

BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II

Due to Brisbane's proximity to the South West Pacific theatre of World War II, the city played a prominent role in the defence of Australia. The outbreak of the Pacific War transformed Brisbane to a garrison city during 1942-45. The city became a temporary home to thousands of Australian and American servicemen. Buildings and institutions around Brisbane were given over to the housing of military personnel as required. Brisbane found it difficult to cope as its population of 300,000 doubled to 600,000 almost overnight.

The present-day MacArthur Central building became the Pacific headquarters of U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, and the University of Queensland campus at St Lucia was converted to a military barracks for the final three years of the war. St Laurence's College and Somerville House Girls' School in South Brisbane were also used by American forces. Eagle Farm, Victoria Park, Nudgee and Woolloongabba were vast encampments, while South Brisbane provided them with entertainment. Newstead House was also used to house American servicemen during the war and a large American Army hospital was built in Holland Park for treating servicemen.

Archerfield aerodrome housed American B26 bombers. Evans Deakin shipyards were kept busy at Kangaroo Point and a large graving dock was built downstream, north of Morningside. Air raid shelters were erected across the City particularly along streets like Elizabeth Street. Eagle Farm airport was upgraded significantly by the Americans to act as an airbase for the Pacific theatre of the war. The upgrade would see it become the main airport of Brisbane. Archerfield Airport was the primary airport before World War II.

Brisbane was used to mark the position of the "Brisbane Line", a controversial defence proposal allegedly formulated by the Menzies government, that would, upon a land invasion of Australia, surrender the entire northern part of the country. The line was, allegedly, at a latitude just north of Brisbane and spanned the entire width of the continent. Surviving from this period are several cement bunkers and gun forts in the northern suburbs of Brisbane and adjacent areas (Sunshine Coast/ Moreton Bay islands). The New Farm/Teneriffe area along the Bulimba Reach of the Brisbane River was an Allied submarine base.

The Battle of Brisbane was two nights of rioting between United States military personnel on one side and Australian servicemen and civilians on the other, in Brisbane, Queensland's capital city, on 26–27 November 1942, during which time the two nations were allies. By the time the violence had been quelled, one Australian soldier was dead, and hundreds of Australians and U.S. servicemen had been injured. Many U.S. personnel were stationed in and around Brisbane, which was the headquarters for General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander, South West Pacific Area. Many buildings and facilities around Brisbane were given over to the U.S. military's use. "They're overpaid, oversexed, and over here" was a common phrase used by Australians around this time. Sergeant Bill Bentson of the U.S. Army was quoted as saying: "The Americans had the chocolates, the ice-cream, the silk stockings and the dollars. They were able to show the girls a good time, and the Australians became very resentful about the fact that they'd lost control of their own city."

The Allies prevailed in the Pacific war against Japan in August 1945 a few months after their victory over Germany and Italy in Europe to wild celebrations all over the world and Brisbane was no exception given the prominent role that it played as the American headquarters in the South West Pacific Area.



Above Left: An exhibit in the Macarthur Museum tells the story of Brisbane as a Garrison Town. Brisbane was the northern base near the famous Brisbane Line which demarked the highest priority area of SE Australia that needed to be protected from Japanese attack. **Above Right:** An Aussie and couple of American soldiers pose along a Brisbane street. **Below Left:** The Courier Mail announces the sober news that Australia, in support of Britain, is at war with Germany. **Below Right:** General Douglas Macarthur conducts an inspection of Australian troops at Enoggera army base.





Air raid shelters in Elizabeth Street, 1942.



Air raid warden and members of the W.A.A.F in a Brisbane air raid shelter, 1942

COMFORTABLE SHELTER



EVEN THE DOG looks comfortable in this air raid shelter, which was built by Mr. J. W. Charlton, of Collins Street, Nundah, for his family. It is fitted with most home comforts, including an appliance for making tea.

