



Remembering a War and Rugby Hero

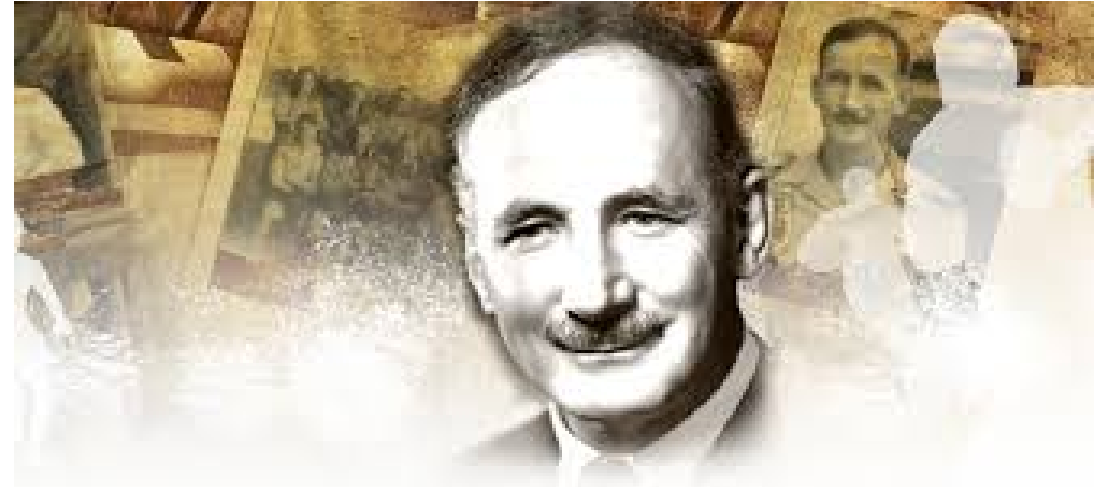
GET INTO
RUGBY
SCHOOLS



Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop – Hero?

Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop

- Former Australian Wallaby player
- Australian surgeon renowned for his leadership while being held prisoner by the Japanese during [World War II](#).



A hero / heroine is...

A **hero** (masculine) or **heroine** (feminine) refers to characters who, in the face of danger and adversity or from a position of weakness, display courage and the will for self-sacrifice – that is, heroism—for some greater good of all humanity. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero>

Heroes are people who transform care and compassion into heroic action.

Source: <http://raproject.org/blog/entry/what-really-is-a-hero-anyway>

Heroes stand up for others.

**Did Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop possess the qualities of a hero?
Let’s find out!**



Early family life

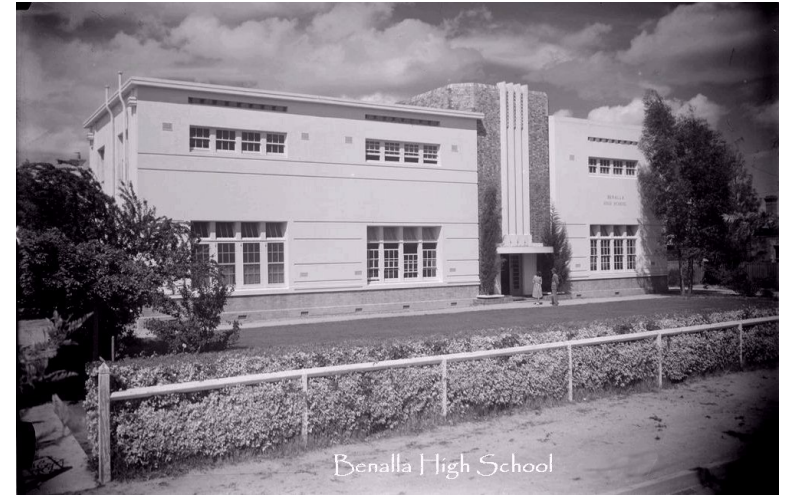
Dunlop was born in [Wangaratta](#), Victoria, the second of two children of parents James and Alice. He attended [Benalla High School](#) for two years of his education.

He started an apprenticeship in pharmacy when he finished school, and moved to Melbourne in 1927. There, he studied at the [Victorian College of Pharmacy](#) and then the University [of Melbourne](#), where he obtained a scholarship in medicine.^[1]

Dunlop graduated from the [University of Melbourne](#) in 1934 with first class honours in [pharmacy](#) and in medicine,^[2] and excelled as a sportsman at Melbourne University and [Ormond College](#).

The nickname "Weary" was a reference to his last name—"tired" like a Dunlop tyre.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Dunlop



Rugby career

While at university Dunlop took up [rugby union](#) commencing as a fourth grade player with the Melbourne University Rugby Club in 1931. He made a lightning-fast progression through the grades, to state and then to the national representative level becoming the first Victorian-born player to represent the [Wallabies](#).

He made his [national representative](#) debut against the [All Blacks](#) at the [Sydney Cricket Ground](#) on 23 July 1932 as a [number 8](#).

