

1946 WAR IS OVER LET THE GAMES BEGIN (Ref: 2020/10)

Following the cessation of World War: 2 hostilities, life in Australia began to slowly return to some kind of routine and 'normality.' (How could life be normal after such a world-wide conflagration?)

While the war had brought untold sadness and misery to millions throughout the world, peace brought the troops home, re-united families and prompted the resumption of community social, cultural and sporting activities.

All sporting organization and clubs, throughout Australia, had suffered losses in those dreadful years of conflict; and rebuilding was not only necessary but, in some cases, extremely challenging. Hundreds of young Australians, who played football, at various levels, had been killed or maimed in action. Some clubs (e.g. Melbourne- see below) had lost their finest players in the war.

Page 12 THE SPORTING GLOBE FOOTBALL BOOK

Football's Honor Roll

From club records this Honor Roll has been compiled.
It embraces men of club first eighteens who made the
supreme sacrifice in the call of duty.

"That we might live they died—
Hail—And farewell!
—Their courage tried,
By every mean device of treacherous hate,
Like Kings they died."—John Oxenham.

Brighton G. Robertson. H. Hunt.	Hawthorn R. Pirrie. Gus Young. J. Drake. Max Wheeler.	Williamstown Jack Munn.
Carlton J. Park. W. Atkinson.	Melbourne Sid Anderson. J. Atkins. H. Ball. Ron Barassi. N. Ellis. J. Fraser. Keith Truscott.	Prahran Archie Roberts. Roy Lette.
Camberwell D. Eccles. K. Keck. N. Prest.	Northcote W. Downie. T. Bretherton. F. Thorn.	Richmond F. Stamford. A. Jennings. W. Cosgrove.
Collingwood Norman Oliver, Norman Le Brun	Oakleigh W. Heintz.	St. Kilda Stuart King. W. Hudson. H. Comte. R. Flegg. B. Shields.
Coburg L. La Franchi. T. French.	North Melbourne M. Shapir. S. Mutimer. A. Egan. L. Thomas. (Also played with Hawthorn and South Melbourne.)	South Melbourne G. Sawley. A. Pearsall. J. Wade.
Essendon J. Keddie. G. Goldin. E. Regan.	Geelong J. Knight. (Also played with Carlton.) C. Helmer. (Also played with Melbourne.) J. Lynch. (Also played with Preston.) R. Lancaster.	<p style="font-size: small;">Supporters of other clubs can be thankful that although ser- vice enlistments were heavy, no player was killed.</p>
Preston J. Lynch. (Also played with Geelong.)		

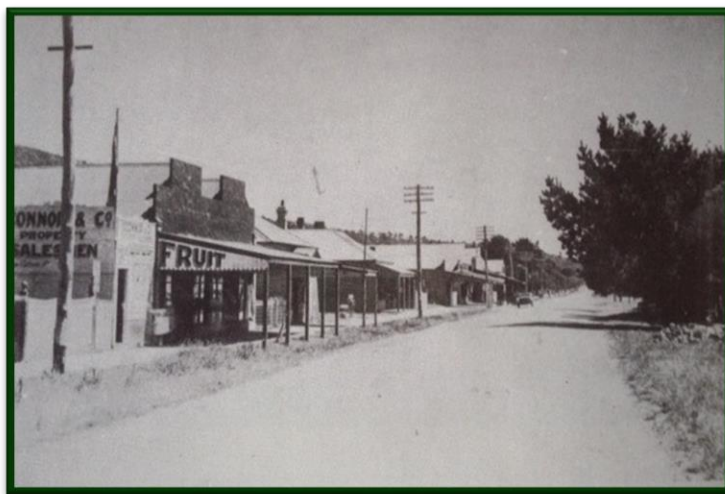
"Here—or hereafter, you shall see it ended—
This mighty work to which your souls were set
If from beyond — then with the vision splendid,
You shall smile back and never know regret."—John Oxenham.

Note: Readers can zoom up to make the names on the 'Roll Of Honour' easier to read.

While it was comparatively easy to list the names of VFL and VFA players (see above) who died on active service, it is not known how many players from suburban and country leagues died in wartime service.

