vegetables for the 90,000 Allied troops in and around the Tableland and Cairns district. AWLA camps were also at Mackay, Bowen, Ingham, Tully, Innisfail, Mareeba and Cape Tribulation.226 The Home Hill Vegetable Project was developed on the Burdekin River flood flats in 1943 to provide work for a large contingent of women of the Australian Land Army who were based at Home Hill.

In April 1941 Britain decided to evacuate the many thousands of Italian prisoners of war who had been captured in Egypt and Libya by British, Australian, South African and Indian forces. Australia was asked to accept a share of the prisoners. From May 1941 until 1947, when they were repatriated back to Italy, a total of nearly 18,500 prisoners of war were confined in POW camps and later sent to work on farms and properties in various parts of Australia. They filled a critical Manpower gap created by Australian farm workers who had joined the services. During 1944, an Italian POW camp was established on the Burdekin River upstream from Home Hill. Here the Italian prisoners grew vegetables for military consumption on farms owned by the Gelling and Macintosh families. Only concrete slabs and rubble remain of the Home Hill POW camp.227

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225 Clem Lock, 1962, pp 257-8
226 Mary Macklin, 2001, p 4
227 AA, Drawing Series BP738/1, (1942-58)
The waterfront

During World War II industrial relations issues arose among a handful of commodity and service suppliers that were vital to the war effort. By the outbreak of the war, coal miners who had struggled through the Depression were keen to gain some benefits from the income flowing into the industry as war demand increased. The struggle of the coal miners was repeated around Australia’s ports where the Waterside Workers Federation sought to use the period of sustained high demand for labour to address the accumulated grievances of the 1930s.228

The Australian waterfront had reached a chaotic stage by early 1942. Pillaging from the wharves had risen during the early war years, resulting in the establishment of the Stevedoring Industry Commission to bring organisation and stability to an industry plagued by appalling industrial relations. From February the shipping industry came under government regulated control involving prices, profits, materials, investments and wages. The Stevedoring Commission marked the beginning of the end of the old system of waterside employment. But it was not the end of waterfront strikes in north Queensland ports. These continued, to the anger of Australian and US troops and the embarrassment the Curtin government, divided as it was between its Labor loyalties and commitment to winning the war.229

One of the largest strikes, at the Port of Cairns during April and May 1945, was over ‘danger money’ for loading ammunition and ordnance. The army eventually sent some 800 troops of the Australian 6th Division from Kairi on the Tableland to the wharves, with instructions to ‘shoot the bastards if they don’t leave within 30 seconds’. The army took control of the wharf from the waterside workers unopposed. Companies of soldiers worked 12-hour shifts until relieved by another crew for the next shift. This strike-breaking action ensured Australian troops had ammunition and supplies when they landed at Balikpapan, Borneo, in July 1945.230

229 Timothy Bottoms, 2002, p 557
230 ibid., p 559
North Queensland’s legacy

The Federal election in August 1943 saw the Labor government of John Curtin returned to power with an overwhelming majority including control of both houses of the Australian parliament: the first time since 1914. Curtin died in office in July 1945. Treasurer J.B. (Ben) Chifley won the leadership ballot and succeeded Curtin as prime minister. Chifley presided over the post-war reconstruction and development of the country.

Legacy of war

The Pacific war ended abruptly with the dropping of atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered unconditionally on 14 August 1945. Even before VJ Day many troops began returning to their home states. However, in some cases it was several years before the last wartime units were finally sent south and disbanded.

The civilian population of north Queensland was left to contemplate the impact of four or more years of military occupation. Homes, hotels, factories and sheds were handed back to their owners, often damaged; sometimes wrecked. Large complexes of hangars, warehouses, workshops and barracks stood redundant in Townsville, Cairns and Atherton. Disposal auctions commenced in late 1945. Everything, from the largest warehouse to the smallest nut and bolt, was sold for removal. As well as buildings and building supplies, motor vehicles, trucks, earth moving equipment and spare parts were auctioned off at low prices to mainly local residents. This proved a boon for north Queenslanders who otherwise had to wait months for timber or hardware orders to be filled. Building supplies were scarce: southern states had to retool and convert factories to produce pre-war manufactured goods. At the disposal sales, the public could purchase steel frame sheds for use as workshops; prefabricated three-ply barrack huts that when placed together could form temporary homes; second-hand timber, iron, fibrolite sheets and all types of building and plumbing materials for use in home construction. Local councils relaxed their building regulations to allow temporary structures. Most were later turned into backyard workshops or garages after new homes were built.\textsuperscript{231} Disposal sales went on for nearly two years.

The legacy of World War II on the population and fabric of north Queensland was profound. Changes could be seen in infrastructure developments such as sealed roads, new bridges, improved railway networks and wharf facilities, better communication links, a system of all-weather airfields, improved public health measures including malaria and dengue fever control programs, and better water and sewage systems. Disposal sales of earth moving equipment, trucks, tractors and prefabricated buildings, gave opportunities for north Queenslanders to improve productivity with up-to-date machinery and better access to transport.

\textsuperscript{231} Vera Bradley, 1995, p 395
Before the war Townsville, Cairns and the other north coastal and Tableland centres were content to enjoy an isolated and narrow relationship with the rest of Australia and the world. The war broadened the perspective of north Queensland’s civilian population. The passage of about 500,000 or more US and Australian service personnel through the region changed old outlooks: nothing would ever be quite the same again in north Queensland.

Legacy of infrastructure

North Queensland benefited greatly from the wartime facilities constructed by US and Australian engineer regiments, the Allied Works Council, Civil Construction Corps, Queensland Main Roads Commission, Townsville and Cairns harbour boards, and local councils.

Some examples of wartime construction still in use:

- Garbutt air base hangars, offices and quarters continue in use as RAAF Base Townsville
- Townsville Airport, Hangar 15 relocated from Stockroute airstrip and now used by an air charter company
- Former aircraft hangar, Clarke Street, Garbutt. Relocated and now used as a tile warehouse
- Building 25, No. 2 US Air Command Operations and Signals Centre, Ramsay Street, Garbutt. Adapted as an office
- Building 81, RAAF North Eastern Area Command, Combined Operational Intelligence Centre and Area Combined HQ, Green Street, West End, Townsville. Now used by the State Emergency Service
- Brookhill Explosives Depot, Flinders Highway, Roseneath, Townsville. Still used as an explosive store by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- US Koala Ordnance Depot igloo warehouse No. 10, Vidler and Hogan streets, Townsville. Now used by Weinheimer Transport Company
- Bellman hangar and huts at Jezzine Barracks, North Ward, Townsville. Still used by the army for storage
- US-built RAAF maintenance igloo shed, Bundock Street, Belgian Gardens, Townsville. Now used as a furniture factory and showroom
- Sidney Williams hut, Bundock and Short streets, Belgian Gardens. Now a shop
- Army Post Office and ASD warehouse, Allen and Perkins streets, Townsville. Now used as a furniture auction store
- Bohle River Airfield, Shaw Road, Townsville. Now used for vehicle drag racing
- RAAF No. 6 Medical Convalescent Unit tennis court, Mount Spec Road, Paluma. Still used for tennis
- Bowen flying boat base, maintenance hardstand and slipway. Used by the Port Denison Sailing Club
- Woolstore igloo No. 50 and Bellman hangars at RAAF Base Macrossan. Used as bulk stores by the army
- Timber truss igloo store, Harris Lane, Charters Towers. Now used as a workshop by Adit Engineering
- Sellheim army camp, igloo recreation hut. Relocated to Phillipson Road, Charters Towers, for use as a workshop
- Concrete encased fuel tank at RAAF 9 Inland Aviation Fuel Depot, Norman Dungavel Drive, Charters Towers. Used for storage
- Inland Defence Road, between Charters Towers, Emerald and Ipswich
- Kuranda Range Road, between Cairns and Kuranda
- RAN Edge Hill fuel installation, Collins Avenue, Cairns. Now Tanks Arts Centre
- Civil Defence Command Post and Communications Centre, Florence and Grafton streets, Cairns. Now the Cairns Scout Shop
- Quonset store shed and fuel storage tanks, Hartley and Dutton streets, Cairns. Relocated and now used by Caltex Australia Petroleum
- US Army LCVP boat assembly warehouse, Dutton Street, Cairns. Now used by Incitec Pivot
- US Army warehouse, Hartley and Hassell streets, Cairns. Now used for light industry workshops
- Allied Works Council workshop and office, Magazine Street, Stratford, Cairns. Now used as a store by Cairns City Council Water
- Queerah Explosives Depot, Swallow Road, Cairns. Now leased by Orica Limited for the storage of explosives
- Edge Hill railway goods sheds, Sheridan Street, Cairns. Now used for storage by Quaid Auctioneers
- Air Raid Shelter, Munro Street, Babinda. Converted to a public toilet by Cairns City Council
- Australian Army Canteen Services igloo warehouse, Robert and Mazlin streets, Atherton. Now the Merriland Hall, Atherton Showgrounds
- Igloo warehouse, relocated to Main Street, Atherton and used by Turner Agencies
- Ration store sheds in Grant and Grove streets, Atherton and at various other locations on the Atherton Tableland. Now used for light industry workshops and for storage
- Prefabricated building (possibly relocated). Atherton Girl Guides and Scouts Hall, Robert Street
- Army officers’ recreation hut stone fireplace, Kilpatrick Street, Mareeba. Now incorporated into the Mareeba Scout Hall
- Wondecla theatre hall. Now used as a dwelling
- Igloo theatre hall, relocated to Park Avenue, Malanda. Now serving as the Malanda Showgrounds Hall
- Igloo warehouse, relocated to James Street, Malanda. Now a Mitre 10 Hardware Store
- Army rifle range, Old Kennedy Highway, Ravenshoe. Still used by the Ravenshoe Rifle Club
- Barkly Highway from Mount Isa to Tennant Creek, via Camooweal
- Charters Towers Airport
- Mareeba Airport
- Cooktown Airport
- Coen Airfield
- Lockhart River Airport
- Bamaga Airport
- Horn Island Airport
Some examples of wartime construction seen by visitors:

