



Australian Peacekeeper Peacemaker & Veterans' Association Inc. NSW Branch

2nd Edition

Newsletter

March 2010



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"Looking After Our Own"

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Hello and welcome to our second newsletter for the year, well it's been busy on the Home Front lately attending National and State Forums on behalf of all our APPVA members. For those of you who are travelling overseas on deployments with the ADF we wish you all the best and hope you have a speedy and safe return to Australia. To your immediate families and friends that are left behind whilst your on deployments don't forget contact your local APPVA Representative via our website: www.peacekeepers.asn.au and get updates to activities for both you and your children during these lonely times in your regional area within Australia. For those of us who don't have to endure the separation from our spouses and are out enjoying the luxuries of civilian life after discharging from the ADF I welcome you and your families to our second newsletter of the year. I would just like to mention the previous National President of APPVA Mr Paul Copeland OAM is now focusing on the Association Internationale des Soldats de la Paix (AISP) aka Soldiers of Peace International Association (SPIA). Paul's appointment to SPIA Australian President was made on 30 May 2008; with further Accreditation as the SPIA Oceania Representative on 29 Sep 2009.

SPIA Australia will be linked with the APPVA as an Affiliated body as agreed in Lyon, France on 29 Sep 2009. Therefore, all members of the APPVA are members of the SPIA. There is no additional membership fees required to be a member of SPIA Australia.

AISP/SPIA is a Category 1 Consulting Non-Government Organisation (NGO), which sits on the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the UN Office in Geneva and is influential in attaining UN Contracts for various operations ranging from:

- a. Humanitarian Development;
- b. Mine Action (Clearance, Awareness and Education); and
- c. Emergency Relief, Response and Recovery Operations.



ALLAN THOMAS
President, APPVA Inc. NSW

An AISP/SPIA Academy is being planned to be established in Lyon, France, where various courses will be made available in the future to qualify people who wish to participate in these various roles.

In Australia, Mr Copeland will be producing a Business Plan, along with establishing links with a number of Australian Government and Australian NGO, in order to network the skills of our members for particular contract work overseas. This is a Work in Place, with an online registration system to be introduced in the next 2 years. Once established, all APPVA Members will be made aware of the SPIA Oceania and Australia Capability for UN Contracts. Paul once again from the members of the NSW APPVA we wish you well in your new endeavours.

For those of you who live in Sydney Metropolitan areas or within reasonable distance the Defence and Veterans Organisation EXPO was held in Sydney's West (Penrith Paceway) on Saturday the 6 March 2010, which I believe was a great success for the greater veterans community and members of the Defence force. I would like to conclude by saying if anyone of our members wish to submit an article that may be of interest to our readers or wishing to get in touch with someone please forward articles and request directly to allanthomas64@hotmail.com for inclusion in our next newsletter, if you wish your name to be included in the please advise me via your article via email. I look forward to hearing from you in our next newsletter.

DEFENCE MEDIA RELEASE

MSPA 044/10 Wednesday, 24 February 2010

ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE SERVICES

Media reports today that Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel have been banned from storing semen prior to deployment are incorrect.

The Australian Defence Force provides Assisted Reproductive Services (ARS) to support families where there is an underlying medical reason for infertility.

Defence's current policy in relation to assisted reproduction services was introduced in March 2003.

This policy states that standard medical services for the baseline investigation of infertility will be provided to members at the ADF's expense.

With regard to specific ARS, those services covered by Medicare will be provided to the member at the ADF's expense. This includes general expenses associated with the treatments, such as anaesthetic fees, hospital expenses and gynaecologist fees.

Defence will cover both the Medicare fee and the gap for the specific ARS authorised by Joint Health Command. Defence will not fund any items not covered by Medicare.

ADF personnel who wish to store semen prior to deployment may do so at their own expense.

Sixty-one semen samples were stored during 2008 and 2009.

Some Health Officers approved 12 requests for semen freezing and storage for ADF members prior to deployment. This was not in line with the current Defence policy.

Ten samples were removed from storage in consultation with the relevant ADF personnel when they returned from deployment. Two samples will remain in storage in Darwin until the personnel return to Australia.

At that time the individuals will be given the option to have the sample destroyed or stored at their own expense.