Colonel William Jefferson Bleckwenn with actor John Wayne at Albion Park races, Brisbane, 1943



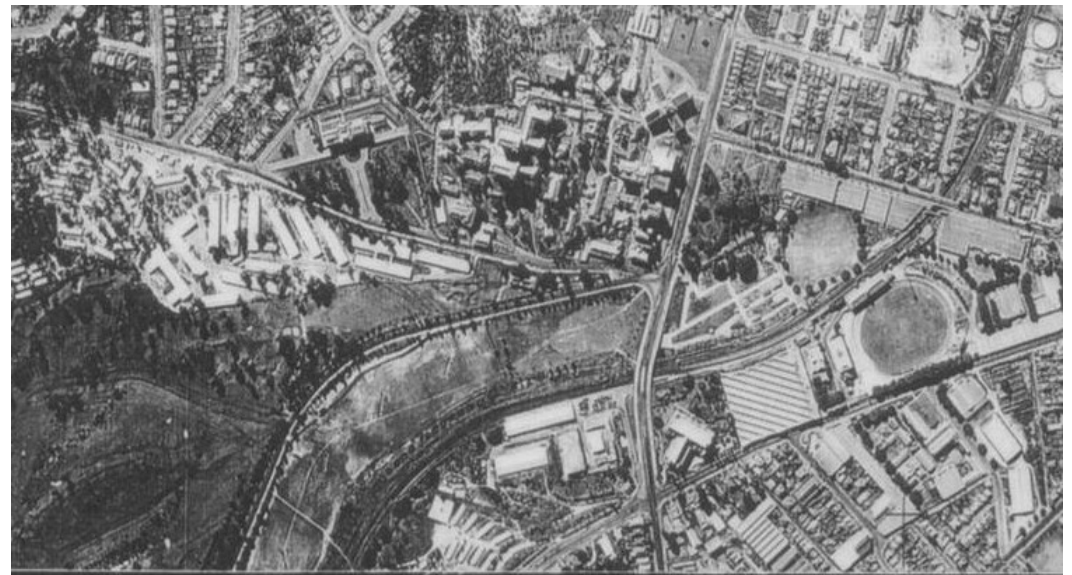
Below: Actor Cary Grant on a visit to Brisbane signs an autograph for an attractive female fan in army uniform.



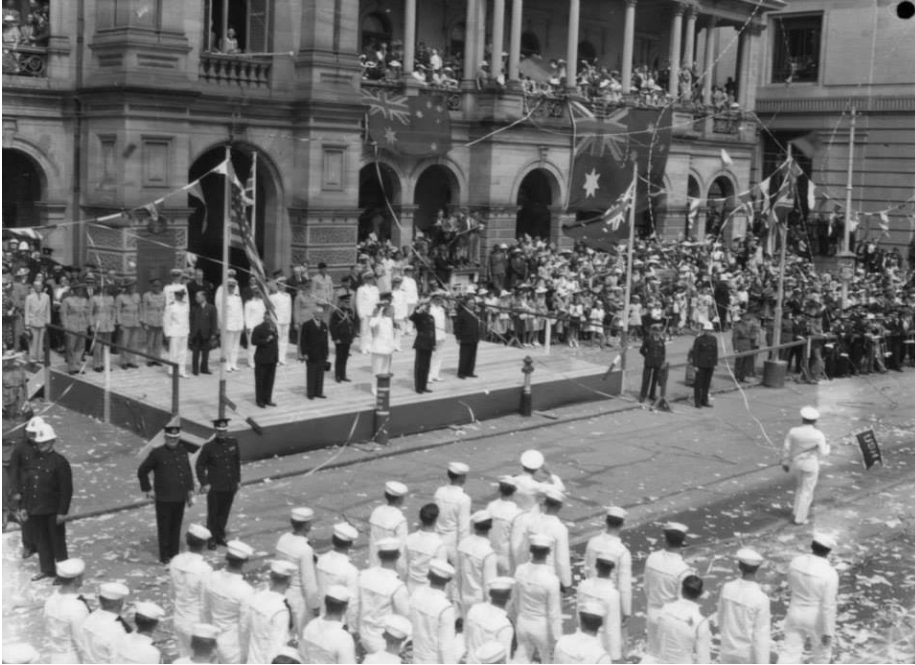
BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II



Above and Below Left: Parades of Army vehicles and Naval Officers through the streets of Brisbane.
Above Right: The massive American Army Hospital in Holland Park. I grew up near the house at the bottom of the photo, right of centre and I went to Seville Rd Primary School where the hospital was.
Below Right: Victoria Barracks is visible in this aerial photo where Victoria Park Golf Course is today. A clear view of Exhibition Ground no. 2 is visible to the north of the train line opposite no. 1 ground.



BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II



Above Left: A military parades outside the GPO. **Above Right:** Some American GI's with kegs of XXXX on the streets of Brisbane. **Below Left:** Banners encouraging people to buy war bonds to support the war effort outside the Hoyts Regent on Queen Street. **Below Right:** Soldiers and citizens mingle outside the Criterion Hotel on the corner of George and Adelaide Streets.



BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II



Above Left: A Brisbane factory manufacturing munitions for the war effort.

Below: A wounded soldier is shipped into Brisbane for hospital care.

Right: Eagle Farm airport became a major airbase for the war in the Pacific. Two of the war's greatest airplanes, a Lancaster bomber and a Spitfire are seen in the Centre Right photo.





AUSSIE girls with sailors . . . there was a huge influx of young men.



Above Right: Some soldiers hanging out having a cuppa at a local coffee shop. **Below Left:** Air raid shelters along Elizabeth Street. **Below Right:** Soldiers march past crowds at a public military parade during the war.



BRISBANE SALUTES THE FIGHTING 29th BRIGADE



BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II

Below: A massive military parade with Aussie soldiers all the way along Queen Street. **Inset:** More Aussie soldiers cross into South Brisbane.



BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II

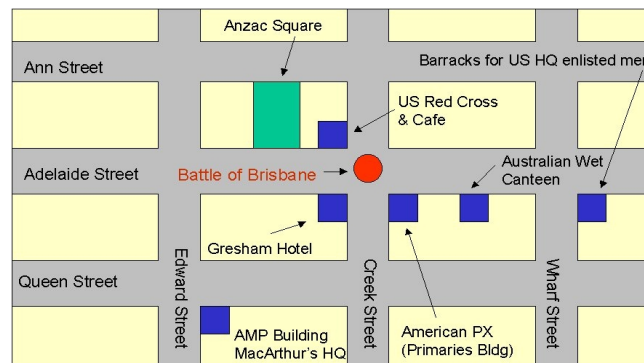


Above Left: A semi-circle of forts from Fort Bribie to Fort Lytton protected the Moreton Bay shipping passage into Brisbane.

Above Centre: New Farm and Teneriffe was an Allied submarine base and memorials along the river walkway commemorate this.

Below Left: Two Black American soldiers enjoying their time in Brisbane. Due to white American resentment towards black American access to dance halls and for associating with "white girls on the streets of Brisbane", troops of the U.S. 208th Coast Artillery rioted for 10 nights in March 1942, fighting against black Americans from the 394th Quartermaster Battalion. As a result, U.S. military authorities segregated black Americans, restricting them to the south side of the Brisbane River, mainly around South Brisbane.

Below Centre and Right: The Battle of Brisbane was two nights of rioting between United States military personnel on one side and Australian servicemen and civilians on the other, in Brisbane, Queensland's capital city, on 26–27 November 1942, during which time the two nations were allies. By the time the violence had been quelled, one Australian soldier was dead, and hundreds of Australians and U.S. servicemen had been injured. Many U.S. personnel were stationed in and around Brisbane, which was the headquarters for General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander, South West Pacific Area. Many buildings and facilities around Brisbane were given over to the U.S. military's use. Brisbane found it difficult to cope as its population of 300,000 doubled to 600,000 almost overnight. "They're overpaid, oversexed, and over here" was a common phrase used by Australians around this time. Sergeant Bill Bentson of the U.S. Army was quoted as saying: "The Americans had the chocolates, the ice-cream, the silk stockings and the dollars. They were able to show the girls a good time, and the Australians became very resentful about the fact that they'd lost control of their own city."



BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II



Top and Bottom Left: General Douglas MacArthur at work in Brisbane leading the Pacific war effort.

