

Behind Barbed Wire:

SPORT AND AUSTRALIAN PRISONERS OF WAR

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Introduction

During World War II (WWII), a total of 28,756 Australians became Prisoners of War (POWs). Between the years 1941 and 45, some 7289 Australians were captured by the Italian and German forces, and were held in camps in Italy, Poland, Austria and Germany.¹ In terms of the number of Australians captured by the Imperial Japanese Army after February 1942, statistics reveal that 21,467 Australian men were surrendered to, or captured by the Japanese and held in Singapore, Ambon, Burma, Malaysia, Java, Thailand and in Japan. Military servicemen had been prepared to fight, and — albeit reluctantly — to die, but they had rarely thought about, let alone been prepared for being taken captive. Indeed, according to research conducted by the author, most POWs admitted they were ill equipped to cope with the emotional and psychological changes that they experienced.² Former Changi POW, Tom Morris, feared what those at home must be thinking, of how he would be received by his family and friends when he returned, and whether he would be labelled as a coward rather than a returning hero.³ POWs in Europe echo these sentiments; their diaries suggesting that their concerns lay in what Australians at home might think of them now that they had no active role to play in defending their own nation or, indeed, the Empire.⁴

With this in mind, Australian POWs set themselves the tasks of setting up camps and creating societies for themselves, using the social, cultural and political values they knew to create a civility that echoed their life back in Australia. Sport became an integral factor in sustaining nationalist and patriotic values, defending Australianness; it provided POWs with activities to plan and prepare for, have discussions and place wagers on, participate in, become avid spectators of, and deconstruct in the usual post-game analysis. Australian sportsmen of every kind became prisoners of war during WWII,

whether they had been amateurs or professionals, or just backyard sportsmen. There were cricketers, former Wallabies, champion Australian Rules football players, boxers, and even champion woodchoppers.⁵

Little has been written about their experiences in academic forums, with the one major exception being the short article published by Warwick Franks in 1995. In his case study, Franks focused specifically on the German POW camp, Stalag 344, and looked closely at the sport of cricket. His account drew essentially on interviews and correspondence, and he made some tentative conclusions concerning the function and significance of sport in the experience of a small group of POWs.⁶ This study also draws on similar types of sources, namely correspondence and interviews, but it also makes use of military records and some unpublished and published memoirs. Importantly, though, this article extends the Franks case study as it has a wider geographical focus and looks at Australian experiences across a multiplicity of sports.

There were clearly extremes between the experiences of Australians held by the Germans and those held by the Japanese. Yet, within both groups, there was a determination by the POWs to use sport as a mechanism for helping to survive their time in camp. The Japanese experience, in particular, highlights the determination of Australians to play sport despite their circumstances; they had little or no access to equipment, yet they produced games, matches and competition that excited, entertained, and confirmed Australian ideals. The manipulation of sports by the Japanese, especially for propaganda or testing fitness, sharply contrasted with the German experience. Clearly neither experience was a good one in terms of war and imprisonment, but Australian POWs used sport to move beyond the immediacy of their surroundings and to link them with those traditions and pursuits they knew would give them hope, raise morale and increase their bid for survival.

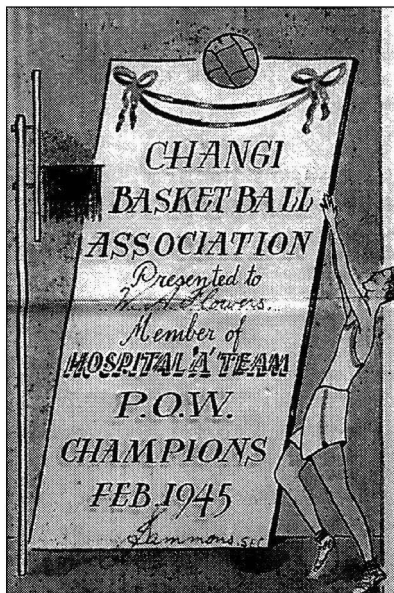
Sport, amongst other activities including education and theatre, was one of the first things organised by POWs after they were captured and placed in the various camps. Gunner Frank Christie wrote of his second day in Changi: 'no dinner, water scarce and filthy, played a game of footy ...'⁷ Gunner Roy East was held in Stalag VIIA at Moosberg in Poland. In this camp he played soccer and trained for boxing. In 1943 he was transferred to Stalag VIII B, later 344 Lamsdorf near Breslau, where Australians participated keenly in a range of sporting activities. There were 36,000 other POWs in Lamsdorf, comprised of Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, Greeks, Italians, Indians, Egyptians, Cypriots, English, Irish, Scots, Canadians and Americans. East either played in, or watched, many 'international' matches including soccer against England; he also enjoyed being a spectator of cricket against New Zealand, South Africa and England; he played rugby against Ireland,

England, Wales, South Africa and New Zealand and remembers the games against the Irish as 'pretty rough at times but nevertheless, quite enjoyable'.⁸

In Stalag 383, a small contingent of 500 Australian commissioned and non-commissioned officers shared the camp with 5,000-7,000 prisoners of other nationalities, including British, Americans, Canadians and South Africans. Australian POWs in this camp took sport seriously, documenting their sporting activities from 1942 to 1944 in a magazine entitled *One Year*, produced with the assistance of the Prisoners of War Aid of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), in Geneva. The magazine claimed to be 'a faithful record of [Australian sporting] activities and will be an excellent souvenir of the brighter moments of an otherwise drab, monotonous exile'.⁹

According to *One Year*, Australians in Stalag 383 participated in Australian Rules football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union, soccer, basketball, baseball, boxing, wrestling, hockey, softball, swimming events, volleyball, water polo, golf, and a variety of athletics events. Australians competed in Anzac Day sports carnivals, Empire Games, August Bank Holiday sports, Highland Games, and Anniversary sport days. Each sport had its own committee, and under this committee was an intricately tiered system that included coaches, trainers, and managers for each sport, not to mention groundsmen, and men who managed the Camp Sports Store. There was a team of masseurs, and men who constructed the football posts, and rolled a cricket pitch that 'haunted bowlers in their sleep'.¹⁰ Old stables were turned into training facilities and boxing arenas so that sport could be pursued even when the weather outside made the pursuit of outdoor sports impossible.¹¹ During one freezing European winter, Australians played ice hockey against the Canadians when an enterprising POW flooded the compound at Stalag Luft 3 in Sagan in Germany.¹² POWs in Colditz Castle devised a new sport — Stool Ball — and although there is no direct evidence of Australians being the instigators of the game, they were enthusiastic participants of matches played.¹³

In South East Asia, Australian and British military leaders strongly encouraged POWs to keep busy and occupy themselves in a number of physical and social activities. Edward 'Weary' Dunlop's 11 May 1942 diary entry states: 'Troops were congratulated on good morale and those concerned with games and recreations were thanked. More exercise urged. Endeavored to encourage a spirit of optimism'.¹⁴ In the camps of this region, the playing of sport was no less popular than in Europe, however the particular conditions of the Japanese experience prevented extensive sporting pursuits.¹⁵ Diary evidence from Java mentions soccer, wrestling, boxing and baseball.¹⁶ Despite the hardships suffered by POWs working on the Thai Burma Railway there is mention of athletics and softball.¹⁷ In Changi in 1942 Australian POWs played tennis, cricket, and 'some very



Certificate of participation in the Changi Basketball Grand Final, 1945.