- Castle Hill observation post, Townsville
- Cape Pallarenda coastal battery, Cape Pallarenda National Park, Townsville
- Magnetic Island coastal battery, Magnetic Island National Park, Townsville
- Charlies Hill radar station, Home Hill
- Bowen radar station site, Queens Beach
- Bowen flying boat base hardstand and slipway
- Dunk Island radar station site, Mount Kootaloo, Dunk Island National Park
- Orpheus Island degaussing testing range site, Orpheus Island National Park
- Charters Towers replenishing centre ordnance stores, Towers Hill
- Julia Creek HFDF station
- Karumba flying boat base slipway
- Fitzroy Island radar station site, Fitzroy Island National Park
- Tanks Art Centre, Edge Hill, Cairns
- Cairns Scout Shop
- Babinda air raid shelter
- Cairns-Kuranda Range Road
- Rocky Creek theatre hall
- Ravenshoe army camp sites and fireplaces, Millstream Falls National Park
- Mutee Head radar station, Cape York
- Bamaga (Higgins (Jacky Jacky) airfield dispersals and aircraft wrecks
- Horn Island airfield dispersals and aircraft wrecks
- Horn Island King Point HAA battery
- Milman coastal battery, Thursday Island
- War cemeteries at Townsville, Charters Towers, Cairns and Atherton
Recorded places of state heritage significance

- No.2 US Air Command Operations and Signal Centre, 3 Ramsay Street, Garbutt, Townsville
- Australian Army Signal Centre, Flinders Highway, Roseneath, Townsville
- Civil Defence Post and Communications Centre (Scout Shop), cnr Florence and Grafton Street, Cairns
- Coen Telephone Carrier Station, off Peninsula Development Road, Coen
- Australian Army Signal Station and RAAF No.36 Radar Station, Hammond East Hill, Hammond Island
- Australian Army Command Post and Signal Station, Goods Island
- AWA Maritime Radio Station, Baird Road, Grassy Hill, Cooktown
- Portland Roads Coastal Battery, Iron Range
- Milman Hill Coastal Battery, Thursday Island
- Turtle (‘Q’) Coastal Battery, Turtle Head, Hammond Island
- Goods Coastal Battery, Tucker Point, Goods Island
- Mareeba Airfield, 37th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 448, off McIvor Road, Mareeba
- Iron Range Airfield, 36th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 446, Lockhart River Road, Iron Range
- Iron Range Airfield, 36th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 447, Claudi River, Iron Range
- Horn Island Airfield, 34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 442, Double Hill, Horn Island
- Horn Island Airfield, 34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 443, King Point, Horn Island
- RAAF No.58 Radar Station, Lennox Crescent, Paluma
- RAAF High Frequency Direction Finding Station, Shead Road, Tolga
- RAAF No.220 Radar Station, Bones Knob, Tolga
- RAAF No.52 Radar Station and Camp, Mutee Head, Cape York
- RAAF No.36 Radar Station, Horn Hill, Horn Island
- RAAF High Frequency Direction Finding Station, Flinders Highway, Julia Creek
- Aircraft Hangar 15, Townsville Airport, Garbutt, Townsville
- Aircraft Hangar, Clarke Street, Garbutt, Townsville
- Bore Sight Range and Compass Swinging Platform, Charters Towers Airfield, Corinda Avenue, Charters Towers
- Breddan Airfield, Gregory Development Road, Charters Towers
- Bowen Flying Boat Base, Quay Street, Bowen
Mareeba Airfield, North-South Runway Section, off Kennedy Highway, Mareeba
Iron Range Airfield AOB, Claudie Strips and Dispersals, Lockhart River, Iron Range
Higgins (Jacky Jacky) Airfield AOB, Camp Sites, Dispersals and Aircraft Wrecks, Bamaga, Cape York
Horn Island Airfield AOB, Strong Points, Camp Sites, Dispersals and Aircraft Wrecks, Horn Island
Inverleigh Airfield, Dispersals and Runways, Normanton-Burketown Road, Gulf District
Karumba Flying Boat Base, Yappar Street, Karumba
Cloncurry Airfield, Qantas Hangar, Sir Hudson Fysh Drive, Cloncurry
USAAF B-24 Liberator Bomber 41-23825 ‘Texas Terror’ Wreckage, Mount Straloch, Hinchinbrook Island
Army Post Office and Advanced Supply Depot Warehouse, cnr Allen and Perkins Street, South Townsville
Koala US Ordnance Depot, Igloo Warehouse No.10, cnr Vidler and Hogan Street, Stuart, Townsville
US Quonset Shed, cnr Hartley and Dutton Street, Cairns
Golden Grove Ration Store Sheds, between Grant and Grove Street, Atherton
Advanced Ordnance Depot Igloo Warehouse Slabs, Griffin Road, Tolga
Wondecla Igloo Theatre Hall, Longland Gap Road, Wondecla
Brookhill Explosives Depot, Flinders Highway, Roseneath, Townsville
RAAF 19 Replenishing Centre, Talmoi Wool Scour, Flinders Highway
Australian Army Field Ammunition Depot, Baronta Siding, Flinders Highway
RAAF 9 Inland Aviation Fuel depot, Norman Dungavell Drive, Charters Towers
RAN Oil Fuel Installation, Collins Avenue, Edge Hill, Cairns
RAAF 23 Inland Aviation Fuel Depot, Phillips Street, Cloncurry
Rodeo, US Army Remount Depot, Rocky Springs, Townsville
Australian (Chemical Warfare) 1 Field Experimental Station, Gunyarra Siding, Proserpine
Jungle Warfare Training Area, Longland Pocket State Forest, off Kennedy Highway, Longland Gap
Australian 5 Farm Company, Kairi State Farm, Black Gully Road, Kairi
Ravenshoe Military Camp, Millstream National Park, Kennedy Highway, Ravenshoe
Coastal Battery Camp, Quoin Point, Goods Island
Watten 2/2 Australian General Hospital, Hughenden-Winton Road
US Station Hospital Buildings, Norman Street, Gordonvale
2/1 Australian Convalescent Depot, Lake Barrine Tea House, Yungaburra
US 2 Station Hospital, Mareeba State School, cnr Atherton and Constance Street, Mareeba
US 3rd Surgical Hospital, Cloncurry Shire Hall, Scarr Street, Cloncurry
Townsville War Cemetery, Evans Street, Belgian Gardens
Cairns War Cemetery, James Street, Manunda, Cairns
Atherton War Cemetery, cnr Rockley Road and Kennedy Highway
American Red Cross Services Club, Central Hotel, Gordon Street, Gordonvale
Officers’ Club and Mess, Barron Valley Hotel, Main Street, Atherton
Queensland Heritage Register places of WWII–NQ significance

