REMEMBERING DARWIN’S DARKEST DAY

19 February 2013

Chief Minister Adam Giles today joined hundreds of Territorians in commemorating the 72nd anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin.

“The 19th of February 1942 was the end of an era for Australia. It was the day innocence was lost and the day war came to Australian shores," Mr Giles said.

“On Bombing of Darwin Day we commemorate the hundreds who died in raids across Northern Australia and thank all those who fought to defend the country during World War II.

“The bombings changed Darwin forever and we must never forget the suffering endured by those caught up in the attacks.

“Darwin is a defence town and it makes me proud to see so many Territorians turning out to pay their respects despite the wet season weather.”

The day was declared a national day of observance in December 2011 by the Governor General and is now officially known as Bombing of Darwin Day.

“New generations of Australians are now learning about this difficult chapter in Darwin’s history,” Mr Giles said.

“It is only through understanding the true horror of war that future generations can hope to avoid its pain and suffering.”

As part of today’s commemorations, Mr Giles laid a wreath at both the USS Peary memorial and the Darwin Cenotaph.

“Close to half of those who died were Americans, mostly on board the USS Peary, which took five direct hits when the Japanese aircraft launched their surprise attack,” Mr Giles.

“It was moving to see the US Consul-General joining today’s commemorations alongside the Japanese Ambassador to Australia.

“Our relationships were forged in war but both countries are now among our most trusted friends and trading partners. We have come a long way from the dark days of 1942.”

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