

OUTBACK ADVENTURE

NOWAK TRAVELOGUE | APRIL, MAY | 2012

Darwin

There is only one town in the world named after Charles Darwin, and we paid it a visit today.

We were pleasantly surprised. The place was very tidy with well kept public lawns and neat houses and business facades. The place is not very big. We expected bigger. Mind you, never having visited Darwin we did not really know what to expect. We were told it's a place that is quite lay back.

After finding a caravan park close to the Subaru service centre (where we will get the car serviced tomorrow) we settled down for the night. The humidity did not let up all night so we arose early and drove in to the city. Darwin is supposed to be excellent for bike riding. Heather was really pleased to read that the many bike tracks here, criss-cross lots of FLAT parklands. We easily found the foreshore near the harbour and rode all around. The new docklands part of Darwin was very impressive. There was a large ocean liner at the dock. Lots of it's passengers were walking the streets. We had an enjoyable time speaking to some of them.



World War II

Most Australians know that Darwin was bombed during the war. But the finer details of what happened then, and afterwards, is not as widely known.

Darwin was attacked by the same Japanese force that attacked Pearl Harbor. The first wave of over 242 bombers dropped 683 bombs (compared with 271 bombs dropped on Pearl Harbor). The Japanese force flew over 90 bombing raids over northern Australia with a

total death toll of almost 1000 people. More than 40 ships were sunk or damaged. To the credit of our forces, the Japanese lost 130 aircraft. The government apparently down played the seriousness of the incursions, and quickly evacuated as many people as it could in anticipation of a Japanese invasion. Then, with the assistance of the Americans, a major building program was begun. The Americans played a much grater role than I ever knew.



IRONY We are so lucky in Australia. Unlike in Europe and UK our toilets, BBQs and hot water are predominately free. Unlike Europe, the showers are not even time limited -- odd when you consider that we are the driest continent on earth



HEAT Although the day temperatures hover around 34C, the humidity is the real killer, especially at night. Our fan, complete with wet towel over the front, is going non stop



EN=SUITE Many of the sites at our Darwin caravan park, have en-suites.. An extra \$3 per night is a small price to pay for a personal shower/toilet/washroom right next to the van.

DEFENDING DARWIN

AMERICAN ASSISTANCE



As we approached Darwin via the Stuart Highway, we stopped to read various monuments dedicated to the war.

After Darwin was bombed the government (and the Americans) feared that a Japanese invasion was imminent so defensive infrastructure was built in quick time. A first road system was extended through to Mt Isa and the Stuart Highway outside Darwin was widened to include 3 large airfields. The remnants of these large airfields for bombers and fighters can still be seen today.

We also visited a cemetery where most of the military and civilian victims of the Darwin bombing are buried. It was sad to read some of the epitaphs. The majority of the servicemen were in their early twenties. One I saw was only 17.



"For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrong that needs resistance,
For the future in the distance,
And the good that I can do."
George Washington, 1721-1799



OUR A-VAN

We get asked often how we like our little traveling home. It's been fantastic. Light, nimble yet safe and secure. Easy to set up and pull down each night if we have to. We have spent most of our time outdoors to date and have not put up our annex (or stabilising legs) until today. We can survive for a few days camping out in the wild but have been told it is not wise to do this in remote areas. Our A-van has every mod con one could want and the only amenity we could do with right now is an air conditioner!!!! Maybe the fridge could be a little bigger so we could fit in more ice blocks.

