




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2015

ADJOURNMENT

Leyburn Airfield, Commemorative Monument

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.36 pm): Recently, on 15 August to be exact, I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a commemorative monument at the Leyburn Airfield. Many would not be aware of the existence of this airstrip or the role that it played in the defence of Australia during the Second World War. The airfield was one of four built on the downs by the US for use by heavy bombers in the event the Japanese ever landed near Brisbane, a real possibility at one stage of the war. Thankfully, that never happened, and after building the strip the US forces never actually used it and it was instead used by RAAF units. The airfield was used by RAAF units from July 1944 until the end of the war, during which time many squadrons, all flying B24 Liberator bombers, were based there, including the 200 Special Duties Flight whose mission was to drop agents and supplies of the Australian Army's Z Special Unit by parachute into enemy territory.

The monument was unveiled by a Leyburn Airfield veteran, Ian Lang, in memory of all who served at this important site and in memory of those who flew from the strip on missions and did not return. *The Last Post* was played and one minute of silence was observed. The date of 15 August marked the 70-year anniversary of the surrender of the Japanese that ended the war in the Pacific.

The monument was a joint project of the Leyburn RSL, the Leyburn Sprints, the Leyburn and District Historical Society, the Toowoomba Regional Council and Ian Waters OAM. After the war, the forces were disbanded and the airfield was used for car racing. In 1949, the Australian Grand Prix was held there, the first time the event had been held in Queensland. My father actually attended that day and used to speak about it often. That tradition continues, as that very same weekend the famous Leyburn sprints were held in front of a very large crowd. This is another example of the history we all have in our local communities if we just take the time to investigate it. I thank Gary Sprott of the Leyburn RSL for his kind invitation to attend what was a very moving and memorable ceremony.