

DIGITAL EDITION 1 | DECEMBER 2016



THE SIGNAL



RSL SOUTH AUSTRALIA | NORTHERN TERRITORY | BROKEN HILL



YOUR SIGNAL - IN AN ALL-NEW FORMAT

Welcome to your first digital issue of *The Signal*. On behalf of the RSL, I acknowledge your acceptance of this significant change - one that has been made in tune with contemporary publishing developments.

It's just the start of a new chapter in our communication outreach. Next year we'll have another three online editions (late April, focusing on ANZAC Day coverage; late August, straight after Vietnam Veterans Day; and late November, following Remembrance Day), plus three printed issues (late March; June/July; early October).

All this, as I say, represents a big shift. But the role of your *Signal* remains precisely the same: to proclaim the aspirations and achievements of the RSL - and to engage with our loyal members accordingly.

Nigel Starck Editor *The Signal*

Cover image: RSL 'ghost platoon' member Craig Barnden in reflective mood (see story page 5)

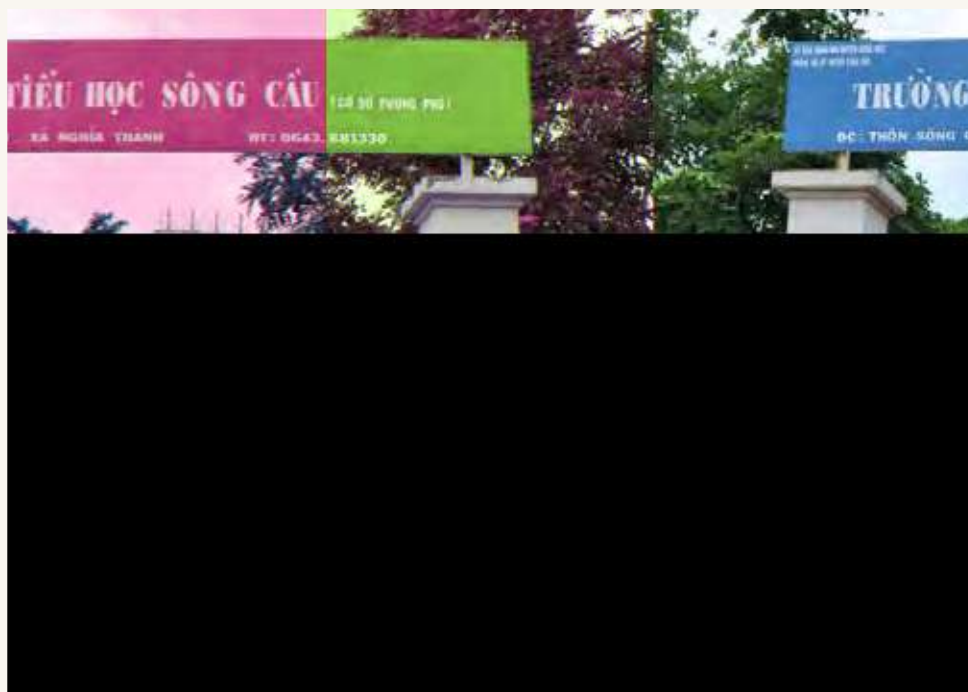
State President Premier's prize and poppies - now Repat review

Remembrance is very much the theme of this digitised edition of *The Signal* - our first issue in this new three-times-a-year format. It can be found in coverage of Remembrance Day itself, and of the Poppy Appeal's annual launch.

My own encounter with this element of the RSL calendar began a month ahead of the November commemorations when I had the privilege of joining the Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize study tour of Vietnam. My companions in this picture (at a Nui Dat primary school supported financially by Australian veterans) are the students themselves, along with (*far left of frame*) Cendall Slattery (a teacher from Lock Area School) and Malcolm McInerney (tour coordinator). Using some of the knowledge that I gained from a 2013 trip to Vietnam with a group of veterans, the students spent 10 days learning about the build-up to the Vietnam War and Australia's involvement in it. Before that, they each undertook research on an Australian soldier from the Vietnam War.

