



The Good Guts



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



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No. 259
February
2026

Life Members Lunch 2026





One Tree Hill BBQ 2026



Factis Non Verbis



President's Report

Dear 39th Family and Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of the "Good Guts" for 2026. Although Christmas and New Year are now weeks behind us, I do hope that it was a joyous and happy occasion for each of you. Our year is well and truly with us, and we look forward to a special one as members of the 39th Battalion Association. As we look back at our history and look forward to our future, there is much to remember and of which to be proud.



It is 80 years since the veterans themselves formed the Battalion Association to which we all now belong. From the time the Battalion was disbanded in 1943, there was a desire to support those who had survived and those dependent families who had lost a member while serving with the Battalion. For two years after that, contact was made with as many former members of the Battalion as possible, and by the end of 1945, the objective of forming an association became a reality.

On the 8th May 1946, the first general meeting of 150 former members of the 39th Battalion met at the Prahan Drill Hall. The goals and objectives were discussed and finalised with a focus on friendship and support for the ill and needy. Social functions such as picnics, trips away and theatre nights were organised to keep in contact with each other as well as observing those important times such as Kokoda Day and Anzac Day. The Association saw itself as one big family, inclusive of all its members. In the late 1990's, the Association decided to expand its membership beyond the veterans themselves to include family members and anyone interested in telling and preserving the story of the 39th.

This concept of family got me thinking. Today 'family' in our modern world has so many different meanings. One dictionary definition describes family as any group of related beings, a group united by certain convictions or a common affiliation. The Queensland RSL website has a great definition of family: "Being in Defence is like being part of a family. Someone always has your back, and you're surrounded by people who share your interests and are working towards the same goals". It would be hard to find a better description of our Battalion Association Family- a group of people who join together in a single organisation with a common interest.

On the 11th January, we gathered at the Kokoda Memorial at One Tree Hill in the Dandenong Ranges National Park at the entrance to the Walk of Honour that has been dedicated to the commemoration of the deeds of those men who fought for our freedom on the Kokoda Track and the Northern Beaches. The 3rd January marked 84 years since the 39th landed in Port Moresby. Our veterans often recalled that day, and the impact of the experiences that were to follow had on them. After a short commemorative service, everyone enjoyed the excellent BBQ and swapped news of their past year.

During January, many of the panels on the Walk of Honour were in memory of all those who wore the 'mud over blood' colour patch of the 39th Australian Infantry Battalion in World War 2. If you have not already visited the Walk of Honour, I encourage you to do so whenever you can. Similarly, I encourage you to visit the Rotary Kokoda Memorial at Cascade Gardens on the Gold Coast if you are up that way.

On the 1st February, the Life members of the Association gathered for their annual lunch and update on all 39th news. Our life members have done much to continue the work of telling the story of the 39th, and this is an opportunity for them to come together and share their thoughts on the future of the Association. Now, an important date for your diary. Mark the 17th May as the day we can all come together to celebrate 80 years of fellowship and support since our veterans had the foresight to found the Association. I hope you will plan to join us that day. More details will be in the April Good Guts and on our website.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all our members for their support. Any organisation is only as good as the level of involvement and passion of its members. The achievements of the 39th can only live on to be told to future generations if we keep their stories alive.

Deeds Not Words
Mary Holloway
President

39th Australian Infantry Battalion 1941-1943 Association Inc

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Editorial

“They’re useless – as weak as water”. “Weak as water !” Most of us have used the expression at some time or other, but is water really weak? It may be weak in flavour when compared to that of say whisky, but it can be a powerful dilutant when added to the said drop! It may be comparatively weak when a drip falls on one’s finger, but a constant drip can wear away a stone! The trickle running down the drain after a shower of rain may seem fairly innocuous, but who amongst us has not watched our television screens without some sense of horror as we view the devastation caused by the waters of torrential flooding?



There is little doubt that water can be one of the most powerful elements on this planet, and we should never underestimate its strength.

And this is equally true of any organisation, be it an ex-service organisation, a bowling club, a church, or indeed just a couple of blokes who decide to undertake some project. Indeed, what an incredible number of outstanding works have come from the efforts of just one person, much in the same way as a constant drip can wear away a stone!

Your committee has plans for the future, but can we achieve them? YES, WE CAN, so long as we never say that it is too hard or that our own efforts are now “As weak as water Just keep on at it, and our strength is unbounded.

Lest we forget.

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 39th website.