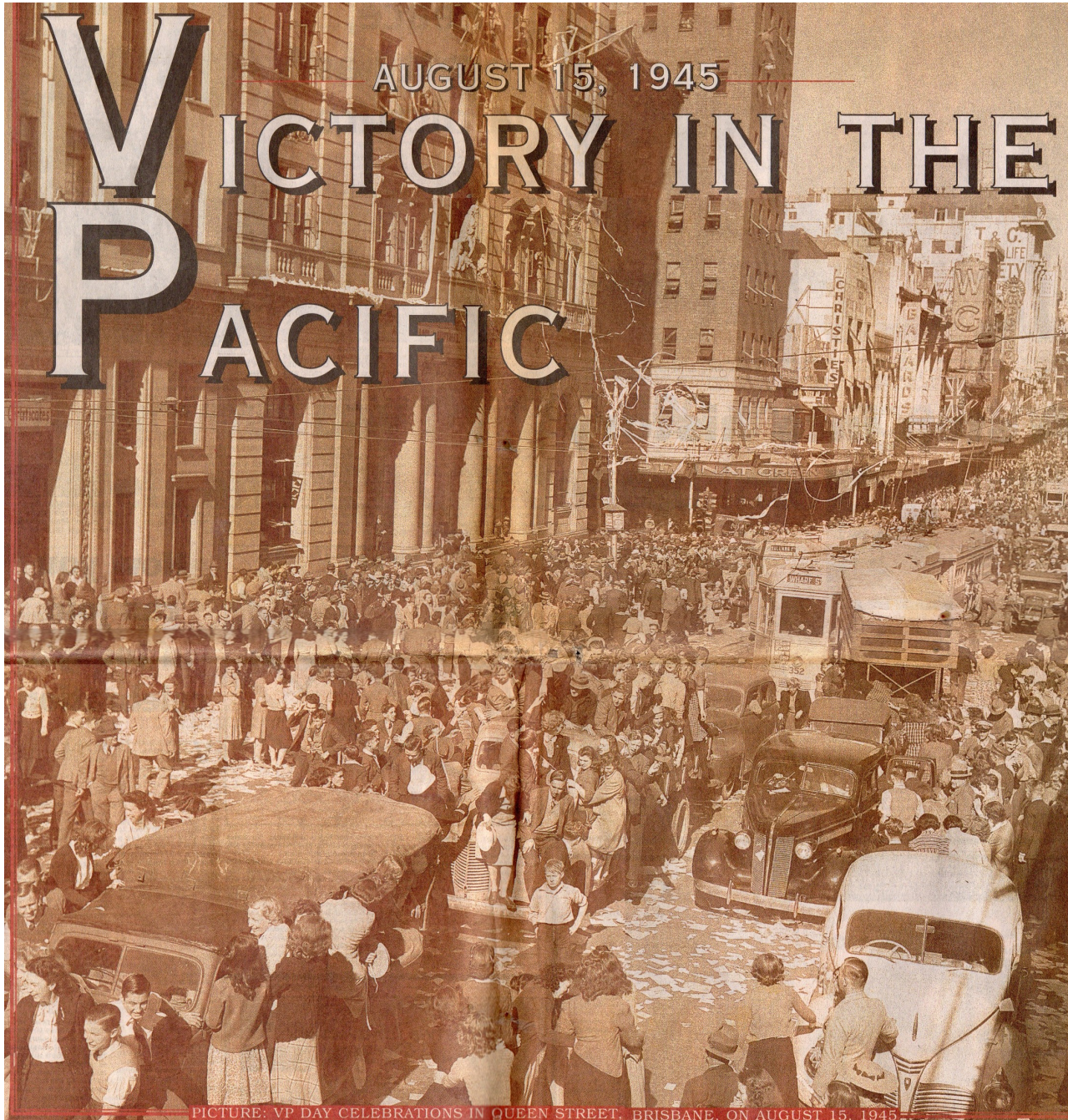
Above: The MacArthur building on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets was MacArthur's headquarters building where a museum is today, which includes his work desk.

Below: In various places across the city many bomb shelters were built to protect people from possible Japanese air raids. After the war the sides were taken out of some of these and they were used for tram and later as bus shelters like these two below on Gympie Road at Lutwyche and at Tenerife ferry at the end of Commercial Road in Newstead.



MACARTHUR: In his car somewhere in Australia General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of United Nations Forces in the South-West Pacific, confers with his Chief of Staff, Major-General Richard Sutherland.





Above: Thousands celebrate victory on the streets of Brisbane.

Below: The Sunday Mail declares the end of World War II.





Above Left: A Victory parade outside City Hall. **Top Right and Centre Right:** The Courier Mail announces VP and VE days. **Below Centre:** A couple of Aussie diggers dance in the street. **Below Right:** An Aussie digger holds his daughter in his arms.



THEY hung from shop balconies and mingled in their tens of thousands on the footpaths of Ann Street, as the victory march wound its way through the streets of Brisbane on the most joyous day in the history of the Queensland capital.



BRISBANE IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR II

Below: A massive ticker-tape Victory parade down Queen Street at the end of World War II as the Allies celebrate peace after 6 years.

