

2009 Opening Address for the “Remembrance Day Contest”.

Hello listeners I am WIA Director Robert Broomhead VK3DN. In this years RD address we will hear from the WIA President Michael Own VK3KI, Lieutenant Commander Peter Ellis, RAN, VK1PE, Brigadier Wayne Budd, (Commander of Australian Forces in Afghanistan), from East Timor Lieutenant Chris Megaw VK4FR, from Queensland Sunshine Coast Trevor Taege VK4BAT talks to Al Carter VK4LT,

Would all stations please note that the Opening Ceremony will conclude with the WIA President Michael Owen VK3KI formally declaring the contest is a go, and not at the end of the one minutes silence.

Here now is WIA President Michael Owen his opening address.

Welcome to the Remembrance Day Contest for 2009, a proud annual event held in mid August every year to salute and commemorate those brave Australians Service personnel who paid the ultimate sacrifice, their lives, during World War II.

This year we saw with much sorrow the passing of Australia's last surviving Serviceman from World War One.

In keeping with tradition, we have invited a prominent Australian to declare the annual contest open, and as the years grind consistently on, it somehow seems appropriate that we also speak with surviving Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who so resolutely protected our great nation against the huge numbers of enemy who sought to subjugate our lands. We also take this opportunity to speak with some of our current serving members of the Armed Forces.

Our special guest for this years opening address is:- Brigadier Wayne Budd, who is going to be, at the time of the RD Contest, the Commander of Australian forces in Afghanistan.

In our Nations Capital City here is Lieutenant Commander Peter Ellis RAN VK1PE

Hello, listeners. I am Lieutenant Commander Peter Ellis, VK1PE, introducing this years Remembrance Day Contest speaker. From July, he will assuming the position as Commander of the Joint Task Force commanding the Middle East Area of Operations, Brigadier Wayne Budd has been the in-country Commander of Australian forces in Afghanistan. He is a civil engineer by training, and is the head-of-corps of the Army Engineering Corps. Before going to Afghanistan, he headed the project team building the new Defence headquarters complex just outside Canberra.

In a war zone there is no real rest, as the rivalry between opposing forces makes each moment potentially decisive.

Ahead is 24 hours of fierce interstate rivalry, and heaps of fun and comradeship, and all of it tinged with the solemn memory of fallen mates and fellow Australians from so long ago.

For the younger members, World War Two seems an impossibly long time ago. It is, after all, fully 70 years since the six awful years of the war – the last truly global conflict – saw literally millions of people perish in multiple theatres of battle. For so many older amateurs though, the years 1939 to 1945 live on as starkly in the memory as if those ghastly events happened only yesterday.

The annual Remembrance Day Contest, Australia's biggest annual Amateur Radio event, is our opportunity to remember, and to think with undiminished gratitude, about the thousands of young Australians who responded to the call to arms so long ago – and, in particular, to the brave members of this country's Amateur Radio fraternity who paid the supreme sacrifice in the protection of their nation, and the freedom for which it still so proudly stands.

At the conclusion of this opening ceremonial broadcast we call for one full minute of radio silence. It is our opportunity to think about and revere those very stoic and brave men who were killed in the theatre of battle by forces which must, to them, have seemed almost impossible to vanquish. But, good did finally triumph over evil, although at a dreadfully high cost in human terms.

Everything we so easily take for granted today, in this community of plenty, is due in no small part to the great efforts of so very many people. It is truly vital that we do not lose sight of their selfless accomplishments, and do not ever diminish or allow ourselves to forget their amazing feats of courage against sometimes overwhelming odds.

I'm told that there are still plenty of World War Two veterans active in Amateur Radio, but their ranks are steadily thinning. They still cover all of the forces involved at the front, though: Air Force, Army and Navy, plus the Merchant Marine, as well as many of the oft-forgotten women who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep them and the nation fed, clothed and armed. And just as history's heroes have done since time immemorial, they don't complain about the privations of the time, and they don't often blow their own trumpets about what they achieved.... I've talked to lots of veterans, and it is a very rare occasion indeed that they will even talk about the ugly events of that awful period in world history.

Yet, you are about to hear from some of them. For many years of the annual Remembrance Day Contest, prominent Australians have been asked to speak during these opening broadcasts. We have heard from a former head of the Armed Services, from a Prime Minister and even from a Governor-General, but for this year's Remembrance Day Contest it is more appropriate than ever to hear once again from a few of the surviving servicemen who so very proudly served their nation in the global conflict of World War Two.

We also hear once again from a few currently-serving Australian personnel, as our forces are currently proudly represented around the world, in Afghanistan where I am serving as the Australian commander, Iraq, East Timor and elsewhere. These groups of men and women service personnel are also very proud to fly the Australian flag.

So listen closely to the reminiscences of these brave Australians.... And, please enjoy yourself as you take part in this year's Remembrance Day Contest.

That was Brigadier Wayne Budd, the Commander of Australian forces in Afghanistan. Now, while this contest runs for a full 24 hours, we really don't expect many of you to operate continuously for the full length of it. Indeed, some of you may only be able to stay on the air for an hour or two, or even less. That's fine, for all of you are very welcome, even if you feel unable to submit a contest log afterwards.

Thank you to Brigadier Wayne Budd and Lieutenant Commander Peter Ellis, our next special guest speaker is currently serving in our overseas conflicts, we also hear from former WWII ex Service personnel, as they relate to their former activities whilst on active service.

