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CAMARADERIE

Third Edition 2020

VOL. 51 NO. 3

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**DVA AND
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DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

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PROUDLY SERVING MEMBERS OF THE ADF AND THEIR FAMILIES SINCE 1959

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Please do not contact the Editor for membership enquiries. Membership enquiries should be directed your State Branch – see page 4.

Camaraderie is produced with the object of keeping members, their families and the broader ADF and veteran community informed of the issues being addressed by DFWA on their behalf.

It is published three times a year and distributed free of charge to every member of the Association usually in March, July and December.

Readers are particularly encouraged to submit brief articles for consideration for publication in *Camaraderie*.

Articles by members about their own views or experiences often stimulate wide discussions and alert other readers to particular points not previously highlighted or appreciated.

Readers are also invited to send letters for publication as "Letters to the Editor".

Material for inclusion in the next edition should reach the Editor at the above address, ideally as a MSWord document attached to an email, no later than Thursday 11 February 2021.

The views expressed in individuals' authored articles are theirs and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association, except where expressly stated.

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

2020 has been a difficult year for us all but I am gratified to receive suggested articles and ideas on how to improve *Camaraderie*. If there is something you don't like or want to see, tell me! I wish you all a happier and healthy 2021....

Les Bienkiewicz

CONTENTS

THIRD EDITION 2020

Contact Details	4
From the President's Pen	5
National Office Roundup	6
How's Your Hearing Cobber?	7
Calling On The ADF Reserves in 2020 - A National Asset	11
Domestic Operations in the Cape	12
Medically Discharged Veterans vs the Tax Office - Update	13
Letter to the Editor	14
Vale Douglas Hary Britt	14
Veterans Homelessness	15
American Australian Association Veteran's Fund Scholarships	16
Book Review: Letters to Lily Vale	16
Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant Bill - Inclusion of a No Disadvantage Clause	17
The Bradford Exchange	18
New Rent Assistance Arrangements for Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Veterans	19
The Rise and Fall of ISIS Armour	20
New Aircraft for Navy and Air Force Pilot Training	28
Corporal Cosmo - 2020! It Hasn't Been All Bad	29
Book Review: The Long Shadow	30
DFWA Shop	31
Application to Join or Renew	32
Branch Reports	33
Letter to the Editor	37
Defence Values	38
Donation Slip	38

FRONT COVER

HMAS Ballarat and USS John S. McCain recently united on the high seas and remained in company through the Malacca Strait while sailing for Exercise Malabar. Both ships joined with Indian and Japanese partners for the high-end military exercise.

Photo courtesy of Defence Media

DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION



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Members of the Association are members of a State Branch of their choosing.

Members from Tasmania are normally managed by Victoria Branch, and members in the Northern Territory are normally managed by Queensland Branch. Residents in the ACT are invited to join the ACT Chapter of the NSW Branch.

Members with membership queries including change of address, or seeking advocacy advice, should contact their respective Branch. Full Branch details, including contact details, can be found on our website www.dfwa.org.au and in the Branch Reports at the end of this magazine.

If in any doubt, contact the National Office.

DFWA RELIEF FUND

The DFWA maintains a **Relief Fund** to provide financial assistance to those "in urgent and necessitous circumstances involving real hardship". Financial support is available to members of the Association; regular members of the ADF; Reservists on full time duty; or their widows / widowers and dependants.

The Trustees are: Major General Adrian Clunies-Ross AO, MBE (Retd); Trevor Goodhew and Kerry Mellor.

Applications for a loan or grant are made via State Branches.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN



Older readers will recall the term, 'The Phoney War'. This was the now historical phase from the beginning of World War II on 3rd September 1939 when Britain declared war and April 1940 when Germany invaded Norway. During this period there was little actual fighting but plenty of manoeuvring and diplomatic posturing. History tells us though that despite the ever-present memories of the carnage of World War I serious preparations for war were in train.

DFWA and the broader ex-service community are now in a 'phoney war'. The arrival of Covid and the unique demands presented by it on how we operate, interact with government, the bureaucracy, DVA and other areas of influence have prompted comments such as, 'is anyone doing anything?' Rest assured there are serious preparations in train.

The Productivity Commission Report

The final Productivity Commission Report, A Better Way to Support Veterans, was tabled in parliament on 4 July 2019. DFWA submitted a detailed, well-researched response, and presented face-to-face to the commissioners. The Report details 69 recommendations across the spectrum of veteran care.

In tabling the report, the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Darren Chester MP addressed 25 of the recommendations only. These deal primarily with mental health, employment support and transition. The Minister has advised that the government's final response i.e. what will be the outcome of the remaining 44 recommendations, will be announced during the next Budget session in May 2021.

For the veteran community, and DFWA in particular, the slowness of the government's response to the outstanding recommendations contained in the report has been difficult to understand. It is understood that some of the recommendations have been rejected and some accepted in part only but beyond this nothing is known.

National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention

Dr Bernadette Boss CSC has been appointed as the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide. Dr Boss appears to be well qualified for the position. A current Magistrate and Coroner in the ACT, she is a Brigadier with service in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Unfortunately the government has taken far too long to make this appointment which has enraged many who have been calling for speedier action of the issue of veteran suicide.

Dr Boss will be under the microscope from day one in the position because of the sensitive nature of the task of reviewing veteran suicides going back to 2001 and the reports she is mandated to produce.

Transition

There is an increasing emphasis on the Transition process from the ADF into civilian life. For a significant number of personnel transitions itself is problematic, particularly if it is on medical grounds i.e. unplanned and unwanted. The research shows that it is these individuals who are prone to experience difficulties in settling back into civilian life. When I say back into civilian life, bear in mind that many younger veteran know only school, ADF and then the possibility of a void once they transition.

Maj Gen Natasha Fox AM CSC, Head ADF People Capability is driving a more innovative and focussed approach to Transition. She is determined "to make it work or and get it right". The Joint Transition Authority (JTA) will sit within Defence and have responsibility for all aspect of the transition process. Interesting or innovative features being considered are:

- a. A two-year window of support post transition.
- b. Transitioning by category i.e. technical skills, trade or other skill sets. This should appeal to potential employers.
- c. A collapse of the 'silo' approach i.e. by service and everyone attend the same seminar.

Alliance of Defence Services Organisations (ADSO)

ADSO is now incorporated. This now formally brings together 18 nationally based ESOs that are determined to collaborate and 'speak with one voice' on the major issues that impact on the broad v veteran community.

The next step is to foster a closer relationship with both the RSL and Legacy. There is a developing respect for and a positive relationship between the national leadership of the RSL for the work that ADSO does on behalf of its membership and the broader veteran community. A work in progress, 'yes' but one that I will continue to promote.

Yes, it's that 'half glass full' approach that will bring us all into closer relationship and focus on the important issues of the day.

The Phoney War

While Covid continues to distract some DFWA has commenced planning for the next Federal election cycle. This we will do in partnership with ADSO and, hopefully, the national RSL as partners in veteran care.

Kel Ryan, National President, DFWA

NATIONAL OFFICE ROUNDUP (June - November 2020)



As the end of the year looms and Christmas approaches, most Australian will likely be sighing with relief that the year from hell is finally coming to an end. The crippling drought around the country and the soul-destroying bush fires and even floods that affected many seem to have lost their currency as discussion topics at dinner tables around the country. The all-too-painful pandemic with its soul-destroying and economical ruinous lockdowns is nonetheless still with us but, as borders open and the sight of aircraft flying in the skies again, glimmers of re-emerging hope are making many of us smile again.

As for the period since the last edition of *Camaraderie*, it was arguably marked by two significant developments, namely the delayed 2020 – 21 Federal Budget and its outcomes for the veterans' community, and the announcements surrounding the appointments of an interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention and that of a Veteran Family Advocate. Dr Bernadette Boss CSC, and Ms Gwen Cherne, a War Widow, have been announced as appointees to these two positions respectively.

Ms Cherne will represent veterans' families as the government tries to improve its support programs and policies. Her role will focus on mental health and suicide prevention and give a voice to veterans' families, particularly as servicemen and women transition from the ADF.

Ms Boss' position is covered by our National President's pen but she will be taking up her position within the Attorney General's portfolio on 15 November 2020. She will be inquiring into suicides of serving and former members of the ADF and be looking to understand the factors and systemic issues that may contribute to suicide risks. Her aim is to improve prevention efforts.

There are two Bills before Parliament to establish Ms Boss' position, namely the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention Bill and the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention (Consequential Amendments) Bill. A Senate FADT Legislation Committee Inquiry into both is currently underway; DFWA has contributed a written submission and will be attending a Senate hearing in the coming weeks to give verbal evidence.

Notwithstanding the decisions made in respect of establishing a Suicide Commissioner, it must be acknowledged that controversy remains as to whether a Royal Commission into veterans' suicides would not have better served the ultimate aim of preventing

and/or mitigating future suicide attempts. The campaign for a Royal Commission among some in the veterans community remains strong. Their views must be respected.

As for the Budget measures that are likely to benefit the veterans' community in forthcoming period, its predominant focus was on increased funding for veteran mental health and wellbeing outcomes and expanding the 24/7 Open Arms Families Counselling network to regional parts of Australia especially in regional and remote areas. There was welcome funding to establish a Joint Transition Authority within Defence and for initiatives to not only increase civilian employment opportunities for veterans but also to provide financial support to those transitioning members who aspire to start their own businesses.

While the Budget held firm against the Productivity Commission's recommendation to do away with the Gold Card – high credit to the individual who fought and won the cause in the Budget Review process – little credit is due to the Government having once again overlooked the need to redress the unfair nature of two long-standing issues, namely to give the most disabled Veterans fair and equitable compensation for the disabilities they received while in-service, and the injustice caused by the continued use of early 1960s life tables to calculate in 2020 DFRDB entitlements. The gouging effect that the nearly six decades old tables impose on veterans and their families was unfortunately not addressed by the recent Ombudsman's inquiry providing portability of preserved MSBS funds.

Perhaps enough for this issue except to acknowledge the welcome sponsorship by the Bradford Exchange. Their advertisements can be viewed in the pages of this *Camaraderie*. Please support them if ever in need of high quality collectable memorabilia for personal use or as a gift that marks a commemorative occasion.

My Office Roundup would not be complete with again thanking those members and friends of DFWA who realise that the work the Association does on behalf of both the serving and the veterans community requires resources oft times beyond what membership dues alone can bring in. Your donations are always gratefully received. I make a plea also to our Virtual Members, please consider joining as an 'Ordinary Member'. If the time isn't quite right for you at the moment, you could nonetheless help by making even a small donation to a cause that will unquestionably aid us to do our work on your behalf. After all, our purpose is to.....'foster the best interests and welfare of all members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in any matter likely to affect them during and after their period of service'.

Alf Jaugietis - Executive Director

HOW'S YOUR HEARING, COBBER?

By BERT HOEBEE, (Veteran)

For what they have done, this we will do.

Introduction

It is a fact that military service can lead to hearing loss in varying degrees of severity. While everything possible is done in training to prevent such injury, that is totally impossible during active service.



Since the First World War provision has been made for our service people and Veterans to be treated and supported to deal with illness or injury due to their service. However, judging by the clamour of dissatisfaction, something seems to have gone seriously amiss for eligible Veterans dealing with compensable hearing loss. The support process has not worked efficiently or effectively, leaving eligible Veterans frustrated, and Audiologists equally frustrated at not being able to provide those individuals with the best possible outcome to meet their needs.

Following an examination of a number of cases where the 'fully subsidised' hearing aids provided under Hearing Services Program (HSP) have proven not to meet Veterans' needs, some common factors emerge.

In this article I will examine these and possible reasons for dissatisfaction. It will conclude with a suggestion as to what affected eligible Veterans themselves can do about it.

The Factors Involved

Seven factors are involved: The unique nature of military service, Legislation, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Health, the nature of 'fully subsidised' hearing aids, Audiologists and most importantly, individual Veterans.

The Unique Nature of Military Service

The unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of those who commit to defend our Nation are recognised and acknowledged by the Commonwealth.¹ With that recognition comes a commitment to support Veterans in dealing with and overcoming the physical, mental and other consequences of their service.

Hearing injuries are a frequent consequence of military service. These 'exceptional circumstances' compensable injuries are endemic and result from both training for war, and from operational service. It is the nature of things in warfare and in training that military personnel will be exposed frequently to loud, harsh or deafening noise. In operations that is inevitable if the military is to achieve the mission it is given. This demand on soldiers, sailors and airmen and women leads often to hearing injury recognised under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) and requiring support.²

Legislation, Policy and Process

The Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) provides for treatment and support services for Veterans. Sect 80, deals with 'treatment' and speaks to restoring or maintaining physical and mental health, ensuring a person's social well-being and the supply of appropriate aids and appliances. Sect 85 establishes where eligibility for treatment arises. Sect 90 (1) and (4) deal with the making of determinations that describe circumstances and conditions under which treatment of particular kinds can be provided.

Made under Sect 90 of the VEA, the Treatment Principles (TP),³ Sect 11.5. deals with hearing aids and Sect 11.5.4 provides that the Commission may accept financial responsibility for the supply of a hearing aid from an audiology provider if the hearing aid is unable to be supplied to the eligible person under the HSP. Note that this is subject to prior approval from DVA.⁴ Note also, that if HSP cannot provide for the needs of a Veteran, it is DVA - the Commission - that should fund them.

The Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019, commits to beneficial interpretation and application of legislation for Veterans. It recognises that Veterans

can require support mechanisms to enjoy good health, to access employment and training opportunities, to access appropriate housing, to have access to justice, to enjoy social wellbeing or to participate in community engagement.

