



Australian Peacekeeper

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2011

**Australia's
Victoria
Cross**

**Lighting the
way for
Afghanistan**

PLUS

HMAS Sydney

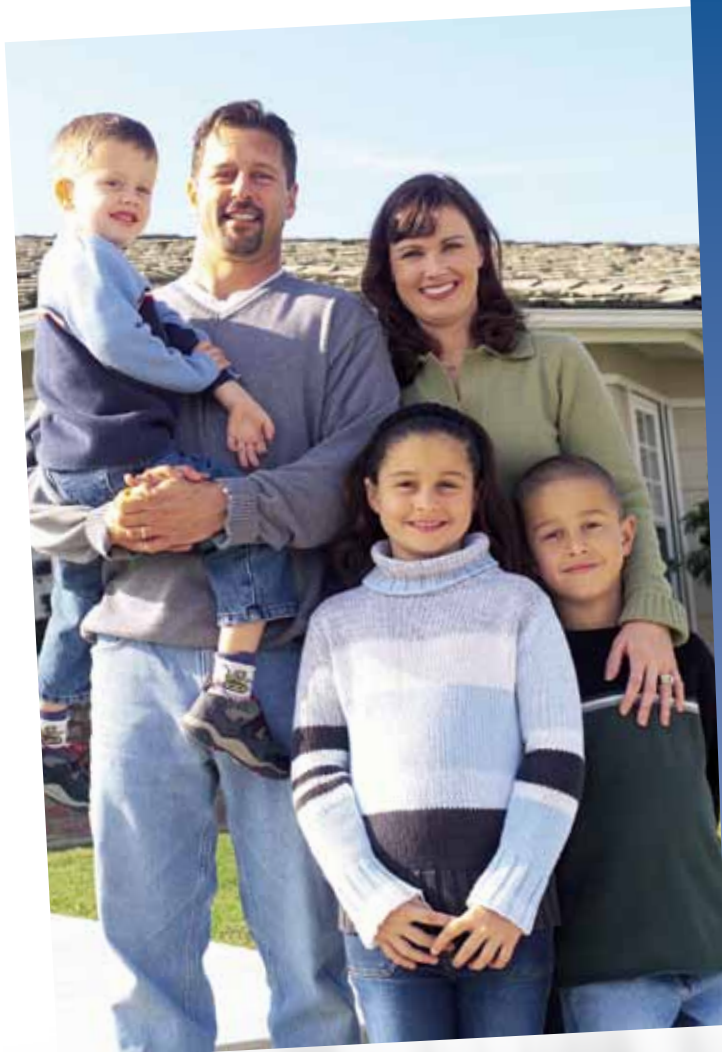
Dents in the Soul

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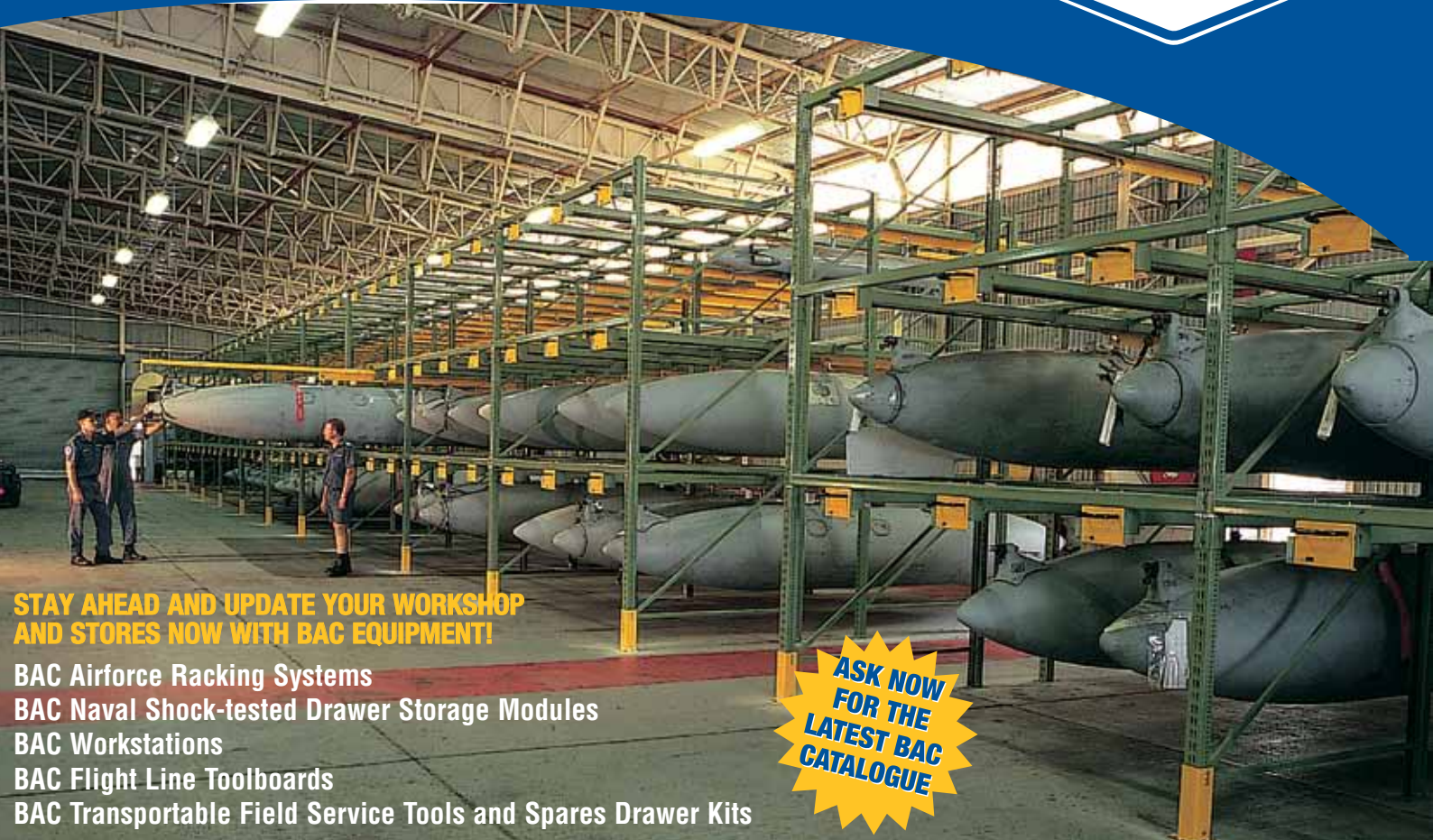
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Letters to the Editor

Thank you

Thanks Allan (Thomas) for this email.

You hit the nail right on the head and we as the APPVA should have made public comment on this matter by now. The situation described in The Australian is not unusual and there have been a number of cases fielded in Victoria of the outcomes being zero compensation, due to the Offsetting Arrangements within the Consequential Transitional Provisions Act 2004 (CTPA 2004). This affects our membership and constituency and to be seen not doing anything will lose our credibility as a Young Veteran ESO, standing up for the rights of our members and constituents.

Our Submission in relation to the Military Compensation Arrangements Review is very detailed, and calls for streamlining of the Compensation Acts to effect the most beneficial outcome to the veteran, as well as dropping the age, sex and Service discrimination within the Guide to the Assessment Rate of Pension MRCA (GARP M).

The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (MRCC) has the power to modify the GARP M, which should see an end to this needless heart-ache for our injured or wounded veterans – no matter where they serve.

When I was on the ESO Working Group for the MRCA, it was unequivocally stated from the beginning and continually reminded during the course of the Working Group's life that there will be no detriment to those who serve post 1 July 2004, in comparison to those who served from 1973 up to and including 30 June 2004. So far, this has been taken on face value as a lie by Government Bureaucrats to appease the veteran community at the time.

The usual statement followed after the Senate Inquiry into the new Military Compensation Bill of 2003 – "This Government has extensively consulted with the Ex-service Community...."

They will use the above every time. Time for affirmative action by this Association.

Paul Copeland
Immediate Past President APPVA

5/7 RAR Assoc Reunion 2012

Just a reminder we are going to have a National Reunion on ANZAC Day in Sydney next year 2012 after the march we will have a quick AGM then get on with the celebrations.

There will be some prizes to win and may be some gifts for those that attend.

So put it in your diary for next year it should be a great day.

Cheers

Ross Langford
National President
5/7 RAR Association
<http://www.57rar.asn.au/>

Greyhound Syndicate

The greyhound is a current race dog called complete madness 39 starts, 10 wins, 13 placings.

The company is called greyhoundsyndications.com The owner is named Warren Owen 0433 813 513 email: info@greyhoundsyndications.com and he has given the APPVA 5% worth \$350.00 as of today.

Any money that this dog makes from racing will go to the APPVA as a donation, it may only be a few hundred, however it does help and we may have some with him by having a few bets, I get some good tips from this bloke so any one interest please give me call. 0438 415 211

Also this dog is still young and should race another 60 races yet unless he gets injured. Which means he will still a few yet. He is based in Victoria.

Please pass this email to anyone interested in purchasing some shares in greyhounds at good prices, the APPVA members could even start their own syndicate.

Ray Mitchell JP
Central coast Advocate NSW
0438 415 211

United Nations Association Of Australia, Qld Inc.

Dear Mr Traill,

Some years ago the Queensland Branch of the United Nations Association arranged for a memorial tree and plaque to be located in Anzac Square, Brisbane as an acknowledgement of the service given by Peacekeepers.

Last year APPVA - South Queensland invited the UNAA Qld to arrange a Peacekeepers Service on UN International Day to recognise Peacekeepers and this was held in two parts.

1. A march led by the Austrian Army Band from King George Square to Anzac Square .
2. A Service at Anzac Square including the laying of wreaths by Members of Parliament, Consuls and guests.

This year UNAA Qld is again arranging a service in Brisbane to be held on 29 May following the lines of the service held last year from 10am -11am.

I am writing to you for two reason. Firstly, as a matter of courtesy to let you now that Professor Major General John Pearn AO, RFD, Patron AAPVA, has kindly accepted our invitation to attend and will make a presentation. Secondly, you may wish to advertise this service through the media and that yourself and/or members of your Association may be visiting Brisbane at that time – all members, family and friends would be very welcome to join us on this occasion.

Virginia Balmain President Qld
United Nations Association of Australia, Qld Inc.
P O Box 244, NEW FARM Q 4005

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From the Editor's Desk

Hello and welcome to the 'Peacekeeper' magazine for 2011. I hope you liked the look of the last edition with the new layout.

I am looking for articles from APPVA members, advertisers, friends or family members. Photos, book reviews, film reviews, stories, poems, jokes and anything you think would be of interest to our members are all welcome for inclusion in 'Peacekeeper'. Remember, it's your magazine.

