

## PROGRAM

**Wednesday 10 June 2015**  
3:30pm  
GRAND OPENING & RECEPTION

Welcome by H.E. Todd Mercer, Australian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam

Speech by Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson,  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, and the Special Minister of State, Australia

Exhibition Opened by Senator Ronaldson, and  
YB Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Laila Diraja Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hazair bin Haji Abdullah,  
Minister for Culture, Youth and Sports, Brunei Darussalam

Ministers' Tour of Exhibition

Refreshments

**Thursday 11 June 2015**  
10:00am - 12pm  
PANEL SEMINAR

Welcome - His Excellency Todd Mercer, High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam.

"The Japanese occupation of Brunei Darussalam in WWII"  
*Dr Frank Dhont, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.*

"The Liberation of Brunei and British North Borneo"  
*Dr Garth Pratten, Australian National University*

"Collecting Bruniean Oral Histories"  
*Dr Maslin Haji Jukim, Universiti Brunei Darussalam*

"The 'Stories Through Memories' Project"  
*Dr Janet Marles, James Cook University.*

Q&A and Discussion

**12 - 30 June 2015**  
EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
(Opening hours: Sun - Thurs & Sat: 9am - 5pm, Fri 9am - 11.30, 2.30 - 5pm)

# قصة الذاكرة

**KISAH-KISAH DALAM KENANGAN**  
**STORIES THROUGH MEMORIES**  
70 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

An exhibition showcasing first-hand accounts of Bruneians who lived through World War II and historical images of Australian forces' leading role in the 1945 liberation of Borneo

The Art Gallery, The Royal Wharf, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam,  
12 - 30 June, 2015



“Our people...regard Australia as one of our closest friends and partners in the Asia Pacific Region. There are strong emotional reasons for this, of course. It was the arrival of Australian forces that signalled the end of World War II for us. This has inevitably created a very special bond of affection and respect between us.”

*His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mui'zzaddin Waddaulah  
Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam  
Delivered 15 February 2005, Parliament House, Canberra, Australia.*

## **FOREWORD**

The 1945 Oboe campaigns to liberate Borneo were the last major campaigns for Australian forces in World War II. They were a success - freeing the peoples of Borneo from an oppressive occupation - but they were not without tragedy.

The events of 1945 created a special bond between the people of Brunei and Australia. The High Commission is honoured to be part of this exhibition, a result of close collaboration with the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. The exhibition captures this significant time in our shared history, and we are pleased to be welcoming Australian veterans of the campaigns and the Bruneian elders whose stories are captured here to its opening.

The High Commission has been overwhelmed by the expressions of appreciation and welcome that have met the veterans on their return to Brunei. Brunei and Australia now enjoy a close friendship built on extensive people-to-people links and business ties, but it is these ties built on shared history that are the strongest of all.

I would like to thank and congratulate all those who have made this exhibition possible, and I hope you enjoy Stories through Memories – 70 years of Friendship.

*H.E. Todd Mercer, Australian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam*

