

SOLDIER ON ANZAC APPEAL

Honour veterans of the past and support veterans of today

Private George Giles and James Millis

Whilst the wounds of the body are able to in most cases be easily identified, it is the impacts on the mind that aren't always so readily recognised. The following two stories from two different eras highlight the need to be vigilant in not only spotting issues, but also in taking action.



Australian War Memorial
E02818

Private George Giles, 29th Battalion (Left)

One of the most significant items at the Australian War Memorial is a uniform of the Australian Imperial Force. It was collected by Australia's official historian of the Great War, Charles Bean, on 30 July 1918. Bean photographed Giles that day in 1918, and the photograph reveals the same patches of mud and creases as can be seen on the uniform today, making it unique.

Giles was born in Ballarat, Victoria, and had stints in hospital with influenza. On occasion he lacked discipline (fined three weeks' pay for being absent without leave), but was undoubtedly brave in battle. On 9 August 1918, a week after meeting Bean, Giles – despite exhaustion – showed *“great courage and coolness under most trying conditions”* as he rescued a group of wounded men under enemy fire at Vauvillers, France. He was awarded the Military Medal for his actions.

After the war, Giles had a difficult time. He divorced and remarried, and returned to his job at Victorian Railways, working as a labourer. He later worked at a bakery but was unemployed during the Depression. In 1936 he unsuccessfully applied to the Repatriation Commission for a disability pension, stating he had been declared fit for service upon enlistment, and that the rheumatism and neurosis he suffered – likely factors in his struggle with unemployment – were a result of war service. *“I hope you are able to help in this matter,”* he wrote, *“as I am just about desperate and destitute.”* His claim was rejected; his ailments deemed by medical officers to be not due to war service. His health declined and he died in 1942 from a heart condition, aged 58.



James Millis

James enlisted in the Army in 1996 and at was almost immediately posted to Singleton Townsville. In 1999 he was posted to 4RAR (Commando) as a Company medic and was deployed with the Company to East Timor two years later. In 2004 he separated from the Army to join the New South Wales Ambulance Service but remained an active Reserve member with the 1st Commando Regiment. In 2007 he was deployed to TAGE and Afghanistan SOTG rotation V111 in 2009.

It was on his return home that he had trouble fitting back into home life. Loud noises and crowds made James feel very uncomfortable and he was quick to anger. James went from being the life of the party to becoming a recluse and found the only time he felt happy was *“...when I was surfing”*. James' wife arranged for him to meet with a Soldier On representative, and it was during this meeting that Soldier On offered James and his family a surfing holiday with other service personnel affected by their service.

It was the first time since his deployment that they had been on a family holiday. It was this holiday that was the catalyst for James to seek the help he needed to become well again. James continues to represent Soldier On in many ways at engagements.

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