An important component of the study tour was to understand the effect of war on the country. All students agreed that the trip, which has been supported by the RSL since its inception, was a life-changing experience. Students have now been asked to engage with their local RSL sub-branch and community to describe what they learnt.

As well as remembering service and sacrifice, the RSL-SA has some compelling reasons for looking to the future. In particular, we encounter a revised set of opportunities and challenges in development of the Repatriation General Hospital site. RSL LifeCare, the lead partner in the RSL consortium for The Repat redevelopment project, withdrew from the contract negotiations with the state government last month.



While this is disappointing, the second-placed consortium led by the ACH Group will now have the opportunity to deliver their solution at Daw Park.

The early and productive discussions I have had with the ACH Group give me great confidence that many of the aspects that we aspired to in the original solution will be included in the new one. Importantly, ACH has made a commitment to ensure that many of the aspects which veterans hold so dear - commemoration and health services - will be part of an ACH outcome. The RSL will be involved to ensure that veterans' requirements are properly considered. The ACH Group is a South Australian not-for-profit organisation which has been supporting older South Australians since 1952. It offers a wide range of services, including retirement and residential accommodation options, domestic, personal and nursing care in the home, respite choices and short-term transition services. Many veterans are amongst its clients, and ACH has a close link to the War Widows Guild.

Tim Hanna AM
Brigadier
State President

Chief Executive Officer

Counting the days – until Dad comes home

The RSL's inaugural art exhibition was truly a family celebration in creativity. My daughter Jaymee, 18, was the youngest exhibitor; we're pictured alongside her 'Paper Chains' – a reflection in watercolour of her childhood in an army family. Her father, Doug, completed the family touch by making the frame.



Jaymee remembers when Doug deployed. Back then, I made paper chains to help her – and her brothers – understand how long he would be away: one link in the chain for every day.

Each night at bedtime the children would take turns in removing a link; another day closer to the end of the chain and Dad coming home. As Jaymee puts it: "The world saw my Dad the army officer. I just saw my Dad."

ADF families are remarkably resilient but separation from their loved ones during deployment is always difficult and has a lasting impact. RSL-SA is determined to create activities which support such families, making separation and transition a little easier on everyone.

In total, there were 92 exhibits on display, representing the creative efforts of 29 artists. All were veterans, or closely associated with veterans through family connections. Some are living with PTSD; art therapy has provided them with an opportunity to connect with others who have similar experiences. Through our newly launched initiative RSL Active, we are helping ease the transition from military to civilian life. The exhibition has proved to be an important part in that process.

Julia Langrehr
Chief Executive Officer

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GHOSTS AND BUGGLERS *hail* REMEMBRANCE *spirit*



'Ghost soldiers' served as the advance guard for our 2016 Remembrance rituals. Dressed in the uniforms of conflicts past, they confronted commuters at Adelaide railway station, paused in commemorative mood at the National War Memorial (*above*), and marched down Rundle Mall. Each carried a card bearing the name and service details of an Australian casualty of war. The 'ghost platoon' – comprising members of military re-enactment groups and RSL volunteers – had one major objective: building community awareness for Remembrance Day itself.

Two days later, at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of November, four RSL-recruited buglers added their plaintive note to the mood. Stationed at strategic locations around town, they sounded *Last Post* in unison with the bugle call from the National War Memorial on North Terrace, followed by a minute's silence and then *Rouse*. "We re-created the mood of

remembrance and respect for the fallen that prevailed in the 1950s," said Julia Langrehr, chief executive officer of the RSL-SA.