COURTESY: BILL FLOWERS

good, some very funny' games of football. Sgt. A. Hodgson also recorded in his diary that he played in a netball game in 1943, a cricket match in August 1944 and softball at Tamarkan on 5 July 1944.¹⁸

Evidence demonstrates that Australian POWs continued to pursue sport in Changi as late as February 1945, participating in a basketball competition against American sailors from the USS Houston. A member of the team, Bill Flowers, reflected that they were determined to play despite being emaciated, ill, hungry, and having no shoes. The games were hard fought as a symbolic stance of physical and mental strength as well as national pride.¹⁹ Flowers wrote, 'I think our involvement had great psychological benefit although my feet and legs ached after a game. It was worth all the pain'.²⁰

Cricket

Cricket provided Australians with links to Empire and the traditional sporting rivalry between England and Australia. Ashes' series were common wherever Australian and British POWs shared the same camp, highlighting the British versus Australian sporting tradition. Meticulous records were kept of POW games, not only for the scoring of the particular match being played, but for traditional post match analysis, discussion, and debating of results for weeks after any match, thus providing mental stimulation as well as a way of passing time.

Cricket organisation in Europe was of a professional standard. In Stalag 383 an overriding committee was formed under formal structures

not dissimilar to those set out by the Australian Cricket Board. There were selectors, trainers, coaches, a team masseur, groundsmen, and an equipment steward. The YMCA provided bats and balls and the oil from Red Cross supplies of sardines were used to keep the bats in good order. With an almost tireless attention to administrative detail, POWs enjoyed a number of excellent series between 1943 and 1945.²¹

The Stalag 383 cricketing experience was vastly different from cricket at home. Jim Davies and Jim Welch, two POWs held in Stalag 383, created a visual record entitled 'Ersatz Ashes', which contains excellent caricature images of the Lion, the Kangaroo and the Kiwi that were used to describe the 1943 tri-series between Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand.²² The symbolism, whilst amusing, is highly indicative of the serious nature of pre-existing sporting relationships between these three nations. The images of the three nations are based around the foot of a hangman's frame with a noose suspended waiting for the unfortunate and defeated; the victor, whichever is relevant for the match, heroically stands at the base admiring his achievements. The Kangaroo (Australia) is almost always represented as victor over the Lion (Britain), and the Kiwi (New Zealand) is always diminutive and downcast. The stance of the Lion varies throughout from victor to loser, and in one instance, after yet another loss to Australia, it can be seen climbing up the hangman's frame to join the hapless Kiwi who remains throughout hanging upside down, trussed from neck to foot.²³

R. L. Hoffmann, a well-known pre-war journalist for the *Daily Telegraph* and previously the Melbourne *Herald*, wrote about the first series in 1943:

We Australians, in the cloudless years to come, will remember the 1943 cricket season in Germany as one of the most unusual and certainly one of the most agreeable souvenirs of this irksome period of detention ... In the winter we pondered the summer months ahead, cricket was only a dream; a vague exquisite hope ... As a souvenir of the games each will keep the green cap — a replica of the real Australian 'Test' Eleven cap carrying the Commonwealth Coat of Arms in gold — in which he played; a curious, but decidedly pleasant memento to take home from a war ... Players and spectators are clamouring for further 'Tests', and more are certain to be played.²⁴

In Stalag 344, Lamsdorf, cricket was also highly organised, and a triangular series was played in 1943 between Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand and in 1944, between Australia, Great Britain and South Africa. Pat Ferrero, a former Melbourne first grade cricketer, captained Australia for these matches and was supported by Allan Snedden, a cricketer from Perth, who dominated the fast bowling.²⁵ Using a matted wicket made out of Red

Cross twine on a loom constructed by convalescing POWs, the batsmen had to contend with a two-faced pitch where the ball skidded through at one end and stood up at the other.²⁶ David Radke, another Australian POW, fielded in these matches and was insistent in noting the high standard of cricket played. Crowds of some 2,500 POWs watched the matches on temporary grandstands 'while some of the Australians created an ersatz Sydney Hill' where the traditional heckling and sledging familiar in an Australian home series were brought to a new audience'.²⁷

Australian merchant seaman captured in 1941 joined Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Royal Navy (RN) personnel in organising and planning an Ashes' series in Westernmike, Germany, in 1943 and again in 1944.²⁸ Vic Marks, a young merchant seaman from Adelaide became involved with the organisation of sport in the camp after realising that something had to be done to relieve personal and general feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. Prior to the war he had been a club cricketer for the Woodville Cricket Club in South Australia, but in the POW context he enjoyed the position of being captain of the Australian side. Matches were hard fought, meticulously recorded and POWs in this camp produced an Ashes' trophy. A ship's carpenter, British merchant seaman, B. Fransham, carved an urn upon which rests a cricketer posed in traditional style. A kangaroo and lion form the supporters looking up at the cricketer and the inscription reads: The Ashes cremated Marlag & Milag Nord Germany 1943'.²⁹

In Changi, Australians also organised and participated in cricket matches. In 1942, soon after settling into the camps, British POWs challenged Australians to a cricket match.³⁰ Competition was keen and accordingly, a number of games were played over the years with the Australians fortunate to have amongst their number an actual member of the 1938 Ashes squad, Ben Barnett.³¹ Barnett was Captain of L section of 8th Division Signals and had been with the forces that surrendered in Singapore in February 1942. He later worked on the Thai-Burma Railway with F Force.³²

In the 1938 Ashes series Barnett had been selected as a member of the Australian cricket team, taking over as wicketkeeper from 'Bert' Oldfield. Barnett's pre-war cricketing exploits became a popular lecture topic with his fellow POWs. It was not unusual for him to speak before some 3,000 POWs at a time. As noted below, Barnett is well remembered by two former POWs: Guy Baker, Cpl. AIF 27th Brigade, Battalion Headquarters, Intelligence, a club player for Balmain before the war, and a British POW, Ron Wilkinson, A/Sgt. 46 Mobile W. S. Company. These lectures, in themselves, provided much needed relief from the stresses of captivity and transported men to a world that was free of the disastrous circumstances they found themselves in.

Baker has an excellent recall of the cricket he played with Barnett.³³ He noted that Barnett was the natural choice as captain for the Changi

'Australian XI' and although he did not keep wicket in the POW camp he did 'fancy himself as a slow leg break bowler'. He was also extremely useful with the bat, driving the ball straight to mid-off or mid-on and often causing the bowler to lose his line and length. Baker recalls that 'it was always good to come out after him as the batsmen could always make a few runs'.³⁴ Ronald Wilkinson confirms Baker's memories of Barnett's batting ability. Wilkinson stated that once Barnett came to the crease, 'his boys' (the British) knew they had no chance. According to Wilkinson, he was 'a fine sight to watch', and the Australians were a 'good outfit', having amazing strength and endurance.³⁵

Australian Rules Football

The playing of Australian Rules was significant regardless of location. Australian Rules football, a uniquely Australian sport, and more significantly, a Victorian state sport, identified players in terms of locality as well as class and nationality. Australian POWs from other states who identified themselves as rugby union and/or league players put aside former prejudices to the sport, reflecting that they too wanted to be part of the one game that linked them integrally to nationhood.³⁶ Evidence suggests that wherever Victorians were held as POWs, in either Europe or South East Asia, Australian Rules football was played. In the absence of suitable equipment they often had to use rugby balls to play and records indicate that 'Aussie Rules' became well known as the Australian sport in Europe and in particular one of 'the leading body and character building sports of Stalag 383'.³⁷

In Stalag 383, Australian POWs were particularly keen to get a competition going and it was up and running just one month after the first Australians had entered the camp on 15 September 1942. Corporal Ryan recorded the early beginnings of these matches in *One Year*.