( WWII values are not necessarily described in the existing entries)

- US PX Store, Government Assay Office, cnr Constance and Hort Street, Mareeba
- Air Raid Shelter, Anzac Park, 107-11 Munro Street, Babinda
- Military Water Tank adapted as a House, High Street, Atherton

RAAF North Eastern Area Command, Combined Operational Intelligence Centre and Area Combined HQ, Building 81, Green Street, West End, Townsville. QHR 602260

RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector HQ, Flinders Highway, Wulguru, Townsville. QHR 601708

Australian North Eastern Area Command, Area Combined HQ, Commonwealth Building, 42 Sturt Street, Townsville. QHR 600932

RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector HQ, School House, Townsville Grammar School, Burke Street, North Ward, Townsville. QHR 601029

Torres Force HQ, Thursday Island Customs House, Victoria Parade, Thursday Island. QHR 601527

US Command Post, Castle Hill Road, North Ward, Townsville. QHR 601218

US Army Base Section Two, Signals Section, Australian Mutual Provident Building, 416-18 Flinders Mall, Townsville. QHR 602159

US 7th Fleet, Fleet Radio Unit Detachment, St Mary’s Convent, Helen Street, Cooktown. QHR 600423

Castle Hill Observation Post, off Castle Hill Road, Townsville. QHR 601218

Pallarenda Coastal Battery and Camp, Cape Pallarenda, Townsville. QHR 602133

Magnetic Island Coastal Battery, Townsville. QHR 600876

False Cape Coastal Battery, Trinity Bay, Cairns. QHR 600975

16 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, "Y" (393) Gun Station, Mt St John, Townsville. QHR 602084

RAAF No.211 Radar Station, Charles Hill, Home Hill. QHR 601716

RAAF No.53 Radar Station, Mount Lookout, Mount Surprise. QHR 602259

Trinity Wharf Stevedore Warehouses (1, 2 and 3) Wharf Street, Cairns. QHR 602790

Rocky Creek Igloo Theatre Hall, Kennedy Highway, Rocky Creek. QHR 601815

Australian Defence Canteen Services Igloo Warehouse (Merriland Hall), cnr Robert and Mazlin Street, Atherton. QHR 602016

RAAF 3 Replenishing Centre Ordnance Stores, Towers Hill, Charters Towers. QHR 601851

Stratford Explosives Store, Magazine Street, Stratford, Cairns. QHR 600754

North Ward Drill Hall Buildings, 4-6 Oxley Street, North Ward, Townsville. QHR 602147

Cluden Racecourse Grandstand, Racecourse Road, Townsville. QHR 600924

Cooktown Hospital Building, May Street, Cooktown. QHR 600424

RAAF 3 Medical Receiving Station, Currajong House, Castling Street, West End, Townsville. QHR 600884

Pioneer Cemetery, McLeod Street, Cairns. QHR 600383

Great Northern Hotel, 500 Flinders Street, Townsville. QHR 600908
US No.1 Depot Store, Lion Brewery Building, 719-41 Flinders Street, Townsville. QHR 602160
Army Post Office, English Scottish & Australian Bank Building, 408-10 Flinders Mall, Townsville. QHR 600907
RAAF Warehouse and Offices, Dalgetty Building, 1-13 Sturt Street, Townsville. QHR 602520
Rooney’s Warehouse, 241-5 Flinders Street East, Townsville. QHR 600917
Agora House Warehouse, 224 Flinders Street East, Townsville. QHR 600913
The Rocks Guest House and Air Raid Shelter, 20 Cleveland Terrace, Townsville. QHR 602384
RAAF Post Office, Townsville School of Arts, 188-210 Stanley Street, Townsville. QHR 600925
US Officers’ Mess, Queens Hotel, cnr The Strand and Wickham Street, Townsville. QHR 600936
Officers’ Quarters, Hides Hotel, 87 Lake Street, Cairns. QHR 600382
Aquatic Club, Cairns Yacht Club, 4 Wharf Street, Cairns. QHR 601883
US Intelligence Offices, Bolands Building, cnr Spence and Lake Street, Cairns. QHR 602536
Jack & Newell Building, 29 Wharf Street, Cairns. QHR 601610
Lake Eacham Hotel, 6-8 Kehoe Place, Yungaburra. QHR 600473
Townsville Railway Station Offices, 502-792 Flinders Street. QHR 600906
Department of Interior Works and Service Branch, Townsville Customs House, The Strand. QHR 600937
Stone Wall around dance floor, Williams Lodge, 16-20 Cedar Street, Yungaburra. QHR 600472
Grassy Hill Lighthouse, Baird Road, Cooktown. QHR 601241
Cook Shire Hall, cnr Helen and Walker Street, Cooktown. QHR 601704

Commonwealth Heritage List places of WWII–NQ significance
Kissing Point Fort, Howitt Street, Townsville. CHL Listed Place
Green Hill Fort, Chester Street, Thursday Island. CHL Listed Place
RAAF Base Townsville, Ingham Road, Garbutt, Townsville. CHL Indicative Place
Bellman Hangar, Jezzine Barracks, Isley Street, North Ward, Townsville. CHL Place Not Included
Macrossan Stores Depot, Flinders Highway, Macrossan. CHL Listed Place
Goods Island Lighthouse. CHL Listed Place
WWII-NQ places recorded 2006–07

Command HQ and signal centres

RAAF North Eastern Area Command, Combined Operational Intelligence Centre and Area Combined HQ, Building 81, Green Street, West End, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

No.2 US Air Command Operations and Signals Centre, 3 Ramsey Street, Garbutt, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector HQ, Flinders Highway, Wulguru, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

Australian Army Signal Centre, Flinders Highway, Roseneath, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

Command HQ and signal centres (requisitioned buildings)

US Base Section Two HQ, Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Building, 32 Denham Street cnr Walker Street, Townsville

Australian North Eastern Area Command, Area Combined HQ, Commonwealth Building, 42 Sturt Street, Townsville

RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector HQ, Townsville Grammar School, School House, Burke Street, North Ward, Townsville

Torres Force HQ, Customs House, Victoria Parade, Thursday Island
Signal stations and posts

Australian Army Signal Station, rear of Bank of New South Wales building, cnr Flinders Street East and Wickham Street, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

US Command Post, Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

Building, (adapted as residence) Kerema Street, Stuart, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

Civil Defence Post and Communication Centre, Scout Shop, cnr Florence and Grafton Street, Cairns
Reinforced concrete building

Archer Point RAN Port War Signal Station site, Cooktown district

Aeradio Station, Cooktown Civil Airfield, Cooktown Development Road, Cooktown

HFDF transmitter station, Hope Street, Cooktown

Coen Telephone Carrier Station, off Peninsula Development Road, Coen

Cape York Telegraph Station, Punsand Bay, Cape York

Cape York Telephone Carrier Station and Cable Box, Cable Bay, Cape York

Green Hill Fort Wireless Station, Chester Street, Thursday Island

Australian Army Signal Station and RAAF Radar Station, Hammond East Hill, Hammond Island
Reinforced concrete building

Australian Army Command Post and Signal Station, Goods Island
Reinforced concrete building
Signal stations (requisitioned buildings)

US Army Base Section Two Signals Section, Beak House Building, 336 Flinders Mall, cnr Stokes Street, Townsville

RAAF No.1 Wireless Station, Australian Mutual Provident Building 416-18 Flinders Mall, cnr Stanley Street, Townsville

RAN ’Y’ Wireless Station and WRANS Quarters, Stanton Lodge, 6 Hillside Crescent, Townsville

RAAF Air Flash Headquarters and 33 Filter Zone Centre Houses, 87-9 McLeod Street, Cairns

Military Signal Station, AWA Maritime Radio Station, Grassy Hill, Cooktown

Wireless station and quarters—2x 3-room concrete buildings; Concrete igloo shed; Concrete base for wireless mast; Power plant pit.

