



# The Good Guts

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



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No. 260  
April  
2026

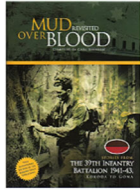
## Educating for the Future



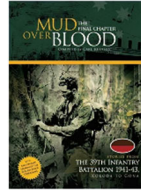
Belgrave South Primary School at the Mates Statue



## Merchandise – available from the website



Mud Over Blood Revisited \$105



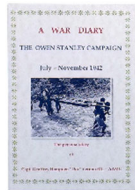
Mud Over Blood, The Final Chapter \$62.50



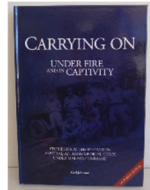
The Final Chapter Supplement \$6.50



With the 22<sup>nd</sup> \$30.00 - \$30.00



A War Diary \$12.00



Carrying on Under Fire \$40.00



Bannerette Only \$20.00



Stubby Holder \$5.00



Bannerette with Stand \$25.00



39<sup>th</sup> Battalion Metal Plaque \$65.00



Walk of Honour Panel, Replica \$70.00



Car Sticker \$5.00



Cloth Colour Patches \$15.00



Lapel Badge \$15.00



Battalion Tie \$25.00



Engraved Wine Glass \$20.00



Baseball Cap \$20.00



Wall Plaque – Shield Shape \$45.00



Free Standing Desk Plaque \$45.00



Ladies Scarf \$25.00

# President's Report

Dear 39<sup>th</sup> Family and Friends,

Time has taken our veterans from us and, with their passing, our direct link with them and their stories passed too. Many years ago, the decision was taken to widen the membership beyond the veterans themselves and, as a result, the 39<sup>th</sup> has a proud record of including family, friends and all those interested in its history. Now more than ever, it becomes important that we, who are left behind, pick up the baton and make sure their legacy lives on. We must be the voices that speak out and tell of the Battalion. Those of us who are direct descendants of veterans must especially share their stories within our families so they are never forgotten. Our veterans left behind a wonderful legacy of service to their country both in wartime and in peace. They are greatly missed not only by their loving families but by the 39<sup>th</sup> as well.



Approximately twenty years ago, the Association undertook what was called the "Mud Between The Toes" History Project and recorded the stories of as many veterans willing to be interviewed. These stories are digitised and are listed on our website. They make for addictive viewing. Why not take a look. Log onto the website [www.39battalion.com](http://www.39battalion.com), click on the History link and choose "Mud Between the Toes" to take you to the stories listed in alphabetical order.

But most importantly, the Battalion Association must also be a strong advocate for educating future generations. We owe so much to the sacrifices our veterans made for us. Now it is our turn to ensure their efforts are honoured and remembered. For this reason, the Battalion Association is endeavouring to build strong links with schools. Already, we have agreements with the cadet units at Southport School in Queensland and at Camberwell Grammar School in Victoria. Recently, Life Member Mal Owen and I had our annual session with the students of Belgrave South Primary School on the Kokoda Terrace in the Dandenong Ranges National Park, Victoria. It is such an uplifting experience to stand in front of the "Mates" statue and share the stories of the 39<sup>th</sup> veterans with them. A few days before Anzac Day, we will be participating again in the organisation of the annual Schools Dandenong Ranges Anzac Day service attended by over 300 school children. This is a great opportunity to talk to students, especially around Anzac Day, and remember the debt we all owe to all those who serve in the defence of Australia.

As Anzac Day draws near, make it your resolution in 2026 to be active in keeping the Battalion flame burning bright. **Lest We Forget**

It is my great hope that this year, as many of you as possible will attend an Anzac Day observance, whether it is in your local area or perhaps join the March here in Melbourne or in Brisbane. Details of Anzac observances are included in this edition of the Good Guts. I look forward to seeing you also at our AGM on the 17<sup>th</sup> May to be followed by lunch.

This year, instead of a guest speaker at our AGM, we are again presenting our own version of the "Antiques Road Show 39<sup>th</sup> style. This proved very popular last year, and members have requested that we have it again. Perhaps, like our family, you have an artefact or something of great sentimental value that a veteran carried with them or brought home from PNG. We would like to invite you to bring it along and share its story or perhaps find out more about its origin and meaning. Maybe you would also be happy to add it to the virtual museum on our website. As this year will also be the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association, we will also be celebrating this milestone. Celebrating our birthday makes for another reason to come along on the 17<sup>th</sup> May.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Association events this year. Check the Good Guts, the website and Instagram for updates.