Dates for your diary

39th Battalion Events



Proposed Calendar Dates for 2025/2026

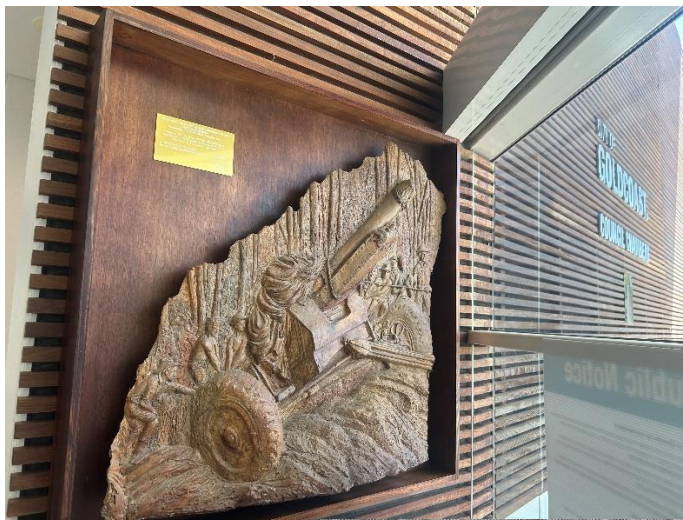
Events printed in bold are events the 39th Bn Association is running or helping run.

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

Month	Date	Event	Time	Location
March	3rd	Executive Committee Meeting	1930	Online
April	7th	Committee Meeting	1900	Online
	TBA	ANZAC Church Service	1600	St Pauls Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne
	22 nd	Schools Anzac Day Service	1100	Kokoda Terrace, Dandenong Ranges Nat'l Park
	25 th	ANZAC Day March- Melbourne	0900	Fall in Collins Street East, South side, Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
			1200	Lunch-Rising Sun Hotel Sth Melbourne
		ANZAC Day March-Brisbane	1030	Fall in Between Charlotte and Mary Street, to King George Square, Brisbane
TBA	Anzac Day Service	1100	Heidelberg Campus, Austin Health	
May	6th	Executive Committee Meeting	1930	Online
	17th	Annual General Meeting 80th Celebration of the Association	1030	Darebin RSL 402 Bell St, Preston VIC 3072
June	2 nd	Committee Meeting	1930	East Keilor RSL
July	7 th	Executive Committee Meeting	1930	Online
August	4 th	Committee Meeting	1900	Online
	7 th	Kokoda Day Service	1300	One Tree Hill Lord Somers Rd, Tremont
	8 th	Kokoda Day Service	1100	Cascade Gardens, Gold Coast, Qld
	9 th	Kokoda Day Pilgrimage	1400	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
	9 th	Kokoda Day Service	1100	Sherwood RSL, Brisbane, Qld
	TBA	Kokoda Football Match	TBA	Reid Oval Warrnambool
September	1 st	Executive Committee Meeting	1930	Online
	2 nd	Battle for Australia Service	1100	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
October	6 th	Committee Meeting	1900	Online
November	2 nd	Executive Committee Meeting	1930	Online
	11 th	Remembrance Day	10:30	Heidelberg Campus, Austin Health
	11 th	Remembrance Day	1100	Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance
	11 th	Remembrance Day	1100	Surfers Paradise RSL, Cenotaph
	TBA	TSS Cadet Annual Passing Out Parade	TBA	Southport School. Gold Coast
December	1 st	Committee Meeting	1930	East Keilor RSL

The Queensland Report

The Gold Coast City Council is a proud supporter of the 8th August Kokoda Day service at the Cascade Gardens Rotary Kokoda Memorial. In appreciation of their support, a fragment of the wall was presented to the Council and is on display in the main entrance to the Council offices for all to see. The fragment depicts one of the twenty-five-pounders being manhandled up Imita Ridge on the Kokoda Track in 1942





Citations For Bravery in The Field



VX100096 Lieutenant Phillip Edward Gartner

Approved for the Award of the Military Cross

On 11th December 1942 Lieutenant Gartner, from Surrey Hills, Victoria, commanded the left platoon of the company which commenced the attack on the Village two miles West of Gona Mission. He pressed home his attack against strong enemy opposition and after 4 hours hard fighting reached the edge of the village. By this time casualties had reduced his strong platoon to a total of 11 and a fresh company relieved him. He then took over the centre platoon whose commander had been wounded and carried on with the dangerous mission of forcing his way forward along the main track which was swept by fire and commanded a series of enemy posts in depth. For five days and nights Lieutenant Gartner fought his way forward under the nose of the enemy, dashing from section to section checking section positions, and making grenade sorties on the enemy. For hours each day he personally pounded the enemy with 2" mortar and EY rifle. To do this he had to expose himself in an open position which the enemy continually searched with medium machine gun fire, but with his ears packed to deaden the noise of the mortar he coolly sat and fired bomb after bomb to help the Battalion move forward.

