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# CAMARADERIE

Third Edition 2021

VOL. 52 NO. 3

**MORE ON ADF  
SUICIDES**

**WORKING HOURS  
IN THE ADF**

**ISSUES FACING  
ADVOCATES**

**UPDATE ON  
VETS V ATO**

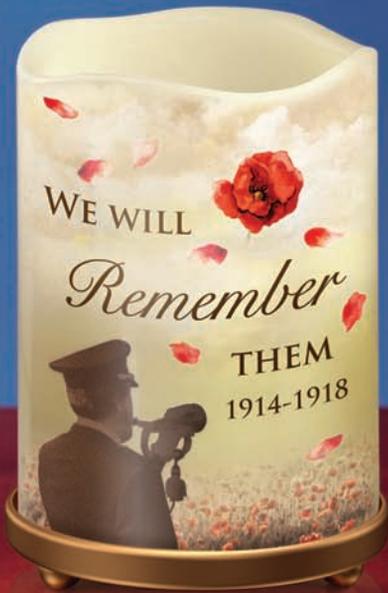
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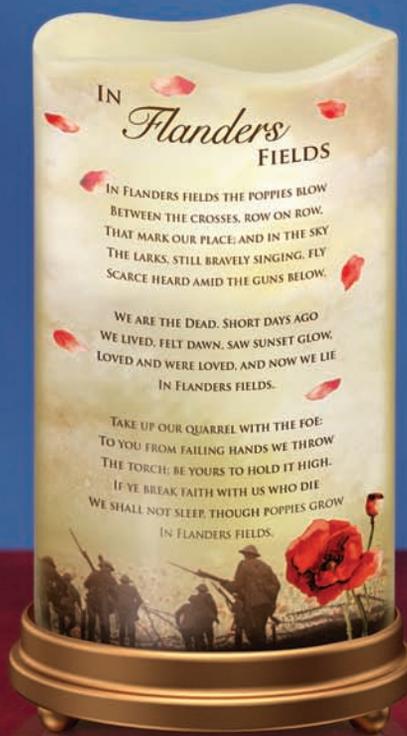
# LEST WE FORGET

1918 - 2018

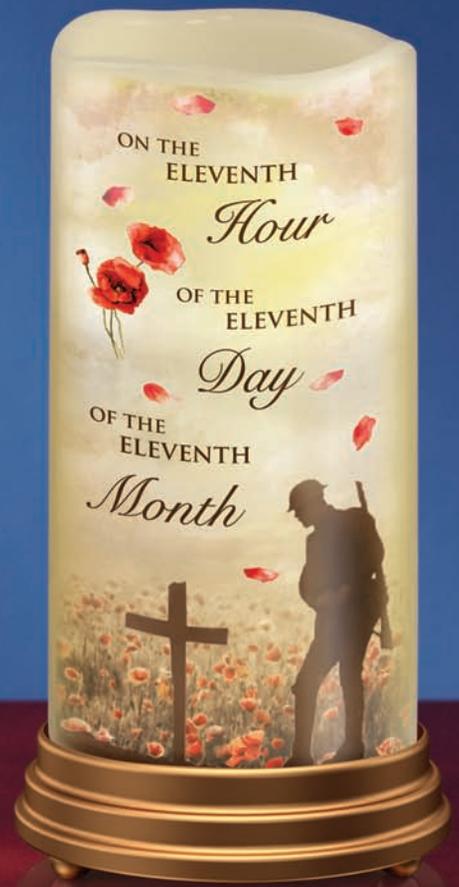
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# THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Vol. 52. No. 3 Third Edition 2021



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 to 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 3 February 2022.**

**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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**This edition published by:**

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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

It's no news that COVID has played havoc with society this year, but the work of the Association has continued unabated. At the national level the continual and numerous demands by Government - often at short notice - for submissions has kept us busy whilst on Branch level the demand for our advocacy and other services has continued. Much of this is covered in articles in this edition. Let's hope for a more "normal" 2022 as well as a happy Christmas and New Year to all readers.

Les Bienkiewicz

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## FRONT COVER

*Seaman Marine Technician Matthew Walker operates a hydraulic press to manufacture components on board HMAS Canberra, during Indo-Pacific Endeavour 21 (IPE21), Australia's flagship regional engagement activity. Centred on a maritime task group, IPE21 involved HMA Ships Canberra and Anzac and approximately 700 people, including Australian Defence Force and civilian defence personnel, and sea riders from partner nations.*

Photo courtesy of Defence Media

# DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION



FOUNDED 1959



## NATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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National Treasurer:	Vern Gallagher
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Vice President, Reserves	Ian Flawith
Vice President, Conditions of Service:	Gerard Gough
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Webmaster:	Chris Lowis
Editor Camaraderie:	Les Bienkiewicz
Honorary Families Advisor:	Vacant
Honorary Legal Advisor:	Don Malcolmson
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Honorary Communications Advisor:	Vacant
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Honorary ADF Vocational Training Advisor:	David Everett
National Membership Manager:	Chris Lowis

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Website: [www.dfwa.org.au](http://www.dfwa.org.au)  
Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 0900 to 1630 hrs

### BRANCH / CHAPTERS

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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](http://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



### **It's the Future St---d"**

Many will recall that Bill Clinton used the expression 'It's the economy stupid' very effectively in his presidential election campaign in 1992. The phrase defined the campaign and caught the imagination of the US media at a time when, despite the success of the ground war in

Kuwait, the US economy was moving into a recession.

Clinton went on to defeat George H.W. Bush who was seeking a second term as President.

The Australian veteran community is now amid such a defining moment. It is reaching the end of an era as the long established traditional ESOs are seeking to define their purpose in a very dynamic veteran space or are seeking to exit the arena.

Signs of the end of an era are evident for those who seek the best for the veteran community. Conflict based ex-service organisations such as the Korean Veterans Association and the Malaya-Borneo Veterans Association are, sadly, by dint of the ageing process and having served their purpose have or are folding their tents. While Vietnam era veterans and their organisations remain prominent in veteran's advocacy they too, are aware that the time for serious consideration of their future is nigh.

Yes, the RSL remains the point of contact for many, but it too is often beset by internal divisions and unnecessary public discord which distract from the positive contributions that resonate from its many sub-branches across the country. It is refusing to succumb

to the glass half empty mantra of the many timid souls that inhabit the veteran community and fold its tent.

DFWA is in such a place and time in its over 60 year history. We should not be panicked by this, nor should we draft our obituary just yet. Some would have us do just that and have allowed inertia to take hold of their actions. DFWA has credibility, time, and a proven place in the Australian veteran landscape. The association can either adopt a negative, woe is us attitude or embrace the catch phrase, "It's the Future Stupid" and grasp the opportunities that present us every day in veteran advocacy.

In recent years DFWA has been prominent in the development and presentation of some 40 papers, submissions, commissions, and Senate hearings promoting the issues that beset the veteran space. These activities have received praise and positive acknowledgement from those in the political and the bureaucratic arenas. I do not kid myself that we get everything right, that what we and indeed I do, meets with positive affirmations, they do not. Such is the nature of the political fight, for that is what we are in, as we collectively seek to better the lot of the Australian veteran community.

The role and purpose of DFWA is "to represent and provide a national voice for serving and ex-serving members of the ADF, their families, civilian employees and businesses and industries that support the ADF."

We will continue to do that by embracing the mantra, "It's the Future Stupid".

*Kel Ryan,  
National President, DFWA*

## Honorary Life Membership Award

### Major General Adrian Clunies-Ross, AO, MBE (Retd)

I had great pleasure recently in awarding Honorary Life Membership to Major General Adrian Clunies-Ross, AO, MBE (Retd), in sincere and deep appreciation for over 30 years of distinguished, dedicated leadership and committed service to the Defence Force Welfare Association, first as its National President (1990–1994) and thereafter as the long-standing Chair of the Association's Relief Trust Fund.

That long service followed a distinguished military career that included two tours in Vietnam and service in 1962 with the Australian Army Training Team, South Vietnam, a unit that fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Vietnamese Army and became the most decorated unit of the Vietnam War.



The esteem to which Major General Clunies-Ross is held is reflected in the naming after him of the new Defence residential housing development at Enoggera, adjacent to Gallipoli Barracks. The development included the completion of 44 townhouses now used by Defence members and their families.

# NATIONAL OFFICE ROUNDUP (November 2021 - February 2022)



Covid and lockdown stories still abound across most headlines in daily newspapers but light at the end of the so-to-speak tunnel is emerging in most States. Whereas hardly six months ago the discovery of a mere several case of the virus at an inconspicuous downtown café led to seven-day hard lockdowns that morphed into a 12-week pain and suffering period for the masses, not to mention continued business failures, now State health strategies appear to ignore even thousands of daily cases without so much as a murmur. The festive season and a tired and angry citizenry is having its effect. That and perhaps another looming election.

Unlike last time, this time a tortuously long election campaign looks like a strong possibility. What may also be in the offing is a change in Government, if polling trends are to be believed. But then again, polling trends last time hardly were a reliable indicator of the final outcome. Whatever the case, at this point in the election cycle, I might remind readers that DFWA has a deliberate policy of being careful to avoid being party political, confining itself to issues that have a direct impact on not only the welfare of its members but also the interests of still serving and all former members of the Australian Defence Force, including their families.

As a matter of principle, DFWA also has a policy of remaining outside the Defence policy debate, except where it may affect the well-being of serving ADF personnel. A case in point is DFWA's recognized intervener role at the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal, a role it exercises pro-actively in the lead up to and during every pay case before the Tribunal.

Notwithstanding the Association's apolitical stance, it will proactively campaign across a number of Policy Objectives. An initial draft of them can be found in the pages of this issue of Camaraderie. Not among the Objectives but nonetheless a critically important issue for DFWA itself, will be whether the current Coalition Government will financially support the work it was doing particularly in respect of being representatives of the serving men and women of the Australian Defence Force. In recognition of the mounting difficulties the Association has experienced with needing to rely on membership subscriptions and a few welcome donation almost exclusively to operate, Labor twice over before the last two elections included in its veterans'-related policies, the need to properly resource DFWA. It committed \$100,000 per annum to mitigate the difficulties we had been experiencing in properly meeting our principal aims and objectives.

To quote from its Media Release of the 9 May 2019 before the last election, "Labor will ensure that ADF members' views are

represented at both the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal and to the government by providing the Defence Force Welfare Association with \$100,000 per annum to ensure our ADF members have an advocate'.

That very same reaffirmed commitment from Labor is expected in the lead up to the forthcoming election in 2022. DFWA will encourage the Coalition to also support its work in a similar way.

While on the topic of support, I must again acknowledge the very generous support our Corporate sponsor, The Bradford Exchange, provides DFWA. The company produces and markets high quality collectable memorabilia, particularly ones that are relevant to commemorative occasions. Their advertisement can be viewed in the pages of this Camaraderie. Please head to the company's web site to fossick through what they have for ready purchase and speedy delivery.

As a reminder, DFWA membership subscriptions coupled with the Bradford Exchange's sponsorship and generous donations are virtually the only sources of income to keep our Association functioning on your behalf. Our voice can only remain strong among decision makers if we have a strong membership base.

Thus please, if you are a member, consider encouraging someone you know to join. If you are not a member, please consider joining anyway. A membership application form is in this magazine for your convenience. To all 'Virtual Members', please think about becoming a full time member soon or when leaving your Service. You will be helping us in a meaningful way to continue our work unabated going into the future.

*Alf Jaugietis - Executive Director*





# PREVENTING VETERAN SUICIDE

*a padre's view*

Editor's Note: see a related article [Update on Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention](#) in this edition

Over the coming months no doubt the workings of the Royal Commission into veterans' suicide will attract attention and reflection. In deed in writing this reflection, I have just completed a response to a subpoena calling me to give evidence to, and appear in person, before the Royal Commission. Let's hope and pray that this can be a positively growth filled experience for all involved, and guide us into ways that can prevent veteran suicide. But all of us have been touched/ distressed / bewildered by the experience of friends or workmates taking their own lives. The RC will involve revisiting some painful memories.

Recently one of my colleagues circulated some newspaper clippings about a veteran who took his life after being medically discharged some years ago. Fred\* had been a conscientious and courageous soldier, passionate about integrity and justice, and physically tough. Following service in an infantry battalion he attempted the SASR selection course but was not selected. He felt shame and rejection, and this was compounded by serious bullying back in his unit. He felt betrayed, unjustly treated, and bewildered. He had a breakdown and was quickly medically discharged with few transition supports in place, and no plan or hopes for the future. He took his own life by a legal drug

overdose when a range of medical interventions were unsuccessful. He was being treated with Psychotropic drugs, but unbeknown to us, his initial problems stemmed from what we now know as Moral Injury and a different approach is now needed

Certainly I cried and cried and cried, the night we heard of Fred's death. It affected me greatly. At the time, we cared for him, ...but didn't know really how to care for him. We didn't understand what was going on for him. His behaviour was severely impacted by the excessive cocktail of drugs he was being administered, electric shock treatments, and institutional experiences that further marginalised him. If only I knew then what I know now about moral injury. But we, and the medical system just didn't know. Perhaps when we were younger, we couldn't have been expected to know how to deal with his situation differently. We can but hold Fred and so many others in loving memory until we meet them again.

