



MARCH 2018

# "Sitrep, Over!"

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC

## Payment of Subs etc.

This year is getting off to a great start, with over HALF our members now becoming financial, allowing our Association to continue its support of the 10th/27th Battalion in many ways. When paying your fees please direct them to the Treasurer, David Hope, and NOT to the Secretary David Laing. *Do NOT send them to the Secretary. He spends the money on lollies and lemonade!* Below is a list of Committee members who have specific jobs.

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## WW1 Gun at Murray Bridge RSL .....continued

The story in last months issue about the WW1 artillery piece being restored attracted quite a bit of interest from our readers, including the CO of the 10th / 27th Battalion, LTCOL Trent Burnard. As the gun traces its capture back to soldiers from the original 10th Battalion, the CO is anxious to assist when the time comes to unveiling the finished product. The date and time are still to be agreed on, but the likelihood is the ceremony will take place on Sunday 16th September this year at 1100 hrs. We expect a large gathering of visitors, including local dignitaries, RSL members, RSARA members and of course, a delegation from 10/27 Bn. We'll keep you all posted of all details as they come to hand.

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### Special points of interest:

- Copies of Max Carmichaels book *In Kilted Company* are now available from the Secretary David Laing. See details on Page 8
- The story of a 10th Bn soldier, William Westbury continues on Page 10.
- The 10/27 Bn Band is heading to Murray Bridge. Page 3.

# The History of the Royal South Australia Regiment (in 4 parts)

## Part 2.

Pre World War One.....continued

There were no imperial defence personnel in the colony until a detachment of 85 men from the 96<sup>th</sup> Regiment (Manchester) arrived from Hobart in October 1841. This was the first association of South Australia with what is now the King's Regiment, one of two British Regiments allied with the RSAR. A succession of company-sized detachments from a number of regiments then rotated through the colony until 1870, occupying barracks in successively Grenfell, Flinders and Topham Streets and from 1857, the building now known as the Police Barracks behind the Adelaide Museum.

The first body of South Australian volunteers was raised by Governor Gawler in 1840 and known as the Royal South Australian Volunteer Militia was to comprise light infantry and lancers. Due to the severe economic difficulties of the colony, it was short-lived and was disbanded after five months.

The Crimean War and the associated fears of attack by Russian warships led to the passing of the Militia Act 1854, which authorised the raising of two infantry battalions. With the passing of the fear of attack, volunteer enthusiasm waned and the force became moribund by 1856, but was reactivated in 1859 to comprise fourteen small rifle companies scattered throughout the colony. On 26<sup>th</sup> March 1860, these companies were grouped to form the Adelaide Regiment of Volunteer Rifles. It is, to this date that the RSAR traces its origins.

In the forty years to Federation, the fortunes of this force waxed and waned depending largely on public enthusiasm and the fears of the day. The American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War brought expansion. A visit by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1867 drew society favour and a short-lived change of name to the 'Prince Alfred Rifle Volunteers', although it seems to have remained popularly known then and henceforth, as the Adelaide Rifles. At times, the Regiment would comprise of up to three battalions and at others, fade to a couple of companies. The Regiments headquarters was located in a building on North Terrace where the Museum now stands, until moved in 1899 to a new shed in the vicinity of the present Torrens Drill Hall (occupied now by the RSL South Australia - ANZAC House).

Gradually, the military in South Australia became more sophisticated. In 1878, an Act was passed to form the South Australian Military Forces with a permanent Artillery component to man Fort Largs and Glanville. In addition to infantry, cavalry and artillery, added over the years were ambulance, signal and machine gun corps. In 1894, South Australia joined with other colonies in discussing the form that the Australian Military Forces would take on Federation.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1899, South Australia was able to offer Britain a contingent for the South African (Boer) War. This was the first of nine contingents comprising of six officers and 121 other ranks of South Australian Infantry, to embark on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1899.