**Deeds Not Words**  
**Mary Holloway**  
**President**

# 39th Australian Infantry Battalion 1941-1943 Association Inc

PRESIDENT	Mary Holloway
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT	Ross Darrigan
VICE PRESIDENT	David Bellairs
SECRETARY	Merren Stockdale
TREASURER	Martin Stuart
MEMBER	Keith Hallet
MEMBER	Jo Howard
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MEMBER	Norman Stockdale
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MEMBER NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR	Sarah Holloway
MEMBER 1/39 BATTALION WW1 1916-1919	Tim Fitzgerald
BATTALION BUGLER	Darcy Manks
INTERSTATE REPRESENTATIVE - QUEENSLAND	Major George Friend (Retd) OAM
39 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Website	<a href="http://www.39battalion.com">www.39battalion.com</a>
Mailing Address	PO Box 552 Gisborne Vic 3437

## Editorial

### AN ANZAC REFLECTION

In surveys that have been conducted on what Anzac Day means to an Australian, an overwhelming majority believed it is important to commemorate ANZAC Day. It was seen as vital that by observing Anzac Day those who served were remembered. It was also regarded as a part of our nation's history and heritage that should never be forgotten.

An interesting exercise would be to do your own survey and ask what ANZAC Day means to each individual to whom you speak. An internet survey revealed a few of the answers given below;

- I thank the men and women who have gone before me for the peace and freedom my family and I enjoy today.
- ANZAC is the most sacred day of my calendar. My father was in WW2. I also have served and fought for Australia.
- I love listening to that bugle player standing all alone playing the Last Post. It makes my hair stand on end.
- It shows that we do truly understand as free countries how lucky we are.
- An effing lot. I have not missed a dawn service, or the march, ever in my 40 years alive. My family has had the misfortune to serve in the majority of the theatres of war our grouse country has had the misfortune to be in. It is my main chance to let the men and women that have done our country proud know that I truly appreciate all the sacrifices done so I can live in a country that is the best in the world. I will be buying a digger a couple of beers and let him tell me how lucky I am, because of what all he and his mates did.
- It's a stark reminder of the lives lost when countries go to war, and have no concrete plans to ensure victory.
- It reminds me of the lives destroyed, when loved ones don't come home.
- It reminds me that as a people, we have a long way to go, and that the only way to get there is by moving forward.

Dr Brendan Nelson, a former Director of the Australian War Memorial, believes it is so important that Australians look beyond the headlines and broad brushstrokes and appreciate that behind the number of Australians who have died fighting for their country there are real people with real lives. This ANZAC Day will you take time to reflect on what the day means to you? Particularly call to mind the service and sacrifice of our 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion veterans who answered the call of their country with Deeds Not Words.

***Lest we forget.***

# Dates for your diary

## 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion Events



Proposed Calendar Dates for 2026

Events printed in bold are events the 39<sup>th</sup> Bn Association is running or helping run.

