

Weary Dunlop Swinburne Scholarship Essay 2017

Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop

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From 1924, when he began a pharmacy apprenticeship until ending his term as President of the Victorian Foundation on Alcoholism and Drug dependence in 1982, Sir Edward (Weary) Dunlop served his country and community. Fifty-eight of his 85 years were dedicated to the wellbeing of others.

Sir Edward's community service seemed to have no limitations when considering the number of roles that he played for his country and local community. He was not a combat fighter in the Australian Army, but served as a medic, which provides some insight into Sir Edward's caring character. In 1939, during the Second World War, he was posted to Jerusalem as an Acting Assistant Medical Director. Within 5 months he was promoted to Major and assigned the role of Deputy Assistant Director of Medical Services. Sir Edward was promoted again two years later temporarily to Lieutenant Colonel, during which time he was captured and became a prisoner of war. Weary Dunlop's accolades alone speak for his leadership and the regard in which he was held by his superiors, and his values did not waiver as he was elevated through the ranks. This was exemplified by his declining of a promotion to command 2/2 Casualty Clearing Station due to the staff's work ethic being unsatisfactory by his own standards.

After his capture Weary Dunlop eventually found himself in Thailand where he led men building the Burma to Thailand Railway. Here he continued to relentlessly treat wounded, sick and malnourished prisoner labourers. He also defended and protected his comrades against their captors, sometimes at the risk of his own life. Sir Edward's role model of bravery was inspirational for the survival of other prisoners of war. From his return to Australia in 1945 to his discharge from service in 1946, he continued to work as an advocate for the justice of former prisoners of war. This demonstrated his insight into his own experience and how he used it to truly empathise with the soldiers. Sir Edward's support for Prisoners of War (PoW) was an ongoing commitment after his retirement. This was manifested by ensuring their receipt of entitled financial remuneration, and liaison with the Government on their behalf. He was to chair many conferences and always encouraged forgiveness and reconciliation with the Japanese.

Post-discharge from the Australian Army, Weary continued his work as a physician. He worked in a number of capacities, from consultant at the Peter MacCallum Clinic to being on staff at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. His medical career continued in both public and private settings until he retired in 1967. Following retirement Sir Edward continued to take an active interest in community health (e.g., drug dependency, alcoholism, cancer and fluoridation), and was an Australian Ambassador internationally, networking with professionals in Britain, USA and India. Sir Edward Dunlop was also an educator throughout Asia, training medical practitioners in South Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Source: <https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/dunlop/bio>