



ANZAC MEMORIAL

HYDE PARK SYDNEY

Anzac Memorial's historic links to Invictus Games

Sport has long played a significant role in the rehabilitation of our wounded veterans, from the service men and women returning from the Great War, to contemporary veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

New exhibitions within the Anzac Memorial illustrate the connection between sport and the veteran community, which existed decades before the modern Invictus Games, and the role injured veterans played in the development of the Memorial.

Memorial artefacts include the 1943 Tobruk Trophy for Champion Swimmers of the Limbless Diggers' Amateur Swimming Club. The Tobruk Perpetual Trophy by artist Randolph Williams was commissioned by Kerwin Maegraith whose older brother was gassed in the Great War and his younger brother Harry, served as a squadron commander with the Royal Tank Regiment and was killed in action in Tobruk in 1941. The tank is a copy of the type of tank he was killed in. Kerwin awarded it, plus a financial benefit, to the limbless soldiers for their swimming competition.

The Limbless and Maimed Association of NSW was formed in 1919 with an initial membership of 50 men, all had received debilitating wounds on active service resulting in single or double amputation, the loss of sight, paralysis of balance or being badly maimed. Initially providing fellowship and support, by 1923 the Association had expanded to find work for limbless men who could not be placed by the Repatriation Department. By June 1931 membership had grown to more than 1,100 while the total figure for disabled members in NSW as at July 1928 was 24,576.

A team of limbless digger swimmers from the Association swam in the inaugural Australian Imperial Force swimming carnival in 1937. In February 1938 the Manly Amateur Swim Club was established exclusively for veteran swimmers, and within weeks the club had 30 active swimmers, including a number of limbless and partially-blind men. Similar clubs followed suit, including one in Bondi.

The Limbless and Maimed Association moved into the Anzac Memorial in February 1935 and remained there until 2004. The new exhibition is tangible evidence of the Memorial's original intent to provide support and services for veterans and families while providing a contemporary understanding of the history and impact, of not just the First World War, but all conflicts.

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