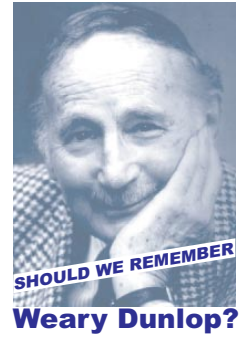


# Investigation 1

## Who was Ernest Edward 'Weary' Dunlop?



Look at this outline of the early life of Weary Dunlop. Note that he was taken prisoner of war (POW) in 1943. In the table provided on the following page, identify those aspects of his experience and character or qualities that might be invaluable in his future life as a POW.

### Born

12 July 1907 near Wangaratta (Victoria).

### Education

Local primary and high schools to Year 11 level.

### Early life:

He was very active at games. As boys he and his brother worked on the family farm before and after school, and on Saturdays. At Christmas they had to help harvest the wheat. Ernest could hold a 210 pound (100 kilo) bag of wheat in each hand. He was also an excellent swimmer and athlete at school.



### Later education

He completed a pharmacy degree in Melbourne, and topped his class in 1927. He then won scholarships to complete a medical degree at Melbourne University.

He was a prize-winning scholar, and represented Australia in rugby union, being noted for his great strength.

He was an excellent boxer.

He was a boarder at Ormond College, and was one of the few 'battlers' not from a privileged background in that environment. He soon became a popular and respected student.



### Career

On completion of his medical degree in 1934 he worked in a number of hospitals, and graduated as a Master of Surgery in 1937.

In 1938 he sailed to England to further his medical experience.

### Army experience

He had been a school cadet, and then part-time soldier until 1929. In 1935 he re-joined the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) (in a part-time position).

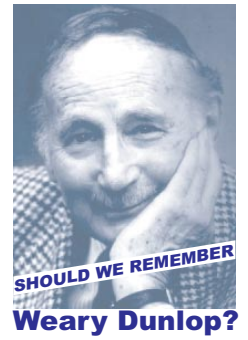
In 1939 he enlisted full time in the AAMC, and was posted to various overseas medical units and positions until being taken prisoner in 1943.



## Investigation 2

### ***What was it like to be an Australian prisoner of war of the Japanese?***

*The evidence and information that follows on this and the next page will give you some idea of the nature of the Australian prisoner of war experience under the Japanese. After considering this evidence and information, complete the exercise contained on page 3.*



#### **Background briefing**

Dunlop, now with the nickname 'Weary' (a pun on 'Dunlop' and 'tyres/tired') became a surgeon, and volunteered for service at the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939. He served in the Middle East, and then the disastrous campaigns in Greece and Crete. His Casualty Clearing Station was then sent to Malaya, but the Japanese invasion of Singapore meant that the ship was sent to Java. While he was there the Japanese continued their advance in the Pacific, and the British, Dutch and Australian forces in Java soon surrendered. Dunlop, together with 22,000 other Australians, was now a prisoner of the Japanese.

Most of the Australians and other Allied prisoners were in Changi, in Singapore, though there were several other prison camps established throughout the Malaya and Dutch East Indies area.

Dunlop was first placed in Bandoeng Camp on Java, then transferred to Changi, before being sent in early 1943 on to the camps in Thailand – to work on building the notorious Burma-Thai Railway.

Japan had successfully invaded and occupied much of Asia by February 1942. But to maintain its armies in far-flung areas, it needed to be able to take supplies to them – food, equipment, medical supplies, ammunition and reinforcements.

There was already a supply route – a railway – from Bangkok to the Malayan peninsula. What the Japanese wanted was to continue that railway to Burma. This would supply their large army in Burma, and allow them to attack the British. A failure to resupply the army would mean that it was very vulnerable to British attacks. So supplies had to be sent – and they had to arrive in time for a campaign in the dry season. The coastal route to Burma was very dangerous and subject to allied attacks – so supply had to be by land. And that meant a railway.

The British had already considered building such a railway, but had declared that the terrain was too difficult, and it would be too costly and too dangerous – the conditions and the diseases in the area would kill many workers. They abandoned their plans. The Japanese, however, decided that they could force the railway through the hills rather than around them – because they now had

unlimited supplies of slave labour, the prisoners of war and many conscripted local labourers.

They therefore set to work to build the railway from Thanbyuzayat in Burma, to Bampong in Thailand. Over 330,000 people worked on the line, 250,000 Asian labourers and 61,000 Allied prisoners of war – 12,000 of these Australians taken from Singapore after the surrender.