If you would like to tell members and subscribers about something that's not right or unfair...or let them know about something fantastic, send your email with 'Letters to the Editor' in the subject line. Email your correspondence to: editor@peacekeepers.asn.au

A note on the size of the magazine, this is dictated by the number of advertisers that we have sold advertising space to. If any member knows of a company, big or small that is interested in advertising in the 'Peacekeeper' let myself know by dropping me a line.

I have some fantastic books to give away from our friends at Big Sky Publishing. The best photo, story, joke or poem will win a book prize. Remember to put your name and address with your articles or photo. www.bigskypublishing.com.au

A big welcome to our new Publishers: K&R Publishing is owned & operated by father & daughter Reg & Kylie Allen.

K&R Publishing produce the GO55s Seniors Newspaper, which has been in circulation for four years.

Kylie also has her own company Borderline Publishing Pty Ltd where for the last 14 years she produces the Duty Served Bulletin the Official Journal of the Injured Service Persons Association Inc.

Reg's company Flight Publishing Pty Ltd produces the Wings Journal for the RAAF Association and has done so for the last 17 years. Flight Publishing also produces the HATS Journal, Helping All That Served for the last 7 years.

Kylie & Reg are looking forward to producing the first of many Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association Journal.

Contact details K&R Publishing 02 9389 6387 or kylie@go55s.com.au PO Box 1269 Bondi Junction NSW 1355

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Cheers Gordon Traill Editor



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Australian Army Awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia





Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith, VC, MG

Citation

For the most conspicuous gallantry in action in circumstances of extreme peril as Patrol Second-in-Command, Special Operations Task Group on Operation SLIPPER.

Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in 1996. After completing the requisite courses, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment where he saw active service in East Timor. In January 2003, he successfully completed the Australian Special Air Service Regiment Selection Course.

During his tenure with the Regiment, he deployed on Operation VALIANT, SLATE, SLIPPER, CATALYST and SLIPPER II. Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith was awarded the Medal for Gallantry for his actions in Afghanistan in 2006.

On the 11th June 2010, a troop of the Special Operations Task Group conducted a helicopter assault into Tizak, Kandahar Province, in order to capture or kill a senior Taliban commander.

Immediately upon the helicopter insertion, the troop was engaged by machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire from multiple, dominating positions. Two soldiers were wounded in action and the troop was pinned down by fire from three machine guns in an elevated fortified position to the south of the village. Under the cover of close air support, suppressive small arms and machine gun fire, Corporal Roberts-Smith and his patrol manoeuvred to within 70 metres of the enemy position in order to neutralise the enemy machine gun positions and regain the initiative.

With the members of his patrol still pinned down by the three enemy machine gun positions, he exposed his own position in order to draw fire away from his patrol

Upon commencement of the assault, the patrol drew very heavy, intense, effective and sustained fire from the enemy position. Corporal Roberts-Smith and his patrol members fought towards the enemy position until, at a range of 40 metres, the weight of fire prevented further movement forward. At this point, he identified the opportunity to exploit some cover provided by a small structure.

As he approached the structure, Corporal Roberts-Smith identified an insurgent grenadier in the throes of engaging his patrol. Corporal Roberts-Smith instinctively engaged the insurgent at point-blank range resulting in the death of the insurgent. With the members of his patrol still pinned down by the three enemy machine gun positions, he exposed his own position in order to draw fire away from

his patrol, which enabled them to bring fire to bear against the enemy. His actions enabled his Patrol Commander to throw a grenade and silence one of the machine guns. Seizing the advantage, and demonstrating extreme devotion to duty and the most conspicuous gallantry, Corporal Roberts-Smith, with a total disregard for his own safety, stormed the enemy position killing the two remaining machine gunners.

His act of valour enabled his patrol to break-in to the enemy position and to lift the weight of fire from the remainder of the troop who had been pinned down by the machine gun fire. On seizing the fortified gun position, Corporal Roberts-Smith then took the initiative again and continued to assault enemy positions in depth during which he and another patrol member engaged and killed further enemy. His acts of selfless valour directly enabled his troop to go on and clear the village of Tizak of Taliban. This decisive engagement subsequently caused the remainder of the Taliban in Shah Wali Kot District to retreat from the area.

Corporal Roberts-Smith's most conspicuous gallantry in a circumstance of extreme peril was instrumental to the seizure of the initiative and the success of the troop against a numerically superior enemy force. His valour was an inspiration to the soldiers with whom he fought alongside and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Personal biography

Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith, VC, MG

Benjamin Roberts-Smith was born in Perth on 1 November 1978.

He enlisted in the Australian Army on 11 November 1996. He completed his training at the School of Infantry, Singleton, New South Wales. In 1997, Corporal Roberts Smith was posted to the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) where he served as a Rifleman in C Company, before advancing on to be a section commander in Direct Fire Support Weapons platoon.

During his tenure with 3RAR, Corporal Roberts Smith deployed twice as part of the Rifle Company Butterworth Malaysia, and conducted two operational tours of East Timor including INTERFET in 1999.

In 2003, Corporal Roberts-Smith completed the SASR selection course and was selected to commence the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) reinforcement cycle. On completion of the reinforcement cycle, he was posted to 3 Squadron, where he served as a member of the Tactical Assault Group West and the Contingency Squadron.

While with 3 Squadron, Corporal Roberts Smith was a member of a number of training and assistance teams throughout South East Asia. He was deployed on operations to Fiji in 2004, and has also deployed on Recovery Operations, as well as a number of personnel security detachments in Iraq throughout 2005/2006.

2006 saw Corporal Roberts Smith deployed as part of the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) in Afghanistan



where he was subsequently awarded the Medal for Gallantry. He was again deployed with the SOTG in Afghanistan in 2007, and on his return was posted to Operational Support Squadron as a member of the Selection Wing where he took part in the training of SASR Reinforcements.

In 2009, Corporal Roberts Smith was then posted to 2 Squadron where he deployed as a patrol second in command to Afghanistan. Upon his return, Corporal Roberts Smith completed the SASR Patrol Commanders Course, and in 2010 was again deployed with the SOTG in Afghanistan. For his actions carried out within Tizak, Afghanistan, he was invested by Her Excellency the Governor General of Australia at Campbell Barracks, Perth on 23 January 2011.

Corporal Roberts Smith is currently posted to the Special Air Service Regiment. He is married to Emma, and they are the proud parents of 5 month old twin girls, Eve and Elizabeth.

(previous page) Cpl Mark Donaldson VC congratulating Cpl Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC, MG on receiving his VC

(left) Cpl Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC, MG with his daughters Elizabeth & Eve after receiving his VC.

(below) Mr Keith Payne VC, Cpl Mark Donaldson VC and Cpl Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC, MG



Diggers wounded more than once denied compo



Veteran army sergeant 'Robert', who was denied compensation for injuries sustained in Afghanistan, at home yesterday. Picture: Aaron Francis Source: The Australian

Story By: Jare Owens
The Australian

Veteran army sergeant 'Robert', who was denied compensation for injuries sustained in Afghanistan, at home yesterday. Picture: Aaron Francis Source: The Australian SOLDIERS who suffer repeated wounds or injury on frontline service, including in Afghanistan, are being denied compensation under a government scheme.

The grouped assessment used by the Department of Veterans Affairs means that points allocated to a previous wound or injury can cancel out those for a later one. Diggers who have already been compensated for being hurt in a war zone face the prospect of being turned down if they are injured again on their return to active duty.

Lawyers for defence personnel affected by the anomaly are launching legal appeals against the government to secure payouts for them.

One veteran army sergeant, who would be identified only as Robert, was denied compensation for shoulder and elbow injuries sustained in Afghanistan when his claim was offset against an earlier one for back and knee damage.

He is mystified why the department insists on grouping the injuries under the points system introduced in 2004.

"My right forearm still locks up and I can't lift with it," said the soldier of 22 years, who has undergone surgery twice since 2007.

"They said any claim I get would have to be offset against any compensation I got for my knee."

The scheme was brought in by the Howard government to centralise entitlements for veterans, who had previously been covered by two older pieces of legislation.

Under the scheme, claims are assessed by a government-run independent body, the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, which ranks "whole body impairment" on a scale of zero to 107. The rating is calculated on the degree of medical impairment and its impact on the individual's quality of life. The commission determines a weekly payment rate commensurate with that impairment, which may be taken as a lump sum.

But if the claimant was compensated for an injury sustained on active service before the points scheme came into effect in July 2004, that payment is deducted from any additional sum they might receive.

Robert did not qualify for compensation for his hurt shoulder and elbow because they were assessed as less severe than his earlier injuries, which had been subject to a claim under the pre-2004 arrangements.

"It just makes you feel insignificant," he told The Australian.

"We're always taught if you put in the hard yards, they'll look after you. You soldier on because that's your job, then you try to get it sorted out and they don't help."

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia vice-president John Smith, who was injured while deployed in 1969, said it was outrageous that young veterans weren't better looked after.

"It's something we're not at all happy with, but until such time as there's a politician who is prepared to put in a change to the legislation to make sure it doesn't happen, I doubt we'll see any change," he said. "Nobody seems willing to take that step."

The Department of Veterans' Affairs said the offsetting method was designed to ensure some veterans were not allowed to double-dip on entitlements.

"Compensation offsetting ensures that an ADF member with eligibility under two or more different pieces of legislation does not receive more compensation for impairment compared to what another member might get under one piece of legislation for the same impairment," the department said in a statement.

But former veterans affairs minister Danna Vale, who introduced the points scheme, said it was never the Howard government's intention for veterans to be unable to combine their entitlements. "That was absolutely not what was intended," Ms Vale told The Australian. "John Howard and I were consistent and clear on this: that any conflict between the schemes would always be resolved by erring on the side of generosity to the veteran."

"That's what John Howard always said, and that's what I said in the second reading speech."

In that 2003 speech to parliament, Ms Vale was explicit: "A member who suffers an injury or illness after that date (July 2004) will be able to combine prior impairments from (previous schemes) the SRCA (Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Scheme) and the VEA (Veterans' Entitlements Act) with the new arrangements to get the best possible outcome."

Veterans Affairs Minister Warren Snowdon was unavailable to comment yesterday, but a spokeswoman said the department was reviewing the issue.

Robert's lawyer, Greg Isolani, said the commission's formula shook the foundations of Australian workers' compensation law. "If you look at Comcare, which is for public servants, they're entitled to individual assessments for each of their injuries," Mr Isolani said.

"If they're in a car crash, they'd get an individual assessment for every single injury they receive."

Mr Isolani said he was representing about a dozen veterans who had experienced similar knockbacks. "There could be hundreds more who are getting this outcome and then receive advice they can't fight it and just accept it," he said.

Ms Vale said the MRCC had the power to change its formula, and urged it to rectify the problem.

