



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Investigation 1: What happened during the Japanese raid on Broome?

There are numerous historical sources which help tell the story of the Japanese air raid on Broome. In this activity, you will consider the reliability and usefulness of several sources, before creating your own account of events.

Activity 1

Familiarise yourself with the first five sections of the virtual museum (Broome Attacked, Dutch Refugees, Local Hero, Courageous Rescue, Japanese Fighters), which all relate to the raid on Broome. A variety of historical sources are presented in these sections, including written accounts, oral accounts, images, objects and media articles. Complete the table on the next page by assessing the reliability and usefulness of six differing sources from the collection. Use the questions below to help you assess each of your selected sources.

How reliable is the source?

- Who was the creator of the source? Did they witness the raid?
- How close in time to the raid was the source created?
- For what purpose was the source created? What factors (e.g. fear, perspective, personal objectives) might have influenced the creator's interpretation and presentation of events?

How useful is the source?

- What can you learn from the source about the raid on Broome? What can't you learn?
- How relevant and informative is the source?

Activity 2

Using the six sources you have selected as your historical evidence, create your own account of the raid on Broome. Refer to, or include quotes from, your sources to inform and justify your historical account.



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II

Education Activities

Source type	Source description	Reliability	Usefulness
Image			
Written account			
Oral account			
Newspaper report			
object			
Your choice			



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Investigation 2: Why did the Government censor information about the raid on Broome?

During the Second World War, the Australian government used its powers to censor information before it was released to the public. This activity looks at how censorship was used after the raid on Broome.

Activity 1

In a press statement on 4 March 1942 Prime Minister John Curtin made the following statement:

The rumours to the effect that loss of life in the Broome raid yesterday, were very heavy is utterly untrue. It is not in the national interest to make any statement giving details of casualties at any particular place, as this would give valuable information to the enemy. I can assure the Australian public however, that while some losses have been incurred – whether they be of life or property – the raid was not of a kind to give that satisfaction to the enemy which he expected.

(Mervyn Prime, Broome's One Day War, Pg.15)

Answer the following questions:

1. How accurate was this statement by the Prime Minister? Was it misleading?
2. Why do you think the Prime Minister wanted Australians to believe this version of events?
3. How do you think people in Broome felt when they heard this statement?



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Activity 2

Full details regarding the attack on Broome were not released until January 1943, nine months after the raid. Justifying the censorship on security grounds, Prime Minister Curtin went on to describe the Broome raid as '*a lesson for all Australia ... of what a full scale attack on this country could mean.*'

Read these letters to the editor which appeared in response to Curtin's statement and complete the activities provided.

Sir,-Mr. Curtin says the bombing of Broome should be a lesson to us. It is a lesson - but not as Mr. Curtin expects. It is an exposure of the senseless strangling power of censorship, and we are filled with doubt and suspicion. What other disasters have happened within the last nine months and of which we have never been Informed?

ANTI-HUMBUG. Edgecliff.

Sydney Morning Herald, 20 January 1943

Sir,-I heartily endorse the remarks of "Anti-Humbug" relative to the withholding of news from the public, and ask: Does hush-hush pay, or what purpose does it achieve? For some-time the public has been fed on the theory that it is unwise to disclose losses or gains, in order that the enemy should not be informed of results. To give the Jap his due. He is not a nit-wit, and Japanese bomber crews knew at once what they had achieved in the open spaces of Broome.

Perhaps if the voters made the members of Parliament feel that their work was under constant scrutiny, that they must insist, for instance, upon speedy and accurate information upon such matters as "the Broome story," then the people would be more alive to the danger at our very doors.

Burwood. D.A.K.

Sydney Morning Herald, 20 January 1943

1. The two letter writers were both critical of the government's decision to withhold information from the public. What arguments did they make? Your task is to write a letter to the editor defending the government's decision. Write in the style of the era and present reasons to support your position.
2. Answer the following questions:
 - a) In what ways has the role of media changed since the Second World War and how might this impact on the ability of governments to control information today?
 - b) Could a situation similar to what occurred after the Broome raid happen today? Why or why not?



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Investigation 3: In what ways was the north west of Australia strategically significant during the war?

The raids on Broome and surrounding areas demonstrated the strategic significance of North West Australia during the war. This activity explores why and for whom this area was significant.

Activity 1

The following sources offer different perspectives on the strategic significance of Broome and the North West. Analyse the sources to identify why the area was significant to:

1. Australia
2. Australia's allies (e.g. Britain, United States, Netherlands)
3. Japan

Use evidence from the sources in your answers.