Although initially planned that the company would be attached to a British battalion, it was decided on arrival in Cape Town, that all of the Australian infantry contingents would be grouped to form a battalion to be known as the Australia Regiment. While the initial phase of the war had demanded conventional infantry, by the time the Australian colonial contingents arrived, the nature of the war had changed, making mounted infantry more appropriate. In consequence, after only one month as an infantry battalion, the Australian Regiment demonstrated its flexibility and converted in a fortnight to a mounted infantry role. It then served with distinction alongside the other Australian mounted infantry regiments and was awarded South Australia's first battle honour '*South Africa*'. In the course of the war, 1500 South Australians served, of whom 60 were killed.

With Federation, the various colonial armed forces came under Commonwealth control. The foundations for all subsequent Australian military organisation was established by the Defence Act of 1903-4, which formalised a system of permanent and citizen forces under which the South Australian infantry was designated the 10<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Regiment (Adelaide Rifles). In consequence of a visit by Lord Kitchener in 1910, a major expansion occurred with the introduction of a 'universal training' scheme, the national service program for all young males. In the associated restructuring, the South Australian battalions were numbered from 74 to 81, with the Adelaide Rifles becoming the 78<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the progenitor of the 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the 74<sup>th</sup>



**Continued next month**

# **A Musical Event NOT to be missed**

To commemorate the Centenary of the end of the First World War, the band of the 10th/27th Battalion Royal South Australia Regiment presents

## **“Movie Music Memories”**

**Including music from the WW1 era**

**Hear all the hits from your favourite movies.**

**AT THE MURRAY BRIDGE TOWN HALL**

**Saturday the 2nd June 2018**

**4 pm till 6.30 pm**

**Intermission @ 5 pm**



**Proudly supported by Murray Bridge RSL and the Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc**

Tickets only **\$15** each

**Tickets on sale at the Murray Bridge RSL on Mondays from 10 am to 3 pm**

**or Thursday and Friday evenings from 4 pm to 8 pm**

**For any ticket enquiries please contact Mr. David Laing on 0407 791 822**



## 10 New RSARA members

At the Battalion support exercise held recently at RAAF Base Edinburgh, some Applications for Membership were filled in by Serving Members and handed to the Secretary by SGT Mark Blondell. We welcome 10 new members to the Association, being:

***Johannes Schoeman, Francois Eckard, Neville Scown, Cameron Martin, Joshua Faunt, Ryan Brophy, Rhys Scott, Reshad Faquiri, Riley Bras and Benjamin Rushton.***

This brings to 65 Serving and Band Members in the Association, and their inclusion will make us stronger, if not younger. The young members of today are the Association of tomorrow.

Welcome all.

## Genie or NOT?

A Husband takes his wife to play her first game of golf.....Unfortunately, the wife promptly whacked her first shot right through the window of the biggest house adjacent to the course.

The husband cringed, "I warned you to be careful! Now we'll have to go up there, find the owner, apologise and see how much your lousy drive is going to cost us."

So the couple walked up to the house and knocked on the door. A warm voice said, "Come on in."

When they opened the door they saw the damage that was done: glass was all over the place, and a broken antique bottle was lying on its side near the broken window.

A man reclining on the couch asked, "Are you the people that broke my window?"

"Uh...yeah, sir. We're really sorry about that," the husband replied.

"Oh, no apology is necessary. Actually I want to thank you... You see, I'm a genie, and I've been trapped in that bottle for a thousand years. Now that you've released me, I'm allowed to grant three wishes. I'll give you each one wish, but if you don't mind, I'll keep the last one for myself."

"Wow, that's great!" the husband said. He pondered a moment and blurted out, "I'd like a million dollars a year for the rest of my life."

"No problem," said the genie. "You've got it, it's the least I can do. And I'll guarantee you a long, healthy life!" "And now you, young lady, what do you want?" the genie asked.

"I'd like to own a gorgeous home complete with servants in every country in the world," she said.

"Consider it done," the genie said. "And your homes will always be safe from fire, burglary and natural disasters!"

"And now," the couple asked in unison, "what's your wish, genie?"

"Well, since I've been trapped in that bottle and haven't been with a woman in more than a thousand years, my wish is to have sex with your wife."

The husband looked at his wife and said, "Gee, honey, you know we both now have a fortune, and all those houses. What do you think?"