With any death we must grieve for a period, but we should not ruminate indefinitely on our grief. Today we can help others, because we now have greater insight. For the past 7 years our team of peer mentors in the Veterans Care Association (VCA)

have been meeting veterans with suicidal ideation{SI} almost every week. They invariably have common symptomology - hopelessness, shame or guilt, loss of identity and dignity. We have found ways for almost every one of them - hundreds of them - find hope, healing, identity, purpose and new life. Our best results have come from engaging them in a residential 9-11 day education experience with other veterans and partners we call Timor Awakening ([www.timorawakening.com.au](http://www.timorawakening.com.au)). We inspire them to get healthy so they can help others too.

In case anyone reading this, have friends or family, struggling with suicidal situations, can I offer some of my summary comments to The Royal Commission that might be of assistance. It is veterans who emerge from the dark pits that have developed what is offered below. They tell us that the bottom line is that Unconditional Love, Acceptance, Belonging and Forgiveness were by far the best medicines. May we lovingly remember Fred and all those you hold dear. Perhaps we needed to feel their pain to develop the passion to improve things. Part of their legacy can be to inspire us to inspire others to work in this space with HOPE.

### **Executive summary of VCA submission to the Royal Commission (RC)**

**Overview.** Suicides of both serving and ex-serving members have deeply affected everyone connected with them. The underlying causes are invariably complex and unique to each individual, and appropriate interventions can be perplexing to implement. Never the less, early intervention through active listening, understanding and fraternal/Peer support, leading to holistic health education can save the lives of many with suicidal ideation (SI).

**Causes.** Whilst various surface issues may be apparent— eg frustration with the Defence/DVA systems; relationship breakdown etc, empathetic dialogue with those at risk of suicide will invariably reveal deep underlying “soul” issues- moral injuries- of hopelessness, shame or guilt, loss of identity and dignity. A disproportionate number have experienced childhood abandonment, and physical or sexual abuse that has been kept a secret. When other stressors are added, the person finds death a serious option to escape their pain. Many veterans with SI have Moral Injury trauma rather than PTSD, (while some have both). But the MI of veterans generally is not being dealt with within the treatment protocols used by many clinicians. MI is not actually a mental health issue –it’s a soul issue. Fascinatingly, medication is now proven to have no positive impact on those with MI- indeed it can compound a person’s problems. A person with suicidal ideation (SI) invariably focusses on what is wrong with their life, and ruminates on the past, seeing no hope for a future. The RC hopefully will find

that shining light on MI can prove to be the greatest strategic innovation to reducing SI.

**Response.** A broad strategic response to help people to choose to live, will need to gently guide those with SI towards embracing a holistic health regime, equipping people to nurture their body, mind, souls and relationships and help them develop a future life purpose. In particular they need to identify the possibility of healing. Such a strategy will help them get in a better “headspace” to see things differently, let go of past issues, embrace forgiveness and reconciliation, and find Hope .VCA can demonstrate through 7 years of evidence based programs, that this response can be more effectively initiated by Veteran Peers, than through clinicians. Broader information on this therapeutic model is available in our VCA website [www.veteranscare.com.au](http://www.veteranscare.com.au)

Sensitive empathetic, non-judgemental engagement is vital. The veteran with SI needs to feel listened to, understood and respected. Realistically, small steps to get the veteran to the next day and meeting with a peer mentor or a clinical practitioner will do better than laying out an overwhelming comprehensive plan. Ongoing peer support should be synthesised with clinical intervention for any morbid conditions like depression or anxiety. Treatments for people by exclusive use of medical or psychological practitioners are rarely holistic and invariably do not address the moral/soul injury dimensions that some service people struggle with. The person with SI may need daily support for a period- much more than what clinicians have capacity to provide. The veteran community has massive capacity to be involved in this space. Trained Peer mentors can assist in affirming the need for forgiveness, love, acceptance and hope, can make the difference between life and death choices. Empowerment and encouragement should be provided for those with SI to develop the self responsibility necessary for later life. Listening empathetically is key. In asking solution oriented questions, people reflecting on their story they can quite often find the solution they need.

We at VCA are bringing veterans back from Suicidal ideation to new life hope and purpose. We implore the RC to explore this approach. I would invite those veterans who would like to contribute to reducing veteran suicide, to explore more deeply what I’ve reflected on above. Google “Moral injury” and become more aware that this is something that you can help with.

May God bless you all  
Padre Gary Stone OAM  
Veterans Care Association

\* name altered for privacy reasons

# DRAFT DFVA POLICY OBJECTIVES

At the time of printing, the DFVA was reviewing its policy objectives. This is especially timely with the Federal election to occur in 2022. The outcomes of the review will be published on the DFVA website and in the next edition of Camaraderie.

We thank those members who recently answered our invitation to make comment on the DRAFT objectives, which are listed below (in no priority order).

## **DFRDB Commutation**

There should be the immediate application of up-to-date life tables for calculating commutation and fortnightly payments for all current and new DFRDB superannuants; and rectification of the financial injustices caused by the application of out-dated life tables to superannuants.

## **Fair Indexation for all Military Superannuation Defined Benefit Pensions**

The provisions of the Defence Force Retirement Benefits Fair Indexation Act should be extended to include all DFRDB, Military Super and ADF Cover pensions, including pensions paid to under 55-year-old superannuants, invalidity benefit pension recipients, and reversionary benefit pension recipients.

## **Remediate Repatriation Medical Fee Schedule**

DVA clients should not need to rely on the good-will of health care providers, or to pay privately, to receive treatment for accepted conditions.

Fees paid to providers should not limit providers to take on DVA clients. Immediately remediate the Repatriation Medical Fee Schedule reduction resulting from the RMFS/Medicare freeze.

## **Improve DVA Claims Processing**

### **- Processing Timeframes**

DVA should identify points of friction in claims processing that result in excessive delays, and appropriately resource mechanisms that address the cause.

DVA has identified “action required by the veteran” as primary cause of delays. DVA must develop and resource schemes that reduce the likelihood, impact, and length of such delays on claims.

## **- Decision Transparency and Communication**

DVA must communicate its determinations with sufficient information on their face to enable the veteran to assess whether the determination is correct.

Templated determinations must be designed in a veteran centric manner and should not require the veteran or their advocate to seek additional information from DVA.

## **Redress Inadequacies of Veterans’ Disability Compensation Payments**

The disability compensation for Australia’s most disabled Totally & Permanently Incapacitated (TPI/SRDP) veterans has declined significantly in relative terms to that of Average Weekly Earnings. The ‘Economic Loss’ component of that eroded payment rests at less than 65% of Australia’s gross minimum wage. This decline in compensation for Australia’s most disabled TPI/SRDP Veterans is a poor indictment of the Commonwealth’s obligation to the enduring care for its Veterans.

The Government has an obligation to those Veterans and their families to provide them with an adequate standard of living. Compensation to all of them should be of equal value across the nation’s TPI Veterans community, thus bringing all payments in line with the top compensated cohort receiving the TPI rate and the full-Service Pension.

## **Hearing Services**

DVA should assume full and direct administration of the provision of hearing services to gold card and white card (accepted hearing condition) holders, including development and application of guidelines.

Guidelines should clearly recognise the UNMS principle, and should, once diagnosis and severity of loss have been accepted, prioritise satisfying lifestyle needs.

## **Inclusion of ‘No-Disadvantage’ Provision in the Military Covenant**

The Australian Veterans’ Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act be amended to include a provision that the Commonwealth acknowledges that veterans, or their families, will not be disadvantaged relative to any other section of the community



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have been advised that the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA service delivery to veterans and their families has been expanded. I understand that veterans and their families can now access face-to-face DVA services at 318 Services Australia service centres across Australia, and that services include:

- printing and lodgement of DVA forms and supporting documents
- fielding general enquiries
- connection with DVA subject matter experts and support services such as Open Arms; and
- support to access online services.

Whilst I take some comfort that all Services Australia staff will undertake mandatory training to ensure they can provide the support that veterans and their families are looking for, I wish to express a note of caution.

Having experienced Centrelink for other reasons, and promises from DVA for those VAN services relocated to Centrelink offices, I would not like Veterans to be put into Centrelink queues and culture. More significantly, veterans run the real risk of being regarded as welfare recipients rather than recipients of owed compensation and rehabilitation services due to conditions sustained due to military service.

I fear that at the end of the day, the Government's aim is to do exactly that - push veterans into the welfare bucket and ultimately dissolve DVAs responsibilities to Centrelink.

I trust that the DFWA is keeping an eye on this "bigger picture"

Yours sincerely  
Larry Podmore  
ARA 1970 - 1992

---

## **OPERATIONAL & NON-OPERATIONAL SERVICE - A MEMBER'S DIFFERENT VIEW**

Dear Editor,

I read with much interest the several articles relating to the above subject in the First Edition 2021 of Camaraderie.

I entered RMC in February 1955 and retired from the service on 13 July 1992. From 1993 until 2002 I had the honour of being the Colonel Commandant RASigs Eastern Region and later Representative Colonel Commandant.

I never had operational service due to circumstances outside my control. In the early years of the Vietnam War, I was posted to the USA for training and then attachment to the USA Satellite Communication Agency. I returned to Australia in mid 1969 and, after eighteen months at the Directorate of Signals, attended Staff College. Towards the middle of 1971 I received a Posting Order to command 110 Signal Squadron in SVN. This Posting Order was cancelled towards the end of the year after PM McMahon decreed there would be no more reinforcements.

My next and only other opportunity for operational service came in 1979 while I was SO1 Ops in Joint Communications Branch. I was to undertake the communications reconnaissance for the UN deployment to Namibia and later to command the communications element. The deployment was delayed a number of times and I was prompted out of the job in December 1979.

Throughout my service career I never refused a posting and was happy to serve wherever I was sent.

I am sure there are many more like me who served for many years without the opportunity to have operational service. Without wishing to diminish in any way the entitlements of anyone who faced the enemy, it may be time to consider attainment of a particular age, say 80, and some qualifying period of service for a Gold Card for those who did not.

Yours faithfully,  
PJA Evans

## TRANSITIONING TO CIVVY STREET - A MEMBER'S DIFFERENT VIEW

Dear Editor,

I read with interest and some concern the article on "Transitioning to Civvy Street" by Ben Wadham in the recent edition of Camaraderie (Vol. 52, No 2 Second Edition 2021) and wish to offer a different view based on personal experience in order to ensure this issue is considered in a balanced, real life manner and ensures that taxpayers money is well spent and not wasted on establishing yet another "bureaucracy" with a "bevvy of experts" attempting to "help" Navy, Army and Airforce service men and women obtain employment in the wider outside world after resigning and leaving the Australian Defence Force.

I would like to express my abhorrence with the sentiments of the author of the article when he states "Once one has served, one is entitled to lifelong support". Which Australian Government enacted legislation and committed the country to such a ridiculous idea? An individual signs up for service in any one of the three branches of the ADF of their own free will and I do not know of any government, public or private organization that would commit to such a ridiculous proposition. I made the choice to join the Australia Army independent of any influence and advice from my parents or friends. I loved my time serving my country and that service and all it entailed prepared me for life in any situation and most employment. I was and still am, very proud of serving my country and I do not expect to be "molly coddled, bottle fed and put to bed" for the rest of life by the Government or any strange group of well intentioned "do-gooders" in a government funded body such as a "Joint Transition Authority". This body might be more relevant to those LGBTIQ in the ADF who may be seeking to "transition"?

While the proponents of establishing and getting the public purse to fund such an anachronism, the "Joint Transition Authority JTA" is admirable, I am not convinced that their motives are honourable or practical and will help the personnel seeking employment and careers outside of the ADF?

I resigned from the Australian Army in 1980 following 28 years of service which included my four years training at RMC Duntroon. I took up a senior executive position in the SA Government and after several other executive positions I became the Chief Executive of The Economic Development Authority of SA and its successor department, the Department of Industry and Trade. During my time in senior executive positions I kept in touch with most of my Duntroon classmates and the soldiers I commanded in various units and in particular, those who served with me in the Vietnam War. I accept that my career and the ease with which I "transitioned" from the Army into civvy street may be unusual and I am sure many soldiers might comment that "John" was an Officer in the Army and that is very different to being a soldier and in particular, a "grunt" leaving the Army and seeking a career and employment outside!

