



**THIS ISSUE**

Note from the Chair	1
Vale - Lorna Morgan	2
New committee members	
Generous Benefactors	
Scholarship Updates - Ballarat Health Services &	
Notre Dame, Deakin and Melbourne University Rural Awardees	3
Australian Catholic University Nursing Award	4
Thankyou - Jade Cartright	

# MENTOR

## Newsletter of the Albert Coates Memorial Trust

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Spring 2021

We are hopeful that during 2022 we will be able to hold our Lunch with the Speaker early in the year and in collaboration with Federation University, the Annual Sir Albert Coates Oration in October/November.

We look forward to catching up with all our loyal supporters.

### A Note from the Chair

It is difficult to conceive that the returning POWs from Asia were treated with indifference in the early post war years. Both the Army and politicians had an ambivalent view.

While the majority of soldiers had no role in their surrender, a decision made by senior officers on their behalf, they were left to suffer the consequences both during the war and on their return home.

Not only did 8 031 soldiers die as a POW of the Japanese (from 22 376 POW as quoted by Christina Twomey in "The Battle Within"), many had lasting disabilities.

General Sir Thomas Blamey, CIC of the Australian Military Forces, wrote, "that surrender to the enemy on the part of the soldier in preference to death is dishonourable."

(Twomey p 16, quoting from Blamey's letter to Frank Forde, Minister for the Army).

There was reluctance to recognize the difficulties in returning to normal life, particularly for the men who were so badly treated on the Burma-Thailand railway.

Some 44 medical officers had remained with their men on the railway, and some became legendary.

I heard from multiple patients who had been POWs, of the work of Coates, under remarkable circumstances. He was their hero.

Earlier during my surgical training, I had worked for Cpt (Retd) Jock Frew, and Cpt (Retd) E B Dreverman, both of whom were with the 2/13 AGH on the railway. Never a

story was told of their time as a POW, though it was only 25 years after that bitter experience.

It wasn't until I visited Kanchanaburi in 2011, that I learnt of their involvement.

Albert Coates died in 1977, at the time his biography was published ("The Albert Coates Story", A Coates and Newman Rosenthal). Weary Dunlop published his War Diaries in 1986, then Patsy Adam-Smith published "Prisoners of War" in 1992.

Eventually in the period 1980-90 the support for POWs became more sympathetic. During this current century, there have been many books published that clearly outline the story of the POWs on the railway.

The Prisoners of War Memorial was built in Ballarat and opened in 2004. Even that met with a mixed response from the Federal Government.

Many records were incomplete, and the POW Memorial Committee has worked hard to correct the missing names.

At last, those men who have been Prisoners of War in past conflicts have been acknowledged. There is also improved recognition of the lasting difficulties of our returned soldiers, perhaps initially highlighted for the Vietnam Veterans.

Lest we Forget!

Don Moss

POW Memorial  
Ballarat



## VALE

### Lorna Morgan

Lorna was one of the original members of the ACMT



Committee. She had been a theatre sister

for Sir Albert Coates when he worked at the Fairfield hospital after his return from WW2.

Lorna was always a delightful woman and was a valuable contributor to the Albert Coates Trust Committee.

The combination of Lorna, Win Gherardin and Marie Pryor was an important part of the Committee over many years.

## INTRODUCING NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Bill Bahr** has a finance background and has been involved in many community groups in Ballarat and



on various Boards of Governance. Bill is an original Trustee of The Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial and has been secretary since 1997.

He has an interest in Australians at War and is an amateur researcher and historian with the Australian War Memorial.

**Jeff Sargent** is a specialist



Orthodontist and has had a long time interest in Military History. Jeff served for ten years in the RAAF in Wagga Wagga, Canberra and Melbourne and on leaving the RAAF in 1990, undertook a Masters Degree in Orthodontics at The University of Leeds. After two years in England he returned to Ballarat to join the orthodontic practice.

## GENEROUS BENEFACTORS

The ACMT is privileged to have received donations from the Glenyis Mclver Trust and the Leckie Family Bequest.

Glenyis Mclver made a huge contribution to many community organisations in Ballarat during her lifetime.

After her death in 2013, the Glenyis Mclver Charitable Trust was established which aims to support local Ballarat community organisations making a difference in the greater Ballarat area. The Albert Coates Memorial Trust is extremely grateful for the generous donation received this year from the Glenyis Mclver Charitable Trust

The ACMT is also very appreciative for the Leckie Family Bequest. This will provide scholarships at Ballarat Health Services over the next five years to enable nurses to extend their studies in Neo-Natal Care.



