

The DANDENONG Journal

FORMERLY THE 'SOUTH BOURKE AND MORNINGTON JOURNAL' Est. 1865

PEACE

DANDENONG received news of peace jubilantly this morning.

★ ★

FLAGS CAME OUT, the fire bell rang, business closed and people thronged into the streets.

★ ★

THE FIRE-BELL rang, the Town Hall Clock went hay-wire-and everybody was happy.

★ ★

DON'T FORGET the United Thanks-giving Service in the Dandenong Town Hall at 3pm this afternoon (Wednesday).

DANDENONG REMEMBERS



The project "Dandenong Remembers" is the response of the Dandenong and District Historical Society to the national "Australia Remembers" program and is part of the program of events arranged locally by the Holt Electorate Australia Remembers Committee.

We thank the Committee for funding this insert, and for the generous assistance given by the Dandenong Journal to make it possible. In addition, the Society would like to acknowledge that the special September edition of the Society's magazine Gipps-Land Gate, which will contain all of what you see here presented in a more permanent form, has also been subsidised by the Committee.

It was the Society's wish to make this very important 50th anniversary of the end of World War II a more personal remembrance of how the lives of Dandenong residents were changed by war and how it altered life in Dandenong.

The 16 long-term residents of the Dandenong area each had a very special story to tell- yet we could have chosen another 16 people with equally interesting stories! To the people who were interviewed and organisations like the RSL and Australian Army which gave us such wonderful co-operation we say "thank you".

The object of this project was not to glorify war but rather to remember- to remember a war which caused such immense suffering to so many people throughout the world- to remember how close the war came to our shores- to remember how it changed the lives of people with whom we rub shoulders daily- to remember how it transformed life in the town of Dandenong.

Ray Carter President, Max Oldmeadow Vice President, on behalf of the Dandenong & District Historical Society.

DID YOU KNOW?

That during the years 1939 to 1945

Many homes in your area had Air Raid Shelters in their back yards.

Air Raid Wardens patrolled the streets enforcing blackout regulations.

(Approx) 16,000 men were encamped in the Dandenong Region.

The Scout Hall on Princes Highway was a Military Hospital.

Troops From Palestine Convalescing At Dandenong

35 AT SCOUT HALL
At the Dandenong Military Hospital, located at the Scout Hall, are 35 Soldiers who recently returned from Gaza (Palestine) on a Hospital ship.
They are convalescing after illness, but are well enough to visit or be taken out on trips.

Dandenong Acts

Prompt Steps Taken To Organise For Air Raid Precautions

The local response to the news of the outbreak of war was immediate and gratifying. Already close on 200 have enrolled on the National Emergency Register which was opened by the district warden (Cr Isaac) on Monday.

LISTEN

IT ONLY COSTS

2d

A WEEK

TO HAVE "THE JOURNAL" POSTED TO ANY ADDRESS

(9/- a Year Post Free)

'IS IT WORTH WHILE BEING WITHOUT IT?'

Order Now at this office or your Nearest Newsagent, and Keep in Touch with District Events.

HOW TO ADDRESS MAIL TO MEN IN CAMP

BECAUSE of difficulty in handling inadequately addressed mail, the Post Office issued advice this week to those writing to militiamen in camps in Seymour area. Addresses on all mail matter should include:

Regimental number, rank and name.
Company (or other sub unit).
Unit.
Post Office, Seymour.

TO SOLDIERS' PARENTS OR RELATIVES

PARENTS or other relatives of members of the A.I.F. who have been officially notified of casualties, are invited to forward brief biographical particulars to the "Journal" for publication.



DANDENONG REMEMBERS

JOYCE BLUNDELL, WAAAF

Joyce Johansen was born in Castlemaine in 1922 and educated at Harcourt and Castlemaine Technical Schools. After leaving school she worked in a knitwear shop in Castlemaine, before being sent by Manpower to Adelaide to pack Tasmanian apples in 1941!

In 1943 she married Alf Blundell at Castlemaine Presbyterian Church. After the war they lived in Oakleigh and moved to Dandenong in 1962. Alf worked as a sales representative, while Joyce was a buyer for the Dorset Hotel for 13 years. Joyce says that "her baby" is the Red Cross and she organises the monthly Red Cross stall which operates from their caravan in Lonsdale Street.

It was at a Technical Schools Sports Meeting in Ballarat that Alf and Joyce met- Alf was a student at Collingwood Tech. They became pen-friends and most of their courting was done by mail! In January 1940, Alf joined the RAAF, trained as a wireless operator, and was sent to the Middle East in 1940 where he served for three years. At their 50th wedding anniversary a friend told the story of how Alf was desperately sick in the Middle East. The doctors were beginning to despair. The friend had collected a letter which had just arrived and said "I suppose you're too sick to read this letter from Joyce". Alf opened his eyes and recovery was on the way!

Joyce joined the WAAAF (Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force) in January 1942. She was one of 28,000 WAAAF's and did her basic training at Geelong Grammar during the school holidays. She was posted to Point Cook and there she stayed for three years working in Catering. Point Cook was then a Service Flying Training School and there were 3750 men and 375 women on the base. Feeding such a large number was a huge undertaking. There were six kitchens and messes at Point Cook and three at satellite stations at Weribee, Little River and Lara (now Avalon). Catering staff were responsible for preparing the menus, ordering the food, then when it arrived dividing it between the kitchens. Joyce tells how 1½d (just over 1 cent) above the daily army ration for each servicemen each day was paid to the camp. Two mornings a week, Joyce went into Victoria Market at 1AM to buy "specials" like cantelope, fish, ham, and bananas. Her 20th birthday was a big day- she became engaged and received her Corporal stripes.