She mulled it over for a few moments and said, "You know, you're right. Considering our good fortune, I guess I wouldn't mind, but what about you, honey?"

"You know I love you sweetheart," said the husband. "I'd do the same for you!"

So the genie and the woman went upstairs where they spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying each other in every way. After about three hours of non-stop sex, the genie rolled over and looked directly into her eyes and asked, "How old are you and your husband?"

"Why, we're both 35," she responded breathlessly.

"NO SH\*T." He said, "Thirty-five years old and you both still believe in genies?"

# CPL Dave's Page

## Useful tools for the handyman

### **SKIL SAW:**

A portable cutting tool used to make boards too short.

### **BELT SANDER:**

An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.

### **WIRE WHEEL:**

Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned calluses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, 'Oh shit'.

### **DRILL PRESS:**

A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.

### **SHIFTER SPANNER:**

Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

### **HACKSAW:**

One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle... It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

### **VICE-GRIPS:**

Generally used after pliers and shifter spanner to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

### **OXYACETYLENE TORCH:**

Used almost entirely for > igniting various flammable objects in your workshop and creating a fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race.

### **TABLE SAW:**

A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity. Very effective for digit removal!!

### **HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:**

Used for lowering an automobile to the ground after you have installed your new brake pads, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

### **BAND SAW:**

A large stationary power saw primarily used by most shops to cut large pieces into smaller pieces that more easily fit into the trash after you cut on the inside of the line instead of the outside edge.

### **TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST:**

A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of all the crap you forgot to disconnect.

### **PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER:**

Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids or for opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; but can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads.



## Did you know?



Line dancing was started by women waiting to use the bathroom.

I DON'T HAVE AN  
ATTITUDE I HAVE A  
PERSONALITY YOU  
CAN'T HANDLE

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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### Association Banking Details

**BSB**            **015 211**  
**Account:**    **482441406**

Hard copies of this newsletter for members with no email access are kindly printed by the office of Federal Member for Barker, Tony Pasin MP.

The RSAR Association thanks them for their generous support.

My neighbour banged on my door at 2 o'clock this morning. Can you believe that? 2 O'CLOCK!

Lucky I was up playing my bagpipes!

Doctor: "I'm sorry but you suffer from a terminal illness and have only 10 to live."

Patient: "What do you mean, 10? 10 what? Years? Months? Weeks?!"

Doctor: "Nine."

## Poor Response for Luncheons

Over the past 10 years the committee and myself have tried to make our quarterly luncheons interesting by adding Guest Speakers. These have included Authors, Commanding Officers of the Battalion, Journalists and folk of interest. Some have bought much acclaim from members, and others, not so much.

It's unknown to the majority of RSARA members just how much work goes into the preparation of a luncheon, but I'll make you aware.

First I find a Guest Speaker. This is harder than you think, as some charge exorbitant amounts to speak, while the majority do it for no charge. Then we book a date, usually 12 months in advance and pay the Hackney Hotel for the special room we use. And you must admit that the meals and service are always above reproach.

The largest audience we ever had was for Peter Goers, with 50 members booking and 70 turning up! That in itself caused a problem, as we had to hurriedly find an extra 2 tables and 20 chairs. Had EVERYONE pre-booked, we could have arranged a larger room.

The lowest number of bookings was for this month when only 5 members put their names forward. I contacted the Guest Speaker and apologised profusely, saying in no way was it his fault, and then cancelled the hotel booking. If anyone turned up that day and found an empty room, it's because you didn't book!!

So, where do we go from here? I still have a couple of Guest Speakers all ready to go, but we need at least 30 members booking to make it worthwhile.

We still have bookings for the 24th June and 28th October, so if you think you value the company of other association members, and would like to listen to some people with stories to tell, let me know. If the apathy continues, the luncheons will be cancelled! **Your choice.**

*David Laing*

Secretary / Editor

## PRESIDENT'S BRIEF UPDATE

I wish to thank all those who volunteered and contributed to the great success in providing a BBQ lunch this month (see photos) for the soldiers of 10/27 Battalion, Royal South Australia Regiment, at RAAF Base Edinburgh. How everyone chipped in and made the process smooth and very efficient just highlights to me that while we may no longer be "in service" we haven't forgotten the basics. **Well done** to you all.