Source A: Kevin Gomm, historian, 2009

Following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour in Hawaii on Sunday December 7 1941, The Philippines, Hong Kong, and Indo-China (Vietnam) all quickly fell. Japanese forces landed in Borneo on December 17, 1941 followed up shortly by the initial invasion of the Dutch East Indies islands themselves on January 10 1942. Three days after the significant and profound surrender of Singapore on February 15 1942 the Japanese army landed on Bali... The following day they invaded the island of Timor, then divided into two with Dutch west and Portuguese east, quickly establishing a foothold and overrunning any resistance that was left of the retreating Allied forces.

(Kevin Gomm, *Red Sun on the Kangaroo Paw*, 2011, p.49)

Source B: United States Rear Admiral Yates Stirling, March 1942

Based on my long experience as a naval commander in the Pacific I believe the Japanese will hurl great forces at Australia as soon as Java is under control. The Japanese timetable apparently calls for control of the western Pacific by June 1 next, but this cannot be effected until Australia is taken or at least neutralised as a potential American base from which United States forces, in co-operation with Australians, could attempt a northward offensive.

(*The West Australian*, 9 March 1942)



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Source C: Japanese Map of World War II, 1942



(National Library of Australia, NLA obj-234716312)

Source D: Prime Minister, John Curtin, 3 March 1942

As time passes - the enemy comes ever nearer. Darwin, Wyndham and Broome are three important strategical points in the security of Australia as a whole. I have long been impressed with the menace to the population in our larger capitals which this part of Australia would constitute if the enemy were able to use it as a base. Established in the north, his hitting power at the larger centres of the population and of economic activity becomes all the more inimical... Australia is vital to the united nations in the war against the Axis. To hold it is imperative, and holding it demands a degree of concentration of energy and totality such as we have not yet displayed.

(Kalgoorlie Miner, 4 March 1942)

Source E: Western Australian Premier Willcock, in telegram to the Prime Minister, 25 March 1942

Meeting [of Western Australian politicians] expresses grave concern at the ... serious lack of defence for the North-west. Our view is that without some provision for fighter planes or suitable defence, invitation being offered to the enemy to take possession of two-thirds of this State. This constitutes an immediate menace to the capital... Could not number of fighter planes be made available immediately for defence of the North-west.

(NAA: A663,066/1/608)



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Investigation 4: What did the Second World War mean for the people of Broome?

While the Second World War was challenging for most Australians the experience of being on the home front varied from place to place. For the people of Broome, the war brought particular and ongoing challenges.

Explore the section 'Broome life' and read the following article (which is quoted in the section). Use this information to consider what the Second World War might have meant for different Broome residents.

MORE THAN GHOSTS.

WALK IN BROOME.

BROOME.

Broome has been described as a ghost town. The description is only partly true. Most of the commercial houses and residences are deserted, but all the essential services are being carried on. Post office, electric light, water supply and harbour facilities are functioning, and one store and two hotels are doing business.

There is not one woman or child within 50 miles. At the same time went many faint-hearted men who, by deserting their posts, failed in their duty to the community.

The full story of the machine-gun and bomb attacks on Broome has not yet been told. It may never be told. All accounts here agree, however, in the precipitate flight of most of the males. About 30 per cent. of the male population remained in Broome and upheld the honour of Australians. They tended the wounded, buried the dead and gave service to surviving passengers from destroyed aircraft.

CONFIDENCE DESTROYED.

From Perth came the officer commanding the north-west. His job was to restore order, and to instil confidence. He was given wide powers and he used them without fear or favour. If the Japanese aircraft return they will be given a much warmer reception.

There is little evidence of the raids. With one or two exceptions the houses are intact because the raiders confined their activities to military objectives.

There are several groups of graves. Some of the victims were buried on the beach where they were found. One lonely grave contains the bodies of a woman and her child. They were found by the woman's husband, a Dutchman, the day after the raid. He refused all offers of assistance, dug the grave, and buried them himself.

No coffins were available for any of the dead. They were mostly Dutch and Americans who were overtaken by the Japanese almost in their hour of liberation, for they had successfully eluded the enemy in Java and got to Australia only to be caught on reaching our shores. The majority were killed when the Japanese attacked flying boats anchored in the harbour. Others were washed ashore, some having been drowned in a desperate effort to make the beach, and were buried in the town cemetery.

NEGLECT OF ROADS.

The raids on Broome should direct public attention to the long neglect by the Federal and State Governments of the roads in this vast province, and any traveller will endorse this indictment. Construction of roads is far beyond the resources of the Road Boards. They are a Government responsibility. They wind and sprawl all over the country to-day, a monument to inefficiency and neglect.

Cairns post, 12 May 1942

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article42343630>

Activity 1

The table on the next page presents a number of Broome characters. Identify the practical, financial, physical and/or emotional impacts which the war may have had on each person. Note these in dot points on the table provided (or create your own table)

Activity 2

Select one character and imagine what the war was like for them. Write a creative response – in the form of a diary entry or letter which captures their experience and perspectives.



