



The Good Guts

Official Newsletter of
39th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION
(1941-43) ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED
PUBLICATION NUMBER 100018459



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No. 242
April
2023

CELEBRATING 101 YEARS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
JOHN HANNAH
22ND FEBRUARY

KOKODA TERRACE - BELGRAVE STH P.S.



The Grade Six students from Belgrave South Primary School spent a week on Environmental Studies in the Dandenong Ranges National Park. It was also a time to learn more of the story of the 39th Battalion. Members, Alfred Mallia and Mal Owen visited the group in the Forest Classroom and shared the 39th story with them.



The **'Mates'** Statue on the Kokoda Terrace. A permanent reminder of the close connection between the Diggers and the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels.



Dear 39th Veterans, Family and Friends,

It has been a good start to the year and a busy time for your Committee, who have been working diligently in organising upcoming Anzac Day events.

I would like to bring you all up to date with a milestone from one of our veterans. John Hannah from Melbourne recently turned 101, well done John, you are an inspiration to us all. Our other surviving veteran, Jack McLeod is currently being well looked after in care and sends everyone his regards.

We have a full Anzac Day march planned and following the march we will lay wreaths for both the WW1 and WW2 39th Battalions at the large eucalypt tree, near where the marchers normally finish at the Shrine. This is the 39th WW1 tree and it is always great to see both groups come together during this ceremony. Once completed, we welcome members and families to join our friends from the 2/14th and 2/16th Battalions for lunch from midday at the Rising Sun Hotel, Raglan St, South Melbourne.

We have the Anzac Schools Service on Wednesday 26th April at the Parks Victoria Education Centre, Kokoda Memorial, Dandenong Ranges National Park. Although predominantly a schools event, everyone is welcome to this fine ceremony. The service starts promptly at 11.00am.

Our Association AGM has been confirmed for 11.30am, Sunday 30th April at the East Malvern RSL. This will be followed by a luncheon with a guest speaker and bookings can be made via the website. We hope to see as many members and friends as possible as it is always a very family friendly gathering.

I will not be standing for re-election as President at the AGM which has been a difficult decision to make. It has been a rewarding experience as President and the Association has come through with flying colours following a couple of very challenging years. I would like to thank the Committee who have all worked extremely hard to keep the Association going during these tough times.

For example, the huge success of the 80th Kokoda Anniversary last August in Victoria and Queensland just shows the amount of effort and commitment that goes into making these events such a success. Its events and commemorations like this that keep our Association relevant to our member group and to an emerging younger generation.

Check our website, Face Book page and the Good Guts for updates on all upcoming events.

Stay safe and we look forward to catching up with our veterans and members during our many events in April and all through 2023, all the best.

Deeds not Words

Ross Darrigan
President

Veterans Roll Call

As we go to press, to our knowledge,
we have 2 surviving 39th Battalion Veterans.

DISTRIBUTION

Victoria 2: John Hannah, Jack McLeod

39th Australian Infantry Battalion 1941-1943 Association Inc

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	Ross Darrigan
<u>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT</u>	Merren Stockdale
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	David Bellairs
<u>HON.SECRETARY</u>	Malcolm Owen
<u>TREASURER</u>	Rosemary Moore
<u>MEMBER</u>	Kerry Sumbler
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<u>NEWS LETTER EDITOR</u>	Mary Holloway
<u>MEMBER-Qld Rep</u>	George Friend
<u>MEMBER</u>	
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<u>MEMBER</u>	Keith Hallet
<u>MEMBER 1/39 BATTALION WW1 1916-1919</u>	Tim Fitzgerald
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<u>INTERSTATE CONTACTS</u>	NSW Judith Matuschka
	QLD George Friend

39th BATTALION WEBSITE and Mailing Address	www.39battalion.com	PO Box 552 Gisborne Vic 3437
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Editorial

We often hear outlined the reasons why Australian service personnel have fought and, too frequently, laid down their lives in armed conflict with a perceived enemy. These reasons can be described as "The Four Freedoms

Freedom of speech and expression.

Freedom of religion

Freedom from want

Freedom from fear

President Franklin D Roosevelt in the State of Union Address he delivered to the 77th United States Congress on 6th January 1941 articulated these **Four Freedoms**. He believed these were the fundamental freedoms that all humans 'everywhere in the world' should enjoy. Since the end of World War 2 these concepts have become almost universally accepted and are probably now deeply etched in the Australian psyche that we often take them for granted.

However as Anzac Day approaches it is a good time to reflect on what freedom actually means to each of us. There is no doubt we would all agree with the premise of the Four Freedoms but each of us has their own definition of a personal freedom that allows us to escape from the chains of our every day life. Perhaps it is a day at the football, or going fishing, reading a good book or getting immersed in an enthralling movie, maybe a day in the garden or just sitting, watching the clouds come up over the horizon and scatter across a blue sky. Whatever it may be, it is your choice and you are free to make it.

