



2011 PUBLIC SEMINAR SERIES

Australia's first commandos in 1942 Timor

Presented by Paul Cleary

PhD Scholar

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

Australian National University and

Senior Writer - *The Australian*

Paul Cleary will present the results of his research into the gripping though little-known story of a small force of Australian special forces commandos that launched relentless hit and run raids on far superior Japanese forces in Portuguese Timor (now Timor-Leste) for most of 1942. Drawing on the unstinting support of Timorese and Portuguese partisans, the men of the 2/2nd Australian Independent Company—a special commando unit—became the only troops from 22,000-strong 8th Division who faced the Japanese in early 1942 and remained an integrated force. Initially stranded without radio contact to Australia, the Japanese declared these bearded warriors outlaws and warned they would be executed immediately if captured. Recruited mainly from the bush, the 2/2nd men were chosen for their ability to operate independently and survive in hostile territory. As film-maker Damien Parer said after visiting in Timor in late 1942, “these men are writing an epic of guerrilla warfare”.

The seminar is based on Paul Cleary's book, *The Men Who Came out of the Ground*.

Monday 8 August 3.30pm

The Seminar Room, NARU, 23 Ellengowan Drive, Brinkin

This seminar is free and open to the public.

The views expressed in this lecture are those of the presenter and do not necessarily represent the view of ANU.

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