Ex-Prisoner of War Club

An ex-prisoner of war (POW) association was first formed in South Australia by WWI POWs under the name the Ex Prisoner of War Club (Ex POW Club) of South Australia in October 1935 in an effort to maintain friendships among Ex-POWs and provide welfare and assistance. The first president was Mr C. Williamson, who carried on in that position for 21 years. Meetings were held bi-monthly and the first constitution was adopted at a meeting on 20 January 1936. A Ladies Auxiliary was established and expanded and revised in 1939 with a new section dedicated to packing and despatching parcels to POWs of WWII.

Ex-Prisoner of War Association of South Australia

With the cessation of hostilities in 1945 and influx of WWII POWs, the Ex-Prisoner of War Association of South Australia was formed and took over the Ex-POW Club organisation on 9 May 1946, with its own constitution adopted in 1952, and with C.J H. Williamson as President and R.F. Zwar as Honorary Secretary. Due to a steady influx of British migrants, on 13 July 1959 the SA Association opened its first sub-Branch in Elizabeth.

The objectives of the SA Association were to further the welfare of Ex-Prisoners of War and to represent the interests of Ex-Prisoners of War with recognised authorities concerned with their repatriation, rehabilitation or welfare and to cooperate and maintain close liaison with such bodies.

Due to a decline in numbers in 2003 the SA Association faced the need to include relatives of POWs in the association, and the Constitution was amended to accommodate the changes and comply with the requirements of the National Constitution. In 2014 the SA Association was dissolved.

National body: Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Australia

Beginning in 1946, efforts were made to affiliate with other state Ex-POW organisations, and in 1953, at the instigation of the SA Association, Mr C. Williamson arranged a meeting in Sydney with Col. J. Williams, president of the NSW Association, and Mr K. Hume-Cook of the Queensland Association, to discuss the formation of a National Association. The Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Australia was formed in 1954 and a special committee, Col. J Williams and C.L. Cruickshanks (NSW), R.F. Zwar and R.M. Thomson (SA), K. Hume-Cook and J.A. Black (Qld), met in Sydney in 1954 for the first conference to draft the original Constitution, which was formerly adopted at the second Annual Conference held in Sydney 10-11 September 1955.

The objectives of the Federal body include: to promote and protect the interests of Ex-POWs and dependents; to cooperate with other organisations in all matters affecting ex-servicemen; to coordinate, initiate, administer and advise in all matters of welfare work for Ex-Prisoners of War and their dependents; to prepare, publish and distribute magazines, papers, books or journals including the official journal ‘Barbed Wire and Bamboo’; to affiliate state Ex-POW Associations with a national association; and to generate comradeship and cooperation amongst all Australian POWs.
The Federal Executive (governing committee) changed between the member states, and was elected during the annual, and later biennial, conferences. The location of the national conference was held in rotation in each affiliated state.

The Ex-POW Association of Australia played an important role in ex-service welfare including working with and maintaining good relations and cooperation with the Repatriation/Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and achieved improved benefits and compensation for POWs and their widows from all conflicts and theatres of war. In 2001 POWs of the Japanese during WWII received compensation and improved benefits, and after tirelessly lobbying the Government, compensation was provided to POWs from the Korean War in 2003, and in 2007 to POWs held in Europe during WWII.

Some of the other achievements of the Federal Body include: the Gold Card for all POWs and widows, the acceptance of POW widows and War Widows, the establishment of pensions/ advocate panels in each state, the adoption of the magazine ‘Barbed Wire and Bamboo’ as the Association’s national magazine, treatment for POWs for all forms of cancer, and automatic acceptance for pensions and benefits for a number of purely POW condition disabilities.¹

The following records of the Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Australia were kept by Ron F. Zwar, a POW held in Germany during WWII, and active member of the SA Association since 1946. Ron Zwar was actively involved with ex-service welfare at both State and Federal level since 1946, and was one of the founding members of the Ex-POW Association of Australia. He served as National President of the Ex-POW Association of Australia for three terms and National Secretary for one year. He was patron of the Federal Association, as well as serving as President and Vice-President of the Ex-POW Association of SA, and Honorary Secretary for 25 years. He took on pension advocacy at tribunal level for POW members and other veterans and was also State Chairman of the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council (AVADSC).

Minute books and associated reports
Minutes for committee meetings, general meetings and AGMs, including president’s and secretary’s reports and balance sheets.
Volume 7 (1982-1989) is missing.