It is thought that about 90,000 of the 270,000 labourers from Malaya, Thailand, Burma and India died, together with 13,000 prisoners – many of whom were Australians.

The building involved clearing 415 kilometres of ground in the jungle, cutting through hills of rock, and building bridges. There were four million cubic metres of earth to be moved, three million cubic metres of rock to be broken and shifted, and 14 kilometres of bridges to be built. There was virtually no machinery available – only a few elephants, and a lot of men with basic hand tools. The short time-line meant that men had to be worked hard to complete their tasks. A number of camps were set up along the route, and men had certain quotas to complete by set dates. For the Japanese, there could be no delays, and no failure if they were to support their Burma army. The safety of their colleagues depended on building the line. This meant that they would force their slaves to work as hard as was needed to meet the deadline.

Officers were generally not made to work, but were expected to impose discipline within the camp, subject always to the discipline imposed with great brutality by the Japanese and Korean soldiers who were the guards.

The medical officers had three main roles:

- to maintain the health of the prisoners;
- to treat the sick and injured; and
- to protect them from being forced to work.

Men showed themselves at their best and their worst in these circumstances. There was heroism, fortitude, self-sacrifice. There was also meanness, selfishness and cowardice. At a time when officers were looked to for leadership and protection, many showed themselves as true leaders, though others were revealed as weak and self-serving. How would Dunlop behave in these circumstances?

## Source 1

The Japanese underfed the troops, gave them no medical supplies, constantly overworked them, and frequently bashed men for no reason. Terrible physical punishments were often given out, such as standing in the sun holding a rock over your head, with a bashing if you collapsed or lowered the rock. Sick men were forced to work.

(Based on Hank Nelson, *Prisoners of War. Australians Under Nippon*, ABC, Sydney, 1986/1990, passim.)



## Source 2

The reason why most men died is simple: they starved. The greatest atrocity committed by the Japanese against the prisoners is that they did not feed them... The few grams of rice, watery vegetable stew and infrequent flavouring from meat and fish... would not sustain men who were being forced to work at maximum effort.

They were vulnerable to diseases which would not have killed, and perhaps not afflicted, the prisoners had they been well-fed.

(Hank Nelson, *Prisoners of War. Australians Under Nippon*, ABC, Sydney, 1986/1990, page 51)

## Source 3

We slept on the floor, close up to each other, men dying, screaming and moaning; spewing and bogging going on amongst us; delirious fits and morphine injections by the light of a candle; fires in the hut all night; men at all times walking up and down the central passageway to the latrines; it made it all a corner of hell brought to earth. This was no figure of speech if you were lying next to a man about to die and lying next to him still, after he was dead.

(Douglas McLaggan, *The Will To Survive, A Private's View As A POW*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1995, page 123)



## Source 5

I was laying on these bamboo slats... I was skin and bone, 5 stone (32 kilos). Pus was running out of my leg, and I used to dread having to have it scraped. Brian, this mate of mine, used to come and carry me out and hold me while it was scraped. He'd often come in where I'd be lying and he'd have scrounged stuff and give me some and he'd help the fellows alongside me whose mates had gone. He'd come in the night time and talk. It's companionship and comradeship that pulled a lot of fellows through... But we all helped each other. And this is what survival is about: having a mate.

(Alan Davies, in Patsy Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War*, Viking, Melbourne, 1992, page 427)

## Source 4

The Australians were angered and many remain embittered by the apparent indifference of the Japanese to sick prisoners. The sick might be issued with no food or perhaps half rations... The Japanese attitude to the sick was consistent with their general ruthlessness in forcing as many men to work as possible, but the Japanese actions also reflected their different beliefs. Where the Westerners were inclined to see sickness as misfortune, the Japanese thought it was a sign of weakness. Sickness, they believed, was a result of a lack of will or 'right thinking'. If an individual soldier did not have the power within himself to overcome his weaknesses then his superiors had a duty to compel him to greater effort to secure his own well-being.

(Hank Nelson, *Prisoners of War. Australians Under Nippon*, ABC, Sydney, 1986/1990, page 43)

In the table below summarise the key features of the experience detailed in the second column of the background briefing on page 1 of this investigation. You may want to add more aspects of POW life to the table. **Leave the third column blank at this stage.**

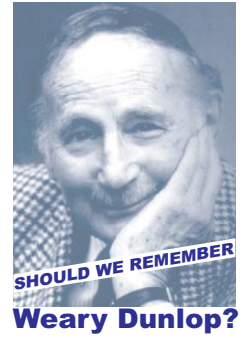
Aspects of POW life	General	Dunlop's contribution
Treatment		
Food		
Medical		
Working conditions		
Living conditions		
Morale		
Organisation		



# Investigation 3

## How did Weary Dunlop behave as a prisoner?

Here are a number of comments about Dunlop by people who knew him when he was a prisoner, as well as some extracts from the diaries he secretly kept. When you have read these comments and diary extracts answer the questions posed on pages 4 and 5 of this investigation.