*Italics are events to which the Association is invited. \* = cost*

Month	Date	Event	Time	Location
<b>April</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>Online</b>
	19 <sup>th</sup>	ANZAC Church Service	1000	St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne
	22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Schools Anzac Day Service</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>Kokoda Terrace, Dandenong Ranges National Park</b>
	24 <sup>th</sup>	ANZAC Day Service	1030	Heidelberg Campus, Austin Health
	25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>ANZAC Day March- Melbourne</b>	<b>0900</b>	<b>Fall in Collins Street East, South side, Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance</b>
			<b>1200</b>	<b>Lunch-Rising Sun Hotel, South Melbourne</b>
		TSS Dawn Service	0500	Senior School, Village Green Southport School
		Dawn Service	0515	The Croll Memorial Precinct, Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL
	<b>ANZAC Day March-Brisbane</b>	<b>1030</b>	<b>Fall in Between Charlotte and Mary Street, to King George Square, Brisbane</b>	
<b>May</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>Online</b>
	<b>17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Annual General Meeting 80<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the Association</b>	<b>1030</b>	<b>Darebin RSL 402 Bell St, Preston VIC 3072</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>East Keilor RSL</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>Online</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>Online</b>
	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Kokoda Day Service</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>One Tree Hill Lord Somers Rd, Tremont</b>
	8 <sup>th</sup>	Kokoda Day Service	1100	Cascade Gardens, Gold Coast, Qld
	9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kokoda Day Pilgrimage</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance</b>
	9 <sup>th</sup>	Kokoda Day Service	1100	Sherwood RSL, Brisbane, Qld
	TBA	Kokoda Football Match	TBA	Reid Oval Warrnambool
<b>September</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>Online</b>
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Battle for Australia Service	<b>1100</b>	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
<b>October</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>Online</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>Online</b>
	11 <sup>th</sup>	Remembrance Day	10:30	Heidelberg Campus, Austin Health
	11 <sup>th</sup>	Remembrance Day	1100	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
	11 <sup>th</sup>	Remembrance Day	1100	Surfers Paradise RSL, Cenotaph
	TBA	TSS Cadet Annual Passing Out Parade	TBA	Southport School. Gold Coast
<b>December</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>East Keilor RSL</b>

39<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion (1941-43) Association Inc.

## NOTICE OF 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held at Darebin RSL  
402 Bell St, Preston VIC 3072  
Parking at the rear



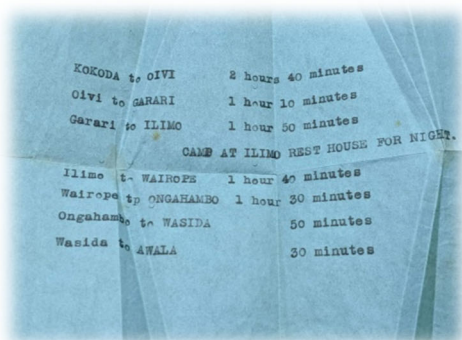
**Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> May at 10.30 AM**

**The Annual Lunch and 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration will follow.**

Cost for a 3-course lunch is \$35 pp

There is no bar service, and drinks are at bar prices.

## 39<sup>th</sup> ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW "Show and Tell"



Full details of both events are on the website [www.39battalion.com](http://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 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

enquiries welcome at [events@39battalion.com](mailto:events@39battalion.com) or by ringing 0409 899 549



# ANZAC Day 2026

## 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 it should not be taken lightly.



The ANZAC Day Organising Committee rightly expects a very high standard from those participating, and this Association has 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 WW2 Army 1 Corps and behind the 2 AIF Railway Construction RAE). **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 beforehand.
- **Assemble at 8:45 am. Step off time is 9:55 am but could be earlier.** The 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) and wear a dark jacket with a white shirt and a tie or similar for women. We have had the best turned-out marchers for many years, 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 backpacks.
- 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, with no chatter, no falling out for photos or interviews, and 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 and 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 2026:** This year, Camberwell Grammar School Cadets will again carry the banner.
- **39th AIF Tree Ceremony:** Following dismissal, we will be holding a small ceremony at the 39th AIF tree and lay a wreath for the 39th AIF and the 39th Battalion.
- **Post-March get-together:** The 2/16th Battalion Association has extended an invitation to all 39th members and family to join 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 veterans in the March **MUST** carry the information listed on the form on the next page in writing.

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





**ANZAC DAY 2026**  
ANZAC DAY MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION CARD - CARRY IN A 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

**2026 Anzac Day Arrangements**

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 39<sup>th</sup> 's Banner please try to be early. The assembly area will be in Flinders St. East on the South Side, down from St Paul's Cathedral.

**Form up time is 10:00**, so the WW1 groups may be stepping off after 11 am. This year, our banner will be carried by a cadet from Camberwell Grammar School.

**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 24<sup>th</sup>, will be the 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disbanding of the 39<sup>th</sup> AIF. After the march, we will assemble on the grass at the 39<sup>th</sup> 's tree to lay a wreath at the plaque and join the 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion (WW2) to place both 39<sup>th</sup> banners together. The tree is directly behind the three large flagpoles on the east side of the Shrine forecourt.