I wish to highlight that the majority of my soldiers did not have any major difficulties leaving the service and entering "civvy

street". Two of my Vietnam soldiers are multi-millionaires as a result of their initiative and business acumen while several successfully established small businesses which have thrived and grown. A small number obtained employment in the chemical and petroleum industries and my faithful driver became the regional manager of Penzoil for SA, WA and NT. At least four of my unit went back on the land farming and have been very successful. One of my Vietnam operators became an independent transport operator. One or two became builders in Queensland while several joined state police forces. Unfortunately, four died prematurely from heart or lung ailments. Two or three turned out to be "bad boys" and fell foul of the law!

None of my ex-soldiers received any help when leaving the Army and entering into different careers and employment. I am so very proud of my soldiers who are all in their late sixties and early seventies and none expect or demand to be entitled to "lifelong support". I believe all of my ex-Vietnam soldiers receive various levels of pension like I do for which we are most grateful. This is adequate recognition for serving our country! As an aside, most of my Duntroon graduating class are now retired (as I am) and achieved in the outside world in civvy street! Several of my classmates are very successful businessmen, now millionaires. One is a very highly successful medical physician, two have PhD's, several became academics, one is a very senior advisor and consultant to the UN on peacekeeping while four are or have been, financial advisers while three of us became high level executives in the public services in various states of Australia.

In conclusion, the training and experience an individual receives in his/her service in the ADF is excellent and serves most officers and soldiers extremely well when leaving the service and entering "Civvy Street". As CEO of the Economic Development Authority in SA I was fortunate through "head-hunters" to find and employ one retired Air Vice Marshall, one Naval Commodore, four ex Lieutenant Colonels, one major and numerous non-commissioned officers and other ranks. These ex-service people were all shortlisted by the recruitment agencies the Government used and all except one of the ex-service personnel performed exceptionally well and were never lost to our country! They can be mobilised to serve in uniform again should they ever be required. No matter what a "Joint Transition Authority" may provide personnel leaving the services, the final decision to employ any ex-service personnel rests with an employer. The record of ex-service men and women obtaining good careers and employment outside in the "big ugly world" is more than average and speaks for itself. Well trained people with initiative will survive and succeed in most environments!

Please let us not invent solutions for problems unless they really exist.

John Cambridge

## BOOK REVIEW: The Marshall Plan - Dawn of the Cold War by Ben Steil

**At the end of World War II, faced with widespread destruction in Europe, strong communist parties in Greece and France, and the Red Army deployed throughout Eastern Europe and in the eastern zone of Germany, United States Army chief-of-staff, General George C. Marshall Jr., was concerned that, without American aid, key allies would not be able to build strong democracies with thriving market economies. The harsh winter of 1946-47 exacerbated the situation.**

Meeting in the Kremlin with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in April 1947, Marshall gained the impression that Stalin expected Western Europe to fall under his sway as conditions worsened. Marshall was determined to prevent such a scenario and set out to reconstruct Western Europe as a bulwark against communist authoritarianism.

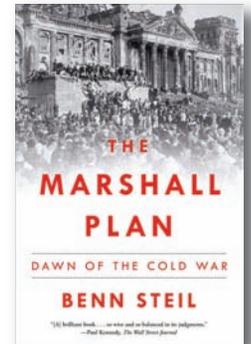
The massive, costly, and ambitious undertaking would confront Europeans and Americans alike with a vision at odds with their history and self-conceptions. In the process, it would drive the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the European Union, and a Western identity that continues to shape world events.

Focusing on the critical years 1947 to 1949, Steil's account brings to life the seminal episodes marking the collapse of post-war United States-Soviet relations – the Prague coup, the Berlin blockade, and the division of Germany. In each case, we see and understand like never before Stalin's determination to crush the Marshall Plan and undermine American power in Europe.

Steil identifies the day the Cold War began: 7 July 1947, when the Soviets cabled their Eastern European allies to forbid them from attending a planning meeting in Paris to discuss aid under the Marshall Plan. Soon afterward, Stalin's top ideologist, Andrei Zhdanov, announced that the world was divided into "two camps" and that the communist countries of Europe were banding together in a new organisation, the Communist Information Bureau, which was created to solidify Moscow's control over Eastern Europe in the face of growing United States influence in Western Europe.

Given current echoes of the Cold War, as Putin's Russia rattles the world order, the tenuous balance-of-power and uncertain order of the late 1940s remains relevant. The Marshall Plan provides critical context into understanding today's international landscape. Bringing to bear fascinating new material from American, Russian, German, and other European archives, Steil's account changes how we view the Marshall Plan and the birth of the Cold War.

Drawing extensively on United States archival material as well as some Russian, British, French, German, Serbian and Czech sources, Steil is at his best when describing the myriad agencies and policies that oversaw and executed the Marshall Plan as it distributed more than US\$13 billion in aid to 17 countries from 1948 to 1952. He writes elegantly on economics, explaining complicated mechanisms used to fuel the Western European recovery, such as implementation of counterpart funds, the creation of the European Payments Union and the cancellation of German debt.



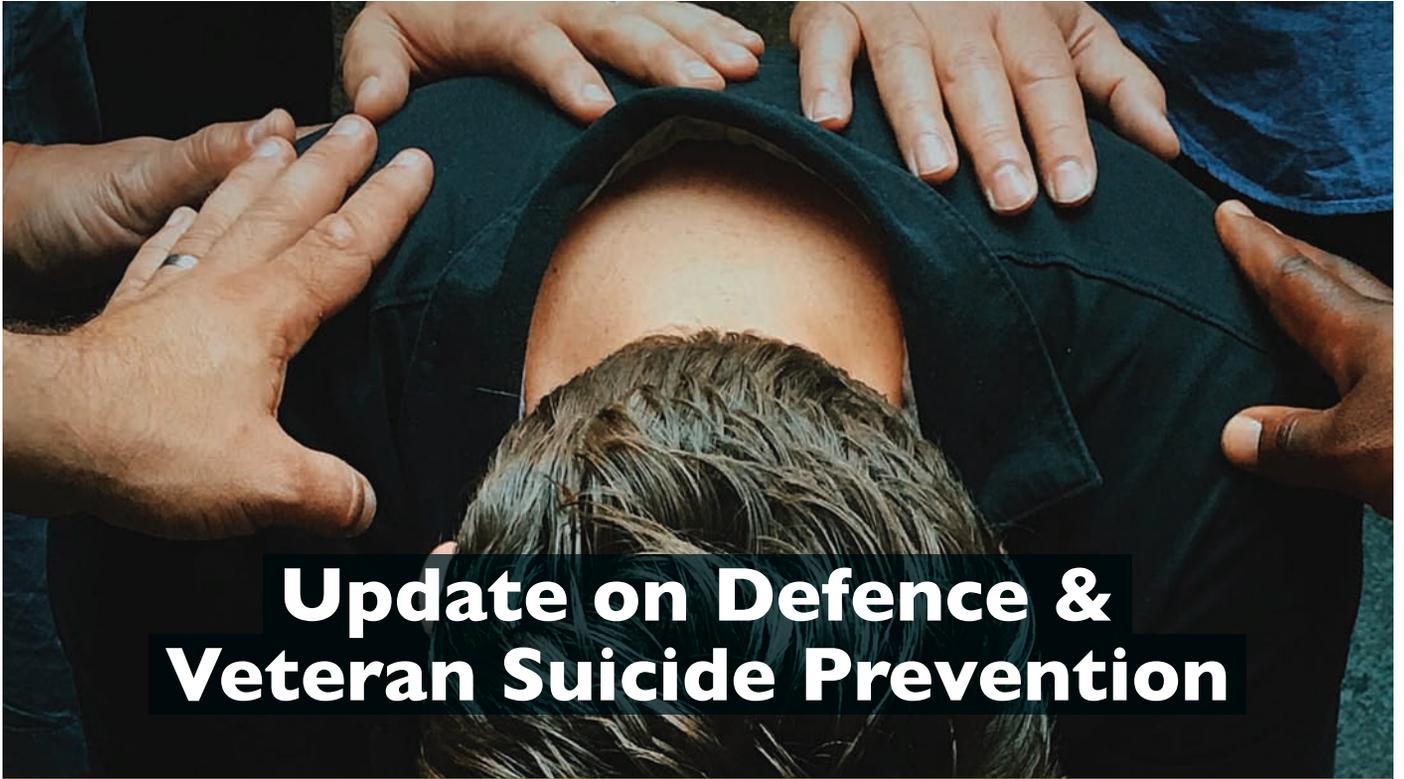
Steil emphasizes the roles and personalities of leading American statesmen driving the effort to enact the Marshall Plan and devotes considerable space to describing the domestic United States political scene and the "legislative drama" behind the plan's political passage. The Marshall Plan achieved the goals of its creators, he concludes, and while it played a role in drawing the lines of the Cold War, the conflict itself was inevitable.

Steil ends the book with a distracting discussion of the post-Cold War period and a critique of United States-supported NATO expansion to countries of the former Soviet bloc and the resulting alienation of Russia. Steil's work might have benefited instead from an analysis of the impact on the legacy of the Marshall Plan from current United States protectionist trade policies and strains within the European Union and in United States-European relations.

Steil is senior fellow and director of international economics at the Council on Foreign Relations. He is the author of the prize-winning *Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

The Marshall Plan includes several black-and-white images embedded in the text; four appendices, one with several poor-quality maps that may have been better placed in the text; a list of references; extensive notes; and a comprehensive index.

It is a polished and masterly history told with verve, insight, and resonance for today. It will interest students of politics, diplomacy, economics and national security. Steil's new perspective on the Marshall Plan will be appreciated by specialists for its wide-ranging analysis and welcomed by general readers for its engrossing style and accessibility.



## Update on Defence & Veteran Suicide Prevention

Editor's Note: : see a related article Preventing Veteran Suicide – A Padres View in this edition

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide was established on 8 July 2021. Under the Letters Patent, the Royal Commissioners are required to produce an interim report by 11 August 2022 and a final report by 15 June 2023.

Readers will be aware that when the Government established the Royal it also decided it was unnecessary to establish a permanent National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention.

Dr Bernadette Boss CSC was appointed as the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention in November 2020. The work of the Commissioner was concluded, and a report was delivered to Government on 15 September 2021.

The 'Boss Report' is well worth a read. It is detailed and reflects her extensive experience across service in both the British and the Australian armies, the medical profession, the law, and her role as a coroner in the ACT.

DFWA will seek to have the recommendations contained in her Report that can be actioned or implemented now done so. She has provided a road map for the Royal Commission to follow and continue the work.

You can read the interim report at:

<https://www.nationalcommissionerdvsp.gov.au/publications/interim-national-commissioner-defence-and-veteran-suicide-preventions-report>

### Public Meetings

The Royal Commission was scheduled to hold its first public hearing at the Brisbane Convention Centre on Friday November 26. The hearing will explain how the Commissioners will conduct the inquiry. The first block of public hearings where participants will give evidence begins in Brisbane on Monday November 29, 2021.

The ceremonial hearing will be open to the public if COVID restrictions allow. It will also be webcast.

Anyone wishing to make a submission to the Commission can do so on the Commission's website. The Commission will accept submissions until at least the end of March 2022. The closing date will be confirmed later this year.

DFWA will also be making a submission. We will keep you updated.

Continued overpage

### **Free, independent legal support to participate in the Royal Commission - A note from The Defence and Veterans Legal Service (DAVLS)**

Defence members, veterans and their families and supporters can get free, independent information and legal advice to take part in the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. A new legal service has been funded by the Australian Government to provide support to interested parties anywhere in Australia or from overseas deployments.

The Defence and Veterans Legal Service (DAVLS) is a project of National Legal Aid and has staff in each state and territory, who deliver a trauma-informed, culturally safe and accessible service.

DAVLS can help you understand your legal rights and options for sharing your experiences with the Royal Commission. The service can also support you to make a submission or in a private session and connect you with other support services.

DAVLS' legal support is free, confidential, and available to anybody considering sharing their experiences with the Royal Commission. The service is independent and separate from the Royal Commission, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

DAVLS has a range of resources that answer frequently asked questions and can support you to take part in the Royal Commission. You can view and download these free resources at [www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au/resources](http://www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au/resources).

The editorial team here at ADFW strongly recommends that anyone interested in participating in the Royal Commission check out the website and contact the DAVLS Infoline for free legal advice about their situation.

For free, independent legal support, call DAVLS on 1800 33 1800 or visit [www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au](http://www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au).

## Covid Vaccination Certificates and DVA Gold Cards



As States start to re-open, most are mandating that patrons and visitors to certain venues show proof of vaccination. DVA has provided some useful information about accessing your Covid-19 vaccination certificate.

If you want to get a digital vaccination certificate added to your mobile phone wallet (Apple or Google wallets) or connect your certificate to state check-in apps (such as the Service NSW app) you will need a Medicare number, and to link your Medicare account on myGov.

Most DVA Gold Card holders do not regularly use Medicare or have a Medicare card so may find the process of adding vaccination certificates more involved than the general population. However, most Gold Card holders will still have a Medicare number – often connected to their parent's, partner's, or children's card.