33 Zone Filter Centre, Edge Hill Community Hall, Mayer Street, Edge Hill, Cairns

US 7th Fleet, Fleet Radio Unit Detachment, St Mary’s Convent, Helen Street, Cooktown
Coastal batteries and command posts

Kissing Point Fort, The Strand, North Ward, Townsville
Gun emplacements No.1 and No.2; Underground magazines; Underground gun stores and casemate; Depression range finder mount

Castle Hill Observation Post, off Castle Hill Road, Castle Hill, Townsville
Reinforced concrete building

Pallarenda Coastal Battery and Camp, Cape Pallarenda, Townsville
Gun emplacements No.1 and No.2 with magazines; Command post; Searchlight stations (2); Machine gun posts (2); Bofors gun emplacement; Officers’ quarters and latrines; Tennis court; Artillery store; General mess; Kitchen; Recreation hall; QM store; AWAS quarters

Magnetic Island Coastal Battery, Magnetic Island
Gun emplacements No.1 and No.2; Magazines; Range finding station; Command post and port war signal station; Arthur Bay searchlight station

False Cape Coastal Battery, Trinity Bay, Cairns area
Gun emplacements No.1 and No.2; Magazines; Command post; Camp site kitchen slab and hospital slab; Beach hut ruins

Milman Hill Coastal Battery, Thursday Island
Command post; Searchlight stations (2) and generator sheds (2)

Green Hill Fort, Chester Street, Thursday Island
Breach loading guns and gun emplacements (3); Depression range finder mount; Magazines and Gun stores; Wireless station

Turtle (‘Q’) Coastal Battery, Turtle Head, Hammond Island
Gun emplacements No.1 and No.2; Magazines Command post and range finder mount; Searchlight stations (2); Generator sheds (2); Bofors gun emplacement

Goods Coastal Battery, Tucker Point, Goods Island
Gun emplacements No.1 and No.2 with magazines; Command post and range finder mount; Searchlight stations (4); Generator sheds (4); Underground rooms; Engineers’ store; Water reservoir

Endeavour Coastal Battery, Entrance Island
Aerial sighting of two 155mm gun platforms and slabs, south-east coast
Anti-aircraft batteries

Mount St John, 16th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, "Y" (393) Gun Station, Mount St John, Townsville
Hexagonal concrete gun emplacements (4); Control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (4)

Ross River, US 208th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) Battery, South Townsville
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (3 located in ruins); Concrete control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (3 located); Sewerage plant tanks

Jimmyns Lookout, Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery HQ, Old Common Road, Rowes Bay, Townsville
Concrete buildings (2); Excavation and concrete slab

Ross River, US 208th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) Battery, South Townsville
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (3 located in ruins); Concrete control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (3 located); Sewerage plant tanks

Pallarenda Coastal Battery, Light Anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacements, Cape Pallarenda, Townsville
Bofors gun emplacement; Machine gun posts (2)

Magnetic Island, Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacement Station, The Esplanade, Nelly Bay, Magnetic Island
Gun emplacement; Magazine

Mount Louisa, Light Anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacements, Mount Louisa, Townsville
Steel-drum machine gun posts (2)

Mareeba Airfield, 37th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 448, off McIvor Road, Mareeba
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (2 filled); Concrete control post and plot room (filled); Concrete magazines (4); Timber ablutions block (relocated)

Magnetic Island, Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacement Station, The Esplanade, Nelly Bay, Magnetic Island
Gun emplacement; Magazine

Mareeba Airfield, 37th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 449, off Kennedy Highway, Mareeba
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (4 filled); Concrete magazines (4)

Iron Range Airfield, 36th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 446, Lockhart River Road, Iron Range
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (3 located); Concrete control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (1 located); Mess fireplace

Iron Range Airfield, 36th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 447, Claudie River, Iron Range
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (4); Concrete control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (4); Mess slab

Cooktown Mission Airfield, US 104th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft), Machine Gun Posts, Cooktown area
Machine gun posts (2); Camp site; Bitumen sealing plant
Anti-aircraft batteries (cont.)

Horn Island Airfield, 34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 442, Double Hill, Horn Island
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (4); Concrete control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (4); Camp site

Horn Island Airfield, 34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 443, King Point, Horn Island
Octagonal concrete gun emplacements (4); Concrete control post and plot room; Concrete magazines (4); Camp site

Horn Island Airfield, 157th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station, Bofors Ridge, Horn Island
Bofors gun emplacements (2); Concrete slab

Light Anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacement, Turtle Head, Hammond Island
Bofors gun emplacement

Radar stations

RAAF 27 Radar Station Site, Mount Kootaloo, Dunk Island
LW/AW radar turntable and spindle sections

RAAF 58 Radar Station, Lennax Crescent, Paluma
Concrete igloos (4); Concrete footings

RAAF 211 Radar Station, Charlies Hill, Home Hill area
Concrete igloos (2); Radar tower footings; Concrete machine gun post

RAAF 55 Radar Station Site, Queens Beach, Bowen
Concrete machine gun post; Camouflage tie-down bolts

RAAF 28 Radar Station Site, Fitzroy Island
Generator concrete footings; Concrete slabs (3); Fuel storage concrete footings

RAAF High Frequency Direction Finding Station, Shead Road, Tolga
Concrete HFDF set room; Concrete engine shed
Radar stations (cont.)

RAAF 220 Radar Station, Bones Knob, Tolga
Concrete igloos (3); Radar tower footings

RAAF 53 Radar Station, Mount Lookout, Mount Surprise
LW/AW radar tower (damaged and without aerial); Concrete machine gun post

RAAF 52 Radar Station and Camp, Mutee Head, Cape York
LW/AW radar tower and aerial; Machine gun posts (2); Generator concrete engine mount; Camp site footings and water pipes; Kitchen and mess concrete slabs; Octagonal water reservoir concrete base; Timber jetty piers; Saibai islander graves and memorial

RAAF 36 Radar Station, Hammond East Hill, Hammond Island
Reinforced concrete building

RAAF 36 Radar Station, Horn Hill, Horn Island
Concrete igloos (2); LW/AW radar base and spindle; Concrete rock camouflage

RAAF High Frequency Direction Finding Station, Flinders Highway, Julia Creek
Concrete HFDF set room (ruins); Concrete engine shed

Airfield projects

RAAF Base Townsville, Ingham Road, Garbutt, Townsville
Officers’ mess (Building No. 41); Single officers’ living block (Building No. 43); Hospital sick quarters (Building No. 53); Guard house (Building No. 52); Sergeants’ recreation rooms – Sergeants’ mess (Building No. 53); Sergeants’ living blocks (Building Nos 54, 55, 109, 108, 109 and 110); Airmen’s living blocks (Building Nos 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67 and 68); Bellman hangar (Building No. 69); Bellman hangar (Building No. 72); Sergeants’ and airmen’s mess (Building No. 70); Gymnasium, canteen and recreation hall (Building 71); Boiler room, laundry, showers and lavatory (Building No. 104); Power house (Building 106); Service transport (Building No. 107); Butler hangar (Building No. 108); Inflammable store (Building No. 80); Administration building (Building No. 79); Hangar No. 75 (Building No. 75); Aircraft workshop and store (Building No. 78)

Aircraft Hangar 15, Townsville Airport, Garbutt, Townsville

Air Gunnery Observation Posts, Town Common, Pallarenda, Townsville

Aircraft Hangar, Clarke Street, Garbutt, Townsville

Bohle River Airfield, Shaw Road, Bohle, Townsville
Airfield projects (cont.)

Antil Plains Airfields, Flinders Highway, Townsville area
Gravel runways (2); Taxiways

Giru Airfield, off Bruce Highway, Townsville area

Woodstock Airfields, Flinders Highway, Woodstock
Gravel runways (3) including Giru-Woodstock Road

Reid River Airfield, Flinders Highway, Reid River
Squadron aid post site; Squadron mess slab; Gravel runway

Fanning Airfield, off Flinders Highway, Macrossan area
Gravel runway; Taxiways

Macrossan Airfield and Stores Depot, Flinders Highway, Macrossan
Runway 70; Cantilever hangar slabs (x2); Taxiways Hospital hill camp; Hospital sick bay slab and footings, Toilets and ablutions slabs, Water heater and laundry slab, Mess and kitchen slab, Sewage filtration plant; Woolstore Igloo W3 and Bellman (3) warehouses

Charters Towers Airfield, Corinda Avenue, Charters Towers
Bore sight range and gun test butt; Compass swinging platform

Bredden Airfield, Gregory Development Road, Charters Towers area
Torpedo maintenance concrete igloos (x7); Torpedo warhead concrete igloos (x3); Torpedo maintenance section camp (Concrete igloo generator shed, Workshop slabs (x2) and forge, Mess hut slab); General engineering section (Instrument shop Bellman slab, Lathe shop Bellman slab, Electropolishing shop slab, Armature winding shop slab, Bellman workshop slab), Engine repair section (Receipt and despatch Bellman slab, Engine inspection and dismantling slab, Blacksmith shop slab and retort furnace, Propeller maintenance workshop slab, Final assembly shed slab); Airframe repair section (Cantilever hangar slab, Bellman hangar slabs, Gun test butt); Radial engine test bed Store shed slabs; Squadron aid post; Cinema projection box footings; Hospital sick bay slab and footings; Power house; Duty pilot tower base; Runway 60

Balfes Creek Airfield, Flinders Highway, Charters Towers district

Bowen Airfield, off Bruce Highway, Bowen
Concrete igloo bomb stores (2)

Bowen Flying Boat Base, Quay Street, Bowen
Port Denison Sailing Club, RAAF 11 and 20 Sqn workshops, Quay Street; Concrete hardstand and flying boat slipway, Quay Street; Concrete surface, Brisbane Street
Airfield projects (cont.)

