

THE SIR WILLIAM WILLIAMS AUTHOR'S PRIZE

Major Michael Tyquin

The Sir William Williams Prize has been established to encourage the research, writing and publication of high quality, original papers from among junior ranks of the ADF's health and allied professions.

The prize will assist the work's wider dissemination among the Defence health community.

The value of the prize is \$1,000. The award will be subject to ongoing review by the senior ADF health commander.

Authors who are junior officers (i.e. those at or below the rank of Lieutenant Commander/ Major/Squadron Leader), NCOs or Other Ranks are eligible for consideration. Candidates must therefore be full- or part-time members of the ADF at the time of the paper's submission.

The prize winner will be notified in the first quarter of each year and their name/s publically acknowledged in the first issue of the ADF Health Journal that year.

The evaluation committee will be formed of members of the ADF Health Journal editorial board. The committee's decisions will be final.

The prize will be awarded on the basis of:

- the originality of the paper submitted;
- the potential for it to influence or inform ADF health policy or practice; and
- the extent to which it could reasonably be assumed that the paper will assist in the future delivery of improved prevention, management or remediation of health and related illness and injury among ADF members.

Where there is no outstanding candidate/s the prize will be held over until the following year.

Sir William Williams KCMG, CB, KStJ

There is a strong argument for placing Surgeon-General Sir William Williams at the centre of Australia's military medical history. Born in Sydney on 20 July 1856, Williams was educated at Sydney Grammar School before graduating at London University College Medical School at 24 years of age.

He was subsequently appointed Principal Medical Officer for a small contingent of troops New South Wales deployed to the Sudan in 1885. After returning to Sydney he later established an ambulance corps to support that colony's 3,000 soldiers. He began to develop what was to become a life-long interest in training. He frequently conducted examinations of both officers and Other Ranks. Addressing a United Services

Institute meeting in 1893 he suggested a motto for the New South Wales Army Medical Corps, one which was subsequently adopted by the Australian Army Medical Corps (now the RAAMC). He proposed 'Paulatim', a Latin word that reflected the short history and subsequent growth of the corps up to that time – 'little by little'.

An enthusiastic proponent of federation and of the army and navy, he was a frequent contributor to pre-federation Australian medical and military literature and rarely ignored the opportunity to speak on these issues. He believed that the British Army's medical organisational model was too large and elaborate for the colonial medical services and pointed out that unless Australia's colonial units followed some definite line of organisation, personnel, equipment, and training, chaos and confusion would follow in the event of a joint mobilisation. Keenly aware of soldiers' welfare Williams argued for lighter, better fitting uniforms of the khaki type, and suggested that the red and blue tunics then worn be retained for ceremonial purposes only.

During the Boer War Williams was appointed the Principal Medical Officer of Sir Archibald Hunter's force of almost 35,000 troops – a considerable responsibility for a colonial officer and recognition of his outstanding drive and organisational abilities. He is therefore a candidate for holding the first Anzac command. In the field he was a strong believer in mobility and worked to ensure that Australian ambulance units could deploy almost anywhere at short notice by using special lightweight carts. Williams was also a bitter enemy of military red tape.

Between 1905 and 1915 he served as member of the Military Board which was responsible for administering the Australian Military Forces. He was elected vice-president of the XVIII International Congress of Medicine in August 1913. Williams was an early and consistent supporter of army nursing and was a key player in the establishment of an army nursing service. He worked tirelessly to prepare the medical services so they could support any large scale deployment of Australian military forces. He did this through standardising equipment and training, instituting high recruiting standards and recruiting suitable young doctors into the reserves.

By 1915 Williams' best years were behind him, and it fell to younger men, such as Victoria Cross winner surgeon Neville Howse, to continue to keep the interest of Australia's health services before both the Government and senior commanders. But Williams left an outstanding legacy, one that is maintained today by the various health branches of the ADF.

Williams died on 10 May 1919 was given a full military funeral and was buried in Melbourne's Brighton cemetery.