When, in 1878, a Victorian, H. C. A. Harrison, formulated the rules of a new code of football to be known as Australian Rules, he doubtless nourished hopes that the game might spread beyond Australia, but I'll lay a shade of odds that Bavaria did not enter into his calculations. It did not enter into ours either, but after events unforeseen had landed us secure behind the barbed wire boundaries of Stalag 383, the possibilities of a game dawned in more minds than one. There did not appear to be much stopping us.³⁸

These first games in Stalag 383 were twelve-a-side matches, and played on a soccer pitch of 100 x 50 yards. By the following year, in March 1943, when the weather once again made football possible and numbers of Australians in the camps had swelled, a larger and more official body was set up. A committee was formed and a general meeting called to select the four sides that would form a competitive football league. They were named

'Kangaroos', 'Emus', 'Kookaburras' and 'Wallabies', and a further two teams known as 'Snakes' and 'Crows' were formed to look after the less familiar players of the game and to provide opportunities to any man in the camp 'wishing to know his capabilities'.³⁹

Australian POWs started what would become a yearly event, a game between 'Eastralia' and 'Westralia'. Jerseys were screen-printed and manufactured from old Army singlets, black swans for Westralia, and a marked V for Eastralia. Betting began on the sidelines at the ever-present totalisator, and the first game kicked off on 29 March 1943. According to *One Year*, 'All but three of the "Sandgroppers" were members of the 2/11 Bn., and of the opposition, fifteen were Victorians ... Westralia won with 10 goals 8 behinds (68 pts) to Eastralia, 8 goals and 19 behinds (67 pts).'⁴⁰ R. L. Hoffman summed up what this game and quite possibly what most sports meant to Australian POWs in Stalag 383:

The game was dedicated to 'Bluey' Truscott, whose brilliant star, with tragic splendour, flared across the sky as a symbol of sportsmanship in its best traditions. There are others like Wing-Commander Truscott, of whom we involuntary exiles have not yet heard, but we salute them all in this reproduction of the national game played in these alien surroundings. It was an Australian occasion — flashback to sunnier days of the past, a pre-view of sunnier days to come: and for the brief exciting while of a football game Australians here in Stalag 383 existed between the warm familiar parallels of latitude south of the equator.⁴¹

Australian POWs in Changi were also keen followers of Australian Rules football and despite the lack of food, and the increasing incidence of ill health, were determined to play and to follow all the rules and traditions of the game, forming a league in late 1942.⁴² They adopted the names of their favourite teams and inter-club rivalries extended to buying and selling players who could be traded for the sum of four ounces of rice. Footballs were obtained from the Chinese and POWs also made some themselves 'using old boot leather and bladders from wild pigs some of the blokes sneaked into the jungle and killed'.⁴³

Les Green, a former POW interviewed for *Football Life* in 1969, told the story of 'Football Behind Bamboo':

For the first six months we were more or less confined to barracks in Changi. Then the Japanese allowed us to play sport. By that time the football season in Melbourne was underway so we decided to run our own. Names chosen for the teams were Melbourne, Collingwood, Geelong, St. Kilda, Essendon and Richmond ... There were three matches every week - sometimes two on Saturday and one on Wednesday ... Believe me, they weren't picnic matches. It was

very serious football. And the standard wasn't bad considering the difficult conditions we had to play under. Occasionally there were fights on the field. The umpires had the power to report players and an independent tribunal heard any reports of misconduct, on or off the field, just as it would in the VFL. The Japanese guards would watch our games. They would laugh at us, and think we were silly to be bashing ourselves. For each match the umpires cast three votes for the best and fairest player award, which we called The Changi Brownlow Medal.⁴⁴

These six teams ran a hard-fought competition that culminated in an end-of-season final — Australia versus the Rest in January 1943, when a Victorian eighteen played a team representative of the rest of the Commonwealth. Les Green also mentions the thrill for Australian players and spectators alike when champion footballer, and 1933 Brownlow medallist for Fitzroy, Wilfred 'Chicken' Smallhorn, ran on to the field to umpire this memorable game. Even though Smallhorn did not actually play football, his presence certainly inspired other POWs to achieve their best by getting involved in the organisation of their games.⁴⁵

At the end of this match, captain Peter Chitty, a former St Kilda player and captain of the Changi Victorian team, was awarded the 'Changi Brownlow Medal'.⁴⁶ Back in Australia, the award of the Brownlow Medal was suspended between 1942 and 1945 so this medal has special significance for Australian sporting history as well as for the Australian Rules followers in Changi in 1943. The medal was, and remains, a symbol for Australian footballers, representing fair play and good sportsmanship. The medal and its recipient represented an ideal that went beyond sport and was played out in the wider POW experience. Chitty carried his Brownlow with him throughout his fifteen months on the Thai-Burma railway, where his leadership and bravery resulted in his also being awarded the British Empire Medal for carrying a dying mate some 50 kilometres on his back through the jungle. In an interview in 1994 before his death, Chitty stated, 'It was a great honour to lead that side ... A lot of great careers were cut short by the war. They were good sides that played that match in Changi'.⁴⁷ This final match of the season would be the last formal football game that POWs in Changi would play and indeed that some would ever play or see again, for work parties were already beginning to be taken to the Thai-Burma railway.

Boxing

Boxing had significance for the individual strength and skill of the participant. Despite the individualistic qualities of this sport, evidence suggests that Australians who did box did so as part of representing the bigger team, Australia, and fought as a team in inter-camp sporting competitions. In Stalag

VIIIB, in Moosberg near Poland, Roy East trained with an Australian team of boxers who met and competed against a team of British POWs from 344 Lamsdorf in a boxing tourney in early 1942.⁴⁸

The camp padre in Stalag VIIIB sent an article to the *Sporting Globe* in Australia that tells the story:

As the result of an almost unbelievable coincidence, Joe Bailey, ex-heavyweight wrestling champion of Australia and a pug of the old Cyclorama days, was the happiest and proudest man in Melbourne on a recent Saturday night. His son, a prisoner of war somewhere in Germany, licked the tar off a British prisoner in an inter-prison tourney and Joe heard a round-for-round description of the bout - broadcast from Germany by short wave. Through a stroke of good fortune, Joe Bailey's neighbour had been listening to his short-wave radio and heard the announcement of the tourney and rushed to tell his neighbour resulting in Bailey being able to hear his son's fight.⁴⁹