New ruling on service in Somalia

Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal Report - Inquiry into recognition of Australian Defence Force service in Somalia between 1992 and 1995

The Government has accepted the recommendations of the independent Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal inquiry into recognition of Australian Defence Force service in Somalia between 1992 and 1995.

The Report recommended:

- (a) that the original Chief of the General Staff Commendation [awarded to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment] not be upgraded to that of a Meritorious Unit Commendation;
- (b) that a campaign medal for service in Somalia 1992-95 not be struck;
- (c) the upgrade of the Australian Service Medal with Clasp 'SOMALIA' that was awarded to HMAS Tobruk ship's company to the award of the Australian Active Service Medal with Clasp 'SOMALIA';
- (d) that HMAS Jervis Bay ship's company be awarded the Australian Active Service Medal with Clasp 'SOMALIA';
- (e) that members of HMAS Tobruk or HMAS Jervis Bay deployed to Somalia between 1992 and 1993 not be considered for the award of the United Nations (UN) Medal because they were not assigned to the UN nor did they meet the 90 day eligibility criteria;
- (f) that the Australian Government not approach the UN to alter the eligibility criteria for the UN Medal;
- (g) that a Meritorious Unit Citation not be considered for the Australian Service Contingent of UNOSOM II;
- (h) no changes be made to the current policy of one award per operational service;
- (i) that no further consideration of additional distinguished service awards be made for either UNITAF or UNOSOM II; and
- (j) no changes be made to the extant policy for visitors or members not force assigned.

Defence has prepared the necessary instruments to enable the Australian Active Service Medal with Clasp 'SOMALIA' to be awarded to eligible former members of the ships' companies of HMA Ships Tobruk and Jervis Bay.

In accordance with long-standing policy, members who are now eligible for the Australian Active Service Medal with Clasp 'SOMALIA' must return their Australian Service Medal, or Clasp 'SOMALIA' as required before their new entitlement can be approved.

Members and ex-members are invited to make application to the Directorate of Honours and Awards.

Application forms can be obtained from www.defence.gov.au/medals/ or by calling the Directorate of Honours and Awards, toll free, on 1800 111 321.

The Tribunal's full report is available at www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au. Further information on Defence honours and awards is available at: www.defence.gov.au/medals/

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Lone Pine Service at Gallipoli



Commemorative services at some of Australia's most hallowed military ground, the Gallipoli peninsular, Turkey, were held to mark the 96th anniversary of Anzac Day. Minister for Department of Veteran's Affairs, Minister for Defence Science and Personnel and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac, Warren Snowdon, represented the Australian Government at the services, while Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Mark Binskin AO represented the Australian military. The Dawn Service at Anzac Commemorative Site attracted approximately 7000 people, with the Australian service at Lone Pine only slightly less. Members of Australia's Federation Guard provided Catafalque and Flag Parties at the Dawn and Lone Pine services, while Royal Australian Air Force Band provided music accompaniment. The RAAF Band also played at the Reflective Program at Anzac Commemorative Site which was held throughout the night in the lead up to the Dawn Service. Department of Veteran's Affairs Repatriation Commissioner MAJ GEN Mark Kelly AO DSC, was the Master of Ceremonies at both the Dawn and Lone Pine services. The AFG is the Australian Defence Force's ceremonial unit, which parades throughout Australia and the world. It is a 170 member strong Tri-Service unit, comprising of men and women from Navy, Army and Air Force. Along with Gallipoli, the AFG is supporting commemorative services in Villers-Bretonneux, France, Sydney and Canberra.

(left) Able Seaman Steve Doherty

(below) Ellie Tibble Memorial Scholarship winner Cadet Sergeant (Australian Air Force Cadets) Sasha Rhodes (left), Officer Cadet Celeste Cook and Officer Cadet Scott Atkinson greet Warrant Officer of the Air Force John Miller before the Lone Pine Service at Gallipoli.



LIGHTING THE WAY FOR AFGHANISTAN



Detained without charge, wrongfully convicted and sentenced to seven years in a Laos prison, Kay Danes has risen above her nightmare to inspire the world through her public speaking and humanitarian work.

Words: Amy Schostakowski

A woman steps out onto the edge of the dirt road, hidden beneath a pale blue burqa. This woman is just one lonesome figure in the dust of Afghanistan. Her eyes, shielded by heavy mesh-like curtains, have seen both suffering and joy. Like all mothers, she only wishes for the best for her family. But how much can one woman sacrifice?

Kay Danes faced an inspirational yet frightening journey, which led her to sharing the Afghan woman's plight.

The nightmare: On 23 December, 2000, the Lao Secret Police abducted Kerry and Kay Danes. The couple, along with two of their three children, had relocated from Australia to take up an opportunity to work for a British-owned security company in Laos. Their lives were about to change for ever. The Secret Police hoped to physically force Kerry into signing a false document against his client. He refused. Over the next 11 months the couple faced mock executions, ill-treatment and torture. Kay says she initially thought there had been a minor miscommunication, which would be cleared in time for her and her husband to be home with their girls for Christmas.

"Every day after that I started to get confused. Why on earth was it taking so long? What was the problem? It took a long time for me to understand that this was something bigger than us," she says.

After three months Kay was allowed outside of the three by three-metre cell she shared with five others to exercise.

"I'd jump on top of the tank every morning for an hour and another hour in the afternoon and I'd run on the spot, always visualising myself in another place," she recalls. The awakening: It was in this cell that Kay discovered the power of the human spirit, that bad things do happen to good people, and that small initiatives offer life-changing opportunities.

On 9 November, 2001 Kay and her husband returned home to their three children after being granted a Presidential Pardon. She wanted and needed her life to once again have meaning.

"I'd much rather turn what could have been a totally debilitating experience into a reflection of strength and determination to make a difference."

And that is how Kay became involved in the Sixth Humanitarian Mission to Afghanistan in 2008 with five other Rotarians. Kay recalls the advice that the Childlight Foundation team were given when explaining they had come to help the women and children of Afghanistan through their aid programs.

"The woman smiled rather cynically and told us to return home and come back when Afghanistan 'wasn't so serious'."

There were many moments over the next 30 days that Kay regretted not taking this woman's advice.

"There was the occasion when we were run off the road by a US convoy. That was really terrifying; I think I held my breath the whole time. Then on the very last day a Frenchman was kidnapped and they ended up closing the city," she says with emotion.

"I thought perhaps we had overstayed our welcome."

But Kay fought off those fears; the Childlight Foundation team's work in Afghanistan was important. She acknowledges that despite the Western world's snapshot of Afghanistan, many of the country's problems have little to do with religion. "Islam offers rights to women, as does the Constitution of Afghanistan – It is the politics of the day that undermine how these rights are interpreted." Kay explains that the Muslim religion encourages husbands to treat their wives with love and kindness. Yet one in three Afghan women experience some form of violence in their lives. The Holy Prophet also expresses that seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim, man and woman. But only 30 per cent of girls have access to education in Afghanistan and more than 80 per cent of women are illiterate. Kay realised that for these women it's not just a simple matter of wearing or not wearing a burqa. In an unstable country, where one commonly encounters extremists and fundamentalists, the burqa is necessary for security reasons.

"The women giggled when we said that some people thought the burqa was a sign of repression," Kay notes.

"We tend to not grasp that. We get this image that they are depressed and oppressed and downtrodden, when in actual fact, some of the most courageous women and resilient women I've ever met in my life are those Afghan women. The smiles on their faces, it sounds cliché, but it just lit up the room. Life is tough and life is hard and they just get on with it."

Kay explains that most of the Afghan people are sick of hearing about Al Qaida.

"It detracts from the world seeing the real Afghan people – those who don't kill others, don't become suicide bombers, and don't hate all foreigners. Most Westerners think the country produces nothing but opium, refugees and terrorists."

Thanks to people like Kay Danes and the Childlight Foundation team who are putting 'service above self', Afghanistan is looking past the misery and conflict and making progress.

Kay says that you have to see each difficulty as a challenge and not a

problem. While on the aid mission the team delivered books to the Nangarhar women's prison, conducted women's and children's health and education seminars and saw the positive outcomes of poultry farms sponsored by an American Rotary club. Like many others, Kay believes education is the key.

"Eight million students are now in school and that in itself is just outstanding. In 2001 when the Taliban was ousted there were 800,000 students – predominantly male. Ten years later that figure has risen to eight million – and that's all coeducational free education.

"Education gives people the knowledge, gives them power – power over themselves, their economic development, over the poverty that they face."

Despite this amazing progress, Kay knows life will continue to be hard for people in Afghanistan for a very long time. But she still holds the same hope for these people that she had for herself while in the prison in Laos.

"Even in the most despairing situations there can still be enjoyment, laughter and complete abandonment of our fears, even for a moment. It's these moments that count towards us surviving all the others."

For more information on the Childlight Foundation for Afghan Children visit www.childlightfoundation.org

Rotarian Kay Danes was recently voted No. 9 in a new book launched by the Governor-General of Australia. Women's Words of Wisdom, Power and Passion is a celebration of 50 of Australia's leading women and their insights on life, love and the world.

Kays latest book Beneath the Pale Blue Burqa can be found at www.bigskypublishing.com.au or all good bookstores nationally.


Beneath the Pale Blue Burqa: One's women's journey through Taliban strongholds

Published by: Big Sky Publishing



HMAS Sydney





The Royal Australian Navy ship HMAS Sydney has returned to her namesake city today following Northern Trident 2009, an international deployment that took her ship's company to ports across the globe. The Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, joined families and friends to welcome home the 230 members of the ship's company from a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many of the crew. Senator Faulkner said that while the deployment provided extensive training and development for the crew individually, the ship itself provided an excellent platform to promote Australian products and export trade. "I congratulate the crew of Sydney on their professionalism during the deployment which saw the ship undertake a range of tasks in support of Australia's diplomatic, international security and defence industry interests in Western Europe, North America and North Asia," Senator Faulkner said. "I am confident that this deployment has provided the ground work to assist Australian Defence Industry exports as well as a variety of national interests."

The Honorable John Faulkner, Minister for Defence with Commodore Ian Middleton, Commander Australian Surface Forces, attends the HMAS SYDNEY welcome home ceremony at Fleet Base East Garden Island, after five months away on Exercise Northern Trident.

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You can complete the survey on your own or a Defence computer, but you should complete it as soon as you can.

Visit www.civilskillsdata.com today



Australian Government Supports Completion Of Memorial For Australia's Greatest Naval Tragedy

Minister of Veterans Affairs Mr Warren Snowdon Announcement.

On the 69th anniversary of Australia's greatest wartime naval tragedy, the Australian Government has announced funding to complete the *HMAS Sydney II* Memorial in Geraldton, Western Australia.