These are the freedoms given to us by those men and women who gave up their lives to protect our right to make a choice. So this Anzac Day remember their sacrifice of life to give us the gift of freedom.

Lest We Forget.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



39th Battalion Events

Proposed Calendar Dates for 2023

Events printed in bold are events the 39th Bn Association is running or helping to run.

*Italics are events to which Association invited * = cost*

MONTH	DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
April 2023	11th	Committee Meeting	1900	East Keilor RSL
	21st	Anzac Day Service	1030	Remembrance Garden Heidelberg
	23rd	Anzac Day Church Service	1630	Austin Health St Pauls Cathedral
	25th	ANZAC Day March	0915	Collins Street East, South Side Melbourne
	25th	Anzac Day Post March Lunch	1200	Rising Sun Hotel-with 2/24. 2/16, 2/27th
	25th	ANZAC Day March	0930	Brisbane
	26	Anzac Day Schools Service	1100	Kokoda Terrace Dandenong Ranges National Park
	30th	39th Battalion AGM and Lunch		East Malvern RSL, Stanley Grose Crescent, East Malvern
May 2023	16th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
June 2023	13th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
July 2023	2nd	Social Function	TBA	Darley-80th Anniversary Battalion Disbandment
	10th 23rd	Committee Meeting Annual 2/14 th Bn Association Lunch	1900 TBC	TBC Brisbane
August 2023	8th	Kokoda Day Service	1300	OTH Dandenong Ranges Natl Park
	8th	Kokoda Day Service	1000	Cascade Gardens, Gold Coast. Qld
	12th	Kokoda Day Football Match	1330	Reid Oval Warrnambool
	13th 13th 15th	Kokoda Day Pilgrimage Kokoda Day Service Committee Meeting	1400 1100 1900	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Sherwood RSL, Brisbane. Qld TBA
September 2023	12th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
October 2023	10th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC
November 2023	11th	Remembrance Day	TBA	
	14th 23rd	Committee Meeting TSS Cadet Annual Passing Out Parade	1900 TBA	TBC Southport School. Gold Coast
December 2023	12th	Committee Meeting	1900	TBC



39th Australian Infantry Battalion (1941-43) Association Inc.

NOTICE OF 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held at East Malvern RSL
Stanley Grose Drive, Malvern East, Vic.

Sunday 30th April 2023 at 11.30 AM

At this meeting a special resolution will be proposed to accept the updated Rules of the Association.

Full details are on the website or can be emailed on request.

The Annual Lunch will follow at 12.30 pm

Cost for a 2 course lunch is \$40 pp (39th veterans and widows free)

Bar service, Tea and coffee provided

During lunch **Tim Fitzgerald will speak of the links with the 39th AIF**

Full details of both events are on the website www.39battalion.com

(AGM under 'Events', Lunch bookings via 'Shop').

Please join us for both events and even consider standing for the committee.

The LUNCH IS A TICKETED EVENT.
SEATS MUST BE BOOKED by 21ST April 2023.

enquires welcome at events@39battalion.com or by ringing 0408592608

ANZAC DAY 2023

MELBOURNE

Descendants and members of the Association are encouraged and welcomed to participate in the ANZAC Day March. It is a privilege to march behind the 39th Banner but one that should not be taken lightly.

The ANZAC Day Organising Committee rightly expect a very high standard from those participating and this Association have set the following guidelines in place.



Please note the following details:.

- **Form up:** 39th Bn. will form up in **COLLINS ST, EAST ON THE SOUTH SIDE** (as part of Army 1 Corps) behind the Paratroops. **However look for our banner** because the marshals sometimes move our assembly point. If you intend to march with the Battalion please join at the beginning, **not** during the march itself. Please get there in time for a good chat before-hand.
- **Assemble** from about **9:15 am. Step off time is 10am.** Time will be confirmed by email to members.
- **Dress code:** As the Anzac Day March is an Act of Remembrance and Commemoration, dress should reflect the dignity of the occasion. All marchers, veterans and non-veterans should be suitably attired and keep in mind that this is a March of Remembrance **not a Moomba Parade.** Those offering to *march* must be at least 17 years old (the minimum age of veterans in PNG), wear a dark jacket with white shirt and a tie or similar for women. We have for many years had the best turned out marchers and we know this will be so again this year as well.

Veterans' Medals worn by family members should be pinned to the right breast.

- NO back packs
- NO football attire
- NO children under 17 years of age
- NO prams
- No photos or political banners.

March behaviour : Descendants and Association members will MARCH, in step, no chatter, no falling out for photos or interviews, no calling out to people on the sidelines. Remember the march is a sign of respect.

