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Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
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Media Release

Honouring sacrifice and service on the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy

Thursday, 6 June 2024

Today we honour the service and sacrifice of Australian veterans who took part in the D-Day landings in Normandy, as we mark the 80th anniversary of that event which took place on 6 June 1944.

A special ceremony and public talk will be held at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney today to commemorate the event.

D-Day and the battle of Normandy marked the first step in the liberation of France and western Europe during the Second World War and laid the foundations for the Allied victory on the Western Front.

Australian defence personnel played an important role in the large Allied forces that participated in D-Day. Approximately 3,200 Australians participated in the D-Day landings on 6 June with thousands more serving during the broader Normandy campaign.

Our nation's main contribution came in the air, where approximately 1,000 Australians flew with Royal Australian Air Force squadrons, and a further 1,800 operated on attachment to the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force. Additionally, over 500 members of the Royal Australian Navy also served on attachment with the Royal Navy and a small number of Australian soldiers also served on the ground with the British Army.

These efforts came at a cost, with 13 Australians killed on 6 June and hundreds more killed over the course of the campaign while flying in support of the ground forces in Normandy. In terms of total casualties, June 1944 was the worst month in the history of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans, David Harris:

"Today we acknowledge the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy. Our efforts helped the Allies secure victory in the campaign, and marked a turning point for the Second World War and a victory at the Western Front.

"It is important that we continue to commemorate this momentous event and I would like to thank the Air Force Association of NSW and Anzac Memorial for organising today's events to honour the service of our veterans who participated in this campaign 80 years ago."

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