

# SOLDIER ON ANZAC APPEAL

Honour veterans of the past and support veterans of today

## Private Martin O'Meara VC and Sarah Watson

Europe is on the bucket list for many people for a variety of reasons. The history, the culture, and the myriad of sights and wonders are recognised throughout the world. However, not all those who go to Europe experience the joys the country can bring. And not all who go to Europe do so because of the cuisine. The following two stories show two completely different experiences.



Australian War Memorial  
H12763

### Private Martin O'Meara VC, 16th Battalion

An Irish-born immigrant to Australia, O'Meara served on the Western Front and was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Pozières in August 1916. He was wounded on three separate occasions during his time in France, and upon returning to Australia, was hospitalised with influenza.

While in quarantine, O'Meara suffered a catastrophic mental collapse. He was put into permanent care but was plagued by voices and hallucinations until he died on 20 December 1935.

Sarah's experience in Europe was quite different to O'Meara's. Less than half a day from Pozières was where she found a passion and forged a support network that supports her even today.



### Sarah Watson (centre)

In 1997 Sarah Watson commenced Officer Training at ADFA and graduated with a BA Politics. In December 2000, following a year at the Royal Military College Duntroon, she was commissioned into the Australian Intelligence Corps where she served in several Intelligence roles within the Australian Army including in Iraq in 2006/07. As a result of her service, Sarah was diagnosed with PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder and was subsequently medically discharged from the Army in 2015.

During this time, Sarah heard about Soldier On. After gaining a position with the Soldier On cycling team that was to compete in the Trois Étapes race in the Italian Dolomite, Sarah was provided with the focus and drive to pull herself out of the black hole she was in. Whilst training, she and fellow teammates, including much loved Aussie celebrities Hamish Blake and Cadel Evans, forged an unbreakable bond, and are all still in touch and look out for each other. Competing in this event gave Sarah a new passion and sport – cycling! As a result of the Soldier On activity, she has entered many cycling events and races. Sarah participated in the 2017 Invictus Games held in Canada with her main sporting event being the Cycling Time Trial and Criterium for which she won Silver and Gold respectively.

Sarah continues to be a spokesperson for Soldier On, speaking about her journey to audiences throughout Australia and engaging with others in the ex-serving community. This has provided her the opportunity to reduce the stigma of mental illness in the military and wider community and hopefully give hope to others who may be suffering.

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