

Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop

The life of Sir Edward Dunlop is full of examples of the high bar set for community service. His choice of career shows his desire to help others, but it is along with his extensive extra-work involvement that one can see the full extent of his actions.

During his schooling, his desire to help others is shown in his involvement in cadets and the army, which was interrupted during his extensive university studies but resumed immediately after.

It has been said that he is the epitome of the mate-ship shown in the ANZAC spirit. During the war he rose to the challenge of looking after the men in his charge, and when his unit was taken, Sir Dunlop chose not to take his chance to escape, but to stay and ensure the health of his injured men, joining them in becoming a prisoner of war. He continued his mission of increasing morale and protecting his men, in some cases physically creating a barrier between POWs and their aggressors. He was described by one of his men as "a lighthouse of sanity in a universe of madness and suffering". His service actions continued at the end of the war, when rather than being evacuated first, he stayed behind to help co-ordinate the evacuation of his fellow POWs; again he chose to help others when he could have been safe. This emulation of the ANZAC spirit remains not only a difficult task, but also a powerful one in the face of such pain and suffering.

Post-war, he went directly back to helping others in his work, dedicating his life not only to medicine and its advancements, but also to the cancer council in his time on the board, and to the welfare of for POWs and their families. His show of continuous support to those in need allowed them to feel less alone when there were few resources for war veterans. The power of having someone on your side is immeasurable. This also extends to his work with the Australian Drug Foundation. When so few people have sympathy for those affected by illicit drugs, Sir Dunlop was determined to give them understanding.

His understanding and forgiving nature is also shown in his post-war efforts to promote better relations between Australia and Asia despite his POW treatment. His statement: "In suffering we are all equals".

While his actions were for purely selfless endeavours, he has been given accolades and awards in multiple countries including a knighthood (for military and medical reasons), Australian of the year, and listed as in the 200 contributors to great Australian society. And while this may not seem important to those wanting to help the community through service, it is incredibly important to note that Sir Dunlop said that he was following the example of two great professors from his studies, showing that having an impeccable example to follow is key to inspiring people to elicit change. Sir Edward Dunlop gives us such an example.