I can confirm after today's committee meeting that our numbers are up, our finances are good, and moral is high. We have suspended the Sunday luncheons due to a poor response, but these have been replaced due to lack of response with other options for catching up.

You will need to keep a look out in Sitrep for these as they are only in the early stages, but it should include a Band concert, maybe a field visit and another formal dinner.

More to follow, over.

*Rod Beames*

President



# Dedication of William Westbury's headstone

Members will remember the article in "Sitrep, Over! January 2018 Page 3 about William Westbury, the only SA identified aboriginal soldier to serve in both the Boer War and WW1.

A Dedication Ceremony was held at Williams gravesite at Pinnaroo on February 20th, and was attended by members of William Westburys' family, indigenous elders, RSL members, interstate visitors, ADF personnel and members of the RSAR Association

The Story of William Westbury continues.....

William was born in Mount Gambier, South Australia, in 1878. He was one of three children with his siblings John James A.I.F. 2206 and Sarah also in the family of James Westbury and Ellen Baker, with Ellen being of the local Boandik people. Ellen was the cook and lived at Benara Creek part of Schanck outstation, near Lake Bonney West of Kongorong SA. The family moved often between Beachport and Port MacDonnell, following work and visiting family. It was however Boandik coastal country that the family called home and where many of William's family still live today.



William attended MacDonnell Bay School. He enjoyed his school days but the outdoors was where his heart was. He won several prestigious foot races prior to and after his service. He was strongly built and a good athlete, his complexion was listed as Grey, Eyes Brown with Hair Grey; he had a scar on his left shin, and perfect vision in both eyes. Like many of his family was a skilled horseman and these skills enabled him to be widely known and respected as a reliable stockman and labourer throughout the district.

William was working as labourer in Pinnaroo prior to enlisting there 1914. This was to follow on from his service in the Boer war. He was very proud to be serving his country as an Australian soldier and as an Aboriginal man. During his attestation, he listed 1 years' experience with the Lamerou Rifle Club and 18 months in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> South Australian Imperial Bushman, William's Boer war unit.

He enlisted in the AIF on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and after his initial training, he was posted to the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, A Company. The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. The battalion was recruited in South Australia, and together with the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Battalions, formed the 3rd Brigade.

He embarked from Fremantle on 25 October 1914 aboard the HMAT Ascanius.

Near Pinnaroo, he had been working as a labourer for M. J. O'Loughlan, who gave William a young kangaroo as a parting gift which sailed with the troops and was a welcome distraction for the men.

The Pinnaroo Military Force.  
Back Row L - R. Jock Smythe, Martin Christopherson, Allen Reed, William Westbury  
Front Row: Fred E Chapman, Les Harding, Perce Venning (First boy from Pinnaroo shot)

HMAT *Ascanius* arrived at the port of Suez in Egypt in December that year. After a brief stint in the Moascar isolation camp, William's battalion underwent further training in Egypt in preparation to take part in the first wave of the landing at Gallipoli. On Christmas Day during Church Parade at Mena Camp each man received a brass tin containing chocolates and cigarettes from Princess Mary. He embarked to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1915 aboard the *Ionian*.



CONTINUED ON Page 9

Members of the 10th Battalion waiting to embark on the transport ship *Ionian* for the Gallipoli Peninsula

## In Kilted Company (The South East soldiers)

*In Kilted Company* is the story of an Infantry rifle company known to the majority of those who were associated with it simply as 'A Company'. For over fifty years 'A Company' has provided a venue through which citizens of the South East of South Australia have been able to contribute part time military service. *In Kilted Company* provides a vivid insight into what it was like to be a member of a South Australian country reserve unit.

However as Major General Neil Wilson suggests in the book's foreword, if the names, places and anecdotes are changed, *In Kilted Company* could be the unofficial history of any sub-unit in the Australian Army Reserve.