Roy East is the only remaining member of that boxing team and he recalls that he won his own weight division and received a Bavarian pipe from the Germans as a trophy. East's reflections on the importance of winning included the idea that being able to win at sports was important when your life was not exactly going the way you had planned, when your situation suggests you are quite definitely not a winner. Winning at sport, therefore, restored masculinity that was tied not only to their ideal of themselves as individuals but how they wanted to represent themselves as Australians.⁵⁰

International Sporting Competitions

One of the upsides to becoming a POW during WWII was the opportunity it afforded Australians to be able to compete in sports at the 'international' level and in sports or events that they had never played before or would play after the war. Australian POWs enjoyed this new level of competition; when they won it confirmed their view of themselves as a superior sporting nation; when they lost, they felt they had represented themselves well as good sports. Australians also took their own cultural perspective into these new sports, to the point where they betted, argued and boasted against other nations that they could beat them at any particular national game. One such occasion occurred in 344 Lamsdorf, when Australian airmen played and determined to beat the Canadians at 'their game' of softball. The Australians came out winners and 'the Canadian supporter who made the boast that 'you can s... on my chest if you beat us!' was a frightened man as he was held 'prostrate and shirtless' whilst 'the Aussie failed to perform due to the laughter and furore surrounding them!'⁵¹

Australians also had the opportunity to compete against former

Olympians and quite proudly claim a good showing against them. Former POW Jack Walker had spent his first six months in captivity just outside Athens until he and his fellow POWs were taken by German Hospital ship to Salonica, and then by train to Thorn in Poland, locked for fourteen days inside cattle trucks. Upon arriving in Thorn sport was organised and competitions began almost immediately. Walker recalls the camp being made up of French, British and Australian troops, and the competition between them was, he said, 'fair but fierce'. Whilst less formal games of football or cricket were played in spare time outside of work, this camp, like many others boasted a formal 'Olympic' competition.⁵²

The 'Olympics' were highly anticipated events and the occasion brought on a rush of patriotic fervour. 'Each team dressed in a uniform of white singlet, army trousers and handmade emblems of their country sewn on the front of their singlet and carrying a handmade banner'. Medals were presented and Jack Walker himself received a bronze medal for coming third in the mile and a quarter running race. The medal had been made from silver paper, melted down and remolded. He states that the efforts of the Australians in these 'Olympics' demonstrated a determination to excel, to win, and when they achieved a win as an individual, they were contributing to something that was significant to their survival, confirming Roy East's comments that they, as Australians, were eager to represent themselves as a team and as good sports.⁵³

That sport was as significant factor in the everyday lives of Australian POWs is undoubted. S/Sgt A Hodgson, 2/6 Field Park Company, whilst working on the Thai Burma Railway wrote in his diary: 'Three years today, and the days are dragging very heavily. There is nothing to do in this camp but work, fever and sleep.' A few entries later he mentions a cricket game and the fact that he got 11 runs.⁵⁴ Sport also added to camp entertainments and as one POW wrote of sport in Stalag 383 — 'anything that does that here is justified'.⁵⁵ Sport was fun, something to keep them busy, to bring a laugh to their otherwise almost static lives. This aspect of sport is best demonstrated in the way POWs restaged occasions such as the Melbourne Cup and Spring Racing Carnivals.

The Melbourne Cup

No camp seems to have missed celebrating this auspicious event. In Camp VIIIIC, in Spittal in Austria, small wooden horses were designed bearing jockeys wearing coloured silks. POWs created a board game outline on the grass, which was marked out in one-yard intervals. The horse's number was painted on a post with a spinning disc underneath with the numbers one through six. The disc was spun and chance chose the winner. The tradition of wagering on anything that moved was a highlight of the occasion; the

totalisator table was busy taking cigarettes and the German Marks. In this particular camp, POWs used the day as a carnival occasion also having fortune telling, hoopla, and other attractions that resulted in this camp of Australian POWs raising money for the International Red Cross. Even the more attractive events of the Spring Racing carnivals were kept up, including Ladies Day and 'beautiful women' wearing stylish hats and garb were paraded amongst the assembled crowds.⁵⁶

In South East Asia, Rowan Rivett describes the POW Melbourne Cup day he experienced in February 1943 as 'the best day of all'. The POWs were in the jungles of Burma and yet managed to produce all the atmosphere of the day. First they had to make horses, which had 'four projecting legs which prevented the rider from running at more than a fast amble. Bits of native sarongs and odd scraps of material from women's dresses and scarves went to make up jockey's blouses and caps'. Betting was the order of the day and:

hard-working clerks at bamboo tables behind the windows dealt with queues of men anxious to wager their cents on their pals who were running the race. Bookies' stands with amazing improvised umbrellas, and records sometimes kept on pieces of bamboo gave us the atmosphere of the ring. There were 'girls' gorgeously dressed from our scanty stock of stage properties — and some of the minxes walked with a roll of the hips that was positively breathtaking.⁵⁷

Working on the Thai Burma railway, Tom Morris remembers a Melbourne Cup Day where stronger POWs were the horses that carried their weaker mates as jockeys.⁵⁸ These days brought a good deal of laughter, lifted men out of their immediate location and provided a much needed lift to their morale.

Sport, Survival and National Identity

Kenneth Gaulton, WO 1, 50 Squadron (RAF), became a POW with 36 other 'RAAF boys' and was held in Stalag 357 at Thorn in Poland. He relates how one Australian POW in the camp was displaying signs of depression: he would not participate in sports and other activities they had organised and later tried to commit suicide. Gaulton claims that this man had to be 'dealt' with; that it was important to the survival of the other Australian POWs in the camp to remain united in their 'tough' stance, and that none of them should reveal weakness of any sort. If one failed then they might all fail, an untenable position for the majority.⁵⁹

Gaulton believes that sport was integral to his survival and that of the other 35 Australian 'RAAF boys' imprisoned in Stalag 357. Although these men made up only 1.6 percent of the POW population of 2,200 in this camp, Gaulton claims that they were the men who organised the camp sports, played them better than everyone else, and achieved the best results.

Gaulton attributes this sporting prowess to their being Australian. He explained that being 'Australian' meant you were tough, resilient and a bit of a larrikin, always looking for mischief. It also meant that as Australians, he and his fellow POWs represented the best of manhood in every way: in courage, strength, morality and citizenship. Australians supported each other, protected each other, played against each other, and even punished each other; it was their psychological health that was at stake, and sports were a mental discipline they could use to help strengthen them in their overall bid for survival.⁶⁰

It would suggest that Australian POWs who played sport in POW camps made links between their experience and their existing understanding of themselves as Australian men. It also suggests then that POWs used sport as a way of confirming national identity and a pride as sportsmen if not much more. Hank Nelson's study of Australian POWs held by the Japanese supports this, stating that Australian prisoners gained a heightened sense of their own nationality ... they believed that they had demonstrated a capacity for survival in extreme conditions and that some of their strength derived from their very Australianness'.⁶¹ Sport was the link that gave them the opportunity to embrace their culture.

