



MEDIA RELEASE – September 26, 2016

Adelaide Serves up Civic Welcome for ex-SAS Amputee on 10,000km Charity Ride to Support Injured Veterans

One-legged Vietnam veteran Laurie 'Truck' Sams will receive a civic reception when he pedals into Adelaide later this month on a six-month, 10,000km bike ride to raise awareness for veteran suicide and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The 67-year-old former Special Air Service warrant officer, who lost his left leg below the knee in a parachute accident in 1995, has battled unseasonably cold head winds after leaving Perth to cross the Nullarbor on September 5.

"In the first week we were hit by 82-knot gales straight off the Antarctic and it became a case of pedal for two hours and thaw out in the sleeping bag for the next hour to avoid hypothermia," the veteran adventurer said from Eucla today.

Truck was awarded a Star of Courage for saving the life of his student parachutist in the accident that cost him his left leg.

He will receive an official welcome to Adelaide at the Torrens Parade Ground by Deputy Lord Mayor Megan Hender and RSLSA President Brigadier Tim Hanna at 11am on Saturday, October 15 before taking part in a wreath laying ceremony at the nearby Vietnam War Memorial.

RSLSA sub-branches or town councils at Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Clare, Two Wells, Murray Bridge and elsewhere along the ride route are staging welcome receptions, wreath layings and motorcycle, bike or police escorts for Truck and his support team in two brightly-logoed vehicles.

In Whyalla he will be joined for the leg to Adelaide by his son William, 27, who is flying in from New Zealand where he works as the head strength and conditioning coach at Christ's College in Christchurch and is a Lieutenant in the NZ Army Reserve.

"William was named after my father, who was captured in the fall of Singapore and went on to work on the Thai-Burma Death Railway until the end of the war," Truck said.

"He is doing this in remembrance of his grandfather and to support injured soldiers and vets, but he's a champion endurance athlete and I think he also wants to put his old man to the test as well."

A former Special Air Service Regiment Warrant Officer who lost his left leg below the knee in a parachute accident in 1995, Truck and his trusty Trek bike have logged 86 days and 7450km of riding since leaving Hanoi on May 12 carrying an Australian flag he wants to hand to the Prime Minister when he passes through Canberra on Remembrance Day.

"We've had to contend with bucketing rain, high winds, and the chaotic roads of Asia in the monsoon season, almost being beheaded by a front-end loader on Route 1 in Vietnam and sliding under an out-of-control gravel truck in heavy mud further south near Vinh city," he said.

“But the toughest test has been the Nullarbor because of its sheer remoteness and the unusually bad weather we’ve encountered here and earlier in the WA wheatbelt.”

Truck said while the first half of his ride was aimed at building a better understanding between Australia and our Asian neighbors, the message in Australia was about raising awareness for PTSD injury and suicide - not just amongst veterans but serving soldiers and civilian emergency workers as well.

“I’m amazed at the response to this message and our donations bucket. The ride is supporting three leading PTSD charities and almost everyone from truck drivers to grey nomads, farmers and ordinary townsfolk are coming forward with donations.”

He said sponsors were still being sought and anyone interested in donating or finding out more about the ride and our charities could go to www.thelongridehome.com.au.

The Long Ride Home patron is former Australian Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery AC, AO(Mil), CVO, MC (Retd), a former Governor of Western Australia and Commanding Officer of the Perth-based SAS Regiment.

Bill Gray

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TLRH DATES & PLACES

Date	From	To	Date	From	To	Date	From	To
05-Sep-16	Perth	Narrogin	06-Oct-16	Kimba	Whyalla	28-Oct-16	Sorrento	Portsea
07-Sep-16	Narrogin	Wagin	07-Oct-16	Whyalla	Port Augusta	29-Oct-16	Portsea	Melbourne
07-Sep-16	Wagin	Katanning	09-Oct-16	Port Augusta	Port Pirie	31-Oct-16	Melbourne	Seymour
08-Sep-16	Katanning	Jerramungup	10-Oct-16	Port Pirie	Crystal Brook	01-Nov-16	Seymour	Violet Town
11-Sep-16	Jerramungup	Ravensthorpe	10-Oct-16	Crystal Brook	Clare	02-Nov-16	Violet Town	Wangaratta
12-Sep-16	Ravensthorpe	Esperance	12-Oct-16	Clare	Kapunda	03-Nov-16	Wangaratta	Wodonga
15-Sep-16	Esperance	Norseman	14-Oct-16	Kapunda	Two Wells	04-Nov-16	Albury	Holbrook
18-Sep-16	Norseman	Cocklebidy	15-Oct-16	Two Wells	Adelaide	05-Nov-16	Holbrook	Wagga Wagga
23-Sep-16	Cocklebidy	Eucla	18-Oct-16	Adelaide	Murray Bridge	07-Nov-16	Wagga Wagga	Gundagai
26-Sep-16	Eucla	Border Village	19-Oct-16	Murray Bridge	Tintinara	08-Nov-16	Gundagai	Yass
27-Sep-16	Border Village	Yalata	20-Oct-16	Tintinara	Bordertown	09-Nov-16	Yass	Canberra
30-Sep-16	Yalata	Bookabie	21-Oct-16	Bordertown	Nhill	11-Nov-16	Canberra	Canberra
01-Oct-16	Bookabie	Penong	23-Oct-16	Nhill	Horsham	14-Nov-16	Canberra	Goulburn
01-Oct-16	Penong	Ceduna	24-Oct-16	Horsham	Ararat	16-Nov-16	Goulburn	Bowral
03-Oct-16	Ceduna	Wirrulla	25-Oct-16	Ararat	Ballarat	17-Nov-16	Bowral	Parramatta
04-Oct-16	Wirrulla	Wuddina	26-Oct-16	Ballarat	Geelong	18-Nov-16	Parramatta	Sydney
05-Oct-16	Wuddina	Kimba	28-Oct-16	Geelong	Queenscliff	20-Nov-16	Opera House	