Neil Leckie, on right, presenting cheque to Luke McEldrew, Special Care unit manager from Ballarat HS with Desley Beechley ACMT Committee Member.

## SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES

### BALLARAT HEALTH SERVICES PERI-NATAL AWARD 2021

The inaugural recipient of this award, funded by a generous donation to the ACMT by a Bequest from the Leckie family, is **Deborah Parkinson**.

Deborah completed her Bachelor of Nursing and Graduate Diploma of Midwifery at Federation University and is employed at Ballarat Health Services as a Graduate Support Midwife in the Special Care Nursery and a Clinical Nurse Specialist in the Maternity Unit.

She is studying for a Masters of Health - Neonatal Care at Federation University.

This program is aimed at Registered Nurses and Midwives who are currently working in, or would like to work in, a Special Care Nursery environment and aims to equip nurses and midwives with the knowledge and skills to care for unwell neonates in the Special Care Nursery environment.

### FEDERATION UNIVERSITY Nursing - Jessica Scott

Jessica is a mum with two young children studying to be a Nurse and the award of the scholarship will be of great benefit as she continues with her studies.

### Visual Arts - Karen Zipkas

Karen is studying Visual Arts at Federation University, Churchill and hopes to fulfil a long held dream with a career in Visual Arts.

### Biomedicine - Troy Naismith

Troy is a second year Bachelor of Biomedical Science student at Mt Helen and when he finishes his degree plans to study for a Doctor of Medicine degree which he hopes will lead onto medical research.

## **NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY - Jack Brownrigg**

*It is my ambition to become a surgeon in the Australian Army one day. I am a former Sydney University Regiment Officer Cadet, and I will apply to the Australian Army Reserves as a Special Service Officer on completion of my internship year at Ballarat Base Hospital. I come from a military family that originates in Yarrowonga, with forebears who served in WW1 and WW2.*



*I travelled to Gallipoli in 2019 with some of these family members and stood on the same beach that Sir Albert Coates landed on 104 years earlier. Medicine within the military allows one to serve their country and their countrymen in the most direct way. It allows one to master a complex profession and directly give that mastery back to those around them. Sir Albert exemplified these values of education, service, resilience, and excellence.*

*He further demonstrated these virtues by giving back to his fellow Australian domestically and abroad under unimaginable physical, emotional, and spiritual stress in the military, as a prisoner of war and as a surgeon. Regional areas suffer health inequalities disproportionately in comparison with their city-based counterparts. Access to properly equipped medical facilities, to highly trained medical staff, difficult working conditions, risky manual employment, large wait times and isolation all contribute significantly to this inequality.*

*It is widely recognised that regional Australians suffer poorer health outcomes, have higher rates of hospitalisation, death and injury compared with Australians living in major cities.*

*I intend to undertake my elective placement in Canberra, learning skills from a senior Orthopaedic Surgeon there that I will bring back with me as an Intern at Ballarat Health Services.*

*My partner and I have settled in Ballarat, and I hope to contribute to improving regional health by becoming an excellent practicing clinician in a regional area, serving the regional populace.*

*It is my intention to become an Orthopaedic Surgeon living and practicing in country Victoria and a part time surgeon within the Australian Army.*

*My elective placement will allow me to begin this journey, learning from established surgeons in a city hospital and returning to practice medicine in Ballarat.*

*Sir Albert Coates stood for much more than just regional medicine and military service.*

*He was a family man, a man of industry and a man of virtue. Well rounded, stoic, and creative, he was a man of honour and a true role model for any young Australian, including myself. He is testament to the impact one individual can have on the lives of many.*

*It is these virtues that I aim to continue to develop within myself, in becoming a person of value within my community in regional Australia.*

## **MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY RURAL CLINICAL**

### **Angelina Koh**

*Angelina was born in Singapore but came to Australia for schooling and has since taken up Australian citizenship.*

*Angelina is currently working at Shepparton.*

*She has a passion for surgery and is currently a part-time anatomy demonstrator at the University of Melbourne.*

*Angelina has plans for an elective placement at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.*