Sporting experiences for Australian POWs depended on whether they were held captive by the German or Japanese authorities (the Australians held POW by the Italians is discussed within the German experience). The circumstances of their capture accounted for the extent to which the different nations adhered to the principles of the Geneva Conventions of 1864 and 1929 and the extent to which POWs were allowed access to the support of the YMCA and the Red Cross. If sport was to be a significant factor in their survival — and it was — then they had to be able to play, to have access to the equipment they needed. This would appear to mean that at the very least, they had to have the tacit agreement, if not the unqualified support and encouragement of their captors to do so.

The Germans not only tolerated POWs playing sport, they encouraged it, and were among the spectators who watched the competitions between Australians and other nations. The Germans, generally speaking, allowed POWs full access to the services of the YMCA and Red Cross who not only monitored the health and wellbeing of the POWs, but also provided most of the sporting equipment and the food they needed to provide adequate energy resources to pursue sport. Some German camps had sporting fields already allocated and others had provided sufficient space so that POWs could employ themselves in constructing cricket pitches and football fields.

Australians were fortunate in that Germany, to a large extent, kept to the terms of the Geneva Convention, reflected in the survival rates of the Allied POWs held by them during WW II.⁶² A total of 242 Australians died

in European camps, some as a result of natural causes, others from injuries sustained from war wounds, or illness in the camp. Only a few Australian POWs were killed as a direct result of their being POWs in Germany except in relation to escapes. Four Australians were presumed shot after the Great Escape, from Stalag Luft III in March 1944.⁶³ In Italy, however, one Australian POW was killed in direct relation to sport.

On 20 May 1943, in Camp PG 57 at Grupignano in Italy, Australian, 'Socks' Symons, was killed by an Italian guard after a disagreement whilst preparing a cricket pitch for a game between the POW 'A' team and his own, the 'E' team. The guard apparently thought 'Socks' was defying his order to move away, and 'Socks' was distressed that the guard did not realise the seriousness for which he was preparing for a game, or indeed how serious that game was to him and his team. 'Socks' died later that day from the wounds received.⁶⁴

For the POWs themselves, sport in the German context had other implications. It was also a necessity for maintaining fitness for escape opportunities. The Germans had some respect for Allied escape attempts and there is even evidence to suggest that they condoned them; however this attitude changed over time as the increasing realisation came over Germany that they were losing the war, and escape attempts became more frequent and were taking up far more manpower than German forces could provide. This led to signs being erected by the Wehrmacht in POW camps all over Europe: 'Escaping is no longer a sport'.⁶⁵

Most POWs saw escape itself as a sport. In simple terms, escape was a sport to be played between the POWs and the Germans and contention amounted to who would 'score': the POW in achieving his objective, or Germans, in blocking the escape. Escaping was, first and foremost, a duty and some POWs were successful returning to England and rejoining the war effort. Most camps had Escape Committees, and every POW who wished to escape had to inform the committee and give them details of their plans. There is a clear correlation here between the escape committees and sporting committees. The hierarchy decided appropriate courses of action and then 'the team' prepared for the escape. Other 'teams' supported the escapees by diverting attention away from tunnelling activities (usually through sport) and others in preparing the necessary administration details. The escape committee made the rules for the escape and all changes in the rules had to be passed by them.⁶⁶

In Oflag VIIB at Warburg in Germany, three Australians, Lt Johnny Rawson, 2/6th Battalion Mortar Platoon, Lt Mark Howard, and Lt Jack Champ, amongst others planned one of their many escapes. It was to be a major 'Wire' job, using ladders — that spent most of their time as innocent looking music racks — to get over the fence. Major Tom Stallard, head of

the escape committee called the men together weeks before the escape to impress upon them the need to get fit:

I want you to run at least a thousand yards a day, walk at least three thousand, and play as much sport as you can without risking injury to yourself. You must realise that once you go over the wire you will have to run flat out for at least a thousand yards, and you won't be in shorts and shirts - you'll be fully dressed and carrying a ten-pound pack.⁶⁷

Four teams of men were set to escape and two succeeded, twenty men in all, although most were picked up in the ensuing days and weeks.

Australian POWs held by the Germans were benefited by the assistance provided by the International Red Cross. As a result, apart from the first six months and the last few months of the five years of internment, most POWs received one Red Cross parcel per week, although these figures varied from camp to camp. These parcels were not only essential in providing POWs with enough calories to be able to pursue exercise, but were even more important in terms of bartering with German guards for other goods. In Camp VIIIIC in Spittal in Austria, Australian POWs bartered their tea and chocolate for photographs of their sporting and gala days, and the Australian War Memorial also holds some photographs of Rugby being played by POWs in Marburg Au Drau in Yugoslavia that were taken with a camera borrowed from a bribed German guard.⁶⁸

The YMCA and International Red Cross provided cricket bats, balls, pads and stumps; rugby and Australian Rules footballs; soccer balls, boxing rings, gloves and punching bags, baseball bats, gloves and mitts and many more items.⁶⁹ The YMCA and Red Cross also made official visits to POW camps to watch special sporting events. On Anzac Day 1943 and 1944 in Stalag 383, trophies and shields were presented by the YMCA for the sporting successes they had there.

By way of contrast, in South East Asia, Australian POWs died in thousands due to the forced working conditions incurred by the Japanese. The attitude of the Japanese was in direct correlation to their political and cultural views of being taken 'prisoner', to surrender, and as such they also refused Australian POWs access to Red Cross food parcels and medicines. Consequently the food supplied to POWs was hardly enough to sustain sleep and existence, and after being measured by doctors in the camps in terms of calorie count and energy value to POWs it was shown to leave little or no energy for sport.

Despite the lack of sustenance sport was still pursued by Australian POWs although doctors increasingly advised against playing it in any form, and there are incidences of sport being formally prohibited.⁷⁰ The lack of food and essential vitamins for promoting healing, and the risk of damage

to spleens or broken bones that could result from boxing for recreation or for entertainment of other troops was seen as a luxury these men just could not afford. For those who had been keen sportsmen before the war and saw themselves as fitter than most, these were frustrating times for they too soon became too ill and emaciated to take part in sport. Being a sportsman did not guarantee survival — at least not in the Japanese experience. As Rowley Richards wrote, the expectations of 'Aussie surfers and footballers' as being the ones who would survive best, was not sustained.⁷¹

The effects of sickness and starvation also threatened sporting occupations after the war. Tom Uren was just 21 years of age when he became a POW and before joining up he had been a promising boxer. He appeared in a number of boxing exhibitions as a member of his 2/1 Heavy Battery Unit and as a POW he fought in a boxing exhibition in Tanjung Priok in 1942. After winning this bout (not quite in Marquis of Queensbury style) he did not fight again as a POW. Tom Uren attempted to return to his professional boxing career after the war but after a few successful bouts in England, had to retire due to continually failing health. Being a POW, and sportsmen, did not always go well together.⁷²

It appears the Japanese had varying attitudes to the Australian POWs in regards to sport, depending on who the Japanese camp commander was. Dunlop's diaries indicate that there was more interest in his camp than there were in others. Dunlop was captured at the fall of Java on 8 March 1942 and is best remembered for his tireless efforts as a leader and physician to his men as they worked for the Japanese on the Thai-Burma railway. His diaries refer to a number of occasions where he encouraged POWs to play sport and lists a few of the sports played, namely tennis, football, soccer, wrestling and boxing.