The *HMAS Sydney II* tragedy resulted in the loss of 645 Australians. The wreck was located in 2008 off the Western Australian coast, more than 60 years after it sunk.

The *HMAS Sydney II* Memorial was originally dedicated in 2001, and declared a military memorial of national significance in 2009.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, said the extra funds will be provided to go towards the construction of the final element of the Memorial—a pool of remembrance.

“The *HMAS Sydney II* Memorial has become an important place of reflection for the loved ones of those lost in the tragedy and the Australian Government is committed to ensuring its completion.

“The pool will feature 645 seagulls symbolising the number of Australians lost in the tragedy. The 645th seagull's wing will touch a granite map marking the final resting place of *HMAS Sydney II*,” he said.

“This Memorial has become a national and international place of pilgrimage for the families and friends of those lost

in the tragedy, and on behalf of the Australian Government I want to thank all those involved in the project for making it a reality.

“This has been a tremendous journey for all these involved and I hope the impending completion of the memorial will bring some closure to the families and friends of those lost,” Mr Snowdon said.

Overall, the Australian Government will provide more than \$290,000 to help construct the memorial which is due for completion in 2011. The remaining funds were raised by the Rotary Club of Geraldton.

Background on sinking of *HMAS Sydney II*

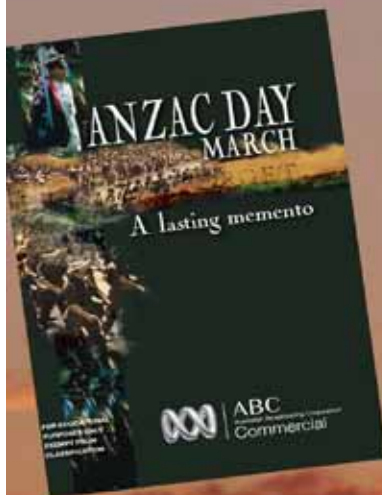
On 19 November 1941, *HMAS Sydney II* was engaged by the German carrier *Kormoran* 130 miles off the West Australian coastline. It is believed the *Kormoran*, posing as an unarmed Dutch merchantman, avoided replying to requests for identification from *HMAS Sydney II* before opening fire.

The *Sydney II* was severely damaged. Returning fire, *Sydney II* damaged the *Kormoran* forcing its crew to abandon ship. Survivors of the *Kormoran* reported the Australian ship was last seen heavily on fire.

For more information on *HMAS Sydney II* visit the AWM website.

For more information on the memorial visit www.hmassydney.com.au.

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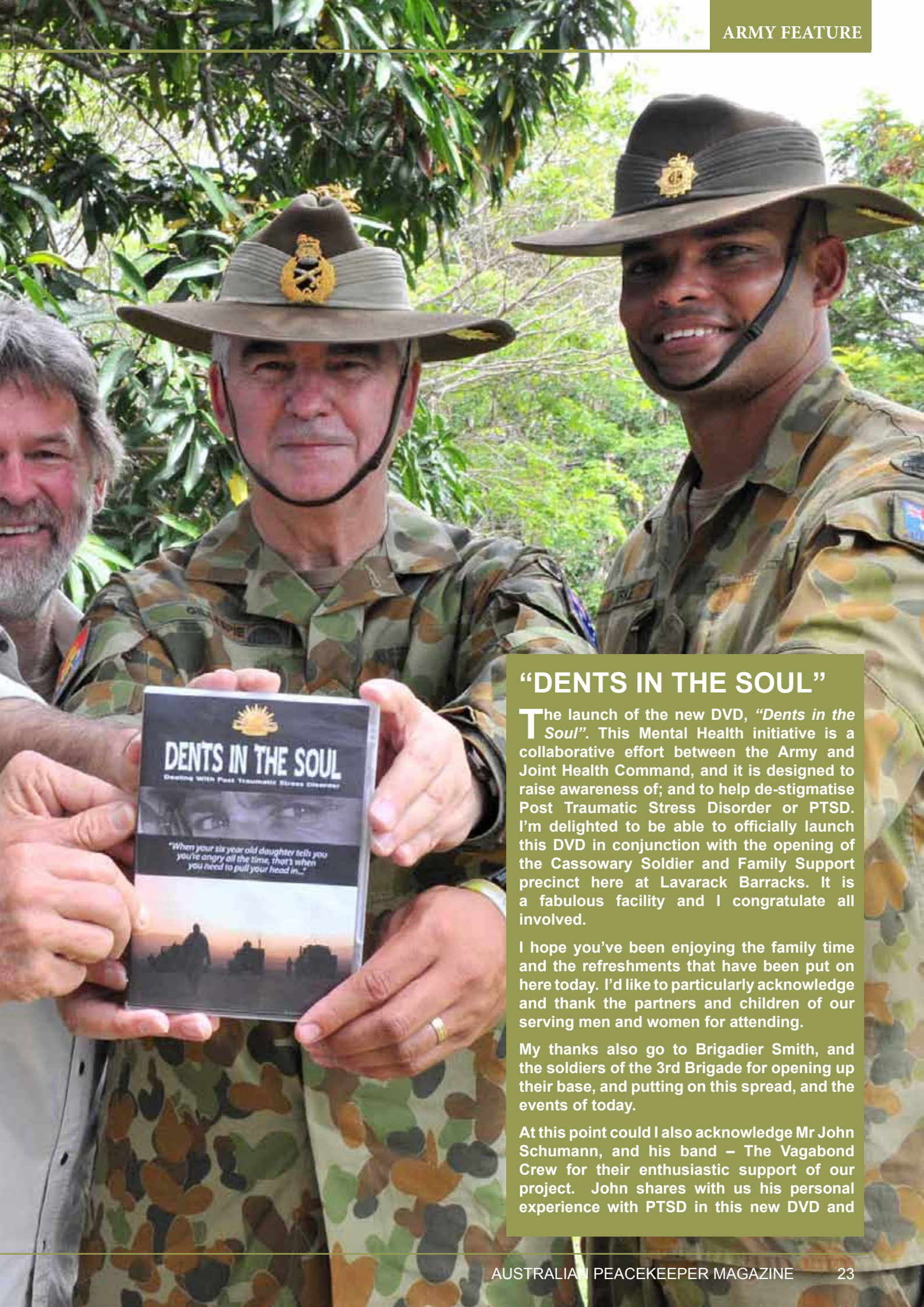
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CHIEF OF ARMY LAUNCHES PTSD DVD



“DENTS IN THE SOUL”

The launch of the new DVD, “Dents in the Soul”. This Mental Health initiative is a collaborative effort between the Army and Joint Health Command, and it is designed to raise awareness of; and to help de-stigmatise Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. I’m delighted to be able to officially launch this DVD in conjunction with the opening of the Cassowary Soldier and Family Support precinct here at Lavarack Barracks. It is a fabulous facility and I congratulate all involved.

I hope you’ve been enjoying the family time and the refreshments that have been put on here today. I’d like to particularly acknowledge and thank the partners and children of our serving men and women for attending.

My thanks also go to Brigadier Smith, and the soldiers of the 3rd Brigade for opening up their base, and putting on this spread, and the events of today.

At this point could I also acknowledge Mr John Schumann, and his band – The Vagabond Crew for their enthusiastic support of our project. John shares with us his personal experience with PTSD in this new DVD and

reminds us that this illness can affect civilians as well as those of us in uniform. Of course, it's also fantastic to have the iconic song "I was Only 19" associated with Army's newest mental health initiative in this production.

"*Dents in the Soul*" arose from Army's desire to better support our soldiers and their families' in understanding PTSD. It is time for a robust discussion in Army and across Defence on how this illness develops, how it can be treated, and the considerable benefits of seeking help early to address the condition.

I would like to start by acknowledging the families of our of 3 Brigade soldiers. You are an important part of Army's family, and much of what we do and achieve is only possible through your ongoing support, your understanding and your patience.

Life as part of the Army family can be a challenge – we face prolonged absences through deployments and training, along with the disruptions associated with the mobility requirements of our profession. We simply could not meet these challenges as an organisation without the support of our wives, husbands, partners and families.

If we break an arm, it goes in a cast.

If we get shot, we get stitched up.

But if we are experiencing PTSD, what does that actually mean?

I feel it is particularly important that you are here on this occasion. Army is working hard to consolidate our direction in the management of PTSD, and I'm very pleased to be able to share some of this work with our soldiers and families today.

Time will prevent me from screening the entire DVD at this point. It will of course, be available for you to view later today. In order to provide some context to what I'm going to say, I'd like to, at this point, screen a trailer of "*Dents in the Soul*".

My key message is that me, my commanders and your Army is working hard to provide more effective resourcing and treatment solutions for our soldiers suffering from PTSD.

We are working towards raising awareness of PTSD; not trying to deny the illness which is indeed present in our ranks.

We are working towards encouraging those at risk to seek help, and, importantly, to seek help early. Critically, we are working towards making our soldiers aware, that a diagnosis of PTSD does not automatically mean the end of their Army career.

I believe our strategy is sound; and it takes into consideration and encourages active spouse and family engagement.

PTSD has long been under recognised, under reported, marginalised and pigeon holed as "*another*" mental illness. It is certainly not a new issue, nor is it a psychiatric fad. In fact, I would contend Post Traumatic Stress Disorder has probably been around as long as armies have gathered, and wars have been fought.

Our experience with PTSD dates back to the Australian Army's initial involvement as an Infantry force on the world stage; where we've seen instances of personal trauma develop around an individual's combat and combat-related experience. In the past, we've identified this condition by a number of names, some descriptive, some derogatory: Shell Shock, Shell Concussion, Combat Stress Reaction, Battle Fatigue, War Neurosis, and most recently, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

What we today call PTSD, first gained mainstream recognition in the aftermath of World War One. Reports from the British Army at that time attributed some 80,000 cases of shell shock to the horrors of trench warfare.

One of the difficulties since; has been accurately identifying the markers of PTSD – those initial signs and signals that might first lead us to put our hand up and say "I need some help". Or just as importantly, for our family or mates to say "you need some help". We've also struggled to provide an appropriate framework for treatment and resolution of this illness. I believe these shortfalls could be due to the many misnomers that surround PTSD.

PTSD has made us nervous. In the past we've not been entirely sure on the best approach to address the signs and symptoms of this condition. This has been largely due to the mystery and stigma that surrounds it as an illness.

We would be badly mistaken to view those suffering from PTSD as being somewhat less robust, less masculine, less tough; less of a soldier than the rest of us.

PTSD is what I would describe as a "non-visible injury" – an illness that we cannot touch or feel. And accordingly, one that we tend to marginalise because of the absence of a magic pill or vaccination or universal cure. However, what I do know is; the symptoms of PTSD are different in each individual, and are often reflected in varied reactions to psychological stressors.