Please come and join us. Hoping to see you all on Anzac Day

Regards Tim  
Lest We Forget

## RSL ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICE

**SUNDAY 19th APRIL 10:00 am**

The RSL Annual Church Service will be held at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. All are invited to this service to honour those who serve and have served in the defence of Australia. The dress the day should be suits or Sunday best with medals if you have them (right side of the chest if not awarded to you).



# BRISBANE

## 2026 ANZAC DAY MARCH ARRANGEMENTS

We are able to formally advise Queensland-based association members on the details for the 2026 ANZAC Day March in Brisbane (ADPB). The following provides that information, and we hope to see as many of you turn out for the 84th Anniversary of the WWII Kokoda Campaign March in Brisbane.

**Who?** The Queensland March Contingent will fall in behind the Association Banner, carried by Cadets from The Southport School (TSS) Army Cadet Unit Heritage Guard. As it is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Deed of Agreement, the TSS Army Cadets, in WWI Light Horse Uniforms, bearing 303 replicas, accompanied by the Director of Cadets and support Staff, will be marching behind the Banner. 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.

Also joining the 39<sup>th</sup> contingent will be several senior Retired Officers and other former ADF members, who are TSS Old Boys and former Parents, marching to acknowledge the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Deed of Agreement for Custodianship of the Banner to TSS. Former PNGDF COMD MAJGEN Jerry Singirok, will also march with the Contingent. Members of the RSL who have marched and supported us for over a decade will again join us this year. KMCG Stakeholders, who may also wish to march or participate, could be present.

**Where?:** Full details for the go to this link: [ANZAC Day Parade Brisbane – RSL South Eastern District](https://www.rslsouthqueensland.org/anzac-day-parade-brisbane) ([rslsouthqueensland.org](https://www.rslsouthqueensland.org))

The march will be commencing at approximately 10:00 am: **OUR CONTINGENT IS LIKELY TO START OFF FROM 10:25 AM.** We will be marching as part of **GROUP 5: Section F Group 52. Australian Army Associations**, in the order of march (OOM) directly behind the PIB Association and in front of the 2/14<sup>th</sup> Bn Association, our traditional partners, comrades in arms and fellowship since 1942.



### ANZAC Day Parade Brisbane (ADPB)

For those who have responded to join the 39Bn Assn Contingent and Banner on Saturday 25 Apr to march on the ANZAC Day Parade Brisbane (ADPB), we will be in line of march with our WWII Affiliated Unit Associations as follows forming up from 10am in George Street:

We will line up in the vicinity of the corner of George and Charlotte Street intersection. Use both the GROUP 5 "teardrop 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 its frame by the TSS Cadets as a point of reference and forming up a point from 10.00 am (or earlier). Also, look for the PIR/PIB/NGVR Contingents; we will be co-located with them,

**SECTION F**

51. PIB NGIB HQ PIR ASSOCIATION  
 52. 39th BATTALION ASSOCIATION  
 53. 2/14 INFANTRY B, ATTALION ASSOCIATION  
 54. 2/16 AIF BATTALION ASSOCIATION

*Details will be provided once ADPB issues the final instructions and will be circulated early next month, including an open invitation to join the PIB Assn for a brief **Ceremony at 9am in ANZAC Square at the Kokoda statue.***

Wives, partners, infants, friends etc. are welcome to support you from the side anywhere along  
*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 subscription.*

## 39th Battalion Representatives wanted

An excellent idea offered to all members of the Association is to have the 39th Battalion remembered at as many ANZAC Day services as we can. For many years now the 39th Battalion Association has been represented at **community Anzac Day memorial services** held in Australia and overseas. Association members are again invited to place a tribute in memory of the 39th Battalion at their local ANZAC Day Ceremony or similar service within their local community.



If you would like to participate in the program this year, please contact the Association, and we will forward a printed card, complete with a colour patch, which can be attached to a wreath, bunch of flowers or simple posy. Obviously, a wreath can be placed without this "official" card, but by doing it this way it allows us to compile a list of the various ceremonies at which we would be represented and prevent duplicating the honour. It would also enable members to be in touch with others in their area.



