

## Raymond Baldwin's background before departing for the Middle East

*"I didn't care about much; I spent a lot of time walking from my home to the creek to look for frogs. I had a reasonably happy life. I was brought up in the Methodist Faith and that took up a lot of my time. I became a Boy Scout in the Linden Park Scout Troop and that was wonderful because I made friends there, but not too many are alive now, they're all dying off." ~Raymond Baldwin.*

Raymond was born 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1921. His father was Stanley Baldwin and his mother Helen Manser. He attended Trinity Gardens Primary School as a child. Not having the opportunity to attend high school, he left primary school at the age of 13 to work at Clarkson's as an apprentice in the glass trade. Raymond also enjoyed swimming and long distance running<sup>1</sup>.

Before enlisting for the A.I.F., Raymond Baldwin also trained as a cadet. He loved every minute of it. That is where Raymond had his first experience with weapons of war.

The Militia called for volunteers from South Australia, to form the 2/27th Battalion. So on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1940 at Woodside, Raymond enlisted and became known as Private Raymond Baldwin, service number 4738 SX2905<sup>2</sup> for the A.I.F. Raymond says that a childhood memory of sitting on a fence near the Kensington Drill Hall, listening to the bugle calls and watching the soldiers drill prompted him to enlist in the army<sup>3</sup>.



(Australians at war, 2013)

<sup>1</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013, Interview; Department of Veteran Affairs, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> World War Two Nominal Roll, 2013

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013, Interview; Australian War Memorial, 2013.

## Raymond's life and Service in the Middle East

Raymond boarded the Mauretania which was bound for Bombay (Mumbai) in mid-1941. Upon arrival, Raymond along with his Battalion remained in the British training camp stationed in Delhi where they received battle training.

Raymond first experienced the horror of combat when he served in Syria. Once the fighting subsided, the toll on the Battalion included seven injured and four dead<sup>4</sup>. After their close encounter with death, the survivors began to realise the harsh reality of being a soldier.



( Raymond Baldwin and some Diggers in Syria, 1941)

When the campaign ended, the 2/27<sup>th</sup> Battalion remained stationed at Syria until January 1942, when they left for Australia to take part in the war against Japan<sup>5</sup>.

After their voyage back to Australia, the Battalion received seven days leave and extra battle training. Following this the Battalion was sent to Port Moresby in August 1942, where they camped in a coconut grove nearby. Their time spent there was fairly relaxed, until word came though that the Japanese were fast gaining ground on the Kokoda track<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Australian War Memorial, 2013, War Diaries.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013, Interview.

<sup>6</sup> Kokoda Historical, 2013

Raymond and his Battalion soon received orders to be sent down the Kokoda Track to assist in the pushing back of enemy lines.

*"The first day on the track was quiet easy...  
gave us a false impression of what was to come"*

~ Raymond Baldwin



(Ramu Valley, New Guinea)

Ahead of the Battalion down the track were the 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion from Victoria and the 2/60<sup>th</sup> Battalion from Western Australia, heading for the Battle of Buna-Gona. These Battalions were sustaining high casualties. The 2/27<sup>th</sup> Battalion experienced the same fate as they traversed the Kokoda Track. One or more would die each night. By the end of the battle there were 967 killed in action, 228 died of wounds, 66 missing presumed killed and 2210 wounded in action<sup>7</sup>.

The supplies on the Kokoda Track were sparse, especially food. Due to these inhuman conditions Raymond suffered from hallucinations. There was never a day when he wasn't hungry<sup>8</sup>.