Our quartet of civilian musicians comprised Brian Fleming and Davis Moss (Enfield Brass Band), Nick Cooke (Glenelg), and David Mounsey (Kensington & Norwood). They inspired a generous response to our annual Poppy Appeal, which raises essential funds for current and former members of the Defence Forces, and their dependants, at times of need. It supports such vital causes as assistance dogs for veterans afflicted by stress-related conditions, and the RSL's emergency housing program for homeless veterans.

Flanking the wreath-strewn war memorial was the Field of Remembrance, displaying crosses planted by school groups and individual mourners. The field this year was enhanced by outsize plastic poppies, crafted from plastic drink containers by children from the Little Picassos art studio.

On the sports field, Adelaide United wore a Remembrance Day strip for its A-League clash with Brisbane Roar. The design featured a poppy, a lone soldier, and an HMAS *Adelaide* insignia. Shirts are still available through the club, with \$20 from every sale being donated to the Poppy Appeal.

The match concluded with presentation of the Tomas Dale medal, in memory of a soldier killed in 2010 by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Private Dale, aged 21, from Reynella, was a soccer enthusiast. The medal, for the player adjudged by match officials to have displayed the most sporting attitude on the night, went to United's Jordan O'Doherty.



Throughout the RSL family at large, the Remembrance mood was echoed – in a truly collective exercise of observance.

(RSL-SA acknowledges, with gratitude, the contribution made by ASC as our principal Poppy Appeal sponsor.)

REMEMBRANCE PICTURE GALLERY



SERVICE NUMBER: VX5403
NAME: Private James Kenneth Atock
UNIT: 2nd/7 Infantry Battalion - World War 2
 Executed (POW of Germany, shot while escaping) on 13 July 1941
 Aged 22 years

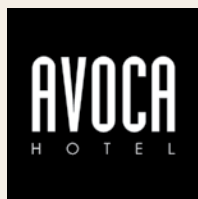




Capturing the Remembrance spirit (clockwise from left above): Blackwood commuter Fiona Berzins buys her poppy from ghost collectors at Adelaide Railway Station; spectral calling cards for city workers; ghost of the Boer War with Operation K9 dogs ready for action; (inset) every card told a story of loss in war; Jordan O'Doherty receives the Tomas Dale Medal from Tomas's parents, Karen and David Dale; giant poppy emblem unfurled for the pre-match minute's silence at Coopers Stadium; CEO Julia Langrehr displays the Tomas Dale Medal, with Adelaide United players Ben Garuccio (left) and Michael Marrone in their Poppy Appeal jerseys

REMEMBRANCE PICTURE GALLERY



Echoes and images of Remembrance 2016 (clockwise from left above): Poppies made at Little Picassos art studio; Field of Remembrance crosses planted by St Peter's Woodlands school; RSL bugler quartet (left to right) David Moss, David Mounsey, Nick Cooke, Brian Fleming; catafalque party sentry at AIF Cemetery, West Terrace (AIF Cemetery photo credit: James Fitzroy)