After returning from the Middle East in 1942, Alf was an Instructor at No. 3 Wireless Air Gunners' School in Maryborough, Queensland. After their marriage in August 1943, it was only about once in 6 months that they managed to see each other. Before Alf was posted to Madang in New Guinea Joyce was given a month's leave which she spent at Maryborough. Joyce was discharged in November 1944, and their first child was born in May 1945.

Both Joyce and Alf remember August 15th. Joyce was living at home in Harcourt, and recalls running out to tell her parents who were working in the family orchard. A big celebration in Harcourt followed a few days later. Alf remembers the day- he was in Madang. There were only two of them and they celebrated with a bottle of beer.

In June this year Joyce attended the 50th anniversary of the end of the war with 950 servicewomen in a wonderful reunion in Darwin.



MURIEL NORRIS, Red Cross Volunteer



Muriel: Top right corner.

Muriel Blackmore was born at Merlin Private Hospital, corner of Wilson and Langhorne Streets, in 1920. The Blackmore family came to Dandenong in the 1850's and Muriel grew up on a market garden property, south of the railway line off Chandler Road. She attended Noble Park State School and Dandenong High School, to which she walked some four kilometres each way across paddocks.

In 1948 she married Ron Norris from Keysborough, at Scots Church, Dandenong. Apart from the short time she spent in the Keysborough and Pakenham areas, Muriel has lived in Noble Park all her life.

During the war, market gardening was an essential industry, and the Blackmores had contracts with the government to provide produce for the services. While one of her brothers managed to join the Army, another brother's attempt to enlist in the Air Force was unsuccessful and he was told that "growing food was the most important job he could do". Muriel spent most of the war working at home, mostly in the house, but occasionally "in the garden".

In 1943 Muriel joined the Red Cross and on Mondays and Wednesdays she went to Rockingham Convalescent Home in Kew where injured servicemen were recuperating. Her duties included helping with meals, washing up, making beds, and talking with the servicemen. She continued this work until 1947. On Sundays she helped at the Lady Dugan Hostel in South Yarra which provided accommodation for service women.

Muriel's recollections of the war years include the black-out curtains, the trench which was dug in case there was an air raid, and the coupons for tea, sugar, butter, clothing and petrol. She believes that because they lived on the land and they had a cow and fowls, they didn't suffer as many shortages as other folk- they could always swap coupons, and they became very good at improvising. Her chief memory is how busy they were on the farm filling orders for the Government.

August 15th is well remembered by Muriel. She went to work as usual at Rockingham and found that most of the men had gone on leave and only the very sick remained. Some NCO's on the staff took her into Melbourne to take part in the dancing and other festivities.

NEIL TUCKER, AIF

Neil Tucker was born in Trafalgar on the 4th April 1919, and moved to Dandenong in 1925. His father, Bob Tucker, was a bootmaker and operated his business from a variety of sites in Lonsdale Street. Neil attended Dandenong Primary School and then took his first job with Yarra Falls Knitting Mills. Prior to war service he also worked at the Gippsland Timber and Trading Company which was located on the corner of Thomas and Foster Streets and Cheltenham Road, where there is now a service station.

Neil married a Dandenong girl, Irene Alexander, in October 1943 at the St James Church. After the war he worked with the State Electricity Commission for 34 years, retiring in 1984.

In the early years of the war all men aged 21 were called up for three months military training. In 1940 Neil did his training at Seymour with the 52nd Battalion, often known as the "Dandenong Battalion", as it had its headquarters at the Dandenong Drill Hall.

In March 1942, after some time back in civilian life, he joined the AIF. He did his six weeks "rookie training" at the Bendigo Showgrounds and his group was then divided, half being sent to Bonegilla and half to Dandenong. Neil was sent to Bonegilla for further infantry training. From there he was posted to Queensland where he served for about two years as a driver mechanic- first with the 54th DOW (Divisional Ordnance Workshop) and then with the 325th LAD (Light Aid Detachment).

It was in staging camps around Brisbane that Neil was drafted into the newly formed 2nd/3rd Landing Craft Workshops Company. After water transport training around Southport they were sent to New Guinea. Here Neil worked on barges and landing craft for the next 15 months, and "this", he says, "was pretty bloody stupid as I couldn't swim"! Most of his service was at Labu and Wewak. He completed his army service in February 1946.

Neil has vivid memories of the end of the war. He was one of many Australian troops who were assembled on the Wewak Airfield to witness the surrender of the Japanese to the Australians in New Guinea, when a Japanese Officer handed over his sword.



ERIC ECKSTEIN "A Dunera Boy"

Eric Eckstein and his wife Judith came to live in Dandenong in 1953 to teach at Dandenong High School. Eric was born in 1923 in Dusseldorf, Germany. In the late 20's and 30's he attended primary and junior high schools. Eric was one of 10 children from primary and junior high schools. Eric was one of 10 children from primary and junior high schools. Eric was one of 10 children from primary and junior high schools.

Dusseldorf who joined a Kinder-transport in February 1939 and, with great difficulty, was able to get out of Germany and was taken to England. Great Britain had agreed to take 10,000 German Jewish children and, in fact, 9,500 successfully made the trip. Eric was in children and, in fact, 9,500 successfully made the trip. Eric was in children and, in fact, 9,500 successfully made the trip.

