

# VP80 Bus Tour Places

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## Inner City

### Commonwealth Bank Building

- The third floor contained the QLD State War Loans and War Savings Certificate Committee. The fourth floor contained offices for War Service Homes Commission.

### AMP Building

- The AMP building was constructed between 1931 and 1934 as the Queensland headquarters of the Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP).
- On 20 July 1942 General MacArthur moved his General Headquarters, SWPA to this building; in part because it was 'the largest and most modern office building, and in the center of town.'
  - Basement - 832nd Signal Battalion's Message Centre (including 'Green Hornet' Signals top secret telephone communications)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> floor - The Allied air force headquarters, including RAAF Command.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Floor - US telephone exchange and US Navy Headquarters.
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Floor - Signals facilities, including a code room.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Floor - A War Brides Office
- MacArthur retained the headquarters until November 1944 when he returned to the Philippines.

### Primac House (US PX)

- Built in 1909 as a motor showroom for the Canada Cycle & Motor Agency (Qld) Ltd, it was sold in 1934 to the Queensland Primary Producers Co-Operative Association Ltd and subsequently became 'Primac House'. In 1942, office spaces throughout its five floors were requisitioned for use by various agencies drawn from the Australian Army, the Commonwealth Government and the US Army.
- On the fifth (top) floor was the main US Army Post Exchange (PX) Canteen for Brisbane. Here, American servicemen could obtain liquor, cigarettes, chocolate bars, candy, soda pop and other items supplied direct from the USA.

### American Red Cross Services Club (Terrica House)

- When US General Douglas MacArthur transferred his headquarters to Brisbane (23 July 1942), the American Red Cross expanded its Brisbane facilities. 'Terrica House' at 236 Adelaide Street held its headquarters and main services club.
- Brisbane's first American Red Cross Services Club was officially opened at 3.30 PM on Thanksgiving Day (26 November) 1942 by USN Vice Admiral Arthur S. Carpender and US Army Colonel Francis S. Wilson; with the opening ceremony offering American luxuries such as 250 Thanksgiving turkeys.

## Battle of Brisbane

- 26<sup>th</sup> November, after 6pm the pubs had closed and a couple drunken Australians were on the street. They saw an American soldier being harassed by an MP and tried to intercede. One thin led to another, and by 8pm, some 2,000 – 5,000 people had become involved in the disturbance which continued to rage.
- Gunner Edward Webster of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Attack Regiment was hit in the chest when a shotgun misfired, killing him. He was later buried at Toowong Cemetery. Several other Australians and Americans were injured by the shotgun blast or melee. The ground floor of the PX was destroyed.

## Bomb Shelters

- The German air campaign against Britain which ran from September 1940 to May 1941. An exhibition of seventy photos capturing the extensive damage London sustained in the Blitz was held in the Brisbane City Hall Basement in November 1941. These photos had been sent to the courier mail by the London Press and the British Ministry of Information.
- The backbone of ARP efforts was largely provided by police, firefighters and medical staff, alongside many volunteer ARP wardens. Power to appoint wardens was granted to the Civil Defence Department and their duties were subject to the *State Civil Defence Act*. Training of wardens began in February 1940, initially in Brisbane and then in Northern Coastal Centres. Each warden received training from the Police in the form of five two-hour lectures presented in various venues. Following this training, wardens would continue to meet fortnightly and monthly to meet with police officials and discuss any local requirements.  
In February 1941 there were 7,000 wardens in Queensland (5,000 of which were in Brisbane), but by July 1942 there were 26,000.
- In Queensland, the standard design specification for a public shelter was that it must withstand a direct hit by an incendiary bomb and shrapnel from a 500lb HE bomb at 50ft.
- Mr F. Warren (Assistant Architect of the State Department of Public Works) believed trenches and surface shelters would provide better protection than basements, possibly as they were less likely to result in people being trapped. He estimated that to provide surface shelters for 35,000 people (the estimated population of Brisbane CBD) would cost £87,500 approximately, at £3 10s per person. In contrast, trench shelters would cost £2 10s per person.  
Queensland Governor Forgan Smith ordered the construction of 200 public surface shelters in Brisbane. In total, 235 would be build alongside several kilometres of slit trenches. F.G. Costello, the City Council Architect at the time, designed most of the shelters, which could hold around 80 people.

## Northern Suburbs

### 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Officer Club

- At its peak the US Navy had almost 6500 personnel stationed in Brisbane during 1944, of these 685 were commissioned officers.

- Through the Australian Army Hiring Service, the USN acquired vacant riverside land from the Brisbane City Council, taking possession on 4 November 1943. The US Navy ceased activities at the property on 23 June 1945.

## US 134 Naval Receiving Station

- The United States Navy (USN) requisitioned New Farm Park in September 1942 for development into the major USN accommodation base in Brisbane. The New Farm Receiving Station could house 500 enlisted men and smaller numbers of unmarried officers. It also provided messing, recreation, immediate medical and postal facilities for the sailors. The USN closed the Station in January 1946, about five months after War's end. The Australian Government then leased the base to the Dutch forces fighting against the Republic of Indonesia.

## Southern Suburbs

### Camp Columbia

- Plans for the tanks prepared by Chesterfield & Jenkins (QLD) PTY LTD Engineering contractors 324 Queen Street.
- The Sewerage Treatment Plant was to accommodate for the needs of Camp No. 1.
- The US was required to foot the expenditure for developing Camp Columbia. A contractor by the name of Mr. Honibrook had already been let a contract for construction on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1942 (assumedly local contractor).