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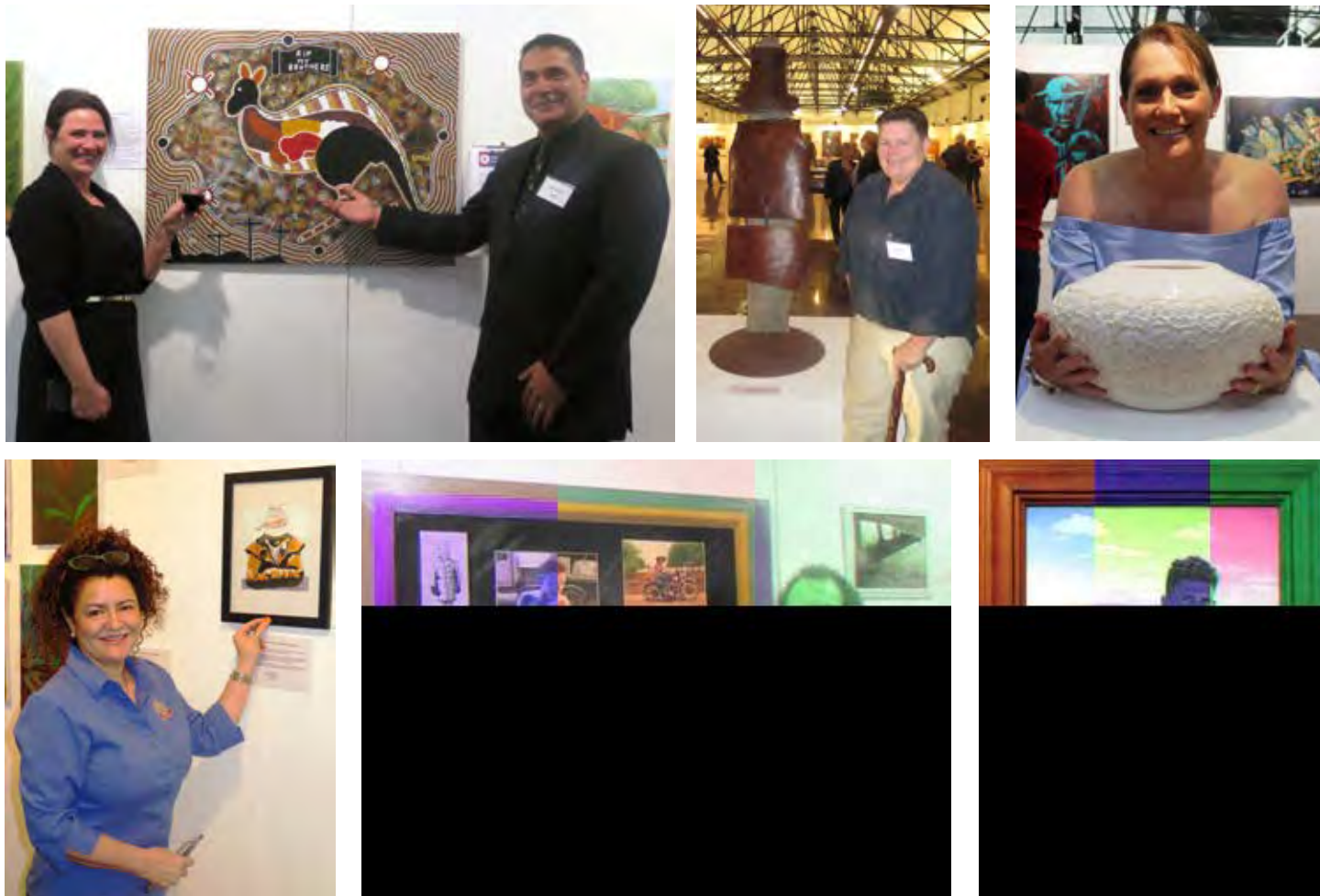
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Ripples of Reflection

Creative artistry for a good cause



The RSL’s inaugural art exhibition attracted an outstanding response – with 92 exhibits by 29 artists. Artist participation was open to RSL-SA members and families, as well as serving and ex-service personnel and their families.

“We encouraged freedom of expression through the visual arts, and our exhibitors truly embraced the opportunity,” says the principal organiser, RSL events manager Nel Aldrete.

Entitled *Ripples of Reflection*, it was all in a good cause too: many entries were donated for ‘silent auction’ in aid of RSL programs – such as assistance dogs for veterans suffering stress-related conditions or emergency housing for homeless veterans. Further proceeds, including the entry fee and pop-up coffee shop sales, went to RSL Active, which supports former members of the Armed Services in their transition from military to

civilian life. The exhibition raised a total of \$4,816 for RSL funds.

Our exhibitors included a group from ‘The Road Home’, an art-based rehabilitation program run at the Repatriation General Hospital. Among this creative platoon was infantry veteran Casey Amos. In the explanatory notes to his powerful acrylic-on-canvas work entitled *Kangaroo Struggles*, Casey said: “I struggle with memories and nightmares of five mates I have lost ... the five best soldiers and brothers I have ever known.” He acknowledged the role that art – and the RSL – has played in his gradual recovery.