Member attendance books
1959-2007. 5 volumes.

Member lists
ca.1949-2005. 7 volumes.
Names of members and contact details arranged alphabetically, including details of subscriptions.

¹ Administrative history adapted from ‘A brief history: Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Australia 1954-2005’ by RF Zwar, 2005 (see Series 28), and ‘Brief history of the formation and the activities of the Ex-Prisoner of War Association of South Australia – 1935 to 30th June, 1959’ (see Series 26/32).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Volume(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitution of the Ex-POW Association of Australia (Federal body)</td>
<td>1955-1997</td>
<td>1.5 cm</td>
<td>Drafts, proposed constitution, and final versions of the constitution for the Ex-Prisoners of War Association of Australia, including the original 1955 constitution which was confirmed at the Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Australia annual conference in September 1955, the amended constitution of 1961, the amended constitution of 1990, and the amended constitution of 1997. The Ex-POW Association of South Australia was one of the members of the national association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal conferences of the Ex-POW Association of Australia</td>
<td>1954-2010</td>
<td>33 cm</td>
<td>Minutes, agenda, correspondence and associated reports and papers from the 1st to the 31st federal conferences of the Ex-POW Association of Australia. Papers for the 19th and 28th conferences are missing. See also Series 26 Subject Files for further papers relating to federal conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary’s annual reports</td>
<td>1980-2005</td>
<td>1 cm</td>
<td>The Honorary Secretary of the Ex-POW Association of South Australia during these years was W.H. Schmitt (1980-2004) and R.F. Zwar (2005). Also includes some President’s reports from Byron Fitzsimons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal and State Ex-POW Association correspondence</td>
<td>1958-1959, 1988-1997</td>
<td>2 cm</td>
<td>General correspondence between the Federal and its member State Ex-POW Associations, some are SA delegate copies of correspondence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correspondence of the SA Branch
Correspondence to Ron F. Zwar in his roles as Honourable Secretary (2010) and President (2011) of the SA branch. Includes some correspondence 2004-2005, and correspondence received in his role as Vice President of the Australian Veterans’ and Defence Services Council.

Papers of the state secretary
1968-2010. 3.5 cm.
Papers of state secretary Ron F. Zwar including secretary’s reports, general correspondence, programs and escort details for the 1973 National Reunion with the Governor-General as a guest (Ron Zwar was Federal President at the time), member list, Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) statements of principles, papers relating to alterations to the association’s rules, including the 2009 amended version of the Constitution for the SA association, reports and reviews on repatriation hospitals, and general notes.

Miscellaneous correspondence and papers from 2006
2006. 1 cm.
Correspondence, reports and papers relating to both the Federal and South Australian Ex-POW Associations, including president’s and secretary’s reports, general correspondence, correspondence and newspaper cuttings regarding recognising the POW memorial in Ballarat as a national memorial, and papers relating to the national reunion in Brisbane.

Papers relating to compensation submissions for European and Korean POWs
Original submission of ‘Compensation claim for Ex European and Ex Korean Prisoners of War’ made to the Minister for veterans’ Affairs in July 2002 including attachments with details of personal experiences of the conditions, abuse and suffering of European and Korean Prisoners of War, along with correspondence regarding the Association’s attempts to gain improved benefits and compensation for Korean and European POWs between 1989 and 2007 and other supporting documents and reports including the review of Veterans’ Entitlements (2003).

Original cases to support compensation claims for POWs
2001-2002. 19 cm.
Submissions from Ex-POWs and the wives and widows of Ex-POWs detailing personal experiences of the conditions and suffering endured as POWs, used to support the 2002 submission to claim compensation for Korean and European Ex-POWs. See Special List for Series 14 for more details.
Photographs of Prisoners of War and prison camps  
ca.1940-1945. 8 black and white photographs.  
Eight black and white photographs used as supporting evidence for compensation claims of the conditions and treatment of European Prisoners of War. See Series 13 for the compensation claim, and Series 14 for submissions of experiences of individual POWs to support the claim. Do a NUMBER search on SRG 869/15 for details and to view individual photographs.

Personal submissions to support improved benefits claims for POWs  
1989. 2 cm.  
Submissions from Ex-POWs detailing personal experiences of the conditions and suffering endured as POWs, used to support claims for improved benefits for European Ex-POWs. See Special List for Series 16 for more details.

