



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

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REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF BARDIA, 80 YEARS ON

TOMORROW the nation commemorates the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Bardia, in Libya, the first land battle of the Second World War planned and fought predominantly by Australians.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the effort by the 6th Australian Division in the Battle of Bardia was widely praised at the time.

"Australian soldiers, in what was then known as the 2nd Australian Imperial Force, launched a two-pronged attack against the Italian stronghold at Bardia early in the morning of 3 January 1941 – one being a diversionary assault – with British tanks in support," Mr Chester said.

"The 17th Brigade created a diversion in the south, while the 16th Brigade attacked the western side of the Italian defences, blowing holes through wire obstacles and breaching the perimeter.

"Demonstrating resilience and stamina, the Australian infantry took the town of Bardia after two days of intense fighting, along with some 40,000 Italian prisoners, weapons, supplies and equipment.

"The troops wore their greatcoats to keep out the intense cold of the desert. During the two-day battle, around 130 Australian soldiers lost their lives and some 320 were wounded.

"Eighty years on from the start of this historic battle, we remember those who served, and the families who made sacrifices to support them."

After the success at Bardia, Australian and British units came together and over January and February, pushed the Italian army back across Libya.

In April 1941, the 6th Division was withdrawn to defend Greece and elements of the 7th and 9th Divisions took over defensive duties in Libya where they would become involved in the 'Siege of Tobruk', which took place between April and November 1941 against Italian and German forces.

Learn more about the Battle of Bardia and the important role of all those who served during the Second World War by visiting the [Anzac Portal](#).

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