(RSL-SA acknowledges, with gratitude, the contribution made by Saab Australia as the exhibition’s sponsor.)

Clockwise from left above: Casey Amos and his fiancée Cindy Hollyfield with *Kangaroo Struggles*; Jodie Willman with her wood carving *Ned*; Debra Fairbanks-Smith and her ceramic *Souvenirs de France*; Jack ‘Tex’ Weston DCM MM, oil on canvas by Barry Spicer; artist Neil Griffin strokes his beard and reflects upon *Self-Portrait*, a study of his colourful life; events manager Nel Aldrete puts a ‘sold’ sticker on *Drover At Rest* by Douglas Brooks, of ‘The Road Home’ rehabilitation program

Pozières remembered at Riverland dinner

Barmera RSL members gathered in strength for a Pozières commemorative dinner in October. The two featured speakers were military surgeon Rob Baird and Barmera vice-president Peter Tucker, a specialist on Western Front history. With an attendance of 90, secretary Chris Rolfe reports that the event raised more than \$1,000 for club funds.



Blazing a seaside trail for charity

An RSL squad of 16 (and a dog) completed the Semaphore-Henley *Trailblazer By The Sea* charity walk on October 30. The event was organised by Rotary and Surf Life Saving SA, with our Virtual War Memorial fund featuring among the beneficiaries. RSL operations director Corey Starkey and his son Matthew, 15, were first across the line – some 40 minutes ahead of others in the squad. They had apparently overlooked the word ‘walk’, and ran the whole way.

Members of the RSL group heading off from Semaphore, with president Tim Hanna (extreme left of frame) and Virtual War Memorial founder Steve Larkins (accompanied by his dog Zelda) setting the early pace, alongside RSL executives Darren Adamson (wearing No. 8003) and Corey Starkey (No. 8087)

DEFENCE

There’s no hidin’ from our Poseidon

The first member of the RAAF’s new P-8A Poseidon fleet won a prime ministerial accolade on its arrival in Canberra from the Boeing factory. In his speech of welcome, Malcolm Turnbull said the Poseidon would “dominate the skies over our nation’s coastline”.

Australian Associated Press defence correspondent Max Blenkin has emphasised the versatility of this “grey albatross of an aircraft” designed to spot people smugglers or to attack enemy submarines. The Poseidons are replacing the RAAF’s 19 Orion maritime patrol

aircraft in a project costing more than \$5 billion.

The 15-strong fleet will be based at RAAF Edinburgh, eventually operating in conjunction with Triton unmanned surveillance aircraft. Their job is to keep watch over Australia’s 14 million square kilometres of surrounding ocean.

The Orion has served Australia well for more 30 years. But, says the RAAF, the Poseidon can fly faster, higher, further – and, with aerial refueling, has the capacity to stay in the sky for up to 20 hours, armed with torpedoes and missiles.



Photo Department of Defence

Australia’s first P-8A Poseidon (foreground) arrives at RAAF Fairbairn, Canberra – next to one of the Orions it’s replacing

Top RSL club takes the title again

Education programs for youth, a refurbished museum, upgraded kitchen, and new bowling greens – they’re the ingredients for sustained success at Murray Bridge.

They certainly impressed the judges at Clubs SA (the industry body representing licensed clubs throughout the state). The trophy for ‘Best RSL Club 2016’ was presented to Murray Bridge at the Clubs SA awards night in early October, following a similar success last year.

“The judges highlighted our efforts to educate the younger people of the Murraylands about the sacrifices made by men and women from the district who had gone off to war,” says vice-president Dave Laing. “The recently opened Bob Channon RSL museum was another feature which scored highly in the judging comments.”