**Flying Boat Maintenance Area, Admiralty Island, Cairns**
Concrete slipway and hardstand; Prefabricated steel slipway or wharf

**Mareeba Airfield, AOB, off Kennedy Highway, Mareeba**
North-South airstrip section off Jennings Road, Mareeba; Taxiway section off Ray Road; HAA Gun Stations 448 and 449

**Cooktown Mission Airfield (Eight Mile Airfield), Marton, Cooktown area**
Mission mango trees and US camp site; Taxiways and dispersal areas; Machine gun stations (2) and camp

**Coen Airfield, AOB, Peninsula Development Road, Coen district**
Office hut; Quarters building; Store sheds; Taxiway and mounded dispersal bays; Wireless mast base; Drum dump
Pump shed

**Iron Range Airfield, AOB, Lockhart River, Iron Range**
Gordon (North) HAA Gun Station 446; Claudie (South) HAA Gun Station 447; Claudie strip; New Claudie strip; Gordon strip taxiways; Claudie strip taxiways and dispersal bays

**Higgins (Lacky Jacky) Airfield, AOB, Bamaga, Cape York**
Taxiways and dispersal bays; Beaufort bomber wreckage; P-40 fighter crash site; Bellman workshop floor slab; Pilot tower machine gun posts (1); Bitumen sealing plant site; OBU kitchen and mess; OBU camp slabs and footings; Beer bottle garden; Camp incinerator; Wireless mast; DC-3 transport aircraft wreckage

**Horn Island Airfield, AOB, Torres Strait**
Pilot tower trenches; Machine gun posts (2); Transmitter engine mount; Loading platform Runway strong point No.1 and trenches; Bomb craters (20+); B-17 bomber wreckage east of EW Runway 81; B-17 wreckage mangroves north of NS Runway 135; B-17 wreckage tidal zone north of NS Runway 135; Taxiways and earth mound dispersal bays; P-47 fighter wreckage east of EW Runway 81; HAA gun stations 442 and 443; Bofors gun emplacements (2); Runway 81 extension; OBU and other unit camp sites; Army dam and spillway

**Augustus Downs Airfield, Burketown Development Road**
Gravel runway

**Inverleigh Airfield, Normanton–Burketown Road, Inverleigh Station**
Duty pilot tower base; Machine gun posts (3); Taxiways and dispersal bays; Drum dumps; Gravel runways (2)

**Karumba Flying Boat Base, Yappar Street, Karumba**
Aeradio building; B depot store; B depot building (later police station and hotel); Hospital cottages (2); Flying boat slipway; Brick lined fuel tank and pump shed

**Torrens Creek Airfields, Flinders Highway, Torrens Creek**
Gravel runways (3)

**Clancurry Airfield, Sir Hudson Fysh Drive, Clancurry**
Direction finding station; Qantas hangar; Generator shed; Administration and passenger building; Sealed and gravel runways and taxiways
Airfield projects (cont.)

Department of Civil Aviation Houses, Sheaffe and Henry Street, Cloncurry

Private houses (s)

Aircraft wrecks

USAAF, Consolidated B-24 Liberator Bomber 41-23825 ‘Texas Terror’, Mount Straloch, Hinchinbrook Island
Crashed 28 December 1942

USAAF, Consolidated B-24 Liberator Bomber 41-23924 ‘Condor’, Quintell Beach, Iron Range area
Forced landed 15 December 1942

ANA/ADAT, Douglas DC-3 Courier Transport VH-CKD, Bamaga Airfield, Cape York
Crashed 5 May 1945

RAAF, DAP Beaufort Bomber A9-190, Bamaga Airfield, Cape York
Forced landed 10 October 1945

USAAF, Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress Bomber 41-2421, Horn Island Airfield
Crashed east of Runway 81, 16 July 1942

USAAF, Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress Bomber, Horn Island Airfield
Crashed in tidal zone north of Runway 135, 13 July 1942

USAAF, Republic P-47 Thunderbolt Fighter, Horn Island Airfield
Forced landed in dispersals, 19 March 1944

Highway projects

Townsville-Charters Towers Road

Inland Defence Road – Ipswich-Duaringa-Charters Towers

Cairns-Kuranda Range Road
Igloos, workshops and warehouses

Bellman Hangar, Jezzine Barracks, Isley Street, North Ward, Townsville

Army Post Office and ASD Warehouse, cnr Allen and Perkins Streets, South Townsville

Sidney Williams Hut, cnr Bundock and Short streets, Belgian Gardens, Townsville

RAAF Maintenance Igloo Workshop, 142 Bundock Street, Belgian Gardens, Townsville

Koala US Ordnance Depot, Igloo Warehouse No.10, cnr Vidler and Hogan streets, Stuart, Townsville

RAAF No.8 Stores Depot, (Army Stores Depot), Flinders Highway, Macrossan

Timber ‘wool store’ igloo warehouse type W3; Bellman hangars (x3)

Sellheim Siding, Railway Goods Sheds (2), Sellheim

Igloo Warehouse, Adit Engineering Workshop, Harris Lane, Charters Towers

Trinity Wharf Stevedore Warehouses (1, 2 and 3) Wharf Street, Cairns

FNQEB Quonset Stores (3) McLeod Street, Cairns (Two demolished 2007)

US Army LCVP Boat Assembly Warehouse, Incitec Pivot Ltd, 5 Dutton Street, Cairns

US Quonset shed, Caltex Shed cnr Hartley and Dutton Street, Cairns
Igloos, workshops and warehouses (cont.)

US Army Workshops, cnr Hartley and Hassell Street, Portsmith, Cairns

Allied Works Council Workshop and Office, Cairns City Council Store, Magazine Street, Stratford, Cairns

Rocky Creek Igloo Theatre Hall, Kennedy Highway, Rocky Creek

Australian Defence Canteen Services Igloo Warehouse, Merriland Hall, cnr Robert and Mazlin Streets, Atherton

Golden Grove Ration Store Sheds (4), between Grant and Grove Streets, Atherton

Atherton Performing Arts Theatre, Igloo Hall, relocated Robert Street, Atherton

Australian Army Aerated Water Factory, Hopkins Street, Atherton

Demolished 2006

Advanced Ordnance Depot Igloo Warehouse slabs, Griffin Road, Tolga

Large concrete slabs x7

AOD Igloo Warehouse Slab (Residential Property), Tate Road, Tolga

Sidney Williams Hut, 395 Sheridan Street, Edge Hill, Cairns

Ration Store Shed, (relocated) 22b Evans Street, Atherton

Sidney Williams Shed, (relocated from Tolga), Hasties Road, Atherton

Atherton Performing Arts Theatre, Igloo Hall, relocated Robert Street, Atherton

Sidney Williams Hut, 395 Sheridan Street, Edge Hill, Cairns

Sidney Williams Hut, 395 Sheridan Street, Edge Hill, Cairns

Australian Defence Canteen Services Igloo Warehouse, Merriland Hall, cnr Robert and Mazlin Streets, Atherton

Ration Store Shed, (relocated) 22b Evans Street, Atherton

Sidney Williams Hut, 395 Sheridan Street, Edge Hill, Cairns

Advanced Ordnance Depot Igloo Warehouse slabs, Griffin Road, Tolga

Large concrete slabs x7
Igloos, workshops and warehouses (cont.)