Defence currently has an active program for monitoring the mental health and psychological outcomes of deployment through a mental health screening continuum. Whilst not providing a diagnosis of PTSD, it does report the symptoms, identifying those who might be at risk of developing PTSD or other mental health conditions.

What we have learnt from this; is that at the 6 month mark post deployment, just under 1 in 10 of total ADF personnel deployed will exhibit some form of psychological distress.

Although the "at risk" group of ADF members runs at nearly 10%, in Army, we have not always been accepting of a soldier's combat injuries, unless they were the kind that bled.

If we break an arm, it goes in a cast.

If we get shot, we get stitched up.

But if we are experiencing PTSD, what does that actually mean?

Where do we go for help? What treatment options are there?

How will PTSD affect our career in Army?

Who do our partners turn to if they are seeing the signs of PTSD in us?

What kind of mental “cast” exists in Army to fix it?

In short, we know there is no simple or straightforward “cure”.

In working out our approach to PTSD, we have had to stop and think about how to handle a problem which appears to have many more questions than answers.

Our current journey began in 2009, when Defence commissioned Professor David Dunt from the University of Melbourne to conduct a major review of our mental health services.

His findings indicated an urgent need for the broader Defence organisation to address the mental health issues

of its personnel.

Subsequently, almost \$90 Million has been allocated over four years to reform and enhance the Australian Defence Force Mental Health Strategy.

A feature of Army’s approach to tackling Mental Health Reform, and Critical Incident Mental Health Support, has included fully supporting the introduction of regional mental health networks. We have also introduced, or refined where appropriate, a number of mental health packages.

We’re focussing on Force Preservation with a program called ‘*Keep Your Mates Safe - Peer Support*’, where we cover a number of topics including; suicide awareness and prevention, driver attitudes, alcohol misuse and a mental health ‘buddy system’.

We are making our Soldiers BattleSMART through a program of Self Management and Resilience Training; giving Soldiers practical skills for responding to stressful situations. Starting at Kapooka, these skills are being developed throughout a soldier’s career and reinforced during pre deployment training. These skills will allow soldiers to “*bounce back*” from adverse situations.

Here, at 3rd Brigade, this initiative also extends to Operation RESET, where a variety of critical topics are addressed in easing the transition from operational life, to home life. These include mental resilience, financial literacy and veteran entitlements.

Our broader mental health initiatives also target mental health literacy, awareness and resilience; and develops health promotion materials and up-skilling our mental health workforce.

It is now recognised that it is common for other conditions such as depression and alcohol abuse to co-exist with PTSD, making the management of this illness even more challenging. In May this year, a national mental health training program was held for over 100 of the ADF’s mental health providers. In addition to specific training in PTSD initiatives, our health providers received further training and development in the recognition, assessment and treatment of soldiers with PTSD complicated by other illnesses.

Another aspect in our push for mental health awareness in Army is today’s release of this DVD.

In launching this production, we are taking our focus on PTSD directly to our soldiers, asking them to engage in discussion, and become more aware of the symptoms of PTSD. We want them to seek help and seek it early. We want them to feel assured that PTSD does not necessarily mean the end of their Army career.

My gratitude and admiration is sincere in publicly recognising the contribution of the soldiers and officers who featured in this DVD. These men have courageously



(left) Lt General Ken Gillespie

(previous page) L to R Major Lester Mengel, Mrs Judith Mengel, Mr John Schumann, Chief of Army Lt General Ken Gillespie and Sgt McQuilty Quirke.

stood up to share their stories, and their respective journeys with PTSD. And, of equal importance, they have opened up the dialogue within Army on the illness.

I really believe this DVD will play an important role in bringing PTSD into the spotlight. My hope is that, as this DVD is more widely disseminated throughout Army, it will begin to de-mystify the stigma of PTSD within our organisation, whilst also addressing the mystery and suspicion that surrounds PTSD as the 'invisible combat injury'.

Army's values of courage, initiative and teamwork are built on the very real tenet of "*looking after our mates*". We do this in training, in barracks, and on operations. Being a soldier is about the person next to you; it's about the chain of command, it's about an individual soldier's willingness to invest his or her safety of life and limb in their mate - in the soldier standing next to them.

These values are also reflective of the manner in which we recognise and manage PTSD. To look after your mates, you need to look out for the signs.

Is he or she consuming more alcohol than normal?

Does he or she seem angry, tired or restless?

Are you picking up a sense that he or she might have problems at home? With their spouse? With their children?

Do they appear to be reliving their experiences on operations?

Are they avoiding activities, places, or people?

Spouses too – can look for some of these signs, and more, that may only be evident at home.

Is your partner having nightmares?

Do they seem moody or withdrawn?

Experience tells us that the symptoms of PTSD are most likely to present 4 to 6 weeks post deployment. This is the time when the invisible injury becomes visible, and provides us with a window of opportunity to address the symptoms and approach the remedy.

I would strongly encourage you to confront PTSD where you see these early signs, to call it out – and to seek help.

You must understand that help is available within the Army.

We have padres, psychologists and doctors – all of whom are trained to recognise the signs of PTSD, and all of whom can assist and guide - not judge, malign or disregard your concerns. Our Chain of Command, too, has an important role in recognising where problems exist, and offering assistance and guidance. This was a key theme I stressed at the recent Army Pre-Command course and on the RSM's course.

Where a spouse of an Army member is tuning into these same concerns – I would like to reassure you that you will be listened to. Assistance is also available to you through our mental health support system of psychiatrists, medical officers, social workers, nursing officers, Chaplains, the Defence Community Organisation, as well as the "All Hours Support Line", and the Veteran and Veteran Family Counselling Service.

Our Wounded Digger forum also provides an excellent avenue for exchange of information between Army and its broader family. This site also presents a synopsis of forward works, which I will continue to advance and implement during my time as the Chief.

Early recognition and intervention in PTSD is our first instance goal – seek help, and seek it early.

Our mental health specialists will establish a diagnosis through internationally accepted criteria, offering evidence based treatments for PTSD like cognitive behaviour therapy. In some instances, medication may be required, particularly where depression runs as a parallel condition to PTSD. And I reiterate, so too is family counselling available where required.

I am absolutely committed to the health, wellbeing and welfare of all of our soldiers and their families. My Army Commanders and I take very seriously our responsibility to ensure our people are prepared physically and mentally for the rigors of training and service on operations.

Where our soldiers are placed in harm's way, our responsibility is to ensure, that upon their return, appropriate health care systems are available for their recovery, care and support.

This is encapsulated in our casualty management framework. The framework seeks to meet service member and family expectations, through the provision of timely and appropriate medical and psychological care.

PTSD sits firmly within this framework.

My feeling about PTSD is that it is not a life sentence – it is simply an illness that requires treatment.

I am aware of an underlying feeling within Army, that reporting PTSD or suspicion thereof, and/or out of character behaviour, might somehow be detrimental to a soldier's career. Or that speaking up with concerns will taint a soldier's reputation and standing within the Army community.

I am also aware of a misconception that a diagnosis of PTSD will almost certainly result in discharge from Army.

Please be assured, PTSD does not necessarily mark the end of your Army career. Once the illness is diagnosed, treated and managed, your career can pick up where it left off prior to diagnosis.

Within the framework of the Adaptive Army, termination of service on medical grounds is always the very last option. We are striving to make every effort to retain our soldiers; whether they are suffering from PTSD or recovering from serious physical injuries. We will exhaust all avenues of rehabilitation before discharge is a consideration.

You have only to ask the Commander of our Career Management Agency to have confirmed that I take a very active interest in this issue, and that I have directly intervened on a number of occasions when I've believed that all options other than discharge have not been explored before discharge options have been enacted.

I believe we are making real in-roads into PTSD and other mental health conditions. We can see from our recent

history, and the initiatives I have discussed that we are making a difference.

Data from the Department of Veterans' Affairs demonstrates a reduction in mental health claims across the ADF. Claims have decreased from 3.9% in East Timor in 1999, to a rate of 1.3% for personnel deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations since 2003. The ongoing challenge with the greater combat exposure seen in the last 3 to 4 years, will be bettering these relatively low incidences.

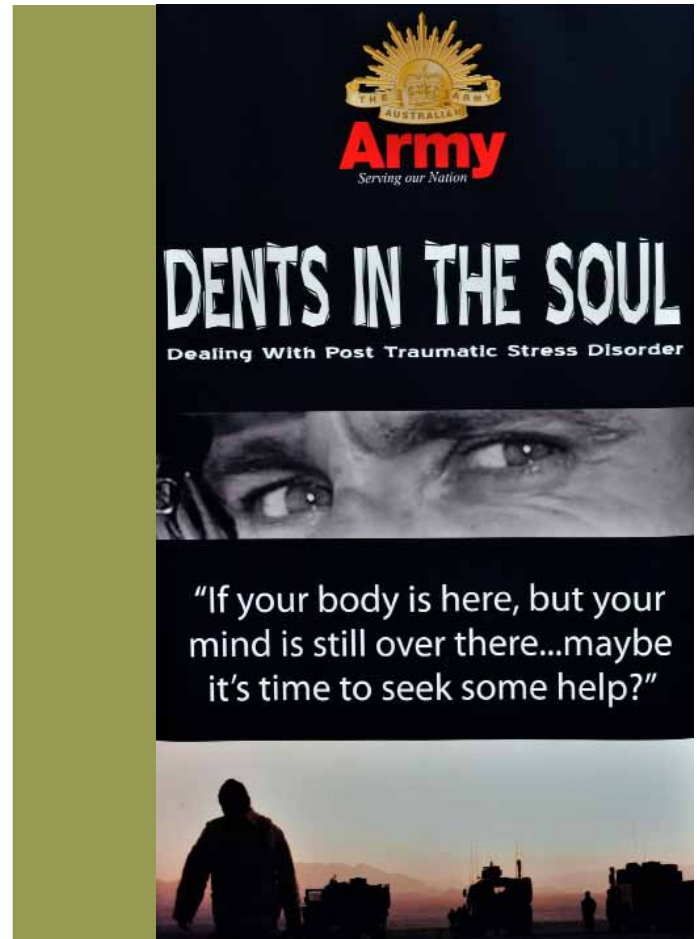
Our challenge, moving forward, is to keep PTSD awareness at a high level, remaining ever vigilant and proactive, and to keep the momentum of strategies, treatment and recovery ongoing.

We need to look after our mates – be aware of the markers of PTSD, and speak up when we see them.

Importantly, as individuals, we need to be cognisant of these symptoms in ourselves, and to accept the individual responsibility to take action, to seek help, and seek it early.

We need to draw on Army's mental health support framework; and go to our padres, our psychs, our doctors, our mates and our Chain of Command for assistance.