At 0900 hours on 16th December 1942 while sniping at the enemy he received a bullet wound in the left side. He applied his field dressing but was determined to fight on. Forty yards his platoon pushed forward through the jungle that day and 35 dead enemy in the ground they captured bore witness to the bitterness with which every yard was contested. Then at 1500 hours Lieutenant Gartner could do no more. His morning wound had rendered his left leg useless and he had to be carried from his post.

It is recommended that he be granted the Immediate Award of the Military Cross.

Citation Reads:

'Extreme courage and devotion at Gona Mission on 11th – 16th December 1942.'



39TH AIF

FEBRUARY 21ST marks the 110th anniversary of the raising of the 39th Battalion AIF. The Battalion was raised in Ballarat and camped at the Ballarat Showground. The plaque below was dedicated in Ballarat on the 100th anniversary on the 21st February 2016.

On the 17th April 2026, the AWM will honour Sgt 398 Herman Frederick Bush at the Last Post Service in Canberra. Sgt Bush was KIA at Messines, Flanders on 17th June 1917, has no known grave and is remembered on the Menin Gate in Ypres Belgium. The service is live streamed on Youtube commencing at 4.30pm. I will place a note on the 39th's Facebook page. At the moment the AWM don't have a photo of Sgt Bush however I do, and will forward one to them.

[AWM Last Post- YouTube](#)
[Herman Frederick Bush 1 Australian War Memorial](#) -



39th Battalion – Historical Overview

The 39th Battalion's origin began in 1858, when two Volunteer Rifle Corps were raised in the Ballarat townships. By 1912 the Unit had split to form the 70th and 71st Battalions, and here the 71st (City of Ballarat Regiment) formed the future link to the 39th Battalion.

In 1916 the 39th Battalion AIF was raised and trained at Ballarat. As part of the 10th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Division, they sailed in May for Plymouth in England. After training there, they sailed to France in 1917 where they joined the other Australians in fighting Germany until the Armistice of 1918.

In 1918 the 71st Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment) became the 2nd/39th Battalion, but when the two Ballarat Units were linked again in 1921 they became the 8th Battalion (City of Ballarat Regiment). It would appear that the 39th was relocated to Hawthorn as the 'City of Hawthorn Regiment'.

By 1930 the Unit had the Territorial title 'Hawthorn-Kew Regiment' and was still known as thus when the Second World War broke out in 1939.

This most famous militia Battalion of WW2 was to meet the Japanese first in New Guinea, where the 39th struggled to contain the Japanese advance along the Kokoda Trail, and by tenacious fighting, bluffed the Japanese into believing they were opposed by a far larger force than they really were. After AIF Units were thrown into the fight, the 39th still fought on until the exhausted Battalion was disbanded into AIF Units in 1943.

The Colours for both wars were laid up at Ballarat in 1952, but were transferred to the Shrine, Melbourne in 1965.

The 39th PSB Battalion was raised in 2006 and proudly serves today as the 39th OSB.



EX PRISONERS OF WAR MEMORIAL - BALLARAT



The ceremony was at the Memorial beside Lake Wendouree in Ballarat at 1130 on Sunday 8th February 2026. The guest speaker for the ceremony was General(Ret'd) The Honorable David Hurley AC.CVO.DSC The EX Prisoner of War Memorial at Ballarat now includes the names of at least seven 39th Bn soldiers who became prisoners of the Japanese in PNG, even if only for a short time.

These soldiers were:

Sam Templeton
Alex Malony
Harry Bould

Syd Moffatt
Vic Holness

Reg Tierney
John McGrath

39th AIF 1916-1919 - POWs in WW1

MAKEHAM. 1350 Private Charles Richard

Farmer, born **Mysia via Boort**, Vic. Father John Makeham, farmer of Mysia. Age at enlistment 21. Enlisted at Swan Hill Victoria.

Wounded In Action. Captured at Armentieres, France 30/04/1917. Interred at Kassel Camp, Germany. GSW right hand, fractured 2nd and 3rd metacarpal bones. Repatriated to Hull, UK 19/01/1919. RTA 16/05/1919, discharged from AIF 12/08/1919.