Personal claims for veterans’ entitlements  
1986-2000. 7 cm.  
Personal claims regarding Veterans’ entitlement for disability pensions and medical treatment for medical conditions caused by military service, including: original claim forms, Administrative Appeals Tribunal decisions and reasons for granting or denying claims, supporting documentation including medical opinions and medical articles, correspondence and other associated papers including the ‘Veterans’ Entitlement Act 1986’.

Medical opinions and reports to support claims  
1979-1993. 8 cm.  
Personal claims for disability pensions and supporting documentation from medical authorities including medical opinions, articles, reports, findings and correspondence, as well as other associated papers including Administrative Appeals Tribunal decisions and reasons for granting or denying claims, newspaper cuttings and articles regarding medical aspects of POWs.

General information about Prisoners of War  
ca. 1945-2010. 4 cm.  
General information about Prisoners of War including statistics, correspondence, articles and extracts about Prisoners of War, newspaper cuttings and maps. Some used as evidence to support claims for benefits and compensation.

Photographs of Japanese POWs, camps and guards  
ca.1942-1946. 9 composite photographs.  
Nine black and white composite photographs (55 photographs total) with captions, showing the mistreatment and condition of Prisoners of War of the Japanese including suffering of malnutrition and other conditions, as well as POW camps in Thailand including aerial photographs, war memorials and graves, and Japanese officers who were charged as war criminals at the end of WWII. Includes graphic images of Prisoners of War suffering malnutrition and other medical conditions.
Photographs of German POW camp Stalag IVB and accompanying papers ca.1940-1945, 1996 15 photographs, 1 cm.
Colour photographs of original black and white photographs, with captions, of the prisoners and buildings of POW camp Stalag IVB in Germany, believed to be taken by a German officer Captain Konig (Koenig). As well as a photograph of Ex-POWs, including some survivors from Stalag IVB, in 1996. Also includes accompanying correspondence, list of Australian POWs in Stalag IVB and newspaper cuttings, sent by Jack Bell to Ron Zwar in 2010.

Photograph of Australian Prisoners of War on their way home May 1945. Black and white photograph.
Photograph of Australian prisoners of war in Naples, Italy after being flown out of Austria, on their way to England and then Australia, shortly after Victory Day in Europe, May 1945. For more details and to view this image do an ARCHIVAL NUMBER search on SRG 869/21/1.

Papers relating to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) ca.1989-2013. 13 cm.
Comprising correspondence between DVA and the Ex-POW Association of SA, Repatriation Medical Authority statement of principles for various medical conditions, advocacy skills training course information pack, miscellaneous blank claim forms and questionnaires, and sections of the Veterans’ Entitlement Act.

Papers relating to the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council Inc. (AVADSC) ca.1986-2008. 16 cm.
Comprising meeting minutes for the SA State Advisory Council of AVADSC 1986-2008, some AGM minutes and agendas, correspondence, newspaper cuttings, articles, reports and submissions, reports from the national president and national secretary, lists of member associations, constitution and brief history of AVADSC, and a binder for a Claims Workshop 1996 for state chairman Ron Zwar. The Ex-POW Association of SA was one of the member associations of AVADSC.

Personal narratives 1983-2009. 6 cm.
Personal experiences, reminiscences and eulogies of Prisoners of War, including some newspaper cuttings and correspondence. See special list for Series 25 for details.

Subject files 1940-2001. 70 cm.
Subject files compiled by Ron Zwar, State Secretary, relating to various activities, events and general running and organisation of the Ex-POW Association of SA, including some papers relating to the Federal Body of the organisation. See special list for Series 26 for details.
Association Files
1967-2013. 11 cm.
Files arranged in alphabetical order and grouped by letter (there are not files for each letter) by State Secretary Ron Zwar, comprising papers relating to memorials and events attended by members of the association and papers relating to the general running of the SA Association, including correspondence. See special list for Series 27 for details.

History of the Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Australia
2005. 0.5 cm.
Brief history of the federal body of the Association including brief background history of the individual State Associations written by Ron Zwar in 2005 to be included in the time capsule buried at the first anniversary memorial service at the POW memorial in Ballarat in February 2005, to be opened in 2050.

