

1937 THE DROMANA DISTRICT FC
&
A TRIBUTE TO
BERT OTTO 'SNOWY' PETERS
Reference: 2021/20



A forgotten hero of Dromana
Albert Otto Peters

VICTORY OVER SORRENTO IN JULY 1937

In 1937 the Dromana claimed the 'B' Grade title by defeating Frankston at Alexandria Park by three goals. However, one of the misconstrued aspects of the victory was the composition of the team; and in some references, there is little or no mention that the line-up was actually a 'combine' i.e. a union of players from several other clubs.

The team was an amalgamation of players drawn from local clubs on the Southern Peninsula and was called 'Dromana District'; and, in the main, the clubs involved were Dromana, Red Hill and Rosebud.

The victory over Sorrento on 24th July, as described below, was hard-fought. Bert Aust was unable to play but the Dromana District line-up included these family names: Guy, Peters, McLearn, Jennings, Volk, Branchi, Wiseman, Patterson, Cairns, Hosking, Boughton, Lacco, Mannix, Griffith and Cornish.

Not a lot can be gleaned from the match report but it is recorded that Dromana had first use of a strong wind and 'fired off' four goals while Sorrento struggled and managed a solitary major. In the context of that game, it was an invaluable start in a tough and tense affair.

As some readers may know, a cross wind at Sorrento can often make attractive football virtually impossible; and trying to score into the wind can be a herculean task. The Dromana combine hit the 'wall' in the second term; and trailed by nine points at half time.

Thanks to the brilliant performance by Fred Volk (also a stalwart with Red Hill FC) who snared three goals, in the third term, Dromana reclaimed the lead and hung on, in a desperate last quarter, to win a thriller by 10 points. This was an important victory along the road to the 1937 'B' Grade flag.

THE FINAL SCORES

Dromana: 4.5 4.6 7.13 8.15 (63)

Sorrento: 1.4 5.9 6.10 7.11 (53)

Goal kickers for Dromana District: Volk 3 G. Mclear 3 W. Guy 2

Best players for Dromana District: Guy, Branchi, Peters, Volk, Patterson, Hosking, McLear and Wiseman.

ALBERT OTTO PETERS

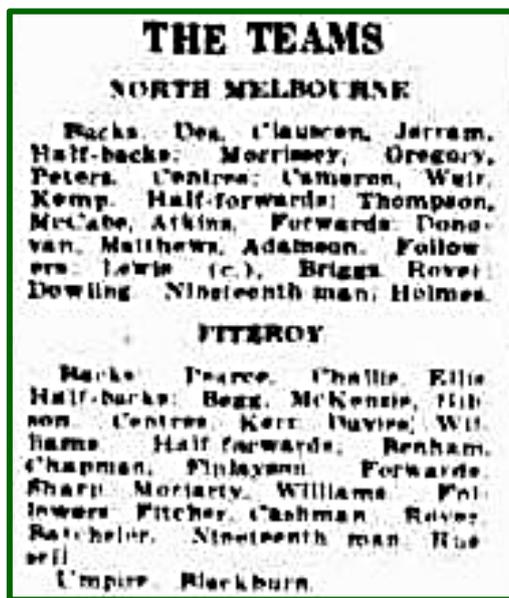


Source: Australian War Memorial

One of the stars for the Dromana District team during that season was Albert Otto 'Snowy' Peters. In the annals of Australian football history, Bert deserves greater recognition as he was first class player, an inspiring coach and a genuine war hero.

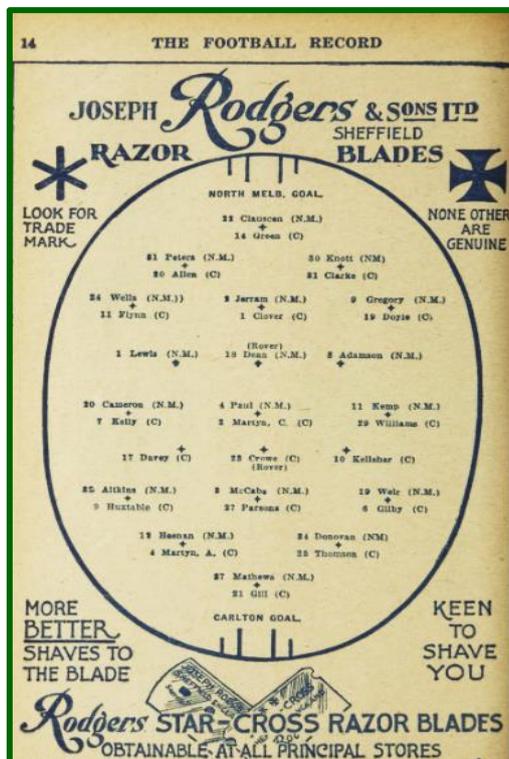
Albert (aka Bert) was born at St Arnaud in 1908; and made a name for himself while playing for North Melbourne in 1930-31. He made his debut for the Shinboners at Corio Oval (Geelong) in Round: 1, 1930, at the age of 21 years. The North Melbourne team included seven players who were making their VFL debut that day: Roy Atkins (ex-Korumburra), Ray Clarke (ex-Toora), Jim Heenan (ex- Northcote), Frank Holmes (ex- Wallan) Mowbray Weir (ex-Poowong) and Bert Peters. Bob Mathews (ex -Melrose) was the youngest of the 'rookies' (17 years of age).