Approaching the Shrine, at the order EYES RIGHT, those not in uniform are to remove their hats with the right hand, hold it over their left breast until the order EYES FRONT when their hats will be replaced

- **Dismissal** After the unit passes the Saluting Base at the Shrine please Follow the banner until well clear of the Flag Poles and dismissed by the President. *"Please DO NOT just break off on your own initiative*
- **Banner Bearers 2023.** This year Canberwell Grammar School Cadets have been asked to carry the banner.
- **Post March get together:** The 2/16th Battalion Association has extended an invitation to all 39th members and family to join with descendants of the 2/14th and 2/27th Battalions following the ANZAC Day march at the **Rising Sun Hotel, 2 Raglan Street, South Melbourne** This is a great get together opportunity for the three Battalions, so do try to be there.

The 39th Battalion Association will have a designated marshal to ensure these guidelines are followed.

Please do not be put off by these requests . . . come along and march proudly

All veteran in the March **MUST** carry the information listed on the form below, in writing.

In fact it would be helpful if all Marchers also carried this completed form.



ANZAC DAY 2023

ANZAC DAY MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION CARD - CARRY IN TOP LEFT HAND POCKET

NAME -----

ADDRESS -----

DATE OF BIRTH -----

BRIEF MEDICAL HISTORY -----

ALLERGIES -----

MEDICATIONS [Name, Dosage And Frequency] -----

NEXT OF KIN

1.Name -----

Relationship -----

Phone Home ----- Mobile -----

2..Name -----

Relationship -----

Phone Home ----- Mobile -----

39th Battalion AIF 1916-1919

2023 Anzac Day Arrangements

Hi all families, descendants & friends of the 39th Battalion AIF 1916-1919.

Once again we are approaching Anzac Day. There will likely be large crowds at the Melbourne March this year so if you are coming to march with the 39th's banner please try to be early. The assembly area will be in Flinders St. East on the South Side, down from St Pauls Cathedral.

Form up time is 10:45, so the WW1 groups may be stepping off after 11am.

Please be early. Once we start marching you are not permitted to join the group from the sidelines. The day before Anzac Day this year, the 24th, will be the 104th anniversary of the disbanding of the 39th AIF. We will assemble on the grass at the 39th's tree after the March to lay a wreath at the plaque, and join the 39th Infantry Battalion (WW2) to place both 39th banners together. The tree is directly behind the 3 large flag poles on the east side of the Shrine forecourt.

Please come and join us that are if you are not rushing off to another engagement. Afterwards the 39th's descendants will head off to a nearby café for a coffee and snack.

Hoping to see you all on Anzac Day Regards Tim

Lest We Forget

RSL ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICE

SUNDAY 23rd APRIL 4:00 pm

The RSL Annual Church Service will be held at St Pauls Cathedral, Melbourne. All are invited to this service to honour those who serve and have served in the defence of Australia.

Dress of the day should be suits or Sunday best with medals if you have them (right side of chest if not awarded to you) .

BRISBANE

2023 ANZAC DAY MARCH ARRANGEMENTS

We are able to formally advise Queensland based Association members details for the 2023 ANZAC Day March in Brisbane (ADPB). The following provides that information and hope to see as many of you turn out for the 81st Anniversary of the WWII Kokoda Campaign march in the State Capital, as well as lunch afterwards.

Who?

The Queensland march Contingent will be led by Neil and Ian Turner, sons of WWII 39Bn Kokoda Campaign Veteran (George) former serving members and family, with Association Vice President, David Bellairs, direct descendant and Vietnam veteran. We are also privileged to be joined by MAJGEN Jerry Singirok, MBE (former CDF PNGDF), who will march with us in honour of Ben Moide CBE and brave PIB soldiers who fought alongside the 39Bn in WWII. Members will fall in behind the Association Banner, carried by Cadets from The Southport School (TSS) Army Cadet Unit Heritage Guard and supported by two members of the 39th Operational Support Battalion from Randwick in Sydney. Direct descendants and Financial Members of the Association (for insurance), followed by members who are Veterans, currently serving personnel, Returned Servicemen, Women and RSL members, will follow in that order.

Where?

Full details for the go to this link: [ANZAC Day Parade Brisbane – RSL South Eastern District \(rslsouthqueensland.org\)](https://www.rslsouthqueensland.org/)
The march will be commencing at approximately 10.00am: **OUR CONTINGENT IS LIKELY TO START OFF FROM 10:15 AM**. We will be marching as part of **GROUP 4: Australian Army Associations**, in the order of march (OOM) directly behind the PIB Association and in front of the 2/14th Bn Association, our traditional partners, comrades in arms and fellowship since 1942.