In June 1940 Eric left Britain on the Ship Dunera, believing he was being sent to Canada. He was one of the "Dunera Boys" about whom a film was made. After disembarking in Sydney, they were then sent to a camp in Hay, NSW. The wide open spaces were a culture shock after living in Europe. For the next 15 months he was an internee in camps at Hay and Tatura, and at Tatura he studied and passed the Leaving Honours Examination. While behind barbed wire he says how well he was treated by camp officials.

Early in 1942, together with 550 other internees, Eric accepted the offer to join the Australian Army. He was a member of the 8th Australian Employment Company. For the remaining 3½ years of the war he operated out of a number of different locations in New South Wales and Victoria carrying out a variety of essential tasks. These included seven months in Tocumwal trans-shipping war materials from Victorian and NSW trains, work at Melbourne wharves for about a year, and loading munitions at Oaklands NSW.

Eric remembers the end of the war very well. He was watching the film Gone With The Wind in an Albury theatre when a notice was flashed on the screen stating that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima.



JIM HARDY, A.I.F.



Jim Hardy was born in Warrnambool in 1913 and commenced his schooling at Illowa Parish School. The family moved to Bacchus Marsh in 1920 and Jim attended St Bernards for the rest of his schooling. He had a variety of jobs which included apprentice hairdresser, baker, and "carrying a swag" for eight months. In 1934 he joined the Federal Milk Company and worked with them until he joined up.

It was in 1940 that Jim married a Dandenong girl, Ann Moylan, at St Mary's Church, Dandenong. Ann worked in Miss Dargie's Willow Cafe in Lonsdale Street and went to Bacchus Marsh for holidays.

Jim came to live in Dandenong on Christmas Eve 1945 and has lived here ever since. He spent 27 years working with Minster Carpets, retiring in 1976. His association with Dandenong RSL has been a long one and he has been President for the last six years.

In April 1940 Jim joined the Army and did his basic training at Caulfield Racecourse. Next it was Weribee Racecourse where he joined 3rd Light Anti Aircraft whose Commanding Officer was Colonel John Rhoden, a well-known Dandenong solicitor. In late 1940 Jim went to the Middle East where, for the next 16 months, he saw active service in the Western Desert and Syria. While in Syria he contracted typhoid fever and for ten weeks was laid up in a British Field Hospital.

After returning to Australia in April 1942 his unit was posted to New Guinea. Here he was seconded into 1st Australian Amenities where he joined the "Thirty Club Show", one of about 26 entertainment groups. His concert party included an 8-piece band, juggler, ventriloquist, magician, singer, and Jim was the "stand-up" comic. For the rest of the war Jim travelled to camps throughout New Guinea and later around Australia providing entertainment.

Jim recalls well the first show put on by his group. It was in Port Moresby, the stage was in the valley and some 3,000 troops sat on the hillside. There were six generals present, including Generals Macarthur, Blamey, Vasey and Moorshead. They played to small groups and large groups, the largest being about 5,000.

His most vivid memory is of a concert his party put on for troops who had just come off the Kakoda Trail. The rain came down continuously and, understandably, they were having great trouble "getting a laugh". Jim was in the middle of his act when the unexpected happened- his false teeth popped out and landed in the mud! Jim quipped, "Pass them back, I need them for my supper"! This broke the ice and a memorable night ended with the concert party being given "three cheers".

In 1944 he was given leave to appear in the Jenny Howard show "Let's Have a Party" at the Sydney Tivoli. He received his discharge in September 1945.

On August 15th, Jim was working at the headquarters of the Australian Amenities in Pagewood. A call came over for Sergeant Hardy to report to the C.O. Colonel Jim Davidson (better known as a band leader). He was told to go immediately to Martin Place in Sydney to comper an impromptu concert which was put on for the enormous crowd of revellers. This was a memorable experience!

ADELE MORTIMER, wife of a prisoner of war

Adele Lamb was born in 1919 in Northcote. She attended Westgarth Central and Preston Girls' Schools. To get to Preston she recalls buying a one penny "transfer" which entitled her to travel on the cable tram and then transfer to the electric train. After leaving school she worked as a tailoress in Carlton.

Adele often stayed with relations in Kooweerup and it was there that she met Lindsay Mortimer. They were married in 1940 at the Church of Epiphany in Northcote. Shortly after this, Lindsay joined the AIF. Their son was born in February 1941. Lindsay left for Singapore with the 2nd/10th Engineers in November 1941. With the fall of Singapore in February 1942 he was taken as a POW and was soon sent to Rangoon and became one of the thousands who laboured on the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway.

For Adele the war was a worrying and stressful time- for four years husband Lindsay was overseas and for most of that time a POW. Adele says that she was always confident that he would return. The first contact she had after his capture was a card that was two years old when it arrived! It was a short message saying he was safe and sending his love- Adele can still remember every word! Three other cards followed. She wrote once or twice a week but Lindsay never received the letters. On his return he described how all mail, when it was received, was placed in the quadrangle and burnt in front of them.

As a wife of a soldier overseas she received a very small amount- she thinks it was 7/- (70 cents) a fortnight. She spent her time between her parents' home in Northcote and Lindsay's parents in Kooweerup. The Mortimers owned the local cafe and theatre and she was able to assist. She tells how she nearly lost her son John twice. First, as a 2½ year-old, John fell into a well- he had gone to give his horse (a wooden hobby horse) a drink. The second scare was when he had to be pulled out of a swampy dam.