This legislative framework establishes the basis upon which an eligible Veteran is able to obtain support in the most effective way, without undue bureaucratic obstacles being put in their way - in this case, particularly where HSP provided 'basic' support is not suitable to meet their compensable hearing and lifestyle needs. On the facts, DVA could be trying to abrogate or shirk this responsibility.

Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)

DVA Portfolio Budget Statements 2019-20, speak to maintaining and enhancing the financial well-being, self-sufficiency and physical well-being and quality of life of eligible persons. The Productivity Commission ⁵ reinforced this objective; speaking of an overarching objective to improve wellbeing for Veterans and their families through a whole-of-life approach to restore injured and ill Veterans, provide timely and effective rehabilitation and health care to enable participation in work and life and to enable opportunities for social integration.

Complaints about the provision of hearing services to Veterans seem to suggest that DVA staff are losing sight of the Department's overarching obligations to Veterans under the VEA. The lack of clarity surrounding the prior approval process most often leads to difficulties - many due to the 'red tape' nature of the bureaucratic process involved.

A particular confusion certainly seems to reign over the technology of the hearing aids supplied under the HSP's voucher-driven process. Brochures ⁶, booklets and notices ⁷ are routinely re-issued and amended, and at least one Notice issued to Audiologists is incorrect in stating that DVA will not give prior approval for other than the basic 'fully subsidised' HSP supplied devices. That is contrary to the legislation under the VEA. Is it possible that Customer Service Officers, or the DVA Audiology Advisor are not fully aware or committed to the need to act in a way that is beneficial and empathic with eligible Veterans' hearing and lifestyle needs arising from compensable hearing injury?

DVA's initial reflex response for requests for approval for the Commission to accept financial responsibility under the Treatment Principles, appears often to be negative - 87% denied between July 2019 and February 2020. ⁸ This negativity is often by way of a refusal along the lines of an assertion that the HSP 'fully subsidised' hearing aids can meet the Veteran's needs, especially in cases where 'prior approval' was not sought. However, even where an Audiologist's professional clinical analysis is to the contrary, the same assertion is made, or extensive further information is sought. Notable is the inference that 'fully

subsidised' HSP devices must be considered, even though these only provide for 'basic' needs. That leads to anger and frustration on the part of Veterans, and Audiologists. It could even be taken as impugning the latter's professional ability and standards.

Department of Health (DOH)

The DOH administers the Hearing Services Administration Act 1997. The HSP provides fully and partially subsidised hearing devices to eligible Australians who are 'hard of hearing' to manage hearing loss and improve community engagement – delivered through a voucher system. The HSP is resource limited, and is not charged with funding particular compensable needs of eligible Veterans, beyond basic 'fully subsidised' devices that it provides to the wider community. It is quite incongruous with the recognition of the unique nature of military service, for the HSP to have the support of Veterans foisted upon it. Neither the HSP, nor individual Audiologists have any imperative or legislated obligation to provide beneficial and veteran centric support to eligible Veterans, despite the existence of the exceptional circumstances HSP process for Veterans ⁹ that specifically fits with TP 11.5.4.

Nature of 'fully subsidised' and 'top-up' hearing aids

The HSP can provide 'fully subsidised' hearing aids to eligible Veterans. All such devices are of the 'basic' variety, which cover only the following situations: Quiet Conversations, Watching TV and Phone Calls. ¹⁰ Veterans have no issue in cases where these meet their clinically established needs.

Other, more technologically advanced aids are 'partially subsidised' under the HSP, and are also referred to by DVA as 'top-up' devices. These go in order of increasing capabilities beyond the 'basic' capabilities and range from Level 1 to Level 7. They can be recommended by Audiologists according to clinically determined hearing and lifestyle needs, which the basic devices are incapable of meeting for any particular Veteran. See Figure 1: *Technology to suit your lifestyle*.

		PARTIALLY SUBSIDISED / TOP-UP				
		Fully Subsidised	Level 1	Level 3	Level 5	Level 7
BASIC	Large Hall				○○○	○○○○
	Car				○○○	○○○○
	Music			○○○	○○○	○○○○
	Outdoor Conversations		○○	○○	○○○	○○○○
	Restaurant / Social		○	○○	○○○	○○○○
	Meetings / Conferences		○	○○	○○○	○○○○
	Phone calls	○○	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○
	TV	○○○	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○
	1:1 Quiet Conversations	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○	○○○○

Source: Adapted from Hearing Australia, 2017 [My highlighting and annotations]

Figure 1 – Technology to suit your lifestyle: Fully and Partially Subsidised.

If a basic device cannot provide satisfactory capability for conferences or meetings, outdoor conversations, social and restaurant or in-car conversations, then the Audiologist is likely to recommend an appropriate device from the more capable range. A Veteran's needs for social wellbeing and participation in community engagement could require a higher level of hearing support. However, the DVA 'prior approval' process must be followed.

Audiologists

Not all Audiologists appear to be aware of Veterans' eligibilities to 'exceptional circumstances' hearing support services from DVA for those with needs beyond the 'fully subsidised' devices available through the HSP. No wonder then that Audiologists react in frustrated and less than helpful ways to requests for clinical reports to be provided to DVA to support a 'prior approval' request.

Audiologists might be directed from 'on high' and by notices such as that referred to, to not make exceptional circumstances requests to DVA or provide such reports. They might also have direction to advise Veterans with higher level needs that DVA will not approve them. It is this dysfunction (confusion, misinformation, lack of knowledge), apparently stemming from both DVA and DOH, which so angers eligible Veterans and frustrates Audiologists.

This can result in Veterans needlessly (and wastefully) accepting unsatisfactory HSP 'fully subsidised' hearing aids or paying from their own pocket for 'partially subsidised' devices, without prior approval. Most commonly, they then seek reimbursement or embark on a very long process of trying to seek prior approval. None of this is beneficial, efficient or effective in meeting the eligible Veteran's exceptional needs in a timely manner. Lack of clarity for Audiology professionals is not in the interests of the Veterans they support.

To their credit, some individual professionally qualified Audiologists, having clinically analysed a Veteran's hearing and lifestyle needs, are still prepared to furnish the reports that DVA calls for when approval is being sought, only to have the request 'knocked back', or more information being sought from them.

Such rejections suggest that Audiologists need to be more aware of what DVA wants from their clinical reports and recommendations, before those are submitted, by ensuring that every possible quibble is pre-empted in their clinical reports and that these reports recognise the exceptional circumstances that lead to Veterans' hearing injuries (indicated and recognised in part by the relevant White or Gold Card). They should NOT be deterred from doing so, as now seems to be the case.

Where a 'top up' more capable higher technology device is clinically indicated, then this will need strong professional

audiology support and proof to:

- a. establish the full clinical hearing and lifestyle needs of the Veteran;
- b. prove that no HSP device can meet those exceptional circumstances needs; and
- c. identify clearly which 'top up' device best meets those needs.

One Audiologist suggested use of the relevant Comcare form ² or something similar. I consider that to be a good idea that could be put to DVA by ESOs. Issued to Audiologists with clear guidance, these could make it much easier for them to submit consistent and accurate information to support a clinical decision that 'top-up' devices should be provided. The DVA provided questions form ¹² should also be used.

Individual Veterans

Not all Veterans are fully conversant with their eligibility to hearing support services, including those that could run beyond the 'fully subsidised' devices available through the HSP. Even when they are, they might then face the obstacles put in the way of Audiologists when attempting to obtain prior approval for the supply of 'top up' devices. This is where most cases I have seen seem to have come a cropper - prior approval has not been sought for a variety of reasons, including lack of, or misinformation. That has led to a considerable degree of frustration and anger, needless expense, or eligible Veterans going without proper hearing support. All of that is contrary to the spirit and intent of the overriding legislated provisions for eligible Veterans.

With clear knowledge of the legislative framework for hearing services, individuals should be able to confidently proceed to having their clinical hearing and lifestyle needs met by, and with the help of, their chosen Audiologist. No eligible Veteran should need to do without, or pay for the support services they need to ensure their social well-being and the supply of aids and appliances appropriate to their condition.

Veterans must insist on the 'prior approval' process (where required), and convince Audiologists that the fallacy that DVA 'will not approve', has to be ignored. If they have the Veterans' exceptional circumstances and interests at heart Audiologists must make a strong professional report and recommendation. This is hard for all individuals to convince them to do.

Conclusion

Hearing loss arising from serious, but totally unavoidable noise exposure during their service is an endemic injury among the Veteran community. Treatment and support for Veterans whose hearing and lifestyle needs can be met by the basic 'fully subsidised' aids available under the HSP are readily available, provided they obtain their doctor's certificate and a Voucher under the HSP.

The process involved for an eligible Veteran to obtain treatment and support for their exceptional circumstances and compensable hearing loss needs, beyond basic aids, is rigidly bureaucratic, not Veteran centric and is not administered in a manner that is beneficial to the Veteran.

While ESOs might well address this issue at the policy and even political level, the ball is mainly in the individual Veteran's court, assisted by professional Audiologists showing genuine empathy with their exceptional circumstances, and understanding their eligibility.

Veterans whose hearing and lifestyle needs go beyond those provided for by 'fully subsidised' devices must (themselves or with their advocate) get their Audiologist to obtain 'prior approval' for exceptional circumstances support from DVA under Treatment Principle 11.5.4. Particular care is required in their approach to this process. Audiologists need to be fully and correctly informed about the unique eligibility of Veterans to treatment and support under the VEA. They need to ensure that requests for prior approval, where needed, meet all of DVA's requirements. DVA and the HSP need to collaborate to ensure that there is no doubt about eligible Veterans' entitlements to hearing services and that the process to meet them is accurately and consistently articulated to Audiologists.

I say again, "How's your hearing, cobber?"

Author's post script:

Following completion of this article, a Review of the HSP was announced by the Hon Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government.

See: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/hearing-services-program-review>

The Panel for this Review will be in place until June 2021. DVA will be making a submission, and I urge all those who have experience with support under the HSP, as eligible Veterans with recognised hearing issues, to make a personal submission to this Review.

Bert Hoebee

3 November 2020

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the assistance of Mr K. Mellor and Mr P. Thornton, who kindly read drafts and offered insightful and helpful comments. This article represents the author's personal views based on his understanding of the ruling legislation and

observations of several dozen individual cases.

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Notes

- ¹ *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019*, General Recognition, Sect 5 and 7
- ² Recognition of Veterans' injuries or illness is also possible under MRCA/DRCA.
- ³ Determination Instrument 2013 No. R52
- ⁴ 'May' is interpreted as expressing permission or sanction, or to be allowed to do something. [Shorter Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1978]. In other words, if the HSP cannot satisfy a Veteran's hearing and lifestyle needs, the Commission ought to / must accept financial responsibility for supply from the provider - it cannot refuse to do so.
- ⁵ Productivity Commission Inquiry Report: 'A Better Way to Support Veterans', 4 July 2019
- ⁶ For example, HSV22, which states: "Neither DVA nor the OHS will reimburse you the additional cost in purchasing a partially subsidised hearing device or the extra cost of your maintenance agreement."
- ⁷ For example, the HSP – DVA Notice to Audiologists which states that a Veteran will not be reimbursed by DVA for costs of 'top-up' devices.
- ⁸ Senate question on Notice N0 1174 given on 3 February 2020. DVA evidence revealed there were 115 requests and 15 approvals (13%) between 1 July 2019 and 1 February 2020, and asserted that: "For each of the declined requests [87%], the clinical evidence did not support the need for a partially subsidised device. In each case the treating audiologist has been asked to consider the full range of devices and services available through the HSP or to provide further clinical evidence to support the need for a partially subsidised device."
- ⁹ See <http://www.hearingservices.gov.au> About the Program – Client Information - Veteran Specific Information – Hearing Services
- ¹⁰ As advised on 12 February 2020 by the Director, Hearing Program Management, Department of Health.
- ¹¹ <https://www.comcare.gov.au/about/forms-publications/documents/forms/claims/hearing-aid-request-form.pdf>
- ¹² The DVA booklet The veteran's guide to better hearing, P04129, page 3-6 QUESTIONS

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CALLING ON THE ADF RESERVES IN 2020 - A NATIONAL ASSET

On 4 January 2020, on the advice of the Government, the Governor-General issued a Call Out Order that called out significant elements of Army's 2nd Division in support of Operation BUSHFIRE ASSIST 2019-2020. Overall around 2,670 Reservists responded to the call out and rendered Continuous Full Time Service. In addition, 940 Reserve personnel rendered service using Reserve Service Days.

The call out was issued in accordance with the civil emergency and disaster relief circumstances set out in s.28 of the Defence Act 1903 (Cth). On subsequent advice from the Government, the Governor-General (on 26 January 2020) revoked the compulsory call out of the ADF Reserves. This took effect after 7 February 2020. This was the first occasion since WW2 that a call out of the Reserves has been enacted.

Reservists involved in the call out were allocated to one of three Joint Task Forces established in their respective state (NSW, Victoria, and SA) and were employed according to their skill set. As they are not ADF trained firefighters, this did not include firefighting duties.

Defence Service such as this is protected under the Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001, and employers must release their employees from their civilian employment to

undertake service without being compelled to use any type of paid or unpaid leave during the period of service.

The ADF scale down from Operation BUSHFIRE ASSIST was followed almost immediately by Operation COVID-19 ASSIST. The ADF raised a Joint Task Force Headquarters (HQ JTF629) based on an augmented Headquarters 2nd Division. Each State and Territory has a joint task group based on the Reserve Brigade present in that State, with additional task groups being stood up in Tasmania and the ACT. In the NT, the task group is commanded by the Regional Force Surveillance Group (RFSG). The task groups have included personnel from 2nd Division augmented by personnel from the Regular Army, Navy and Air Force. To date, nearly 3,000 Reservists of the 2nd Division – 25% of the total strength, have volunteered to serve on Operation COVID-19 ASSIST.

