New resources for South Australians to trace their ANZAC history

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With 2014 marking the Centenary of the outbreak of World War 1, the State Library is developing a series of online resources to help South Australians trace their ANZAC history.

Director of the State Library of South Australia, Alan Smith, says there will be a concentrated effort in the next few years to digitise a range of historic WW1 records.

“The idea is not only to make our unique South Australian records more widely available, but to invite others to enhance the records with information they may have, add their own family material or share their comments online,” he said.

In the lead-up to ANZAC Day, the State Library, in partnership with State Records, has this week launched a digitised collection of images, South Australians of World War 1, on the social media platform, Flickr.

The launch attracted a high level of media interest and our new Flickr site received over 14,200 hits on the day of the announcement alone.

Manager of the State Library’s Online Projects, Andrew Piper says the Flickr group has been designed for the public to add photographs and information.

“The State Library has ‘seeded’ the group with almost 500 images from the Chamberlain Collection, featuring portraits of ANZAC soldiers on glass plate negatives that, until now, have only been available to view on request at the Library.

“State Records has provided a further 364 images of soldiers, sailors and nurses.

“In some cases, there is little detail in the records about the South Australians pictured, so we are inviting the community to help us identify them and tell their stories, including service details and biographical information.

“We’re also keen to include the contribution of people who assisted the war effort at home through groups such as the Cheer Up Societies.”
You can access the Flickr group via a new State Library Guide, *South Australians of World War 1: Share their story*. This includes tips on how people can contribute to the group and provides them with research leads.

**The State Library also has in its collections the original South Australian Red Cross Information Bureau’s WW1 enquiries files.**

“These records contain as many as 8,000 enquiries from families and friends trying to trace wounded and missing soldiers and other army personnel, including nurses” Mr Piper said.

“These complement the files from other State Bureaux held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

“The SA records make very moving reading. The anxiety of family and friends searching for their loved ones is evident and, with the South Australian Bureau known for not toning down the details divulged, the disturbing realities of warfare are revealed.

“With the assistance of volunteers, these thousands of enquiries have been sorted and are now being digitised by Library staff. We will then build an indexed, web resource of these records, which we plan to release in 2015 to coincide with the centenary of the Gallipoli landing.”

The State Library has also developed a self-guided walking tour on the War Memorials of Adelaide. It’s one of a series of tours they’ve been developing for mobile devices with internet access.

“The War Memorials tour will take people on a journey of monuments, memory and emotion,” Mr Piper said

You can download the walking tours Apps to your smart phone, or other mobile device, via the State Library website.

South Australians can also add to the State Library’s collection of WW1 material by uploading their own historic photographs, donating material to our archives or recording an oral history for us.