*"All in all, the Kokoda experience wasn't good at all"*  
~Raymond Baldwin

<sup>7</sup> Department of Veteran Affairs, 2013

<sup>8</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013, Interview



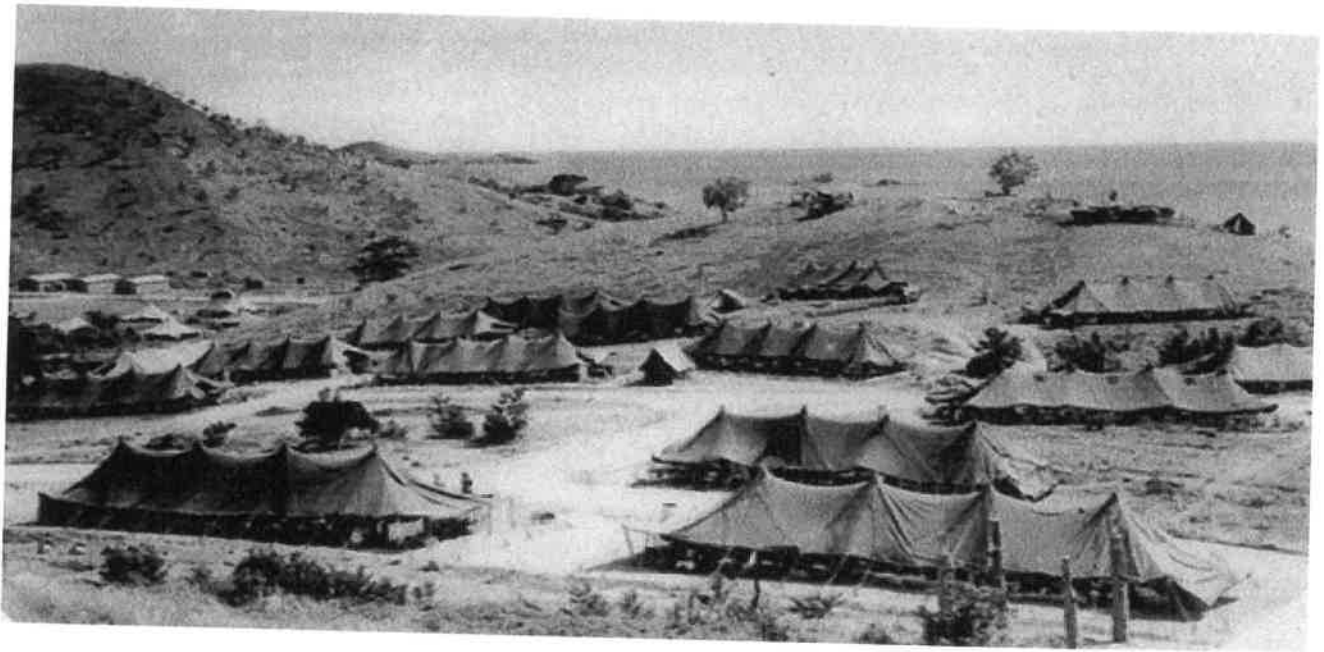
(Kokodahistorical, 2013)

The Battalion eventually ended up in Gona where they were led straight into battle. By the end of the campaign, there were only three officers and sixty-five soldiers left out of the thirty seven officers and eight hundred soldiers they had before the battle.<sup>9</sup>

This was where Raymond was severely concussed and wounded. His injuries were received from a hand grenade explosion and being peppered with shrapnel. He was carried back to Port Moresby for medical treatment.<sup>10</sup> Being bedridden due to his injuries caused Raymond to feel frustration and hopelessness, a frantic need to leave, to return to his mates. He was so desperate that the first chance he got he actually ran away from the hospital.<sup>11</sup>

*"I was like 'bugger this, I'm off', so I wrote a letter to the  
doctors and nurses to say  
'thanks' and left."*

~ Raymond Baldwin



(Port Moresby Hospital, Papua New Guinea, WWII)

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<sup>9</sup> Adelaidenow, 2013

<sup>10</sup> Australians at war, 2013

<sup>11</sup> Raymond Baldwin interview, 2013

Once Raymond was clear of the hospital interfering, he was able to catch a ride back to Gona on one of the aircrafts. He arrived back to the 2/27<sup>th</sup> Battalion when he realised the brutal fact that many of his friends had been killed in the last battle. All the soldiers that survived the battle had to bury the dead, including the Japanese<sup>12</sup>.