At the same time, 2nd Division has continued with other assigned operational contributions including the deployment of six RFSG patrols on Operation RESOLUTE, protecting Australia's northern borders. In addition, 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment has commanded Operation OVERARCH which monitors the transition of people through the Torres Strait. The Battalion's contribution is the focus of the following article - 'Domestic Operations in the Cape'.



DOMESTIC OPERATIONS IN THE CAPE

Since its inception, 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment (51 FNQR) has maintained a consistently high operational tempo. Since transitioning into a Regional Force Surveillance Unit (RFSU) the Battalion's focus has been on conducting regular patrols throughout far north Queensland in support of Border Protection Operations (under the auspices of Operation Resolute).

However, with the onset of COVID-19 and the potential ramification of an outbreak would have on the remote indigenous communities, 51 FNQR was quickly mobilised to support the Government's national response to the pandemic. This support included reinforcing Police Check Points (PCPs) throughout the Battalion's Area of Operations (AO) as well as supporting hotel quarantine tasks in Cairns.

Concurrently, an increased and persistent presence was required in the Torres Strait as part of the Government's Enhanced Border Control Operations (EBCO). As such, the Battalion quickly found itself executing two concurrent operations throughout the majority of the year. This created a constant need for personnel to rotate through operations for extended periods of time. Whilst this provided increased employment opportunities for our reservist during uncertain times, it also placed great strain and stress on our soldiers.

The potential ramifications this would have to individual's mental and physical health was recognised early by the Joint Task Force (JTF) that was mobilised to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, a thorough demount process was implemented for those returning from domestic operations. This provided an opportunity for our soldiers to highlight any injuries sustained during the conduct of their duties and as such would allow soldiers to access a variety of health services for subsequent treatment.

Furthermore, due to the length of their deployment and potential exposure to stressful situations, soldiers returning from EBCO were provided the opportunity to engage with mental health staff as part of their demounting process. This support was promptly organised through our Navy partners at HMAS Cairns. The success of this initial trial has prompted discussion for mental health screening to become a consistent part of demounting from Border Protection Operations. This is testimony of the complex nature of these domestic operations which are the focus for RFSUs.

Whilst this year has been challenging, the soldiers and officers within the unit have conducted themselves with high levels of professionalism and commitment. The 51st Battalion is well poised to respond to any future requirements of the Government as we move into a new year.

MEDICALLY DISCHARGED VETERANS VS THE TAX OFFICE FEDERAL COURT APPEAL - UPDATE

The two previous editions of Camaraderie chronicled this on-going saga, which started in February 2016 with Veterans' registering objections to the ATO treatment of Class A and Class B Invalidity Benefits paid from the military superannuation schemes run by the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC).

The outcome of these cases will affect all Veterans **who are currently receiving Class A or B Invalidity Benefits or received them in the past from:**

- The Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) scheme;
- The Military Superannuation Benefits Scheme (MSBS); and probably
- ADF Cover.

The outcome may also affect currently serving ADF members awaiting Medical Discharge.

The DFRDB case also addresses taxation regarding Retrospective Medical Discharges.

Saga So Far. Full details of the case and arguments are detailed on the DFWA website. Essentially, Veterans are arguing that under the respective Acts, Invalidity Benefits are reviewable and are not for life, as CSC clearly advises on their website. While such payments are reviewable, they cannot be regarded and should not be taxed as Superannuation Income Streams – they are a form of insurance. Civilian equivalent payments are not taxed as Income Streams. The three Veterans concerned won their argument before Justice Logan at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) in Brisbane earlier this year. In April, the Commissioner of Taxation appealed against the AAT decision to the Full Bench of the Federal Court.

What Happened Since Last Update. As reported, the ATO original appeal submission listed the AAT as a respondent, a most unusual "firing all guns" counterattack. The ATO since had a re-think and subsequently withdrew this and was content with just naming the Veterans as respondents. The sequence:

- The ATO submitted its written case in September.
- The Veterans' legal team lodged their response around 26 October.
- The ATO reply to the Veterans' response is due on 5 November.
- Court Hearing, before the Hon Justices, Jenifer Davies, Tom Thawley and John Griffiths, is 12-13 November.
- Hearing Decision likely around March 2021.
- After the Federal Court decision, either side has 28 days to apply for leave to appeal to the High Court of Australia.

The arguments being presented by the ATO and Veterans are essentially the same as presented at the AAT, except a bit "more polished". The three cases (Wayne Douglas – QUD103/2020, Peter Burns - QUD114/2020 and Shane Walker – QUD115/2020) will be heard together at the Hearing. The Veteran legal teams comprise two Senior Counsel (QCs) and 3 Junior Counsel (barristers) as well

as the Veterans' solicitors. Wayne and Peter continue to be represented by DFWAQ Honorary Legal Advisor, Cleary Hoare Solicitors and Shane by Irish Bentley Lawyers. The ATO has two QCs and one Junior Counsel, as well as a cast of in-house "legals" which at previous Hearings numbered about eight.

Litigation and court cases are stressful for any individual litigant. In these cases, the Veterans also have the extra stress of being Test Cases, knowing any instructions they give to their legal team, not only affects their cases, but could also affect several thousand other Veterans on Invalidity Benefits – and their families. The official legal battle started in February 2016, nearly 5 years ago... This has not been a short battle.

The Veterans and their families deserve our thanks and support.

Video Hearing. Due to COVID restrictions, the hearings are conducted by video link. The public were able to dial in and attend the "virtual courtroom" under strict conditions, e.g., muted and no recording. Connection details were available from the Federal Court Qld registry by 1630 the previous day. The public can also register to be notified on next court dates – the Federal Court decision day, and join in and watch when the decisions are announced, hopefully, early next year.

DFWA Veteran Briefing. COVID 19 and lockdowns etc. permitting, DFWA Qld will be providing a briefing session on the subject as soon as possible after the Federal Court decision – as part of our annual member update on Veteran matters. Previous briefing sessions were by the Cleary Hoare solicitor, Daniel Paratore, also a Veteran. As before, such sessions will also be open to other ESO, and interested Veterans, including serving ADF, subject to capacity of venue. Watch the DFWA website for details.

Advice to Veterans Receiving or Likely to be Granted a Class A or B Invalidity Benefit from MSBS or ADF Cover. As mentioned in last Camaraderie, the ATO advises current and former recipients of Class A and Class B not to raise objections to current and previous years' tax returns based on the AAT decision. The ATO states that your full rights will be retained. The author highlights reasons why affected Veterans should question the ATO advice, given their behaviour in these cases and the Judge's critical comment on it. Recipients have every right to lodge an objection.

John Lewis - President DFWA(Qld)

STOP PPESS

The Federal Court Hearing scheduled for 12 – 13 November was adjourned after one day as both sides completed their Oral arguments sooner than expected. It is possible that the Federal Court decisions may be sooner rather than the predicted Mar 2021. A summary of the Hearing and of judges comments will be available on the DFWA website.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

THE NATURE OF OPERATIONAL AND PEACETIME SERVICE

The recent report by the Productivity Commission has prompted discussion on the nature of compensation rendered due to military service. There is an important point of principle here:

a. In peacetime service the safety of the troops involved is the paramount consideration. If there is a peacetime activity, including training for war, (which we try to make as realistic as possible), involves a risk that makes the taking of casualties inevitable, the activity either does not proceed, or, if in progress, is stopped. The casualties cannot be justified.

b. In wartime service achievement of the mission is the paramount consideration. While it is a core responsibility of commanders at all levels in war to achieve the mission with a minimum of casualties, if casualties are inevitable, they have to be accepted as part of the cost of achieving the mission.

Thus, the two categories of service are fundamentally different in that respect and the distinction made in the administration of veterans' care is fully justified. We should strive to preserve it.

Kerry Mellor

Editors Note:

The question of considering the "reasonable hypothesis" is especially relevant given the changing operational environment the ADF has and is experiencing. It is also interesting to note that the Government is presently proposing the introduction of the compulsory callout of Reservists in support of non-warlike operations. Readers' comments on this important matter are welcome!

VALE - DOUGLAS HARRY BRITT

Petty Officer Medic RAN 15 March 1937 - 11 April 2020

Douglas Britt was born in the square mile of Adelaide SA and led a very colourful life, swimming in the River Torrens, being involved with race horses and even delivering bread by horse and cart. Douglas joined the Royal Australian Navy after his older brother Gordon joined up and he became a Medic and served in HMAS Sydney, Vendetta and Vampire. He served in the Indonesian, Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam conflicts. It would seem that he was also a very deft hand at being a surgeon, for on one occasion on HMAS Vendetta, he was required to remove the appendix on a junior sailor as no doctor was available. He also delivered babies in his VW enroute to hospital and was a very popular sailor.

After leaving the RAN, he joined the Regular Defence Force Welfare Association and at one stage was president of the Veterans Vietnam War Trust Fund. He became an advocate for veterans and helped many veterans with their claims and applications for benefits. He also assisted many veterans who

*Douglas with his
Grandson Isaac at
an ANZAC Day Service*



suffered mental health issues. Doug was the Hon Secretary of the RFDWA/DFWA and through sheer personal determination kept the association going during lean years. He also became a Life Member of the association.

Doug was married to Gwyneth and they had 2 children, Christopher and Megan. Doug passed away after a long battle with heart disease and vascular dementia. He will be missed. Rest in Peace Douglas Harry Britt.



ANNA LANG

VETERANS HOMELESSNESS

Veteran homelessness is an issue that needs to be addressed and one that is a matter of importance and directly impacts that suicide rates of veterans. It has come to light that not only are there veterans on the streets who are suffering and struggling that are known about, but there are many out there including men and women who cannot be found. They end up in that situation for various reasons often stemming from mental health conditions, financial hardship, family breakdowns, ill health and drug and alcohol addiction. So many veterans are in need of assistance out there and this article is to raise awareness of not only the problems they are facing, but some prevention rather than cure approaches.

Why are veterans becoming homeless?

As mentioned, they are often suffering mental health conditions, financial hardship, family breakdowns, ill health or drug and alcohol addiction. When they served they may have endured witnessing traumatising events and they may not be able to cope or some are injured and cannot work while the thing about all of these veterans, is that they are in need of some dire assistance and for the Ex Services Organisations (ESO's) to rally together to find ways to assist them to not only re-integrate into society but to rise up, re-educate and to get back into a life they are more accustomed to. Veterans are losing their partners, children, assets, dignity and often sadly in some cases their life as a result of facing homelessness. Financial hardship is very much a large part of why they end up on the streets while the thing about illness, injury, relationship breakdowns and addictions is that they add to the financial pressures and often veterans lose grip of their lives and end up sleeping on the streets. There are not enough services available for these veterans and not enough people helping while their pride is also stopping them reaching out for assistance and they may stay homeless and stuck for longer than they may need to as a result. There must be more done about why these veterans are becoming homeless and education and innovation is key to the outcome of reduced incidences and thus will have an impact on the number of veteran suicides.

How do we prevent veteran homelessness?

Awareness and education are crucial to the prevention rather than cure approach. When a veteran is mentally capable, they will be able to plan, budget, relate to others and sustain a lifestyle and life that is held together no matter how stressful situations may be. It is a fact of the demographic that there is a higher number of mental health concerns and that impacts the number of men and women who are able to think and create their life out of the situation they have gotten themselves into or been forced into. To prevent, there must be more education and encouragement

to ask for assistance and reach out for help and they must know about the services available in their area. Social inclusion is a crucial aspect of this and being isolated often has them disappear and not be able to be accounted for and helped, even if they cannot help themselves. It is amazing the work that many ESO's and NGO's are doing and that includes Mission Australia and Exercise Stone Pillow along with a number of ESO's who are now focused on suicide prevention. To prevent suicide there must also be a focus on reducing veteran homelessness as many who face homelessness and financial, relationship and health ruin take their own lives.

What should we do about veteran homelessness?

Outreach programs are a good way to ensure that those who are unaccounted for are now accounted for. It is a fact that many veterans need rescuing. Also, better inclusion of both men and women into the ESO's who suffer from social isolation is an effective way to ensure that these people are not left behind. It is sad that for an organisation such as the Australian Defence Force (ADF) which so openly promotes comradeship that so many resist it and won't allow it into their lives. Comradeship is something that can help to prevent veteran homelessness and make all feel welcome into places that provide a safe space for them and ensure they are able to be caught before they fall. Many won't want to rely on their mates while they must be encouraged to allow themselves to be helped and let go of their pride so that they can receive the help they desperately need. Referring to organisations is very helpful while there must be more case management services within the ESO's and the Department of Veterans' Affairs as the epidemic of mental health challenges, psychosis and conditions that have veterans unable to take care of themselves has them not be able to fend for themselves.

In summary, together all ESO's and DVA can assist those who are facing homelessness and let go of the stigma and judgment around mental health and those who have been in those positions. There is much a veteran who has been through hardship can add to the ESO community and there is much that someone who has faced or endured living on the streets can impart to assist not only reducing the homelessness issue but the suicide issue also. Veterans can overcome anything and although many mental health and physical injuries and illnesses are permanent, there must be an attitude of faith and confidence that no matter how dire things look, they can find a new vision and life and ensure they are able to rise up from the ashes to find their place in life once more. There are great things to come for the ESO communities and the way forward for veterans as there are things being done to help them and actions are being taken by the Government.



AMERICAN AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION VETERANS' FUND SCHOLARSHIPS

The American Australian Association (AAA) established its Veterans' Fund in 2017 to provide much needed financial support and assistance to Australian and American honourably discharged post-9/11 military veterans to pursue study in each other's countries respectively. With more than 20 veteran scholars and alumni and US \$900,000 awarded to date, the AAA is committed to investing in the future of veterans by supporting educational opportunities which build new skills and create prosperous post-military careers.



