



Australia honours fallen heroes of World War II



The Australian Government recently marked Remembrance Day at the Hellships Memorial in Subic Bay Freeport Zone with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque honouring the prisoners of war who died on the ill-fated Japanese ships the *Montevideo Maru* and *Rakuyo Maru* during World War II. Ambassador Smith (centre), together with (from R-L) Mr James Curtis Smith, President of the Angeles City Returned Services League (RSL) Sub Branch and RSL member Mr George MacDonald, joined veterans and their families from Australia, the Philippines, the United States and New Zealand in offering prayers and wreaths to recognise the dedicated service and sacrifice of soldiers and their families during the war.

“Remembrance Day was originally conceived to honour the sacrifice, suffering, and ultimate victory of those men and women who fought in the First World War. Over the years, the occasion has become a day for Australians to honour all veterans and remember the victims of war,” Ambassador Rod Smith said.

Montevideo Maru and *Rakuyo Maru* were Japanese ships that were sunk during World War II, carrying more than two thousand prisoners of war including Australians. *Montevideo Maru* was sunk off the coast of northern Luzon by American submarine *USS Sturgeon* on 1 July 1942. 1,050 prisoners of war from the Australian Territory of Papua New Guinea lost their lives in what was considered the greatest single maritime tragedy in Australia’s history. The *Rakuyo Maru* sank on 12 September 1944 after being attacked by *USS Sealion*. An estimated 1,165 Australian and British prisoners of war died in the incident.

(Photo by Kevin R Hamdorf ©www.kevinhamdorfphotography.com)

Media Enquiries:

Australian Embassy Public Affairs (02) 757-8173 – Mr Kiel Enrique

Fax (02) 757-8323 | Public-Affairs-MNLA@dfat.gov.au | www.philippines.embassy.gov.au