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Footy Goes to War - Roll Call

Ron Barassi (Sr.) made his debut for Melbourne in 1936. His final league match was Melbourne's victorious 1940 Grand Final. Serving as part of Australia's campaign in North Africa, he was killed in action at Tobruk in 1941, the first VFL footballer to lose his life in the Second World War.

L.A. "Peter" Chitty made his VFL debut for St Kilda in 1936. Sidelined by injuries, he would only play 2 games. Later, while a P.OW. of the Japanese in Singapore's notorious Changi Prison, he captained Victoria's side in a match against "The Rest", winning the only "Changi Browlow" ever awarded. While working on the infamous Burma Railway, he carried a malaria-ridden friend over 200 kilometers. Chitty was awarded the British Empire Medal after the war.

Jack Cooper played his first senior VFL game for Fitzroy in 1907, remaining there until 1915. After enlisting in the AIF in the same year, he would be wounded at the Somme. He played for the **Australian Training Units** team in the famous October **1916 Pioneer Exhibition Match** that was held in London. Cooper was killed during the Battle of Passchendaele on 20 September 1917.

Harold Comte played with St Kilda from 1930-7. He was killed in action in 1945 in Tarakan, Dutch East Indies.

Jack Dyer played with Richmond for almost two decades and was a titan of the game. Dyer's performance during the 1944 Grand Final was one of the best individual performances by a Richmond player in the club's history.

Fred Fanning played with the Demons throughout the war years and was the VFL's leading goalkicker in 1943, 1944, and 1945.

Clyde Helmer was Geelong's leading goalkicker in the late 1930's. He joined Carlton after Geelong withdrew from competition in 1942. He was killed in action in 1945.

Jim Knight played with Geelong in the late 1930's and was their Best and Fairest in 1941. He played for Carlton when Geelong withdrew from competition in 1942. He was killed in action in 1943.

Phonse Kyne played with Collingwood for almost two decades. He served in the Australian Army (22nd Battalion) between 1942 and 1945, playing for the Mt. Murtha Area Army team.

Jim Park played with Carlton for 9 years and was killed in action while fighting Japanese forces with the 2/6th Infantry Battalion at the Battle of Wau in New Guinea.

Joe Pearce played with Melbourne for ten years, beginning in 1904. He enlisted in the First AIF on 17 August 1914. He was killed in action whilst taking part in the landings at Gallipoli, Turkey on 25 April 1915.

Bob Pratt played with S. Melbourne until 1940, switching to Coburg of the V.F.A. He took leave of Coburg during the war, enlisting in the R.A.A.F. and leading their own Stores Depot team to the R.A.A.F. Premiership in 1942.

Bob Quinn enlisted in Australian Army in June of 1940 after his first season as captain/coach with Port Adelaide. He served with distinction on multiple fronts during World War Two and returned to play with Port after the war in spite of multiple injuries sustained during his service.

Joe Slater played with Geelong between 1906 and 1914, enlisting at the outbreak of World War One. He was killed in France in 1917.

Bruce Sloss played with both Essendon and South Melbourne before enlisting in 1915. He captained the victorious **Third Australian Divisional Team** which beat the **Australian Training Units Team** 6.16 (52) to 4.12 (36) during the London Pioneer Exhibition Match of 1916. He was killed in 1917.

Wilfred "Chicken" Smallhorn played with distinction for Fitzroy throughout the 1930's into the 1940 season, won the Brownlow in 1933, and was instrumental in the creation of the Changi P.O.W. League in Singapore.

Len Thomas made his debut for S. Melbourne in 1927 and went on to become one of their better players during the 1930s. He won the club's Best and Fairest award in 1931 and 1938. He became the most experienced VFL footballer to be killed in World War II when he was killed in action in New Guinea in 1943.

Jack Titus was the VFL's leading goalkicker in 1940. He played his entire career - almost two decades - for Richmond. He still holds the Richmond records for most Grand Finals, most finals goals, and most consecutive games to this day.

Keith Truscott played 44 games (and kicked 31 goals) for The Demons as a half-forward flanker from 1937 to 1940, He played in both of Melbourne's 1939 and 1940 premiership victories, taking leave from military duties to play in the September 1940 final. After joining the R.A.A.F. in 1940, he became the second highest scoring Australian World War II fighter ace, credited with 20 confirmed victories and 5 unconfirmed victories. He was killed in a training accident in 1943.

Norm Ware won the Brownlow in 1940. He played his entire career with Footscray and was their leading goalkicker in 1942.

Lindsay White played for South Melbourne briefly in 1942 and 1943 when Geelong withdrew from competition due to transport restrictions and petrol rationing. He was both Geelong's and South Melbourne's leading goalkicker during the war years.