

Thank God for atomic bombs

Alex Ward

FOR his 21st birthday Bob Shoobridge was given an extra rice cake.

He was a prisoner of war for 3½ years in Japanese-controlled territory in North China and Malaya during World War II.

Of the 181 men in his division, Mr Shoobridge, 89, of Abbotsford, and one other, survived. "I was lucky to make it home," he said.

"If it wasn't for the atomic bombs I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you - it forced the Japs to surrender."

He survived on two saucers of soya beans a day.

"We got friendly fire when the Yanks bombed our camp," Mr Shoobridge said.

"These 2000-tonne bombs were landing on ice which put enormous pressure on the body but I was lucky."

He also suffered "tremendous dysentery" but a Japanese soldier gave him soya beans and rice for three days.

"He said it would taste terrible but I was weak as a kitten so I ate it," he said.

"There was medicine in the food he gave us.

"He would've got his head chopped off if he'd been found out."

His parents and sister were relieved to see him safely home when he did finally return.

"All they'd had was one little card from me saying everything's all right," he said.

Mr Shoobridge's grandchildren have heard some of his stories. "They've got my medals," Mr Shoobridge said.



Bob Shoobridge reflects on his time in captivity.

Picture: PHIL BLATCH -PP443108

PRISONER OF WAR

- The POW camp where Mr Shoobridge was in Mukden, Manchuria (northeast China).
- Inmates included 1400 Americans, 81 British, 3 New Zealanders and 16 Australians in 1942.
- About 140,000 prisoners were taken into POW camps in Japanese-occupied countries including Taiwan and Singapore.
- America dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Within days of the second attack, Japan had surrendered.

Health care for veterans
Bob Shoobridge is assisted by Regal Health Services which provides community healthcare to veterans.

The 45-year-old service has helped 55,000 veterans. It was established by mother and daughter Patricia and Anna Shepherd after immediate family members served in both world wars.

ANZAC DAY

MONDAY 25TH APRIL



5.00AM MARCH

5.15AM DAWN SERVICE

FOLLOWED BY BREAKFAST

TWO UP FROM MIDDAY

21/02/08/ 21/4

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Anzac Day

Monday
April 25th



- Huge 2-up arena from 12 noon
- Food and Drink specials
- Live coverage of NRL ANZAC clash on our Brand New Big Screen

The Royal
Wedding
Reception

Friday
April 29th 7-11pm

WATCH HISTORY IN THE MAKING ON OUR NEW BIG SCREEN AS PRINCE WILLIAM WEDS KATE MIDDLETON IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

\$4 glasses of champagne

prizes for best dressed



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