

SOLDIER ON ANZAC APPEAL

Honour veterans of the past and support veterans of today

Captain Hugo Throssell VC and David Savage AM

In war, it is not just the immediate injuries and impacts that need to be attended to, but also those that occur after. The following two stories poignantly reflect this.



Australian War Memorial
A03688

Captain Hugo Throssell VC, 10th Light Horse Regiment

The son of the second premier of Western Australia, Hugo Throssell (then a lieutenant) was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Hill 60 on Gallipoli in August 1915. Severely wounded in the engagement, he later suffered from cerebrospinal meningitis which almost killed him and severely affected his life afterwards.

Throssell eventually returned to his unit, then to the fighting in Palestine, only to learn of the death of his beloved brother, Ric, in the second battle of Gaza in April 1917. Hugo's health continued to deteriorate, and he suffered from malaria; as a result, he was returned to Australia and discharged from the AIF in September 1918.

He married Katharine Susannah Prichard in 1919, a well-known novelist and devout socialist who had also lost a brother in the war. Her views found ready acceptance from the already disillusioned Throssell, who shocked his conservative hometown community of Northam when he declared himself a socialist. His wartime experiences haunted him throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and he fell into increasing bouts of depression. He attempted to pawn his Victoria Cross, but was offered only a few shillings.

The war claimed Hugo Throssell on 19 November 1933 when he used his service revolver to end his life on the family property at Greenmount. A short note read, "I can't sleep, and I feel my old war head; it's going phut, and that is no good for anyone concerned." The chaplain presiding over his funeral said Throssell had "died for his country just as surely as if he had perished in the trenches."



David Savage AM

David Savage, served as an AusAID Stabilisation Advisor with the Coalition's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan from 2011-12. He became Australia's first civilian casualty in Afghanistan when his patrol was attacked by a child suicide bomber. David described his injuries in a speech he gave two years ago,

"My injuries from the blast were life changing and permanent. I suffered severe respiratory failure twice, a traumatic brain injury, broken leg, arm, spine, severe nerve damage, loss of hearing and partial loss of sight. The number of ball bearings that struck me caused the head of Trauma at Sydney's St. Vincent's to describe it as if I had been shot 8 times with a shotgun. To date I have had over 20 major surgeries. After a year and numerous nerve surgeries, I finally learnt how to walk again. However, two years ago, I had a set-back when some shrapnel in my spine moved, paralysing my right leg."

David has also credited Soldier On as helping him and his family in many ways "[They connected] us to other families with similar experiences and ensuring financial disadvantage doesn't prevent us from participating in social, community and sporting activities. Being injured in service has affected every aspect of our lives. Sandy has had to forego her career and salary to care for me, and our financial position eroded."

"Through my Soldier On work I have been able to regain my sense of self-worth. I may be unable to button up my shirt, write my name or recall my DOB but I can give back to those who have helped me. By speaking on behalf of Soldier On to raise awareness, necessary funds and to encourage others to come forward to seek assistance - I am able to assist those in the military and my first love - the Police and National Security community."

David was with the Australian Federal Police for 20 years where he served on several overseas UN Peacekeeping Operations including Mozambique and East Timor, before joining the United Nations as a Human Rights and War Crimes investigator. He also worked for the International Crisis Group, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, and other organisations throughout South, and South East Asia, and is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at The Australian National University. David was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2014 for his work in International Relations, Peacekeeping and Human Rights Investigations and was an ACT finalist in the 2015 Australian of the Year awards. David and his family continue to be advocates for awareness around mental health and for the veteran community.

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