

Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop

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Many Australians have always volunteered their time and resources to help out those who are less fortunate, to support a community or even to prioritise the lives and property of others above their own. Examples of these include the recent bushfires and floods that have ravaged the country, supporting local not-for-profit entities as they work towards a fairer society and organisations which bring communities together like neighbourhood houses.

Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop was no exception to this, embodying the ANZAC values of mateship and self-sacrifice (Encyclopædia Britannica 2019) early in life through his studies, during his service to Australia in World War II and in life after military service.

Early in his life, Edward Dunlop first studied at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, then transferring to the University of Melbourne to follow his chosen career path of a medical practitioner (Horne & Mills 2019), where he volunteered to be part of the rugby and boxing teams during his studies. Upon graduating from the University of Melbourne with a master of surgery, he carried on his studies at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in London (Royal Australasian College of Surgeons nd) where he was inducted to the Royal College of Surgeons at the end of his examinations (Ebury 2010; Encyclopædia Britannica 2019).

In the early days of World War 2, Edward Dunlop volunteered to serve in the Australian Military Forces on the 28th December 1939 whilst in London (National Archives of Australia nd.). Initially serving in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in Greece, Crete and North Africa (Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2019), he was later relocated to Java, Indonesia, in February 1942 and was placed in command of No. 1 Allied General Hospital (Horne & Mills 2019). In January 1943, Edward Dunlop and almost 900 personnel were captured by the Japanese (Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2019).

Whilst a prisoner of war, Weary Dunlop still displayed a caring nature for the other prisoners through providing what treatment was possible with what resources were available at the time through rubbish and secret trades with the river trader Boon Pong (Royal Australasian College of Surgeons nd). He also put his own health and life at risk to protect the other prisoners, which resulted in physical punishment from the Japanese captors (Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2019).

In his post-military life, Weary Dunlop continued his service for the community in both his civilian profession and as an ex-serviceman going on to serve as president of the Victorian branch of the Ex-Prisoners of War Relatives Association (Horne & Mills 2019). He also was involved with Red Cross, Anti-Cancer Council and the Victorian Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (Royal Australasian College of Surgeons nd).

Whether it was in a warzone, prisoner of war camp, civilian hospital or a board room, Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop always demonstrated the desire to help others and a degree of self-sacrifice to ensure people are safe. A desire which has left a major impact on Australia and on foreign shores.

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