Brookhill Explosives Depot, Flinders Highway, Roseneath, Townsville

Kangaroo US Ordnance Depot Site, Bruce Highway, Kurukan, Townsville district

RAAF 3 Replenishing Centre Ordnance Stores, Towers Hill, Charters Towers
32 Concrete explosives stores; Pugh’s Adit bomb store

Queenah Explosives Depot, Swallow Road, White Rock, Cairns

Stratford Explosives Store, Magazine Street, Stratford, Cairns

US Ammunition Depot, Red Hill, Bruce Highway, Woree, Cairns

Ammunition Store slabs (Residential Properties), Equestrian Drive, Tolga

Kalunga Reinforcement Depot, Flaggy Creek Road, Herberton area

RAAF 19 Replenishing Centre, Talmoi Wool Scour, Flinders Highway, Richmond district
Concrete igloo stores (9); Mess and kitchen slab; Airmen’s quarters site; Laboratory; Talmoi Woolscour ruins

Field Ammunition Depot, Baronta Siding, Flinders Highway, Hughenden district
Railway siding platform; Laboratory ruins; Camp officers’ mess, tank stand footings, ablutions slabs; Administration building footings; Ammunition store slabs (About 95 store slabs)
Fuel stores

RAAF 9 Inland Aviation Fuel Depot, Norman Dungavell Drive, Charters Towers
Concrete encased fuel tanks (6); Office building; Pump station

RAN Oil Fuel Installation, Collins Avenue, Edge Hill, Cairns
Concrete fuel tanks (3) and steel fuel tanks (2)

RAAF 23 Inland Aviation Fuel Depot, Phillips Street, Cloncurry
Underground fuel tanks (4)

US Motor Transport Fuel Depot, Alba Siding, Hughenden–Winton Road, Hughenden district

Military camps

Jezzine Army Barracks Huts, Isley Street, North Ward, Townsville

North Ward Drill Hall Buildings, 4-6 Oxley Street cnr Mitchell Street, North Ward, Townsville
Drill hall; Office and stores building; Quartermasters store; Residence

Barracks Foundations, Landsborough Street, North Ward, Townsville

Sellheim Military Recreation Hut (relocated), Phillipson Road, Charters Towers
Sellheim Military Camp, Flinders Highway, Sellheim
Kitchen hut; Cricket pitch; Sewage filter plant; Detention centre site; Pump shed; Convalescent depot slabs

Sidney Williams Hut (relocated), Australian Women’s Land Army Camp Site, Home Hill Showgrounds Home Hill

Rodeo, US Army Remount Depot, Rocky Springs, Townsville area.
Remount camp kitchen and ablution slabs; US Army stone weirs (5+) and inscriptions

Cluden Racecourse Grandstand, Racecourse Road, Cluden, Townsville
Detention Centre Cell, Duckworth Street, Garbutt, Townsville

North Ward Drill Hall Buildings, 4-6 Oxley Street cnr Mitchell Street, North Ward, Townsville
Drill hall; Office and stores building; Quartermasters store; Residence

Barracks Foundations, Landsborough Street, North Ward, Townsville

Sellheim Military Recreation Hut (relocated), Phillipson Road, Charters Towers
Sellheim Military Camp, Flinders Highway, Sellheim
Kitchen hut; Cricket pitch; Sewage filter plant; Detention centre site; Pump shed; Convalescent depot slabs

Sidney Williams Hut (relocated), Australian Women’s Land Army Camp Site, Home Hill Showgrounds Home Hill

Rodeo, US Army Remount Depot, Rocky Springs, Townsville area.
Remount camp kitchen and ablution slabs; US Army stone weirs (5+) and inscriptions

Cluden Racecourse Grandstand, Racecourse Road, Cluden, Townsville
Detention Centre Cell, Duckworth Street, Garbutt, Townsville
Military camps (cont.)

Italian Prisoner of War Camp Sites, Home Hill–Kirkinie Road, Home Hill district

Australian (Chemical Warfare) 1 Field Experimental Station, Gunyarra Siding, Proserpine district
Administration huts (2) and slabs; Camp slabs and mess fireplace; Ablution slabs

Cairns Showground Grandstand, Mulgrave Road, Parramatta Park, Cairns

Girl Guides & Scout Hall, Robert Street, Atherton

Army Butcher Shop, (now a House), Main Street, Tolga

Wongabel Army Camp, Wongabel Road, Atherton area

6th Division 2/3 Infantry Battalion Camp, Possumwood Farm, Longland Gap Road, Wondecla

Jungle Warfare Training Area, Longland Pocket State Forest, off Kennedy Highway, Longland Gap

5 Farm Company, Kairi State Farm, Black Gully Road, Kairi area
Silos; Dairy; Feed shed slab; No.1 poultry shed section

Power Station or Pump Station Engine Footings, Burtons Road, Tinaroo

Fireplaces and Slabs, Lake Tinaroo, Browning Road, Tinaroo

Army Field Bakery Slab, Grigg Street, Ravenshoe

Ravenshoe Rifle Range, Old Kennedy Highway, Ravenshoe

Large Fireplace, Tinaroo Falls Dam Road, Tinaroo
Military camps (cont.)

Ravenshoe Military Camp, Millstream National Park, Kennedy Highway, Ravenshoe area
Ravenshoe igloo theatre slab; Mess fireplaces, 2/11 Field Ambulance Camp; Rock-edged paths; Gravelled roads; Log bridges over culverts; Parade ground; Detention compound

Army Mess Fireplaces, Millstream Parade & Kennedy Highway, Ravenshoe area

Officers’ Recreation Hut Fireplace, Mareeba Scout Hall, Kilpatrick Street, Mareeba

Army Mess Fireplaces, Millstream Parade & Kennedy Highway, Ravenshoe area

Australian-US Army Bakery, off Lockhart River Road, Iron Range
Concrete slab and oven footings

RAAF Radar Station Camp, Grassy Hill, Cooktown

Officers’ Recreation Hut Fireplace, Kilpatrick Street, Mareeba

Water Reservoir & Workshop, Portland Roads, off Portland Roads–Iron Range Road, Iron Range district

26th Infantry Battalion Beach Defences, King Point, Horn Island

34th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Camp, Double Hill, Horn Island

5th Machine Gun Battalion Camp, Horn Island

157th Light Anti-Aircraft Coy Camp, Horn Island Camp; Swimming pool

Goods Coastal Battery Camp Site, Quoin Point, Goods Island
Officers’ mess slab and garden; Kitchen slab; Signals room slab; Other building slabs; Rock fish trap

Cape River Meat Works, Flinders Highway, Cape River
Stove footings; Mess slab; Grave

Roger Marks
Hospitals

US 44th General Hospital, Black River, Church and Nora Road, Black River

RAAF No.6 Medical Convalescent Unit, Tennis Court and Weir, Mount Spec Road, Paluma

2/2 & 2/6 Australian General Hospital, Rocky Creek Siding, Kennedy Highway, Rocky Creek

Atherton Hospital and QCWA Haven Hut, Jack Street, Atherton

Atherton Hospital Houses (2), Jack Street, Atherton

Hospital Wards (2), (Relocated from Rocky Creek), 25-7 Evans Street, Atherton

Hospital Ward (Relocated from Rocky Creek), cnr Grigg and Wakooka Street, Ravenshoe

Cooktown Hospital (Relocated), May Street, Cooktown

102nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station, Skull Creek, Cape York Ward slab; Patients' kitchen slab; Sisters' latrine

2/2 Australian General Hospital, Watten Siding, Hughenden–Winton Road, Hughenden district

Hospitals (requisitioned buildings)

US 12 Station Hospital, Chapman Street Houses Nos. 1-33, Mysterton, Townsville

RAAF 3 Medical Receiving Station, Currajong House, (Relocated) 5 Castling Street, West End, Townsville

RAAF No.6 Medical Convalescent Unit Cottages, Mount Spec Road, Paluma Hotel Australia (Ivy Cottage); Grip of the Gog Cottage
Hospitals (requisitioned buildings) (cont.)