Note: Younger readers are often surprised to hear that more than 50,000 Australian men and women either perished or suffered debilitating wounds on the various battlefields of Africa, Europe and the Pacific theatres of war.

Life in the township of Dromana, in those post war years, was tranquil and virtually idyllic. It was best described as a small coastal hamlet with a permanent population of about 700 residents; and, although vacationers and day-trippers visited the beaches in the warmer months, the town was not geared to commercial tourism (as is the case today).



By April 1946, organized and competitive inter-town football, which had been suspended in most leagues throughout the nation, was 'back on the agenda'; and Dromana Football Club had taken the 'jumpers out of mothballs' and 'joined the fray'...

“ Peninsula Football League To Resume...The meeting of the Mornington Peninsula League convened for last Wednesday night at Mornington drew a record attendance of club delegates, many of whom were new to the League which went into recess when football became impossible owing to a state of war. Source: 'Frankston Standard' February 28th 1946 Page: 9

Such was the interest in the restoration of football after the war, that the club delegates to Peninsula Football League (PFL) decided, in their collective wisdom, that it would be necessary to have two divisions or grades of competition. The reformed league would be made up of clubs that had existed prior to the war, a combine (Pearcedale-Baxter) and a newly established club from Rye. Note: The population of Rye was about 400 in 1946.

The PFL 'A' Grade consisted of eight teams:

- Frankston Hastings, Naval Depot, Carrum, Somerville, Mornington, Sorrento and Seaford.

The seven teams which that made up the PFL 'B' Grade competition were:

- Red Hill, Dromana, Rosebud, Pearcedale-Baxter (combine), Hastings,* Frankston* and a newly formed club from the Rye township. **

Note:1 Frankston* and Hastings* entered teams in both 'A' and 'B' grades; and this appears to be the origins of the Seconds XVIII competition which would evolve at a later date.

Note: 2 Rye FC** was founded in 1946. It was documented that in the first year of participation in the PFL, Rye players wore singlets in games because of the shortage of suitable knitwear following in the post war years.

Note:3 Discussions regarding the formation of a junior(or under-age) league for boys were not advanced until 1947.



In 1946, Mr R. Wilson was the President of DFC while Bert Aust , who was a key player of the team, took on the important administrative duties of secretary and treasurer.

As research uncovered, Dromana performed well in the 'B' Grade competition throughout the year and had secured a place in the PFL finals series. The following match report provides a brief review of Dromana's clash against Red Hill in the Semi-Final that year.

1946 FIRST SEMI FINAL: DROMANA V RED HILL

The PFL Semi-Final was played at the picturesque Sorrento Oval. A large crowd attended the match; and generous praise in the match report was directed to the Sorrento Club for its preparation of the ground and first-class facilities.

Umpire Price was in charge of proceedings. There is no record of Umpire Price ever officiating at VFL level. However, a certain 'J. Price' had been appointed to matches in the Federal District FL, the Victorian Saturday Morning FL and the Diamond Valley FL during the 1946 season.

The Dromana team sheet that day listed the following players:

Wally Guy (Captain) Osborne Hosking (VC) Allen Aust Hazeldine Moorhead Loader G & J Brown Goad Friend Griffith Christie Gourlay Earls Humphrey Friend and C. McLean(19th man).**

****Note:** While the newspaper carried the name C. McLean as 19th man that day, it is highly probable that it intended to read Colin McLearn. Available club records indicate that Colin Mclear played his first senior game in 1947 but in article that Colin wrote, for the club in 1996, it is printed that his first game was in 1946.

TEAM PHOTOGRAPH- JULY 1946

The team photo was taken was taken in July in 1946; and while it is poor in quality and the images are indistinct it is an edifying historical document as it names the players who represented Dromana FC in that game.



Source: Standard (Frankston, Vic. : 1939 - 1949), Thursday 11 July 1946, page 3

THE FIRST SEMI FINAL AGAINST RED HILL

Wally Guy, who was the recipient of the Klein Trophy for the Best & Fairest 'B Grade' player that season, won the toss and kicked with breeze. Wally, who had played his first game with the Dromana in 1930, had been a member of the club's first three premierships in 1931, 1937 and 1940. Wally was a virtual Colossus in local football and a valiant character in the life of DFC.