*"That was the saddest place I've ever been in my life. It's been on my mind ever since".*

-Raymond Baldwin

Raymond lost his rank and stripes for running away from the hospital.

Raymond was discharged from the A.I.F. on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1945. At the end of the war Raymond became further involved with the Australian Army. Raymond's dedication and commitment became more apparent in 1948 when he enlisted in the Australian Regular Army as a training officer. During the next 20 years he served in various postings, training cadets, national servicemen and soldiers embarking on overseas trips. The early 1960's saw Raymond fight in yet another war as part of the Malaya-Borneo campaign.<sup>13</sup>

Raymond Baldwin, an ordinary citizen who made extraordinary efforts and suffered unbelievable hardships, has contributed to the freedom that our nation, Australia, enjoys today.

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Raymond Baldwin was awarded 'The Order of Australia' medal in recognition for the service he so valiantly gave.<sup>14</sup>



(It's an Honour - Order of Australia 2013)

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013, Interview.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013, Interview.

<sup>14</sup> It's an Honour- order of Australia, 2013



## The meaning of the ANZAC Spirit

I was privileged to personally interview Raymond Baldwin in September this year. I asked him to reflect on his thoughts of the meaning of the ANZAC Spirit. He said;

*“Never giving in,  
Battle on to the bitter end,  
Team spirit,  
Love for each other,  
Care for each other and  
Reliance on each other”  
~Raymond Baldwin*

The research I have undertaken in regard to our soldiers and their indomitable spirit shows the above attributes of our ANZAC's. My views on the ANZAC Spirit are very similar. I feel that the ANZAC Spirit centre's around the Mateship the 'Diggers' shared, their outstanding courage, and their team spirit in the face of brutal battles and of course the humorous and 'larrikin' personalities they had and their pride in being Australian.

Whilst being interviewed Raymond Baldwin related many of his wartime stories. His account of his exploits whilst in Port Moresby Hospital and how he left the hospital without being officially released really stood out to me. He didn't care that he would be in trouble, he wanted to return to his mates, to rejoin his Battalion and continue fighting. It amazed me that he actually ran back to the war to reunite with his mates instead of running away from it; that he cared more about his mates and the duties he carried as a soldier, than his own well-being. Even after being wounded in battle he was desperately driven by his need to return and make a difference.<sup>15</sup> I believe this story showed a great example of true Mateship and never giving up, emulating the true meaning of the ANZAC Spirit.

Raymond's desperation to rejoin his Battalion represents the true meaning of the ANZAC's. A genuine ANZAC spirit expresses an Australian soldier's undying faith and loyalty to each other, looking out for one another, the special bonds between Australian's and fighting together on unknown ground. Being able to show a true unity, reliance, love and courage, fighting side by side and of course the Australian way of conducting themselves is what ANZAC Spirit is about.

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<sup>15</sup> Raymond Baldwin, 2013 Interview

A quote from Dollman & Skinners the Blue and Brown Diamond sums up the ANZAC spirit that has followed on a tradition for the 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion;

*All my life I shall look back with pride to the days when they were my comrades-in-arms, and whilst enjoying the peace which they in their unselfish sacrifice, did so much to establish, they will ever remain to me friends and comrades-in-arms<sup>16</sup>.*

Raymond and his mates have kept these sentiments alive whilst showing what it means to be an Australian and an ANZAC.

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<sup>16</sup> Dollman & Skinner, 1921, The Blue and Brown Diamond

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Australian War Experience 2: Australian Army at War 1939- 1945

The Digger A History

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Forgotten Force

Books:

History of the Second World War (volume 2)

Blue and Brown Diamond

With Australians In Korea

Photographs:

Kindly supplied by Ray Baldwin

## Appendix I



Raymond Baldwin is also the custodian of the 2/27<sup>th</sup> Battalion flag.<sup>1</sup>

*"I will be the last one to have it on my coffin."*  
~Raymond Baldwin

(Raymond Baldwin, 2013 Interview)

Plaque placed on Efogi School House by Rod Bucheker and Wayne Enright Trek Group in September 2008



(Adelaide Now, 2013)