

AUGUST–NOVEMBER 2025

BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD

A TALK SERIES PRESENTED BY THE
KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY



Here are details of the final three Friends of Kokoda (FoK) Beyond the Battlefield military history talks in 2025.

WHERE:

Ralph Honner Education Centre, Killoola St, Rhodes Park, Concord West.

WHEN:

See program for time and dates.

COST:

FoK members will be free; all others \$5.00. Light refreshments served.

RSVPS:

to admin@kokodawalkway.com.au or call (02) 9166 0890 a week before the talk.

PROGRAM

Saturday 9 August 10.30am start



Dr Seumas Spark: The 'Dunera Boys' in Australian history and memory.

In July 1940, the transport ship Dunera sailed from Britain to Australia with 2,100 German and Austrian male 'enemy aliens'. Most were Jewish, and refugees from Nazi Germany who had been arrested in Britain, where their 'crime' was to hold an enemy passport during wartime. Once in Australia, they were incarcerated in isolated, rural internment camps.

After the war, around 600 of these men remained and made Australian lives. Their collective story is often told as one of triumph and success. This talk dwells on the lives of different 'Dunera boys', and examines the extent to which this lens of success has distracted us from the complexity of the Dunera story.

Seumas Spark is an Adjunct Fellow in History, Monash University. He has published widely on the Dunera internees, including as co-author of the two-volume history *Dunera Lives* (Monash University Publishing, 2018/2020), and as co-editor, with Jacquie Houlden, of *Shadowline: The Dunera Diaries of Uwe Radok* (Monash University Publishing, 2022). With Kate Garrett and Andrew McNamara, he has co-edited a book (to be published by Berghahn in 2025) on the art historian and one-time Dunera internee Ernst Kitzinger.



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Saturday 11 October 10.30am start



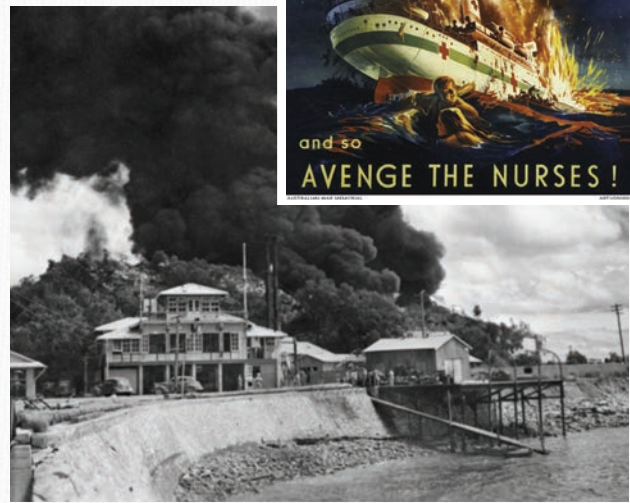
Dr Tom Lewis OAM: Australia's coastal war.

In World War 2, there were 1,993 enemy attacks around Australia. Scores of submarine and ship actions, and many hundreds of individual enemy air actions, from Darwin to Hobart, from Townsville to Melbourne, saw scores of ships sunk and thousands of lives lost. Yet many Australians know little of these events.

The battle began with German surface raiders laying mines and attacking ships. It continued with Japanese submarine actions, and intensified with air attacks. Many of the stories are tragic: the sinking of the cruiser Sydney, a quiet beach in South Australia where a mine killed two men, the lonely end of a priest captured by an enemy floatplane and flown away to be executed, to the Sydney midget submarine raids and attacks by two RAAF bombers against a Japanese fleet submarine off New South Wales.

Dr Tom Lewis OAM is a military historian, the author of 22 books, and a public speaker and presenter. He is also a retired naval officer who served in combat; a retired secondary school teacher, pilot, and scuba divemaster. He was the Director of Darwin Military

Museum in its redevelopment from 2009 to 2013. His Order of Australia was bestowed on him for services to naval history. He has won numerous prizes for his literary works, the most recent being as the national winner of the 2021 Australian Naval Institute's Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize for Teddy Sheean VC. His latest book, Australia's Coastal War, will be published in 2025.



Saturday 29 November 10.30am start

Colin Burgess: Sisters in captivity - Australian Army nurses in Sumatra 1942-1945.



Colin Burgess is the author of the best-selling *Sisters in Captivity*, the story of Sister Betty Jeffrey OAM, one of a group of Australian nurses held captive by the Japanese in Sumatra for three-and-a-half years after their evacuation ship (SS Vyner Brooke) from Singapore had been sunk by enemy aircraft. Most were taken prisoner, but 21 of their colleagues were brutally murdered on a beach on Banka Island, with Sister Vivian Bullwinkel the sole survivor. The nurses' stories provide a powerful account of women's resilience amidst the brutality of war.

Colin Burgess is a Sydney-born author of more than 40 published books on diverse topics from military history to spaceflight. He flew as cabin crew with Qantas for 30 years before retiring to concentrate on his writing and research.



Scan for more details on the Beyond the Battlefield talk series, including payment options.