



RSL ANZAC Appeal gets Mark on his bike

18 April 2016

Big Mark Reidy (110kg and 198cm, or 6ft 5in) is off to the Invictus Games in Orlando, Florida.

He's being sponsored by funds from the RSL ANZAC Appeal in this international adaptive multi-sport competition designed to help recovery from conditions caused by military service.

Mark, 45, from Clearview, served in the Australian Army for 16 years: two deployments to Iraq, one to Afghanistan, and multiple peacekeeping missions at trouble-spots as a cargo specialist, often with the SAS. He came out of all that with knee and back injuries, along with a lingering post-traumatic stress condition (PTSD) through the bombs and bullets encountered in the Middle East.

"I was in a dark place for a while when I left the army," he says. "But, with exercise and peer support I'm coming out of it now."

His speciality is long-distance cycling. To prepare for the Invictus Games, he regularly makes the gruelling climb from downtown Adelaide to Norton Summit – without stopping. Mark is also helping fellow veterans achieve peace of mind and physical fitness through the RSL Active cycling program.

"The physical and mental benefits of the training and competition are invaluable to the individual, their family and their friends," says RSL SA chief executive Julia Langrehr. "The Invictus Games is an opportunity for the RSL to support veterans in a truly tangible way."

At national level, the RSL is combining with the Australian Defence Force to send a 40-strong team to the event. They leave on April 30.

While Mark is the sole RSL-sponsored member from SA, the Defence-funded element of the squad also includes SA cyclist Wade Roberts, 30, from Mitcham.

Wade, a serving RAAF member, is in remission from stage 4 bowel cancer. It required nine months' chemotherapy and two major operations.

The Invictus Games, championed by Prince Harry, take place at the ESPN sports complex, Orlando from May 8 to May 12. The RSL ANZAC Appeal runs nationally and donations can be made at www.rslsa.org.au

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PICTURE ATTACHED

Invictus: RSL Invictus Games representative Mark Reidy (*right*) with team comrade Wade Roberts

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