

## Homecoming: Jane Cameron

The Manly ferry nudges the wharf, engines revving as it bumps against the pylons. I look at the small boats bobbing gently in the swell and the sun reflecting on the white apartment buildings that edge the shore. The gangways go down with a thump and the passengers shuffle together determined to get off as quickly as possible.

But not me. I'm coming home and I'm savouring every moment of it.

I've been away for three years, travelling to places as far removed from Manly as one could imagine. But now I listen to the gulls as they circle overhead; I look at the straggly Norfolk pines and breathe in the warm, balmy air.

There were times when I didn't think I would ever get back to my beloved Manly. There were dark days of death and destruction, when the sounds were of gunfire, of rockets falling and people screaming as their bombed homes collapsed in piles of dust and rubble.

I am a war photographer and the images of frightened people running for their lives, trying to escape their burning homes and wailing for their dead will forever be imprinted on my mind.

But unlike them I could walk away from the horrors. I could escape to peace in Manly, the only place where eventually, I might heal and learn to deal with some of my nightmares.