Adele remembers well August 15th. Her dad put up flags all around their house in Northcote with a big "Welcome Home" sign over the front verandah, and then they had a party. However the biggest celebration took place when Lindsay returned home in November 1945.

After the war Lindsay and Adele ran mixed businesses and hotels in Kooweerup, Corowa, Nagambie and Regent. They came to Dandenong in 1960 and Lindsay worked in the Electoral Office and with the SEC. He died in 1981.

Adele has been a member of Dandenong Legacy Widows since its inception twelve years ago. This is her tenth year as President. She was also the first President of the RSL Ladies Bowling Club. To honour her contribution to the Women's Auxilliary of the RSL, which she joined in 1942, she has been presented with a Gold Merit Badge and made a Life Member.



DANDENONG REMEMBERS



PAM OLDMEADOW, school girl

Saunders was born in 1928 at Murray House, Dandenong, and her schooling was at Dandenong 1403 Dandenong High School. After leaving school she worked in the Union Bank at Oakleigh. Girls were employed on a temporary basis and told that they were "holding the fort" until the men returned from the war. After two years she worked in the office of Robert And Son - a Dandenong Baker and Pastrycook. In November 1948 she married Max Oldmeadow at Dandenong Methodist Church.

She spent four years of the war as a student at Dandenong High School. War was certainly affecting the lives of students. She recalls knitting socks, balaclavas and scarves for troops. Domestic science students cooked cakes and biscuits which were taken to servicemen in the military hospital at the Scout Hall.

Students were encouraged to raise money for the war effort. Pam still has in her possession an impressive certificate headed Young Workers' Patriotic Guild which was given by the Education Department to students who had raised more than £1 (\$2) for War Relief. There is also a certificate from the District Inspector, Mr Green, under the heading Work for Victory in which he says:

"We receive many letters from our soldiers overseas and they never fail to say how delighted they are to receive warm woolies and other comforts which we send them. Keep the good work going, Pam, and encourage your friends to help too."

Support in the 1942 school magazine says that the school raised £200 (\$400) for War Relief. At form assemblies money was collected to purchase War Savings Certificates. All sorts of stalls and competitions were used to raise money.

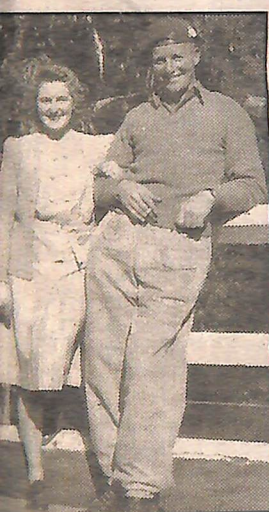
Issues of the 1942 and 1943 school magazine The Gate reflect the influence the war was having on the school. In addition to a list of all known ex-pupils in the Services, including those who had been killed, there were literary contributions from pupils on war-time topics such as Spitfires' Victory, The Finders, Batan, Australia's Men, and a letter from an ex-student in the Air Force. Pam remembers as a highlight the arrival of a British evacuee in 1940. Sheila Cameron came from Scotland and was one of a group of 477 British children. One of the pleasing results of the war was that, due to shortages, girls were encouraged to wear socks to school instead of black stockings during the winter. She was not so happy that school socials were not held!

At home Pam remembers the "air raid shelter" which was a trench dug in the back yard. Her father was R.P. (Air Raid Precaution) Warden whose job it was to patrol the streets and ensure that all houses were "blacked out". Soldiers marching along the street were a common sight. Pam recalls looking forward to the frequent visits of her cousin Dick who was camped on the outskirts of Dandenong. He enjoyed a home-cooked meal and a bath. Pam enjoyed the chocolate which he brought and which was in short supply to civilians.

On August 15th Pam remembers going to work at the bank as usual. They did not open the mail but read the announcement. When it came she went home and then into the city with friends to celebrate.



CARMA KEAST, wife of a soldier



Carma Woide was born in 1925 at Cranbourne and moved to Dandenong in 1932. The Woide dairy farm was on the north-west corner of the intersection of Heatherton and Stud Roads. Her schooling was at Cranbourne and Dandenong Primary Schools, and Dandenong High School. After leaving school she worked in Miss Armitage's Women's Store, a highly successful local business.

Carma clearly remembers the many troops who were stationed around Dandenong. Soldiers from the Rowville Camp often marched down Stud Road and sometimes would rest under a tree near their bottom paddock. She recalls her father becoming most annoyed when some of the troops antagonised their bull. By 1942 there were Army camps at Rowville, off Heatherton Road near where the Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre is now, at the end of Kiddy Road in what is now Doveton, and off Hammond Road near Bangholme. The old Showgrounds were occupied by American troops, and the Scout Hall on the Princes Highway became a military hospital.

Being a keen dancer, Carma with her friends then attended a round of dances at Bangholme, Clyde, Tooradin and Berwick. The Saturday night dance at the Dandenong Town Hall was packed with soldiers. It was there in 1942 that she met Roy Keast who was then stationed at Rowville. Carma and her friends always sat in front of the stage, their strategy being to "any boys wanting to dance with them would have to be really keen". The strategy worked - Roy was taken and the romance blossomed. Roy tells how Rowville Camp was so muddy that he had two pairs of boots - once out of the camp he changed from his muddy boots, which he left in the bushes, into the highly polished pair! Roy spent six months at Rowville. They were engaged in February 1943 and married at St James, Dandenong in August 1943.

