



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wednesday, 8 February 2012

## **VETERANS RETURN TO SINGAPORE 70 YEARS AFTER THE FALL**

The Repatriation Commissioner for the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Major General Mark Kelly, AO, DSC, announced today that six Second World War veterans will return to Malaysia and Singapore to remember their service, and those who fell 70 years ago during the fall of Singapore.

"This was a campaign which brought great suffering and sacrifice to Australians and was one of the defining moments in Australia's efforts during the war in the Pacific," MAJGEN Kelly said.

"The Malayan Campaign, which ended with the fall of Singapore, lasted just 68 days from 8 December 1941 to 15 February 1942," he said.

"It was one of the most costly campaigns in which Australians were involved, with over 20,000 directly affected.

"Following the surrender of the Allied forces to the Japanese, an unprecedented 15,000 Australians became Prisoners of War (POW). Sadly close to 8000 Australians lost their lives at camps including Changi and Sandakan, while others perished working on the Thai-Burma Railway.

"POW deaths in the Second World War accounted for nearly a quarter of Australia's fatal casualties."

MAJGEN Kelly said Australian troops suffered harsh conditions while in captivity but were renowned for their great fortitude, resilience and humour as prisoners of the Japanese.

"This will be an emotional journey for the veterans, retracing their steps through Malaysia and Singapore, including visiting Changi where many of them were held as prisoners," he said.

The six veterans will represent all Australians who served and died during the campaign. They will visit wartime locations including Gemas and Parit Sulong in Malaysia and Changi and Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore.

An Australian Memorial Service will be held at Kranji War Cemetery on 15 February – 70 years to the day when Allied forces laid down their arms and Singapore fell to the Japanese.

The mission party will depart Sydney on Monday 13 February.

**Media inquiries:** 02 6289 6203 or 0428 805 578

**Editor's note:** A list of veteran representatives follows.

Follow the mission on Facebook at *DVA Aus* or on Twitter at *@dvaaus*. Images and biographies of veterans, historical images and factsheets are available at [www.dva.gov.au/media](http://www.dva.gov.au/media)

Any mission inquiries contact Erin White at [erin.white@dva.gov.au](mailto:erin.white@dva.gov.au)

## **Veteran representatives**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Location</b>
Mr Derek Arthur Holyoake	HMAS <i>Hobart</i>	Karabar, NSW
Mr Gordon Butler	2/15th Field Regiment	Hunters Hill, NSW
Mr Roydon Charles Cornford	2/19 Battalion	Vincentia, NSW
Mr Peter Dimopoulos	2/4 Machine Gun Battalion	Jarrahdale, WA
Mr William Ennis	2/30 Battalion	Lindfield, NSW
Mr George Robert Smith	2/18 Battalion	Pingelly, WA