The cost of wreaths/flowers for these services is borne by the person representing the association.

For further information or to obtain a card, please do not hesitate to contact us. Some Ceremony organisers need to know well in advance who will be laying wreaths at their services, so if you are thinking of doing so, ensure you don't leave it too late.

Merren Stockdale  
 39<sup>th</sup> Bn Assoc. Committee  
[secretary@39battalion.com](mailto:secretary@39battalion.com)

## Your Association Needs You!

To be successful, any organisation needs the support of its members, and the 39<sup>th</sup> is no different.

Have you thought about how you could help? There are many ways you can be involved.

What about standing for the Committee and helping plan for the future of the Association? Nomination forms are available from the Secretary, Merren Stockdale, [secretary@39battalion.org](mailto:secretary@39battalion.org)

But the most important way you can support the Association is by attending Battalion functions and help to honour the contribution that our veterans have made to our way of life and to the safety of the wonderful country in which we live.

Wouldn't it be amazing if every member came along on Anzac Day and Kokoda Day or at least tried to attend one activity a year. How about it? Will we see you this year? We hope so!



# Kipling's Korner

## "THE SHRINE SPEAKS"

The symbol of a Nation's sacrifice  
I stand unchanged throughout the passing years.  
A lasting Diadem, a people's pride,  
Each rock within my structure bathed in tears.

I ask of you, who tread my paths and lawns,  
To realise you walk on holy ground.  
Let not a careless hand defile this stone,  
Nor loose lips utter one secular sound.

When ye who pass me now return to dust,  
Thy children's children in the years to be,  
Shall see me still unchanged by time's swift hand,  
A Monarch representing liberty.

Throughout the years I watch the busy throng,  
Who travel upon path and road.  
Youth with head high and swinging tread,  
Ages bent and weathered by life's heavy load.

Ships out at sea, I watch them as they sail,  
Frail craft, which time will bring to cold decay.  
Buildings grow up with in the city square,  
Grand for a space but they shall pass away.

Shall leaf decked trees that curtsy to the wind,  
Sweet fragrant flowers in the that blossom Spring,  
Myriads of birds that fill the air with song,  
All these shall die and as a bird takes wing.

Such a loving hand hath fashioned me with care,  
So I shall stand through fire, through storm and flood,  
That all who follow on may learn with pride  
A Nation bought me with the price of blood.

One hope is mine one prayer alone I pray,  
That this my fair young land may never see,  
Through all the changes and decaying years  
An alien flag float here in Victory.



## A Veteran's Story

Corporal Charles Bennett  
39<sup>th</sup> Battalion C Coy  
V57967



V 57967  
Charles Bennett

Corporal Charles F. Bennett was sent to PNG as part of the 39<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement and was posted to 13<sup>th</sup> Platoon, C Coy. Charles was wounded on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1942 and in September 1942 returned to Australia on the Hospital Ship "Manunda". Very sadly Charles was killed in a logging accident in 1958 leaving his wife with a family of five children. His son, Ron Bennett, has a keen interest in military history and, in November 1998 sent a copy of a letter written by his father late in 1942 from hospital back in Australia for publication in the Good Guts. This is a reprint of that letter.

Ward 4  
2/11 AGH  
Warwick  
Australia.

Dear Mum,

*Well there is not much news this week as I have not been around much yet to see the place although I am allowed to get up and walk around now, but my foot has been playing up a bit and the Doc will not let me go far as yet.*

*My arm is coming good now, I can use it nearly as good as normal now but I have not had my skin graft yet as I still have Tinea and the Doc cannot get any good skin off my legs yet, but he should be getting to me any day now.*

*I had a letter from the Egan family in Coburg and they told me that my name had been on a casualty list, so I want you to keep all the casualty lists and send them to me because I like to know how the boys got on because they are the best blokes in the world and they held up the Japs for eight weeks, the old 39<sup>th</sup> did and all on their own. Up at Denili where I did all my fighting and got wounded my section was the nearest one to the Japs for three weeks and we had quite a few little scraps on our own, in fact one day we went back three-quarters of a mile behind the Jap lines and sneaked up to have a look at them and one yellow cow saw me and said, "Come out Corporal" so we went home, and in the evening three of us got stuck into a Jap patrol and "done them up" good and proper and they never got a bullet near us.*