What to do?

Could you all be in position in the vicinity of the “Group 4” area designated by the “teardrop” or “feather banner” displaying that location no later than 10.00am for fellowship, forming up and Admin time.

How?

Our Contingent will be marching immediately behind the PNGVR Assn, followed by the 2/14th Bn Association. Also in this Group will be the 49th Battalion Association and the following affiliated WWII Units, with their designated OOM number, if you have any difficulty locating us, look for their Association Banners and you will be close!

Leading: Brisbane Pipe Band SECTION D (cnr George & Mary Streets)

36. 49TH BATTALION ASSOCIATION
37. NGVR/PNGVR ASSOCIATION
38. PIB NGIB HQ PIR ASSOCIATION
39. **39th BATTALION ASSOCIATION**
40. 2/14 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION

Where to now?

We will line up in the vicinity of the cnr of George and Mary Streets. Use the both the GROUP 4 “tear drop or feather Banner” AND, OR, the 39Bn Association Banner, as the guide to our location and Forming Up Point (FUP) for the Contingent. The Association Banner will be unfurled and mounted in it frame by the TSS Cadets as a point of reference and forming up point from 10.00am (or earlier) Also, look for the PIR/PIB/NGVR Contingents, we will be co-located with them. If you have any trouble finding the Assn position phone me on my mobile at the bottom of this notice. Wives, partners, infants, friends etc are welcome to support you from the side anywhere along Adelaide Street

LUNCH

Members and families have been invited to join the PIB Association for Post march luncheon and limited seats have been organised. Everyone who marches and supports the Contingent are more than WELCOME to join us for Lunch and beverages at the Pullman Mercure Hotel **Goldfinch Restaurant** (Cnr Ann & Roma St) at 12 noon following the march: [Goldfinch Restaurant Brisbane - Sophisticated Dining \(goldfinchbrisbane.com.au\)](https://www.goldfinchbrisbane.com.au/) It will be cash bar at own expense for lunch, with Menu details etc on the Website. This will be a great opportunity to share Fellowship!

ATTENDANCE CONFIRMATION/RSVP for the MARCH & LUNCH

The PIB Assn have a booking at the venue and to include Members, Partners, Family Members, Cadets, 39OSB and RSL Members, PLEASE RSVP to me on rfsf@kokoda.com or direct to Kev Horton (PIB Sec.) kevhorton49@gmail.com (cc me) no later than **10 Apr 23** (or earlier), to indicate your intent to either March, and or Lunch, or just Lunch. To secure your place at our table, please confirm your final numbers and commitment ASAP.

Looking forward to seeing as many as possible on the day!

George Friend, OAM (Qld Representative)
Mobile Phone Number 0418 418282

P.S. A reminder that all Queensland public transport is free for Veterans wearing medals and for their carers/family on the day and kindly update your Association Membership subscriptions and contact details. Thanks!

39th Battalion Representatives wanted

It is wonderful having the 39th Battalion Association represented at many memorial services held in Australia and overseas every year. This is where you come in . . . Association members are invited to place a floral tribute, in memory of the 39th Battalion, at their local ANZAC Day ceremony or similar service.

To participate in this program please contact me and I will forward a specially printed card to attach to a wreath, bunch of flowers or simple posy. The cards were printed by veteran, 'Inky' Wiltshire but only resurfaced a few years ago when going through old boxes. It is great seeing them used for the purpose 'Inky' planned so long ago.

Distributing these cards from a central point will allow monitoring to prevent duplicating the honour in any one town. Please consider this invitation, it is an ideal opportunity for those living outside the major cities to be involved. It also enables younger folk to participate.

For further information or to obtain a card just contact me. Remember, however, some ceremony organizers need to know in advance who will be placing tributes at their services so make sure you do not leave it too late to inform them.

Please send us any photos from the day for inclusion in the Good Guts gg@39battalion.com and on the website

Merren Stockdale
Ph: 0408 592 608



WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO SOMETHING FOR OUR ASSOCIATION?

READ ON – THEN - THIS MAY BE FOR YOU!

The effectiveness of any organisation depends on the work done by its administrative officers and our association is no different. For many years we have been served by many efficient officers who have renominated year after year. However the time has come for a number of our present committee to step back.

We will not tell you a fairy story and say there is no work involved but we would argue that there is a tremendous amount of self satisfaction for whoever puts their hand up to serve on the committee of 39th Battalion Association.

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING AND FILLING IN A NOMINATION FORM FOR OUR COMMITTEE.

Want To Know More About The Role Of A Committee Member?

An Information Sheet Is Included with the Good Guts Or Please Contact Our President Or Secretary Who Will Be Only Too Happy To Discuss This With You.