Papers of Ron F. Zwar
1980-2014. 4 cm.
Papers of Ron Zwar, secretary of the SA Association and past Federal President and Federal secretary, comprising: 1980 diary which includes committee and AGM minutes 1987-2003; thank-you cards and letters re Ron’s work in obtaining ex-gratia payments for POWs held in Europe (2007); invitations to various memorial services and Ex-POW/veterans events (1998-2014); a high school student’s interview and report on Ron’s war experiences (1995); black and white photograph of Ron with Doctor Geoff Cornish and his wife Alison at a repatriation health conference and accompanying papers (1992); copy of Australian War Memorial photograph number UK3134 of Ron and other ex-prisoners of war before returning to Australia in 1945; agenda and minutes for a meeting of the Deputy Commissioner’s Consultative Forum SA (2013); information and notes from the Australia Remembers Youth Forum program and Australian Prisoners of War in Europe and the Pacific Commemoration (1995); and various name tags.

Papers relating to the POW Memorial at Prince Alfred College
1999-2013. 2 cm.
Correspondence, orders of service, black and white copies of photographs of the memorial service in 2000, and other papers re moving the POW memorial from Prospect to Prince Alfred College in 1999, the annual Act of Remembrance services held in August, and Remembrance Day services held in November each year and run by students from the school.

Work with students
1995-2008. 1 cm.
Papers relating to work with school and university students comprising correspondence, notes form the student youth forum (1995), Anzac Eve youth vigil ceremony brochure (2008), and research and speech notes of Ron Zwar for a talk presented for the Anzac Youth Vigil at the Blackwood memorial (April 2008).
Papers of the Consultative Council of Ex-Service Organisations (SA) 1981-2004. 0.5 cm.

Order of service booklets 1971-2002. 1 cm.

Thank you and in memoriam cards ca.1997-2009. 1 cm.
In memoriam and thank you cards for Ex-POWs and their relatives.

Christmas cards 1973-1976, 1995. 0.5 cm.
Christmas cards from the Governor General of Australia (1973, 1975-1976), and one Christmas card from the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs (1995).

Newspaper cuttings 1945-2008. 4 cm.
Newspaper cuttings relating to the Ex-POW Association of South Australia as well as the national association and other state associations and ex-servicemen leagues, compensation for prisoners of war, and prisoners of war in general.

Papers relating to Rex Crane 2009. 0.5 cm.
Newspaper cuttings and letter of resignation of Rex Crane, former secretary of the Ex-POW Association of Australia, who falsely represented himself as a POW.

Miscellaneous papers ca.1972-2012. 4 cm.
Miscellaneous documents including: two copies of 2002 the UK National Ex-Prisoner of War Association newsletters, Ex-Prisoner of War Association of Canada conference, reunion and newsletter papers, copy of Geneva conventions relating to POWs, statuary declaration forms, medical information on hookworms and cancer prevention, copy of ‘Summary of the conditions of award of the Campaign Stars, the Defence Medal and the War Medal’, memorial service speeches, and colour copies of photographs from the memorial service and dedication of a wreath in memory of the men of Bomber Command (February 2012).
21st anniversary key
1966.  45 x 18 cm.
Large wooden autograph key painted gold with the Ex-POW Association of SA logo and 1945-1966 painted on the front, with signatures of members on the inside, celebrating the 21st anniversary of the SA Association. Do an ARCHIVAL NUMBER search on SRG 869/39 for more details and to view images.

National reunion 1977 glass plates
1977.  13 x 13 cm.
Two square glass plates created for the national reunion held in Adelaide in October 1977, with a gold border, the SA Association logo in the centre, and the words 'Adelaide national reunion 5th – 9th October 1977'. Do an ARCHIVAL NUMBER search on SRG 869/40 for more details and to view images.

New Zealand Ex-Prisoner of War Association
1977.  3 cm.
Programme booklet for the New Zealand Ex-POW Association National Reunion held in Hamilton, April 1977, and a circular wooden plaque with a metal logo of the Association in the centre (13.2 cm diameter, 2.5 cm high), with plastic stand. Do an ARCHIVAL NUMBER search on SRG 869/41 for more details and to view images.

Prince Alfred College 60th anniversary memorial service DVD
2005.  53 minutes.
DVD of the 60th anniversary memorial service of VP Day (Victory in the Pacific) and the end of WW2, held at the Eric Freak Memorial Chapel, Prince Alfred College, 15th August 2005. Featuring the Prince Alfred College choir, readings by students, and talks by Ex-POWs including Ron Zwar. See bibliographic record for SRG 869/42/1 for further detail.

Papers relating to published materials
1982-1996.  2 cm.
Correspondence, reports and notes relating to some of the published titles donated with the group (see special list for published materials), including reports and reviews on the Repatriation Hospital System and veterans’ welfare.