For interstate transport for civilians during war-time was extremely difficult - Carma was determined to meet up with Roy and on the Australia Day weekend 1944 she flew to Sydney and then caught a train to Singleton. Standing on the station in her "Sunday best" she recalls asking a soldier, "Do you know Carma Keast? Would you tell him his wife is here?" Roy couldn't believe it! He got leave, borrowed a bike, and in 40°C heat they made their way into the town. For the next 12 months Carma lived in towns near to where Roy was in camp - Singleton, Albury, Seymour and finally Sydney. By this time she was pregnant and returned home to live with her parents.

Roy was in Brisbane awaiting embarkation. He applied unsuccessfully for compassionate leave. Their daughter Pauline was born in June 1945 while Roy was in New Guinea. After 4½ years service Roy was discharged in January 1946.

A two-month old baby and a husband in New Guinea meant that there were no wild celebrations for Carma on August 15th. She recalls going to Melbourne later with Roy and her father to watch the Victory Parade through the streets of Melbourne.

JOAN CAMERON, A.W.A.S.

Joan Ball was born in Mildura in 1925 and attended Merbein Central and Mildura High Schools. After school she worked in the office at Fisher's Store in Merbein.

In 1948 she married Max Cameron at St. John's Church in Merbein. Her late husband was employed by the International Harvester Company all his working life. When International Harvester set up in the International Harvester Company all his working life. When International Harvester set up in the International Harvester Company all his working life.

Dandenong in the early 1950s Max was on their staff and the Cameron family moved to Dandenong. The Ball family felt the full impact of war with the death of one of Joan's older brothers in 1942. Harold was an outstanding footballer and played in Melbourne's 1939 and 1940 premierships. He joined the 9th Field Ambulance and was sent to Malaya in 1941. There he captained and coached the Field Ambulance football team and they were successful in winning the "premiership" in the locally-run competition. Harold was killed in action during the fall of Singapore in February 1942. The parents were devastated when they received a telegram stating that he was "missing believed killed". His death was not confirmed until after the war.

It is not surprising that Joan's parents did not want to see her join the services. However, Joan was determined, and she joined the A.W.A.S. (Australian Women's Army Service) in December 1942, several months before her 18th birthday. She did her rookie training at Balcombe and Darley, near Bacchus Marsh. Her unit was the Land Headquarters Cipher Production Section located in Melbourne, first in Queen's Road and then in temporary buildings in the grounds of Government House. Her unit was one of high security, handling secret information. She served with the same unit for all her service and was discharged in April 1946.

Joan remembers August 15th, and like so many others, she was one of the revellers in the streets of Melbourne on that day. However, the most moving and vivid memory she has of the end of the war is of November 1945, when prisoners of war from South East Asia were honoured with a procession through the streets of Melbourne - she remembers standing outside St. Paul's Cathedral watching the parade with many thousands of revellers.

BILL TOON, prisoner-of-war

Bill Toon was born in England in 1920. He came to Australia in 1923 and, apart from a year in Sydney, he lived in the East Melbourne and Carlton areas. After school at Rathdowne Street, Carlton, and East Brunswick, he had many different jobs beginning as a messenger boy for a shopkeeper in Melbourne for which he was paid ten shillings (one dollar) a week. As he was living on his own at this time he paid nine shillings (ninety cents) for board which left him one shilling for pocket money.

In 1947 he married Betty Potter in Holy Trinity Church in Kew. He came to Dandenong in 1950 and opened his first fabric shop in Vanity Court in 1951. For the next 32 years he successfully owned and managed a number of fabric shops in Dandenong and the surrounding area.

This year Bill was honoured by the Victorian Branch of the RSL by being made a Life Member with gold badge.

Bill remembers well the declaration of war on Sunday 3rd September 1939 - he was busy during the afternoon selling a special edition of The Herald on his beat, which was the corner outside St. Paul's Cathedral. He was 18 years old and the following morning he tried to enlist but was told, "You just come back when you're 21, son". Six months later, then 19, Bill was in the Army and on his way to Bendigo for basic training.

By the end of 1941 he was stationed in Malacca, Malaya, as part of the Allied Defence Forces, protecting both the Peninsula and the approaches to Singapore. On the 15th February 1942, Bill, with thousands of his comrades, was incarcerated at Changi. Singapore had fallen. Bill now commenced three and a half years as a Prisoner of War. He was moved to another camp in Singapore and was used as a driver to transport food from Singapore's warehouses to Japanese supply ships.

Bill was then sent to Thailand in March 1943 and so began his work on the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway. The construction of this 415km railway through virgin jungle took 16 months at a cost of 104,800 men, of whom 4,500 were Australian POWs. Bill tells of the acute suffering caused by the horrific conditions and the many who lost their lives from malaria, dysentery, pellagra, dengue fever, typhus, ulcers, pneumonia and cholera. He says "But for the wonderful skill of doctors and medical staff to improvise, many more would not have survived". Bill suffered 27 relapses of malaria!

His work on the railway included a range of jobs such as digging embankments and being a "hammer and tap" man. He worked on many different parts of the railway, including the notorious Hellfire Pass. Bill was moved to Bangkok in March 1945 and now American "flying fortresses" were raining down bombs!