*Angelina is a Volunteer for "Conversation Isolation".*



## **DEAKIN UNIVERSITY There were two awardees**

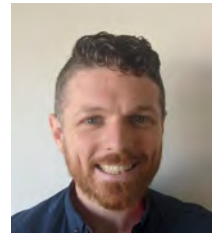
### **Bevan Hirst**

*Born in a farming community in South Gippsland, Bevan did a Biological Science degree at Deakin and undertook various roles, over several years, before enrolling as a mature-age entrant to study medicine at Deakin.*

*Whilst at Deakin, he has offered assistance to others in various groups, acting as a mentor to first year students and providing support to indigenous nursing students.*

*Bevan is currently training at Horsham and plans to become a rural GP.*

*Bevan's grandfather served in World War 2 at Tobruk and Alamein.*



### **Elle-Louise (Ellie) Smith**

*Born and educated in Ballarat, Ellie Smith completed a degree in Biomedical Science and is now completing her Doctor of Medicine degree at Deakin.*

*Whilst at school, Ellie had the opportunity to be part of the Timor-Leste Immersion Program at her school and has since returned and worked with the midwives.*

*Ellie was attracted to Deakin University because of its approach to public health.*

*On completion of her training, Ellie plans to work as a regional GP with particular interests in mental health and aged care.*

*Ellie's great grandfather served in World War I.*

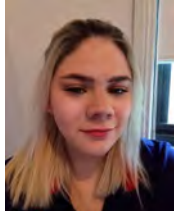




## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY - NURSING/ PARAMEDIC

### Molly Davis

As the recipient of the ACU Coates Scholarship for 2021, I am honoured to be part of Albert Coates legacy.



Currently, I am

completing my second year of the Bachelor of Nursing, planning on completing my course at the end of 2022.

I have always wanted to be a nurse or work within some area of medicine.

Growing up with my father as a Paramedic, he instilled in me the importance of hard work and appreciating what and who I have around me.

Once I've finished studying, I want to go on to-do remote Nursing whether up North as a Fly In Fly Out worker or to join the Royal Flying Doctors - either way bringing quality health care to those who have limited access is a passion of mine, and one I think I share with the Albert Coates Trust.

Despite having a bit over a year and a half before finishing, I am already looking at different possible grad year programs up in the Kimberley, Pilbara area.

Receiving the scholarship means I can focus on my upcoming placement and next semester, giving me the opportunity to achieve my personal goal of becoming a nurse.

So I just want to thank you all for this opportunity.

## ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS/THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE (Graduate Diploma in Surgical Anatomy)

The two awardees for 2021 are:

Matthew Dunn  
Mohamed Umar

## EMERGENCY NURSING AWARD

Applications for the Gippsland area are closing shortly.

## THANK YOU

Our Secretary, Roger Trudgeon, recently received a letter from one of our Scholarship Awardees from 2011-2012 - Jade Cartright (m/s Beechey).

*Since receiving this Scholarship, I have continued to work in Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley providing a high standard of care to members of our community in both the Central Gippsland Health and the Latrobe Regional Emergency Hospital Departments.*

*I successfully completed my Master of Nursing (Emergency) in 2014 and am now moving forward in my career having recently enrolled in Master of Advanced Clinical Nursing - Nurse Practitioner.*

*I am due to partake in these studies in August. I am very excited about the prospect of furthering my skills to better equip myself to help the people in our community even more by stepping into this advanced Nurse Practitioner role.*

*I wanted to take the opportunity to thank Trustees and Member of the Albert Coates Memorial Trust for giving me this opportunity. At the time I received the Award, I was a single mum doing the best I could; juggling shift work, raising a toddler and paying the bills; the financial support you provided me eased the financial burden beyond belief and allowed me to follow my passion for Emergency Nursing; something that would have been a struggle otherwise.*

*The work you do and the support you provide to our field is commendable and I thank you all sincerely for being the driving force behind my career; I would never have been able to do it without you; it is something I will never forget and will be eternally grateful.*

*Thank you again.  
Jade Cartright*

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Donations to the ACMT are tax deductible

The Albert Coates Memorial Trust sponsors a range of student scholarships at Federation University Australia and the University of Melbourne.

In association with the Department of Health, Victoria, it also offers scholarships for the post-graduate training of rural emergency care nurses.

Scholarships are also offered at the Australian Catholic University (nursing/paramedics), at the University of Notre Dame (medical) and Deakin University (medical).

A Peri-Natal Scholarship is offered at Ballarat Health Services.

### Albert Coates Memorial Trust Committee Trustees

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