*The old myth about the Jap being a little bloke and not much of a fighter is up the pole because they were all big blokes that we struck, just as big as us or bigger, and the Jap is a Damm good fighter and the most cunning man in the world but we were a match for him because when we found him doing a thing one way we did the same and then it was a matter of who saw the other bloke first or who was the best shot.*

*When I got wounded, the Japs had taken one flank and from where they were they could have wiped us out if they had brought up some more men and one of our boys was in there wounded so I asked to get some tommy gunners and go and try and get the wounded man out and clean up the japs, so they gave me four good men, some of the best fighters in the company and I led them in.*

*We found the wounded man and sent back to get somebody to get him out, and he told us where the enemy was so we got round into the old position and could see nothing so we waited a while but nothing happened and as there was a small ridge a bit higher up from which we could throw grenades down on anything we did not like., I decided to eto up there and make it our position, so off we went.*

*I had just about got to the top when the Japs had a shot at me and missed so we let him have it, with the guns and I threw a grenade, but I was too weak to throw it far enough, and I had just got hold of my gun again when my foot went form under me and I heard a burst of fire, and I looked at my foot to see what was wrong with it I saw a bullet hole through my boot, and then they hit my gun and knocked it out of my hand and as I was still looking down I saw my arm blow up, because it was hit by an explosive bullet, so as I was helpless I tried to reach my gun but could not get it so I rolled down the hill and the boys dragged me out.*



*Well I think I have given you some idea of what it was like and I feel very proud of myself because I was into action with seven men and myself and we had a tough job and we only lost one man killed and myself wounded although most of the credit goes to my @IC because he carried me on after I was wounded and now he is in command and has been promoted to Corporal which he certainly deserves.*

*There are not many of the 39<sup>th</sup> left now because only about one hundred and fifty if there were that many that came out of action when we were relieved.*

*Well that is about all Mum and don't let Dad work and kill himself because he is much better to us alive, because if he only makes camouflage nets he is doing a hell of a lot to save fighting soldiers' lives.  
Your loving son Charlie*

## Another Veteran's Story

### The Night I Walked With God

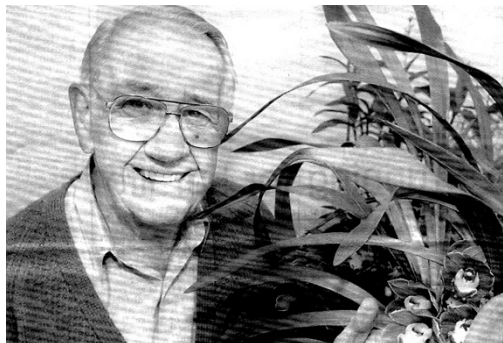
*In this issue of The Good Guts we thought it would be appropriate to reprint this item from the issue of September 2002 of "A Reminiscence" written by Gordon Bailey - "D" Company -17 Platoon*

I was a corporal in 17 Platoon and we were on a "Standing Patrol" between Isurava and Deniki during August 1942; and, with Don Simonson and Harold Marsh in charge, were ordered to move on the track towards Deniki and advise of any Japanese movement towards our HQ's. [I am allowed to use Don's Christian name as we are both in legacy!]

The patrol had settled down in positions covering the "Track" when, just after dark, the Japanese attacked the patrol with grenade and small arms fire. I received a deep wound to the chest and immediately lost consciousness. I have no idea as to how long lapsed before I regained my senses but, on doing so, realized that I was "on my own". My chest was covered in blood and I can easily understand that my mates had assumed I had been killed. Being alone in that situation was rather frightening and one naturally thinks the worst; particularly as we all knew of the Japanese way of treating prisoners! Enough said!

I had lost so much blood that I found it difficult to stand, but I also knew I had to make my way back to the unit. Naturally, I also knew that the Japs would be between myself and HQ's. To cut this story short, I crawled - more than walked - back, expecting at any moment to be challenged by the Japs. I did survive that experience and was challenged by one of our own scouts and was taken to the MO [Medical Officer].