Dunlop's fame as a former 'Wallaby' was of great interest to the Japanese.⁷³ On 13 July 1942, his diary records that he was invited to meet with the 'kebetai crowd' — the Japanese officers in the camp — to discuss the virtues of Australian racehorses and to discuss his past rugby experiences. Dunlop's notes indicate that he did not seem to think much of this, stating 'I am firmly established as our rigger representative at the kebetai, damn it'.⁷⁴ Dunlop's reticence to be known for his football prowess was genuine. He was more concerned with the health and safety of POWs and it would appear that his sporting status meant nothing to him unless it could have benefit for his men. His repeated appearances at kebetai meetings with reference to 'rigger' would indicate that he was hoping that his knowledge and capacity to converse with the Japanese about rugby would aid his men in some way. Perhaps he hoped that he could create relationships with the Japanese that would allow medical supplies or even Red Cross parcels into the camp, bringing life saving drugs or vitamins that would aid the survival of all the men he cared for. Tom Uren

calls him 'one of nature's gentlemen.'⁷⁵

It would seem that the Japanese had a sophisticated understanding of the sporting interests of Australians beyond rugby and used sport for propaganda purposes. At one kebetai meeting, Dunlop was asked to provide a list of names of prominent Australian sportsmen to the Japanese. Concerned about the propaganda context of such information, Dunlop, in consultation with other British officers, decided to give the Japanese just two names, his own and that of Lt Jack Rymill, a former Australian Sheffield Shield cricketer from South Australia.⁷⁶ That Dunlop gave only these two names when there were a number of other sportsmen in the camp is unexplained. Perhaps as Rymill was an older officer, and by offering his own name, Dunlop thought he might be protecting younger 'fitter' men from been sent on working parties when they were not ideally fit to do so.

Rivett mentions the making of a film for propaganda purposes in *Behind Bamboo*, stating his own (sarcastic) interpretation for the reason: for the Japanese to 'illustrate their humanitarianism and generosity to their captives'.⁷⁷ A copy of one of these films, entitled *Calling Australia*, is held in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and an additional copy, with interviews and commentary by the POWs involved in its making, is held at Screensound Australia.⁷⁸ One of the POWs used in the film, Don Thomas, Radar Officer with the Nos. 1 & 8 squadrons, related his memories of the experience.⁷⁹ He stated that the men involved in its making had major concerns that the government, or indeed their families, might see the film and believe that they, the POWs, were having nothing less than a summer holiday, clearly the intention the Japanese were attempting to convey.

Calling Australia was made in Batavia (Java) and shows Australian POWs resting, listening to war news, receiving medical treatment, and swimming in picturesque surroundings. The film also shows POWs playing sport — tennis and cricket and these scenes begin with the jaunty notes of 'Waltzing Matilda' in the background. The tennis scene is almost comical in its construction, and George Thomas, a participant, explained (as does the POW commentary), that the POWs were counted to by the Japanese — one ... two ... one ... two ... and as such the POWs are shown looking from end to end with the 'ponging' sound of a tennis ball in the background. POWs had been ordered to look 'jolly' and engrossed in an enjoyable tennis match and yet in reality the situation was quite the opposite. The Australians, shown smiling and jovial, had armed guards just out of the camera range with bayonets fixed upon them.⁸⁰

The POWs carefully constructed the cricket scene in *Calling Australia*. They knew the film was to be used for propaganda purposes so they played on the lack of knowledge of the game by the Japanese to show it as a sham. Officers batted and bowled in full dress uniform (uniforms and new clothes

were supplied to the POWs for the making of the film and then taken away again immediately after). There is only one stump at one end and three at the other. One player wears a leg pad on one leg and an arm pad on the other. The umpire stands side on to the pitch and calls 'out' when the batsman is clearly in, and 'safe' when he was 'out' despite 'excited' shouts of 'Howzat'. The farce created by POWs shows how determined they were to show up the ludicrous nature of the exercise hoping that when the film was seen in Australia it would alert the authorities to its falseness.⁸¹

When the Japanese did permit sport in POW camps, and this was a rare occurrence, they usually did so to show superiority or to assert some control over the POWs' psychological health. For example, the Japanese would allow sport one day and take the privilege away the next. In one sense this is easily explained by the fact that they wanted any energy from the small amount of food POWs were given to be expended on work rather than sport. On the other hand, the Japanese banned sport for churlish reasons, including the fear of their [the Japanese] 'losing face' and the consequences this might have for the POWs.

In Pudu Gaol, in Sumatra, several Australians took part in a baseball competition against British and American POWs, resulting in the Australians coming out as champions. The Japanese found this extraordinary, considering baseball was the American game. Consequently, the Japanese challenged the Australians to a game. Ex-POW Charles Edwards recalls that the Australians allowed the Japanese to win the first innings, firstly to see how good they were and secondly, mindful of the Japanese fear of losing face. The Australians won the second and third games easily. 'The guards having "lost face" started to make conditions already harsh even harsher', that is, the Japanese guards physically assaulted the Australian players and thereafter baseball games and other sports were abandoned.⁸²

There is also direct evidence of the Japanese using sport as a way of testing the fitness of POWs for working parties on the Thai Burma Railway. On New Years Day 1944, Australian, British and American troops who had returned from working parties were given a rest day. Most of these POWs were already ill, and were to be sent out almost immediately to another camp, and Australian military leaders objected to this. The Japanese authorities, aware of the Australian love of sports, put on a sports day.⁸³ The winners would all get huge baskets of fruit and although the British and Americans did not seem too interested, the Australians rose to the challenge and participated in footraces, boxing competitions, and wrestling. As a result, winners did get the baskets of fruit which they were able to share with their sick mates, but in return, the Japanese felt that they had proved their point and many of these men were sent back out on working parties the next day.⁸⁴

Conclusions

In 1993, Hank Nelson wrote that although much had been written about ex-prisoners of war, it had been concerned with describing an overwhelming experience of a life and the impact of that experience on a life. He went on to state that there had in fact, been little research done on how these experiences have influenced Australians' images of themselves in terms of the history of the nation.⁸⁵ This article argues that sport was a significant part of camp culture and that Australian POWs, whether in Europe or South East Asia pursued sport not just as individuals, but also as a nation; that the POW sporting experience itself drew on the history of the nation. In addition, the sporting experiences of POWs have been largely ignored in the annals of Australian sporting history and further studies may lead to an understanding of the increase in the sports played in Australia in the postwar period and whether there is any direct correlation between this and the sports POWs experienced in Europe or South East Asia.

What this article has shown is that sport was a significant factor in the survival of Australian POWs. It confirmed who they were and where they had come from. It perpetuated existing beliefs within Australian society that confirmed sport and physical activity as contributing to healthy life and healthy citizenship. To play sport meant that they confirmed their very Australianness and POWs not only drew on Australian sporting history and culture to play the sports they loved best but added to their sporting accomplishments with new sports. They also linked their Australianness with existing notions of national identity, citing the ideals embedded in both the Anzac and Bush legends. Moreover, many POWs continued to play sport when they came home and most considered it a matter of pride that they overcame their experience, that they stayed as fit as they could throughout, and that they kept up their sports and were able to discuss these pursuits with their families when they returned.