MEMBER NEWS

- ✚ On the 22nd February John Hannah and his family were delighted to be able to celebrate his 101st birthday. this was a joyous occasion for John and his family. He was delighted to receive a birthday call from his old mate, Jack McLeod. John and Jack were transferred from the 39th to the Signals Unit which became the New Guinea Air Warning Wireless Company (AIF). We send our best wishes to John for many more years.
- ✚ Jack McLeod has again been keeping the medical staff busy at John Fawkner Hospital. He says it is like a second home.
- ✚ The Grade 6 classes at Belgrave South Primary School spent time from the 20th March to the 24th March at the Kokoda Terrace learning about the environment and the Kokoda Campaign. Once again representatives of the 39th Association joined them for one session to share the 39th Battalion story.
- ✚ Welcome to new member, Dennis Bentley. We look forward to meeting you at Battalion events.
- ✚ In Queensland fundraising is underway for the construction of statues of Ben Moide, Bruce Kingsbury and Harry Saunders to be included in Stage 3 of the Cascade Gardens Memorial Wall.



Do you enjoy reading 'The Good Guts?'

This **may** be the last issue you receive!

Our mailing list is being checked and any members who are more than two years in arrears in paying their subscriptions will be removed.

Veterans and Widows excepted.
Payment should be made online through the Battalion website.

Should the payment of Membership Fees cause you hardship please contact our Secretary to make special arrangements.

PLEASE ACT PROMPTLY



ANOTHER VETERAN'S STORY

L/Cpl John Louden "Jack" Hood

VX 60097

E Coy

L/Cpl John Louden "Jack" Hood. This is his story.

He was born in Taradale , Victoria, about half way between Bendigo and Melbourne on the Calder Highway. He was one of ten children, There were six boys and four girls. Military archives show he was born on the 12th July 1918 and that his father was William Hood.

He attended Taradale State School which he left at the age of fourteen to go to work on Granite Hill Station. He joined the army on the 29th July 1941 and did his military training at Darley Camp joining the 39th Battalion in March 1942 in Port Moresby having travelled there on the TSS Taroon.

A small girl remembers the day a big black car turned up at Penno Street in Taradale with "The Boss" of Granite Hill Station at the wheel having come to tell Bill Hood that he had lost another son. The news devastated the small town and broke a little girl's heart.

Young Jack was only twelve years old when he lost his mother and within two years went on his bike to work at Granite Hill Station, a property of 1000 acres. He lived in a small hut which still remains as it was when it was Jack's home. The boss in those days was a Mr Murdoch. Jack grew up with a great love of poetry and in his lifetime write a number of poems including some which mention "The Boss" In fact we are assured, his stories would rate with the best.

After many years a new owner took over and Kevin Burrows became "The New Boss". He soon became amazed at all the things he saw that a "young fella", Jack Hood, had done around the place over the years. One thing that he did was build a rock fence which stood four or five feet high. As you would know from the name of the property there was no shortage of rock available for the job but it had to be cut and carried. The reason for the fence was to ensure that the homestead would survive a grass fire. The fence is still there although a small section of it was knocked over but Mr Burrows went into action to restore it.

He says he was twenty years younger then but he found out how tough it was for him and he wondered how a mere boy had built the fence right around the house. Kevin Burrows decided that Granite Hill Station would not forget a twenty four year old who had worked so hard at the station and killed in action on 2nd January 1943 while a soldier in the 39th Battalion.



So began the tribute to him. Now standing in front of his fence is a flagpole from which a flag flies in his honour. A 3" Trench Mortar and a bronze plaque with appropriate wording stand at the foot of the flagpole in tribute to him. Anybody is welcome to come and visit this simple but fitting memorial.

The Hood family home in Taradale is to be demolished and one of Jack's nephews is going to build a new home on the site so the Hood family will still live in Penno Road, and Jack's favourite niece , who lost her favourite uncle lives across the road in Taradale.

Jack, like so many of his comrades, now rests in the Bomana War Cemetery at Port Moresby. { *Editor's Note: This story was submitted to the Good Guts by Arthur Grassby and published in the August 2007 edition. It has been reproduced exactly as it was originally submitted.* }

Taradale today



TAKE TIME FOR A LAUGH

It is better to have a friend with two chins... than to have one with two faces.



I miss the good old days...when you could actually have an opinion without offending somebody.

Well, that's just good advice...



Emergency Phone Not Installed
Please Do Not Have An Emergency At This Location

Finally figured out the reason why I look so bad in pictures.

It's my face.

MY DOCTOR SAID I SHOULD SPEND AT LEAST AN HOUR A DAY ON MY TREADMILL.