Undergraduate or Graduate level study in any disciplinary field, at an accredited educational institution in the country of the other, for a minimum of one-year. It may be used to support travel, living, tuition or other associated costs.

There are two scholarship application rounds offered each year (one in each direction). The Australia to USA scholarship is open for application on February 1 to March 15 each year.

The Fund provides support of up to US \$40,000 to Australian and American Veterans undertaking or planning to undertake full-time

For further information go to <https://www.americaaustralian.org/scholarships/veterans-fund/>

BOOK REVIEW: Letters to Lily Vale

The life and letters of Ernest Latchford MC MBE in France, Persia, and Russia, 1916-1919

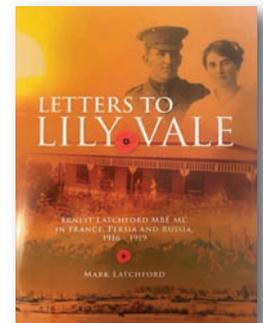
Ernest Latchford MBE MC served 40 years as a regular Australian Army soldier from the early days of the militia through to the 1950s. During WWI, he served with the 38th on the Western Front through Messines and Passchendaele (where he won the MC). He later volunteered for the secret mission, Dunsterforce, to NW Persia and most intriguing, instead of coming home at the Armistice, he signed on to train White Russians in the middle of Siberia. Whereas other ANZACs were sent to near Finland, Ernest Latchford was the only Australian deployed to Siberia.

The story of Ernest Latchford is told through his articulate, observant letters home from three very distinct theatres of war, with related commentary by his grandson. Every week, irrespective of location, intensity of battle, or injury he wrote to his fiancé, Linda Dehnert in Western Victoria. These previously unseen letters, often many pages in length, were always passionate and vivid as he describes the politics of the conflict and the horrors of the battles, especially the loss of much-loved colleagues.

On his return, he was seen as the mentor of two generations of infantry as trainer/commander at the Small Arms School at Randwick, Bonegilla and Seymour. Latchford Barracks at Bonegilla is named after him as are the Latchford Galleries at the Singleton Infantry Museum. His only child, Major General Kevin Latchford, inevitably, also served, in Japan, Germany and Vietnam, albeit in the Armoured Corps.

A prolific letter writer and diarist Latchford was eyewitness to events beyond the experience of many at the time. A good read as the letters take a personal trip through an interesting period of Australian military history – in war and peace.

This wonderful and most readable book is available from <https://www.openbookhowden.com.au/product/letters-to-lily-vale/>





DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION
Patron-in-Chief: His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
NATIONAL OFFICE

**PO Box 4166
KINGSTON ACT 2604**

27 August 2020

The Hon Mr Darren Chester MP
Minister for Veterans Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE VETERANS' COVENANT BILL -
INCLUSION OF A NO DISADVANTAGE CLAUSE**

Dear Minister,

In 2019 your Government made a positive, long sought contribution to the issues being addressed by the veteran community. This was the passing of the *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019 (the Act)*. This Bill introduced to the Australian people the *Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant* – a milestone in the recognition of the unique nature of military service.

Minister, during the discussion leading up to the formulation of the Covenant itself DFWA sought the inclusion of a 'no disadvantage' clause into both the Bill and the Covenant. The proposed clause is that, *'The Commonwealth acknowledges that veterans, their families and veterans' widows will not be disadvantaged relative to any other section of the community'*.

In commending the Bill to the Senate on Monday 29 July 2019, Minister Reynolds, Minister for Defence, talked of the Covenant as, "giving a foundation to a cultural shift" in the acknowledgement of the 'nation's respect for those who serve and their sacrifice'.

Senator Reynolds then spoke of the Covenant being, *"designed to establish a new exchange of trust, of recognition and of thanks"*. Minister, in a social context trust is an evolving construct or phenomenon that is subject to change.

Change in attitudes, change in recognition and change in acceptance. Anyone who lived through the pre-Vietnam, Vietnam War and post-Vietnam periods will attest to the attitudinal changes that occurred in the recognition and acceptance of veterans and their families.

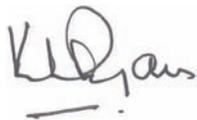
When, as National President of DFWA, I addressed the FADT during its review of the proposed Bill, I promoted the inclusion of a 'no disadvantage' clause. Unfortunately, the concept was ultimately overlooked in the Committee's final report. In her own submission to the FADT, the Secretary DVA intimated in her address that such a clause could be introduced at by way of an amendment to the Act in the future.

Continued overpage

Minister, DFWA requests consideration that the *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019 (the Act)* be amended to include the no disadvantage clause. Further, that the Australian Defence Veterans Covenant be amended to reflect the no disadvantage clause. The proposed words are as follows:

'The Commonwealth acknowledges that veterans, their families and veterans' widows will not be disadvantaged relative to any other section of the community'.

Yours sincerely,



Kel Ryan
National President
Defence Force Welfare Association



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As its major sponsor, we respect and support the sterling work done by Defence Force Welfare Association of Australia in providing its own voice for our military personnel. The sacrifices they make for Australia in war and in peace is truly deserving of recognition.

To see The Bradford Exchange's diverse range of military-themed editions, go to: www.bradford.com.au/lwf



New Rent assistance arrangements

for Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Veterans

The Independent Review into the TPI Payment by Mr David Tune AO PSM recommended more targeted support for the most severely impaired recipients of the disability pension and a more streamlined administration of the disability pension.

As a result, new arrangements have been announced that will simplify the way income support payments are calculated, indexed, and administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and Services Australia. The initiative will exempt the disability pension from the Social Security Act income test and the rent assistance test under the Veterans' Entitlements Act.

This means that the existing Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA) can be abolished as it is no longer necessary, and will result in some individuals receiving higher rates of rent assistance. Abolition of DFISA aligns with recommendation 15.1 of the Productivity Commission report A Better Way to Support Veterans.

No veteran will be worse off as a result of the abolition of DFISA. A veteran's social security payment (eg age pension) will be equal to the sum of their current reduced social security payment and their current DFISA payment.

For some veterans who are eligible for rent assistance, the new payment rate will be higher than the sum of their current payments.

Renaming the disability pension to 'Disability Compensation Payment' will provide clarity as to the purpose of the payment. Exploring the feasibility of better information sharing across agencies will facilitate better targeted support for the most seriously impaired veterans.

There will be a staggered introduction of the various components between 1 July 2021 and 20 September 2022. Veterans in receipt of disability compensation payments, especially those who are the most seriously impaired and those on low incomes paying private rent will benefit from this new arrangement.

THE RISE AND FALL OF ISIS ARMOUR

by Lieutenant Colonel Alistair Pope, psc, CM (Retired)

UNDERSTANDING THE MAZE

Following their unilaterally declared victory over various rebel forces in Iraq in 2007, the USA began withdrawing its deployed combat forces and commenced the process of reconstituting the Iraqi Army. The withdrawal was a politically driven decision based on the U.S. Presidential electoral cycle rather than any military or intelligence assessment. Al-Qaeda and other opposition forces had been badly hurt, but they had not been eradicated. However, this decision was probably politically essential, though from a practical military point of view the withdrawal was opposed by many senior military commanders as being both premature and contrary to the situational evidence. Nonetheless, the withdrawal went ahead and was completed by 2011 in time for the next U.S. Presidential race. By 2012, only about 4,400 U.S. soldiers remained in Iraq in training and support roles.

Concurrently with this Iraqi strategy a stated objective of the USA and its European allies was the military defeat and removal from power of President Bashar Al-Assad and the ruling Baathist Party in Syria. The fall of Assad was considered a logical outcome of the misnamed 'Arab Spring' movement. This was an entirely misguided objective created by the narrow perspective of Western political analysts' intent on imposing democracy on a country that had no experience of what that meant. The alternative rulers supported by the West would most likely be far more murderous than any excesses perpetrated by the Assad regime.

Thus, cross-alliances, cross-purposes and mutually exclusive objectives were supported by the USA (and its allies) out of both expediency and a failure to understand the extremely Byzantine politics of the region. Bizarrely, this meant that U.S. troops (plus other clandestine operations conducted by the CIA) were both fighting rebel and terrorist groups in one area while supporting, supplying and training members of those same groups in another. The overriding focus on removing Al-Assad resulted in the USA both supporting its bitter enemy, Al-Qaeda, its brutal ISIS affiliate and other equally ruthless and barbaric 'moderate' groups depending on whether or not they were fighting Assad today. The political situation across the region (and North Africa) defies any rational analysis or the implementation of consistently realistic policies.

THE RISE OF ISIS

In Iraq, experienced soldiers from Saddam Hussein's former army were not welcomed as recruits in the new army, so the quality and capabilities of the units being raised was generally poor, despite being lavishly supplied with considerable quantities of modern equipment. In the first months of 2014 the little known ISIS faction began to assemble and tentatively invade small sections of territory in northern Iraq. In June 2014, in a brilliant blitzkrieg operation spearheaded by convoys of hundreds of brand new Toyota HiLux vehicles, ISIS fighters swept out of Turkey and across northern Iraq capturing Samarra, Tikrit, the Kirkuk oil fields and Mosul.

Five Iraqi divisions broke and ran, usually without putting up any resistance in an unseemly rout before this host of lightly armed terrorists. These Iraqi Army divisions both outnumbered and outgunned the insurgents. One complete Brigade of 1,750 men surrendered at Tabqa Airbase and were gruesomely murdered by machine gun and AK-47 fire in a massacre videoed and distributed for propaganda purposes. ISIS now controlled a huge area of Iraq and were within striking distance of Baghdad.

A stunned world had just witnessed an ISIS force of about 30,000+ annihilate a well-equipped modern force of over 100,000 soldiers that had been building and training for up to six years. However, this was the ISIS high point in Iraq as the still numerous Iraqi Army, now supported by highly motivated Shia militias and the Iranian Al-Quds Brigade now deployed to defend Baghdad, while the Kurdish Peshmerga fought hard to hold their homeland in the north along the Turkish border. ISIS would now look for easier targets, so it turned its attention to Syria.

One compelling mystery that attracted the media and the public's attention was how ISIS was able to obtain hundreds of identical, brand-new Toyota trucks to spearhead their invasion of Iraq. Testimony to Congress revealed that both the U.S. and British governments, through the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Army and its ally's military forces and intelligence agencies had provided them for use against the Syrian Government. In effect, the West was complicit (with other parties) in supplying and paying for vehicles and weapons for the use of brutal terrorists in Syria, but which were first used against their own client and ally in Iraq.



Convoys of Brand New Hilux's begin their Blitzkrieg through Northern Iraq, June 2014

With their initial victories in Iraq ISIS captured an estimated 2,500 armoured vehicles, including up to 200 tanks. With so much equipment, ISIS now had the means to create a Muslim Caliphate 'state' and fight a conventional war against its opponents.

THE RISE OF ISIS ARMOUR

Several insurgent groups were already fighting (and winning) against Assad when ISIS arrived on the scene. The initial ISIS surge into Syria was just as successful as that in Iraq and resulted in the capture of approximately another 100+ tanks, self-propelled artillery and 70 BMP's, almost all of them in operationally working order. The aggregation of these windfalls made ISIS one of the largest armoured forces in the world.

Although tanks and armoured vehicles are deliberately designed to be easy to drive, their maintenance and the tactical skills for successfully employing them in battle are more complicated. Despite the disasters, defeats and the loss of territory and cities in Iraq and Syria most military analysts continued to optimistically predict that ISIS would not be able to exploit the huge arsenal of heavy weapons and armour they had acquired. As with almost every other 'expert' prediction, this one also proved to be wrong as ISIS rapidly learned how to operate and maintain their new weapons. Given their lack of experience they also innovated and quickly developed an operational doctrine for their deployment that stayed within the limited level of their technical and tactical skills.

Former Iraqi Army soldiers, foreign fighters who were either mechanics, electronic engineers, technicians, or who were just armoured vehicle enthusiasts were soon found among the ISIS ranks. These specialists were allocated to the new 'Special Weapons Units' being formed and tasked with servicing and

enhancing the capabilities of this impressive arsenal. The prominence given to these tanks and heavy weapons in ISIS propaganda videos and their on-line magazine ('Inspire') was way out of proportion to their effectiveness as battlefield weapons at this point. However, their visibility made the point that ISIS was a powerful fighting force that had already swept aside a large U.S. trained and well-equipped Iraqi army and now appeared to be on the brink of defeating the remnants of Assad's army and conquering all of Syria. The clear message they wanted to send to the world was that they were not a junior force that could be taken lightly.

When their apparent lust for torture, brutality and beheadings is added to the mix, then any enemy facing them had every right to be fearful. Of course, this also hardened the determination of the remaining Iraqi and Syrian Army soldiers, non-Sunni Muslims, all other faiths and the Syrian government and its allies not to surrender, nor would they in their turn show any mercy to any ISIS fighter they captured.

THE OPERATIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF ISIS ARMOUR

An Unusual Intelligence Source

Social media can be a source of both good and bad information. As we have often seen, many people make comments on social media they later come to regret. An alternative view is that it can also be a great source of information, so perhaps it is not surprising to find that many ISIS fighters continued to maintain and regularly update their social media profiles. Many were keen to boast of their exploits (and crimes in slaughtering prisoners), apparently unaware they were providing the easiest source of intelligence available.

Social media was one of the sources of material for this article.

Organizational Structure of ISIS Armour

ISIS does not appear to have ever created a formal organizational structure or specialized command headquarters to manage and operationally deploy its considerable armoured assets. Although there are references to 'The Tank Battalion' as an independent unit, there are no known instances of any concentration of ISIS armoured units gathering and independently instigating attacks. The limited centralized command, as understood by conventional armies, appears to have been more for logistics and administrative purposes rather than for command, control and operational deployment. Instead, selected armoured vehicles would be attached to elements of the elite Platoons of Special Tasks as required for a specific task. This infantry support role considerably reduced the effectiveness of these heavy weapons in winning battles, but singled them out as prime targets for their opponents.