From the various military organizations that preceded the establishment of 'A Company' as part of 27 Battalion South Australian Scottish Regiment, through the Company's employment as part of the Citizen Military Forces within the Royal South Australia Regiment, to its most recent allocation within the Army Reserve as an element of 10/27 Battalion Royal South Australia Regiment, *In Kilted Company* follows the latter-day development of the Company through the eyes of the many individuals who have filled its ranks, signposting significant milestones in the life of 'A Company' and detailing the effects of political and bureaucratic decisions that effected the Company and its members.

I caught up with Max Carmichael at the 2017 Formal Dinner in Adelaide, and we spoke of his book *In Kilted Company*. I first purchased the book back in 2011, and Max said he still had some copies available, and in a very generous offer, he said if any member would like a SIGNED copy of the book, all you need to do is pay postage (\$6) and a small donation to Legacy, (\$10 is suggested) and the book is yours. The book retailed previously for \$39.95.

I have copies of the book available for purchase now, so contact the Secretary for your copy. It's a good read!



## 1964 Beating the Retreat @ Adelaide Oval

Member David Thomas from Casino NSW is after a film or video of a parade he was part of with 1 RSAR back in 1964. He thinks it was for Beating the Retreat or Laying up of Colours at Adelaide Town Hall. The parade was reviewed by Sir Edric Bastian Governor of S.A. The possible date was 8th March 1964, and he thinks Lt Col Blackburn was the Commanding Officer. 1RSAR had the 1st week at Cultana and 2nd week at Hampstead Barracks practising for the parade, at Adelaide Oval. All soldiers wore the newly issued polyester dress uniform. If anyone has any pics or especially a film of the parade, please contact David on his email of [twods26@gmail.com](mailto:twods26@gmail.com)





## William Westbury .....continued

The 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and so was the first ashore at around 4:30 am. The 10th Battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC position, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion continued to serve at Gallipoli until the evacuation in December 1915.

William survived the chaos of the initial landing and was promoted to Corporal on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1915. William's unit was heavily involved in numerous actions during the first month of the campaign. He unfortunately was wounded in action on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1915 with a gunshot wound to the left ankle and he was eventually evacuated to the Harefield Auxiliary Hospital in England on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1915 and returned to duty on the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

The battalion saw out the rest of the year alternating between front-line duty, and training and labouring behind the line. Westbury, however, was transferred to the 13th Infantry Training Battalion on 29 October 1916, returning to England on 6 November 1916. After taking some much needed leave in London, he was promoted to lance sergeant and assigned to 10th Infantry Training Battalion in Codford.

Westbury was a sociable person who got on well with others, which was the likely reason that he was only mildly reprimanded for the misdemeanours of returning late from leave, and leaving his equipment and rifle unattended at Salisbury train station. Afflicted by rheumatism, Westbury was returned to Australia on 10 May 1917 for home service and was discharged as being medically unfit with good conduct on 27 August 1917. He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British Service Medal, and the Victory Medal.

Returning home, William Westbury reunited with his family, who welcomed him back to Port MacDonnell. He was particularly keen to see his sister, Sarah Jones, her husband, Francis, and their newly-adopted five-year-old son, William Charles Jones.

Westbury would take young William out rabbit trapping, fishing, and shooting along the coast and lakes. Westbury reacclimatised to civilian life, finding employment on building jobs and engaged in net fishing, cave guiding, potato digging, supervising work on the Heywood railway, and using his innate abilities and local knowledge to make the most of regular hunting trips..

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Westbury joined the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) and his RSSILA badge was among his prized possessions. He would often tell stories of his experiences – of snipers, trenches and suffering – and be grateful to be safe at home.

In 2015 a Pinnaroo charity event was held that recreated the 1919 races, and Westbury's grandson, Ken, and granddaughter, Heather and Great Grandson's Flint and Lincoln, were honorary guests of the Pinnaroo community. The family participated and Ken presented the prizes to the winner of the men's race. Willy's original gold medals were proudly worn by Ken and his two young sons, who also took part in the race.

But an old war injury finally caught up with Westbury, who endured the agonies of a varicose ulcer on his left leg. Tetanus was the final straw, and on 20 February 1936 he died at the age of 58. He was buried at Pinnaroo, mourned by family and friends of Port MacDonnell.