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aunty acid



EX-PRISONERS OF WAR MEMORIAL ANNUAL SERVICE-12TH FEBRUARY 2023

by Megan Spencer

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the Country I'm standing on today, and its Traditional Owners, the Wathaurung People. I pay my respects to your Elders past, present and emerging, and I extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People here today. Thank you for having me on your Country.

I'd also like to acknowledge:

Catherine King MP;

Vice Consul Tom Chidiac;

Kerry Ridgeway representing Sarah Henderson MP

Councillor Des Hudson, Mayor;

Commodore Greg Yorke from the Royal Australian Navy;

Julianna Addison MP;

Michaela Settle MP;

Colonel Luke Brady from the Australian Army,

And of course the current-serving and past-serving Australian Defence Force members here today.



Thank you very much to the Committee Members of the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial for inviting me to be your guest speaker again – third time lucky! It's fantastic to finally be standing here in person after 2 years of doing this by video and online. And thank you to the hard-working Bruce Roberts – it's fantastic to meet you in person too, for the first time. You do such great work for the Memorial here!

And I'd especially like to pay my respects to all of the people whose names are on the wall behind me, and their descendants and relatives here today. If I may ask – for a show of hands of those who have a family member on this memorial wall? (Raise my hand too). Amazing - me too...

It's a great honour to be able to speak in front of you today, again, in person, and also in front of my father, Bob Spencer, the eldest son of Henry Bailey Spencer, or "Harry" as he was known, my grandfather, whose name is also on the wall behind me, next to that of his brother's, Nathaniel Spencer.

Both Harry and Nathaniel were prisoners-of-war during WWII in Germany, Army corporals in the 2/7 and 2/8 Battalions respectively, captured in Crete in 1941. Both of them were lucky enough to make it home to Australia in 1945.

Now in his 87th year, my father Bob experienced life as the child of a prisoner-of-war during WWII. It was, as you might expect, an uncertain and challenging time. And as Bob can tell you, and as he told me when I made *From A Whisper to A Bang!* a couple of years ago – a 6-part audio podcast series about remembrance and my grandfather's prisoner-of-war experience for the Australian War Memorial - Harry's prisoner-of-war experience left a unique imprint on his own life, on his son Bob's life, and on that of the lives of all his family members.

Along with 11,000 other people, Bob was also here at the inauguration of this Memorial 19 years ago. And by a twist of fate, here I am, now, speaking in front of him – and you - at this auspicious occasion, in this auspicious place.

Through the vicissitudes of war and history, here we are together, in this moment, sharing a common wartime thread, in person.

With the recent loss of Warrant Officer Colin Fraser, Royal Australian Air Force, who, like my grandfather, also spent time at Stalag VIIA in Germany, I'm advised that there are now no active Prisoners of War left in Victoria; and that Australia-wide, there are only around 20 POWs still with us, all in their 100s.

Which means that unfortunately I can't be here today speaking in front of a living prisoner-of-war.

Which now makes this wall behind us even more precious, urgent and necessary, and the responsibility that falls to us - the descendants and relatives and communities of these ex-service personnel - even bigger, more urgent and necessary.

As Professor Christina Twomey, author of the great book *The Battle Within: Prisoners-of-War in post-war Australia*, as she once said to me in that very same podcast series for the Australian War Memorial, Australian prisoners-of-war "had a very different type of war experience" to those of their non-POW counterparts.

Their war was unique, as were their issues, injuries and needs when they got home. Something I'm sure many people here today know about, through their lived experience.

For those ex-POWs who did make it home, oftentimes their experiences were under-recognised, not acknowledged or under-valued. Oftentimes their stories and experiences faded – moreover were expected to fade - into the background.

Something that I feel to a certain extent still happens today when it comes to the Australian prisoner-of-war experience and story within our national wartime history. It's still an under-told story, I feel unfairly so. Perhaps you might feel the same way...

It might be a difficult story, but it is rich story. And it's not one-size-fits-all.

So, as these service personnel - these ex-prisoners-of-war – pass, and as we move further and further away from the wars in which they served, it therefore falls to us to keep the flame of their memories, experiences, stories and legacies alive.

It's up to us to fearlessly uncover this history. It's up to us to learn not only about what these service members went through during wartime, but what happened to them afterwards - and to their families and communities. Their story is unique and valuable. They are part of us, and we in turn, are part of them.

Stories like that of my grandfather's: an Australian Army soldier interned in 4 different camps in Germany and occupied-Poland for as many years, after firstly being transported by ship from Greece and then in cattle wagons across Europe to Stalag VIIA in Moosberg, near Munich. Harry just couldn't settle when he got home. He says that over and over again in the memoir he handwrote before his death in 1987.

Stories of like that of Australian Army Nursing Service sister, Betty Jeffrey, later Lieutenant Betty Jeffrey, who survived 4 years as prisoner-of-war also in as many camps between Bangka Island and Sumatra, interned by the Japanese Army.

