

**SPARROW FORCE MONUMENT
OESAU, KUPANG, TIMOR, INDONESIA
CEREMONY OF REDEDICATION – APRIL 8, 2026**

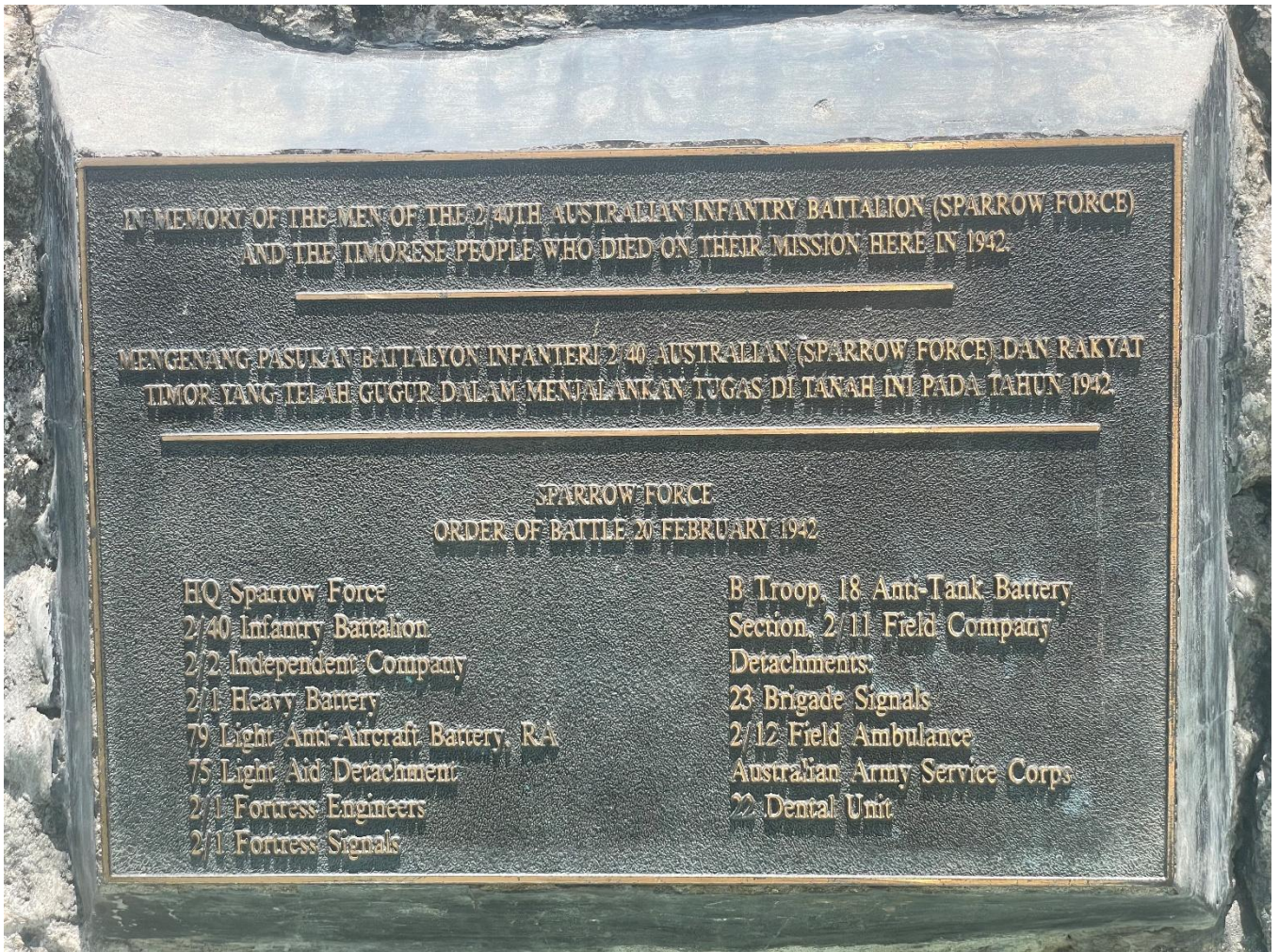


The renovated monument in September 2025

During World War II, Sparrow Force was sent to Timor to defend against Japanese invasion. The 1400 or so men of Sparrow Force came from 14 different units, with approximately 900 men being from the 2nd/40th Infantry Battalion, almost all Tasmanians. Retreating from Kupang, they encountered several hundred Japanese paratroopers dug in on Oesau Ridge . There followed an action on February 22, 1942, in which a bayonet charge by the Tasmanians overran the Japanese positions. It is at exactly this location that the Sparrow Force Monument is located in the town of Oesau about 30 km from Kupang City.



