



BENDIGO DISTRICT RSL SUB-BRANCH INC.

Immediate Media Release

2022 Sandakan Commemorative Service

For further information regarding this media release or to request an interview please contact:

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COVID-19 continues to impact the veteran community and unfortunately the Sandakan Commemorative Service, which is usually held at the Sandakan Memorial in Crook St, Strathdale, will not occur again at this location this year.

The Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch has again moved the Commemorative Service to the Memorial Garden at the Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch, 73-75 Havilah Road, Bendigo.

Date and time have not changed, Sunday 06 March 2022 starting at 11 am.

The Sandakan Commemorative Service commemorates the loss of over 2500 Australians and British servicemen from July 1942 until the end of the war. By 15 August 1945 none of them remained alive with only 6 men returning from Sandakan through escaping at various times. The Sandakan Death March's are the worst atrocity in Australian military history - yet is rarely discussed.

This year's guest speaker is Miss Kay Fraser. Kay is a member of the Friends of Sandakan Group which brings families of the prisoners of war in Sandakan together to acknowledge those who perished at Sandakan including the Death Marches.

Kay will be honouring her Grandfather Thomas Fraser who was born in Benalla Country Victoria who served in the 27th Brigade in Singapore during WWII. After the fall of Singapore, Thomas was transported to Sandakan and like many Australian, suffered through many years of hardship. Thomas was part of the 1st Death March after almost 2 years as a POW Thomas passed away at Ranau, Borneo.

This years' service is open to anyone who wishes to attend, participants are strongly encouraged to register their intent to attend the service via commemorative@benigorsl.com.au . There is no limit on the number of veterans, family and guests who can attend, all are welcome.

The service will also be streamed live via the Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch Facebook site for those who cannot physically attend the service.

We invite the media to participate in this event to acknowledge the sacrifice of over 2500 Australians and British servicemen and local Sandakan peoples.

“Lest we Forget”