

# Winning 'Weary' Dunlop Swinburne Scholarship Essay 2011

## Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop

By Aaron McNeilly \*

Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop epitomised the true spirit of community service. As an exceptionally skilled surgeon and talented sportsman with a remarkably strong character, his unwavering commitment to the men he served with during his war service and subsequent return to the community stands as a beacon to sacrifice and support.

Combined with a rare ability to work unbelievably long hours for years on end, his compassion and sense of community added dignity to Weary's community service. His self-sacrifice to put his fellow man before all other needs is the essence of a selfless, community spirited and driven human whom was a shining example of servitude. I do not believe Weary would accept the romanticised pedestal that the Australian society places him on due to his humbleness and commitment to strengthen his community, at home and overseas.

There many examples of Weary which help to sustain and assist me in my own personal effort to assist my own community.

I am reminded of when overrun by the Japanese Army in Java, one of Weary's patients, Blue Butterworth, had been blinded and lost both hands in an explosion. Blue was to be summarily bayoneted in hospital. Weary jumped between the Japanese soldier and Blue and said if you are to bayonet my patient you will have to bayonet me first. This vividly illustrates Weary's sense of helping others, without a thought for his own safety. It would have taken remarkable courage to sacrifice his life in this way. This however, was the nature of the man and is part of his legacy.

By taking on medical cases other doctors did not want to do, Weary gave his patients another chance at life, while others had turned away in the face of adversity. He allowed his fellow man to ascertain their will to live - a chilling reminder of my experience assisting at Mother Theresa's Home for the Sick and the Dying.

In his post-duty life, Weary would travel around regional Victoria to visit reunions, talk to Legacy groups and to keep in touch with the survivors of the Burma Railway. His unwavering commitment and dedication to make peace with members of nations who were so recently his foe, shows a character who emulated forgiveness and resulted in a positive public society that was devoted to move forward.

Even though it may seem difficult at times to balance university, work and other commitments, I recite Weary's words - "it's only when you are put at full stretch that you can realise your full potential"

In conclusion, Sir Edward Dunlop's Community Service will always be an inspiration for me as I strive to assist my community. A man of immense courage and ability who never ceased in helping others.

\* Aaron McNeilly wrote this essay whilst studying for his Bachelor of Engineering at Swinburne University of Technology. Aaron also holds a Diploma of Sustainability and has managed to combine excellent academic achievement with considerable community service involvement.