In the Palembang camp, along with Australian Army Nurses Mickey Syer and Flo Trotter, Betty Jeffrey was one of the members of the Women's Vocal Orchestra, an acapella choir of female prisoners who sang beautiful classical compositions to help to keep up the spirits of the internees as they wasted away under hardship, privation and disease in the harsh tropical camps.

Stories like that of proud Ngarrindjeri man, Uncle Roland Carter, from Raukkan in SE South Australia, the first of 21 Ngarrindjeri men to volunteer for the AIF in WWI, who became a prisoner of the Germans after being shot in France, held in three different POW camps. This Aboriginal soldier of WWI made it home to tell his remarkable story.

Years later Uncle Roland Carter chanced to meet one of the German anthropologists who'd been working at the WWI camps in Germany. His name was Leonhard Adam, who, in an ironic twist of fate, himself became an 'internee' in Australia during WWII, after fleeing Nazi Germany and its anti-Semitic laws in the early 1930s. A Dunera transportee, Dr. Leonhard Adam spent 2 years in "No. 2 Internment Camp, Tatura" in Victoria, from 1940-1942. Born a year apart, remarkably, these men became friends.

Recently I met Private Carter's granddaughter, Aunty Glenys Wilson, for another podcast I've just finished about two of the Ngarrindjeri Anzacs. As I found out, she inherited Uncle Roland's beautiful singing voice, which, a century ago, captivated the Raukkan church congregation, singing in the choir as a soloist...

We need to know these stories. We are the better for it.

(Gesture to the Memorial wall). This isn't just some 'nice wall in some nice park in some nice regional town... As you and I know, it's much more than that. That's why we're all here today.

We are the living legacies of these Australian Defence Force members and ex-prisoners-of-war. It's up to us to honour their names and give them a voice so that their stories never die.

We owe it to them. All of them...

Thank you.

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AUSTRALIAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE

12 FEBRUARY 2023

Commodore Greg Yorke, AM, CSC. RAN
Senior Naval Officer
Victoria



Distinguished Guests, Veterans, current Serving Defence Force members, Ladies and Gentleman;
I wish to start by acknowledging the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we meet today the Wadawurrung People, and pay my respects to elders past and present. I extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People particularly those that served in the Australian Defence Force over the years.

I would also like to acknowledge those Defence personnel currently deployed on operations around the World. Particularly, the some 1600 Navy personnel in 18 ships that are deployed away from their home ports this week.

It is a great honour for me to be here today representing the Chief of Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC and the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AM RAN, at this magnificent National Memorial.

Behind me etched into the black granite are the names of some 36,000 Australians. They are the names of the known prisoners of war.

These brave Australians not only joined the various armed forces and support agencies during the various wars, but were those captured and then imprisoned, often in the most trying circumstances, to say the least. Over 22,000 of those Australians were those captured in the Pacific theatre of the Second World War and was also where most Navy PoWs were captured.

Last year Navy remembered the 80th anniversary of the loss of the cruiser HMAS *Perth*, sunk in the Sunda Strait, off Java, on 1st Mar 1942. *Perth*, in company with USS *Houston* encountered a vastly superior Japanese force, part of an invasion fleet heading for Java. They battled bravely but after expending all of their ammunition, *Perth* and *Houston* succumbed to Japanese fire.

Perth had a crew of nearly 700 that night, over half paid the ultimate sacrifice, going down with their ship, while the remainder were captured and imprisoned. They endured the same hardship as their Army, Air Force and allied brethren as captives in Singapore, Japan, and on the Thai Burma Railway.

They all endured brutal conditions at the hands of their captors, spending years of their young lives in captivity. At the end of World War 2 only 218 members of *Perth's* ships company were repatriated. They left behind 106 of their shipmates that had died as prisoners of war. They all had made this sacrifice in the Defence of Australia and to maintain our way of life.

The Australian Defence Force personnel of today have a reputation around the world for courage, sacrifice, resilience and mateship.

The characteristics of that reputation, though, were born in the history of previous conflicts and in the Australian service men and women of the past. In particular, that reputation is inherited from the brave men and women who were prisoners of war.

Those PoWs displayed the most amazing levels of courage, sacrifice, resilience and mateship. The place, of the Australian Prisoners of War, in our history, should never be forgotten and that is why this memorial and this annual service is of such importance.

May we be worthy of their sacrifice.