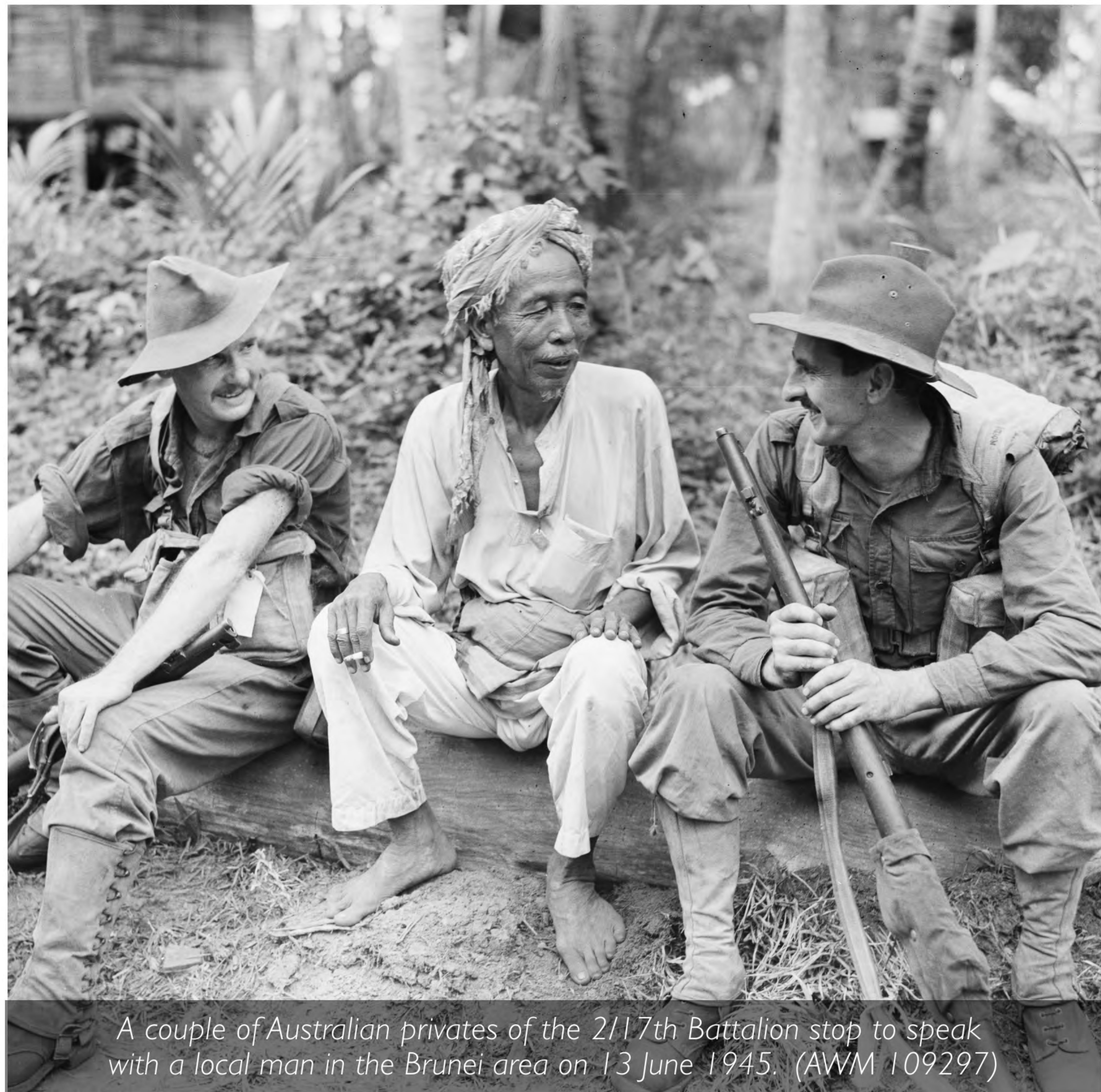


*Sultan Sir Ahmad Tajuddin Akhazul Khairi Waddien and his wife Tengku Ampuan Raihani return to Brunei Town accompanied by Wing Commander K.E.H. Kay of RAF British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit after Australian Forces successfully defeated the Japanese Imperial Army and liberated Brunei in June 1945.*

