

In their own words

EVERY YEAR A SELECT FEW AUSTRALIANS ARE SINGLED OUT FOR RECOGNITION IN THE AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS LIST. THIS IS THE ONE TIME OF THE YEAR THAT THE WORK AND DEDICATION OF MANY 'UNKNOWN' CITIZENS IS APPLAUDED. WE HAVE ROUNDED UP FOUR OF OUR LOCAL 'WINNERS' TO GET THEM TO SHARE WITH US THEIR STORIES.



Olwyn Green

Olwyn Green, 82, was awarded an Order of Australia “for service to the community recording and documenting military history and to the welfare of veterans and their families”.

rial was being built in Lismore to honour his military service. He had been a Commanding Officer in the three branches of the military.

I had never really come to terms with his death. When I learned of the memorial I thought it was time I learned about this outstanding soldier who had been my husband for only seven years. I knew him only as the tall dark handsome man I had married and borne a child to. His presence has never left me. Charlie Green - Lt Col Charles Green DSO, Silver Star (USA) - had died aged 30, back at war commanding another battalion in Korea. Aged 16 he joined the CMF; he spent six years on active service in World War II. When that war ended he was still only 25 and he was commanding an AIF Battalion in the Wewak campaign in New Guinea. In 1950, for his experience and his reputation, he was selected as the Commanding Officer of the first Australian Battalion to the Korean War.

It was that Lismore memorial that changed my life. The realisation came to me with a shock. "Thirty years after he has died, someone thinks sufficiently of him to build a memorial in his honour." I decided it was time I discovered Charlie the soldier, and I soon learned how great a soldier he was.

After years of research, laying bare his past and shedding many tears, I had my memoir biography of him published. It is called *The Name's Still Charlie* and it covers his short life, spent almost entirely in the military.

Charlie had died only six weeks after he took his Battalion, 3 RAR, into action in Korea. So for the published book I had only partially researched the Korean War. But I did learn that few Australians are aware of the great reputation our wonderful diggers earned in Korea. Though a small force in the UN army, they could stand out. In that bloody war, known as The Forgotten War, 339 of

them died. So significant was the slouch hat, only a couple of days ago from a US Korean War Veteran I got a plea for a memento - a slouch hat. I felt Australians needed to know the diggers' stories. That is how I became engaged in collecting, documenting and writing, particularly about the Korean War. I organised the material into a collection that is in the Australian War Memorial - I have become a military history junky. What has captured my intense interest is the experience of war. It is difficult for the survivors to document it. In Korea the bitter cold was enemy enough, let alone the daily brush with death. What engaged me most was that despite the horror, their experience is remembered as rich in a way that only they can fully understand or convey. The award I received on Australia Day is, I hope a tribute to their stories. That is the source of my satisfaction.

Norma Geribo, was awarded an Order of Australia “for service to the community of Canada Bay and to women’s soccer”.

All my life I have enjoyed organising. Teaching was my chosen career and I loved every day of it. As a kid I haunted my brother and his friends joining in any game going - be it cricket, football, tops or marbles. At high school I played netball in the school team and went on to play competition tennis after I left school and indeed until I started coaching soccer.

When my five-year-old son joined Five Dock RSL Soccer Club coaches were in short supply. My husband had volunteered to be an assistant manager knowing nothing about the game, so we started from scratch. We bought a rule book and a junior coaching manual and I



Olwyn and her late husband, Charlie when he was on leave in 1944, pictured with another soldier Ronald Diamond

On Australia Day this year, aged 82, I was awarded an OAM for my contribution to Australian military history. I retired from teaching in 1979. A few months later, I had a bolt out of the blue. Thirty years after my husband had died in the Korean War, a memo-