The Sinking Of Montevideo Maru

19 November 1941

BY A TRAGIC IRONY, AUSTRALIA SUFFERED AN EVEN GREATER MARITIME LOSS THAN HMAS SYDNEY WHEN A JAPANESE SHIP CARRYING PRISONERS OF WAR WAS SUNK BY AN ALLIED SUBMARINE

In the aftermath of the recent enquiry by Justice Terence Cole there has been renewed interest in the events surrounding the sinking of HMAS *Sydney*. The loss of Australian lives in that tragic encounter on 19 November 1941 was 645. However the anniversary of an even greater war-time loss of Australian lives has just passed again in the tragedy of the sinking of *Montevideo Maru*, when 1053 Australian soldiers and citizens were drowned.

These men were from the Lark Force, which was hurriedly sent to Rabaul to repel the imminent Japanese invasion. They began to arrive on 16 March 1941 and were established by ANZAC Day 1941. They had an army band made up largely of Salvation Army volunteers and more than 900 men and 38 officers, including 2/22 Battalion and six nurses. In addition to these servicemen there were on the boat seven missionaries who had served in the Rabaul area for years and other mission staff, as well as civilian leaders from the New Britain area. All had been taken prisoner in the overwhelming Japanese assault on Rabaul.

On July 1 the 1035 male prisoners were loaded onto the Japanese ship, *Montevideo Maru* (the women and officers were later loaded onto the *Naruto Maru* which safely transported them to Yokohama where they were imprisoned). The US submarine *Sturgeon* had been cruising in the area for some months near Luzon and was surprised to see this Japanese boat without naval protection come into its range. At first they could not keep up with the pace of the Japanese boat but as darkness came *Montevideo Maru* slackened its pace, thinking the darkness would protect it from attack, and *Sturgeon* was able to overtake it and take



up position to strike with torpedoes.

The Americans were completely unaware that the ship had so many prisoners on board, imagining that it was a normal merchant vessel. One of the Japanese crew who was on deck and did survive told how those Australians who did get into the water were singing *Auld Lang Syne* to the many who were trapped. The boat sank quickly stern down and no Australians survived.

Rev Syd Beazley (uncle of Kim) and also the grandfather of Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett were among the Australian POWs who died.

At the end of the war many families hoped that their men folk would now be found in Japanese POW camps but the large number on *Montevideo Maru* were unaccounted for. Lists of those on board have even now not been finalised. Several airmen were executed in Rabaul, particularly later in the war. Relatives contend that this wreck should also be located and commemorated.

The wives and children of these men had been sent home to Australia just before the Japanese attack, which commenced on 23

January 1941. There were 5000 Japanese troops, yet only 16 were killed in the assault. Although some plans were made for the escape of RAAF and naval personnel, no such plans were in place for the army forces. The officer in charge, Colonel Scanlan, made it clear that "every man for himself" was the policy.

The RAAF fought courageously with their eight Wirraways and the four Hudsons of 24 Squadron against 109 Japanese fighters, but they were hopelessly outnumbered. Rabaul became a major Japanese base.

It should be noted that readers interested to pursue further the story of the *Montevideo Maru* are advised that there is a website as a community meeting point on www.MontevideoMaru.org

It is hoped that the interest of the Prime Minister and the Australian people will be aroused to more adequately recognise the courage and significance of the Rabaul and *Montevideo Maru* service personnel in the Australian iconography.

Story written by Dick Udy, ex RAAF and the Rowland Village resident chaplain

Kipling's Korner

ONE THOUSAND MEN ARE WALKING

One thousand men are walking,
Walking side by side
Singing songs from home
The spirit as their guide.
They walk towards the light milord
They walk towards the sun.
They smoke and laugh and smile together
No foes to outrun.

These men live on forever
In th ehearts of those they saved
A nation truly grateful
For the path of peace they paved.

They march as friends and comrades
But they do not march for war
Step closer to salvation
A steady tranquil corps
The meadow lit with golded beams
A beacon for the brave
The emerald grass untrampled
A reward for what they gave.

They dream of those they left behind
And know they dream of them
Forever in those poppy fields
There walks one thousand men.

Josh Dyer 2019



Lest we forget

Josh Dyer's poem, 'One Thousand Men Are Walking', has been read by hundreds of thousands of people online.

Joshua said that he was asked in school to write a poem that could accompany the hymn "[On The Road To Passchendaele](#)" at a veteran's group concert. The resulting 24-line poem, an ode to comradery and sacrifice, was written by himself in about 40 minutes.

Josh, from Leominster, Herefordshire, was a student at Tenbury High Ormiston Academy in Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire

EX PRISONERS OF WAR ANNUAL SERVICE-BALLARAT



Wreaths and books were laid in tribute. Donated Books are placed in the local schools to help educate future generations. The 39th chooses to donate books rather than lay a wreath.



Merren Stockdale returning to her seat after placing our books. Captain Sam Templeton remembered with a poppy.

EX PRISONERS OF WAR ANNUAL SERVICE-BALLARAT