North's coach was John Lewis one of the legendary figures in NMFC history. It was John's debut as coach. Although 1930 was a disappointment for the club (1 win and 17 losses), on an individual basis, John finished fourth in Brownlow Medal . That year Haydn Bunton took out the coveted award with 26 votes. Other well-known names in the NMFC line up in 1930 included: George Jerram , Jack Morrissey , Johnny Gregory and Charlie Cameron.



Source: 'Sporting Globe' May 10th 1930. Page: 2

In the game against Fitzroy in Round: 2 1930, Bert was named on the half back flank for North Melbourne; and was listed in the better players for the team that day. As can be seen above, the full forward for Fitzroy in that match was the famous Jack Moriarty. Jack played 170 games for Fitzroy and kicked 662 goals which included 82 goals in 1924, 83 goals in 1927 and in 1932 he booted 81 goals. Jack won the AFL goal kicking award in 1924.



Bert Peters was named in the back pocket for the Round: 7 clash against Carlton in 1970 (June 14th 1930). The back line for North Melbourne that day included Ed Clausen and George Jerram from Queenscliff Garrison Artillery. George also played with Geelong and represented Victoria in 1927-28. Source: 'VFL Record' Round: 7 1930

LEAGUE PLAYERS OFFICIAL NUMBERS

(COPYRIGHT.)

| NORTH MELBOURNE. (Royal Blue and White.) | CARLTON. (Dark Blue.) |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1—LEWIS, J. (Capt.) | 1—CLOVER, H. R. (Vice-capt.) |
| 2—JERRAM, G. | 2—MARTYN, C. |
| 3—McCABE, M. | 3—McSWAIN, C. |
| 4—PAUL, J. | 4—MARTYN, A. |
| 7—DONNELLY, G. | 5—COLLINS, N. |
| 8—ADAMSON, J. | 6—GILBY, F. |
| 9—GREGORY, J. | 7—KELLY, J. |
| 10—HEFFERNAN, N. | 9—HUXTABLE, E. |
| 11—KEMP, C. | 10—KELLEHER, D. |
| 12—HEENAN, J. | 11—FLYNN, W. |
| 13—DOWLING, W. J. | 12—SKEHAN, A. |
| 14—MORRISEY, J. | 14—GREEN, J. |
| 15—DEA, T. | 15—JOHNSON, M. |
| 16—COOK, E. | 17—DAVEY, C. |
| 17—THOMPSON, J. | 18—BYRNE, T. |
| 18—DEAN, F. | 19—DOYLE, A. |
| 19—WEIR, M. | 20—ALLEN, L. |
| 20—CAMERON, C. (Vice-Capt.) | 21—GILL, F. |
| 21—PERRETT, R. | 22—VALLENCE, H. |
| 22—CLAUSCEN, E. | 23—CROWE, J. |
| 23—BRODY, W. | 24—STEPHENSON, W. |
| 25—WELLS, F. | 25—THOMSON, H. |
| 26—KENNY, E. | 26—BREW, R. (Capt.) |
| 27—MATHEWS, R. | 27—PARSONS, C. |
| 28—SAUNDERS, O. | 29—WILLIAMS, F. |
| 30—KNOTT, J. | 30—ARTHUR, V. |
| 31—PETERS, H. | 31—CLARKE, A. |
| 32—ATKINS, L. | 32—DUNCAN, A. |
| 34—DONOVAN, J. | 33—SCHARP, B. |
| 35—DYKES, G. | 34—CRONE, L. |

Field Umpire—See No. on Scoring Board. See Page 26.

See Page 19 for Progress Scores of the other Games, Page 27 for Racing Programme.

WATCH THE "RECORD" SCORING BOARD.