The Australian Immunisation Register has a dedicated Veteran and Defence Support Line, which can help you get a certificate and find out your Medicare number. Ring 1800 653 809 and select option 4.

DFWA has raised this matter with DVA. We do not expect it will be resolved, so encourage those affected Gold Card holders to connect via Medicare.

**Free, independent legal support to participate in the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide**



**DEFENCE & VETERANS  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**Call 1800 33 1800** (FREE CALL)  
[www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au](http://www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au)

## DEFENCE REPARATION PAYMENTS EXTENDED

The Commonwealth Ombudsman has announced that the deadline to apply for a payment under the Defence Reparation Scheme (the Scheme) has been extended to 30 June 2022.

The scheme provides a reparation payment for individuals who experienced serious abuse while serving in the Australian Defence Force. Serious abuse includes:

- sexual abuse
- serious physical abuse, or
- serious bullying or harassment

### Why was the Scheme extended?

Extending the Scheme gives members who may not have been aware about the Scheme previously, the opportunity to report their experience of serious abuse in Defence and apply for a reparation payment.

### What do I need to do to apply for a reparation payment?

To apply for a reparation payment under the Scheme, you must contact the Ombudsman's Office (the Office) by **30 June 2022** and either:

- submit a report of the abuse you experienced in Defence, or
- provide a written notification that you intend to submit a report of abuse. If you notify us you intend to submit a report, you must submit the full report by 30 June 2023.

People who do not submit their report or intention to report to the Ombudsman's Office by **30 June 2022**, will not be eligible to receive a reparation payment under the Scheme.

### How do I lodge my report or notice of intention to lodge a report?

Reports of abuse can be made directly to the Ombudsman's Office by calling 1300 395 776 or by completing the Abuse Reporting form found here and sending it by:

- Email to [defenceforce.ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:defenceforce.ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au) or
- Post to GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601

To provide a written notification that you intend to submit a report of abuse, please:

- send an email to [defenceforce.ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:defenceforce.ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au) by 30

June 2022, if you have not submitted a report of abuse by that deadline

- and say in your email: "I intend to submit a report of abuse in Defence by 30 June 2023"

After sending your intention to report, you must submit your full report by 30 June 2023. If the full report is not received by that date, a reparation payment cannot be recommended.

### Do I need a representative?

The Ombudsman is independent of Defence. You do not need legal or any other professional representation to report abuse to the Ombudsman or receive a reparation payment under the Scheme.

If you need help completing the form or if it causes you distress, please contact the Liaison Team for support on 1300 395 776.

### What is a reparation payment?

The Ombudsman can recommend that Defence make a reparation payment in response to a report of serious abuse, if:

- the abuse occurred on or before 30 June 2014
- the Ombudsman receives the report of abuse by 30 June 2022, or a person provides a notice of intention to report abuse by 30 June 2022, and then submits their report in full by 30 June 2023
- the Ombudsman is satisfied the report involves the most serious forms of abuse and/or sexual assault. The purpose of a reparation payment is to:
  - acknowledge that abuse can have a lasting and serious impact
  - recognise that, in the past, Defence did not respond appropriately in many cases, and
  - acknowledge that mismanagement by Defence of verbal/written reports or complaints about abuse is unacceptable.

A reparation payment is not paid as compensation for any physical, psychological, emotional or financial injury, or loss or damage suffered by a person as a result of abuse.

### How much can be paid?

The Ombudsman's Office may recommend Defence make:

- a payment of up to \$45,000 to acknowledge the most

- serious forms of abuse, or
- a payment of up to \$20,000 to acknowledge other abuse involving unlawful interference accompanied by some element of indecency.

We may also recommend an additional payment of \$5,000 if satisfied that Defence did not respond appropriately to the incident of abuse. The maximum total payment we can recommend is \$50,000.

### What happens after 30 June 2022?

The Office may still receive reports of abuse, but we will not be able to recommend a reparation payment under the Scheme for any reports received after 30 June 2022, unless a person

has provided written notice of their intention to report abuse by the deadline and subsequently submits their report in full by 30 June 2023.

For this reason, the Office encourages people who have experienced abuse in Defence to contact us as soon as possible, or by 30 June 2022 at the latest.

### Where can I find out more?

For more information about reparation payments see the website:

<https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/australian-defence-force/reporting-abuse-in-defence>

## AUSTRALIA UNDER ATTACK! HISTORY ALL AUSTRALIANS SHOULD KNOW



An aerial photograph of vessels burning in Darwin Harbour taken by a Japanese airman during the first raid.



The explosion of the MV Neptuna and clouds of smoke from oil storage tanks, hit during the first Japanese air raid on Australia's mainland.



A sunken ship (MV Neptuna) and burnt-out wharf in Darwin Harbour following the attack (AWM 027334)

19th February 2022 will mark the 78th Anniversary of the bombing of Darwin. Darwin would be bombed a total of 64 times, the last raids occurring in November 1943. None of these subsequent raids would, however, match the ferocity of those on 19 February 1942.

Two raids on Darwin killed 235 people with a further 300 to 400 wounded. Thirty aircraft were destroyed, eleven ships were sunk, and some of the civil and military facilities in Darwin were destroyed.

Many Australians do not know that the Japanese bombed as far south as Katherine in the NT as well as parts of WA and QLD.

Between February 1942 and November 1943 the Australian mainland, domestic airspace, offshore islands and coastal shipping were attacked at least 111 times by aircraft from the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Force and Imperial Japanese Army Air Force.

On 31 May 1942, the war came to the east coast when three Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour. In June 1942 a submarine lightly shelled the eastern suburbs in Sydney and then Newcastle. Japanese submarines also attacked coastal shipping, causing the loss of some 60 lives and 29,000 tons of shipping during the two months after the midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour



A recent photo of the ACT DWG members at the annual wreath laying ceremony at the Australian War Memorial.

Editor's Note: : The following is an edited version of information supplied by Annette Sadler, who is currently writing the history of the Defence Widows Support Group (DWSG), expected to be finished by early 2022. The DWSG is now known as the Defence Widows Group (DWG).

2021 marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Defence Widows Support Group (DWSG) in the Australian Capital Territory. The inaugural meeting was held on 8 July 1981 and was Chaired by Maj Brian Fegan MBE, the President of the ACT Branch of the then Regular Defence Force Welfare Association (RDFWA). The Branch had recognised the need for a support group for widows of former members of the regular defence force, many of whom were not entitled to receive support from other Ex Service Organisations. For some time the Branch had been providing ad hoc counselling to widows who needed support, advice of their entitlements, and assistance with claiming benefits.

It is obvious from the Minutes of that first meeting that a considerable amount of thought and planning had already taken place within the Branch and the purpose of the inaugural

meeting was simply to raise the DWSG as had been recommended by the Executive Committee of the RDFWA (ACT Branch). There were no objections to the recommendation that:

- The aim of the DWSG was 'to provide immediate and effective assistance to Defence Force Widows from a source independent of any Government Agency, but able to present a Widow's cause in a manner which would minimise delay in Government Department processing and consequent distress to the widow'.
- The Group would be fully supported by the RDFWA – ACT Branch and would be comprised of Chairwoman, Senior Counsellor, Voluntary Counsellors and Executive Officer.

- Volunteer Counsellors would be sought from widows and wives of service members. It was considered that their personal experience, knowledge, and sympathetic understanding of the widow's problems would enhance the successful achievement of the defined aim of the DWSG.

Mrs Lorelle Moore was elected Chairwoman, Mrs Robin Mahood, Senior Counsellor, and Flt Lt Roy Levick, Executive Officer. A draft brochure for the DWSG had already been prepared for discussion and the meeting was also informed of an intention to prepare a 'Counsellor's Handbook'. Its purpose was to standardise information given to widows as well as to serve as a Counsellor's Training Manual.

Much thought was also given to how to promote the Group. At a basic level, the 'Fridge Door', a weekly public announcement column in The Canberra Times was regularly utilised. Information brochures were widely distributed, and it was decided to have an annual formal lunch with a Guest Speaker, to which senior military and government representatives would be invited. The first such lunch was organised for 19 August 1982 at The Canberra Club and it became a regular annual event on the Canberra social scene.

Thought was given to asking the wife of the Governor General to become the Patron of the Group and in 1983 Her Excellency Lady Stephen accepted the invitation to become the Group's first Patron. She was the first of many vice regal patrons, with Her Excellency Linda Hurly being the current Patron.

The importance of social contact and networking for defence widows was soon recognised and the number of lunches were increased to include regular informal lunches – one on the Southside and one on the Northside of the lake. A tradition of distributing chocolates at Christmas was also established with over 100 boxes being distributed in 1986, just five years after the Group's inception. The Branch contributed to the cost of the lunches and groups like Army Wives donated to the costs.

DWSG stalwart, Lorelle Moore was a passionate lobbyist on behalf of all defence widows, campaigning for changes to the defence widow's share of pension. She also led a successful campaign to stop the charging of an entry fee to the Australian War Memorial.

Towards the end of 1995, the Group was informed of the effect the proposed Professional Indemnity Insurance would have upon the RDFWA and DWSG. This necessitated a change to the role of the Volunteer Counsellors but did not deter the work of the Group. In 1996 Defence Widows were granted

representation at the National level of the RDFWA with the appointment of a Vice President – Defence Widows.

Following the resignation of Lorelle Moore, Maelyn Wishart was elected President in 1997. She personally took on the role of contacting new defence widows, a total exceeding 1000 in her period as President.

Another Group stalwart, Robin Mahood, prepared a concise list of things which can be done when a widow faces her loss. The pamphlet 'What Happens to Your Widow when You Die' was the result. It was regularly updated and distributed widely within the Veteran Community.

During Maelyn's time as President it was resolved that all widows of former servicemen would be eligible to be part of the DWSG and widowers were also welcome. The use of the term 'widow' was assumed as including 'widower'.

At the beginning of 2009 Maelyn resigned as President. Annette Sadler, who had been serving as Secretary of the Group for several years and had been acting as President in Maelyn's absence, was appointed in her place. Annette chose to be known as Convenor and Minutes of Meetings reverted to Records of Meeting as had been deemed more appropriate at the Group's inception. Annette also replaced Maelyn as the VP - Defence Widows on the National DFWA.

By 2009 the number of widows on the DWSG list at that time was 332.

A challenge to be met was who was going to contact the new widows? It was decided that a group of volunteers would take it in turns to undertake this task. A 'training' meeting was held where Maelyn explained best practice and a set of resources was produced. The volunteers were each allocated a two-month period between meetings to collect the funeral notices and follow up with contacting the widows and sending out a package of information. Handover took place at each meeting and a report was made. Legacy was the main source of assistance where required although the DFWA Branch did provide limited Pension and Welfare Officer assistance.

2011 marked the Group's 30th Anniversary and the Australian War Memorial agreed to the holding of a Commemorative Service for defence widows, and the Group continues to hold this annual event.

As a special Anniversary Project, it was decided to collect the stories of the families of those who had served. A project team

Continued page 38

## UPDATE ON

# MEDICALLY DISCHARGED VETERANS VS ATO..... AND THE CSC? AS AT 12 NOVEMBER 2021

The first mention in Camaraderie of the legal challenge regarding the taxation of Invalidation Benefits paid to medically discharged Veterans was in the Qld Branch report in the July Issue of 2018. This has been followed by several full articles in subsequent issues. The last few articles have focussed on various issues arising in the implementation of the Federal Court decision in favour of the Veterans.

While there were three veterans involved in the test cases, over 11,000 veterans and families have been affected. There are potentially more. It is also important to realise that the Court decision changes the definition of the Invalidation Benefit payments and the amounts received by the Veteran. This can affect:

- Withholding Tax – amount of tax withheld from fortnightly payments until tax return time.
- Counting of Invalidation Benefit payments towards the low rate cap and the untaxed plan cap.
- Family tax benefits
- Child care subsidy
- Child support payments to or from an ex-spouse
- Paid parental leave payments
- Other government support payments that consider your taxable income.

The area is quite complex and each individual may be affected in different ways. Professional financial advice should be sought. This is general advice only.

This article covers an update on progressing a list of questions that DFWA put to CSC concerning the Invalidation Benefits taxation case, as well as other aspects not previously covered.

## CSC MISTAKES IN CALCULATIONS

During the AAT Hearings (*Douglas vs the Commissioner of Taxation*), it was revealed that CSC had made incorrect calculations of Douglas income, overstating his income by more than \$58,000, meaning he had paid tax on money he never received. CSC never gave any explanation of how the miscalculation occurred and was subsequently rebuked by Justice Logan in his decision.

DFWA wanted to know what action CSC had been taking to ensure that no other veteran had been similarly treated and that similar mistakes would not happen again.

A request from DFWA to explain this were dismissed by CSC with the non-explanation that "It was just a one-off."

**CSC have still not explained how they determined that it was just a one-off mistake.**

DFWA is continuing to pursue this matter. It is noted that the government excluded CSC from the Royal Commission into Financial Institutions because they were held to account by other mechanisms and were squeaky clean with high standards.