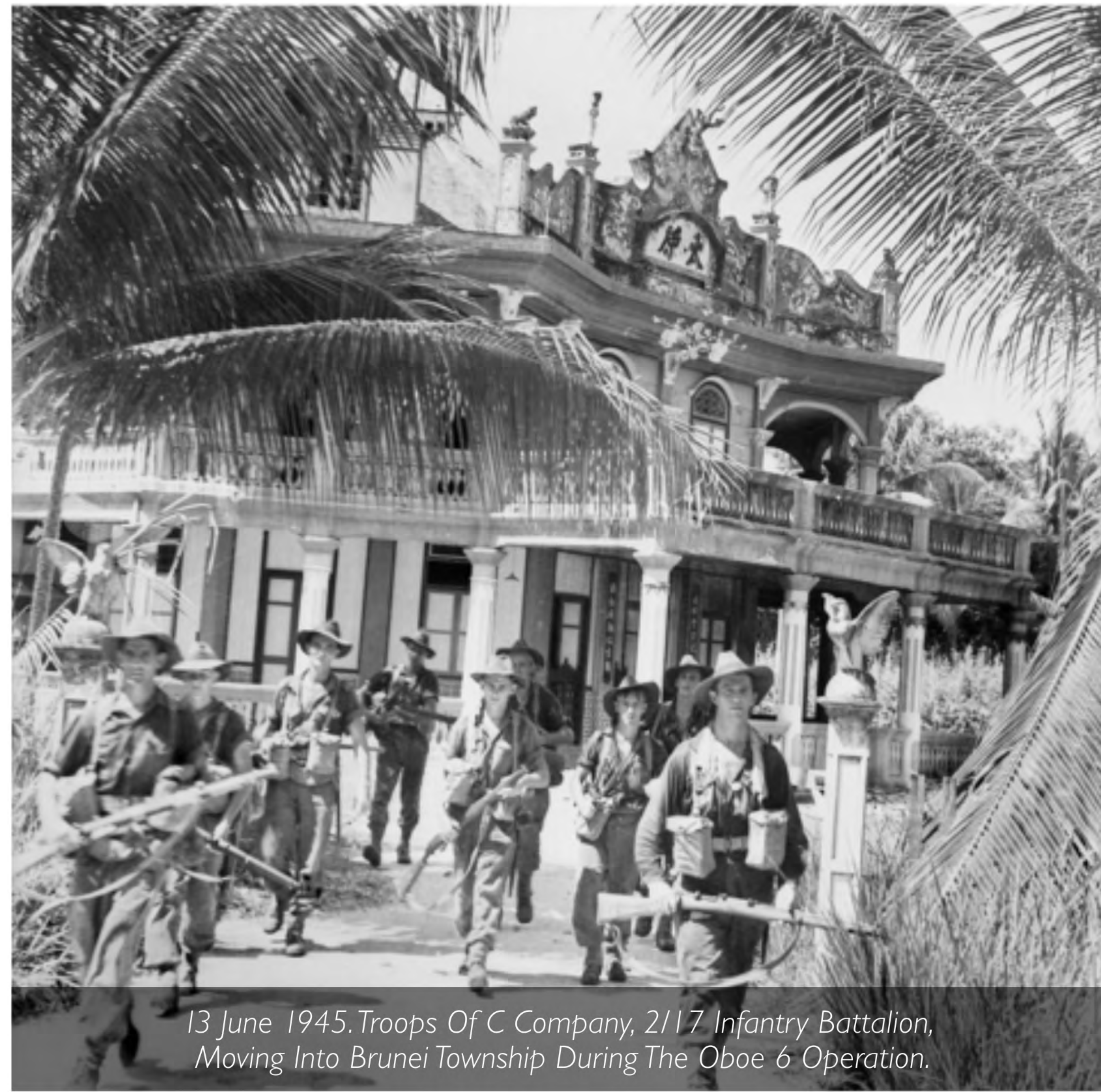
## **INTRODUCTION**

In the closing months of the Second World War, Australian forces launched a series of assaults on Japanese occupied Borneo as part of a planned campaign to liberate the Netherlands East Indies. Codenamed Oboe, six operations were planned but only three proceeded.

The Oboe operations began with the landing at Tarakan on 1 May 1945, followed in June with attacks on the Japanese around Brunei Bay and in July with the assault on Balikpapan. They were the last Australian campaigns of the war against Japan. The Oboe operations, carried out by a citizen army in the war's dying months, were conducted with professionalism and skill borne of years of experience. In each locale the Australians prevailed over the Japanese, but the Borneo campaigns cost the lives of almost 600 Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen.



*A couple of Australian privates of the 2/17th Battalion stop to speak with a local man in the Brunei area on 13 June 1945. (AWM 109297)*



*13 June 1945. Troops Of C Company, 2/17 Infantry Battalion, Moving Into Brunei Township During The Oboe 6 Operation.*

## SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS



Hj. Morsidi bin Tamin  
Kampong Ayer

*“Pengiran Sapar brought His Majesty (the late Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin) here (to Tantaya, located East of Bandar just over the current Brunei Sarawak border) to hide. He was about to be killed by the Japanese... Back then, even with only ten fingers we were willing to guard the Sultan”*



Haji Akhbar Khan bin Abdul Khan  
Bandar Seri Begawan

*“I was assigned as a blacksmith... every afternoon after work you had to attend school where they teach Japanese... we learnt a lot from the Japanese. We learned to make things ourselves rather than import from overseas. There was some good in the Japanese”*

*“Bruneians ran to Lawas, to Sundar, to Awat-Awat (east into present-day Sarawak). A lot of Bruneians died at Trusan (across the border east of Temburong District). A lot of them”*



Hajah Mastura Binti Mail  
Kampong Ayer

*“Our people (The Iban, traditionally Borneo’s head-hunters)... when they kill; execute the Japanese, they will take their heads. To hang and burn them. It acts as a sign... Every Japanese killed, if they were able to get their heads, they will take their heads”*



Awang Jamit Anak Lasah  
Head of Iban Longhouse  
Teraja