In an interview with his local newspaper, *The Murray Valley Standard*, president Merv Schopp added: “What got us over the line was the amount of work we do supporting young veterans, our work with mental health, and our work with schools. We’re not just here to serve meals and drinks, we’re here to support our community.”

The club has already decided on a place to show off the 2016 trophy – mounted on the wall, right next to the 2015 Club of the Year award.

Two in a row: Murray Bridge RSL president Merv Schopp, secretary Sue Allam, and vice-president David Laing with the club’s latest trophy



(Photo courtesy *The Murray Valley Standard*)

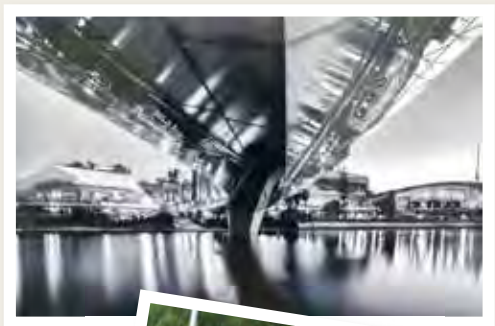
Camera brings peace – and a new career

James Fitzroy – former combat engineer and now professional photographer – was the star turn at our latest RSL Connect evening. The focus was on his entries in the recent RSL art exhibition, and how photography has changed his life.

Interviewed by Julia Langrehr, he told the gathering that he had found the “peace and quiet” to overcome the PTSD that had previously troubled him. “It gives you time to breathe,” he said. “It helps you calm down.”

The sheer quality of his entries in the exhibition, by way of contrast, created some considerable excitement.

Below: ‘Under the Bridge’ exhibition entry; James Fitzroy focuses on his new career



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Angry seagulls forced Lancaster back to base

When World War 2 ended, Bomber Command pilot Ernest Milde took his ground crew for an inspection flight across the English Channel – but had to make a hasty return to base when attacked by seagulls. They scored three direct hits on his Lancaster, taking out the gun turret and damaging the navigation.



Clockwise from above left: Flying Officer Ernest Milde tells the ambassador about the seagull attack; family group congratulates Flight Lieutenant David Leicester DFC and Bar; Flying Officer David Mattingley DFC and his wife, Christobel; Flying Officer Colin Watt DFM and family members

This story of avian flak emerged as Flying Officer Milde, 92, of Linden Park, was being presented with his Legion of Honour insignia by the French ambassador to Australia, Mr Christophe Lecourtier.

“And they were French seagulls!” he complained to the ambassador.

In this latest ceremony acknowledging military contributions to the liberation of France, 10 SA veterans were made *chevaliers* (knights) of the Legion, an order established by Napoléon Buonaparte in 1802.

Mr Lecourtier told them: “I have come today to tell you, in the name of the French Republic, that we have not forgotten – that we have remained grateful.”

Other ex-RAAF recipients of the award, conferred at the Adelaide Town Hall on September 30, were: Ralph Aston, of North Plympton; Leonard Bence, Burra; Keith Bruhn, Novar Gardens; Clive Hill, Grange; David Leicester, North Plympton; Donald Looker, Royston Park; David Mattingley, Stonyfell; and Hugh Watt, Glenelg South. The tenth newly created *chevalier* was Derek Dawson, of Hackham, a British army veteran.



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DON'T FORGET ME, COBBER – and they didn't



“The Virtual War Memorial is the only memorial of its kind nationally and internationally. It is unparalleled in its ability to capture the stories of every Australian serviceman or woman who has served our nation in times of conflict.”

With these words, Peter Williams, Virtual War Memorial board chairman, welcomed 362 guests to a lunch entitled *Don't Forget Me, Cobber* at Adelaide Oval in early October. Ticket profits, along with pledges and raffle sales, helped fund the ongoing operation of the VWM, RSL-SA's major Centenary of ANZAC initiative.