Bert Peters wore number 31 in the match against Carlton. Although North Melbourne started well that day, Carlton 'ran over the top' of the home team in the second half and won by 50 points. Les Allen, who kicked six goals that day for Carlton, was cleared to North Melbourne in 1932. Bob Mathews, who kicked three goals for NMFC, was cleared to Essendon in 1935. Bert Peters played 12 matches for NMFC in 1930.

This match report from the Round: 10 match, North Melbourne v Hawthorn, at the Glenferrie Oval was published in 'The Age' (July 7th 1930 Page: 6)...

North's display was very pleasing. Cameron and Lewis again giving a fine display of first-class football. Spry kicked long distances in defence, and was ably supported by Knott, Dea, Gregory and Clarke. Carter struck his best form at roving, Morrissey played well in the centre, Mathews was very accurate in the forward zone, and Paul, Jerram, Smith, Peters and O'Shea (his first game) were conspicuous for good play.

Goal Kickers.—Hawthorn: Hyde (4), Ryan (3), Poole (2), L. Mills and A. Mills. North Melbourne: Mathews (3), Carter (3), Lewis (2), Paul, Peters and Cameron.

Hawthorn won a 'nail-biter' by four points that day. In the match report Bert was noted as being conspicuous for his good play and kicked his first goal in VFL football. Bert Peter played 12 VFL games in 1930 and a further five in 1931 before stepping down from VFL ranks. His last VFL game was against St Kilda at the Junction Oval on May 30th 1931.

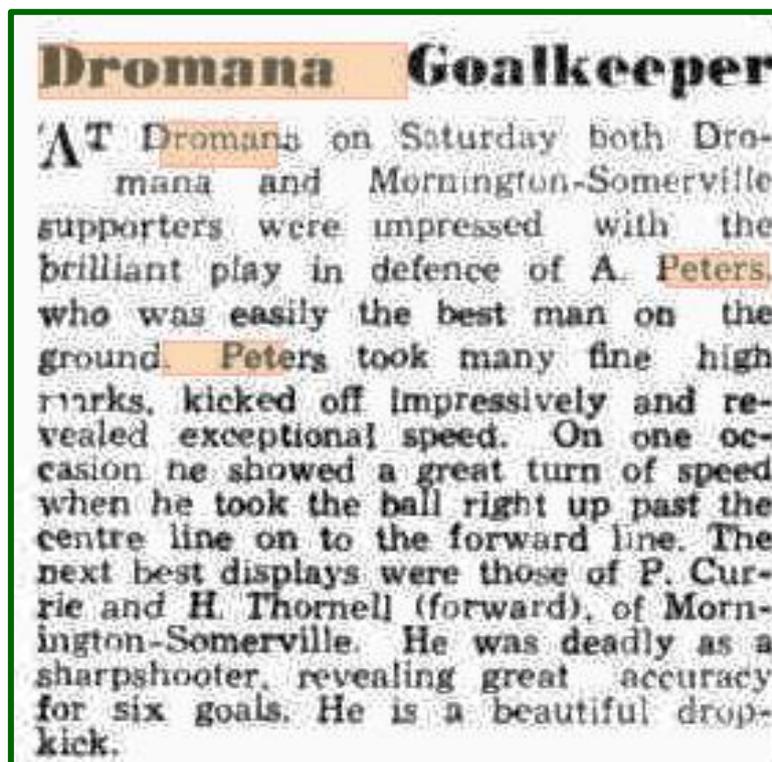
On that day his coach was Norman Childers 'Hackenschmidt' Clark (shown below) who had played 126 games with Carlton (1905-1912). North Melbourne went down by 45 points with St Kilda's legendary spearhead Bill Mohr kicking three goals. Bert Peters was just 22 years of age when he stepped away from VFL ranks.



Bert Peters' coach in his farewell game in VFL Football- The famous Norm Clark.

A little known fact, regarding Bert's seventeen appearances with North Melbourne, was that he never played in a winning side. The team's average margin of defeat, in games in which Bert played, was approximately 56 points per game. It is fair to say, that Bert Peters had experienced a cheerless time at VFL level; and perhaps that is why he looked elsewhere to play football?

Bert returned to 'the bush' and starred with Wonthaggi, Tooradin and eventually arrived at Dromana District in 1937.



This extract was taken from the 'Weekly Times' on August 7th 1937. Bert's brilliant defensive play, fine high marking and speed are mentioned. Bert was a standout player for the Dromana District in 1937.

