

Laurie Andriske OAM (1923 – 2021)

Like many others, Laurie put up his age when he enlisted in October 1941 as a Private in 7th Battalion, claiming he was 18 years and 11 months old, when in fact he was only 17 years and 8 months. He was discharged 1,667 days later on the 26 May 1946, having served for 594 days overseas.

Laurie served with the 7th Battalion throughout the war, seeing service in Darwin, training in Atherton Tablelands and then travelling to Bougainville and Solomon Islands until the end of the war. Being single Laurie was one of many who stayed on to guard about 26,000 Japanese soldiers awaiting repatriation to Japan. Once the last ship had left for Japan, the remaining Australians were collected and returned back to Australia during the period March – May 1946.



Laurie was born in Mildura and became an apprentice watchmaker at 16. This career was short lived because of the war. On his return to civvy life Laurie initially worked with his father, before setting up a business with his brother Ern – *Andy's Engineers*- in the 1950's. The business introduced some of the biggest ranges of agricultural components in Australia and became very successful with 100 employees. Laurie was the Sales Manager and travelled overseas for 25 years attending trade fairs, finding new business opportunities and working with existing clients. The business later changed into making off road wheels for all sorts of equipment, and this too was successful.

Laurie became active in local politics and was very passionate about the Mildura region. He was elected to the City Council, serving for 18 years (1969-87), two of these as Mayor (1976-77). He played a key role in some major projects during this period, including the positioning of the 'new' bridge across the Murray and associated roadworks. Laurie was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to local government and the Sunraysia region.

Laurie was a big supporter of our Association. He regularly sent donations to our funds and tried to ensure that the Battalion's service during WW2 was known and recognised. As Secretary, I regularly received content for potential inclusion in *On Parade* and our Archives.

Laurie gave the Commemorative Address at the Dedication of the 7th Bn plaque at the Australian War Memorial in 2009. He was also active in getting a plaque installed at Rocky Creek on the Atherton Tableland and was present to give a short speech and unveil the plaque on VP Day, August 2008.

Laurie enjoyed a long life, lived well. He leaves wife Nola, three children, eight grandchildren and great grandchildren to carry his legacy onwards.

Elaine Towers,

Secretary
7th Battalion (1939-45) Association



Laurie is in the back row on the far right