Of the end of the war Bill says, "Even though the war was over on 15th August 1945, we weren't absolutely sure until three days later when an American aircraft flew over and dropped a radio and operator. Then food parcels started to arrive..."

Bill had his first plane trip when he was loaded onto a DC3 for Singapore and then sailed for home on the 17th October.

The following words, branded in a tree, at Kohima in Burma have never been forgotten by Bill:

"When you go home, Tell them of us and say, We gave our tomorrow, For your today"

In recent years Bill has done a remarkable job raising money for memorials and plaques at Hellfire Pass and other parts of the Burma-Thailand Railway. He has led a number of pilgrimages.



BILL BROOKS, RAAF



Bill Brooks moved to Dandenong in 1916 at the age of two having been born in East Melbourne. He was educated at Dandenong Primary School and Dandenong High School. Leaving school at the beginning of the Great Depression he, like so many others, experienced great difficulty in getting employment. His first job was at Kingsbury's bike shop in Foster Street. Before the war he was studying in his own time to be an accountant.

After the war he joined the P.M.G.'s Department on the technical side and worked there until his retirement in 1977. In 1949 he was married in St James Church to Barbara McDonald who was born in Dandenong.

When Bill joined the R.A.A.F. in October 1941 he was told that they wanted wireless mechanics urgently. After completing his recruit training at Ascot Vale Showgrounds he attempted to transfer to air crew but was unsuccessful. During his technical training at Melbourne Technical College he was able to live at home and travel in and out each day.

In mid-1942 he was posted to Wagga where he worked on the maintenance of wireless gear in Hudson planes which came south for their 200-hour check. After a further 6-week course on teleprinters at the GPO Melbourne he was sent to the Embarkation Depot in Sydney and then on to Townsville. Next it was Port Moresby, arriving there on an old Dutch merchant ship. In New Guinea he worked on ground receivers, teletype and coding machines. He arrived in Port Moresby towards the end of the Japanese bombing and said that "being at the foot of a hill, the danger didn't seem to come from bombs, but from the nose cones of spent anti-aircraft shells raining down".

In mid-1944 he was posted south, first to Laverton, and then to R.A.A.F. Signals Headquarters at "Frognaal" in Mont Albert Road Camberwell, where he stayed until the war finished.

Bill said that he didn't do any celebrating at the end of the war and in his words "I'd had enough of service life and I was just relieved and glad to be getting out of uniform".

DAVE MORRIS, AIF

Mr Dave Morris was born in Cranbourne in 1922 and moved to Dandenong in 1925. He was educated at Dandenong West Primary School, and Dandenong High School where he was Head Prefect for two years. In 1940 he commenced a course in agricultural science at the University of Melbourne but his studies were interrupted when he joined the Army. He completed his degree in 1947.

Without doubt Dave Morris was one of Dandenong's most outstanding sportsmen. He played cricket at the university, for 35 years with Dandenong High School and later DHS/RSL teams in the Turf Section of the Dandenong Cricket Competition. After playing football with University Blues and Noble Park he was "signed" by Melbourne but a knee injury put an end to that.

In 1947 he married Norma Campbell, a Dandenong girl, at Scots Church, Dandenong. After graduating, he spent his working career with the Department of Agriculture at the Plant Research Institute at Burnley. He retired in 1982.

While Dave applied first to join the Air Force, it was the Army that he joined in December 1941. His first camps were Bonegilla and Balcombe, then he was sent to Western Australia for twelve months with the 32nd Battalion. It was in WA that he volunteered for the AIF and joined the 14th/32nd AIB (Australian Infantry Battalion). After further training at Puckapunyal followed by "jungle training" at Canungra and the Atherton Tablelands he was sent to New Guinea early in 1943.

He spent about 18 months in New Guinea in a variety of locations including Port Moresby, Buna, Gona, and the highlands at Lae. During this time the 14th/32nd AIB was a reserve battalion. Japanese night bombing was a regular occurrence. His unit then went to New Britain where they were involved in action. After about six months in New Britain he was posted to South Australia for Officer Training but a severe bout of malaria led to an early discharge in March 1945. Dave believes he was fortunate to have stayed with the same battalion resulting in close comradeship with his mates.

Dave remembers the day the war ended. By then he was a university student again, and he recalls going with his girlfriend Norma Campbell to Melbourne where they celebrated the end of the war with many, many thousands of revellers.





DANDENONG REMEMBERS

GRAEME TRIGG, RAN

Graeme Trigg was born in Morwell in November 1925. He was educated at Morwell Primary and Yallourn Higher Elementary Schools, and Wesley College. After leaving school he worked with his father in an accounting business in Morwell for 18 months. He recalls taking his turn in manning the lookout tower where they watched for Japanese planes. He also remembers his father, who was a member of the V.D.C. (Volunteer Defence Corps), regularly going off to drill and do other tasks.

After being demobbed he went back to Yallourn High School in 1947 to study science subjects prior to studying for a degree in Medicine at Melbourne University. It was at Yallourn High School that he met Marion Dawson, a Dandenong girl, who was in her first year as a secondary teacher. Marion and Graeme were married in early 1949 at Dandenong Methodist Church.

Graeme worked in general practice in Ararat before going to Edinburgh where the family spent three years. There Graeme obtained the Edinburgh Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. Graeme and Marion returned to Dandenong in 1969 where he practised as a surgeon at the Dandenong Hospital and in private practice.