Renovation of monument was organised locally by Pak Frans Wayan and Pak Daniel Hirewaki



The monument was an initiative of the veterans association of the 2nd/40th Infantry Battalion and was inaugurated on June 16, 1992. In the period since then a number of repairs and enhancements were made by various Australians resident in Kupang. However, by 2022 , the condition of the monument had deteriorated to the extent that more significant repairs were required. "Friends of Sparrow Force" was formed by Michael Kramer and Chris Curtis of Sydney, and a grant obtained from the Department of Veterans' Affairs. With the assistance of Indonesian friends in Kupang, renovation was substantially complete in 2025. A ceremony of rededication was scheduled for April 2026. The last such ceremony that we know of , was held on February 22, 2009, which was attended by Fred Smith, a veteran of the 2nd/40th Battalion . Periodically, visiting Australians have also laid wreaths,



2nd/40th Battalion veteran Fred Smith at the Oesau monument, February 22, 2009



Visitors from Geraldton WA with Michael Kramer, April 2025

In planning this latest ceremony it was decided to involve the local Indonesian community to the greatest extent possible. So, invitations were sent to the local high school, local residents, the owners of the land on which the monument sits, and to national, provincial and local government bodies with responsibilities for cultural preservation, as well as a number of Australians living in Timor. The attendees numbered about 40. The ceremony was conducted in a mixture of Bahasa Indonesia and English. Likewise , the printed information booklet contained both languages.



The Kapitan family, on whose land the monument sits, came in traditional attire

The MC was a young lady from Kupang, Angela Hosang , who had spent some of her childhood in Toowoomba. Proceedings opened with a prayer. Michael Kramer of "The Friends" then gave some background on Sparrow Force and a short account of the battle. He next related the history of the monument and went on to thank the Kapitan family on whose land the monument is built,

and to thank also all those involved in the renovation. In closing, Kramer urged all to remember not only the Australians who fell at Oesau, but also the suffering of the people of Oesau during the period of occupation during WW2.

Addresses were made by the following invited Indonesian officials:

Bp Konstant S Ballo head of the Education and Culture Office of the Kabupaten of Kupang

Bp Haris Budiharto who heads the Preservation of Culture Office for the Province of East Nusa Tenggara.. Interestingly, Bp Haris was managing the Benteng Vrederburg Museum in Yogyakarta when that museum hosted the Black Armada exhibition in 2015. That exhibition marked the 70th anniversary of the Australian union action to prevent the loading of Dutch shipping bound for the reconquest of Indonesia.

These were followed by the reading of two brief extracts describing the battle. The first from “The Men Who Came out of the Ground” by Paul Cleary, was read by an Australian AVI volunteer, Scott Brunner. The second from “Straight Left” by Tom Uren was read by another Australian AVI volunteer, Shelley McPhee.



Australian AVI volunteers read extracts describing the battle at Oesau Ridge

This was followed by the laying of wreaths . One by the Indonesian students, a second by the Australian volunteers.



A wreath is placed by Indonesian high school students



A minutes silence followed . To close out the ceremony , The Ode was recited in English by Michael Kramer, and an Indonesian version by Angela Hosang. It was explained to the attendees that the Ode is recited whenever Australians pause to reflect on the sacrifice of our Fallen.

After the close, snacks were provided and there was an opportunity for photos and discussion.



The ceremony was organised by Frans Wayan of the Nusa Tenggara Association (NTA) and he was assisted by members of the NTA. Sadly, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta declined to send a representative.

Michael Kramer

Friends of Sparrow Force Monument