### Source 1

*These days, in which I see men being progressively broken into emaciated, pitiful wrecks, bloated with beriberi, terribly reduced with pellagra, dysentery and malaria, and covered with disgusting sores, a searing hate arises in me whenever I see a Nip.*

*Disgusting, deplorable, hateful troop of men-apes.*

Entry 18 May 1943 in E.E.Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1990, pages 264–265

### Source 2

*I think Ray Parkin summed it up when he said, 'Weary could get more from the men with a smile than an army of blooming colonels wielding big sticks.' The blokes would do anything for him. He just had that quiet, assured way. 'Do as I do, not as I say,' that was Weary. He gave confidence. He looked assured and he was assured and he was just brimful of confidence.*

Fellow POW Bill Haskell in Margaret Geddes, *Remembering Weary*, Viking, Melbourne, 1996 page 103



### Source 4

*Weary's legs are bad – ulcers and beri-beri swelling. But he keeps going all day at the hospital. This affects all the fellows in the camp. They feel for him and worry about him. Many of them try to think of some ruse to keep him off his feet; none has been found.*

Ray Parkin, fellow POW, in Ray Parkin, *Into The Smother*, Pacific Books, Sydney, 1963, page 51

### Source 3

*[Dunlop was interrogated and tortured to make him reveal the whereabouts of a radio that he had hidden.] At last I was told patience was now exhausted and I must die. I was pushed and flogged along to a tree and my manacles changed to encircle my wrists behind the tree with my body and arms taut about the tree, my bare belly exposed to four bayonets wielded by an execution squad of four... I was told by the interpreter...that I was to have the grace of 30 seconds... 'Now ten seconds to go. Have you last message for relatives. I shall try to convey.' I shifted my gaze to his distasteful face and said contemptuously: 'Last message conveyed by thugs like you – no thanks!' The bayonets were withdrawn and poised for the last yelling thrust when I saw a flush on the face of my executioner who raised a hand and cried, 'Stop! He will suffer a lot more than this before he dies...'*

*Back to the cells, manacles, and wall contemplation... A conundrum – 'If I had [a suicide] pill would I take it now?...*

*My interrogator astounded me by resuming [questions], inviting me to sit. He said, 'Colonel, you must understand that though you have not talked others have*

*and we know that you are guilty.' Me: 'If they have talked, they are liars. Why don't you give me a fair trial to throw the lies in their faces!'*

*After a while, he looked at me in a sort of puzzlement and said: 'Is it that you really have not done these things or that you will not talk?' I laughed and said, 'Have I not spent all this time telling you that I know nothing?' Then to my utter astonishment; 'Colonel, if I were to release you this time, would you have hard feelings against the Japanese, hard feelings against me? We kempis [secret police] do but do our duty.'*

*I said cautiously, 'From all I have heard of you kempis, I feel that I have been well treated'... My manacles were removed and I was given beer and cigarettes...*

*At the fag end of the war, I faced [this officer] in one of General Slim's 'identification' parades. There, without tunic or belt, holding up his trousers with one hand, face strangely gray and drawn. Our eyes locked again and I said, 'Interesting specimen that; but I have not seen him before.'*

Entry 18 May 1943 in E.E.Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1990, pages 264–265

## Source 5

Part of an appeal to camp members at Chungkai was: 'The following articles are urgently needed: Tins and containers of all sorts, solder, flux, nails, wire, screws, sponge-rubber, scraps of clothing, hose-tops and old socks, string, webbing, scraps of leather, rubber tubing, glass bottles of all sorts, glass tubing (transfusion purposes), canvas, elastic, rubber bands or strips, braces, wax, mah-jongg pieces, and tools of all sorts. Nothing is too old, nothing is too small.'

Ray Parkin, fellow POW, in Ray Parkin, *Into The Smother*, Pacific Books, Sydney, 1963, page 51



## Source 6

[After one particularly severe bashing] They left him there for the rest of the day. Breathing was difficult because of his fractured ribs. The pain in his legs was intense, made intolerable by the rough ground and the weight and pressure of [a large log behind his legs]; but then numbness set in as circulation in his legs failed. 'How long to gangrene in the tropical heat?'