## REVERSIONARY BENEFICIARIES

Widows, widowers and dependents of deceased veterans may be reversionary beneficiaries, if the deceased veteran was receiving Invalidation Benefits that were paid under the DFRDB scheme or MSBS.

You are likely to be affected by the decision if the deceased Veteran's Invalidation Benefit started on or after 20 September 2007 and you are a death benefit dependant as defined under tax law.

The ATO advise that they have worked with CSC to identify affected reversionary beneficiaries. If they consider you are affected, they will write to you and let you know. [However, CSC has made mistakes before which they have not explained. DFWA recommends seeking advice from a financial advisor if you believe you could be affected.]

If you are affected, your reversionary benefit pension income is regarded as a death benefit lump sum which is non-assessable and non-exempt income. This means:

- you do not need to pay tax on your reversionary pension
- you are entitled to a refund of amounts CSC has withheld from these pension payments.

The ATO intends to correct how this income has been treated for superannuation purposes.

In summary, for the 2021 individual income tax return, ATO will refund any amounts CSC has withheld from your pension payments during the 2020-21 income year, when you lodge your tax return.

ATO will issue you a notice of assessment which will reflect these changes. Your outcome will depend on your personal circumstances but is likely to result in a reduced tax liability or a refund.

ATO will amend any other returns they can for you at the same time, which generally, is two years from the day ATO issued you with an assessment. If ATO issued your 2021 notice of assessment before 16 August 2021, they should go back and amend any returns which are in your period of review.

Amending income tax returns for other years outside your period of review, individual objections for the 2008 and later income years may be required.

Any objections should clearly state, “I am a reversionary beneficiary of a veteran who was receiving an invalidity benefit provided under the MSB or DFRDB scheme impacted by the Full Federal Court decision in *Commissioner of Taxation v Douglas* [2020] FCAFC 220.”

Further details are available on the ATO website at <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Super/In-detail/Withdrawing-and-using-your-super/Individuals-receiving-military-invalidity-benefits---impact-of-court-decisions/?anchor=Reversionarybeneficiaries#Reversionarybeneficiaries>

DFWA recommend anyone affected by these changes, seek professional advice.

CSC are responsible for making the necessary changes to make sure you don't pay tax on your reversionary pension from 1 July 2021 onwards.

### **DECEASED ESTATES**

Executors of deceased estates are required to settle tax issues with the ATO within certain time limits. DFWA requested CSC advise what CSC and the ATO were doing regarding notifying the estates of deceased veterans whose invalidity benefits would have been affected by the Federal Court decision.

Under the streamlined process introduced to expedite implementation of the Court decision, CSC are to notify the ATO of all those Invalidity Benefit recipients who are affected by the Court decision. This would include those who have died during the period. The deceased estates of those deceased recipients need to be notified.

**CSC have not responded to this request submitted in August.**

DFWA is still awaiting advice from CSC on this matter. Now that over 60% of taxation amendments have been addressed for current Invalidity Benefits recipients, DFWA has now raised the matter the ATO and again with CSC.

### **IMPACT ON FAMILY COURT DECISIONS**

DFWA requested CSC advise if they intended to change their practice regarding reporting Invalidity Benefits to the Family Court. The Family Court has, in many cases, treated the Invalidity Benefit as guaranteed for life and therefore calculates an Asset value that generates the Invalidity Benefit income. As the Federal Court considered that the Invalidity Benefit was not guaranteed for life, DFWA requested advice on what CSC is intending in future reporting and if it is intended to address previous apparent incorrect reporting.

CSC have advised, “. superannuation splitting under the Family Law Act 1975 does not rely on the very specific definition of “superannuation income stream” and “pension” under Regulation 1.06 of the Superannuation

*Industry (Supervision) Regulations 1994 which were considered in the Douglas matter. As such, the outcome of the Douglas matter has not affected the Family Courts’ power to split an invalidity pension, or the way in which CSC has complied with validly made Family Court Orders and Agreements previously. CSC will continue to comply with its obligations under the Family Law Act to implement Family Court Orders and Agreements splitting superannuation benefits.*

At some stage, this will be challenged in court. For years, CSC refused to address the way they reported the reviewable nature of Invalidity Benefits to the ATO, resulting in the Court Cases and the current situation. The CSC response is all about tax definitions and does not really address the argument put forward by veterans.

### **DELAYS IN PROCESSING DOCTORS’ CERTIFICATES**

To gain most of the Federal Court ruling, members should apply for the Invalidity Benefit to be classed as a disability superannuation benefit. This required properly worded doctors’ certificates. These were required to be processed by CSC by end of May for veterans to opt into the streamlined process. CSC were behind in their processing. On 2 June, ATO stated veterans could still opt in if, they applied and indicated where the holdup was.

While this was an ATO attempt to prod to CSC to speed up their processing, it was insufficient.

Subsequently the ATO has extended the time by which veterans could opt into the process and has advised that the ATO would contact all who had not yet opted in and invite them to do so. This seems to be working, albeit slowly.

**CSC advises on their website:** *A tax offset is also available if you meet the criteria for your invalidity pension to be taxed as a Disability Superannuation Benefit (DSB). More information on DSB eligibility and how to claim it is available on the CSC website here: [www.csc.gov.au/retirement/pensioners/tax-changes-to-invalidity-pensions](http://www.csc.gov.au/retirement/pensioners/tax-changes-to-invalidity-pensions).*

How the above process can be addressed for deceased estates has not been identified.

DFWA continues to pursue this with both CSC and the ATO.

### **FORMER RECIPIENTS OF CLASS A OR B INVALIDITY BENEFITS**

CSC has confirmed that “customers who have been reclassified a class C and back to an A or B on or after 20 September 2007, may be eligible for the lump sum tax treatment. We’re conscious that this information may be contrary to what some of you have been told, and apologise for any confusion caused.”

However, DFWA raised the issue that there may be some former recipients of Invalidity Benefits who commenced receipt of a pension

on or after 20 Sep 2007 but have since been reviewed and no longer receive the payment. It is possible that these will not be aware of the recent decision.

DFWA requested that CSC advise what action is being taken to ensure that previous recipients of Class A and B benefits are advised of this decision and how to seek advice to determine their situation?

DFWA is continuing to press CSC on this matter.

### **WHAT ABOUT INVALIDITY BENEFITS PAID BY DFRB AND ADF COVER?**

DFRB was replaced by the DFRDB Scheme on 1 October 1972. ADF Cover Invalidation Benefits replaced the same cover previously provided under MSBS. The products are virtually the same and subject to same review but did not form part of the Federal Court decision.

At present, CSC and the ATO are only addressing DFRDB and MSBS as these were the schemes examined in Court. There is no legal requirement for the ATO or CSC to apply these changes to the other schemes, but DFWA contention is that the same principles should apply.

As DFRB ceased on 30 Sep 972, there would only be a handful of veterans who say, were granted a retrospective medical discharge backdated to that date or before. But there have been some backdated to the early 1970s. Introduced in 2016, ADF Cover has about 200 Invalidation Benefit recipients, at present.

Both the ATO and CSC have been asked for their position on this related to the Douglas decision.

### **SOME VETERANS PAYMENTS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN REDUCED**

On this matter CSC advised: *In mid-August we made contact with some customers advising that their fortnightly invalidity pension amount was to be reduced, beginning in October 2021. This was in relation to a decision made by the Full Federal Court in December 2020.*

*Since that time a number of federal government politicians have expressed their concern in regard to the impact on veterans who will end up receiving less in the hand each fortnight. [Note: Representations had been to politicians to address this matter. This situation caused unnecessary alarm and should not have required political representation to correct poor implementation by the agencies involved.]*

*Once CSC has a clear direction on how to proceed with these future invalidity pension payments we will be in touch to let every impacted customer know what that will mean for them.*

*For those veterans whose fortnightly invalidity benefit increased recently, you do not need to worry – your fortnightly benefit will remain as it is currently. [Hopefully, CSC calculations are more accurate than that*

*experienced in the “one-off” Douglas case.]*

This situation affected some who had not applied for or been awarded the Superannuation Disability Benefit and/or are receiving lower Invalidation Benefit payments. While fortnightly payments may go down, the actual taxation on these veterans may not necessarily increase – the actual tax impact will depend on veterans' personal circumstances. The amount of money to be withheld for some veterans increased due to the ATO Pay As You Go (PAYG) Withholding Schedule 12 that now applies to Invalidation Benefit payments. Legally, the payments are now classified as lump sum payments, not pensions. (Schedule 12 was not designed for fortnightly payments and does not factor in the tax free threshold that was taken into account by the Withholding Schedule 13 that applied to pensions.

While the excess tax withheld can be claimed back at tax return time. This means the veteran loses the use of money in the hand, until the tax refund payout.

This does not suit everyone.

There is an alternative available.

The ATO issued CSC with a Class Variation to Schedule 12 to enable the tax-free threshold and/or Medicare levy exemption to be taken into account. If claimed by veterans, it will reduce the amount withheld for many veterans. More information is available at: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Super/In-detail/Withdrawing-and-using-your-super/Pay-as-you-go-withholding-for-military-superannuation-payments/> .

Veterans may wish to consider claiming the tax-free threshold and/or the Medicare levy exemption if appropriate, or can apply to the ATO for a PAYG withholding variation to reduce the amount of PAYG tax withheld by CSC from the Invalidation Benefit payment. This must be applied for by 30 April of the current FY.

In all these matters, it must be stressed that each veterans case is different and the article is providing general information only.

**If you think you may be affected, you should seek professional financial advice.**

**If you know of any Veteran or Widow or dependant who may be an Invalidation Benefit reversionary beneficiary, it may be helpful for you to mention this tax decision.**

**If you know of any veteran who was receiving an Invalidation Benefit and is now deceased and the deceased estate is going through probate process, please advise the Executors or family of this tax decision. Some of the lump sum tax refunds have been in the 10s and 100s of thousand dollars.**

# An Ordinary Man & His Exceptional War:

## The Jock McLaren Story

by Lt Col Alistair Pope, psc, CM, (Retired)

### A TASTE OF WAR

Robert Kerr 'Jock' McLaren was born in Kirkcaldy in Central Scotland in 1902. This meant that by the time the war ended in 1918 he was too young to enlist ... except he is listed on the nominal rolls of the 51st Highland Division serving as a Private in France in 1918. It is not known if he took part in the defence against the German Spring Offensive (when the 51st was pushed back), but he was with the 51st for the final 100-Day offensive that ended the war.

Jock McLaren returned to Scotland and completed his studies as a Veterinary Surgeon. In the late 1920's he immigrated to Queensland, where he married a local girl at the age of 36 and settled into the quiet life of a rural veterinarian in Childers.

### THE CLOUDS OF WAR RETURN

An apparently inevitable war with Japan was looming so he joined the Reserves in 1941 and then transferred to the AIF. In WWI he had been too young to fight, but now at 39 he was too old for a combat unit! As a veterinarian with some medical knowledge, he was posted to a Field Workshop in the ill-fated 8th Division in Singapore. In February 1942 he became a PoW in Changi.

This is where the story should have ended (as it did for most), but McLaren had other ideas as he found life in Changi intolerable. With two others he successfully escaped and made his way north through Malaysia. On this journey he developed an abiding hatred for the occupying Japanese Army as he came across the massacred bodies of many Chinese families. Unfortunately, he and his companions were recaptured after being betrayed to the Japanese by some Malay villagers. They were extremely lucky to be returned to Changi as several



Sergeant Jock McLaren, 1943

other escapees who were recaptured were summarily executed.

With little opportunity for a second escape from Changi, McLaren volunteered to join a group being transferred to a Forced Labour Camp in Borneo, with their ultimate destination being the infamous Sandakan Camp in which thousands died with only a few surviving the war.

### A SECOND ESCAPE

McLaren again escaped from the PoW camp on Berhala Island by leading several Australians to steal a boat from a leper colony that the Japanese were loath to visit. In this small craft they 'island-hopped' north by paddling with a shovel for more than 450km until they reached Mindanao in the Philippines, arriving in June 1943. There they made contact with the

legendary American Reserve Officer, LtCol Wendell Fertig who had established a guerrilla band that had carved out a base in the deep jungle. Fertig had just managed to contact the American military and established their continued existence. A submarine was dispatched to provide Fertig's group with weapons, medicine and communications – and evacuate the escapees. McLaren elected to stay on with Fertig's group as a reconnaissance Patrol Leader, Coastwatcher and whaleboat 'captain'.

### GUERRILLA ESCAPEDES

On one distant patrol Jock diagnosed himself with appendicitis. If the infected organ was not removed – and quickly - he would die. He prepared for the operation by entwining coconut fibres for sutures, strapping a mirror to his knee to see what he was doing and then cut out his own appendix with a penknife, all without painkillers or anaesthetic. Finally, he stitched up the incision himself. As he said later, "I knew I had appendicitis and

that if I did not do something I would die. The operation took four and a half hours. It was hell, but I came through all right.” Just two days later, he was on his feet once more and fleeing from the approaching Japanese.

