

ALBANY HERITAGE PARK US SUBMARINE BASE ALBANY WA 1942.



NATIONAL
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DID YOU KNOW?

- Japan entered WWII in December 1941 and rapidly advanced through South East Asia. As the Allied bases fell to the Japanese, Allied ships and submarines were moved further south. Fremantle and Albany (Western Australia) were chosen as major submarine bases with Fremantle becoming the largest American submarine base in the Southern Hemisphere throughout WWII.
- On the 17th March 1942, the United States submarine tender the USS Holland and 5 US submarines were sent to Albany fearing an attack by Japanese forces. No warning was given to the Australian army gunners at the Albany Princess Royal Fortress who were quite alarmed to see a large vessel and several submarines entering the harbour. Much to their relief, they soon identified USS Holland's flag as the Stars and Stripes of the United States of America.
- The USS Holland was stationed at Albany until July 1942 when it was relieved by the USS Pelias which remained until October 1942. During this time, 31 submarines visited the Albany port and most of them were refitted by the submarine tender's technical staff and members of the submarine crews. The submarines were tied up at the Albany jetty and the crew were housed at the Quarantine Station. Used to tropical climes, the crews called Albany 'Little Siberia'! The Americans became friendly with their Western Australian hosts and approximately 15,000 Australian women married US Navy personnel and moved to the U.S.A. after the war.
- Throughout 1942, many units of the American navy gathered in Albany and the jetty was alive with activity day and night. A submarine net was stretched across the Princess Royal Harbour entrance to prevent enemy attack. This manoeuvre was perhaps not in vain as on the 4th August 1942 the SS Katoomba, on her way from Adelaide to Fremantle, was attacked by a Japanese submarine about 20 miles south of Albany. The SS Katoomba escaped without damage.
- US Naval Commanders received many reports that their perfectly aimed Mk14 torpedoes were passing harmlessly beneath target ships. Tests were conducted in Albany by firing torpedoes through a fishing net and it was discovered that torpedoes were running far deeper than set. Rectifications were made which helped then change the course of the war with greatly increased successes in sinking virtually all the Japanese merchant fleet and most of its Navy.
- Fremantle and Albany were safe havens for the American submarines which played a vital role in the overall success during the war. American submarines launched 521 patrols from Australia, sinking over 1.7 million tons of shipping. Sadly 52 submarines were lost with 374 officers and 3131 sailors "Still on Eternal Patrol".

- In 1976, to honour the lives of all American and Australian Submariners who are 'Still on Patrol', a plaque was sent from the Mayor of New York to Albany listing all the names of the US Submarines and the number of men lost during WW11. The plaque 'Still On Patrol' was sent by the Mayor of New York to Australia by Pan Am and Australian Airlines' Free of Costs' and was unveiled by Mr Fran Ward US Consulate Perth WA on the 4th July 1976. A return plaque was sent from Albany through the assistance of the local RSL. The plaque was made from Albany granite, 14 inches square and is mounted at the Torpedo Memorial in New York-the only one of its kind in America.

- Each year a US Submariners Memorial is held at the Princess Royal Fortress to pay respects to the brave souls who made the ultimate sacrifice, remaining on an eternal patrol and forever watching over American and Australian submariners.

Albany Naval Connections

- Albany Western Australia has a strong connection to Navies from around the world:

- o Commander Captain George Vancouver of the British Royal Navy sailed into King George Sound, Albany and claimed Western Australia as British territory in 1791.

- o The US Great White Fleet chose Albany in 1908 for anchorage and coaling on their around the World Tour in 1908.

- o Albany was the first port of call for the Royal Australian Navy's first flagship, the battlecruiser HMAS Australia and the cruiser HMAS Sydney on their delivery voyage from the UK in 1913. They spent a week in Albany for coaling in preparation for their grand entry into Sydney Harbour.

- o King George Sound Albany was chosen by the Australian Government in 1914 as the assemblage point for the first Anzac departures for WWI.

- o Albany was used as a US submarine base in 1942 for the protection and maintenance of US submarines throughout WWII and a memorial dedicated to all those who lost their lives in submarine warfare is based adjacent to the National Anzac Centre.

For more on-site naval history, collect an Albany Heritage Park Significant Site Brochure and on the map explore the:

- RAN & HMAS Perth Interpretive Centre...No.16

- WWII 'Still On Patrol' Memorial...No.29

- Naval Guns, Torpedoes, Missile area & Merchant Navies Memorial...No.30



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