He squared his shoulders, pulling himself together in a characteristic way that, throughout his life, proclaimed a conscious stiffening of his will to all who saw it.

The sun was low in the western sky when the interpreter delivered his final summation, finishing with: 'If we were so forgiving as to release you, would you have hard feelings against the guard?' Weary considered this warily. His gift for sensing the appropriate response for the circumstances returned to him. 'Hard feelings against what guard?'

'My legs were released. With a desperate heave, I disengaged from the log... [and said] And now, if you will excuse me, I shall amputate the Dutchman's arm who has been waiting all day...'

I was determined to show them that Australians were tough.'

Sue Ebury, *Weary: the life of Sir Edward Dunlop*, Viking, Melbourne, 1994, page 496

## Source 7

The men would do anything for him and are proud to be with him. I am sure it is his presence which holds this body of men from moral decay in bitter circumstances which they can only meet with emotion rather than reason. He is a big man – some six feet four inches of him – and a most skilful surgeon: a simple, profoundly altruistic man, with a gentle, disarming smile... When we move, Weary always tries to carry all his surgical gear and books. He has to be bullied to part with any of them; and then, like as not, you will find him carrying something for someone else.

Ray Parkin, fellow POW, in Ray Parkin, *Into The Smother*, Pacific Books, Sydney, 1963 page 51



## Source 8

It lasted barely three months, but in those three months [when Dunlop was made officer in charge of the camp] an astonishing transformation took place in our camp. All traces of confusion, bitterness and incohesion vanished. We rounded up all the public money we could find in the possession of senior officers in the camp, established contact with Chinese merchants outside prison and bought food on the advice of the Australian medical team to supplement inadequate and unbalanced prison rations... those three months... were to become a kind of golden prison age in the totality of our prison memories... it is hardly necessary to add that Weary Dunlop and his team of doctors built up a model prison hospital in which the most advanced operations were successfully performed on men who would have died otherwise.

Fellow POW Laurens Van Der Post in the Introduction to E.E.Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, Penguin,

## Source 9

[The Japanese camp commanders] continued to compel him to release men from hospital. Every day they demanded 700; every day he fought to keep some back. Always he succeeded... but Weary was forced to endure bashings regularly from the guards, most of whom barely reached his chest. '...The most humiliating was having to kneel to be hit in the face.' He seethed inwardly, but endured it without any change of expression, standing and bowing to his squat assailants when they finished whilst vowing silently: 'One day, one day...'

Sue Ebury, *Weary: the life of Sir Edward Dunlop*, Viking, Melbourne, 1994 page 415

## Source 10

*He resolved to 'take [the] care and welfare' of former prisoners-of-war 'a life-long mission', part of a 'vow when he came back [in 1945], that he would never fail to answer any call that his country... made on him in any shape or form... [and] he would answer every call from his own community'.*

Sue Ebury, *Weary: the life of Sir Edward Dunlop*, Viking, Melbourne, 1994, page 548

## Source 11

*He did the most extraordinary things. In one instance, he plucked these pieces of wireless from a truckload of vegetables in front of the guards and rushed off at high speed screaming out 'Medical supplies'. Anybody else would have been executed on the spot. He acted so quickly. He saw the situation, saw the radio pieces and acted, in a split second. That sort of thing.*

Fellow POW Bill Wearne in Margaret Geddes, *Remembering Weary*, Viking, Melbourne, 1996, page 113

## Source 12

*'[Under Dunlop] we lived by the principle of the fit looking after the sick, the young looking after the old, the rich looking after the poor.' The wisdom of [taking a proportion from] all those who were paid so that the Camp fund could furnish food and drugs was plain and the difference between the Australian and British camps was obvious. 'Only a creek separated [them]... but on one the law of the jungle prevailed, and on the other the principles of socialism.'*

POW Tom Uren in Sue Ebury, *Weary: the life of Sir Edward Dunlop*, Viking, Melbourne, 1994, page 352

## Source 13

*In all the time I knew him, he obviously was as pleased as any of us are at praise. Fine. He was just a normal, natural person. But I saw no exhibition of him actually using it as a bravado thing. If there was any kind of bravado about it, I think he wanted to show the Japanese that he was not going to be mangled by them and destroyed by them, and that was a good thing because it was a good example to us. I won't say he was impervious to pain but I think that on the whole he had the mental capacity to stand more pain than a lot of people. He expected it and he accepted it and rode it and got through.*

Fellow POW Jack Chalker in Margaret Geddes, *Remembering Weary*, Viking, Melbourne, 1996, page 117

## Source 14

### ***Citation for Award of Mentioned in Despatches***

From 12 March 1942 to the cessation of hostilities in JAVA and THAILAND this officer was a supreme example of outstanding courage and devotion to duty under extreme conditions of contagious and infective diseases and whilst himself on occasions seriously ill.

