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American KIA's and MIA's in Australia?



Australia was attacked over 100 times by Japanese aircraft between February 1942 and November 1943. In the first and most successful of these raids, 242 aircraft hit the Australian Naval Base at Darwin on 19 February 1942. 235 people were killed, hundreds of people were rendered homeless, and Darwin was abandoned as a major naval base. The USS Peary (DD-226) had been operating out of Darwin in January and February on anti-submarine patrol. On the morning of the raid, the Peary was struck by five bombs and sunk, one of eight ships to go down on that day. The crew battled with machine guns until the last enemy fighter flew away. Lost with the ship were 88 officers and men. 53 enlisted men and one officer survived. Today there is a memorial in Darwin commemorating the event. A 4-inch gun was salvaged from the Peary and now points toward the Peary

where she lies in the harbor waters. The 88 men killed are listed on a plaque at the base of the gun. The crew of the USS William B. Preston (DD-344)—also in the harbor that day—were luckier. Although hit and unable to steer, the Preston's crew managed to steam out of the harbor ahead of the inferno that overcame the Peary. Reports differ, but 8-15 men were lost. These are commemorated on a plaque in the same memorial park. The Preston was returned to service after extensive repairs and was decommissioned on 6 December 1945.

...and Iceland

B-24D Liberator "Hot Stuff", assigned to the 330th Bomb Squadron, 93rd Bombardment Group (Heavy), became the first heavy bomber in the 8th Air Force to complete twenty-five missions in Europe in World War II. After "Hot Stuff" completed thirty-one missions, the plane and her crew were on the return flight to the states for a War Bonds publicity and morale-boosting tour on May 3, 1943. Lt Gen Frank M. Andrews, Commander of the European Theater of Operations needed to get back the states as he had been summoned to Washington DC by General George Marshall. Andrews and his entourage hitched a ride on "Hot Stuff", and in doing so bumped five crew members from the flight. Though they were supposed to refuel at Prestwick, Scotland before heading out over the Atlantic, the crew elected to skip stopping at Prestwick and proceed to their next waypoint, Reykjavik, Iceland. Weather over Iceland was horrible, and after several aborted attempts to land at the Royal Air Force station at Kaldadarnes, the B-24 crashed into the side of 1,600-foot-tall Mount Fagradalsfjall, near Grindavik, Iceland. Upon impact, the aircraft disintegrated except for the tail gunner's turret which remained relatively intact. All of the 15 aboard died except the tail-gunner Sgt Eisel who, though injured, survived the crash. A monument was dedicated near the crash site on 3 May 2018 honoring Lt Gen Andrews and the others killed in the crash, as well as the crew for their accomplishment of being the confirmed first to complete 25 bombing missions. Joint Forces Base Andrews in Maryland is named after Lt Gen Andrews.



Remember, because of the CARES Act, donations up to \$300 (\$600 for joint filers) are tax deductible, even if the tax filer cannot itemize and therefore takes the standard deduction. Please consider us in your charitable giving this year.