Due to the potential of their destruction from the air, the Tank Battalion was divided into several sub-units and widely dispersed across several bases further complicating their ability to concentrate.

While the doctrine for the 'Platoons of Special Tasks' was already evident as early as 2014 the large influx of foreign fighters in 2014 and 2015 enabled the Islamic State to set up more specialised units intended to expand the Caliphate beyond its initial boundaries. Instead of directly deploying its new foreign recruits to the frontline, large numbers were held back in the 'Caliphate' capital of Raqqa for enlistment into elite assault units. As these foreigners had travelled to Syria specifically to fight for the Islamic State, they were generally regarded as being well-motivated and better-educated than locally recruited regular Islamic State soldiers. As a result the foreign fighters received more training and were assigned to special units, such as the Tank Battalion.

In its normal configuration, a 'Platoon of Special Tasks' would consist of Raqqa-based infantry supported by several 'technicals' (a heavy machine gun mounted on a Hilux tray) plus attachments from the 'Tank Battalion' and artillery, depending on the type of operation. After achieving their objective, these units would return to their individual bases and await their next mission. This meant that no unit was ever the same and could consist of several individual components during each operation. No effective tactical cohesion, even between individual armoured vehicles was possible.

With such a powerful armoured force available ISIS possibly had a fleeting opportunity to defeat Assad before his powerful allies (Russia and Iran) had time to intercede. Instead of completing their conquests of Iraq and Syria ISIS misdirected a significant proportion of their combatant strength to defeating the other rebel forces also fighting Assad. By now their brutality was turning the tide against them as ordinary Syrian people recognized that being conquered by ISIS meant a certain grisly death.

Surprisingly, one western military analyst commented to the media that the "Islamic State deployed its armour on a large and organised scale, even surpassing the militaries of many established nations states in the amount and quality of its equipment as well as the tactics employed." This is certainly a false and incorrect statement as the repeated attachment of small numbers of AFV in support of infantry operations attests. The armoured tactics ISIS employed were more akin to those of WWI infantry support than the massed 'Blitzkrieg' assaults of WW2 or the concerted use of strong armoured forces during Operation Desert Storm in 2001.

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF ISIS ARMOUR

The Armoured Vehicle Repair Workshops

One of the great surprises for Western analysts was the rapid creation of a series of armoured vehicle repair, maintenance and upgrade workshops. Maintaining armoured vehicles is no minor undertaking as it requires heavy-lift capabilities and a degree of engineering and mechanical sophistication that is not readily available. This suggests that the technicians' involved were probably former Iraqi or Syrian Army soldiers and/or civilians already experienced in this area. Indeed, in the early part of the Syrian war several major Syrian Army units changed sides by declaring their support for ISIS and the Caliphate. These units brought with them to ISIS much needed expertise in conventional warfare.

Several workshops were established by the ISIS created Provincial Governments' ('Wilayats') within the Caliphate. Their capabilities ranged from minor servicing and maintenance to two facilities in Syria capable of carrying out major overhauls, upgrades and of building AVBIEDs (Armoured Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices for use by suicide bombers).

The most successful of the maintenance facilities was 'The Workshop' in the Wilayat al-Raqqa which overhauled and upgraded over 150 armoured fighting vehicles between July 2014 and its capture by the Syrian Army in June 2017. This is more than half the tanks and BMPs ISIS operated in Syria.

The Raqqa Workshop had the capability to overhaul and upgrade nearly all types of armoured fighting vehicles used by the Islamic State. They also innovated by producing and installing multi-spectral camouflage on tanks and up-armouring other AFVs. Several of the ex-Syrian Army T-55s they overhauled were used by ISIS in the protracted defence of Mosul at the other limit of the Caliphate's territory.

Unlike in Syria where ISIS initially blended in with other anti-government insurgents, their immediate and sustained brutality in Iraq either prevented the defection of Iraqi Army units to join their cause, or they murdered the technical staff they captured. Service and armoured vehicle maintenance in Iraq never achieved the same capabilities as in Syria.

OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT OF ISIS ARMOUR

Air Power versus Armour

It is a tenet of modern warfare that armour must operate under the protection of adequate air cover or it will simply be an easy target for precision missiles either fired from piloted ground attack aircraft or armed UAV (drones). In North Africa as early as 1942, Rommel's armoured divisions struggled to survive and fight under the threat of superior air power. After

the D-Day invasion of Normandy in 1944 the Panzer divisions found daylight movement almost impossible. Finally, in the first Gulf War the annihilation of a column of retreating Iraqi Army vehicles by fuel-air weapons seemed to seal the principle that coordinated air cooperation for the protection of armoured forces was essential.

In September 2014 the USAF began to tentatively fly missions against ISIS heavy weapons and forward positions. Unfortunately, the strict Rules of Engagement (RoE) under which they operated considerably reduced the effectiveness of these sorties for fear of the 'war crime' of causing 'collateral damage' to civilians, and particularly Niqab clad women and the prominently displayed children riding on the armoured vehicles as human shields. When Samarra was counter-attacked by the Iraqi army in 2015 an ISIS Hilux convoy was allowed to travel unmolested to the relieve the defenders as every vehicle carried several unidentifiable people wearing Niqabs.

Despite the commencement of these Coalition air patrols aimed at degrading the Islamic State's heavy weaponry throughout Syria and Iraq, ISIS was able to operate its AFVs on every front with only a minimal risk of being targeted. However, as a precaution, all AFV were kept inside a building when being overhauled or were camouflaged and distributed individually in thick orchard vegetation when not deployed on active service. Although their quantity made ISIS a significant armoured force there can be little doubt that they were no tactical match individually or collectively for any of the well-trained Western armoured forces they could possibly expect to meet in battle.

Case Study: the Defeat of an ISIS Armoured Attack

Genghis Khan is reputed to have said that he judged a man by the quality of his enemies. By that measure ISIS does not fare well. While their barbarity is of the highest order it was mainly aimed at prisoners, civilians and anyone not a member of ISIS. There is no argument that many of their religiously motivated infantry fought well and skilfully, but in conventional warfare when higher command and control, heavy weapons and unit tactics will decide the strategic outcome they do not rate well.

Despite more than two years of regular operations the Tank Battalion and the Platoons of Special Tasks had still not produced a realistic tactical doctrine for deploying their armour. While the quality and resolve of the strengthening forces they faced continued to improve, ISIS armoured tactics remained on the lowest skill level.

The Battle of the Kuweires Airbase Pocket

From mid-2012, the Kuweires Airbase had been surrounded by rebel forces. For nearly three years less than 1,000 defenders had been regularly attacked by a series of insurgent groups, but

the airbase always repelled the attacks and held out. Despite receiving reinforcements, attrition had probably halved the defenders numbers by the time of the ISIS assaults in August 2015. With no way out and surrender not an option the Syrian Army and Air Force soldiers trapped in the pocket doggedly fought off every attempt to capture the base although they had neither armour nor artillery support and only a few reinforcement infantry being flown in. Although they were bombarded and mortared regularly they had beaten off resolute infantry attacks several times and had not surrendered any ground in three years. When the opportunity arose they worked to strengthen their defences. Curiously, the airstrip was never completely closed and continued to be used as their lifeline for resupply, evacuation and even offensive airstrikes!

By June 2015, ISIS had defeated every other insurgent group in the area and was now in control of all the territory surrounding the base. Elimination of the Kuweires Pocket became an important ISIS objective for propaganda purposes. To ensure the success of this operation their largest conventional assault force since their initial Blitzkrieg operation in 2014 was assembled in July-August 2015.

The terrain surrounding the airbase greatly favoured the defenders as any attacking force would have to cross 600m of flat empty plains to reach the defenders. They were likely to incur heavy losses while doing so.

The defenders also demonstrated considerable skill in adapting the Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HAS) located at the Northern and Eastern part of the airbase into virtually impregnable fortresses. These HAS' would need to be suppressed by heavy weapons before the ISIS infantry attacked. Each HAS had either one anti-aircraft gun or heavy machine-gun installed on top. As they could withstand large bombs ISIS could not destroy them, even with their captured U.S Army 155mm artillery. Well-sited trenches and berms provided cover for the defending soldiers tasked with the protection of their assigned front. An internal maze of communication and resupply trenches allowed the garrison to quickly reinforce threatened points. Additionally, the defenders created a number of 'technicals' armed with ZU-23s and heavy machine-guns, which could be used as a ready-reaction force to reinforce any part of the base requiring extra firepower.

ISIS reconnaissance does not appear to have recognised the strength of these fortifications nor the difficulties of crossing such a wide open space swept by heavy fire, so their attack plan remained unchanged from those that brought them victory in 2014. These previous easy victories had blinded them to the changed nature of the war or the resolve of these defenders. In fact, ISIS was facing a confident, highly-motivated, skilled and experienced garrison unfazed by either the ISIS reputation for

cruelty to prisoners or their reputed fighting capability. From July through August 2015, ISIS began to move its assault units and armoured forces into position.

There was no air interdiction to interrupt the concentration of their forces as the Western governments still held the belief that the removal of Assad must be the prime objective, even if the price of doing so meant making a pact with barbarous, evil, war criminals.

ISIS began its campaign with a crude attempt to frighten a garrison into surrendering that had resisted all attempts to capture it for more than three years. If anything, the final threat probably made them more determined than ever to fight to the end, if necessary.

Although Kuweires had significant political value for both sides it was not militarily important. The Syrian Army could not assist them at this point as it was fully engaged keeping the corridor open to support the battle for Aleppo raging to the north-west. With no resources available for their relief, the defenders of Kuweires were on their own with what they had available as neither a breakout, nor rescue was possible.

The expected assault began on August 9th, 2015 with a suicide bomber driving an explosive packed armoured technical at one of the defenders strongpoints. Although the AVBIED was destroyed before reaching its objective the size of the explosion injured several of the defenders, though they claim nobody was killed. Incredibly, this attack was not immediately followed-up, giving the defenders time to recover and reset their positions.

The first armoured assault began on August 10th, with T-72 '311' and BMP-I '208', advancing across the exposed plain to a point where the infantry could dismount and storm the heavily fortified first HAS. Instead of the T-72 holding back and using its firepower and the range of its main gun and machine guns to provide cover by suppressing the defenders, the T-72 overtook the BMP-I and positioned itself behind a berm. They immediately found that their main gun could not elevate enough to fire on the top of the HAS. T-72 311 now had a very limited field of fire that could only hit a few enemy positions. It also meant that they came under heavy fire from the top of the HAS which they could not answer. Without fire support, the infantry could not safely dismount from the BMP-I and reach cover. The BMP-I then stopped short and the exiting infantry were all killed before reaching the shelter of the berm. The BMP-I was then disabled, possibly by an RPG and its crew killed as they fled. At this point the T-72 appears to have still been operational, though taking heavy fire on its protective armour. It is possible that it could have been driven away, but instead the crew abandoned its protection and were immediately killed by small arms fire. The first assault had been completely annihilated.



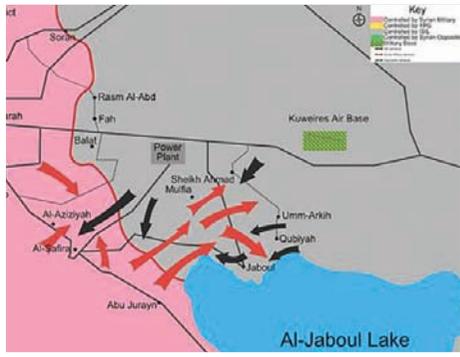
The bare, steep slope of the HAS that would have to be assaulted

When the defenders ventured out to inspect the battle site they found a wealth of intelligence material had been carried by the crews. This was another amateur mistake as it allowed the defenders to prepare for the coming second assault.

This complete failure did not deter ISIS from carrying out another identical mechanised assault involving T-55 '319' and BMP-I '206'. As if channelling the unimaginative carnage of WWI the second attack would unfold in roughly the same way as the first. As in the first assault, the T-55 charged forward and ploughed itself into the berm. Having no room to manoeuvre after this catastrophic error, the T-55 was damaged by an anti-tank weapon, but not penetrated. The assault infantry exited the BMP-I and were immediately killed. The crew of the BMP-I then abandoned their still functioning vehicle and were also killed. The T-55 crew also tried to flee on foot and were shot down.

Despite the significant resources ISIS had assembled for the attack on the Kuweires Pocket, the piecemeal commitment of their forces showed their fatal lack of modern military tactics for the employment of large forces. Their attack was poorly planned, uncoordinated and under-resourced given the strength of the defences they faced. The result was the loss of several upgraded BMP-I's, two of which ('206' and '208') would later enter service with government forces defending Kuweires. ISIS had supplied the defenders with the armour they lacked. While T-72 '311' and T-55 '319' were captured intact, 311 appears to have been used for target practice, while the damage to 319 rendered it unrepairable.

The ISIS offensive continued for several more days before slowly winding down towards the end of August. In September, Assad's forces launched their own offensive to relieve the Kuweires Airbase, though it took until November to relieve the Pocket.



Beginning of the Syrian Army Offensive to relieve the Kuweires Pocket: September 2015.

armoured fighting vehicles such as T-72AV '334' along the same lines as those lost at Kuweires, but now they improved their defences by the addition of more explosive reactive armour on the turret and front of the tank.