This officer was in command of a force of 850 PWs and was later Senior Medical Officer in THAILAND and as such had the care of English, Australian, American and Dutch PWs.

His unfailing courage, organising ability and power of leadership were an inspiration to all ranks during the extremely difficult conditions of the Burmese Railway Camps.

Regardless of his own safety he constantly opposed all attempts by the Japanese to force sick men to work, and in so doing received a very large amount of severe beatings and punishments.

Although seriously ill himself, he displayed amazing skills as a surgeon and during an epidemic of cholera he worked long hours continuously with the result saving many lives.

Lack of all forms of drugs and medical equipment were handicaps which were overcome by his efforts and such were the results achieved, that this officer's name became legendary as "King of the River" in all the Railway Camps in Burma and amongst all the nationalities represented there.

Citation of Major (T/Lt-Col) Ernest Edward Dunlop, 1947 (National Archives of Australia MP742/1, D/5/2044)



**Q1** Using the information in Sources 1-14, decide what qualities Dunlop showed, and what weaknesses or 'flaws' are revealed.

Notes:

**Q2** What impacts did Weary Dunlop have?

Notes:

**Q4** Fill in the third column in the table on page 3 of Investigation 2.

**Q3** What was his importance or significance to others?

Notes:

**Q5** Imagine that you were in this situation – what do you think would be the worst aspects? In your answer you might consider aspects such as these: food, health, lack of comradeship, absence of family, fear of the enemy, fear of failure, despair, need to set an example, etc.

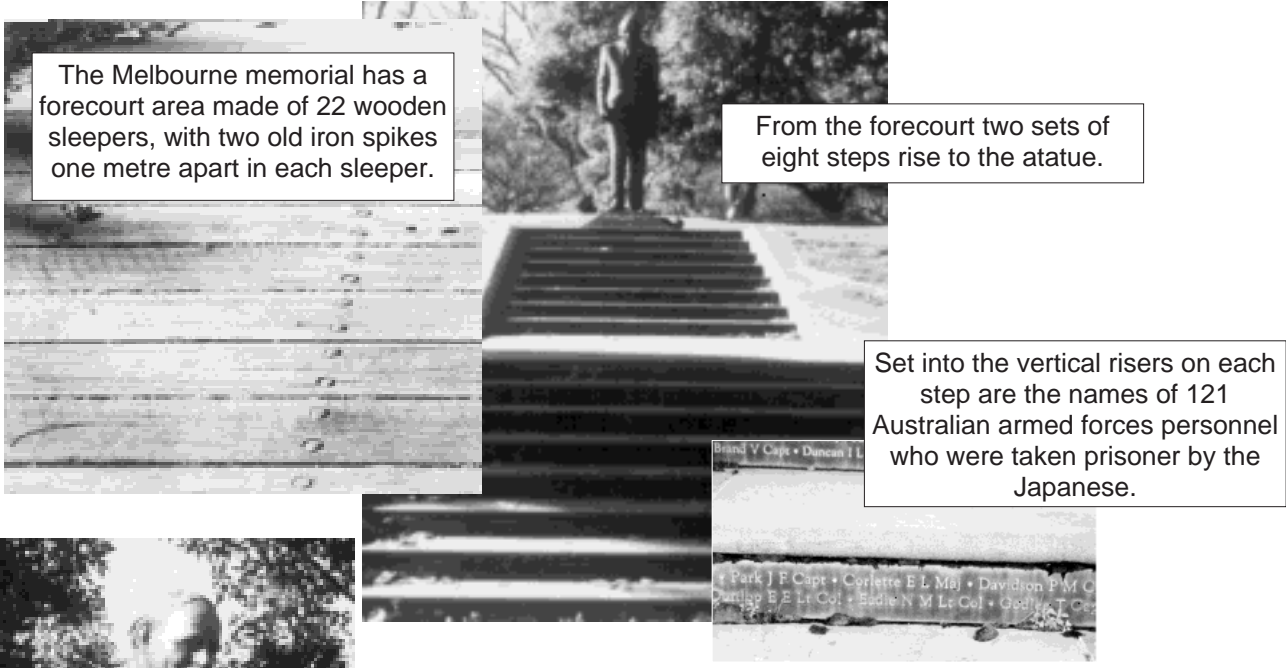
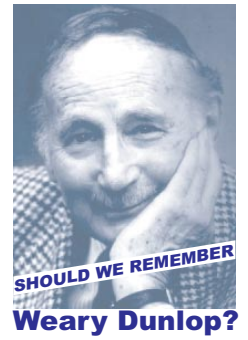
Notes:



