



South Australian Division

President's Report #7 2018

December 10, 2018

Meetings and Functions. Farewell to AVM Joe Iervasi 21 November; Lyne Skinner's EATS reunion at War Vets Home 22 November, (and celebration of life of Allan Vial DFC OAM at NMAFC); Ceremony at National War Memorial 25 November to add 12 names of deceased WW1 SA Aviators, with MC Greg Weller, attendance by Governor and The Duke of York, Prince Andrew KG; Premier and Minister for VA talk at TPG 26 November, with Mental Health Commissioner and visiting "Academic" paper on suicide; VHAC meeting 26 November; (Orion 50th anniversary 30 November; aircraft handover to SAAM attended by Secretary 2 December; Cultana crash commemoration attended by ?); Legacy 6 December, Western Front "Ride for Legacy". Next week Deputy Commissioner's Xmas function 12 December.

Notes re the above:

The Iervasi farewell appears to have been well received. Did we miss important invitees?

The 12 Aviators were identified after the SAAM publication on SA Aviators of the Great War. Half died in training accidents, others had enlisted overseas. Only four families had been identified by the date of the event, two after an article in the Advertiser 3 days previously; another turned up on the day. SAAM historians were among the invitees at GH.

The life story of ex Pathfinder Allan Vial may be of interest, but he does not appear to have been a RAAFA member.

The "Town Hall" talk on 26 November, after the Mess luncheon, was embarrassing. The suicide message was one for the journalists, viz how to report suicides without creating celebrities, or methods, or responsibilities; but what was the message for vets? 20% of the audience, and the Premier, had left the talk by the time I did, to attend the VHAC. Two members of Veterans SA staff looked glum; encouraged me to complain.

The Veterans' Covenant. Please examine this document which I received at the National Council meeting. It appears to be asking something from the community, companies etc. but not a guarantee from the Federal Government. What do veterans really want? What did those who returned from WW1 or WW2 receive?

Dropping the D in PTSD. This ill-advised campaign, pushed eagerly for some years by Rob Manton in Veterans SA, has been adopted by the "Road Home", suggested to Legacy and others, and has been agreed by the Round Table (Council) of Veterans Ministers in its Communique of 8 November. It "agreed to refrain from using the term disorder, as a step towards destigmatising PTSD". This is naïve and unhelpful, as explained many times by Prof Sandy McFarlane to Veterans SA etc. The VHAC, on 26 November, strongly opposed dropping the D, as it is clinically incorrect, will not be diagnosed, nor will it attract a Pension or other compensation. Bill Denny has received support for use of the complete term PTSD by the RSL, the VVAA and the VVFA. The VVAA has passed a resolution that includes the following: "The VVAA does not take exception to the use of PTS by contemporary veterans, but is firmly of the opinion that PTS and PTSD are two different things, PTS



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being a short-term reaction to previous traumatic experiences, PTSD being the disorder that may arise as a consequence of exposure to traumatic events". I recommend that we support this view.

World War 2 Veterans. Bill Denny has asked us and others to help find the names of all who served in WW2, and who now reside in SA. He hopes to obtain a complete list by Anzac-day 2019. There are over 1,000 living in SA. DVA will help with a letter. Annette's careful records gave Bill a quick response, now revised wrt the Mitcham members. Other branches please help.

National President's request for information regarding Divisions and branches for a data matrix. Secretary Dave has completed most of the gaps, but a few are still needed eg from Burnside/Prospect and Salisbury/Elizabeth. Data requested include membership numbers, categories, annual subs, whether Incorporated, exempt from GST etc.

RAAFA representation on SA advisory bodies. I am concerned that we have had no member on Veterans' Advisory Council (VAC) for some years. I am a Veterans' Health advisory Council (VHAC) member. We also have Bill Chappell on the DC's forum, and Bob Mac has served from time to time on the Defence Consultative Group (DCG). Greg Weller also attends for the RAAF. We do not know its relationship, nor ours, to ADSO, the Alliance of Defence Service Organizations? This latter, as opposed to the RAAFA, has a seat at Federal level advising the DVA, 'though National Vice President Richard Kellaway is its delegate. I understand that one of our members meets with the Defence Welfare Association, to what purpose I am uninformed.

Anzac Walk. We await further input, re Siam and Thailand, before asking questions of the AWM.

Robert Black

6 December 2018.