It is possible that their catastrophic defeat at Kuweires convinced ISIS leaders that tanks and BMP's were overrated as war-winning weapons. It is also possible they concluded that the cost and effort of maintaining them was greater than the benefit they contributed on the battlefield, especially now that they were vulnerable to air attacks. Finally, as their vehicles were wearing out, cannibalisation to maintain a declining number of AFV had already become the norm.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ISIS ARMOUR

Enter the Russian Bear & the Iranian Lion

In July 2015, both Russia and Iran agreed to send ground combat units to Syria to help the Assad regime. The Russians also provided ground-attack aircraft, so the Syrian Army effort to relieve the Kuweires Pocket was supported by Russian airpower. Initially the Russians paid little attention to ISIS and its armour, but concentrated on road oil tankers and other 'moderate' insurgents supported by the USA and the UK. As these were weakened or destroyed ISIS moved in to fill the gap. The tensions this caused between Russia and the USA are beyond the scope of this article, but having secured their air and naval bases, the Russians were now ready to focus on ISIS combat assets, including its armour.

An Iranian elite Al-Quds Brigade was sent to Syria along with some very senior Generals. Hezbollah, which had always coveted obtaining a base close to the Israeli border also contributed significant forces. Not only was it no longer possible for ISIS to conquer Syria, but they soon began losing key territory and were threatened with being broken into separate unconnected areas. Their corridors now required the deployment of ISIS armour to defend their lines of communication.

The Russian air force operated with far less restrictive rules of engagement than the Western coalition and was soon accused in the UN of committing 'war crimes' by targeting schools, hospitals and causing civilian casualties. Russian airstrikes destroyed several ISIS armoured vehicles. The USA, perhaps stung by these results, also stepped up their anti-armour attacks. ISIS armour now had to be much more cautious and had much less freedom of movement than previously.

A Change of Plan

Although they still had plenty of armoured assets available, exposure on the battlefield now risked their destruction from the air. The Al-Raqqa Workshop' continued to upgrade

At this point a new doctrine for the employment of their armour appeared. Whatever the logic, some of their BMP-I's were now converted to the role of an Armoured Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (AVBIED) for use as suicide vehicles. Their advantage was that their protective armour gave them a far greater chance of reaching their objective than soft-skinned vehicles (which were frequently hit and destroyed before reaching their target). As with kamikaze attacks in the Pacific in WW2, they had a considerable psychological effect, but they were also a sign of desperation as ISIS was now on the strategic defensive, despite some further offensives against weak regime targets in Syria. In Iraq there were no further offensive actions as they were now either trapped in isolated pockets, or had returned to terrorism. In Kobani and Mosul, U.S. airstrikes destroyed the last of the ISIS armoured forces deployed there.

As early as 2013, ISIS had used a BMP-I and two other vehicles to open a path for their capture of the heliport in Mennegh. The use of these VBIEDs had proved decisive. The thin armour and their vulnerability of the BMP-I's in their normal troop-carrying role led to many of them being converted into AVBIEDs. Their turret and one of the rear doors was removed and the opening then closed and welded. The BMP-I AVBIED picture on the right came under heavy fire before ultimately reaching its objective.

In August 2015, ISIS used two BMP-I AVBIEDs to attack Syrian Army forces assaulting their positions al-Qaryatayn. The Syrian Army temporarily fled, but soon cautiously returned, although they did not capture the village until April 2016.

ISIS now had no allies and a growing number of enemies on every side. To hold their positions ISIS increased their use of its AVBIEDs, even using them against the Free Syrian Army and the Turkish Army advancing on al-Bab. The up-armoured BMP-I AVBIED '225' managed to enter the compound despite the presence of sand barriers erected precisely to prevent enemy vehicles from doing so. The AVBIED was detonated to great effect inside the compound.



The ISIS BMP-1 '225'AVBIED successfully breaches the berm before detonating inside the compound

By 2016, ISIS armour was now in terminal decline, both as a battlefield weapon and as a propaganda tool. In fact, the opposite was now true as coalition air forces now used their destruction of ISIS AFV as a means of demonstrating that the war against ISIS was being won.

The increased use of valuable AFV's, including tanks as 'one-off bombs' reflects the inability of ISIS to understand how to tactically deploy them effectively. For more than a year, between June 2014 and August 2015 no tactical doctrine had been devised by ISIS, yet this was the very period when their enemies were at their weakest.

It is unlikely that they could have captured Baghdad as ISIS faced intervention by Iranian regulars and highly motivated Shia militia. However, they turned their attention to Syria just when the Assad regime was at its weakest so they possibly had an opportunity to seize a whole country to the cheers of the USA and the West. When Assad regime units defected to join them a window of opportunity beckoned.

This was the moment when a concentrated armoured attack by ISIS may very well have seen them complete the conquest of the whole country provided certain rules of conduct prevailed. ISIS must:

1. not threaten either the Russian main naval or air base in Syria (they can be dealt with later, after victory is achieved);
2. ally with every other group willing to assist in defeating Assad (these apostates and infidels can be executed later);
3. declare their support for democracy as an objective (and repudiate it once in power); and
4. call for peace talks to discuss the abdication of Assad and the peaceful transfer of power to themselves (the million apostates and Allawites can be massacred later, once in control).

Instead, their hard line religion was so rigid their infantry and

armoured resources were used to defeat all the other insurgent groups rather than Assad.

The Endgame

As with the kamikaze, no amount of self-sacrificing suicide explosions could now reverse the military fortunes of ISIS. ISIS AFV assets were being destroyed in battle, by air strikes and by their deliberate sacrifice as AVBIED. No replacements were available as no further captures of enemy heavy equipment occurred. Without replacement parts the vehicles and their armaments deteriorated to a dangerous degree.

By 2017, their once impressive armoured forces had been destroyed or captured and will not rise again. ISIS was never able to successfully exploit the mailed fist they were gifted in 2014 by the Iraqi Army. They failed both strategically and tactically to use the power of their armour effectively as they never understood how they could be most effectively employed.

ISIS AFV continued to cautiously appear on various battlefields in Syria throughout 2016, but more than ever their appearance was as an AVBIED. By 2017 ISIS armour was rarely seen, though it is likely they retain a few vehicles to this day.

As time went by, the lack of spare and replacement parts caused yet another decline in their numbers as damaged AFV were cannibalised to provide parts to keep other vehicles operational.



This upgraded T-72 suffered a catastrophic detonation of a main gun round in its worn-out barrel

The crew survived the damage, but the tank was unrepairable, other than as an AVBIED.

The ISIS workshop near Raqqa now had less urgency to repair and upgrade the fewer vehicles available. In a bizarre twist, as

late as December 2016, the workshop was not only carrying out essential maintenance and upgrades, but took more care over the cosmetic look of the vehicles!

In January 2019, the Caliphate capital of Raqqa has fallen to the Syrian Army and ISIS and the other insurgents have been broken into isolated pockets. The myth of their invincibility and their claim to be the founders of a new Caliphate has been dispelled, yet they will carry on by once more returning to their terrorist roots of random killing and murder. Although they achieved none of their own objectives, they infected Europe with a million migrants unable to assimilate, but who

can provide cover and a base for those wishing to resume their terror campaign in a new venue.

The critical ISIS threat is no more. It only lasted as long as it did because of the ineptness of Western politicians unable to understand and cope with the intricacies of Middle Eastern politics. That failure is the one constant of warfare in that region in the past century.

The ISIS Armoured force had risen spectacularly and then met its demise in less than three years.

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NEW AIRCRAFT

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Top Row L-R: The welcome to country ceremony by an Aboriginal elder; Commodore Brett Dowsing RAN Rtd presenting 'Wings' to Pilot Officer Jack Shellcot at No. 258 Course. Bottom Row: Pilot Officer Jack Shellcot and his Award for Navigation. On the left is WA Branch President, Richard Usher and right is Commodore Brett Dowsing (note the social distancing); Sub Lieutenant Charles Gordon receiving his 'Wings' from the Commanding Officer HMAS Stirling, Captain Ainsley Morthorpe CSC ADC RAN at No 259 graduation on 16th October 2020; The new PC-21 aircraft fly over the parade in salute to the new graduates of No. 259 ADF Pilots' Course.

By Richard Usher OAM, President WA Branch

Recently the RAAF introduced the Swiss-designed and built Pilatus PC-21 turbo-prop trainer for advanced undergraduate pilot training at Na.2 Flying Training School at RAAF Base Pearce in Perth. The PC-21 replaced the Pilatus PC9/A which came into service in 1889 which in turn replaced the Macchi MB326H in 1991.

The course at No.2 Flying Training School provides training for Naval and Air Force pilots in advanced general, instrument, night and formation flying, and navigation. A graduate pilot in the ADF must be capable of flying with the skill and confidence necessary to allow ready transition to selected operational aircraft. Necessarily allied to this, graduates must be capable

of discharging the duties and responsibilities of a junior officer.

Apart from the graduates receiving their Flying Brevets (or 'Wings'), high achievers are awarded various Awards. The Defence Force Welfare Association awards the Navigation Award for the graduate who displays the highest level of navigational skill. This Award is normally presented by the President of the WA Branch.

The last course to graduate using the old PC9 aircraft took place in December 2019, but unfortunately Covid-19 restrictions delayed further graduations until August 2020. Course 258 graduated on 14th August, with strict social distancing rules enforced, but for the first time, a 'welcome to country and smoking ceremony' was held.

Corporal Cosmo

2020! IT HASN'T BEEN ALL BAD



Hello Readers, it's been a very busy and trying year. In this edition of CPL Cosmo, I'm going to pick up where I left off last year and highlight the significant improvements the ADF plans to introduce in 2021.

I'll also review the outcome of Workplace Remuneration Arrangement 2020-2023.

ADF Employment Offer

In my previous article, I highlighted and went into some detail to describe the improvements that came in to effect in 2019. They were:

- Long Service Leave policy was changed to reduce the minimum period of leave allowed to seven days, down from 15 days - providing greater flexibility in how members manage their leave
- All members posted to a seagoing vessel can relocate their families anywhere in Australia for family or community support at Commonwealth expense. A return removal is also provided once the member is returned to a 'shore posting'.
- ADF paid parental leave was increased from 14 calendar days to 28 calendar days – including for the adoption of a child.
- ADF carer's leave was extended to provide members access to leave to care for close relatives who may, or may not, live with them, in addition to dependants.

Serving members may recall that CDF wrote to members in October 2019 inviting full-time serving members, their partners and Reservists to Email adf.employmentoffer@defence.gov.au and participate in a series of face-to-face discussions to share their ideas about how to improve the overall ADF remuneration package through innovation and modernisation.

CDF wrote to all serving members and their families again in July this year to inform members of the success of the ADF employment offer feedback and workshops and to advise that the Project team was working to:

- Provide more flexible housing solutions to better meet you and your families' needs and offer greater choice
- Contemporise the categorisation system that determines members benefits and allowances
- Modernise and simplify the complex ADF allowances framework, commencing with a proposal to roll several universal ADF allowances into base salary.

ADF Allowance Modernisation: Tranche 1

As indicated by CDF in his July missive to ADF members and

families, the first step of Allowance Modernisation – the rolling-in of uniform and service allowance into base salary – has been taken. Readers of this column will know that I regularly visit the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal (DFRT) website. I encourage all members to do the same.

The DFRT lists correspondence that it receives from the ADF to introduce, amend and cease ADF salary and allowances as Matters on its website. The ADF Allowances Modernisation – Tranche 1 is listed as Matter 16 of 2020.

The rolling in of service allowance and uniform allowance into base salary are amongst the most significant changes to the administration of pay and allowances in the past 30, even 40 years. I believe this a positive development for serving members. It's important to highlight a couple of technicalities about the changes:

- a. Service allowance is already a superannuable allowance; therefore, there is nil impact on superannuation by rolling in this allowance.
- b. Future salary adjustments will be based upon base salary, which will include an extra \$14,847. To be fair, adjustment (increases) to service allowance were as regular salary reviews, however with the roll-in of service allowance it will now be automatic, thus reducing administration of service allowance reviews for the ADF and the DFRT.
- c. Uniform allowance will become subject to PAYG tax. However, the unused portion of uniform allowance was always subject to tax. If you continue to use uniform allowance, it will still be an eligible tax deduction.
- d. The good part about rolling in uniform allowance is that future salary adjustments will include an extra \$419-\$682 – rank dependent – in your base salary. Over time this will have a compounding effect.
- e. Uniform allowance is not a superannuable allowance. Once it is rolled into base salary, there will be a small – but compounding – increase to superannuation.

Hidden benefit

If you're inclined to think that these changes are of little significance, consider this feedback that came from a member during discussions about the ADF employment offer:

"The higher proportion of allowances over salary is an extremely important point to make. In addition to the reason you give for this reform, members like myself who are also property investors are most concerned with how banks assess allowances in calculating serviceability. The banks assess allowances as less secure than salary; they look at allowances as payments that can cease at any time as opposed to

salary, which endures unless the mortgagee loses their job. An increase in salary and decrease in allowances would benefit both homeowners and investors achieving higher serviceability. It would also streamline the lending process by removing the need to apply for variations with banks.” LT, Army.

Workplace Remuneration Arrangement 2020-2023

Over the past year, the Commonwealth Government has increased its reliance on the ADF to keep our Nation safe. Before it became clear how the National deficit would balloon due to the economic impact of COVID-19, I thought that it would be more than fair to increase ADF salary by 5%. However, when times are tough, we should all pitch in to help – it’s what we do as Australians. Therefore, I believe that a 2% annual increase – the first instalment of which will be delayed by six months (to May 2021) – over three years, was a fair outcome for ADF members subject to the WRA 2020-23. This modest increase and delayed increase also reflects ADF members and their families’ commitment to the economic recovery of our Nation.

However, this outcome only remains fair if others in service to the public are treated equitably. You don’t need to look very far

to find that other Commonwealth entities, (I’m thinking of one that has something to do with superannuation), continue to award executive bonuses that reflect pre-COVID times.