# Investigation 4

## How and why has Weary Dunlop been commemorated?

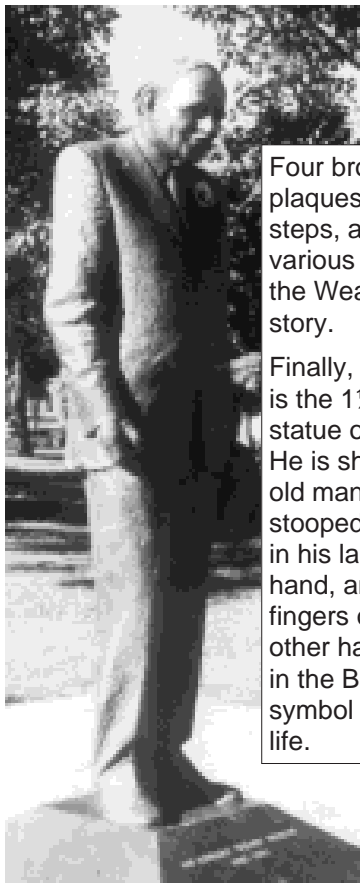
Weary Dunlop has been commemorated and memorialised in many ways – there is a statue at the Australian War Memorial, another in Benalla (Victoria), as well as a memorial in Melbourne. He was a great supporter of Australia's contacts with Asia, and there are programs, scholarships and lectures in his name, many of which are associated with Asia. There is also a Weary Dunlop Foundation, which raises funds for medical research.



The Melbourne memorial has a forecourt area made of 22 wooden sleepers, with two old iron spikes one metre apart in each sleeper.

From the forecourt two sets of eight steps rise to the statue.

Set into the vertical risers on each step are the names of 121 Australian armed forces personnel who were taken prisoner by the Japanese.



Four bronze plaques flank the steps, and tell various parts of the Weary Dunlop story. Finally, at the top, is the 1¼ size statue of Dunlop. He is shown as an old man, slightly stooped, a poppy in his lapel, hat in hand, and the fingers of the other hand joined in the Buddhist symbol of eternal life.

**Q1** Look at this description of the Dunlop memorial in Melbourne, and see if you can guess or work out the symbolism of the following features.

Feature	Symbolism (your guess)
the 22 sleepers	
the iron spikes	
the spacing of the spikes one metre apart	
the set of eight steps	
the engraving of the names on the steps	

(Answers on page 2)

**Q2** Why do you think the sculptor, in the Melbourne memorial, chose to depict Dunlop in old age (as has also been done in the Canberra statue), rather than has been done at Benalla, where he is shown as a prisoner?

Notes:



After the war Weary Dunlop resumed his medical career, retiring only shortly before his death. He spent much of his time fostering closer relations between Australia and Asian countries, and helping former prisoners of war with their medical and other problems. He expressed forgiveness for his Japanese captors. The life of Weary Dunlop might be an appropriate focus for a Remembrance Day commemorative ceremony in your class or school.

**Q3** Prepare a service that could focus on Weary Dunlop. You will find more ideas for Remembrance Day ceremonies in the Spirit of ANZAC kit (produced by Ryebuck Media and the Department of Veterans' Affairs for the Australian Army's 100th anniversary and sent to every secondary school earlier this year.) You might also consider raising a donation for the Weary Dunlop Medical Research Foundation (see [www.siredwarddunlop.com.au](http://www.siredwarddunlop.com.au)).

Notes:

### Answers to Q1

- The engraving of the names on the steps – is of the 121 doctors taken prisoner.
- The set of eight steps – representing the eight thousand who were killed or died in captivity of the Japanese)
- The spacing of the spikes one metre apart – the gauge of the track they had to build)
- The iron spikes – are relics from the original 'railroad of death'
- The 22 sleepers – represent the 22,000 men and women taken prisoner by the Japanese