In 1943, at the age of 17½, Graeme joined the Navy and did his initial training at HMAS Cerberus at Flinders. Being a matriculant he could have applied for officer training, but he chose to go to sea as an Able Seaman. He was posted to the HMAS Shropshire in March 1944. The Shropshire was a Royal Navy ship which was given to Australia after the sinking of the Canberra. It had a crew of about 1200 men and Graeme was part of a Bofors Anti Aircraft Crew. He was only on the Shropshire for a short time when he contracted chicken pox and was off-loaded at Milne Bay for six weeks. Once fit, he was given the job of swinging a pick and shovel building roads.

For a short time he was on the HMAS Australia until it caught up with the Shropshire at Manus Island in the Admiralty Group. An Australian flotilla, of which the Shropshire was a part, was attached to the United States Task Force 74, with Admiral Kincaid in command.

The Shropshire saw a great deal of action. It provided bombardments in the landings at Biak, Hollandia and Morotai. It did numerous patrols. It was one of many ships in the big build-up for the initial landings in the Philippines at Leyte Gulf, and then at Corregidor and Manila. Graeme recalls that this was a time when the Japanese were using a great number of kamikaze attacks. It was said that the Shropshire was a lucky ship as it was not "hit" like other Australian ships. Next came the Battle of Suriago Straits, perhaps the largest of the war's naval battles, and the one that finally put an end to the Japanese fleet.

It was during a six-month course at Flinders that VP day took place. Graeme then joined the HMAS Hobart which went to Japan as part of the Occupation Forces. He remembers well visiting Hiroshima five months after the atomic bomb totally ravaged the city. He received his discharge in July 1946.

In 1953, Graeme joined the Naval Reserve and served in it for 30 years, retiring as a Lieutenant Commander.



ELWYN WILKIE, Army Nurse

Elwyn Norman was born in Ashfield, Sydney in 1916. Her schooling was at Geelong and Skipton Higher Elementary Schools. She worked at the Skipton Telephone Exchange and trained in infectious diseases at Fairfield Hospital before training to become a qualified nurse at Royal Melbourne Hospital.

In 1952 she was married to Alex Wilkie, a returned serviceman, at Ballarat Scots Church. They came to live at Dandenong in 1957. Alex, a carpenter, died in 1979.

In late 1940, Elwyn tried to enlist but was told by the Matron-in-Chief to "go home and grow up". At that time nurses had to be 25 before they could enlist. Elwyn went to Camperdown Hospital in Sydney for a year and completed a Post Graduate Certificate. While doing some private nursing she received a call from Southern Command in Melbourne and she joined the Australian Army Nursing Service as a Lieutenant. It is interesting to note that a Lieutenant in the nursing service was paid at the rate of a male Corporal!

Elwyn's first year of service was at Heidelberg where she worked as a theatre sister. Patients were mainly from Australian camps with a few from the Middle East. After a friend had received a posting "up north" she asked Matron if she could go too. Matron's response was "I hope you realise there's a war on! This is not a travel agency!" A few days later a nurse withdrew and Elwyn was able to join her friend.

For the next 18 months Elwyn worked in Army hospitals in Townsville where they nursed casualties from Milne Bay. She recalls that when she was at Pallaranda Hospital it was flattened by a cyclone. All the "bed patients" were moved to Townsville General Hospital while the "walking patients" were put into trains where they were looked after. Elwyn and her friend became frustrated at being kept in Townsville while other nurses were passing through on their way overseas. The Matron-in-Chief listened to their complaint and soon they received an overseas posting.

They left from Sydney on the hospital ship "Manunda" for Morotai in the Celebes group where they worked in the 2nd/15th Australian General Hospital. All the hospital was under canvas and there were over 100 beds. Elwyn remembers that the theatre she worked in was a huge marquee with three operating tables and a floor of compacted sand. Casualties from the landings in Borneo were brought back to the 2nd/15th A.G.H.

On the night of August 15th she was with a group at the pictures when a notice came on the screen, "Peace has been declared". There was shouting, cheering and then some shooting of guns into the air. American officers ordered that "the girls" be taken out immediately. Arriving back at the hospital they found celebrations in full swing with Matron Sage playing the drums!

After peace was signed the hospital received P.O.W.s from Ambon and Japan. Elwyn recalls this as the most rewarding time and in her words "I was privileged to do this work". The P.O.W.s were weak and dreadfully emaciated yet they were in good spirits. They were so grateful for any little kindness! Elwyn remembers nursing "Mulga Jack". One night she found he had slipped down the bed. Although weighing only seven stone (about 43kg) she was able to lift him and move him up the bed. Some six months later, in a lift at Heidelberg, she met a big fellow over 6 feet (1.8m) tall. He said, "How are you Sis? You don't remember me- I'm Mulga Jack- I bet you couldn't lift me up now!"

Elwyn returned from Morotai in October 1945 and then nursed at Heidelberg. She finished her Army service towards the end of 1946.



GIL KINGSBURY, RAAF

Gil Kingsbury was born in 1915 in the Kingsbury home on the corner of McCrae and Walker Streets. He received his education at Dandenong 1403, Dandenong High School and Wesley College.

The Kingsbury family opened their Dandenong business in 1890. Gil's father had built a number of shops in Foster Street and, in 1929, in the middle of the Great Depression, Gil joined his brother Frank in one of these shops in a business which sold motor bikes, bicycles and cars.