In any discussion as to why POWs played sport, there has always lurked an overriding need to impress the shadow of the privations of that experience. In the German camps, the experience had brighter moments, and greater possibilities for both physical and psychological survival (even though some of these men were held for nearly five years, in itself a privation), were quite often the motivator for their concerted efforts in creating organising, playing and enjoying their many sporting pursuits. In the Japanese camps, however, death seemed to be a more constant daily reminder during the three and a half years that their life was not normal and many POWs appear to still suffer pangs of guilt and sadness in remembering the death of their mates. The fact that men played sport as POWs was of itself a remarkable badge of courage, and the sporting exploits, however few, clearly stand out as the brighter moments of that experience for the men involved in them.

NOTES

- 1 Michael McKernan, 'War', in Wray Vamplew (ed.) *Australian Historical Statistics*, Broadway, Sydney, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1987 pp. 416-417.
- 2 See, for example, Ron Pattemore, Pte, 2/2nd Aust Inf. Bn. 2002 Memoirs, 'Kreigie'.
- 3 Tom Morris, Interview conducted 15 January 2002.
- 4 PR85/353 Papers of Fordyce, HSW (Flight Lieutenant) 'A Wartime Log' and PR0040, Papers of Sig. G. T. Carrol, 'Log Book', photocopy, Sagan, Germany, contains a poem stating that 'Despair mocked the day', p. 57.
- 5 Neville Anning, Interview conducted 12 February 2002.
- 6 Warwick Franks, 'Sport in Prisoner-of-War Camps, in the Army and on the Home Front — Cricket in Stalag 344: Sport in German Prisoner-of-War Camps During World War II', *Sporting Traditions*, vol. 11, no. 2, May 1995, pp. 81-90.
- 7 Cited in Hank Nelson, *POWs: Australians Under Nippon*, ABC, Crows Nest, 2001, p. 24.
- 8 Roy East, Letter, 8 February 2002.
- 9 3DRL 1835 YMCA Papers, Letter, 6 July 1944. WO Baxter to Mr W. F. Woodcroft, National Secretary of the YMCA in Australia.
- 10 *One Year*, undated, p. 39.
- 11 *One Year* p. 39. The 'perfect' cricket pitch was actually a nightmare for batsmen. A large green field of lush clover looked good at first but was actually a sloping surface, honeycombed with ruts and intersecting furrows which bode ill for the fieldsmen. *One Year* records: The only men who were able to look at its venomously corrugated face without wincing were, presumably, wicket keepers and those brave, bold men you see fielding in the so aptly named "silly" positions', pp. 39-41.
- 12 Franks, 'Sport in Prisoner-of-War Camps', p. 82, supported by Bruce Bockstanz, an American POW who provided a video tape of an ESPN program on Americans and sport in POW camps produced in 2001.
- 13 P. R. Reid, *The Colditz Story*, University of London Press, London, 1957. Stool ball consisted of two sides, consisting of any number of players, often as many as 30 aside, who fought for possession of the ball by any means. A 'gaolie' at each end of the guard sat on a stool and a goal was scored by touching the opponent's stool with the ball. Goal defence was by any means necessary, including 'strangulation' of the ball-holder. There was no referee and no touchlines, — in short, a free or all. Supplied by Antony Anderson, son of William Anderson, British POW held in Colditz. Email, 1 January 2002.
- 14 E. E. Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop: Java and the Burma-Thailand Railway 1942-1945*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1986, p. 23.
- 15 Nelson, *POWs: Australians Under Nippon*.

- 16 Dunlop, *The War Diaries*, p. 61, Charles Edwards, Telephone conversation and letter, 5 March 2002.
- 17 Rohan Rivett makes a number of references to sporting occasions and the impact of them on POWs in his account of his time as a POW of the Japanese in Rowan Rivett, *Behind Bamboo*, Ringwood, Penguin Press, 1991, pp. 225,328.
- 18 PR 91/141 Papers of Alec Hodgson, (Sergeant), AWM File 91/0195, 1 of 2.
- 19 Bill Flowers, Letter, 1 March 2002, and 'Aussies Cock-a-Hoop Over Changi Basketball Win', *Vetaffairs*, June 1995, pp. 2-3.
- 20 Flowers, in 'Aussies Cock-a-Hoop Over Changi Basketball Win', pp. 2-3.
- 21 *One Year*, pp. 39-41.
- 22 Ersatz Ashes in Papers of Jim Davies, (Jim Davies and Jim Welch), Stalag 383 Hohenfels Germany 1939-1945. 3 DRL/3566 AWM File 419/17/9. See also Franks, 'Sport in Prisoner-of-War Camps', p. 83.
- 23 Ersatz Ashes in Papers of Jim Davies.
- 24 *One Year*.
- 25 J. E. Holliday and D. A Radke, *Stories of the RAAF POWs of Lamsdorf including chronicles of their 500 mile trek*, Holland Park, Lamsdorf RAAF POWS Association, 1992.
- 26 Franks, 'Sport in Prison-of-War Camps', p. 85.
- 27 Franks, 'Sport in Prison-of-War Camps', p. 87.
- 28 Vic Marks, *Autobiography and Prisoner of War Experience by Vic Marks*, privately published memoirs, 2001, telephone conversation and letter, 4 February 2002. In 1945, after returning to Australia, Marks rejoined the Woodville Cricket Club on the 'B' grade team and was promoted to the 'A' grade team in 1946. During this period his team played Don Bradman's club team. Bradman had heard about the trophy and asked to see it. Marks retains the trophy, along with a photo of himself showing it to the 'Don'.
- 29 Marks, *Autobiography*, p. 51, telephone conversation and letter, 4 February 2002.
- 30 Ron Wilkinson, A/Sergt. 46 Mobile W. S. Company, Interview and memoirs, 22 January 2002.
- 31 AWM 54/10/10 series has Barnett's post war statement. In this he mentions returning from work parties to find his trunk had been gone through and everything stolen. All that remained were his cricket boots.
- 32 AWM 54/10/10 Statement of Captain B Barnett to the War Crimes Tribunal.
- 33 Guy Baker, Corporal, AIF 27th Brigade, Battalion Headquarters, Intelligence, Telephone Conversation, 13 February 2002 (or while he was in Changi, Private Baker was demoted several times for leaving the camp without permission to find food for sick comrades).
- 34 Baker, 13 February 2002.
- 35 Ron Wilkinson, A/Sergt, 46 Mobile W. S Company, Interview conducted 22 January 2002.
- 36 *One Year*, pp. 27-28.