**“The deceased was resident in this district for very many years and his kindly and unassuming nature appealed to all of those whom he came in contact with. He was prominently associated with most of the sporting bodies of the district as one of the keenest and best playing members of the old original Pinnaroo Football Club.”**

**Extract from obituary published 24 April 1936, *Pinnaroo and Border Times*.**

# RAAF Base Edinburgh Battalion Support

The Association once again supported the Battalion by providing a sumptuous BBQ lunch complete with plenty of nutritious salads plus dessert today at RAAF Base Edinburgh.

The serving members were wrapping up a weekend training exercise utilising the new facilities at Edinburgh, and the CO asked the Association for help. We were glad to provide it. Subsequently 15 members of the Association prepared, cooked and served the meals to nearly 200 hungry soldiers.

Thanks to Rod and Cheryl Beames, Norm and Lyn Tregenza, David & Selina Laing, Nat Cooke, Colin Phillips, Max Hill, Alan Orrock, Barry and Marg Johnson, Graham & Julie Elliott and our own WO Caterer Col Abel.

The best part came when the members of the Association were invited over to the WTSS facility (Weapons Training Simulation System) to have a go at firing a sequence with the F88 Steyr. Great fun!

Thanks to CO LTCOL Trent Burnard and OPSWO Dave Nicholls for their help and support in getting us all through the gate with truckloads of equipment, and arranging some diggers to assist with the clean up.









# RSARA at the WTTS



## RSARA at the WTTS





## Murray Bridge high schooler Ben Wohlfeil wins RSL trip to Canberra with essay on World War I digger Albert Mugford

The prize was originally going to be a tour of the battlefields of Europe's western front.

Murray Bridge High School student Ben Wohlfeil put a huge amount of work into the essay which won him an RSL competition – he even convinced his parents to take him to the National War Memorial in Canberra for his research.

Unfortunately, security concerns led Murray Bridge RSL to change the prize – to an all-expenses-paid week long trip to the National War Memorial in Canberra.



The RSL sub-branch will arrange Ben's flights, a week's accommodation, a hire car and attendance at this year's Anzac Day service in the nation's capital. And his parents will go along as chaperones, all courtesy of the RSL.

But the link the student now shares with World War I digger Albert John Mugford will live on well beyond April 25.

"AJ Mugford was born on May 22, 1895," he said.

"What brought me to him was his birthday: I was born on May 22, my great-grandfather was born on May 22, so it was a great connection there – it gave me a reason to research him."

Private Mugford worked in the railways before he enlisted at Keswick and shipped out to Egypt.

He fought at Gallipoli, survived, but was later killed during the Battle of the Somme in France. He was 21.

Off to Canberra: An essay about World War I soldier Albert Mugford, written by Ben Wohlfeil and judged by David Laing and others, has won the student a 7 day trip to Canberra.

Article and Photo: Peri Strathearn. Murray Valley Standard

Ben was able to trace his footsteps through service records, photographs, even a letter to his girlfriend which arrived after his death, a fact she would only learn later.

He even discussed his project with the director of the National War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson.

"The day we were there, I can't remember what battle they were commemorating, but they were doing a very special memorial that day," Ben said. "I saw him, went up to him, talked to him."

He hoped the RSL could have reproductions made of Private Mugford's medals - a Gallipoli Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal - for display in its museum, alongside another medallion and a chair donated by the soldier's parents, who were buried in Murray Bridge.

Having won the trip to Canberra, Ben also hoped to use the project to earn credit towards a high school research project.

One of the competition judges, retired teacher Bob England, described Ben's essay as a valuable piece of research, very readable and a sensitive portrayal of trench warfare.

The Anzac scholarship was created by the RSL's David Laing in 2015, and funds raised for it through the sub-branch's annual Anzac sports carnival, which has so far netted about \$7000.

Ben was revealed as the essay competition's winner at the RSL clubrooms on Thursday 25th January.

*Story and photo courtesy of Peri Strathearn and the Murray Valley Standard.*