Fertig was a maverick who did whatever he thought was necessary to harass the Japanese, no matter how unusual the idea may seem. He even ‘commissioned’ an anti-Nazi German ‘soldier of fortune’ into his band. He was an innovator who thought outside of the conventional warfare box so when McLaren proposed a particularly audacious plan Fertig approved it. Jock and two Filipinos sailed their 8m whaleboat (he had cheekily christened ‘The Bastard’) into the middle of a Japanese controlled harbour in broad daylight, machine-gunned the vessels there and mortared the docks before turning around and fleeing. The amazing thing is that he repeated this exploit, causing the Japanese to improve their static base security leaving less manpower for patrolling and anti-guerrilla operations.

McLaren also assisted in keeping the Japanese from encroaching too close to Fertig’s Base Camp by regularly carrying out harassing raids on their bases and ambushing patrols entering their domain. This ordinary man, by circumstances and through his own initiative had become an extraordinary warrior.

Yet his greatest success in his personal war resulted from coast-watching near a Japanese controlled port and army camp. As the war drew closer to the Philippines the Japanese army began consolidating their forces by withdrawing their army from some of the outlying islands. McLaren spotted a troopship and sent a report that it was moving large numbers of soldiers between islands. A nearby American submarine sank the vessel and drowning most of the 3,000 troops on board.

McLaren's numerous land and sea guerrilla actions so disrupted Japanese operations that (without any apparent self-awareness about how they were perceived by the Filipinos after all the atrocities they had committed) the Japanese placed a reward of 70,000 pesos on McLaren's head. Finally, on 20th April 1945, McLaren was withdrawn from Mindanao, transferred back under Australian command and assigned to Z Special Unit.

In late June 1945, McLaren and four men were parachuted into the jungle near Balikpapan on a reconnaissance mission ahead of the 7th Division's amphibious assault that was due to take place in July. One man was seriously injured on landing and another was killed in an ambush. McLaren and the other two men were able complete their reconnaissance mission and report the Japanese dispositions. McLaren took part in one last operation by leading an eight-man section on a

reconnaissance mission behind Japanese lines in Borneo. He remained in Borneo after the war ended to help re-establish the civilian administration before returning to Australia in November 1945.

## AWARDS AND THE FINAL TRAGEDY

On joining Fertig's guerrillas and after Australia was made aware of his operations, McLaren was promoted to Sergeant in 1943 and awarded a field commission promotion to Lieutenant in 1944. He finished the war a year later as a substantive Captain. It was not until after the war in 1948 that the awards he so richly deserved finally caught up with him and he received the Military Cross and Bar (MC & Bar) and a Mentioned in Dispatches (MiD). He also received the US Silver Star from General MacArthur.

As is often the case with those who have lived for so long close to the edge, returning to normal life proved difficult, so he accepted a position as a government veterinarian in the highlands of PNG. In 1956 he bought a coffee plantation in Wau.

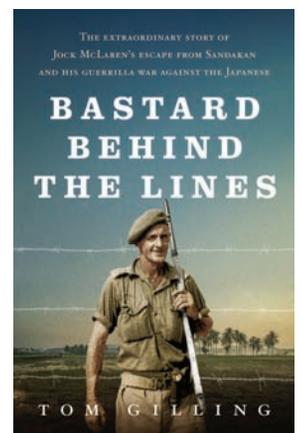
Jock McLaren was the stuff of legend as thousands of Japanese had tried, but could not kill him. But like Achilles he was not immortal and in an ironic tragedy he backed his vehicle against a dead tree near his home on 3rd March 1956 and was killed by a piece of rotted timber falling on him.

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# Corporal Cosmo

## ‘Working Hours’ in the ADF

Earlier this year, in a particularly busy period, one of my troops asked about the unit’s working hours and whether meal hours were factored into the ‘standard’ hours worked per week.

On face value, this appears to be a straightforward question that should be fairly easy to answer. But...

If you wanted to find out the ‘standard’ working hours for ADF personnel, where would you begin? Most people would begin with the Military Personnel Policy Manual (MILPERSMAN). Perhaps the answer may be hiding in the ADF Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN)...???

Let me save you some time.

Standard working hours are not defined in any ADF-wide policy document. Part 2, Chapter 1 of MILPERSMAN provides the policy link about working hours in the ADF, under the chapter title, **Inherent Requirements of Service in the ADF**.

Right now, some readers are thinking, “...but at my unit, (wing, regiment, brigade, division, HQ, etc), it says in Standing Orders, *during normal routine, personnel are expected to work a minimum of XX hours per week/per fortnight...*”, or words to that effect.

Whilst commanders at many levels choose to authorise and publish a ‘working routine’ for personnel under their command, the policy of inherent requirements of Service in the ADF remains. It is relevant at this juncture to delve into the detail of *inherent Service in the ADF*.

## Unrestricted Service

Remembering that members of the ADF are not employees of the Department of Defence rather, they are volunteers, accepted for service in the ADF<sup>1</sup>, an ADF member is subject to the conditions of service published in MILPERSMAN:

*Defence members may be required to work long hours, shift work, irregular hours or a combination of these. Defence members do not have penalty rates or overtime as a condition of service, however the payment of an ADF Military Salary (which pays for a member’s occupation and level of skill) incorporates unique factors of service life including the need to be on call and the liability to work long and irregular hours. Notwithstanding, Defence members may need to work long and irregular hours if required for a specific purpose.*

**Service is not a civil contract** – No civil contract of any kind is created with the Crown or the Commonwealth in connection with a

*member’s service in the Defence Force.*<sup>2</sup>

Now that we have established that you have no employment contract, can your commander work you, well, like a dog? Yes – but with authority comes accountability.

‘Authority’ is, ultimately, derived from the Government through the overarching legislation of the Defence Act 1903 as it applies to Defence members. At the top is the CDF, as appointed by the Governor General. CDF delegates authority for command of the Services to the Service Chiefs – this is enacted through charter letters. A charter letter covers a number of things, many of which are legislated, however the important part is that it gives the Chief authority to make decisions about Service members (quite broadly). Cascading down the ranks, the Chief vests power in Commanders to ‘command their respective units’ - this gives Commanders the right to make many decisions with regard to their command (their people) without having to rely on policy or legislation. Decisions simply have to be reasonable and have regard to any legislation, policy or direction [from superiors] that is applicable. In short, as long as a CO has regard to Workplace Health & Safety (WHS), Op tempo, superior directions and so on, amongst many other routine decisions, the CO may determine their unit working routine as they see fit.

It may appear that the policy in MILPERSMAN regarding working hours of the ADF is vague because it is not defined. This is deliberate. To define the exact working hours of service in the ADF would severely restrict a commander’s ability to command. Service in the ADF is complex and it is not possible to have a policy for each and every situation that arises. Commanders need the flexibility and discretion to employ their allocated resources, including personnel, to achieve their unit’s mission.

## Conclusion

Whilst it may be common for commanders to publish a normal working routine, it is not a requirement to do so – it may even be counter-productive by setting expectations of service as a member of the ADF. So, in response to my troop’s question about whether meal breaks are included in the standard working hours, it doesn’t really matter – ADF members are paid on a 24-hour, 365-day basis. What is more important is that the workforce is having sufficient breaks during the work period. Ultimately, what the unit routine is, is at the discretion of the commander.

- Corporal Cosmo

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

<sup>1</sup> Defence Act 1903, Division 2 – Service in the Australian Defence Force

<sup>2</sup> Defence Act 1903 Division 2 – Service in the Defence Force, section 27



# THE ADF EMPLOYMENT OFFER MODERNISATION PROGRAM - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO THE SERVING MEMBER ?

People Policy and Employment Conditions, Defence People Group, explain ....

Editor's Note: The DFWA has been keeping a close eye on the progress of the ADF Modernisation Program and is broadly supportive of what it aims to achieve. Should members have any questions or concerns you are encouraged to contact the Defence People Group (see contacts at the end of this article) or the DFWA.

Serving in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) requires sacrifice by those in uniform and their families, and the last two years have certainly been no different. The ADF have come together and supported Australian communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through Operation COVID-19 Assist. Partners and families have continued to be an integral support system during these difficult times, where we have seen both work and home lives disrupted.

If the past two years have reinforced anything, it is how unique and vital the role of the ADF is. The type of work that we do requires members to be committed, flexible and focused throughout their careers.

How members are rewarded for their service is critical.

Clear and relevant ADF pay and conditions policies are crucial. These policies must be fit for purpose and meet members' contemporary needs in all the different situations they are expected to serve.

**The ADF Employment Offer Modernisation Program (ADF EOMP)** is helping to address this.

The program was initiated in October 2019, with the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) General Angus Campbell writing to the workforce. In his communication, the CDF invited serving members and their families to participate in a series of discussions to share ideas about how to improve the ADF employment offer.

Following on from the CDF's invitation, more than 980 people provided their feedback and ideas, and almost 500 members and partners attended tri-Service workshops held around Australia in late 2019 and early 2020.

The consultation with the workforce resulted in three key areas of

focus for the program. These include:

- Better housing solutions for members and their families through more flexible options.
- The updating of the categorisation system that determines member benefits and allowances.
- The modernisation and simplification of the ADF allowances framework.

Changes made under the ADF EOMP are not about savings but introducing flexibility, transparency and less complexity. Resources will be re-invested into new benefits that support our members in different stages of their service careers, including transition into civilian life.

The ADF EOMP is being implemented in a phased approach. Development of individual policy proposals for consideration commenced in late 2020, with significant improvements already made.

## What changes have been made so far?

### Military Salary

The establishment of Military Salary was the first major change under the ADF EOMP and came into effect in May 2021. This included rolling several universal allowances (Service, Reserve, Trainee and Uniform Allowance) into members' base salary.

Military Salary provides a transparent and consistent outcome for ADF members that enables them to make informed decisions about their future.

Military Salary pays for occupation and level of skill. It incorporates the following unique factors of service life including:

- the need to be on call
- working long and irregular hours, including weekends, public holidays and shifts and frequent absence from

- home
- frequent postings, often at short notice and the effect this has on members and their families
- service discipline and control
- hard living and working conditions.

The introduction of Military Salary also saw a number of changes for Reserve members.

Before Military Salary was implemented Reserve members received a daily rate of pay. The daily rate was based on 1/365th of the equivalent permanent annual salary, and a percentage based on attendance.

Reserve members also received a flat rate of Reserve allowance, regardless of the hours of attendance. This was a daily rate (1/365) of 75% of Service Allowance.

Under Military Salary, Reserve members still receive a daily rate of pay, and a percentage based on attendance. The difference is that Reserve Allowance has increased to 100% of Service Allowance and is rolled into their salary.

Some Reserve members' remuneration may have been impacted by these changes. As compensation for those affected, a one-off supplementary transition payment is available.

This one-off payment covers the period from the implementation of Military Salary on 13 May 2021 to 30 June 2022 and will be paid at the end of the 2021/22 Financial Year. For more about this supplementary transition payment, visit the ADF EOMP website <https://pay-conditions.defence.gov.au/adf-employment-modernisation/reserves>

### Higher Duty Allowance

Changes to Higher Duty Allowance (HDA) were also made at the same time as the introduction of Military Salary.

HDA is now paid at the rate of 5% of members' salary. The qualifying period for HDA has been increased to 10 consecutive days.

These modifications were made to HDA to create consistent, flexible and simple policy for all members and their chain of command. The old Higher Duties policy created varying inconsistencies in application and did not conform to the Total Workforce System.

### Housing initiatives

Several new housing initiatives have already been delivered for members since 2020.

Members and their families in Sydney and Canberra may have access

to Townhouse Choice properties. Townhouse Choice properties give members centrally located, lower maintenance accommodation as an alternative to the traditional, suburban Service residence.

The removal benefit post-transition to civilian life has been increased from 12 to 24 months. Transitioned members now have more time to decide where in Australia they want to settle in civilian life.

All members posted to a seagoing vessel can now 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.

The Flexible Housing Trial, which gives members more options to live with their families, commenced on 2 September 2021.

Members will be able to live further away from their normal place of duty and be closer to where their partner works or studies, or to the professional services that support their dependants with special needs.

The Flexible Housing Trial will run until 31 December 2023 in the following five locations:

- HMAS Stirling including ships and submarines homeported at Fleet Base West
- HMAS Cerberus
- RAAF Amberley
- Kokoda Barracks
- Singleton Army Barracks

The Flexible Housing Trial will help us better understand the needs of our members by trialing housing flexibility and choice.

### What's next for the ADF EOMP?

There is still work to be done in creating a modern employment package that attracts and retains the workforce required for current and future Defence capability and meets your contemporary needs.

The program will explore how ADF members are categorised and where benefits can be accessed from. Changes will be implemented through a phased approach and members will see changes over the coming years.

