

Help Needed to Write Queensland History Collecting Memories and Writing History

Joanne Tapiolas from Townsville is researching the history of Italian prisoners of war in Queensland with the assistance of Queensland families and is interested in talking with families in the Gaythorne/Enoggera suburbs about their memories of the Gaythorne Prisoner of War & Internment Camp and the Italian POWs.

The project 'Footprints of Italian Prisoners of War in Queensland 1943 - 1946' encompasses the ten Queensland Centres: Q1 Stanthorpe, Q2 Nambour, Q3 Gympie, Q4 Gayndah, Q5 Texas, Q6 Home Hill, Q7 Kenilworth, Q8 Kingaroy, Q9 Monto and Q10 Boonah and the Gaythorne Prisoner of War & Internment Camp.

Many Queenslanders are unaware of this history but Queensland families are digging into the past and uncovering photos, gifts and letters associated with their Italian POWs. Their stories are featured on the project's website: italianprisonersofwar.com

Government documents provide the 'black and white' record but Queenslanders provide the 'colour'. While a memory or memento might seem insignificant, every small recollection or detail adds perspective and assists in building a comprehensive history.

The Italian prisoners of war wore clothing that was burgundy in colour. They would have come into the area by train then



For Italian prisoners of war the first stop in Queensland was at the Gaythorne Prisoner of War & Internment Camp and became the 'parent' camp for all Italian POWs in Queensland before they were moved onward to the farming communities. It also had a hospital unit and a detention compound. From November 1945 and up to 23 March 1946, the 1500 POWs were withdrawn from farms and brought to Gaythorne until onward movement to Cowra and Hay could be arranged transported in covered army trucks to the Gaythorne Camp. Possibly, local men might have signed up for army service and were then assigned duties as camp staff. The photo was taken at Yanco, NSW but highlights a group young Italian soldiers who had been captured in the North African Campaigns and were sent to Australia as prisoners of war. Pictured in the photo are Giovanni D'Aniello, Edoardo Corvo and Gaetano Musella who spent time at Gaythorne before onward movement to Q6 Prisoner of War Control Hostel Home Hill.

For further information and/or to contribute your story, Joanne Tapiolas can be contacted at joannetappy@gmail.com

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