We need to remain aware that PTSD is not a life sentence, nor is it a career stopper. There are options, and there are solutions available within Army for treatment and a meaningful recovery.



Australian Government

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* Free local call. Calls from mobile and pay phones may incur charges.



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*Number affected globally by climatic crises by 2015 – projection from oxfam.org.uk

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Fallen Digger

Sapper Jamie Larcombe



Goodbye Trusted Sapper. Sapper Jamie Larcombe was farewelled by mates, friends and colleagues during a Memorial Service and Ramp Ceremony on 22nd February 2011 at Multi-National Base Tarin Kot. Sapper Jamie Larcombe was killed in action on 19 February 2011, during operations in the Mirabad Valley, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

Insignia Bearer Corporal Timothy Young carries the medals of his friend, Sapper Jamie Larcombe.





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Fallen Digger Cpl Richard Atkinson

CPL Richard Atkinson, killed in action in Afghanistan on 2nd February 2011, was formally returned to his family in a moving Ramp Ceremony at RAAF Base Darwin. Richard's mates from the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment (1CER) formed a bearer party and honour guard to carry and receive his casket as a final mark of respect from his military family. Richard's fiancée, Dannielle, his parents, Ross and Kate and his brother James were joined at the ceremony by the Chief of Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston; the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie; Commander 1st Brigade, Brigadier Gus McLachlan; and Commanding Officer 1CER, Lieutenant Colonel Matt Pearse.

(left) Insignia Bearer, Sapper Zack Babic, 1st Combat Engineer Regiment carries the honours and decorations of Corporal Richard Atkinson as he is escorted from ceremony

(below) The casket of Corporal Richard Atkinson is lead from the repatriation service by Chaplain Wally Schiller, Headquarters 1st Brigade and Chaplain Keil Maslen, 1st Combat Services Support Battalion.



Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project



An RAAF F/A-18A Hornet from No 77 Squadron

AVALON 2011

APMP Raises funds and support at Avalon - 21 March 2011

The Peacekeeping Memorial project's presence at the Avalon Airshow was given great support by the Defence Materiel Organisation. The Peacekeeping Memorial stand was open for the week.

The memorial project stand at Avalon included our design model and we were able to inform very many interested individuals from the trade and the Australian public about the Memorial, its significance and its progress. In addition to the funds raised by individual donations and the sale of peacekeeping bears, we managed to raise the profile of the project with many organisations.

We have a number of good prospects to follow up who may become donors to the memorial project. This could not have been achieved without the excellent support we received from our volunteers on the stand and the support we received from our support organisations, particularly Defence, the UN Police Association of Australia and the

Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association.

116 peacekeeping bears were sold and there were generous individual donations. One of our dedicated volunteers reported that, 'I was getting hoarse by the end of the last three days from talking and as well as having to raise my voice over the roar of jet engines and pyrotechnics. Sometimes it made talking impossible but the noise was exciting for the public.

On the public days the crowds came in early along with the earliest volunteers. When I quizzed a few they said they had been caught in traffic in years gone by so they were there at the crack of dawn to see the outside exhibits before the pavilions opened at 9 am.

Our Chairman (who was present at Avalon) and the Memorial project committee thanks our wonderful volunteers Fred McArdle, Denis Percy, Tom McGrath, Graham Rayner, Paul Copeland, Gordon Traill, John Rice, Errol Archibold, Ian Hardy and Barney Wursthorn.



The APMP stand in the exhibition hall



Passers by will see just this imposing bulk, relieved by the glow of light.

Design Concept

On the 19th of December 2008, the winner of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Design Competition was announced at Parliament House. The winner of the competition was Super Colossal, based in Sydney.

The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial has two main elements. The first is a glowing passage of light that is a powerful entry for the Memorial. The passage is between two massive monoliths, raised slightly off the ground in a stone courtyard. They make up a monumental structure that is the right size for Anzac Parade. The pathway between the two polished cubes glows with an intense golden light. This light can evoke the Australian Peacekeepers' role and their help to local populations. The Memorial with the lit interior has a striking presence on Anzac Parade both by day and night.

As visitors go deeper into the Memorial they can walk through the passage of light they may be reminded of deep canyons in the Australian outback, with towering walls but the uplifting blue sky above. They may feel the warmth and comfort of the light between the two imposing monoliths. They then will come to a courtyard, of more intimate size and feel. It is surrounded by Australian trees. Written in the pavement are words evoking the qualities and sacrifice of Australian Peacekeepers. Along the back will be a long horizontal beam recording the many peacekeeping missions in which Australians have served and an inclined plane to receive wreathes and other mementoes. This inner space will be suitable for both formal ceremonies and smaller scale commemoration. It will also be a place of quiet reflection on personal experiences and the significance of Peacekeeping.



A Donation from Defence and Industry Golfers - 17 March 2011

The proceeds from this year's Defence and Industry golf day have been donated to the Peacekeeping Memorial project. Mike Kriebig from C3I gave a cheque for \$5000 to Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General Dave Hurley, who immediately passed it on to the Memorial Committee.

This is the second time that C3I have supported the Peacekeeping Memorial project and they have now qualified as an APMP "Friend of Peacekeeping". Congratulations C3I !



Lieutenant General Hurley passes a cheque for \$5000 from Mike Kriebig of C3I (left) to Major General Ian Gordon from the Peacekeeping Memorial Committee.

APPVA AGM



Shane Carmody, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs with Dave Penson, APPVA National President.



Brigadier Keith Rossi (Retired), Representing the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee for Veterans and APPVA National President Dave Penson.



Rhonda Copeland receiving The National President's Award for 2010 with Dave Penson.



Jeremy Muhling (APPVA Vic Sec); Fiona Quinn (APPVA Vic Treas and National Membership Sec); John Burgess (APPVA QLD Pres); Dale Cooper (APPVA ACT Pres); Mick Quinn (APPVA Vic Pres); Dave Penson (APPVA National President); Rhonda Copeland (APPVA National Treasurer); Paul Copeland Immediate Past President and Ron Coxon VVAA National President.



Vale: Mr John Hopkins

It is with sadness that an APPVA Member (Mr John Hopkins) has recently passed away.

John was not only a loyal member of our Association but was also a long time serving member of the Army, discharging with the rank of Sergeant.

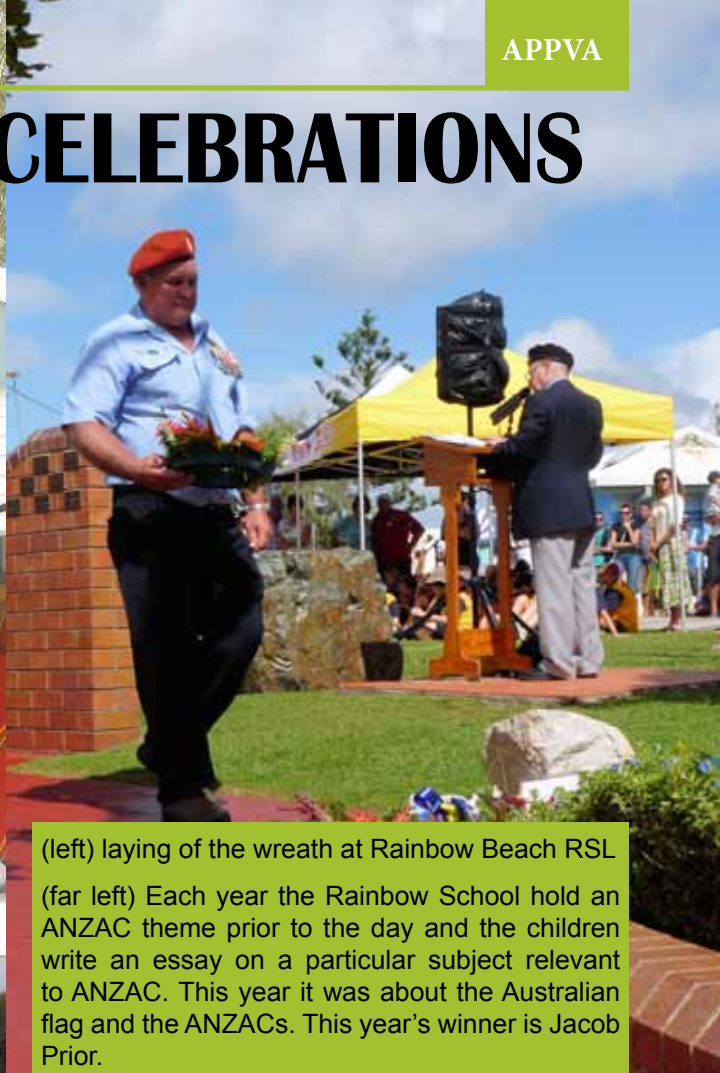
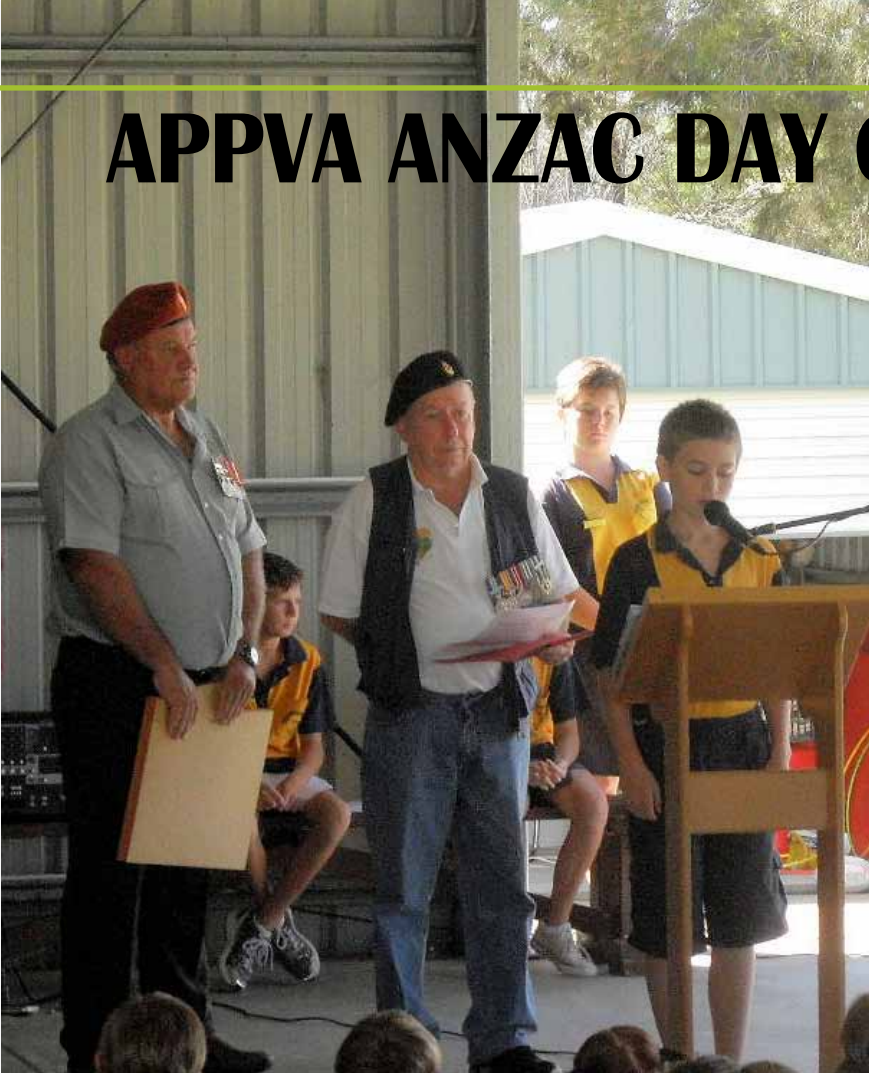
John was an ARA RAAMC (Australian Army Malaria Institute; 1st Parachute Surgical Team; and Corps transferred to RAAOC. He then served in Pers Div; BASC-Randwick; 5 BASB; 9FSB; and 142 Sig Sqn.