US 84 Station Hospital, St Gabriel’s school, 29 Gordon Street, Charters Towers

RAAF Nos. 11 and 20 Squadron Hospital House, 16 Poole Street, Bowen

5 Australian Camp Hospital and Land Headquarters Medical Research Unit, North Cairns State School, cnr Sheridan and Arthur Street, Edge Hill, Cairns

US 63 Station Hospital Shop Buildings, Norman Street, Gordonvale
Gordonvale Hotel (operating theatre and surgical wards); Doctor’s surgery and shop; Commercial Hotel (casualty and outpatient wards)

2/1 Australian Convalescent Depot, Lake Barrine Tea House, Yungaburra

US 2 Station Hospital, Mareeba State School, cnr Atherton and Constance Street, Mareeba
Operating theatre; Dental clinic; Atherton street Buildings; Lavatory block

US 33rd Surgical Hospital, Cloncurry Shire Hall, Scarr Street, Cloncurry

War cemeteries

Townsville War Cemetery, Evans Street, Belgian Gardens, Townsville

Charters Towers War Cemetery, Gregory Development Road, Charters Towers

Cairns War Cemetery, James Street, Manunda, Cairns
War cemeteries (cont.)

- Pioneer Cemetery, McLeod Street, Cairns

Atherton War Cemetery, Rockley Road, Atherton

Requisitioned buildings (other)

- Great Northern Hotel, 500 Flinders Street, Townsville
- US No.1 Depot Store, Lion Brewery, 719-41 Flinders Street, cnr Knapp Street, Townsville
- Army Post Office, English Scottish & Australian Bank Building, Henlien & Company Building, 408-10 Flinders Mall, Townsville
- RAAF Warehouse and Offices, Dalgetty Building, 1-13 Sturt Street cnr Denham Street, Townsville
- US Officers’ Quarters, Dance Hall, Employnet Building, 164-80 Sturt Street, Townsville
- Rooney’s Warehouse, 241-45 Flinders Street East, Townsville
- Agora House Warehouse, 224 Flinders Street East, Townsville
- WAAAF Quarters, St Patrick’s College Convent, 45 The Strand, North Ward, Townsville
- The Rocks Guest House and Air Raid Shelter, 20 Cleveland Terrace, Townsville
Requisitioned buildings (other) (cont.)

US Officers’ Residence, Duncrogen House, 8 Cleveland Terrace, Townsville

USAAF Officers’ Quarters, House, 23 Hale Street, Townsville

RAAF No.8 PRU Pilot Quarters, House, 38 Stokes Street, Townsville

USAAF No.6 Photographic Unit, Cheviot Flats, 630 Sturt Street, Townsville

US 208th Coastal Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) Quarters, South Townsville State School, 78 Tuly Street, South Townsville

RAAF Post Office, Townsville School of Arts, 188-210 Stanley Street cnr Walker Street, Townsville

US Officers’ Mess & Quarters, Houses, 33-35 Stagpole Street, West End, Townsville

HQ RAAF 3 Replenishment Centre, Selassie House, 4 Park Lane, Hyde Park, Townsville

Australian Officers’ Mess, Sea View Hotel, 56 The Strand, North Ward, Townsville

US Officers’ Mess, Queens Hotel, cnr The Strand and Wickham Street, Townsville

Misthaven Guest House, off Mount Spec Road, Paluma

Cavilcade Guest House, Mount Spec Road, Paluma

Caledonian Service Club, Caledonian House, 108-10 Gill Street, Charters Towers

USAAF 3rd BG ‘The Last Slug’ Club, former Phillips Residence, 26 Aland Street, Charters Towers

(Next property at 28 Aland Street is in original condition)

All Souls St Gabriel’s School, Flinders Highway, Charters Towers
Gymnasium; Sports oval grandstand; Residences (2); School building
Requisitioned buildings (other) (cont.)

RAAF Squadron Headquarters, Grand View Hotel, cnr Dalrymple and Herbert Street, Bowen

RAAF Barracks and Mess, Club Hotel, cnr Herbert and Powell Street, Bowen

Station Headquarters, Shop, 10 Herbert Street, Bowen

RAAF Store, Shop, 21-23 Herbert Street, Bowen

RAAF Instrument Shop, Shop, 28 Herbert Street, Bowen

Airmens’ Barracks, Shop, 35B Herbert Street, Bowen

RAAF Photographic Section & Airmens’ Barracks, House, 24 Dalrymple Street, Bowen

Airmens’ Barracks, Houses, 22, 26, 28 Dalrymple Street, Bowen

Airmens’ Barracks, House, 33 George Street, Bowen

RAAF Instrument Shop, Shop, 28 Herbert Street, Bowen

Airmens’ Barracks, Houses, 32, 34 George Street, Bowen

RAAF Parachute Section, Houses, 65, 67, 69 Powell Street, Bowen

Sergeants’ Mess and Barracks, House, 35 George Street, Bowen

Airmens’ Barracks, Houses, 32, 34 George Street, Bowen

RAAF Parachute Section, Houses, 65, 67, 69 Powell Street, Bowen

Hides Hotel, Officers’ Quarters, 87 Lake Street cnr Shields Street, Cairns

RAAF No.20 Squadron Officers’ Quarters, Empire Hotel, cnr Abbott and Wharf Street, Cairns

Aquatic Club, Cairns Yacht Club, 4 Wharf Street, Cairns
Requisitioned buildings (other) (cont.)

Trocadero Dance Hall, Mazlin Building, cnr Shields and Lake Street, Cairns

US Intelligence Office, Bolands Building, cnr Spence and Lake Street, Cairns

Jack & Newell Building, 29 Wharf Street, Cairns

USN Barracks, Houses, 146-52 Martyn Street, Paramatta Park, Cairns

RAAF Nos. 11 and 20 Squadron Officers’ Quarters, 141 Esplanade cnr Minnie Street, Cairns

RAAF Nos. 11 and 20 Squadron Officers’ Quarters, 141 Esplanade cnr Minnie Street, Cairns

American Red Cross Services Club, Central Hotel, Gordon Street, Gordonvale

Officers’ Club and Mess, Barron Valley Hotel, Main Street, Atherton

USN Quarters, Diabetic Centre, House, 249 Lake Street, Cairns

Lake Eacham Hotel, 6-8 Kehoe Place, Yungaburra

Officers’ Quarters and Mess, Ravenshoe Hotel, Hotel Tully Falls, Grigg Street, Ravenshoe

USN PX Store, Government Assay Office, cnr Constance and Hort Street, Mareeba

RAAF No. 5 Squadron Photographic Reconnaissance Unit, Farm House and Tobacco Barn, off Ray Road, Mareeba

Supply Store, St Joseph’s Church and School, Railway Avenue, Mount Isa
Other associated places

Townsville Railway Station Offices, 502–792 Flinders Street, Townsville

St Patrick’s School Bell Tower & Bell, Nelson Street, South Townsville

Townsville Customs House, Department of Interior, Works & Service Branch, The Strand, Townsville

Japanese Bomb Crater, DPI Farm, off Abbott Street, Oonoonba, Townsville

Giru Hotel, cnr Drysdale and Bird Street Giru

Woodstock QCWA Hall, Old Flinders Highway, Woodstock

Anzac House Façade, Cairns RSL Club, cnr Esplanade and Florence Street, Cairns

Palace Theatre, Lake Street, Cairns

Cairns Plywood Factory, cnr Kenny and Draper Street, Cairns

Rex Theatre, 302–4 Sheridan Street, Cairns

WWII Brothel, Shop, 99a Grafton Street, Cairns

Old Barron River Bridge Pylons, Rinks Close, Stratford, Cairns

Air Raid Shelter, Norman Street, Gordonvale

US 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, Parachute Packing Shed Site, No.1 Tennis Court, cnr Gordon and Mill Street, Gordonvale

Lyric Theatre, RSL Memorial Hall, 94 Gordon Street, Gordonvale
Other associated places (cont.)

Mountain View Hotel, Little Mulgrave, 864 Gillies Highway, Gordonvale area

Air Raid Shelter, Anzac Park, 107-11 Munro Street, Babinda

Military Water Tank adapted as a House, High Street, Atherton

Stone Wall around dance floor, Williams Lodge, 16-20 Cedar Street, Yungaburra

Ravenshoe School of Arts, cnr Grigg and Wakooa Street, Ravenshoe

Cook Shire Hall, cnr Helen and Walker Street, Cooktown

Ma's Café Site, Criterion Hotel Fireplace, Charlotte Street, Cooktown

Portland Roads Jetty Site, Iron Range district

Mutee Head Jetty Site, Cape York

Red Island Point Jetty Site, Seisia, Cape York

Thursday Island Post Office, Douglas Street, Thursday Island

Water Tank Bases (4) off Airport Road, Horn Island

Water Tank Base, Outie Street, Wasaga Village, Horn Island

Goods Island Jetty

Goods Island Lighthouse

Hockney house ruins

Goods Island Lighthouse

Light station, battery shed and tramway
1. RAAF No.1 Wireless Station Command and Signals Centre, Townsville. ‘Reinforced Concrete Building No. W 142’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T226/1, 4 May 1942.
2. RAAF Operational Intelligence Centre & Area Combined HQ, Townsville.
‘Reinforced Concrete Building for RAAF, Building No. 81’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing, T171, 4 April 1942.
3. **RAAF Operational Intelligence Centre and Area Combined HQ, Townsville.**

‘Reinforced Concrete Building for RAAF, Building No. 81’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T247/1, 14 May 1942.
4. RAAF Operational Intelligence Centre and Area Combined HQ, Townsville.