- 37 *One Year*, pp. 27-28.
- 38 *One Year*, pp. 27-28.
- 39 *One Year*, pp. 27-28.
- 40 *One Year*, pp. 27-28.
- 41 3DRL 1835, YMCA Papers WWII, Letter from WO Frank Baxter, YMCA representative, Stalag 383 to Mr W. F. Woodcraft, National Secretary of the YMCAs of Australia.
- 42 'Football Behind Bamboo', *Football Life*, September 1969, pp. 1-5.
- 43 'Football Behind Bamboo', pp. 1-5.
- 44 'Football Behind Bamboo', pp. 1-5.
- 45 'Football Behind Bamboo', pp. 1-5. Smallhorn's health deteriorated further during his stay in Changi and at the repatriation of the POWs in 1945 he weighed just three and a half stone.
- 46 The Brownlow medal was and remains an award for the best and fairest player in the Victorian Football League, now Australian Football League competition, and awarded at the end of each season. See, <http://afl.com.au/default.asp?pg=brownlow&spg=display&articleid=18158>.
- 47 Captain Chitty's medal had originally been a soccer medal provided by the Q-store in the British section of the camp. But for Chitty, this medal became a lucky charm. Chitty took his Brownlow medal to the jewellers when he came home to have the soccer ball taken off the top and it remained a treasured memento until his death in 1995. See Mrs Lillian Chitty, Letter, 12 February 2002. Also, various newspaper articles untitled and undated, also, records of the Australian Rules Football Association Historical Branch.
- 48 Roy East, Letter, 8 February 2002.
- 49 *Sporting Globe*, February 1942.
- 50 Roy East, Telephone Conversation, 24 February 2002.
- 51 J. E. Holliday and D. A. Radke, *Stories of the RAAF POWS of Lamsdorf Including Chronicles of their 500 mile Trek*, Lamsdorf RAAF POWS Association, Holland Park, 1992.
- 52 Jack Walker, Emails, 5 February 2002, 20 February 2002, 2 March 2002, 20 April 2002, 26 May 2002.
- 53 Walker, Emails.
- 54 PR91/141 Papers of A. Hodgson, 1 of 2.
- 55 *One Year*, p. 37.
- 56 Alf Stone, Interview conducted 1 April 2002, letters and photographs.14 and 16 February 2002, 1 March 2002.
- 57 Rivett, p. 196.
- 58 Tom Morris, Interview conducted 15 January 2002.
- 59 Kenneth Gaulton, WO 1 RAF 50 Sqdrn. (RAAF), Letter, 3 April 2002. Telephone conversation, 10 April 2002. The 36 Australians in Stalag 357 at Fallingbostal near Hanover put together a rugby union team and beat England. They also played basketball, boxed, and ran, against Britain, New Zealand and against the Americans.

- 60 Gaulton.
- 61 Nelson, *POWs: Australians Under Nippon*, p. 6.
- 62 Unfortunately the Germans did not hold to these terms in their treatment of the Russian POWs who died suffered at the hands of the Germans. Roy East remembers throwing bread over the fence to the Russians and although not hurt himself, saw Russian's who caught the bread shot before they had even caught it. Roy East, Telephone conversation, 24 February.
- 63 Hank Nelson, *Chased by the Sun: Courageous Australians in Bomber Command in World War II*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2002 p. 239.
- 64 H. V. Clarke and Colin Burgess, *Barbed Wire and Bamboo: Australian POWs in Europe, North Africa, Singapore, Thailand and Japan*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1992, p. 59.
- 65 Jack Champ and Colin Burgess, *Diggers of Colditz*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985, p. 202.
- 66 Famous escapes such as The Wooden Horse in Stalag Luft III used sport as a direct means of organising the actual tunnelling activities. In another camp, a Frenchman practiced his pole-vaulting every day until one day he pole-vaulted over the fence. In another camp a POW sharpened his ice-skates methodically using the excuse of sport and physical activity to support his actions and one day used them to cut through the fence and escaped. These and other escape stories can be found in Reid's *The Colditz Story* and were related to the author by Antony Anderson, Email, 1 January 2002.
- 67 Champ and Burgess, *Diggers of Colditz*, pp. 45-46.
- 68 <http://awm-public/database/photo.asp>, negative number P00110.034.
- 69 3 DRL 1835, YMCA Papers, WWII. This file contains lists of supplies and order forms for equipment along with a substantial amount of correspondence thanking the YMCA for its support of Australian POWs by the POWs themselves. In addition they also asked for records, sheet music, books, both fiction and non fiction, musical instruments, chess sets, cards and other games, cribbage, draughts and so on.
- 70 PR 85/145, Papers of Captain Alan Rogers, 3 Advanced Depot Medical Stores AIF, Papers of Lt Col Leon Stahle, 8th Division Signals AIF, 3DRL 7665, Diary of Major Kennedy Burnside, Mobile Bacteriological Laboratory AIF, and PR 89/77, Diary of Lt Lindsay Orr, 8th Division AASC, AIF. All either detail the incidences of sport having to be curtailed due to illness and have records of sport played by Australian POWs on the Thai-Burma Railway as well as in Changi.
- 71 Rowley Richards, cited in Nelson, *POWs: Australians Under Nippon*, p. 55.
- 72 Tom Uren, *Straight Left*, Random House, Sydney, 1995. Chapters three, four and five, pp. 23-74, deals with this period in Uren's life as a POW and his attempt to return to a career as a professional boxer.
- 73 Dunlop was not the only former Wallaby held as a POW in South East Asia. Several others were held in Changi or found their way there during the period 1942-45. Clarence John Pearson, Pte. 2/18th Bn., better

known as 'Ginty' to his friends, was a keen rugby player and relates that he was picked for a final 30 to play in an 'International' between Australia and Great Britain at Changi in 1942. However, the fact that there were other Wallabies in the camp meant he once again missed out on the team. More than 60 years later, Pearson still smarts at the rejection: here he was, 'trapped in this bloody place' and he *still* couldn't get on an International team to play for Australia. Telephone conversation, John 'Ginty' Pearson, 6 February 2002.

- 74 Dunlop, *The War Diaries*, p. 67
- 75 Uren, *Straight Left*, p. 37.
- 76 Dunlop, *The War Diaries*, p. 59. Lt Rymill was probably Jack Westall Rymill, born: 20 March 1901, North Adelaide, died, 11 February 1976, Adelaide. A left-hand batsman who played 22 matches for South Australia between 1921-22 and 1926-27, he did not play for Australia but played Sheffield Shield cricket. Geoff Sando and Bernard Whimpress, *Grass Roots: 100 Years of Adelaide District Cricket, 1897-1997*, South Australian Cricket Association, Adelaide, 1997, p. 128.
- 77 Rivett, *Behind Bamboo*, p. 227.
- 78 'Calling Australia' 1943, AWM F03372 and 'Calling Australia, POW Presentation: An Australian Message'. Screensound Cover Title No. 9007, 1943.
- 79 Donald George Thomas, Telephone Conversation, 22 February 2002.
- 80 'Calling Australia' 1943, AWM F03372 and 'Calling Australia, POW Presentation: An Australian Message'. Screensound Cover Title No. 9007, 1943.
- 81 Thomas, Telephone Conversation.
- 82 Charles Edwards, Telephone Conversation 1 March 2002, Letter, 5 March 2002.
- 83 Nelson, *POWs: Australians Under Nippon*, p. 101 and Tom Morris, Interview conducted 15 January 2002.
- 84 Morris, Interview. This story is also related in Nelson *POWs: Australians Under Nippon*, p. 101.
- 85 Hank Nelson, 'Measuring the Railway', in Gavan McCormack and Hank Nelson (eds), *The Burma-Thailand Railway: Memory and History*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1993, p. 23.