

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Receive Funding For New History Book

by Simon EKINS *News Of The Area - Modern Media - February 21, 2024*

THE New South Wales Government's Veteran Affairs Department recently announced that 92 projects across the state will receive funding support from the 2023 ANZAC Community Grant Program.

The Tomaree Headland Heritage Group is one such project benefitting from the program.

"This grant will assist us in getting a fantastic new book printed, written by local historian Judy Washington," said Peter Clough, President of the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group.

Judy has spent the last four years researching and writing a manuscript which details a comprehensive history of Tomaree Headland.

"I have learned so much about the history of our area and it has been a real labour of love for me to undertake this huge task," said Judy.

While conducting research, drone footage was taken of the area and a World War II observation post was located which was previously unknown and not mapped.

"The Nissen huts which were built by Australian forces were subsequently used to house European immigrants arriving in Australia after the war," Judy explained.

With additional funding from the Port Stephens Historical Society and the Royal Australian Historical Society, the Heritage Group are also aiming not only to supply additional signage and information at the entrance of the Tomaree Lodge site, but also provide the gun emplacement and observation post buildings with some much needed maintenance.

The Group are also hoping to locate the original RAAF radar aerial which was positioned at the top of Tomaree Head after the same Japanese fleet that attacked Pearl Harbour in December 1941 also attacked Darwin in February 1942.

Coastal defence batteries were then set up, along with the radar, a barracks where Tomaree Lodge now stands, and a training centre at Little Beach known as HMAS Assault.

Mark Balsarini, President of Nelson Bay RSL sub-Branch, provided written support for the Heritage Group's funding application.

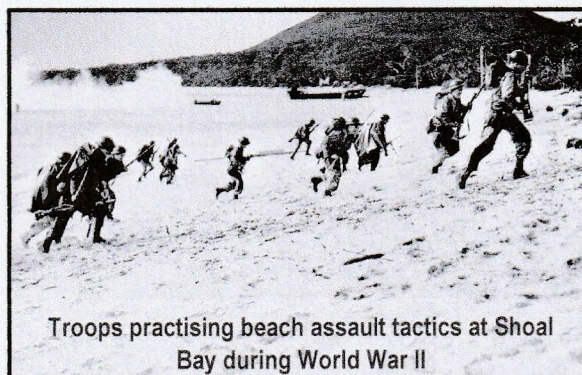
"This is a wonderful opportunity to understand how the headland has evolved over the years," said Mark.

"I, for one, will definitely be buying a copy of the book."

Judy is hoping to release the book within a few months, and with the help of local photographer Jen Newman, will have produced an important historical document for locals and visitors to enjoy.



Tomaree Headland Heritage Group President Peter Clough, Nelson Bay RSL sub-Branch President Mark Balsarini and author Judy Washington at Tomaree Headland.



Troops practising beach assault tactics at Shoal Bay during World War II



Royal Australian Naval Commandos at HMAS Assault, Little Beach, 1942