The chairman's own motivations are inspired by the wartime experiences of his father, Lieutenant Ronald Williams, who served in the 2nd/40th Infantry Battalion (known colloquially as 'The Doomed Battalion'). He survived imprisonment at Changi, the horrors of the Burma Railway, and slave labour in a Japanese coalmine. Today, his story – enlivened by diary entries – can be read in detail on the VWM.



As Peter Williams told the audience:

“This is a personal example, important to me, of precisely how every family from every community in the cities, to the country and outback areas of Australia, can preserve stories about their own hero.”

The main item on the menu was a panel discussion, led by Channel 7 newsreader Jane Doyle. Her family's hero, she said, was a great-uncle: Corporal Alexander Buckley, awarded the VC posthumously for gallantry on the Western Front in September 1918.

Panel members spoke of remembrance – in all its forms and across all conflicts. As Warrant Officer 1 Wayne Weeks, a panellist with multiple frontline deployment to his credit, put it: “The Virtual War Memorial offers us a fantastic opportunity to tell the stories of modern engagement in warfare.”

That mood was established from the very start of proceedings when Colonel Steve Larkins, founder of the VWM, delivered the Ode. “We will remember them,” he intoned, adding: “And when we say ‘we will remember them’, we mean it.”



Serves of reality for lunch (descending order from top of page): Channel 7's Jane Doyle and panel members (left to right) John Schumann (singer and songwriter), WO1 Wayne Weeks (regimental sergeant major, Adelaide Universities Regiment), Dr Brendan Nelson (director, Australian War Memorial), Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston (former chief of the Defence Force); VWM board chairman Peter Williams urges support for the VWM cause; the wartime experiences of Lt Ronald Williams, as pictured on the VWM website; WO1 Weeks hails the VWM's potential; dining in style, and in impressive numbers, at Adelaide Oval's Magarey Room