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

What might the practical, financial, physical and emotional impacts of war have been for these Broome residents?	
An Aboriginal child	
The wife of a Broome hotelier, and mother of three	
A Timorese indentured labourer working as a crew member on a pearl lugger	
A married Postal officer	
An Army engineer deployed to Broome	
A pearl lugger owner and family man	
A local ground crew worker at the Broome airfield	



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Investigation 5: Why were people interned during the war and what were their experiences?

Thousands of people were classified as 'enemy aliens' under national security regulations implemented at the beginning of the war. The regulations stated:

"enemy alien" means a person who, not being either a British subject ... or a person enjoying His Majesty's protection, possesses the nationality of a State at war with His Majesty

Under the regulations, enemy aliens living in Australia had to register with local authorities and throughout the war years about 7000 of those registered were interned. Although they did not meet the definition of 'enemy alien', 1500 British subjects were included in those interned.

Activity 1

Read about Jimmy Chi (in the 'Internment' section) who spent time in various camps across Australia during the war. Use your skills as an historian to analyse the military record relating to his internment. The form reflects the time it was created and includes handwriting that is difficult to decipher.

JM.

A.A.F. A. 112
Revised, May, 1941

AUSTRALIAN JAPANESE MILITARY FORCES

INTERNEE PRISONER OF WAR SERVICE AND CASUALTY FORM Identification No. WJ.18059

District WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Rank A. 114 P. 114 Other Names James Surname C. H. I. (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date of Capture Dec. 1941
Place of Capture Broome
Date of Birth 18.7.1905
Place of Birth Broome
Trade or Occupation Taxi Driver
Religion Roman Catholic

NATIONALITY Japanese Mother & Chinese,
Marital Condition Single
Next of Kin Joseph CHI,
Address of Next of Kin Kobe.
Relationship

Identification—Colour of Hair Black Eyes Brown
Distinctive Marks Vaccination Marks L. Arm.

REPORT

Date	From whom received	Report	Date of Casualty	Place of Casualty	Authority A.A.F. A. 113, or other Document	Signature of Officer Certifying Correctness of Entries
29.1.42	G. Kearney	Interned Kearney	24.1.42	Kearney	A 113	M. Kearney
7.2.42	do	Transferred to Lowday	1.2.42	do	do	J. Kelly
11.2.42	G. Kearney	Marched in to Kearney	5.2.42	Lowday	do	J. B. R. R. R.
29.5.42	do	Marched out to Woodcock Creek Wood Party	7.5.42	do	do	J. B. R. R. R.
6.6.42	Woodcock	Marched in to 14 C Camp	7.5.42	Woodcock	do	J. B. R. R. R.
25.11.42	J. B. R. R. R.	34 A.C.H. Barracks Wing	67.15.42	"	"	J. B. R. R. R.
2.12.42	do	From 34 A.C.H. Barracks Wing	67.22.42	"	"	J. B. R. R. R.
13.5.45	K. B. R. R.	Transf. to 14 C Camp	12/45	do	do	K. B. R. R.
do	do	Marched in from Woodcock	11/45	do	do	do
9.3.46	S. A. R. R.	Marched out to Laitia	7/46	Lowday	A 113	M. R. R.
2.3.46	S. A. R. R.	Marched in to Lowday	59/46	Laitia	A 113	M. R. R.
26.9.46	J. B. R. R.	Transferred to 14 C. 3. Int. Camp.	(Rush)	26.9.46	"	P. O.

Ph. 113 R. R. R. 3-3-42.

NAA:MP110311,WJ18059

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8600332>



Virtual Museum: Broome during World War II Education Activities

Use the form as the basis for your own research regarding Chi's internment:

- What camps did he spend time in?
- Where were these camps located?
- People of which nationalities were also interned at the camps?
- What were the living conditions like for internees?

The National Archives of Australia is an excellent place to start your research.

www.naa.gov.au/collection/snapshots/internment-camps/WWII

Activity 2

In discussing his return to Broome after the war, Chi recalled that locals held 'meetings in the RSL hall and the Shire Council'. These meetings attracted widespread interest, with several newspapers reporting on one of them:

The meeting was stormy from the start. The point that Japanese born in Australia were able to travel and reside where they pleased was not received with any enthusiasm. It was suggested that, as the Government was unable legally to prevent Australian-born Japanese from returning, the answer lay in the hands of the people of Broome, who need not patronise businesses they conducted. A boycott was suggested.

(Tweed Daily (NSW) 9 January 1947)

Imagine that you were at this meeting. Why do you think it was stormy? What views and emotions might different people have brought to the meeting? Write two speeches that could have been given during the meeting, each offering a different perspective regarding Chi and his return to Broome.