The Champion of Dromana- Wally Guy

Dromana controlled the early stages of the match; and Bob Moorhead was busy around goal while Norm Osborne and Vern Humphrey were prominent in setting up forward opportunities. Dromana led by five goals at the 'big break.'



Norm Osborne



Bert Aust

At three quarter time the game seemed to be beyond Red Hill but 'Mother Nature' intervened and the situation quickly changed. A strong breeze sprang up early in the last term and Red Hill, 'kicking with the wind,' notched a string of goals. ...

" The wind sprang up in the last term and Red Hill was extremely hopeful of making up the leeway. They made a

gallant attempt and goals and behind were coming freely. Guy (Dromana) played at full back.. Red Hill's : forwards were playing the hard game. Buchanan, Trewin, Schwab and Delaney, were coming into their stride. There were roars from the crowd at every score Red hill was getting closer. Guy mis-kicked and out-of-bounds. Then a free to Red Hill, but the kick failed. Had it been successful: things would have been bad for Dromana who had not scored for the quarter. The strain was on; Osborne saved time after time. Red Hill badly needed a couple more goals. However, the bell proclaimed Dromana victor.” Source: ‘Frankston Standard’ September 5th 1946.

As reported by the journalist above, Dromana stalled and it was only the brilliant defence of Norm Osborne that prevented the ‘Hills’ snatching an unlikely victory in the dying minutes of the game. Dromana failed to score in the last term but hung onto to win the final by 15 points.



Bob Moorhead: Five crucial goals in the 1946 Semi- Final

Quarter by quarter scores:

Dromana: 3.6 7.7 9.14 9.14 (68)

Red Hill: 0.1 2.6 3.7 7.11 (53)

Goals for Dromana: Moorhead 5 Friend Aust Humphrey Brown

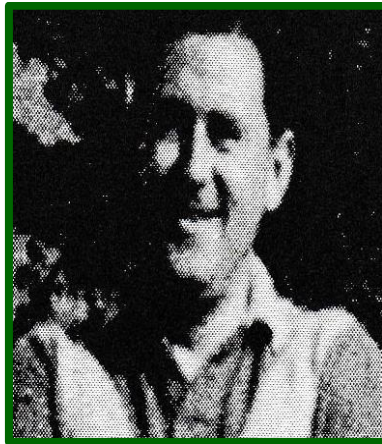
Best for Dromana : Osborne Allen Humphrey Loader Moorhead Hazeldine Gourlay Brown Christie

FOOTNOTES

1. Alan Hosking was the Vice-captain of Dromana in that match.
2. Umpire Price received glowing praise for his exhibition; it was said that he did a ‘grand job and was fair to both sides.
3. Dromana FC won its way through to the ‘B Grade’ Grand Final that season; and, despite a gallant effort, went down to Frankston by 13

points. The club had to wait another four years to eventually claim the pennant.

4. In 1950, Dromana won the 'B Grade' premiership and was promoted to PFL 'A' Grade for the 1951 season.
5. Many of Dromana's team went onto play 100 games with the club, including Norm Osborne (181games), Vern Humphrey(89), Bob Moorhead (251 Alan Hosking(137), Doug Goad (123), Brian Griffith (193), Wally Guy (182), Bert Aust (238) and Colin McLear who played 201 games.



Colin McLear- 201 games for DFNC

6. Much has been previously written about Wally Guy who coached the team in 1946. Wally was a true champion of Dromana and a doyen of Peninsula football. Wally, who had played at the highest level (8 games with North Melbourne in 1934), played his last game for DFC in 1958.
7. Bert Aust trained with VFA and VFL clubs; and it is thought that he was most unfortunate not to have gained senior selection at Carlton FC . Bert starred in Armed Service fixtures which were organized during World War: 2. Bert Aust was unfaltering in his attempts to build and strengthen the Dromana Football Club.
8. Vern Humphrey was a footballer of some status in the local league and there is a notion that Vern trained at VFL level in that era. On examination of the VFL archives, the only Humphrey to have played VFL football was Eric Humphrey (ex- Corryong) who played 4 games with Carlton in earlier times. Vern played 89 games with Dromana between 1938-49. In reading the sporting history of that era, it is important not to confuse Vern Humphrey with Gordon Humphrey who played cricket and football with Red Hill in those times.
9. Times were frugal after the war; and it is documented ...