Conclusion

I maintain that it is great time to be in service to your country as a member of the ADF. Pay and allowances are moving in the right direction and our ‘seniors’ are taking on board our feedback. However, I caution you dear reader, to dive into the detail of any ‘improvements’ to ensure that your conditions of service are not eroded as part of these important reforms. If you discover something that doesn’t pass the sniff-test, it is your duty to follow it up with your chain of command. Alternatively, bring it to my attention and I’ll follow it up on your behalf.

Enjoy your time with family and friends over the Christmas-New Year break. Stay safe, check in on a mate - or two - and I’ll see you in 2021.

- Corporal Cosmo

Remember: Corporal Cosmo’s comments are their own, reflecting their opinions only.

BOOK REVIEW: The Long Shadow

Australia's Vietnam veterans since the war

To Vietnam veterans and their families: The new Agent Orange/PTSD Official History is out.

THIS is the story of our troubled homecoming told accurately, compassionately, and eloquently by historian Peter Yule.

Some of the story is told through the eyes of over 100 veterans Peter Yule and his team interviewed. Some of the story is a rollicking yarn about veterans’ conflict with the bureaucracy and government. And some of the story is the technical review of studies, written so we all can understand, on the health of veterans and their families.

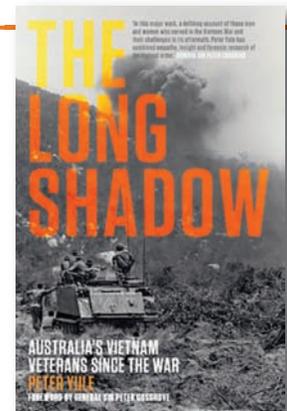
Peter Yule delves deeply into the tragedy of the traumatic effects of the war on so many of those who fought it and on their families. He delves deeply too into the controversy over whether veterans were harmed by their exposure to a variety of herbicides and insecticides. On this exposure issue, there are two parts.

One is the purely scientific question of how toxic were these chemical agents including the most recognised, Agent Orange.

The second part is that which was pursued by the Vietnam veteran movement and, indeed, was the reason for their activism. It stemmed from the veterans’ belief that the Department of Veterans Affairs was unfairly rejecting compensation claims based on chemical exposure. The unfairness resulted, the veterans’ argued, from the Department not giving veterans the ‘benefit of the doubt’ prescribed under Repatriation law.

It tells the whole story and is recommended for those who would like to know and understand the whole picture.

AUTHOR - Peter Yule is a Research Fellow of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He has published over 20 books on Australian military, medical, and economic history, including histories of the Collins Class submarine project, Australian National Airways, and the Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne.



DFWA SHOP

If you wish to place an order for any of the DFWA Shop items, please complete the order form details below and send your order to the address shown.



Men's Bisley Shirt
A high quality collared shirt with embroidered DFWA badge. Light blue colour and available in long or short sleeve. Size range XL, L, M, S.
\$45.00 including postage



Women's Bisley Shirt
A high quality collared shirt with embroidered DFWA badge. Light blue colour and available in long or short sleeve. Size range XL, L, M, S.
\$55.00 including postage



DFWA Polo Shirt (JB's Wear)
Smart looking polo shirt in Navy blue with gold trim and embroidered DFWA badge. Size range XXL, XL, L, M, S.
\$36.00 including postage



Zip Front Jacket
Navy blue with DFWA embroidered badge. Size range XXL, XL, L, M, S.
\$75.00 including postage



Zip Front Vest
Navy blue with DFWA embroidered badge. Size range XXL, XL, L, M, S.
\$35.00 including postage



DFWA Metal Lapel Badge
Attractive enamel finish with single pin attachment.
\$5.00 including postage



DFWA Cloth Pocket Badge
with three attachment pins.
\$10.00 including postage



DFWA Embroidered Cloth Patch
On a navy blue background.
\$10.00 including postage



DFWA Cap
Navy blue with DFWA embroidered badge.
\$15.00 including postage

DFWA Shop Order Form

ITEM	SIZE	QTY/SIZE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1. Bisley Shirt - Men's	XL, L, M, S		\$45.00	
2. Bisley Shirt —Women's	XL, L, M, S		\$55.00	
3. DFWA Cap	xxxxxx		\$15.00	
4. DFWA Lapel Badge	xxxxxx		\$5.00	
5. DFWA Polo Shirt	XXL, XL, L, M, S		\$36.00	
6. DFWA Cloth Badge	xxxxxx		\$10.00	
7. Embroidered Patch	xxxxxx		\$10.00	
8. DFWA Zip Front Jacket	XXL, XL, L, M, S		\$75.00	
9. DFWA Zip Front Vest	XXL, XL, L, M, S		\$35.00	

TOTAL DUE \$

Notes:

1. Please note that Bisley shirts are generally one size larger than most other brands.
2. All prices include postage.
3. Please specify the size required (where applicable) in the quantity column

Please enter your contact and payment details below and send your completed order form to:

DFWA QLD INC,
Victoria Barracks Brisbane, Enoggera QLD 4051

Or email your order and payment details to:

qldbranch@dfwa.org.au

YOUR DETAILS:

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Address

..... State

Postcode Phone

Email

PAYMENT DETAILS:

Internet Banking/Direct Debit:

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DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN JOIN ONLINE? SIMPLY GO TO dfwa.org.au/join AND FOLLOW THE PROMPTS.

ALTERNATIVELY, PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION BELOW AND FORWARD IT TO YOUR NEAREST DFWA BRANCH / CHAPTER:

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Rank Family Name

Given Names Post Nominals

Address

..... State Postcode

Contact Telephone Year of Birth

Email

I AM: Serving Retired Navy Army Air Force Allied
 Spouse of ADF member Widow/Widower of former ADF Member N/A

PAYMENT: I have made a direct deposit to the Branch (see bank account details below)
 I enclose \$..... as my Annual / Life Membership subscription (mail to your Branch address below)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP	\$40.00	LIFE MEMBERSHIP	\$560.00
SPOUSES, WIDOWS and WIDOWERS of FORMER ADF MEMBERS:			
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP	\$20.00	LIFE MEMBERSHIP	\$300.00

DFWA NSW BRANCH and ACT CHAPTER, Bldg 96, Victoria Barracks Paddington. Locked Bag 7005, Liverpool, NSW 1871
(T) 02 8335 5447 (E) nswbranch@dfwa.org.au BANK DEPOSIT TO: BSB 062-220 Acct 10266228

DFWA QUEENSLAND BRANCH, RUSI Bldg, Victoria Barracks Brisbane c/- Enoggera Mail Centre Qld 4051
(T) 07 3233 4480 (E) qldbranch@dfwa.org.au BANK DEPOSIT TO: BSB 124-185 Acct 10480398
(Queensland Branch also administers NT membership)

DFWA VICTORIA BRANCH, Victoria Barracks Melbourne (H Block), 256 - 310 St Kilda Road, Southbank VIC 3006
(T) 03 9282 4959 (E) vicbranch@dfwa.org.au BANK DEPOSIT TO: BSB 833-205 Acct 20700279
(Victoria Branch also administers TAS membership)

DFWA WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH, Irwin Barracks, Karrakatta Community House, Karrakatta WA 6010
(T) 08 9383 4055 (E) wabbranch@dfwa.org.au BANK DEPOSIT TO: BSB 066-192 Acct 10378174

DFWA SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH, PO Box 573, Stirling SA 5152
(T) 0409 577 035 (E) sabbranch@dfwa.org.au BANK DEPOSIT TO: BSB 833-205 Acct 20374231

In addition to individual membership, **CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS** and **CORPORATE** Subscriptions are available by contacting DFWA NATIONAL at national@dfwa.org.au Phone 02 6265 9530



BRANCH REPORTS Around Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH

Patron:	Governor of New South Wales Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC, QC
Vice Patrons:	Fleet Commander, Forces Commander, Air Commander
President:	Michael Stuart-Watt
Vice President (Navy):	TBA
Vice President (RAAF):	Alan Hind
Vice President (Army):	TBA
Treasurer:	Ralph Hannaford
Secretary:	Alan Hind
Assistant Secretary:	TBA
Membership Sec.	Project Officer John Kane
IT Advisor:	John Kane
Location:	Victoria Barracks Building 96 Locked Bag 7005, LIVERPOOL NSW 1871
Telephone:	(02) 8335 5447 (4 lines) + Voice Mail
Email:	nswbranch@dfwa.org.au

CONTACT GROUPS

CENTRAL WEST	SHOALHAVEN
Anthony (Tony) Horsington	Mr Christopher Clifford
45 Dalton Street	6 Platypus Avenue,
PARKES NSW 2870	SANCTUARY POINT NSW
Mobile: 0412 299 331	2540
	Ph: (02) 4443 7725
HUNTER VALLEY	
David Winkelmann AFC	Mr Kevin C Buchanan
PO Box 467,	12 The Triangle,
MAYFIELD NSW 2304	CULBURRA BEACH NSW 2540
Ph: (02) 4968 3811	Ph: (02) 4447 2461

A report to NSW Branch activities to NSW Branch members is provided in the insert NATTER.

NEW MEMBERS

Your President and Committee offer a warm welcome to the DFWA family to the following new members who have recently joined the NSW Branch:

Mrs M Devine and Mrs Jenny Healy

VALE

It is with sadness and regret that the death of the following members are advised:

Captain E M Aarts, Brigadier F J Cross AM, DSM, Wing Commander B J Hay, Mrs G M Haynes, Mr R W Healy, Mrs P Maddock, WO2 C E Morgan, Captain B J Read, Mr D J Weatherall JP.

ACT CHAPTER (NSW BRANCH)

President:	Les Bienkiewicz
Treasurer:	Paul Jones
Postal Address:	GPO Box 2272 Canberra ACT 2601
Email:	actchapter@dfwa.org.au
Telephone:	(02) 6265 9496 (answering service only)
Convenor ACT DWG:	Christine Lamb. Should you wish to contact the DWG please leave a message at (02) 6265 9776 or send an email to dwg-act@dfwa.org.au

The COVID dampener on activities and the recent transfer of ACT Branch to a Chapter of the NSW Branch has curtailed much formal activity in the ACT. Nevertheless, advocacy support, Defence Widow Group support and behind the scenes Committee work has continued.

The Chapter has been represented at all recent meetings of the NSW Branch Executive Committee, and will continue to be so.

VALE

We regret to advise the recent passing of Lewis Horsfield, David Clinch, Maelyn Wishart and June Healy. Short obits of three who were long time stalwarts of the ACT DFWA, follow. All will be sadly missed.

David Clinch OBE. After leaving the RAN after 34 years' service, David immersed himself in the then RDFWA and other volunteer organisations. He was an active and dynamic member of the ACT Branch Executive Committee, serving as Hon Treasurer from 1988 till 2008; Vice President from 2009 till 2012; and Hon Secretary from 2013 to 2014. He was especially a strong supporter and hard worker in support of the ACT Defence Widows Support Group. After a long battle with illness, David passed away peacefully on 3 October 2020.



Maelyn Wishart was President of the Defence Widows Support Group (DWSG) from 1997 till 2010. During that time she made over a thousand phone calls to recently bereaved ladies offering them friendship and support. As President she organised and hosted countless events to bring members of the Group together represented

the DWG at the meetings of the ACT DFWA. At the of her term she was honoured with Life Membership. She was a wonderful DWG President and an inspirational person who led the Group with her own special display of warmth, practicality and empathy.



June Healy was a foundation member of the Defence Widows Support Group (DWSG) in 1981 when it was realised that not all widows were entitled to assistance from DVA and Legacy. As an Army wife June managed to fit into her busy life a number of volunteer roles. Groups such as COTA, the WRAAC Association, the WWG and the RSL were among the many who benefitted from her extensive experience. In 1990 June was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia for service to veterans.

DWG at the AWM

On 29 October 2020 the ACT Defence Widows Group attended its annual wreath laying ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. The cousin of one of the ACT DWG ladies, Denise Bird, was honoured at the ceremony. Captain Benjamin Hooper was a doctor with the Z Special Unit Medical Corp and died whilst undertaking training. It is so unfortunate that his only surviving sibling was unable to travel from Rockhampton for this special ceremony.



The daily commemorative ceremony at the AWM is a wonderful ceremony and can be seen online. It is highly recommended to all that visit Canberra.

QUEENSLAND BRANCH

President:	John Lewis
Exec Vice President:	Robert Shortridge
VP – South Queensland:	Vacant
VP – North Queensland:	Vacant
VP – Sunshine Coast:	Win Fowles
VP – Townsville:	Vacant
VP – Cairns:	John Wilson
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Walter Buldo
Membership:	Vacant (Walter Buldo acting)
Communications Officer:	Deb Keir
Administration Officer:	Sharyn Hughes
IT/Project Officer:	Chris Lewis
Advocates:	Wally Buldo, Clem Russell
Welfare/Funerals:	Harry Mee, Pearl Mee
Hon Solicitors:	Cleary Hoare
Office Address:	RUSI Building, Victoria Barracks, Petrie Terrace, BRISBANE.
Postal Address:	RUSI Bldg, Victoria Barracks Brisbane, c/o Enoggera Mail Centre, ENOGGERA, QLD 4051
Telephone:	(07) 3233 4480
E-mail:	qldbranch@dfwa.org.au
Office Hours:	Tue – Wed: 1000 to 1400 hrs Fridays: 0900 to 1100 hrs

The DFWAQ Branch Annual General Meeting was held on 25 September by video conference link using the “Zoom” application as Victoria Barracks was not available due to COVID, Nine members were able to attend and 21 proxies and 24 apologies were registered. As result of our request in the notice we sent out, we had some volunteers to help in some of the DFWA tasks. This is much appreciated. The Reports and draft Minutes of the AGM is on the DFWA website in the Queensland section.