'Townsville Qld. RAAF Building No. 81. Lights, Power, Ducts'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J157, Drawing ET 115, 23 April 1942.
5. Decoy House on Operational Intelligence Centre and Area Combined HQ, Townsville.
‘Building 81 Subsidiary Buildings’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, I153, Drawing T456, 7 August 1942.
6. RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector HQ Main Plot, Filter Rooms and Galleries, Townsville.

"3 F/S HQ, Townsville. Light, Power & Clocks"
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J157, Drawing ET140, 2 February 1943.
7. **US Army Command Post, Underground Room, Castle Hill Road, Townsville.**

‘Command Post, USA FIA, Townsville, Q’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T221, 30 April 1942.
8. Australian Army Signal Centre, Roseneath, Townsville.
   Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 13 August 2006.
9. Magnetic Island Coastal Battery Layout, Townsville.

‘Site Plan’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T675, 8 October 1942.
10. Magnetic Island Coastal Battery, Port War Signal Station and Command Post.
‘Sketch for Combined PWSS, Lookout Post & Command Post’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1064, 8 February 1943.
11. Cape Pallarenda Coastal Battery, Gun Emplacement, Townsville.
‘Proposed Coastal Artillery, Pallarenda Point’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T650a, 2 October 1942.
12. False Cape Coastal Battery, Gun Emplacement, Cairns.

‘Coastal Artillery False Cape’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1033, 25 January 1943.
13. False Cape Coastal Battery, Command Post, Cairns.

‘Command Post False Cape’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1220, 17 April 1943.
14. Turtle (‘Q’) Coastal Battery, Turtle Head, Hammond Island.
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 19 September 2006.
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 19 September 2006.

'Site Plan AA Battery'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T441a, 3 August 1942.
17. Iron Range Airfield, 36th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Gun Station 447, Claudie River.
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 9 September 2006.
18. RAAF 211 Radar Station, Charlies Hill (near Home Hill).
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 24 June 2007.
19. RAAF 52 Radar Station, LW/AW Tower, Mutee Head.
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 12 September 2006.
20. Garbutt Air Base, Building Layout, Townsville.

‘Garbutt Aerodrome, Showing Water & Sewerage Reticulation. Storm Water, Drains, Fire Fighting Equipment’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J156, Drawing T358, 24 June 1947.

‘Diagrammatic layout Garbutt. USA Air Corps’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1736, 11 December 1944.
22. Iron Range Advanced Operational Base Runway Layout, Cape York Peninsula.

'Iron Range'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J156, Drawing T355 (1944-45 no date).

‘Higgins Field N.Q. RAAF Landing Ground’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, 156, Drawing T354 (1944-45 no date).
24. Horn Island Airfield, Advanced Operational Base. Command Posts, Camp Sites, Dispersal Areas and Installations.
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 18 September 2006.

‘Locality Plan’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T538, 6 September 1942.
27. ‘Karumba Flying Boat Base Layout RAAF’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing QTA2158, 3 April 1952.
29. Igloo Warehouse, Timber Box-Truss Arch Detail.

'Igloo Type Warehouse, No. 2 Base Section Engineers, USASOS, SWPA'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T412, 31 July 1942.
30. Igloo Warehouse, Timber Box-Truss Arch Detail.

‘Igloo Warehouse for USASOS, SWPA’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, 1153, Drawing T656, (August-October 1942 no date).
31. RAAF No.3 Fighter Sector HQ, Ancillary Timber Buildings, Townsville.
‘Buildings No.3 F/S’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T729, 23 October 1942.
32. Koala Ordnance Depot, Igloo Warehouse Layout, Townsville.

‘Plan of Koala Ordnance Depot (US Army)’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, Drawing ST543, 21 June 1944.
33. Army Post Office and Advanced Supply Depot Warehouse, South Townsville

'Sketch Plan. Proposed Store'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1060, (January-February 1943 no date)
34. Australian Advanced Ordnance Depot, Tolga.

‘AOD & AEME Installations, Tolga’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, 1156, Drawing T167, 17 May 1944.
35. RAAF No.3 Replenishing Centre, Charters Towers.

'Site Plan. No.3 Replenishing Centre'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T139, 21 March 1942.

‘Woree. US Navy Ammo Dump’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, Folio 71, 16 October 1945.
37. Australian Field Ammunition Depot, Baronta (near Hughenden).

'73 Aust. FAD Amn Storehouses and Facilities'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, I/B/11, (no date).
38. Australian Field Ammunition Depot, Baronta (near Hughenden).
‘73 Aust. FAD Camp & Administration Area’
AA (Qld), BP378/1, I/B/11, (no date).
39. RAAF 19 Replenishing Centre, Concrete Igloo Store, Talmoi (near Richmond).

'2000 lb Bomb Store Talmoi'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1296, 18 June 1943.
40. Jungle Warfare Training Area, Longland Pocket State Forest, Atherton Tableland
Howard Pearce, Measured Drawing, 22 August 2006.
41. Sellheim Military Camp and Convalescent Depot (near Charters Towers).
'Military Camp Sellheim'
AA (Qld), BP378/1, Folio 49 (no date).
42. Chemical Warfare Field Experimental Station, Gunyarra (near Proserpine).

‘Experimental Station Proserpine Q.’

AA (Qld), BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1685, 22 September 1944.
43. **Townsville Showgrounds Military Camp.**

‘Showgrounds Camp Townsville’
BP378/1, I/T/1, (no date).
44. Australian Army Canteen Service Igloo Warehouse and Field Bakery, Atherton.
‘Atherton Showgrounds Layout Plan’
BP378/1, I/A/37, 29 September 1944.
45. Italian Prisoner of War Camp, near Home Hill.

'Layout Plan POW Camp Home Hill'
BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1542, 1 February 1944.
46. US Army Remount Depot, Rocky Springs (near Townsville).

'Site Plan'
BP378/1, J153, Drawing T881, 7 December 1942.
47. *Australian Farm Company, Kairi State Farm Buildings.*

'S Aust. Farm Coy Camp Area'

BP378/1, I/K/74, 30 August 1945.
48.2/2 Australian General Hospital, Wattten (near Hughenden).

‘Proposed Reticulation at 2nd AGH at Wattten’
BP378/1, J153, Drawing T452, 5 August 1942.
49.2/2 Australian General Hospital, Rocky Creek (near Atherton).

'Rocky Creek, First 1200 Bed AGH'
BP378/1, I/R/12, 25 November 1944.
50. Sewerage Treatment Plant, 2/2 & 2/6 Australian General Hospital, Rocky Creek.

‘Rocky Creek Sewerage Proposed Sludge Pump at Treatment Plant’
BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1250, 13 May 1943.
51. US 13 Station Hospital Aitkenvale, Townsville.

'Layout 13th Station Hospital Aitkenvale Townsville Q.'
BP378/1, 1/USA/A6, 23 November 1942.
52. US 44th General Hospital, Black River (near Townsville).
‘Black River Hospital Hut Identification Unit No.2’
BP378/4, J153, Drawing T1500, 2 December 1943.
53. 116th Australian General Hospital (former US Army Hospital), Jungara, Cairns.

'Layout Plan Jungara Hospital'
BP378/1, I/I/13, 9 June 1944.
54. 102nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station, Skull Creek, Cape York.
‘90 Bed Hospital Scull Creek’
BP378/1, J153, Drawing T1585, (April 1944 no date).
55. **US 84 Station Hospital, St Gabriel’s school, Charters Towers.**

‘Hospital for US Army St Gabriels Charters Towers’

BP378/1, J153, Drawing T241/1, 8 May 1942.
56. US 2 Station Hospital, Mareeba State School.

‘USAFIA Hospital Mareeba’
BP378/1, J153, Drawing T364, 8 July 1942.
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