



**David Elliott**  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for Veterans

## MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 31 May 2022

### **80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY JAPANESE SUBMARINE ATTACK ON SYDNEY HARBOUR**

A star ceremony was held at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney today to honour the lives lost 80 years ago when a Japanese torpedo sunk the HMAS *Kuttabul*.

On the evening of 31 May 1942, three Japanese midget submarines entered the heads of Sydney Harbour with the intent of sinking Allied warships that were peacefully anchored in the harbour.

Minister for Transport and Veterans David Elliott and RSL NSW President Ray James today attended the *star ceremony* to pay tribute to the personnel who lost their lives aboard the HMAS *Kuttabul* that fateful night 80 years ago.

Mr Elliott said Sydney felt the full impact of the Second World War in the early hours of 1 June 1942, when a Japanese submarine fired upon the HMAS *Kuttabul*.

“The ship, which was primarily used as floating accommodation, was moored on the east side of Garden Island, before one of the Japanese torpedoes struck the seawall alongside *Kuttabul*, sinking the vessel,” Mr Elliott said.

“The star ceremony is significant in honoring the 21 lives lost with stars adorned with the name HMAS *Kuttabul* and the names of the 19 Australians and two British sailors that paid the ultimate sacrifice.”

Three Japanese submarines attacked Sydney Harbour that night but only one (*M-24*) found its target, inflicting the fatal blow to the *Kuttabul* before navigating its way out. The other two submarines (*M-22* and *M-27*) were either caught up in anti-submarine nets or damaged with depth chargers.

“It took several days to recover and account for those servicemen who were killed on the *Kuttabul* and on 3 June 1942, they were remembered with a burial service with full naval honours,” Mr Elliott said.

On 1 January 1943, the naval depot at Garden Island was commissioned as HMAS *Kuttabul*, a lasting memory of the 21 men killed during the attack.

RSL NSW President Ray James said commemorating significant moments in our military history was vital to Australia, as a people, a community, and a nation.

“RSL NSW takes this responsibility incredibly seriously as the custodians of the Anzac spirit and as a nation we should never forget when the war came to our doorstep during the Second World War,” Mr James said.

“But for the service and sacrifice of the men and women who served in our armed forces, and those of the Allied forces, the Australian people would not have been protected from the battles of the Second World War reaching our shores,” he said.

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