“ Due to shortages of goods many of the club’s jumpers were hand knitted’. Source: DFNC files.

The statement is a little ambiguous but is probably meant to say that the club jumpers were knitted by local supporters of DFC.

10. In 1946, the Dromana Oval was described by Colin McLearn as : “a cow paddock along both wings” During World War: 2, the state of playing fields and sporting arenas in all towns had taken a ‘back seat’ to the pressing financial needs of the war effort.

11. 1946 saw the installation of showers in the clubrooms and improved plumbing services to provide the club with hot running water. Modern footballers may find it difficult to imagine the Spartan conditions that existed at the Dromana Recreation Reserve in those days.



12. A rare photograph of pronounced interest to Dromana supporters was found during the research of this story. The photograph (below) is of the North Melbourne FC Senior XVIII (1934); and shows Wally Guy crouching in the front row, second from the right hand side. Other famous players in the photograph include VFL stars Tom Fitzmaurice, Neville Huggins, Johnny Lewis and Wally Carter.



Source: Boyles Football Photos

13. One of the highlights of the 1946 PFL season was the game between Carlton FC and a Combined Peninsula team at the Frankston Oval on April 13th. The match was organized to raise funds for the 'Food for Britain Appeal.'

14. The Carlton v PFL game was umpired by one of Australia's most famous umpires, Bill Blackburn. Bill had umpired 190 VFL games and had taken charge of three Grand Finals during his notable career. Bill's connection with the Mornington Peninsula may have been more than just through umpiring football matches. The township of Dromana and Bill Blackburn's unexpected death made front-page news in December 1955...

" VFL umpires coach dies Mr. Bill Blackburn, umpires' adviser to the Victorian Football League since 1949, died last night while holidaying at Dromana with his family. He was 55. He was a leading umpire for 21 years, beginning with seven years as a V.F.A. umpire. In his V.F.L. career, he umpired four grand finals, many finals, and an Australian championship." Source: 'The Argus' December 28th 1955 Page: 1



Umpire Bill Blackburn
Source Boyles Football Photos

15. It is uncertain if any Dromana players were selected in that combined Peninsula team; but it was recorded that Carlton's hero Bert Deacon starred in the match. Carlton 16.11 (107) defeated PFL 6. 7 (43). The estimated crowd at the game that day was a disappointing 600.

16. 1946 saw the reintroduction of interleague matches; and the two main fixtures for the PFL representative team(s) were against Central Gippsland Football League in June and, in late September, a match against the Goulburn Valley FL took place.

17. In 1946-47, a number of PFL finals matches were played at the Pier Street Oval.

A RECENT LETTER TO DFNC FROM FORMER DEFENDER OWEN GRIFFITHS

The club received some interesting correspondence from former player, Owen Griffiths, this week (June 5th); and his information adds a little more to the archives regarding the 1968 season. Thank you to Owen for taking the time to write and explain that he had been cleared to Richmond Districts FC in 1968. Owen wrote...

“...I played football with Dromana for a number of years in the 1960s. Unfortunately there are some errors in the report "50 years ago 1968". The report has me listed as being in the back pocket, however, in 1968 I was living in Melbourne and was playing with Richmond Districts in the (now defunct) Metropolitan League.

In clarifying his playing history at Pier Street, Owen added ...

“ I did play in the back pocket when Dromana beat Somerville in the First Semi-final in 1967. This was John Kelton's first year as Senior Coach. We then played Rye in the Preliminary Final, which we won by 6 points, but unfortunately went on to lose the Grand Final to Crib Point.”

According to MPNFL and our club records, Owen played 65 senior games with Dromana in the period 1965-69; and he was selected in the 'Team of the Decade 1966-75' on the half back flank.

Thank you: Special thanks to Owen for his assistance in adding to our club's history archives.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: DFNC Records –MPNFL archives –local newspapers - NLA- personal records.

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