In the first Test of 1934 he again appeared for Australia, this time as a lock. Australia won the match 25–11, and two weeks later the second and final match of that year's [Bledisloe Cup](#) series finished in a draw. Although Dunlop missed that match due to injury he stands as a member of the first Wallaby squad to have won the Bledisloe Cup away from New Zealand.

In June 2008, he was honoured in the third set of inductees into the [Australian Rugby Union](#) Hall of Fame. To date, he is the only Victorian so honoured.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Dunlop



Pre-war career

Dunlop had been a school cadet, and he continued his part-time army service until 1929, when his service ceased under pressure from his pharmacy studies.

He re-enlisted in 1935 and was commissioned into the Australian Army Medical Corps on 1 July with the rank of Captain. In May 1938 Dunlop left Australia for London by boat. He was the ship's medical officer.

In London he attended St Bartholomew's Medical School and in 1938 became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. The distinguished medical mentors Dunlop met in London, Professor [Grey-Turner](#) and Sir Thomas Dunhill, impressed him with their dedication to their job and he resolved to emulate their example.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Dunlop



War and imprisonment

During [World War II](#), Dunlop was appointed to medical headquarters in the Middle East, where he developed the mobile surgical unit. In [Greece](#) he liaised with forward medical units and Allied headquarters, and at [Tobruk](#) he was a surgeon until the Australian Divisions were withdrawn for home defence. His troopship was diverted to [Java](#) in an ill-planned attempt to bolster the defences there. On 26 February 1942, he was promoted to temporary [lieutenant-colonel](#). Dunlop became a Japanese [prisoner of war](#) in 1942 when he was captured in [Bandung](#), Java, together with the hospital he was commanding.^[5]

Because of his leadership skills, he was placed in charge of [prisoner-of-war](#) camps in Java, was later transferred briefly to Changi, and in January 1943 commanded the first Australians sent to work on the Thai segment of the [Burma-Thailand railway](#).

After being held in a number of camps in Java, he was eventually moved to the [Thai-Burma railway](#), where prisoners of the Japanese were being used as [forced labourers](#) to construct a strategically important supply route between Bangkok and Rangoon. Conditions in the railway camps were primitive and horrific—food was totally inadequate, beatings were frequent and severe, there were no medical supplies, [tropical disease](#) was rampant, and the Japanese required a level of productivity that would have been difficult for fully fit and properly equipped men to achieve.

Along with a number of other [Commonwealth](#) Medical Officers, Dunlop's **dedication and heroism** became a legend among prisoners.

A courageous leader and compassionate doctor, he restored morale in those terrible prison camps and jungle hospitals. Dunlop defied his captors, gave hope to the sick and eased the anguish of the dying. He became, in the words of one of his men, "a lighthouse of sanity in a universe of madness and suffering". His example was one of the reasons why Australian survival rates were the highest.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Dunlop



Post-war life

After 1945, with the darkness of the war years behind him, Dunlop forgave his captors and turned his energies to the task of healing and building. He was to state later that "in suffering we are all equal".

He devoted himself to the health and welfare of former prisoners-of-war and their families, and worked to promote better relations between Australia and Asia.

He was active in many spheres of endeavour. He became closely involved with a wide range of health and educational organisations, and served on the board of [Cancer Council Victoria](#).

His tireless community work had a profound influence on Australians and on the people of Asia. As well as numerous tributes and distinctions bestowed upon him in his own country, he received honours from Thailand, [India](#), [Sri Lanka](#), and the United Kingdom.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Dunlop



Celebrating the life of a magnificent man

During the course of his life Dunlop received numerous honours and awards in recognition of his civic, sporting, educational, military and medical achievements.

These included the Order of the British Empire (1947), Knight Bachelor (1969), Companion of the Order of Australia (1987), Knight Grand Cross, Order of St John of Jerusalem (1992), Knight Grand Cross (1st Class) of the Most Noble Order of the Royal Crown of Thailand (1993). He was an Honorary Fellow of the Imperial College of London, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Honorary Life Member of the RSL and Life Governor of the Royal Women's Hospital and the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital.

In 1977 he was named Australian of the Year and in 1988 one of the 200 Great Australians.

After contracting pneumonia, Dunlop died at his home on 2 July 1993. He was accorded a state funeral on 12 July at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. Over 10,000 people witnessed his funeral, attesting to his great public esteem and popularity.

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



Wallaby Hall of Fame

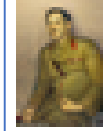
Each year two or more of Australia's greats from all eras of the international game are inducted into the Wallaby Hall of Fame.

To be eligible for inclusion in the Wallaby Hall of Fame, a player must have:

1. Played at least one Test for Australia
2. Been retired from Rugby for at least 10 years
3. Made a major contribution to the game of Rugby
4. Demonstrated outstanding ability, sportsmanship, commitment, character and personal contribution to their team and the game in their era.

While consideration is given to a players' on-field career, induction is not based on statistical achievement alone.

Source: <http://www.rugby.com.au/wallabies/TheTeam/WallabyHallofFame.aspx>



Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop

Wallaby Number: 280

Position: No.8

Test Career: 1932-34

Tests: 2

Test debut: 1932 v New Zealand,
Sydney