



The Hon Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT PAYS TRIBUTE TO NANCY WAKE

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello MP, who is responsible for Veterans' Affairs has paid tribute to Australian war heroine Nancy Wake who passed away at her London home aged 98.

Minister Dominello said Ms Wake, also known as „the White Mouse“, is the Allies' most decorated servicewoman of World War Two.

“Nancy Wake was a fearless freedom fighter for the French Resistance during the Second World War and was so important to the cause she was placed on the Nazi's most wanted list,” Minister Dominello said.

“Her legacy is one of daring independence, immense courage and lasting peace.

“Nancy Wake was a woman prepared to risk her life for the greater good of people being unfairly persecuted on the other side of the world.

“A trailblazer for Australian women everywhere, her significant contribution during the war will never be forgotten.

“When France surrendered to the Germans in 1940 and violent anti-Semitism spread through Europe, Nancy Wake and her husband Henri Fiocca joined the fledgling French Resistance.

“The couple assisted in the escape of many Allied servicemen and Jewish refugees from France into neutral Spain.

“After a brief stint in prison and fearful of further persecution with the Gestapo hot on her trail, Nancy Wake escaped France across the Pyrenees.

“The Germans code named her „the White Mouse“ because she was so hard to catch.

“Nancy Wake arrived in England in 1943 where she trained and worked as a spy in the French Section of the Special Operations Executive with the British Army.

“The following year, she was parachuted back into France where it was her job to help prepare the Resistance for D-Day through supplying thousands of fighters with arms and establishing covert communications with England.

“On one occasion she rode a bicycle 500 kilometres to re-establish a coded wireless communication network essential for supplying weapons to the Resistance.



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“Impressively, Nancy Wake was also involved in front line combat with bodies of German troops.

“Upon liberation, she learnt her husband had been tortured and killed by the Gestapo in 1943.

“After the war, Nancy Wake moved back to Australia twice including a lengthy stint in Port Macquarie on the NSW Mid-North Coast.

“She returned to London in 2001 where she lived the remainder of her life in a nursing home for retired veterans.

“I offer my sincere condolences to Nancy Wake’s family and friends.”

Highly revered in France, Nancy Wake was awarded the country’s highest military honour, the French Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

She also received the George Medal, 1939–45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, British War Medal 1939–45, French Croix de Guerre with Star and two Palms, US Medal for Freedom with Palm and a French Resistance Medal.

Nancy Wake’s medals are on display at the Australian War Memorial and she was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2004.

Nancy Wake was born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1912 and shortly after moved to Sydney with her family where she grew up and was educated.

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