Bert is often mentioned in match reports but one of the riddles, of that season, was that he did not play in **any** of the finals that year . As can be seen from the Grand Final line-up, Bert was not selected. It is puzzling and deserves further investigation.

cession. Final scores:—
Dromana District 11—14
Frankston 8—14
The whole team played well for Dromana District but those outstanding were Branchi, Murray, Wiseman, Trewin and J. Russell.
Frankston's team pulled well together, but one who played extra football was Houlihan.

THE PLAYERS

DROMANA DISTRICT'S PREMIER TEAM

E. Pritchard (capt.), R. Hosking, F. White, G. Humphrey, A. Waldron, R. Edwards, T. Cleine, B. Temby, R. Trewin, P. Branchi, G. Gourlay, C. White, R. Wilson, H. Wilson, G. King, J. Russell, L. Wiseman, A. Murray, H. Holmes.

Bert was appointed as coach of Sorrento in 1938...

“Albert, known as Bert, played with Tooradin (1934-36), Dromana (1937), Sorrento (1938-1940) playing coach, known affectionately by the colour of his thick fair hair -Snowy. In 1940 Sorrento lost the Grand Final to Somerville-Baxter.” Source: Roger Dunkley Sorrento FNC.



A photograph of the Sorrento team in 1938. There were no names listed but perhaps Bert Peters is in the centre of the middle row. Caption text: “Country Football: Frankston Defeat Sorrento. Frankston, the leading team in the Mornington Peninsula Football League defeated Sorrento 14.23 to 10.12 at Frankston on Saturday.” Source: ‘The Weekly Times’ July 16th 1938. Page: 35.

Although there was some ‘idle chatter’ about Carlton’s champion midfielder, Mickey Crisp, leading Sorrento in 1940, Bert Peters took on the position as shown below (Source: The Standard April 12th 1940 Page: 6).

CRISP NOT FOR BORRENTO.

Now, from Sorrento states that there is no truth in the rumor, current in Frankston, that Micky Crisp, the Carlton and interstate footballer, is to be playing coach of Sorrento this season. "Snowy" Peters, who led Sorrento in the finals last year, has again been appointed coach. Sorrento officials discounted rumors that they had appointed Crisp for the position, although suggestions may have been put to him while in military camp at that end of the Peninsula. Sorrento expects to field two teams this season.

WEDDING BELLS

Mr A. Peters, head teacher of Red Hill, was joined in happy marriage to Miss Ruby Kernot, daughter of Mr and Mrs T. Kernot, of Tooradin, at Christ Church, Tooradin, by Rev. Daunt. The happy couple, after their honeymoon, will settle at Red Hill.

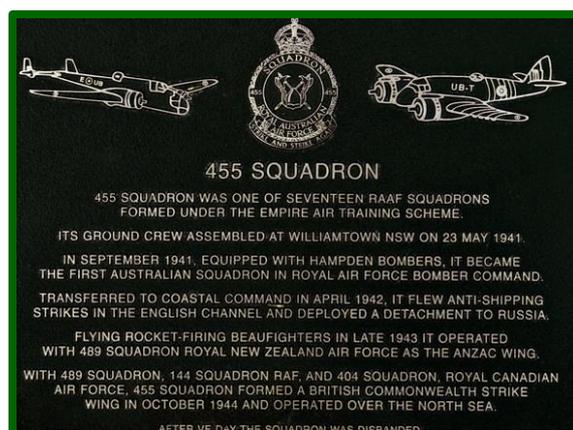
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Bert Peters married Ruby Kernot in September 1939

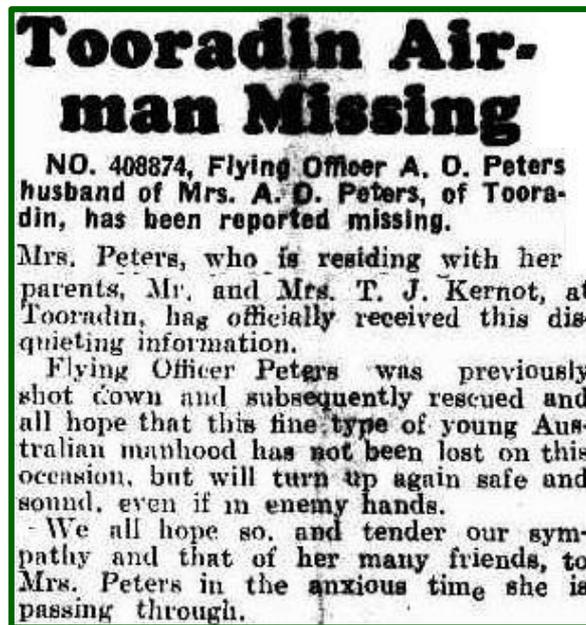
Source: 'The Dandenong Journal' September 27th 1939 Page: 9

BERT PETERS ENLISTS FOR WAR DUTY

As was the case with other Dromana players in that match (e.g. Wally Guy, Bert Aust, Les Wiseman, and the McLear bros.), Bert enlisted for war service in the RAAF (Service No: 408874) on the 29th June 1941. RAAF records indicate that Bert was posted to 455 Squadron RAAF; and, in 1943, was stationed at St Eval, in Cornwall, with the 53 Squadron RAF (Coastal Command).