Veterans Exercise Programs

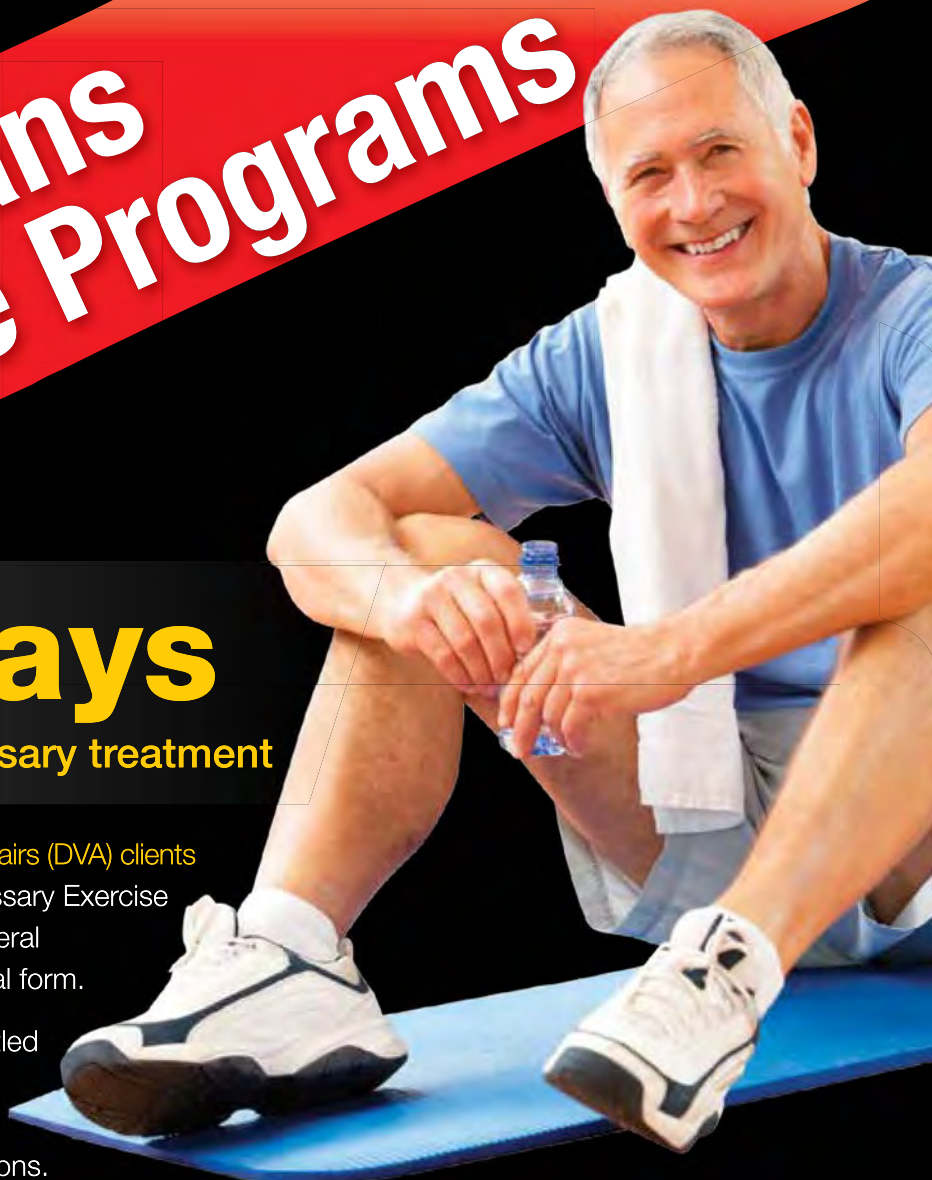
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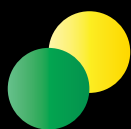
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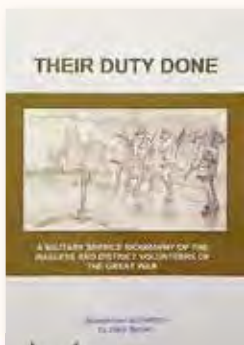


Blood, Sweat and Fears II

Three eminent military medical men – and a nursing professor – have combined to produce *Blood, Sweat and Fears II*. Its secondary title tells the full story: *Medical Practitioners of South Australia on active service after World War 2, 1945 – 1975*. The book has been published under the banner of the Army Health Services Historical Research Group. The text, says the publisher, supplies ‘personal reflections, as well as tragic and humorous insights’.

There is a famous Australian medevac image, from the Vietnam War, on the cover – used, refreshingly, without any politically correct erasure of the crewman’s cigarette. *Blood, Sweat and Fears II* is a sequel to the authors’ similar work on World War 1.

Both books are available through Openbook Howden (\$25 each); telephone 8124 0000; electronically at <http://bit.ly/2dz2aEi> or at <http://orders.openbookhowden.com.au/YourBooksOnline/products>



Their Duty Done

The honour roll at Wasleys – 66km north of Adelaide – lists 76 people from the district who served in World War 1. Their stories can now be read, through the publication of *Their Duty Done*, a book researched and written by military historian Daryl Barker.

His text brings back to life, in engaging detail, the service and sacrifice behind that list of names.

Their Duty Done (209 pages) costs \$25 plus postage. Available at these outlets:

Wasleys Community Group (wasleyscommunitygroupinc@gmail.com)

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Tony Piccolo MP (Member for Light), 148 Murray Street, Gawler 5118



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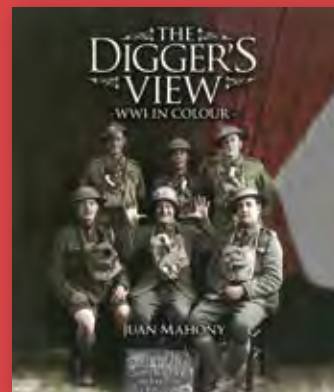
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