Now hear from Lieutenant Chris Megaw VK4FR who is back on active service in East Timor

G'Day from the Australian Armed Forces encampment here in East Timor. My name is Chris Megaw, VK4FR, but up here I am better known as Lieutenant Megaw, who pilots an Australian Army Helicopter.

This is the second time I have been invited to have a chat with you for the annual R.D. Contest opening – and yes, I'm still here in tropical East Timor.

The Australian contingent up here goes quietly about its work. You may not hear much about us in the media these days, but there are actually quite a few of us working hard up here – about **600** at the present time, all of them proud Aussie men and women tasked with helping the locals in a range of diverse functions covering education, construction, manpower and support – and there's plenty to do as the people of the young independent country work to build this place, so we're helping our nearby northern neighbor be the strong, happy and healthy place its people want.

The R.D. Contest reminds us with recognition and attention of the brave souls who fought against overwhelming odds to save Australia during the Second World War. Send me back some 70 years or so as an Aussie pilot and I might have flown a fighter, a transport plane or even a "Biscuit Bomber". Remember them? Even in times of global conflict, people need to eat. You'd load a real workhorse – a Douglas DC-3 we called the Dakota – with tons of provisions including Bikkies, and shovel them out over villages as we flew along. Australia's Biscuit Bombers were famous around the Pacific Rim, and particularly so up here to the north of Australia, not so far from here at all. They didn't have helicopters in World War 2, but you'd use a "Helo" today for such a vital task..

Sure, we might use different technologies to the diggers of World War 2, but I can assure you that every Australian serving up here is a proud representative of Australia and its world-class, professional armed forces. Every one of our crew here is a highly trained member of a cohesive team of specialists working in multiple fields of endeavor.

Last year I spoke of how the Western World of the late 1940's was a very different world to that of today. It was a world recovering from the pain of a global conflict which had been literally **MILLIONS** lost their lives. It is unfortunate we still have some conflicts around the globe involving our fellow country Men and Women.

Nobody will ever know precisely how many electronics and wireless enthusiasts offered their skills to their respective armed forces, but we **DO** know how many Australians, New Zealanders and Papua New Guineas failed to return from their nation-building service. Some of our boys had served in ghastly conditions, across all the services, and right across the globe, unselfish in their determination to protect their precious home soil.

As this address goes to air we still have some of our modern day personnel participating in conflicts in various parts of the globe, we ask that you remember that **these** people are there putting their lives on the line, protecting our freedom and way of life.

The RD Contest is addictive fun, and so it **should be**. We run it at this time of year because it is the weekend closest to Victory in the Pacific, which marked the conclusion of hostilities in the Pacific area and the cessation of all hostilities of the Second World War. And so to today's special function.

Please remember our diggers – our fallen mates and comrades over the 24 hours of the annual Remembrance Day Contest, and when you have the chance, say G'Day to some of our current crop of proud service men and women, still proud to wear the famous Aussie uniform, maybe with that famous Aussie Slouch Hat!

I'm Chris Megaw, VK4FR portable ----- and now we welcome Trevor Taege, VK4BAT.....

Once again, we've visited a number of old-timer's to talk to some of the normal people whose efforts on our behalf seemed anything **BUT** normal, for the next few minutes, join us as we meet a few ordinary Australians who did some extraordinary things all those years ago. Now with a collage of their Wartime experiences, we hear from :-

- 1/ A sprightly (4) Score +, Gentleman From QLD's Sunshine Coast Al Carter VK4LT.
- 2/ (Peter Harding with), (FO) Flying Officer, VK4LC, Bill Hempel, atop Mt Tambourine in QLD
- 3/ (Peter Harding with), (LAC) Leading Aircraftsman, VK4IW Kevin Dickson near Coolangatta Airport

Shortly we shall ask you to maintain total radio silence until 0800 Zulu, when the Remembrance Day Contest will be under way once more. Good luck and good contesting to you all, and *may the best state win!*

Please stand by now for the solemn roll call of our fallen comrades – Australia's amateur radio servicemen who did not return home after World War Two...

Following the reading of the Roll Call of those Hams who paid the Supreme Sacrifice, we will play the Ode, that will be followed by a one Minutes silence, shortly after that the contest will begin.

Roll Call and ODE and 1 Minutes Silence inserted here.

We are now just seconds away from the 2009 contest. We take this opportunity to thank:-

WIA President Michael Owen VK3KI, for his opening and closing sections

(Our Special Guest speakers)

Brigadier Wayne Budd, (Pronounced BRIGADEER) due to earlier errors

Lieutenant Commander Peter Ellis RAN, VK1PE,

From East Timor Lieutenant Chris Megaw, VK4FR,

Trevor Taege VK4BAT with Al Carter VK4LT

Peter Harding VK4OD with:-

(FO) Flying Officer, VK4LC, Bill Hempel, atop Mt Tambourine in QLD

LAC Leading Aircraftsman Kevin Dickson @ Coolangatta

Please do remember to send in your log – be it written or computer generated – to the RD Contest Manager via E-mail to rdlogs@wia.org.au or via the mail to 40 Centaurus Crescent, Regents Park. Queensland 4118. Of course, the electronic and postal addresses are published in *Amateur Radio Magazine* and the rules and details are available on the web site, which is www.wia.org.au

We use logs to determine which State or call area is the annual winner, and of course – in the true ANZAC spirit – we welcome contacts and entries from, all stations across Australia, New Zealand and New Guinea.

In closing, It is with the greatest of pleasure that I declare open, the 2009 Remembrance Day Contest.