

Saturday 10 January, 2009

SIX STUDENTS CHOSEN FOR TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Six South Australian school students have been selected to travel to the Western Front to commemorate ANZAC Day this year as winners of the Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize.

Premier Mike Rann and Veteran' Affairs Minister Michael Atkinson today announced the winners of this year's prize:

- Justin Clarke, Booleroo Centre District School
- Melissa Crawley, Aberfoyle Park High School
- Alice Dawkins, Loreto College
- Joel Grieger, Swan Reach Area School
- Matthew Leigh, Loxton High School
- Jessie Lewcock, St Peter's Collegiate Girls School

The students will attend the dawn service at Villers-Bretonneux on ANZAC Day, as well as other commemorations and memorials in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

Before embarking on the two-week State Government-sponsored study tour, the prize winners will travel to Canberra this weekend to visit the Australian War Memorial and Parliament House.

Premier Rann congratulated the winners, who were selected from a field of 12 finalists.

"The knowledge and passion demonstrated by these six students has earned them a place on a once-in-a-lifetime trip and the opportunity to be Ambassadors for their school, State and country.

"This prize was designed to help inspire young South Australians and future generations to keep the ANZAC spirit alive."

Veterans' Affairs Minister Michael Atkinson said each student researched the life and death of a local soldier and will now be able to retrace their steps and truly honour their memory.

"The study tour is a rare opportunity to learn more about Australia's history and experience the pilgrimage to an ANZAC Day dawn service to honour our fallen diggers."

Booleroo Centre District School student Justin Clarke, 15, says his application was based on research about a former local soldier, Private Harold George, who is related to Justin's hairdresser.

"I got a few letters and his medals that were lent to me by my hairdresser. That made it personal to me and I got a real insight into his life," he says.

"I wanted to go to the battlefields to fully appreciate just how many soldiers died fighting for our country's freedom and way of life."

R.S.L. S.A. President Jock Statton and two teachers will accompany the students on both study tours.

Students in Years 9 and 10 last year were invited to enter the competition by making a video, a six-minute digital program, an audio production, web page or a three-page written application.