Continue to share your experiences, concerns and ideas for improvements on ADF pay and conditions policies, by emailing: [adf.employmentoffer@defence.gov.au](mailto:adf.employmentoffer@defence.gov.au)

For more information about any of the reforms, please visit the ADF Employment Offer Modernisation Program internet page: <https://pay-conditions.defence.gov.au/adf-employment-modernisation>

# CURRENT ISSUES FACING ADVOCATES

by Les Bienkiewicz

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** this is an opinion piece reflecting the author's personal views.

Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) are currently being faced with a combination of issues that are adversely impacting on ESO advocacy and welfare services. These issues have resulted from arrangements involving VITA (Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association), ADTP (Advocacy Training and Development Program) and BEST Grants (Building Excellence in Support and Training).

Significantly, this has been occurring when advocates are facing a tsunami of claims, which was forecast to the DVA by ESOs some years ago and is now coming to past.

## VITA

VITA provides access to professional indemnity insurance for member organisations that support the ex-service community with advice and advocacy to individuals on government pensions, benefits and community support services.

ESOs and incorporated groups performing similar functions can become VITA members to access insurance for their advocates at an affordable cost. Reference A refers.

## ADTP

ADTP is a recently introduced DVA managed program providing nationally accredited training (mainly computer based) in military advocacy and support and is managed by a Registered Training Organisation. It aims to ensure advocates meet national standards before they give advice. It replaces the previous TIP (Training and Information Program).

Advocates that have met the (ongoing) requirements of the ADTP are classed as accredited.

## THE ADTP - VITA LINK

VITA requires its member ESOs to issue a Letter of Authority to their advocates to act on their behalf at a level consistent with the advocate's training and currency. In issuing the Letter of Authority, the VITA member needs to ensure that the advocate, amongst other things, has completed ADTP (or previous TIP) training (see Note 1), and participate in continuing professional development.



The requirements imposed by ADTP (Reference B refers) on advocates are considered onerous and claimed by some to be inconsistent with the modus operandi that advocates have been traditionally operating.

In the past, advocates were trained and accredited under TIP, a simpler and more relaxed training arrangement that volunteer advocates found relatively easy to manage and was seen to be respectful of an advocate's OJT experience. The new ADTP arrangements on the other hand are more complex, bureaucratic, demand ongoing training and detailed recognition of prior learning and experience.

These more complex arrangements have resulted in previously highly respected, efficient and effective advocates (many having operated for decades) opting out of ADTP training and therefore not being accredited. Many of these older advocates find the computer based ADTP training and accreditation modules frustrating, demeaning and effectively pointless as ADTP only adds to their already busy workload, for no obvious benefit.

New (usually younger) advocates are also baulking at the ADTP requirements and as a result many are choosing not to become an accredited advocate. Sadly, despite their initial good intentions, some then decline to continue their involvement in advocacy at all, and chose other volunteer opportunities.

As a result, ESOs are facing a decreasing pool of both accredited and non-accredited advocates at a time when the demand for their advice and advocacy has never been greater, and in fact is increasing.

Notwithstanding the honourable aims of VITA – i.e., to provide affordable insurance cover for advocates - there is nothing to stop advocates operating outside of VITA cover. Indeed many ESOs have opted to take out similar insurance and operate outside of the ADTP / VITA umbrella.

### BEST GRANTS

DVA provides limited funding to ESOs for their advocacy services under the BEST Grants program. Reference C refers. The grant available to an ESO is determined on the basis of the total funds available to DVA and the workload information provided by the applying ESO. Basically the latter involves data on the number of claims that their accredited advocates have supported.

### THE FUNDAMENTAL PARADOX

Given the above, it seems that ESOs which operate outside of the VITA / ADTP umbrella:

- need to make other insurance arrangements to cover the work of their advocates; and
- will no longer be entitled to claim for a BEST Grant.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ESOs

ESOs need to develop a policy that reflects the reality of the current situation, as outlined above. The following matters also need to be taken into consideration:

- Can the ESO budget afford to lose part or all of its BEST funding?
- What are the wishes of its current advocates - are they (or some) happy to involve themselves in ADTP (and thus allow their insurance to be covered by VITA and support our BEST applications)?
- If the ESO removes itself (partly or completely) from BEST / VITA / ADTP will it be able to provide adequate insurance to its volunteers?
- Could it manage both arrangements ? - ie, a hybrid model where some advocates are accredited (and thus continue to be involved in BEST and VITA) and have others not accredited (and thus the ESO has to provide insurance for them).
- Should it decide to only go one way, can / should it impose that decision on its volunteers and if so, what will be the implications on its ability to maintain the level of advocacy and welfare support it wishes?

#### References:

- <https://www.atdp.org.au/documents/VITABrochure2018.pdf>
- <https://www.dva.gov.au/civilian-life/support-ex-service-organisations-and-advocates/advocacy-training-and-development-3#about-the-program>
- <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/best>

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# DFWA SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE FADT REFERENCE COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY INTO THE DEFENCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DISCIPLINE REFORM) BILL 2021

## INTRODUCTION

The Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiring into Defence Legislation Amendment (Discipline Reform) Bill 2021.

The Inquiry is of specific and fundamental interest to DFWA because it has long contended that:

- the Defence Force Discipline Act needed to be modernised to reduce its current complexity and to improve the way disciplinary issues are managed in the Australian Defence Force;
- the current military discipline system is cumbersome, difficult to understand, and promotes unnecessary delays in dispensing justice; and
- breaches in any military justice system should be dealt with in a timely manner, particularly given that most breaches are uniquely military in nature.

DFWA's interest also derives from its agreed charter 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'*.

In essence, DFWA broadly supports the proposed amendments, particularly those that simplify unit level discipline – the expansion of offences that may be dealt with through the discipline infringement system, and the (effective) replacement of Subordinate Summary Authorities with the new position of Senior Discipline Officers.

DFWA is of the view the Bill provides adequate balance between the need to maintain discipline within the Australian Defence Force and not only a Defence Force member's rights

but also as to his/her welfare.

DFWA agrees with the tenant that 'it is critical that breaches of discipline are quickly and fairly resolved' to maintain good morale and enhance the operational and professional capability of the Defence Force.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

### Changes to Disciplinary Infringement and Summary Authorities

Under the existing scheme, the Subordinate Summary Authority is procedurally cumbersome, often with significant delays between the offence and dealing, and imposes a significant burden on a unit.

DFWA notes the enhancements to the disciplinary infringement system:

- The wider range of minor breaches which may be dealt with as disciplinary infringements.
- The (effective) replacement of the Subordinate Summary Authority with the position of Senior Discipline Officer.
- The expanded range of ranks the new Senior Discipline Officer can deal with, compared to the previous Subordinate Summary Authority.
- Mandating the requirement to consider any reasonable excuse prior to issuing an infringement notice, and the consideration of such an excuse by the Senior / Discipline Officer.
- Commanding Officer review of Senior Discipline Officer decisions.

DFWA is of the view that these changes will significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Discipline System within units.

## New Offences

### *s 35A Failure to Perform a Duty or Carry Out Activity*

DFWA notes this offence may be available to hold members, specialists, and commanders to account, where they fail to correct, report, or otherwise deal with the behaviour or actions of others, where that behaviour or action falls short of expected standard of conduct.

### *s 48A and s 48B Cyber-Bullying Offences*

Cyber bullying is a serious issue that can negatively impact the morale, welfare, and discipline of the ADF; particularly given the relatively younger ADF workforce.

This offence will be the first specific cyber-bullying offence in any jurisdiction in Australia, and Defence ought to be commended to being at the leading edge of reform in this area.

DFWA notes the following concerns with this offence:

- The technical nature of evidence relating to social media means the evidentiary and investigatory requirements in many (if not most) cases will be beyond the scope of unit investigation (i.e. will require specialist service police/ADFIS<sup>1</sup> investigative capability).
- Whether a Commanding Officer or Senior Summary Authority has the capability deal with this offence.
- Given the above, whether investigating and dealing with possible offences under this section, including removal orders, can occur in a sufficiently timely manner that balances unit discipline, fairness, and the welfare of the victim and alleged offender.

DFWA is of the view that the concerns outlined above can be managed effectively through command guidance and controls; however, the effect of these new offences should be monitored to ensure that any unintended consequences that arise can be identified and addressed promptly.

## Rights and Welfare of Defence Members

DFWA notes that existing protections of the Discipline Infringement Scheme remain intact, and are further strengthened by:

- Requiring the Infringement Officer to consider whether a reasonable excuse exists, before issuing an infringement notice.
- The power of Discipline Officers and Senior Discipline Officers to dismiss infringements if a reasonable excuse exists or for trivial matters.
- The requirement for Commanding Officers to review Senior Discipline Officer decisions.

DFWA is of the view that the protections included in the Bill sufficiently and appropriately protect the rights and welfare of Defence Members.

## CONCLUSION

DFWA is generally supportive of the amendments to the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 contained within Defence Legislation Amendment (Discipline Reform) Bill 2021.

DFWA is of the view the Bill adequately balances the need to effectively maintain discipline while protecting the rights and welfare of Defence Members.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Defence Force Investigative Service.

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## Something to think about

We hang petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office.

~ Aesop, Greek slave & fable author

A politician is a fellow who will lay down your life for his country.

~ Texas Guinan. 19th-century American businessman

Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.

~ Plato, ancient Greek Philosopher

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Government. But then I repeat myself.

~ Mark Twain (1835- 1910)

Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river.

~ Nikita Khrushchev, Russian Soviet politician

I don't make jokes. I just watch the Government and report the facts!

~ Will Rogers (1879- 1935)

Politicians are people who, when they see light at the end of the tunnel, go out and buy some more tunnel.

~ John Quinton, American actor/writer

A Government which robs Peter to pay Paul, can always depend on the support of Paul!

~ Will Rogers (1879- 1935)

I offered my opponents a deal: "if they stop telling lies about me, I will stop telling the truth about them".

~ Adlai Stevenson, campaign speech, 1952.

I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians. ~ Charles de Gaulle, French general & politician

When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President; I'm beginning to believe it.

~ Quoted in 'Clarence Darrow for the Defence' by Irving Stone.

Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.

~ Doug Larson (English middle-distance runner who won gold medals at the 1924 Olympic Games)

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.

~ Oscar Ameringer, "the Mark Twain of American Socialism."

I contend that for a nation to try and tax itself into prosperity, is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.

~ Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965)

I am reminded of a joke: What happens if a politician drowns in a river? That is pollution. What happens if all of them drown? That is a solution! I have come to the conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two are lawyers and three or more are the government.

~ John Adams (1735 - 1826)

The problem we face today is because the people that work for a living are outnumbered by those who vote for a living.

~ George Bernard

# DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION



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**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](mailto: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 2102 9879 (E) [qldbranch@dfwa.org.au](mailto: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](mailto: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) [wabranch@dfwa.org.au](mailto:wabranch@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) [sabranch@dfwa.org.au](mailto:sabranch@dfwa.org.au) BANK DEPOSIT TO: BSB 833-205 Acct 20374231

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## 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
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Vice President (Navy):	Ralph Derbidge MBE
Vice President (RAAF):	Alan Hind
Vice President (Army):	TBA
Treasurer:	Ralph Hannaford
Secretary:	Alan Hind
Assistant Secretary:	Meg Green AM
Project Officer:	John Kane
ACT Chapter:	Les Bienkiewicz
Location:	Victoria Barracks Building 96 Locked Bag 7005, LIVERPOOL NSW 1871
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Email:	nswbranch@dfwa.org.au

#### CONTACT GROUPS

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Ph: (02) 4968 3811	Ph: (02) 4447 2461

#### ACT CHAPTER

Les Bienkiewicz  
actchapter@dfwa.org.au  
(02) 6152 9166

A report to Branch members is provided in the insert **NATTER**

#### ACT CHAPTER

COVID has curtailed most of our operations but the work of our advocates and the Defence Widows Group continued behind the scenes. Unfortunately the Government House function, hosted by Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley to mark the 40th anniversary of the Goup, had to be postponed to next year, as was the annual wreath laying ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. We look forward to

“business returning to usual” in the new year !

#### 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 & ACT Chapter: Mrs H M Anstee, M/ K Carter, OCDT Xavier Radecker, Mr John Goodwin and Mr Peter Albiston

#### VALE

It is with sadness and regret that we advise of the death of the following members: Colonel A W Bewley, Mr J V Cole, Mrs M D Deadman, LTCOL D J Lobb MBE, Mrs J E Metcalf, Brigadier K P Morel, Mr K R Phipps, Mrs E M Pruckner, Mrs R Rayner, GPCAP A R Robertson, Mrs A D Werner, CMDR F R Wood and WgCmdr Lindsay Williamson, GPCAPT Alexander Arnel, LCDR Bernard Clark, Mrs Yvonne Plunkett.

### QUEENSLAND BRANCH

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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) 2102 9879
E-mail:	qldbranch@dfwa.org.au
Office Hours:	Tue – Wed: 1000 to 1400 hrs

A report to Branch members is provided in the Branch insert.