VALE

Ken Railton. Ken, a former long serving Qld President sadly passed in July. His work for Qld Branch and the National organisation was considerable. His obituary follows at the end of this report.

VICTORIA BARRACKS COVID RESTRICTIONS EASED

With the reduction in COVID restrictions, DFWAQ was able to re-open the Victoria Barracks office in mid-October.

QLD BRANCH RE-ORGANISATION

The Qld Branch re-organisation was on hold until the direction of the DFWA National Constitution re-write was known. If the re-write allowed management of individual members by National the original plan would be revisited. Current plans are for a draft revised National Constitution will be presented in November and be considered by the National Executive late 2020.

Help DFWA Help Veterans
CONSIDER DONATING!
Online at : dfwa.org.au/donate

QLD MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

The good news is that membership has increased from 504 to 516 since last year. The bad news is that we made a loss for the second year in a row. Grant funding to assist in advocacy work was reduced by approximately \$6000. This was due to no change in the funds available to all ESO, but increased numbers of salaried Advocates employed by other ESO to cater for a very large increase in DVA claims being made. Welfare work receives less DVA support than Advocacy work. With our Advocates and Welfare people being all volunteer, our share of the funds available reduces. While we reduced expenditure by about \$9000, by reducing travel costs and savings made by changing our Telstra plans, we still made a loss of \$7434 compared with a loss of \$8343 the previous year.

WELFARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Over the last four years we have provided direct financial support of about \$25,000 in grants to veterans and families as well as some short-term loans. Much of this was for long term support which is coming to an end this year. This policy on what we support, and periods of support is being reviewed to ensure funds are made available to those in need and who cannot get support from other, better off ESO.

HONORARY LEGAL ADVISOR

Brett Hart, principal of Cleary Hoare Solicitors welcomed the opportunity for the firm to continue serving as DFVAQ Honorary Legal Advisor. Cleary Hoare continue to assist the veteran cause, especially in the support of the invalid Veterans in the current court proceedings with the ATO. (See article in Camaraderie and on website.)

KEN RAILTON – OBITUARY

DFWA lost a remarkably effective advocate for veteran's issues when Ken Railton 'crossed the bar' recently. Ken was a former President of the Queensland Branch.

I first met Ken when we were both on veteran related committees in Brisbane and he was being frustrated by inaction on some issues. In particular he was annoyed by the internal quarrelling in the ESO community when unity should have been the priority. He was president of his local RSL sub-branch and said to me, 'Kel, can we do something here?' We did and it is to Ken's credit that his focus became the broader veteran issues rather than those of an RSL sub-branch and its club. We continue to benefit from this decision.

Ken was one of those individuals that you wish you had met 40 years ago. His lengthy service in the RAN, his post-service life as a civilian in Defence and then in business endowed him with a background of curiosity and substance in the issues of the day. He was never afraid to take a step forward when pursuing an issue or an idea that impacted on veterans and DFVA in particular.

At times his enthusiasm for an issue caused DFVA to move from

its traditional focus and into the increasingly fertile and topical issues of the day. The goal posts continue to move with the changing nature of military service, the articulate younger veteran community and its ability to develop issues through the use of technology and social media. Ken was a master in this regard.

His love of motorcycles aside, Ken's advice and opinions could always be relied upon as they were based on a serious consideration of the issue. His spirited interaction with National Office was always a treat to watch as he developed and persisted with a line of argument. Sometimes it was a Master Class.

Vale, Ken Railton, a good mate, a respected State President of DFVA Queensland and a man who will be missed.

Kel Ryan

SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH

Patron	His Excellency Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia
President	Lee Bowes
Deputy President	Vacant
Immediate Past President	John Wilson
Secretary	David Lyas OAM
Treasurer	Ian Smith
Vice President (Navy)	Alexander Ward
Vice President (Army)	Paul (Tich) Tyson
Vice President (Air Force)	Vacant
Vice President Welfare	David Everett
Honorary Auditor	John D Thornton FAICD FAIM FCPA
Convenor Women Veterans	Trish Matthews
Membership Officer	Vacant
Contact:	0412 574 444 or email sapresident@dfwa.org.au

I start with the devastating news that the Northern Hub (XMRC) was destroyed by fire. No one was injured however the building and contents were damaged to the point that a new building will have to be found. To the troops that use the establishment, it has hit them hard and they will miss everything that it offered. Knowing the A/CEO Dion Cowdray and his determination this will not put an end to what he has achieved. We will continue to support him and his group.

We now have a woman's group and they are putting together a team of women who have been effected by their and their husbands military service. This also has an effect on their children which makes a perfect circle of trauma within the family. We are just seeing the effects of this problem which has been going on since the both parents have been deployed and now the woman of the family retires to take over the running of the house and children. These are young family groups that are struggling and we must address the problem. There are a number of professionals who have agreed to assist us in this matter so we are off to a good start.

Work at the Flinders Uni continues to progress with A/Professor Ben Wadham the leader of the Veterans Centre for Research on Veterans Transition. The MAPP programme has been extended and we are looking at those younger veterans who may offer to join us and see that we are changing for the future of our younger veterans.

We now have an office that is manned 3 days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Fridays between the hours of 1000 and 1400 hours. Dave Helman is the man and you all have his e-mail address. The office was given to us by Veterans SA and all we have to do is put some money in the coffee/biscuit tin. We thank Veterans SA for their very generous offer.

Our group is now engaged with our AGM which is on the 19 Nov. We will be having a group of influential guests that we see as working in the same areas that we do and will be of assistance to us in the future. More important is we want to get out to the corporate world that we are the real deal when it comes to getting things done for the Serving ADF members, veterans and their wife's and families. The military person/veteran in any work space is an asset not being used to its fullest. We hope the Veterans Transition Centre will help to fix that. We meet Mr Jamie Getgood who's company among other things is involved with Transition. We intend to introduce him to the Flinders group and hopefully both will gain experience. We also meet Ms Sharon Wilson who is CNS Strategy Director, BAE Systems ASC Shipbuilding. They are involved with the building of the new ships for the RAN and consequently will be looking for apprentices / and experienced workers for this task will take a number of years to complete. Once again this will be of interest to the Flinders group and to others who are involved with Defence employment after transition.

After the AGM we hope that there will be some new names on the committee who will bring their ideas and continue to push our branch forward.

VICTORIA BRANCH

Patron:	The Honourable Linda Dessau, AC, Governor of Victoria.
President:	Stephen Turner
Vice President Navy:	Shaun Rodenburg
Vice President Army:	John James
Vice President Air Force:	Darryl Topp
Secretary/Treasurer:	Greg Powell
Location:	Victoria Barracks Melbourne (H Block) 256-310 St Kilda Road SOUTHBANK VIC 3006
Telephone:	(03) 9282 4959 (+Answering Service)
Facsimile:	(03) 9282 7089
Email:	vicbranch@dfwa.org.au
Office Hours:	Tue and Thur 0900 to 1500 hrs

The implementation of Stage 4 COVID-19 restrictions in Melbourne compelled the closure, albeit temporarily, of the DFWA (Vic) office at Victoria Barracks Melbourne. The Branch applied to the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for a work permit to allow the Secretary / Treasurer to continue to attend the Branch's office but this was unsuccessful. This has placed a severe strain on the Branch's capacity to continue its work in supporting DFWA members and the wider veteran community in Victoria.

In August the Branch Executive Committee agreed the following:

- the practicalities of having a proper Annual General Meeting had been thwarted by the COVID -19 restrictions put in place in Victoria and Melbourne;
- the most practical means to meet the basic obligations of the Annual General Meeting would be to post the appropriate AGM documents on the DFWA website; and
- all Executive Committee members would remain in their positions until the next Annual General Meeting in 2021.

VALE

Since the last edition of Camaraderie, the Victorian Branch has been advised that the following Victorian member has passed away:

Colonel Charles "Carl" McCarthy

Lest we forget.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Branch's finances continue to be well managed by our Secretary / Treasurer.

DIARY DATES

With Victoria's significant success in combating COVID-19, it is anticipated that the Government will soon lift travel and gathering restrictions to a level that will allow the Branch Executive Committee to then meet to plan out the Branch's future activities. One of the first tasks will be to set future meeting dates which will be advised to members as soon as possible.

Pre-COVID, Branch Executive Committee meetings were normally held at the Mail Exchange Hotel, corner Burke and Spencer Street, Melbourne commencing at 11.00 am. Hopefully this can continue in the future.

DFWA (Vic) members are most welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings. Those wishing to attend are requested to contact the Branch Secretary (Greg Powell) at least five

business days prior to the meeting in order to ensure sufficient copies of the relevant meeting documents are available for all attendees.

Stephen Turner - Commander RAN (Rtd)
President, DFWA (Vic)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA BRANCH

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A more detailed report will be provided to WA members in the Branch newsletter 'The Western Front', which will be posted to members with their copy of Camaraderie.

VALE

With deep sadness we note the passing of Gp Capt Jean Harrison (Rtd) ARRC

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The membership strength of the Branch is now 232, down 10 from this time last year. The AGM was held in September with two new members being elected to the Committee – Robert Potts and Jeff Wake OAM.

RAAF ADVANCED PILOTS' COURSE GRADUATIONS

The change-over from the Pilatus PC-9 to the new Pilatus PC-21 trainer aircraft, coupled with Covid-19 restrictions saw no graduations of new pilots until August. Pilot Officer Jack Shelcott won the DFWA Award for Navigation on 16th August and Sub Lieutenant Charles Gordon RAN won the Award on 16th October. The next graduation is scheduled for 11th December.

PTSD DOG TRAINING

The Branch has assisted two veterans (one man and one woman) with PTSD assistance dogs and both dogs have

received their Public Access Test (PAT) certificate which enables the dog to assist their owners in public places. We have recently commenced supporting another veteran who had his tongue removed after mouth cancer. He needs an assistance dog to assist him when he chokes, and the dog is being trained to respond to hand signals, finger clicks etc. The remaining ANZAC Day Trust Funds will be used to fund this training along with some WA Branch reserve money. Donations to this worthy cause are very welcome.

SOCIAL

The social outing to a private military museum which was cancelled due to Covid restrictions in May will be scheduled again next year.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The brand-new club facilities at RAAFA Bull Creek are open so the WA Branch Christmas lunch will be held there on Thursday 10th December

Richard Usher OAM President, WA Branch

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

Further to my National Office report (page 6), it would be remiss of me not to make mention of and acknowledge the recent sad passing in Melbourne on 1 November 2020 of Colonel Charles (Carl) McCarthy (Retd). He was likely one of our very oldest and longest ever serving DFWA members, having joined the Association in 1973 and marking his 100th birthday on 20 March this year. On which date our VIC Branch President, Stephen Turner, awarded Carl his more than well deserved Life Membership about which Carl was exceptionally proud. Sincere condolences were passed to his family.

Alf Jaugietis
Executive Director

NEW DEFENCE VALUES

More than at any time in the past, Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and Defence Australian Public Service (APS) employees are operating in joint and integrated environments.

In 2019, a series of national engagement workshops were held with over 200 all-ranks ADF personnel for the purpose of exploring what a single unifying set of values could do for an aligned ADF. Feedback from those workshops overwhelmingly showed that moving to a single set of unifying values was a 'change worth making'.

In April 2020, a single set of ADF Values centred on human virtues of character were developed with the Services and agreed by Service Chiefs to replace all existing sets of Service values. Defence APS Senior Leadership indicated strong support that these values be adopted across the whole of Defence.

On 1 October 2020, the Secretary and Chief Defence Force announced the new Defence Values and Defence Behaviours.

The new Defence Values – Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and

Excellence – are underpinned by the Defence Behaviours, a set of six action statements:

- act with purpose for Defence and the nation
- be adaptable, innovative and agile
- collaborate and be team-focused
- be accountable and trustworthy
- reflect, learn and improve
- be inclusive and value others.

The new Defence Values and Behaviours have replaced* all other values statements and behaviours, forming a single, unifying set of values and behaviours that reflect the character expected of all Defence members and employees. They bring with them the strengths of all values and behaviours that have served Defence well in building a positive Defence culture.

*The Defence Values are consistent with the APS values legislated in the Public Service Act 1999 s.10. Defence APS employees continue to have two sets of values: the Defence Values and the APS Values, demonstrated through the Defence Behaviours.



Defence Force Welfare Association

The Association does much work on your behalf - from lobbying Government to improve conditions to assistance to individuals. We cannot do it without financial and human resources. Your tax deductible donation will help us continue our good work. If you are able to help us financially you can make a donation at dfwa.org.au/donate. Alternatively please detach the form below and send it along with your tax deductible donation. A receipt will be issued to you.

DONATION

To The National Office, DFWA PO Box 4166, KINGSTON, ACT 2604

Please accept my donation of \$ to the Defence Force Welfare Association

Your donation will go towards the daily operating costs of the Association.

Tick here if you wish your donation to be allocated to the DFWA Relief Fund

Rank/Title Name

Address

State Postcode Phone

Alternatively, make an electronic deposit as follows:

Account Name: Defence Force Welfare Association BSB: 833 205 Account Number: 20656807

You can also make a credit card donation:

Go to dfwa.org.au/donate and follow the link.





If you're a veteran
or serving member
of the Australian
Defence Force entry
to the Museum
is on us

Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC)
has a long history of serving members of the
Australian Defence Force.

We greatly value and appreciate the commitment and loyal service of our veterans, serving members of the Army, Navy and Air Force, and cadets.

As a way of saying thanks, CSC is providing every single Defence Force veteran, serving member and current cadet with a **complimentary pass** to the **Australian National Maritime Museum.**

If you're a Defence Force veteran, a serving member, or a current cadet just show the Museum's front of house team your valid ADF ID card, a DVA-issued card, service medals, or arrive in uniform and you'll receive free entry to the Museum.





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SCHEME

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