It should also be emphasised that there are broader legal issues which must also be considered in regard to this issue.

This is a very sensitive matter and Defence continues to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and welfare of Defence personnel.

MEDIA RELEASE FROM MINISTER OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Dated 26th February 2010

NEW VETERANS' REVIEW BOARD HEAD

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin today announced that Doug Humphreys has been appointed as the Principal Member of the Veterans' Review Board for five years, beginning on 22 March.

The Veterans' Review Board is the first avenue of appeal for decisions about veteran's benefits and entitlements, after internal review options have been exhausted. Veterans' Review Board decisions can be appealed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Mr Humphreys is an experienced senior public servant with an extensive background in government tribunals. He is currently the Principal Registrar of the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal, a position he has held for the past six years. He is also an alternate member of the NSW Legal Aid Commission Board, and has served as an infantry officer in the Army Reserve since 1976.

"Mr Humphreys' service background combined with his legal expertise gives him a strong understanding of the unique nature of military service and his role in making decisions related to service," Mr Griffin said.

"Mr Humphreys has a strong network within the legal fraternity and across the Australian Public Service. The partnerships he formed with the Registrars and Heads of other Commonwealth Tribunals resulted in greater co-operation across each organisation.

"No doubt the benefits of such partnerships will

flow to the Veterans' Review Board."

The Veterans' Review Board is an independent tribunal that reviews decisions or determinations of the Repatriation and Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Commissions. The Veterans' Review Board also reviews determinations of the Service Chiefs of the Navy, Army and Air Force in relation to rehabilitation for serving members of the Defence Force.

Dated 26th February 2010

APPOINTMENT OF NEW REPATRIATION COMMISSIONER

Major General Mark Kelly AO, former Commander of Australian Forces in the Middle East, has been appointed as the new Repatriation Commissioner, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin announced today.

The Minister said the appointment of such a highly experienced and respected officer was a coup for the veteran community.

"At a time when significant numbers of Defence Force members are returning from deployment, having a Commissioner who understands their situation, has shared their experiences and in many cases commanded them, will help their transition from military to civilian life," Mr Griffin said.

"I am keen to improve the connection between the ADF and the Department of Veterans' Affairs and to better understand and support current and recently ex-serving members of the ADF, and I am confident Major General Kelly will help achieve this.

"I am certain that Australia's veteran community will welcome his appointment."

The Repatriation Commissioner is the services representative on the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and is appointed from nominations received from the ex-service community.

With the support of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Repatriation Commission delivers compensation, health care and other support to our current and former servicemen and women.

Major General Kelly graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1978 with the Sword of Honour and has since commanded at every level in the Australian Army. His operational experience includes service with the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, Chief of

Staff of INTERFET during Operation Stabilise in East Timor, and Commander Joint Task Force 633 in the Middle East Area of Operations and Afghanistan, concluding on 15 January this year. His five-year appointment as Repatriation Commissioner begins on 1 July 2010, when the current Commissioner retires.

"My thanks go to outgoing Repatriation Commissioner Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO (Retd) who has provided outstanding service during his period as Commissioner. It has been a privilege to work with such a highly regarded and genuine leader who has demonstrated dedication and compassion in helping the men and women of the defence and veteran community," Mr Griffin said.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASES MARCH 2010

Dated 1st March 2010

Australian appointed as the Senior Military Advisor to the Afghanistan Defence Minister. The Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, today announced the appointment of Major General Ash Power, AM, CSC, to a senior position within the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF). Senator Faulkner also took the opportunity to welcome Angus Campbell back to Defence on promotion to Major General.

Greg Combet, Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, today launched the electronic update of the 2009 Public Defence Capability Plan (DCP). The first update of the Public Defence Capability Plan 2009, which lists major capital equipment proposals that are currently planned for Government consideration over the next few years, is now available on Defence websites, Mr Combet said. Specific changes to the Public Defence Capability Plan can be found at www.defence.gov.au/dmo.

Chief of the Defence Force Welcomes the ADF's Future Leaders. The Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, today welcomed 330 midshipmen and officer cadets into the Australian Defence Force Academy at the annual Chief of the Defence Force Parade. You join, and will inevitably go on to lead, some of the finest people in this country, and it is with great pride that I welcome you into the Academy, and into the wider Australian Defence Force

(ADF) community.