He served from 6 March 1985 to 6 February 2004. He served on War service with INTERFET and subsequently UNTAET from 15 Jan 2000 to 29 June 2000 inclusive.

He is survived by 2 daughters.

LEST WE FORGET.

APPVA ANZAC DAY CELEBRATIONS



(left) laying of the wreath at Rainbow Beach RSL

(far left) Each year the Rainbow School hold an ANZAC theme prior to the day and the children write an essay on a particular subject relevant to ANZAC. This year it was about the Australian flag and the ANZACs. This year's winner is Jacob Prior.



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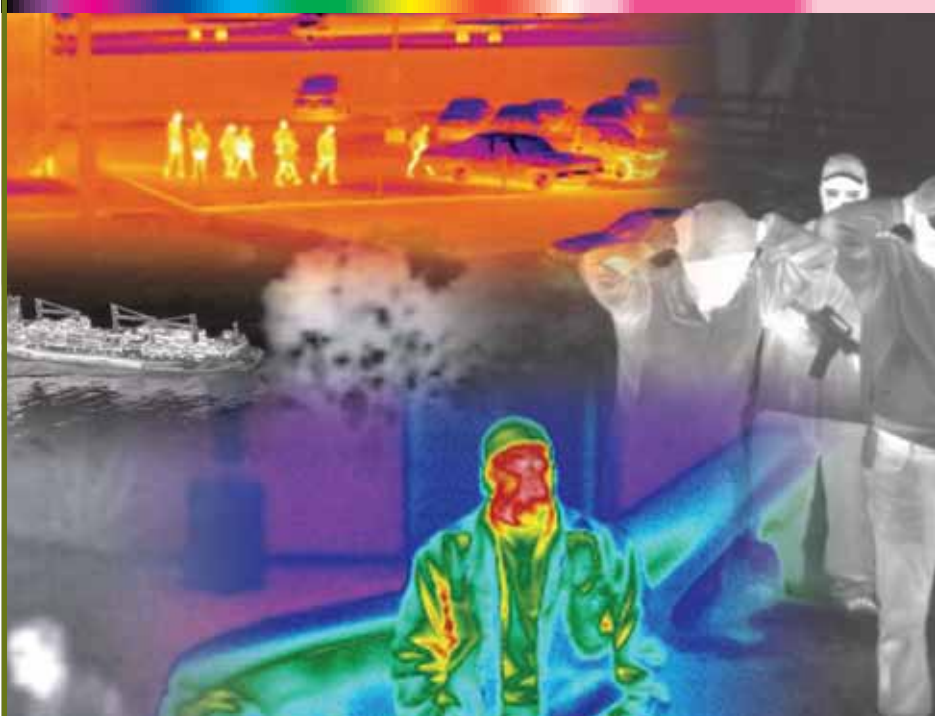
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503 UL DCDI (50 h.p)



Indigenous Development Program

Ms Chanaya Takai talking with Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Science and Personnel, The Hon. Warren Snowdon.

The beginning of something new - Indigenous Development Program - Cairns

The Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, recently met with the current participants of the Indigenous Development Program being held in Cairns.

he participants come from locations across North Queensland including one from Annerley; two from Badu Island; two from Bamaga; 17 from Cairns; one from Cooktown; six from Hammond Island; two from Horn Island; two from Injinoo; one from Mackay; one from Mossman; one from Prince of Wales Island; one from Rockhampton; six from Thursday Island; one from Townsville; one from Weipa; one from Wonga Beach and one from Yarrabah.

The participants are in their second week of the seven month live-in course that primarily aims to provide young Indigenous adults with the life skills and confidence to secure opportunities and sustain continuous employment as well act as role models within their communities.

"It was great to be here and get to talk with the participants about what has motivated them as each participant has very different reasons for participating in the program," Mr Snowdon said.

"Two of the men I met had different reasons for being on the program. One said that he really wanted his son to look up to him and be proud of when he grows up, while the other said he wants to inspire some of his cousins to get off the grog and to get a job."

"One young woman has reason to be very proud of her self having already passed the recruitment selection and she

is now excited about being able to be considered for the job she really wants."

"It's hearing these stories and seeing first hand their desire for change that makes me proud that Defence is part of this fantastic program," he said.

By the end of the first stage on 21 April 2011, participants will have had the opportunity to obtain a First Aid Certificate and a Certificate I in Information Technology. Additionally, they will also have completed the application process and have been advised of their results to join the Australian Defence Force.

The next stage commences on 4 May 2011 and includes Vocational Education and Training at TAFE and periods of dedicated military training conducted with various Navy and Army establishment.

Participants also have the opportunity to participate on the job training or work experience in other fields, not just the Australian Defence Force.

The Defence Indigenous Development Program is provided through a partnership between the Department of Defence, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Queensland Department of Education through Tropical North Queensland TAFE.

"I'm very proud that Defence is a part of this innovative and worthwhile program and I look forward to following up on the success of these candidates later in the year," Mr Snowdon said.



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TODAY
24
FLIGHT CREWS OUTPACED
THEIR AIRCRAFT UPGRADE.
2010

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Sabri

The Explosive Detection Dog


The RSPCA awarded Sarbi, the Explosive Detection Dog the RSPCA Australia Purple Cross. The RSPCA Australia Purple Cross represents outstanding animal service or sacrifice, and has been awarded only seven times previously. The Purple Cross was awarded to Sarbi for her bravery and courage during the period she was Missing in Action, but also in recognition of all Explosive Detection Dogs and the work they do with the Australian Army. Previous recipients include "Murphy", PTE Simpson's Donkey. The award was presented by the RSPCA's National President, Mrs Lynne Bradshaw at the Animals in War Memorial Sculpture Garden at the Australian War Memorial, Tuesday 5 April 2011

Explosive Detection Dog Handler Corporal Adam Exelby with Explosive Detection Dog Sarbi who received the Purple Cross from the RSPCA.



Artillerymen from the 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, are in Afghanistan supporting the British 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery. The contingent is the final of six rotations of Australian gunners to deploy in support of Operation HERRICK in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Since March 2008, an Australian gun detachment has been deployed to Helmand Province to support their British counterparts as part of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). The 105mm L118 light gun provides indirect fire support to Coalition and Afghan troops on the ground. This is the last deployment of Australians on OP HERRICK as the British are now able to sustain their own rotations.

Bombardier Chris Reeves is serving on the final deployment of Australian Artillery gunners supporting the British Operation HERRICK in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.



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Shooting or Helping the Wounded?

I have listened to stories and have read reports and I still find it hard to accept that former brave, healthy young men and women, who have survived the fears and trauma of war, commit suicide. After much thought and wrestling in my mind, I can understand why such a sad and grievous thing should happen, but everything in me screams out that it is such a waste of life and is not fair to either family or friends who have suffered along with the deceased. Yet can we blame those who believe there is no other option open to them but to take their own life and end the nightmare they find themselves in?

My understanding is that, and please correct me if I am wrong, that a young man or woman, who is fighting fit, skilled in the art of war and techniques of survival in such scenes, who has the 'buddy' system in place who has faced bullets and mortars and the rigours of being out on patrol for days or weeks at a time, who has stretched their physical capabilities to the limit, who has seen death and experienced the loss of a mate or acquaintance while out on patrol, should on return home, buckle at the knees in another kind of war. This war is on the home front and is fought against fellow Australians and the enemy is called Government Bodies.

This is usually a panel of Australians, some of whom have never been in a war zone and who have the authority to judge whether the person standing before them has earned the right to receive compensation for their services offered to the Australian Government when they, as a resource, were needed.

When a person returns to our country after active service and civvy street beckons, their safety net of mates, the discipline of service life, the familiarity of routine, their being told what to do, when to do it and how to do it all ceases. They are cast into a limbo kind of situation. Civvy street has more than likely changed since they were last walking the streets as a 'free person.' Now they are responsible for finding their own employment and housing, finding schools for their children who may have sampled many schools around Australia as they followed their parent's postings from one base to another. The access to base personal to help with difficulties is not available, their mates whom they may have relied on to jolly them a long a bit, have moved on, now they are left alone to sink or swim in a sea of uncertainty.

Yes, they may have a wife or partner but can they understand the reason for the sudden anger that bursts forth when the kitchen cupboard door gets stuck? Can they understand the sleepless nights spent in front of the TV or the unexpected sound of a car horn that causes them to drive defensively for the next few kilometres? What about tears that flow unbidden, hands that won't stop shaking and perspiration that soaks shirts? Can they understand the need to drink? Drink that brings peace for a time but in the end it too becomes an enemy?

So they ultimately come before this panel and are told that they may have what is known as PTSD; Post Traumatic

Stress Disorder. The voice of the Government Bodies may say that yes they do have this malady, as a result of being at war, but it probably is not bad enough to warrant compensation at this stage as there are not enough points on the system used by the Government Bodies to warrant a pension. They also may be asked; "How do we know that your problems are not inherited?" Or they may be informed that in their opinion, "What has caused your PTSD is not war related."

This war is on the home front and is fought against fellow Australians and the enemy is called Government Bodies.

They who once walked and marched proud and tall in tight formation now return home, shoulders slumped and on unsteady feet. They know they were not afflicted like this before going overseas on active service, they know the problems they are experiencing are not inherited and in their minds they know that all the problems stem from the sights, the smells and the situations they recall in the darkness of the night when all others are sleeping.

The war escalates against another kind of enemy: Bureaucracy, Red Tape and Officialdom. Sadly it is this war that brings them undone. Finally their knees buckle and all hope diminishes as they face round after round with this new enemy and to them it seems they consistently lose the battle. They do not know the system well enough to understand that if they hang on eventually, perhaps years down the track, they may lose many a battle but in the end, long and drawn out though it may be, they may win the war.

