



Beyond Adversity: 'U' Company, 15th Battalion 1941-1942 (Australian Army History Collection)

William Park

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In November 1941, about 100 university students began their short-term compulsory military training with the 15th Infantry Battalion. Most were aged 19-22, had daytime jobs and were evening or external students from the arts, commerce and law faculties. They were ambitious, hard-working young men anxious to make their way in the world.

Their compulsory military training was due to end on 4 February 1942 and the students would then be released to return to their jobs and continue their part-time studies. The outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December changed everything. In April 1942, the 15th Battalion was given 24 hours' notice to move from Caloundra to Townsville. In January 1943 the Battalion went to New Guinea to take part in the Salamaua and Lae campaigns and did not return to Brisbane until July 1944. In November it was sent to fight in Bougainville. The Battalion finally returned home in January 1946 and most returned to resume their studies and jobs within the community.

This book tells the story of those Queensland University students of 'U' Company, 15th Battalion during its brief existence. It covers their wartime service in all its tragedy and triumph and how they resumed their lives, studies and careers once the war was over. Most regard themselves as being very fortunate - to have survived the war, to have learned to cope with adversity, to have learned the importance of getting on with life in spite of insurmountable obstacles and in having been able to make the most of opportunities that arose. They have been fortunate to find a life beyond adversity.

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