

Mateship never fades for Frank, 99 ...



Veteran Frank Waterton with a model of a Lancaster bomber which he wanted to fly when he enlisted in 1944 (inset). Picture: David Caird

I'll never forget the families who gave everything

Emily Dann

For World War II veteran Frank Waterton, Anzac Day has always held a degree of reverence.

From enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force at the ripe age of 17 to serving in Japan and working out of former military facilities, the 99-year-old has lived a valiant life distinguished by bravery and mateship.

On Saturday, the Dandenong RSL will perform a special service at his residence, Mercy Place in Lynbrook, giving the respected veteran a chance to pause – not just to remember the war, but to honour the voices of his mates who never returned.

“Anzac Day means a great deal to me because it’s a time to stop and remember the people who never came home,” he said.

“As the years go by, there are fewer of us left, but you never forget those mates, or the families who gave everything.

“When the Last Post plays and the wreath is laid, it brings it all back.

“To me, Anzac Day is about making sure their sacrifice is never forgotten, because the life we have today came at a great cost for so many.”

In 1944, at 17, he enlisted in

the Royal Australian Air Force, joining the brave soldiers in the ground crew and supporting missions by servicing aircraft and preparing bombs.

Post war, he continued to serve in Japan, journeying there on a ship via New Guinea and Guam, where he lived and worked out of former military facilities for several years.

Mr Waterton is now a respected figure within his RSL

community, electing to donate a Japanese sword he found in a bombed dump to the Trafalgar-Thorpdale RSL, where it remains on display.

“I got to go home and be part of the parade at Trafalgar-Thorpdale RSL, my hometown, the other year and it was amazing,” he said.

“It’s so special to get together with that community as it means so much.”

ANZAC DAY 2026

TOMORROW
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