

Winning 'Weary' Dunlop Swinburne Scholarship Essay 2010

Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop

By Nancy Huynh-Vu *

Much has been said and written about Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop. Never have any of the reports been negative – it has invariably been full of praise. This is highly unusual for someone so well known, and is a testament to the life and goodness of this remarkable man.

I first heard of Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop in 1995, when we were studying Australian history at school. The tales of his courage, compassion and selflessness as a surgeon and prisoner during the Second World War were truly inspirational.

Weary Dunlop lived his life to serve other people. He enlisted to serve his country, put his own life and well-being on the line to save the lives of his patients, and earned the trust of thousands of men, as well as the grudging respect of his Japanese captors. In the post-war years, he continued serving the community both in his medical career, and as an ambassador for Australia.

Weary Dunlop was a credit to his profession, to his community, to the people of Australia. We are fortunate to have such a man to draw inspiration from.

His spirit lives on in the courage, strength, compassion and selflessness of the people who, like Weary Dunlop, dedicated their lives to serving other people.

Although there are too many to mention them all, these include: the troops in the Australian Defence Force, Navy and Air Force, who put their lives on the line to defend our borders and promote peace throughout the world; the fire-fighters, police and ambulance officers who attend emergencies and assist the public on a daily basis; and the teachers, doctors, and nurses who battle to improve the lives of those under their care.

In addition to those who help their communities as part of their chosen profession, there is the "volunteer army" of Australia – an "army" so great that, it is said, the volunteer output is worth \$14.6 billion per year (ABS 2009).

Again, there are too many to mention them all. However, examples include: the volunteers who make up the CFA, SES, St John Ambulance Australia, Red Cross, RSPCA, and surf life savers. In addition, volunteers throughout the country run school canteens, opportunity shops, neighbourhood watch programs, and care for their relatives and friends at home.

Although not a uniquely Australian phenomenon, the extent of "volunteerism" common – and hence often taken for granted here – is uniquely Australian.

Like Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop, over 4.5 million people across the country do their bit to serve their community, to make this world a better place (ABS 2009).

Reference: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009, 5256.0 – *Australian National Accounts: Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account 2006-07* Australian Bureau of Statistics, www.abs.gov.au

* Nancy Huynh-Vu wrote this essay whilst studying for her Bachelor of Business/Arts at Swinburne University of Technology. Nancy combined her studies with active voluntary service for her local community.