The missions of pilots and aircrews in World War: II were most perilous. Younger readers may not be aware that the life expectancy of airmen, during the height of World War: II, was measured in weeks; not months; and, on June 13th 1944, Bert perished in action somewhere over the English Channel.



Source: 'Dandenong Journal' July 19th 1944. Page: 1

The following excerpt is taken from Australian War Memorial archives...

"...408874 Flying Officer Albert Otto Peters RAAF... A school teacher of Tooradin, Victoria, he enlisted on 20 June 1941. He trained in Australia and Canada as an Observer and Navigator and arrived in England in June 1943.

.....On the night of 13 June 1944, the 53 Squadron B-24 Liberator BZ818/C, in which he crewed as navigator, took off from St Eval at 2130 hours to conduct an anti-submarine patrol south-west of Ushant, France in the Bay of Biscay.

At 2355 hours, the aircraft sent a flash message that they had sighted a U-boat on the surface and were going to attack. Nothing further was heard and the aircraft failed to return. It was learned later that U-270 had shot down the Liberator at 2359 hours after the aircraft's inner starboard engine was hit by the U-boat's 20mm anti-aircraft fire."

Bert's body was never recovered; and his name is now honoured (for those fallen in action without a known grave) at the Air Force Memorial, at Runnymede Surrey, in England. It is not widely appreciated in Australia, that the Runnymede Memorial is dedicated to 20,456 airmen/ women who died in World War:II. Bert Peters is just one of many Australians who died without a 'traditional and fitting' burial service.

|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Service number | 408874 |
| Rank | Flying Officer |
| Unit | No. 53 Squadron (RAF) |
| Service | Royal Australian Air Force |
| Conflict/Operation | Second World War, 1939-1945 |
| Conflict Eligibility Date | Second World War, 1939-1947 |
| Date of Death | 13 June 1944 |
| Place of Death | English Channel |
| Cause of Death | Flying Battle |
| Cemetery or Memorial Details | Runnymede Memorial, Surrey, England, United Kingdom |



The RAF , St Eval Cornwall, Memorial to those airmen who lost their lives in action.

According to 'ozgenilone.com' website, memorial headstones for Albert and Ruby Peters can be viewed at the Anglican Church Memorial Gardens in Tooradin as shown below...



The Memorial Gardens of Tooradin.

In conclusion, further information, as recorded by Roger Dunkley, FNC also refers to the existing memorials for Albert and Ruby in Tooradin...

“Albert Otto Peters played with NMFC (1930-32). Recruited from Wonthaggi, his parents are buried in the local cemetery. The family came from St. Arnaud in 1918. Father Eric Carl PETERS was repatriated from the Boer War... A primary teacher by profession he taught at Tooradin North for several years then Red Hill South where a memorial stands today in the Peace Garden, at the behest of the former student and shire president Keith Holmes.

Another memorial for Snowy and his wife Ruby Anzac Kernot rests in the All Saints Church Tooradin, Ruby's home town. Snowy taught violin: his school team won an award at Sorrento Talent Show.” Source: Roger Dunkley, Sorrento FNC 12th August 2014.

CAN YOU HELP WITH DFNC HISTORY?

It is disappointing that so few people, who reside on the Mornington Peninsula, appreciate the life of Albert Otto Peters. He deserves recognition and, above all gratitude, for his supreme sacrifice in a far-flung battle during World War:II.

Both Sorrento and Dromana clubs would like to uncover more details about Bert Peter’s background and football career. Perhaps there are readers who can assist in this quest. Photographs of Bert would be appreciated and valued. Please contact DFNC if you can assist in this project. Thank you. Roger for DFNC

DFNC HISTORY PAGE WEBSITE–‘PRESERVING OUR PAST’

A list of other articles related to the club’s history can be found at:

<http://www.dromanatigers.com.au/newsite/history.html>

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: NLA –The Australian War Memorial- Commonwealth War Graves website- MPNFL archives- Roger Dunkley (SFNC) Rosebud Public Library and personal files.

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