1 March 2010. Australian Army turns 109. The newly formed Commonwealth Government created the Department of Defence on 1 March 1901. It was from this time that the Australian Army came into being.

Dated 2nd March 2010

Minister welcomes Navy moves to update battle honours. Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, says Navy's decision to revise and update campaign and battle honours awarded to Royal Australian Navy (RAN) units is an historic milestone. The Royal Australian Navy places a high priority on remembering those people, ships and units which have played their part in protecting the nation and I am sure that veterans and serving members will be delighted, Senator Faulkner said.

Boss Lift to Solomon Islands reinforces benefits of employing Reservists. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, today announced that twenty employers of Defence Reservists will travel to the Solomon Islands today (Monday, 1 March) as part of Exercise Boss Lift a Defence program designed to encourage employer support for the Reserves. As the ADF's commitments grow, Reserves are bringing increased levels of capability to Australia's Defence Force and this experience can flow directly to the civilian workplace, Dr Kelly said.

Dated 3rd March 2010

The Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, today met with East Timors Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Julio Tomas Pinto, reinforcing the relationship between Australia and East Timor.

Identification of Fromelles fallen begins.

Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, Greg Combet, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, welcomed the commencement of this important process. The identification of the remains is an extremely complex process involving the review of anthropological, archaeological, historical and DNA information, Mr Combet said.

Memorial Service for AHS Centaur. A large screen enabled the public to view the service from outside the cathedral. Issued by Ministerial Support and Public Affairs, Department of Defence.

Joint approach to stabilise and rebuild Afghanistan. Working together, the Department of

Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), AusAID, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF), are improving security, governance and development in Oruzgan Province. The ADF and Australian Government representatives are delivering projects that are improving the lives of the Afghan people.

African Union International Symposium to enhance the Protection of Civilians in Conflict Zones. Dr Mike Kelly is attending an international symposium on the Protection of Civilians in Conflict Zones in Addis Ababa from 3-5 March 2010. The symposium is being convened by the African Union and supported by the Australian Government. Dr Kelly and Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union Commission will deliver the keynote addresses.

You're Say

Article One

The Governance of Australian Government Superannuation Schemes Bill 2010 (the Bill) gives effect to the Government's announcement in October 2008 to merge the Australian Reward Investment Alliance (ARIA), the Military Superannuation and Benefits Board (MSB Board) and the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Authority (DFRDB Authority) to form a single trustee body from 1 July 2010. The Bill is part of a package of three Bills giving effect to Government decisions in 2008 and 2009 to modernise Australian Government superannuation and establish governance arrangements for the Commonwealth superannuation schemes that are effective and more consistent with the broader superannuation industry.

Article Two

DIGGERS MISS OUT ON CHANCE TO HAVE A FAMILY

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Personnel and Assisting Shadow Minister for Defence, Bob Baldwin, today said that reports that access to assisted reproductive services (ARS) for Diggers would be limited will further hurt the morale of personnel.

‘Those men that are putting their lives on the front line in Afghanistan deserve to have peace of mind that if they are killed or severely wounded, that their family bloodline does not end with them on the battlefield and that their partners may still be able to have children,’ Mr Baldwin said.

Mr Baldwin said that this was just another unnecessary hit on the morale of the men and women of the Australian Defence Force. ‘The Rudd Labour Government puts out a lot of rhetoric about being family friendly and yet for a very small cost, as compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars wasted on dodgy home insulation, the failed Fuel Watch and Grocery Choice programs, it could have made a real investment in Defence families,’ Mr Baldwin said.

‘According to reports in News Limited Papers today, the storage of semen costs about \$275 for the initial freeze and about \$175 for every six months of storage thereafter.’ ‘The failed Grocery Watch program wasted at least \$10m alone, which could have provided this ARS service for over 22,000 Defence families.’

Mr Baldwin said that this small amount of funding would not only give Diggers piece of mind, but would also pay dividends by way of increased support from their family for their continuing service in the ADF.

‘It is a long accepted truth in the modern military that while you recruit the soldier, you need to retain the family,’ Mr Baldwin said.

‘A short sighted decision like this will no doubt have a negative impact on the ADF’s recruitment and retention numbers, and the costs of recouping that shortfall will more than likely outweigh the short term ‘savings’ of this erroneous policy.’

Mr Baldwin said that Australia’s diggers are putting their lives on the line and sacrificing some fundamental human rights in the process and therefore deserved certain non-financial benefits.

‘In this instance, I believe that the Rudd Labour Government should extend its support of assisted reproductive services, not reduce it.’

Article Three

KMART'S ANZAC DAY APPLICATION SPARKS ANGER

Kmart has angered RSL groups after seeking

special legal permission to open its doors before 1pm on Anzac Day. In an application to the NSW government, the retail giant claimed Australians were accustomed to 24-hour trading and regarded shopping as an "important leisure activity", the *Daily Telegraph* reported.

"Kmart submits that there is a desire within the community to see our stores open before 1pm on Anzac Day," the application said.

"Customers who are used to being able to shop at any time would potentially be severely inconvenienced by our closure. In short, they would not be able to obtain necessity items when they want."

The move has infuriated RSL groups who argue Anzac Day should be preserved as a sacred time to remember the fallen. "We're totally opposed — surely to God they can take a morning off to commemorate Anzac Day," RSL President Don Rowe told the newspaper. "That is what it is about, it is not about business."

Kmart has also applied to open on Easter Sunday and Boxing Day for the next three years.

MEDIA RELEASE FROM MINISTER OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Dated 18th February 2010

RED TAPE CUT FOR VETERANS AND ADF PERSONNEL

The red tape facing Australia’s most disabled ex-serving personnel accessing income support has been cut in new changes announced today by the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Alan Griffin.

Minister Griffin said that from March 2010, veteran pensioners assessed as totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) would be exempt from Centrelink medical reviews to access a Disability Support Pension.

“Since coming to Government we have sought to reduce the barriers facing veterans and injured ex-serving personnel seeking compensation and income support,” the Minister said.

“We established an Interdepartmental Working Group to simplify the bureaucratic maze facing veterans and ex-serving personnel, making it easier for them to access their entitlements and streamlining arrangements across agencies.

“Today’s announcement immediately assists around 1100 veterans on a Centrelink Disability Support Pension and has the potential to benefit many more into the future.

“Currently TPI pensioners undergo repeated Job Capacity Assessments to access and retain their Disability Support Pension. Our TPI pensioners have already been through a rigorous assessment process to access their DVA benefits so making them go through a similar process to access Centrelink benefits is unreasonable.”

Today’s announcement builds on a range of initiatives introduced since the election, including expanding acceptance the ADF Identification Card as Proof of Identity by more government agencies and compiling the ADF Transition Handbook, which lists all interdepartmental benefits and support services available to separating ADF members.

DVA and Centrelink are also sharing data to help reduce the risk of overpayments for the more than 17,500 pensioners on both DVA and Centrelink payments.

Mr Griffin said the inter-agency co-operation under this Government was creating smarter ways to deliver “whole-of-government” services.

“I am pleased with our progress to date but more will be done in our efforts to support our veterans and defence personnel,” Mr Griffin said.

The AAPVA Past President and National Treasurer meet Prime Minister Kevin Rudd



REPATRIATION MEDICAL AUTHORITY WEBSITE UPDATE

12 January 2010

At the meeting of 9 December 2009, the RMA

- Determined Statements of Principles (SoPs) for:
- tension-type headache (1 & 2 of 2010)
- herpes simplex (3 & 4 of 2010)
- human immunodeficiency virus (5 & 6 of 2010)
- human t-cell lymphotropic virus type-1 (7 & 8 of 2010)

These SoPs revoke the SoPs previously determined for these conditions.

All of the above SoPs will take effect from 13 January, 2010.

N.B. – This concludes the previously advertised investigations into:

- » tension-type headache
- » herpes simplex
- » human immunodeficiency virus
- » human t-cell lymphotropic virus type-1

- decided to advertise the following investigations:
- rapidly progressive crescentic glomerulonephritis
- myeloma
- spondylolisthesis & spondylolysis (focussed review)

The Investigation Notices for these investigations will appear in the Government Notices Gazette of 13 January, 2010.