BOLTON. 4675 Lance Corporal Reginald Henry

Business manager from **Gipps St, East Melbourne**.

Enlisted at Sydney, NSW. Attended Melbourne Church Of England Grammar School and Dookie Agricultural College near Horsham Victoria. Taken On Strength from 29th Battalion Wounded In Action and Captured Hamel 15/7/1918 Interned Limburg, Germany. Died 03/8/1918 while POW of Pleurisy. Buried at St Roch Communal Cemetery, Valenciennes, Nord Pas de Calais, France. Widow Mrs Doris Bolton of Hunters Hill, Sydney, NSW.

Between the Boer War at the turn of the last century and the Korean War in the 1950's, 34,737 Australian servicemen and women were incarcerated in Prisoner-of War (POW) camps. Many suffered inhumane and atrocious treatment from their captors. Until recently there was no Memorial in Australia such as this dedicated to these Australians or any recognition of their pain and suffering endured in the service of our nation. The motto of these brave prisoners was "When you go home, tell them of us and say that we gave our tomorrow for your today" A memorial has been built in the Botanical Gardens in Ballarat. The monument has been designed by well known sculptor Peter Blizzard with the intention to provide ex-prisoners of war, their descendants, visitors and future generations with a reflective experience where they can pay homage to those who endured so much. The POW monuments'



design uses the basic idea of a journey through and an experience of time and place. The start of the pathway is long and straight heading off into the shape of railway sleepers, a reference to the Burma Railway. Running parallel to the pathway is a polished black granite wall, 130m long etched with the names of all the Australian POW's. Standing in a reflective pool are huge basalt obelisks up to 4.5m high will the names of the POW camps. The columns are out of reach and across the water, symbolising that all the POW camps were away from Australian shores. Further on there is another wall with the words Lest we Forget engraved, allowing for an area of contemplation and reflection after the "journey"

The Australian Ex-Prisoner of War Memorial

Ballarat, 8th February 2026

General (Retd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People, and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders gathered here today.

Acknowledgements

- Hon Catherine King MP, Federal Member for Ballarat and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government representing the Hon Anthony Albanese MP Prime Minister
- Julianna Addison MP Member for Wendouree representing the Premier Hon. Jacinta Allan MP and Hon Natelie Suleyman
- Councillor Tracey Hargreaves Mayor of the City of Ballarat
- Captain Ben Esler RAN Senior Naval Officer Victoria representing Chief of the Defence Force Admiral David Johnston AC RAN
- Ms Michaela Settle MP Member for Eureka and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria and Parliamentary Secretary for Community Sport
- Mr Tokuro Furuya - Consul-General of Japan
- Commander Dean Uren RAN – HMAS Ballarat Commanding Officer
- Mr Michael Harper -Deputy Commissioner Victoria-Department of Veterans' Affairs



Delighted to be invited to become Patron of the Memorial and for Linda and I to return for today's service.

Today we are honouring a very special group of Australians – those who sacrificed their lives, their liberty and their health in service of their country and fellow Australians. And equally as importantly we give our sincere thanks to the families who endured years of uncertainty when little or no news about loved ones was available and those families who lived with the consequences of captivity on their loved ones.

The experience of our EX POWs is a story that continues to reveal itself. I recall during my last speech that I mentioned that in my family, my uncle on my father's side had been a POW in Changi. I had memories of him as a child when we visited his home and, as children do, noticed something different in him, but could not understand what that might be and what had caused it.

I have since learned, in further conversation with my cousin, that Uncle Tup, as we called him, had not only been a POW in Changi but had slaved on the Burma railroad and that his captivity ended in Japan at the end of the war. He had also survived the submarine attacks on Japanese convoys sailing between Indochina and Japan– the convoys before and after his convoy were both successfully attacked – and he was sent into Nagasaki three days after the atomic bomb was dropped to participate in the clean-up. And I know that he would not be the only POW with this terrible set of experiences.

It is remarkable how widely the POW story extends in our society. I was mentioning to my nieces husband this week that I was coming to this service. His immediate response was that his grandfather, Phil Wynne, had been in Changi – his name is on this memorial. Similarly our driver, Tony Jones, was keen to tell his families POW story on our drive from Melbourne.

My thoughts on Uncle Tup led me to consider the experiences of two other Ex POWs that Linda and I have been fortunate to either meet or spend time with –Jock Cassells and Billy Young.