I believe the time was 12.30 am when the Doctor, on examining me, said he could see the "Apex" of the heart.. I learned that the apex is the first covering of the heart. I was given the help of two New Guinea Boys who assisted me back to Port Moresby.



I have entitled this story "The Night I Walked With God", and I do know that there is no way I could have survived had I been alone.

Gordon Bailey

## Membership Dues

It is time to think about renewing your membership now. Thank you to those who have already done so. Standard membership is \$30 and \$35 if you receive a posted copy of the Good Guts. Payment can be made online through the 39<sup>th</sup> website.



## Citations For Bravery in The Field



### **SX4500 Captain Maxwell Leslie Bidstrup**

#### ***Approved for the award of the Military Cross***

Captain Bidstrup, from Adelaide, South Australia, was commanding officer Delta Company 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in action in Kokoda – Owen Stanley area August – September 1942 and Gona – Sanananda area 1942 to January 1943.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942 Captain Bidstrup led his company from Deniki to Pirivi where he surrounded and destroyed an enemy force. Pushing on with the remnants of his company he set an ambush on the road Oivi – Buna where his men accounted for 45 to 50 enemy killed and a similar number wounded. Fresh enemy forces cut off 17 Platoon, and in order to extricate the remainder of his men and to reunite his company Captain Bidstrup withdrew to Komando beating off a determined attack during withdrawal. This audacious thrust into the enemy Left of Centre undoubtedly delayed the enemy advance.

Captain Bidstrup's cool leadership was again an inspiration to his company in the battles of Deniki (August 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>), Isurava (August 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>) and Eora Creek (September 1<sup>st</sup>). Captain Bidstrup's gallant and distinguished conduct in leading his company in attacks on Gona Mission (December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>) and on the village West of Gona (December 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>) contributed largely to the capture of those enemy strongholds.

Citation Reads:

*'Gallant and distinguished conduct at Kokoda / Owen Stanley'*



## 39TH AIF

Thank you for an interesting article of the 39 Bn AIF. I've attached a photo of the 39 Bn AIF Battle Flag that was carried by the 39<sup>th</sup> in most of their WW1 engagements. The flag was stolen from the 10<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance by PTE Kearney of 39 Bn, because they didn't have one of their own. Aussie larrikinism at its best.

A story about how the flag was found. In 2006 I was posted to the Deployed Forces Support Unit (DFSU) which became 30 PSB on 8 Aug 06, I was the Battalion Executive Officer. Another officer whom I worked with was LCDR David Murphy, RAN and he spotted a military memorabilia trunk on ebay from the Ballarat Historical Society. We put in a bid for it and promptly forgot about it. The trunk turned up some weeks later and after rummaging through the military items in it we found this moth-eaten flag in the bottom of the trunk. Knowing that we could not keep it we presented it to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne when we went down for the renaming parade from DFSU to 39 PSB. The Shrine of Remembrance had it mounted in a vacuum case to preserve it and I did see it on display there when I went to Melbourne for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kokoda.



It was fortuitous that we came across this flag and preserved some military history of not just our WW1 veterans, but also the 39<sup>th</sup>.

Factis non Verbis  
Bernie Hayes

## ARE YOU READY TO EMBARK ON THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME?

Applications have now opened for the 2026 Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize. Through the Spirit of Anzac Prize, you could take part in a fully funded overseas study tour in September to learn about the Anzac legend. The Prize helps students build confidence, leadership skills and a deeper understanding of the world.

### Who can apply?

The Prize is open to Victorian students in years 9 to 12. We encourage applications from students from all backgrounds, from across the state. Twelve students will be selected to visit historically significant Anzac sites and learn first-hand about the people, places and sacrifices of those who served in war. If you're a teacher, principal, parent or carer, we encourage you to pass this opportunity on to students who may be interested.

### Important information

To enter, students are asked to reflect on the Anzac values and how they model them in their lives. Recipients will participate in an overseas study tour during the September school holidays. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing covers all costs associated with: accommodation, transport, insurance, activities, meals. Financial assistance is available on request for students who need support for any additional related costs.

Applications for the Prize are now open and close at 5 pm on Monday 11 May. For more information or to apply for the 2026 Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize, visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/spirit-anzac-prize-student-competition>.