After the war Gil returned to his business in Foster Street which was now his. This was the first business in Dandenong to sell electrical appliances. By the time he retired in 1982 he was selling mainly bikes and baby carriages. The business continued under his nephew Graeme until 1994. Gil joined the RSL in 1946 and was President for three years including the time when "Westwood" was bought.

Gil joined the RAAF at the end of 1940. Colour blindness prevented him going into air crew which was his first preference. He joined the administration section and served in Australia for 2½ years before

being posted to London in the middle of 1943. He travelled on the American ship "West Point" from Port Melbourne to the USA, and then the British ship "Aquetania" across the Atlantic. At the time he arrived, London was being attacked by V1 rockets, nick-named "doodlebugs", and later V2 rockets. The V1's were psychologically demoralising as you could hear them coming.

Gil tells of a lucky "near miss". He usually lunched at the RAAF Club but on this occasion his brother Allan suggested they eat elsewhere. How fortunate they were! A V1 came over and "blew the innards" out of the RAAF headquarters. The death toll was 169. Two double-decker buses disintegrated.

Late in 1944 Gil was posted to Plymouth to join No. 10 Squadron, the only Australian Squadron in Britain. It was a Sutherland Flying Squadron and was part of Coastal Command which had the important task of patrolling the seas around Britain and keeping them free of German U-boats.

As Gil was involved in the European theatre of war, VE Day was more significant than VJ Day. He spent the day at Plymouth with some mates. Celebrations were a bit slow so one of his group, an Air Gunner, decided to liven things up and he lit a few flares. It certainly succeeded in attracting a crowd to where they were!

Even after VE Day No. 10 Squadron was still operational. They still had the task of "rounding up" and accounting for all German U-boats in the area. Gil returned to Australia and was discharged in March 1946 after almost 5½ years service.



GRACE HILL, WRAN

Grace Rohead was born in Oakleigh in 1926. Shortly after commencing school in Oakleigh her mother became seriously ill. There were eight children, and while the older children stayed with their father, Grace (6) and her younger brother (3) were placed in a children's home in Mornington where they lived for seven years. In January 1939 she went to live with an aunty in East Malvern, finishing her schooling at Lloyd Street Central. After leaving school she worked at Madam Wiegel's Paper Patterns until she joined up.

In 1949 she married George Hill at Ewing Memorial Church, East Malvern. They moved to Dandenong in 1955. After the death of her husband in 1972 she worked for the P.M.G. for a further 18 years.

On her 18th birthday she enlisted in the WRANS (Women's Royal Australian Navy Service) and was called up in August 1944. Asked why she chose the WRANS she said that she thinks it was the uniform which attracted her. Already the Rohead family had felt the full effects of the war- two brothers joined the Army in 1940, one served in the Middle East and the other brother was killed when the Japanese attacked Rabaul in January 1942. Her sister joined the Australian Women's Army Service in 1942.

Grace was one of 3000 Australian women who joined the Messenger, she was posted to Monterey which was attached to Lonsdale. The Monterey group were involved in secret work with the American Navy. After the war finished Grace signed on and served until the WRANS were disbanded. For the next twelve months she was attached to the HMAS Rushcutter in Sydney. She finished her service in September 1946.

Grace recalls August 15th 1945. She and her sister went into Melbourne that night and were part of the huge throng in Swanston Street who, in her words, were "going mad".

In June 1995 she was one of the 950 ex-servicewomen who celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in a grand reunion at Darwin.



Thanksgiving!

A UNITED PEACE THANKSGIVING SERVICE WILL BE HELD IN THE DANDENONG TOWN HALL AT 3 P.M. TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AIR RAID SHELTERS FOR SCHOOLS

THE secretary reported that he had been in touch with the Education Dept. and had ascertained that it would not be providing slit trench shelters for any of the schools in the shire. However, East Oakleigh school was the only one which would need them. The others were all close to open country which, in his opinion was just as good as trenches.

Motorists!

Black Out Paint For Head & Tail Lights 1/- per Tin

AT— OWEN'S Hardware Store 273 Lonsdale St., DANDENONG.

It's Not Cricket---- But Then There's A War On!

DANDENONG CRICKETERS AMEND RULES TO SUIT THE TIMES

SHOULD a cricketer who has played half-way through a two-day match in the Dandenong Association be called up for military service, his club will be permitted to replace him with another player who will be allowed to bat, bowl or keep wickets for the rest of the game.

Dandenong In To-morrow's A.R.P. Test

The Dandenong Shire is included in the area affected by the daylight A.R.P. Trial on Thursday (tomorrow).

Everyone is expected to do what they have planned to do in an Air Raid. People who are on the street are expected to use the trench shelters provided. These are not completed, but sufficiently advanced to use.

Notices will be displayed indicating where the nearest Shelter is to be found. The Siren will be sounded.

OBEY YOUR WARDENS.

SHIRE OF DANDENONG

Supply of Aluminium

An Urgent appeal is made by the Federal Government for supplies of Aluminium for War purposes.

THE COUNCIL APPEALS TO ALL HOUSEHOLDERS IN THE SHIRE TO DONATE SUCH ARTICLES OF ALUMINIUM WARE THAT CAN BE SPARED, AND REQUESTS THAT SAME BE PLACED BESIDE THE GARBAGE TIN (WHERE GARBAGE SERVICE IS IN OPERATION) FOR COLLECTION BY THE GARBAGE COLLECTOR