I met Jock at the presentation parade for the President of South Vietnam's Presidential Unit Citation to 35



Sqn RAAF while I was the Governor of NSW. Some might say that the presentation was a bit late but apparently these things take time. I noticed Jock because of his medals. He wore a combination of World War 2 and Vietnam awards. Somewhat unusual. In discussion with him, Jock explained. As a young man he had been a Spitfire pilot in the RAF. He was shot down over Anzio, captured and sent to Stalag Luft, the main German camp for sir force POWs. Towards the end of the war, as the Russians advanced into Germany, he was forced marched to Berlin where at war's end he was released. He returned to the UK and in time elected to continue his service with the RAF. In 1966 he saw a 'wanted ad' for pilots in the RAAF. A year or so later he found himself commanding the RAAF Caribou detachment in South Vietnam. Jock's experience was different to his Australian brothers in Asia yet one that shared deprivation and the constant threat of death.

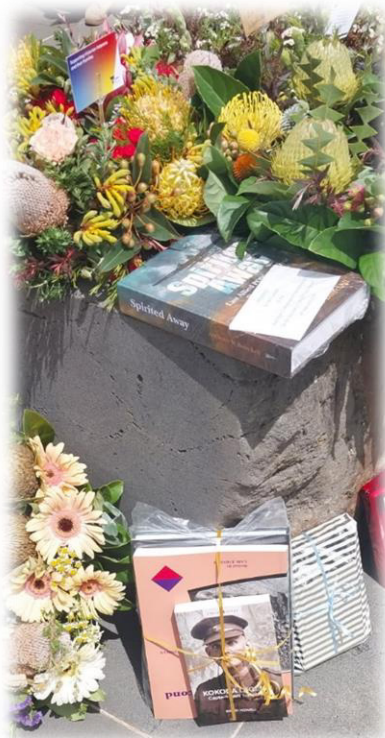


General (Retd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC and Mr Tokuro Furuya - Consul-General of Japan

My memories of Billy Young will remain with me for life. I met Billy when I was asked to launch a book of his recollections of his time as a POW in Sandakan and as a prisoner in Outram Road Prison in Singapore. Billy's book – 'I was Teenage Prisoner of War' – is a must read.

In the language of the day, Billy was a larrikin. Billy was orphaned at a young age and as a child and a teenager he lived by his wits and streetwise ways. In 1940, aged 14, he and a mate travelled to Melbourne by various means and stole some bicycles on which they intended to cycle around Australia. Their adventure ended on the Great Ocean Road when they were arrested. The following year Billy decided that the best way to avoid the consequences of his lifestyle, was to enlist in the Army. So at the age of 15 he joined up and was assigned to the 8th Division. After a short period of initial training, he found himself in Singapore three weeks before its fall. He was captured and shipped via Changi to Sandakan. Billy's continuous mischief in that camp, driven I believe by a strong survival instinct, for example he would sneak out at night to steal food for his mates, lead him to repeated brutal beatings and finally to being declared by the Japanese to be a criminal thereby losing his status as a POW. At 16 years of age, he was shipped to Singapore and imprisoned in Outram Road Prison.

Billy's experiences in Outram Road have to be read to be believed. Such were the conditions he endured that he described his occasional visits for medical treatment to the Changi hospital as 'going to a holiday camp'. That he survived I can only attribute to the tough character he developed in the streets of South Sydney.



Billy was the final speaker at the book launch. He walked slowly with his walking stick to the lectern, propped himself up, and spoke quietly without notes. He recounted many of his experiences and concluded with this story: We had had a good day at the airfield (the prisoners at Sandakan were building an airfield for the Japanese). In the evening everyone was resting on their hut verandas before our evening meal. A group of five of us stood out in front of the huts and practised the song that we intended to sing at the Christmas concert.

In a soft whisper Billy began singing the song, first in Bahasa Malay then English and again in Malay. With tears rolling down his face he said: and now I am the only one left. Being a thief had meant that Billy was spared the Sandakan Death March. At that time of his book launch, he was the only one left.

It's difficult to describe silence . At that moment there was no sound but there was an almost physical sense of emotion. In time soft crying could be heard. We had been privileged to be present as another story had revealed itself. And not from a book but in flesh and blood before us. Another reminder of why this memorial and this annual service are so important to our understanding of ourselves as a country.





Your work to support this memorial and your attendance here today will allow these stories to continue to reveal themselves. This annual gathering continues the work of correcting past behaviours towards our ex-POWs and to reinforcing a pride in service that they all must be allowed to share.

Our remaining ex POWs are very few in number. We, you, me, all carry the responsibility of revealing their stories to our fellow countrymen and women.

Lest we forget.

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General (Retd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC

