



AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION

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Australian Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association

Subject: PROPOSAL TO THE APPA FOR YOUNGER VETERAN ISSUES TO BE RATIFIED

Aim

The aim of this paper is to convince the reader to review and determine support for the issues that I propose, for the Younger Veteran of today to both Government and Ex-Service Organisations. This is in the hope for these organisations to consider, approve, support and lobby these issues as veteran issues to the Government. The evidence provided has been researched by myself, and if requested by any one I will provide a copy of my Summary of ADF "Peacekeeping & Peacemaking Deployments since 1947".

Background

To date, Australia has almost 40,000 ADF personnel who have deployed to **38 Peacekeeping or Peacemaking missions to 41 Countries** around the world. This figure is regularly increasing to 1750 service personnel every six months on various missions around the world; this is not including the War on Afghanistan (which is 1550). Unfortunately, 350 personnel have been killed (including Korean figures (339) – the residual is 11), and many more wounded. The missions range from "Non-Hazardous" or Peacekeeping (Schedule 3 of the Veteran Entitlement Act (VEA)), through to Operational/War like missions (Schedule 2 of the VEA). Currently, there are only eight missions listed on the VEA Schedule 2, with EAST TIMOR and now AFGHANISTAN to be added.

The "Non-Hazardous" missions are categorised as equivalent for Defence Service in Australia under Schedule 3, in that they have to prove the Balance of Probabilities requiring a great deal of documented evidence. Defence Service in Australia surely does not hold equilibrium to Peacekeeping Service Overseas? The simple fact is that all Medical records of these peacekeeping missions were and are kept at the Contingent HQ and the troops are vastly deployed across the country of mission, sometimes in teams of 3 or in a lot of cases on their own with UN Observers at Team Sites, Observation Posts (OP) or on top of hills on their own without adequate protection.

The Prime Minister's Media Release on Veterans' Proposals

The current Government (John Howard's Government) released a statement for the intended Coalition and ALP Plan for Veterans' Entitlements, should they be re-elected in the upcoming election on 10th November 2001.

My interpretation of the release is that it appears to acknowledge service after WWII if you are 70 years old, with the concerns raised for some ex-servicemen and women who perhaps served in BCOF, British Atomic Testing in Australia; some WWII veterans; The Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) (Counter Terrorism (CT) and Special Recovery Operations (SRO)); War Widow Income Supplement to be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Male Timed Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE); and VEA entitlement anomalies. The program is to be known as **"Supporting Those Who Served"**.

Whilst this may appear progressive to the veteran community (which is appreciated), it is lacking some fundamental areas for the Younger Veteran of today, that have mainly been deployed on Operations since 1947 (Peace Monitoring), with intense, increased tempo of the deployment of ADF assets since 1989 (NAMIBIA), up until the current operations that Australian Defence Force Personnel now serve within the Middle East (UNTSO), Bosnia, the Multinational Force & Observers (MFO) Sinai - Arab Republic of EGYPT, Mozambique, Solomon Islands, Bougainville and EAST TIMOR – with the recent AFGHANISTAN mission.

Although it is reported that a Policy Statement should be released by the PM soon outlining other proposals, it appears that the Veteran and other Policy and Departmental responsibilities are sadly lacking improvement of entitlements to the younger veteran of today and those who continue to serve this country.

Proposed Younger Veteran Issues

Issues of concern that I would like to have raised with Government and ESOs are the following:

1. Post 1975 Honours & Awards Review with APPA Involvement.

Motion: I Propose that the APPA actively lobbies the Government for a comprehensive review of the Post 1975 Honours and Awards System of various deployments made by the ADF, with APPA involvement.

Comment: It is requested that the Government particularly include the awarding of the Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) to the Australian Contingent RWANDA (1994-1995); the Australian Service Medal (ASM) to RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE for the Australian Contingent to the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF Rhodesia); in 1979; a Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) Medal struck for OPERATION BEL-ISI in Bougainville (1996 to present); the ASM for the Australian Contingent to the South Pacific Peacekeeping Force (SPPKF) (circa 1990); the Awarding of the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal (HOSM) to ADF DACC tasks in the South West Pacific region with a minimum of seven days service.

There are many more in a draft submission that my Association (Australian Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association (APPA)), have constructed. I believe that the APPA should be instrumentally involved with any such government or ESO review of the Honours and Awards review committee.

2. Schedule 3 Review for Peacekeeping Service.

Motion: I propose that a full review of Peacekeeping Service under Schedule 3 to the VEA is initiated by the APPA to Government.

Comment: The problem is that ADF Missions under Schedule 3 were in dangerous places such as: The Middle East (1948 to the present); Kashmir (1950 – 1966); Western Sahara (1991-1994); and the RSL Awarded mission of Rwanda (1994-1995) – there are many more. The problem with Schedule 3 is that the veterans are unable to be treated like War Veterans, as they have been determined as "Non-Hazardous" missions. Some of the **Hazards** on "Non-Hazardous" missions experienced by these service personnel is: placed into a Civil War to keep the peace (or deployed to a war zone); witnessing mass killings, exhumation of mass graves, recovering decomposed bodies and genocide; Mines (some countries have over 1 million mines that are unmarked), disease (Malaria has been contracted by many service personnel in Bougainville over the past 5 years); abducted, imprisoned and beaten for exchange of favouritism or money from the United Nations; being caught in cross fire with opposing factions; and very restricted Rules of Engagement (ROE). The effect is, that it is believed that the Rwandan mission alone has up to 200 veterans on T&PI out of the 635 that served there, just 6-7 years after that deployment. This has a high risk potential impacting Veteran Resources for the Treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The number of ill and wounded younger veterans is increasing, with young veterans under Schedule 3 of the VEA, averaging (approximation) in age of 30-35 years old. How can they survive financially, especially with a young family? There is

no entitlement to Service Pensions and other Schedule 2 benefits. This situation questions the Government of Australia when these young people return to Australia with a limited support and later in life is offered, for their service of peace and their country, only T&PI without additional entitlements.

3. **Australian War Memorial Peacekeeping Display.**

Motion: I propose that the National APPA approach the Australian War Memorial (AWM), to facilitate a consultative working group with the RSL and APPA as to the standard of the Peacekeeping Display within the AWM.

Comment: From what many veterans and I have observed in visits to the AWM THIS YEAR, there is a poor representation of Peacekeeping, in which individual missions need to have its own separate representation, medals, honours, mission statement, maps, and display. Each mission is unique with varying hazards. The current Display basically places all missions since 1947 into a corner without much detail, leaving the veterans of other missions disappointed as their service has not been appropriately recognised or explained in detail for the education of all who visit the AWM. This may be overcome by dialogue with the APPA, who have a vast array of veterans that have served in many missions.

4. **AWM listing of Peacekeeper & Peacemaker deaths.**

Motion: That the National APPA approach the AWM and lobby to have the names of ADF personnel who have died on Service Overseas to be placed onto the honour roll of the dead - the centre piece of the AWM.

Comment: There are approximately 11 Peacekeepers/Peacemakers killed in all parts of the world. One of our members was advised by an AWM Customer Service Officer last month (September 2001), the reason that the deceased were not on the honour roll is that the missions were not under Australian Command. If this is AWM Policy, I then question the Boer War (British Command), WWI (Gallipoli - British Command (along with Indian and British Troops on all points of the Peninsula, The Western Front - British Command), the Pacific Campaign in WWII, as it was commanded by McArthur (US), The European Campaign (Commanded by UK, with the USA), Korea (Commanded by the UN), Borneo/Malaya (By the UK (British Commonwealth)), Vietnam (Overall commanded by the US) etc.

This is clearly an insult to those service personnel who have died **In the Service of Peace** and their families. The 11 names of the dead can be forwarded by me, which I have conducted some research, however there maybe more precise documents within the Department of Defence.

5. **AWM Veteran and Mission computerised listing of all Peacekeeping and Peacemaking Missions.**

Motion: I propose that the APPA approach the AWM to rectify this anomaly for younger veterans and ask why the names of all personnel who have served in missions since 1947 have not been placed on the AWM Honour Roll (Computerised).

Comment: The East Timor Campaign has been listed and continues to be updated each 6 month rotation (1200 names biannually), however apparently all the other missions since 1947 have been "Classified". Again, an insult to our intelligence that does not support the Younger Veterans' deeds in the Service of International Peace and Security, whilst risking their lives.

6. **Younger Veteran Health and Morbidity Study.**

Motion: I propose that the APPA lobby the Government, with ESO support, for A Younger Veteran Health Study and Morbidity Study to collect Medical and Psychological data for those who have now discharged from the service, is needed to identify past, present and future illnesses.

Comment: It is acknowledged that the Current incumbent government has surveyed some 1700 Gulf War and other Veterans in a similar program. However, this I suggest is skimming the surface. There have been approximately 40,000 ADF personnel deployed to many parts of the world since 1947 - 1700 personnel does not give a conclusive medical/psychological analysis, compared to the remaining 38,700 veterans with increasing numbers of 1700 bi-annually and the 1550 committed to AFGHANISTAN when they return.

7. Renaming of the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service.

***Motion:* I propose that a review into the naming of the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service (VVCS) to reflect ALL Veterans.**

Comment: Although the VVCS, which is managed by DVA, provides an excellent service after the successful lobbying of the VVAA some 20 years ago (which is an achievement worth applauding), however, I think it is time to start accommodating the new generation of veteran, which will soon eclipse the amount of Vietnam Veterans (55,000).

The VVCS provides a service for Peacekeepers & Peacemakers, however the Heart Health and the Children of Vietnam Vets programs are only for Vietnam Veterans, which resulted after a morbidity study commissioned by DVA, recommended these programs (Younger vets were not given the opportunity for participation in the study). The name "Vietnam" does in fact deter a lot of the younger vets, although Vietnam Veterans are highly respected, the Younger Veteran are none the wiser (especially when they are 19 + years old), when they read the 4 brochures that have been distributed to the Veteran Community. The younger veteran also feels that the VVCS are unaware of the conditions of the younger veteran compared to Vietnam, Korean, Malayan, Borneo and WWII veterans.

8. Educating the Australian Public of ALL Peacekeeping & Peacemaking Missions.

***Motion:* I propose the RSL with ESO support, and the DVA commence an education program to educate the Australian Public of ALL Peacekeeping & Peacemaking Missions since 1947.**

Comment: This is not just the favourite 1 or 2 (Gulf War and East Timor conflicts), but the whole gambit of Peacekeeping & Peacemaking operations since 1947. This proposal is not restrictive and should also include the Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) being educated themselves. That way a better understanding may be achieved, rather than dispersions of "non-combatant" being cast on the Peacekeeper, which is currently happening in many within the Veteran Community, ESOs and RSLs.

9. Certificate of Appreciation of Service issued by the Australian Government.

***Motion:* I propose the APPA, through the ESO community, actively lobby the DVA to have this anomaly ratified, in order for all service personnel to be recognised for their efforts in various operations and peacetime service.**

Comment: your local Member of Parliament issues *The Certificate of Appreciation for Service*. Presently, the certificates are awarded to anyone who has served in WWI up to the Vietnam War. There is **no** recognition whatsoever by the Government for those who have served in small to major operations since 1947. This displays a distinct disparagement for recognition of service and the deeds of those Australian service personnel who have served.

10. Recognition of Special Operations Circa 1959, by the Australian Government, for VEA entitlements and appropriate recognition.

Motion: I propose that the APPA, through the ESO community, actively lobby the Government to have the ADF Personnel who have participated in Special Operations since 1959, to be given VEA entitlements and appropriate recognition.

Comment: To date, many veterans and ex-service personnel have not been identified under any Schedules of the VEA for entitlements to their service. Due to the Secrecy of these operations, it has been made difficult to trace these personnel's deployments in support of other Government Agencies, Covert Operations in cooperation with other countries, Intelligence gathering and deployed as Operatives of Australia. These people at best, have extreme difficulty in proving where they were and what they were doing, because the work was classified Top Secret with a Caveat. These people are ADF Intelligence personnel, communications and Electronic Warfare operators, Special Forces and Defence Civilians.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gents of the APPA, I believe that I have perhaps asked for a great deal of support from the organisation in the 10 issues of this proposal, however I am sure that you will agree with me that these issues are clearly missing from any Political Party's agenda for Veterans' Affairs. I have raised these issues in the hope that the Government, RSL and ESOs, will support the younger veteran of today, **and protect the Peacekeeper** if or when the **"Supporting Those Who Served"** Project is launched. Any review or decision by the Government and the RSL is requested to be made by interactive consultation with the **APPA**, as we were the ones that were there, and have a focal point of contact network, with extensive knowledge of Peacekeeper & Peacemaker issues.

The Younger Veteran of today is very proud to have represented our country by serving in 41 countries for "The Service of Peace" in Hazardous environments. I hope that the People and Government of Australia will look after the Peacekeeper & Peacemaker appropriately.

Paul Copeland
State Secretary,
Victorian Branch.