#### AGM

The AGM was held at the end of September. We welcome a

newcomer to the Committee, Rod Murray, ex-Royal Australian Engineers and is now South Qld Vice President. Another new contributor to the Branch, and DFWA generally, is Dr Susan Gray who contributed an article on “Development in PTSD Treatments: Cannabis” in the last Camaraderie.

#### MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The new Membership Management System has been operational for some time now and the rich features available are slowly being realized and used. This allows Committee members to use the system in their homes and not compelled to go to the office to address membership administration matters. This gives considerable flexibility for working and does not waste “volunteer hours”.

#### MEMBER OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The Membership OUTREACH programme has commenced with volunteers doing a member phone around to check on well0being of our members and to see if members need any assistance with veteran, COVID or other issues and identify any concerns members may have, especially about veteran matters in the news.

#### DFWAQ ACTIVITIES

DFWAQ has continued to represent DFWA at various veteran related events this year:

- Attended Veterans Roundtable at Bribie Is RSL with (Labor) Shadow Minister for Veteran Affairs Shayne Neumann MP.
- RSL Qld and Legacy ESO Forums in July and October. In the October meeting DFWA gave a presentation on contender veteran policy objectives for the coming election, seeking veteran community feedback.
- Two Queensland Consultative Forum meetings (DVA), where the budget and other issues were raised.
- The Qld Assistant Minister for Veterans and the Qld Shadow Minister for Veterans both visited DFWAQ Offices for a briefing session on DFWA and veteran issues within the state.
- The President had meeting with the Qld Minister for Health on issues relating to health services delivered to veterans through the state system and the benefits to both the veteran and the state if such veterans could be identified and treatment funded by DVA.
- The President John Lewis and VP Win Fowles both had meetings with local Federal Members on veteran issues.
- Attended the opening of the “Duty First Veterans Legal Service”, along with the local Federal MP (Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services), representatives of legal fraternity and other ESO. There have been further follow-up meetings between DFWAQ and DFVLS to establish mutual benefit working.
- Attended a virtual symposium organized by Australian Catholic University Veteran Students Group to publicize

ACU veteran offerings and their recognition of ADF qualifications for degree credit.

- Supported and provided the MC for the Defence and Mental Health Symposium at the Brisbane City Hall and streamed internationally. Minister for Defence, Peter Dutton, gave the Opening Address. This Mental Health Month event was organized by the Mental Health Foundation of Australia.

#### QLD STATE POLITICS

Two areas of involvement:

- As reported previously, the Qld Veterans Council Bill was tabled on 22 April and DFWAQ made submissions concerning composition of the Council, as did other ESO. We had received informal feedback from the Premier that some of our concerns were being addressed. The 2nd Reading of the Bill was on 27 October and amendments had been proposed. ESO representations appear to have been heard.
- Qld Parliament initiated an Inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness. As the TOR touched on subjects affecting serving ADF and families transferring into Qld and those transitioning in Qld, DFWAQ decided to make a submission. We also co-operated with RSLQ and jointly addressed the transition aspects in their submission. It is good to see increased cooperative working on these policy matters with RSLQ.

*John Lewis - President*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH

Patron	His Excellency Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia
President	Brigadier Mick Burgess
Past President	Lee Bowes
VP Navy	Aaron Hannam
VP Army	Mark Freer
VP Air Force	Taylor Harcourt-Heron
VP Wellness	David Everitt
Secretary	David Helman OAM
Treasurer	Mark Evens
Membership Secretary	Gavan Phillips
Convener Women Veterans	Charmaine Lock
Committee Member	Lee Bowes
Committee Member	Jodie Clark
Committee Member	Ben Wadham
Contact:	0412 574 444 or email <a href="mailto:sapresident@dfwa.org.au">sapresident@dfwa.org.au</a>

The South Australia branch had its AGM on Friday 29 Oct and we now have a new President with a young and vibrant team to assist him. This team will see us into the future with a better understanding of what the current veterans and their families need.

Our new President is Brigadier Mick Burgess. He graduated from the Royal Military College in 1988 into the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps. He has seen service in almost every state and was deployed on operations in Rwanda and Timor Leste. Career highlights include postings as an instructor and Company Commander at RMC, Company Commander in Darwin, Staff College in Thailand, Commanding Officer of 9 CSSB in Adelaide and Commander of 9 Brigade.

Mick has also served as a civilian in the United Nations in Cote d'Ivoire and ran his own consulting company for 15 years prior to taking on senior roles in the defence industry.

The rest of the team have been busy with various Government departments and other that are involved with employment, Education, and Transition. Flinders University Open Door project has introduced a terrific opportunity for veterans wanting to further their education or other qualifications. This is being run by Assoc Professor Ben Wadham. Ben and his team are working with other countries that run similar projects and this liaison has resulted in a great exchange of information. It good to see the Academics having some understanding of what the Military and veterans and their families have to offer each other. In my time involved with ESOs I have found that the general public have little knowledge of what the Military is all about. The younger ones have no idea at all. We need to change that.

Earlier this month Professor Sharon Lawn from Flinders University presented a paper on Supporting your veteran or emergency service responder in help-seeking for mental health concerns. This was the first paper covering this topic released in this country. About 50 attended the launch with an estimated 120 on a webinar both Nationally and internationally. Professor Lawn has been instrumental with us and our initial introduction to the Flinders University and continues to assist us.

We find that the more we interact with the public and our younger veterans the more doors open to our future and that's the way we will continue to travel. We have also been talking to other progressive ESOs in ways that we can work with them and share the outcomes.

*Lee Bowes - Past President*



## 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

There is only one word to describe the Victorian Branch activities since the last Camaraderie - LOCKDOWN.

While we have been able to keep some things in motion by using the wonders of the internet the majority of Branch's day to day work has had to be curtailed pending the lifting of COVID restrictions.

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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

### DIARY DATES

Unfortunately COVID restrictions have meant that the remaining Branch Executive Committee meetings planned for 2021 could not occur. Meeting dates for 2022 will be advised to the Branch membership as soon as the Executive Committee are able to determine the 2022 diary.

The 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 although attendee numbers may be restricted due to ongoing COVID directions from Victoria's Chief Health Officer.

Those wishing to attend are requested to contact the Branch Secretary (Greg Powell) at least five business days prior to the meeting. Doing this will ensure that numbers do not exceed any COVID restrictions and that sufficient copies of the relevant meeting documents are available for all attendees.

### CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR AND BEYOND

The Executive Committee wish all Victorian members the very

best for the coming festive season and, COVID willing, a happy and prosperous 2022.

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

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA BRANCH

Patron:	The Honourable Kim C Beazley AC
President:	Richard Usher OAM
Vice President:	Max Ball
Secretary:	Allan Austin
Treasurer:	Lou Halvorson
Postal Address:	Irwin Barracks KARRAKATTA WA 6010
Telephone:	(08) 9383 4055 (Answering Machine A/H)
Office Hours:	Mon and Wed 1000 to 1400 hrs
Email:	wabranch@dfwa.org.au
Location:	Karrakatta Community House Matapau Road Irwin Barracks KARRAKATTA WA 6010

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 Kelvin Liddiard OAM,

Clair Bristow-Stagg and Mrs Joy Acol (aged 102).

### 2021 CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The annual Christmas lunch will be held on Thursday 9th December at the RAAFA facilities at Bull Creek. It is not too late to book, but please ring the Secretary on 9383 4055 or email to wabranch@dfwa.org.au asap to secure your places.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The well attended AGM was held in September and the following were elected: Richard Usher OAM (President), Max Ball (Vice President), Lou Halvorson (Treasurer), Allan Austin (Secretary), and committee members Mark Wainwright, Shirly Mooney OAM, Steve Lucks, Peter Billington, Robert Potts, Alan Long, Jeff Wake OAM and Kelvin Liddiard OAM. (Kelvin was keen to contribute, but alas that was not to be as he passed away shortly after the AGM).

### PRIVATE MILITARY MUSEUM

A visit was recently arranged for DFWA members to view the many hundreds of thousands of exhibits held in an extensive collection of military items, owned by Mr Pat Hall (ex-RAAF). The items are from all three services, and from many different countries. Historical items date back to before the Boer War and cover practically every campaign since.

After a couple of hours inspecting Pat's extremely impressive collection, members adjourned to the Swan Yacht Club for a convivial lunch and to spin a few 'warry' stories of their own.

*Richard Usher OAM - President, WA Branch*



Pat Hall (2nd from right) explaining the history and stories behind some of his exhibits.

# 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 polar fleece with DFWA embroidered badge. Size range XXL, XL, L, M, S.  
**\$40.00** including postage



**Zip Front Vest**  
Navy blue polar fleece 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	xxxxx		\$15.00	
4. DFWA Lapel Badge	xxxxx		\$5.00	
5. DFWA Polo Shirt	XXL, XL, L, M, S		\$36.00	
6. DFWA Cloth Badge	xxxxx		\$10.00	
7. Embroidered Patch	xxxxx		\$10.00	
8. DFWA Zip Front Jacket	XXL, XL, L, M, S		\$40.00	
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:**

Title ..... Initial ..... Surname .....

Address .....

..... State .....

Postcode ..... Phone .....

Email .....

**PAYMENT DETAILS:**

Internet Banking/Direct Debit:

Bank of QLD BSB 124 185 Account No: 10 480 398

Or enclose Cheque/Money Order: \$ .....

Signature: .....

Date: ...../...../.....

Continued from page 18

was formed consisting of Dawn Laing, Judith Rule and Annette Sadler. After a slow start, the stories started pouring in – enough to warrant the publication of a book. Big Sky Publishing agreed to publish the collection with the title ‘Here, There & Away’, and it proved to be a great success.

In 2016 the Group decided to follow the lead of the DWSG in Western Australia and to drop ‘support’ from its name. Since the changes to the work of the Volunteer Counsellors, the Group had struggled with exactly what form of support it could provide. Although It provided networking, referral, and informal support, it did not have trained Welfare Officers. The Group then became known as the Defence Widows Group (DWG).

Such a change also changed the dynamics within the Group. Whereas the DWSG consisted of a small group of Support Friends, the DWG consisted of everyone on the DWG list and anyone could attend the regular meetings. Support Friends became Contact Persons and they were responsible for maintaining contact with the widows on their individual list.

In 2018 Annette Sadler resigned from her positions of Convenor

of the DWG and Vice-President – Defence Widows on the National DFWA. Christine Lamb who had previously acted for Annette, was appointed Convenor. Being a former member of the WRANS (Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service), Christine has brought a new dimension to the role.

The activities of the Group continued as previously although the contacting of new widows became increasingly problematic. Because of privacy laws, the Group has always relied upon information in the public domain, namely funeral notices. However there has been a marked decrease in the number of notices which indicate military service. Added to this is the preference for unlisted mobile phones and, even when a new widow is identified, they can be difficult to contact. New widows are still joining the Group but it is concerned that some are being missed.

The members of the DWSG/DWG can be very proud of the contribution this Group has made to many hundreds of members of the Veteran community over the last 40 years. In many ways it has been a leader and one could rightly say “Mission Accomplished”. However, there is no doubt that there continues to be a place for the DWG to continue its good works.



## 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.



# OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families Counselling

> A service founded by Vietnam veterans,  
now for all veterans and families

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## SUPPORTING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

At Open Arms your wellbeing is our business.  
We offer free:

confidential counselling for individuals, couples and families  
group programs  
transition workshops  
peer networks  
suicide prevention training  
education, self-help resources, and more...

To get support or find out more call or visit:  
**1800 011 046 | [OpenArms.gov.au](http://OpenArms.gov.au)**



## SAFE ZONE SUPPORT

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**FREE ANONYMOUS COUNSELLING LINE**

**CALL 24/7: 1800 142 072**

Safe Zone Support's specialist  
counsellors understand the military and  
can offer help to veterans and their  
families without needing to know who  
you are.

Calls to 1800 142 072 are answered 24/7,  
and are not recorded.

For more information visit:  
**[OpenArms.gov.au/safe-zone-support](http://OpenArms.gov.au/safe-zone-support)**



**Defence  
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[defencebank.com.au](http://defencebank.com.au)  
1800 033 139



# The credit card that has tails wagging.

Introducing Australia's Defence Bank Foundation VISA Credit card. It's a win for members, a win for veterans and a win for specially-trained dogs like Bruce, whose handsome face appears on the card.

**3.99%**  
p.a.  
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- Up to 55 days interest free on purchases.
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- Additional cardholder at no extra cost.

Australia's Defence Bank Foundation supports the Defence Community Dogs' Program. It provides specially-trained assistance dogs to veterans living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Thanks to you, we'll donate half of the annual card fee every year to do what we can to serve those who protect us.

Find out why this credit card is getting tongues and tails wagging at [defencebank.com.au/creditcard](http://defencebank.com.au/creditcard)