It is OK for me to sit and ponder over these facts, but what kind of a person would I be to present my thoughts without bringing a possible solution to the problem? There are enough people who do that already.

A person who has given years of their life on active service, who have been through rigorous training and had information fed into them for different courses, who have experienced the disciplined life style, the training of obedience to those of higher rank and to do as bidden without question including the order to shoot to kill, need a rudder of some kind to guide them through the months of being debriefed into civvy street again. They need an anchor that helps them to once again learn to make their own decisions and find their feet in a world where no one orders them around or tells them what to do. They need a certain kind of stability to defuse the adrenalin that has shot through their system after being able to smell danger at 50 paces and to regain a certain amount of trust in their surroundings.

So what I propose is a half way house. I know this works as I have seen it in action in the United States of America. These are places, houses purchased for the express



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purpose of housing returned service personnel, who are finding it hard to cope in civilian life, who cannot control their finances, their drinking and who are plagued with PTSD or drugs or alcohol.

These houses come under the care of a Manager who is himself a returned service person and has enough compassion, wisdom and maturity to care for his 'family'. It is his responsibility to run the house and ensure that the rules are obeyed. A nominal rent is charged and a routine is established with each household member being responsible, in turn, for taking out the garbage, cooking, cleaning etc. No alcohol or drugs, except prescribed ones, are allowed on the property and the manager ensures that each member attends their medical appointments. A signed contract is entered into and this contract states that if the rules are broken, there are consequences.

Each resident is given the freedom to do what they want providing the rules and their responsibilities are kept and they are accountable at all times. This ensures that each resident feels secure in their surroundings, has a semi-styled military environment, is cared for yet still has the beginnings of freedom to find their feet and ease back into society at their own pace. Each person is allowed to stay in one of these houses for a period of two years. Many residents find that they are ready to face the world before this time expires. If they have a nightmare or a flash back, there are those around them who understand and can help them. If they need to talk, they have mates around who understand, if they want to be quiet for a day or two, that is also understood providing their responsibilities are undertaken.

This system has enabled many veterans who were about to give up on life to find their feet once more and lead successful lives.

How can this come about? Do we ask Philanthropists? Do we ask the Government? Do we ask the RAA, RAN or the RAAF? Good question. It might be wise not ask those who want to come and take over and issue impossible rules or perhaps appoint non suitable managers. Unsuitable Boards with copious amounts of red tape might be a stumbling block as well, especially if there is a subtle power struggle going on. So who would be suitable? Perhaps a privately owned and guided band of people who have the heart for the returned veteran, who understand the problems they face, who have at their finger tips resources for aid when needed and a heart as big as all of Australia.

These people are around, they are the sort of people that sit back and think that someone else can do it better than they can. They are the people who have been in the 'school of hard knocks' themselves yet have come through. They can be older people, wiser people, yet sometimes they can be younger men or women who are just as smart as the older ones.

Of course there are already places like Pandanus Park and Alarak Retreat and Drop In Centres. Places where men and women can go to chill out for a period of time and leave the world behind so to speak. These places are like a refuge too, they enable a person to take a deep breath and relax far away from the pressures that build up with every-day living.

They are all beneficial to the Veteran community, but to my way of thinking more needs to be done and sooner rather than later.

That's my answer to the problem. What's yours?

Carla Evans
Veterans Ministry

Saluting and wreath laying

I was recently asked what was the history behind the placing of our right hand over our hearts at funerals and remembrance services and such like. After some research I found the following and was surprised to learn that we are actually placing our hand over our medals. If you could forward to Sub Branches for their info I would appreciate it. If more info is required I will endeavour to follow it up

The Salute by Veterans at the Cenotaph or Wreath Laying Ceremony (Remembrance Service)

It will be noticed at any Remembrance Service or when passing a Cenotaph Veterans will place their Right Hand over their "Left Side" many believing that they are placing their 'Hand over their Heart' in Respect or Remembrance of their Fallen Comrades";- this is not so.

The Veterans Salute to their "Fallen Comrades" originated in London on Armistice Day in 1920,

during the ceremony to unveil and dedicate the Cenotaph in Whitehall at the same time a funeral procession accompanying the remains of the "Unknown Soldier" halted at the Cenotaph during the ceremony before proceeding to Westminster Abbey for internment. Those present included the senior Soldier, sailor and many Victoria Cross winners. The ceremony concluded with a march past. The Regimental Sergeant Major of the Guard Regiment conducting the ceremony, faced with a gathering of highly decorated and high ranking military men (including many Victoria Cross winners), all wearing rows of medals, decreed that all would salute the Cenotaph as they marched past by placing their hand over their medals, signifying that "No matter what honours we may have been awarded they are nothing compared with the honour due to those who paid the supreme sacrifice".

By Chris Chatterton

Dental Implants – New DVA Policy

DVA recently advised of a review of the arrangements for the provision of DVA funded dental services. The first phase was implemented on 1 November 2009 and phase two has now been completed resulting in a review of DVA funded dental implant policy being finalised.

The main changes to the dental implant policy are inclusion of periodontists and oral surgeons to provide the surgical phase of implant treatment with an increase from one to two single tooth implants every two years with an increase from a maximum of two to three implants to facilitate the construction of a full lower over-denture.

Today we give a brief overview of the procedures involved when eligible members of the veteran community may be considering Osseo integrated dental implant (dental implants) treatment under the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) arrangements. A dental implant is a titanium metal screw, which is placed into the upper or lower jawbone providing in effect, an artificial tooth root used to support an artificial tooth or to stabilise and support partial or full dentures. Usually the permanent replacement of a tooth is fitted several months after the implant is put in.

Approval for treatment can be complex as applications for dental implants require input from a number of dental and medical providers. This can mean the decision making process can be lengthy and once DVA have all of the required reports a recommendation will be made and you will be advised in writing.

There are two phases for implant treatment, the surgical phase and restorative phase.

As DVA has restrictions on what type of provider can submit a dental implant application for both phases of dental implant treatment you should discuss any issues relating to dental implants with your local dental officer. You do not have to pay towards the cost of the treatment if your application is clinically necessary and if the treatment meets the DVA dental implant policy and guidelines, DVA will accept financial responsibility for your dental implant treatment and for the dentures or crowns which attach to the implants.

DVA will also pay for modifications to existing dentures to include attachments for implants in them as the payment by DVA for implant supported crowns falls outside the normal arrangements for crown and bridgework. This means that the provider must accept the DVA schedule fee for the implant supported crown and cannot charge a co-payment for this. DVA does not accept financial responsibility for dental implant applications that include sinus lifts; mini implants; block bone grafting or zygomatic implants, but if there are compelling clinical circumstances to warrant the use of the above treatments, the case may be considered by DVA under exceptional circumstances.

DVA does not fund dental implant treatment for cosmetic purposes. Dental implant criteria require the eligible person to have their local medical officer (LMO) or

general practitioner (GP) complete a Medical History and Assessment Form. Final consideration will not be made by DVA until the restorative phase, surgical phase and Medical History and Assessment Form is submitted to DVA and then assessed. When the application for the restorative phase is submitted, DVA will return this form if you are eligible and the treatment meets DVA policy. If, at this stage, you are not eligible or the treatment is outside of DVA guidelines and there are no exceptional circumstances relating to your specific case, DVA will advise you in writing of their decision.

If you are eligible you will be required to see a specialist for the surgical phase of treatment (an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, oral surgeon, or periodontist). Limits do apply to dental implant treatment as DVA will only fund dental implant treatment for eligible persons who have met all of the clinical and generic criteria required in the DVA dental implant policy and guidelines. If you think you require Dental implants discuss first with your dental provider who can then contact DVA on your behalf.

Government Continues Commitment To Veteran Community

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Subscription List
Tuesday, 10 May 2011

The Gillard Government has maintained its commitment to Australian veterans and their families in the 2011-12 Budget, and provided \$60.7 million in new initiatives.

This includes \$30.1 million for a Veterans' Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme and \$3.4 million to better meet the needs of our troops through an overhaul of the rehabilitation and compensation claims process.

A new \$27.2 million Prisoner of War (POW) Recognition Supplement will provide former POWs with an extra \$500 per fortnight in recognition of their special service and sacrifice.

Finding room in a responsible Budget for new initiatives reflects the Government's commitment to continued support for more than 360,000 veterans and their families.

Veterans' Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme

The \$30.1 million Veterans' Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme will assist around 70,000 veterans with out-of-pocket costs for medications, and delivers on an election commitment to introduce a fair solution that provides veterans with war or war-like service relief from pharmaceutical costs.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, said many veterans have complex health needs arising from or compounded by their war service and face increasing costs from the medications they need.

"This is a positive outcome for many veterans who have additional costs from the pharmaceutical co-payments not covered under existing entitlements to veterans," he said.

Veterans who have qualifying service and are in receipt of a disability pension (or equivalent under other Department of Veterans' Affairs administered entitlements) will receive this additional support towards their health care needs.

The Scheme will be effective from 1 January 2012, with the first reimbursements to be made in early 2013. For eligible veterans, the reimbursements will cover the gap between the pharmaceutical allowance component of the Pension Supplement and the pharmaceutical safety net.

New initiative to overhaul rehabilitation and compensation claims process

"Under a new \$3.4 million initiative, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will begin a major overhaul of the rehabilitation and compensation claims process to better meet the needs of our troops who are injured or adversely affected as a result of their service," Mr Snowdon said.

The Gillard Government is committed to ensuring this process is improved, especially for our personnel currently serving overseas.

Over time the claims process has been criticised for being complex, unwieldy and slow, and it's clear that veterans require a more modern and sustainable support system.

This initiative will help identify changes required to streamline rehabilitation and compensation processes, and will provide a simpler experience for clients, their advocates and the broader veteran community, to better meet their needs.

Planning and investigation, including a pilot project, will commence this year and conclude in early 2012.

The 2011-12 Budget also delivers funding already committed by the Australian Government, including:

- More than \$8 million per year in additional funding for the Australian War Memorial; and
- \$3.3 million for the establishment of a world-first education centre in Washington DC honouring Vietnam veterans, delivering on a 2010 Labor election commitment.

Media inquiries:

Minister Snowdon: Alice Plate 0400 045 999

Department of Veterans' Affairs Media: 02 6289 6203

Minister of defence Budget 2011-2012

Defence Capability

Over the next 12 to 18 months, Defence is developing First and Second Pass approvals of Defence Capability Plan projects worth over \$6 billion.

In addition to the recent decisions to acquire a fifth C-17A Globemaster III heavy lift aircraft and the amphibious ship Largs Bay, approvals will be sought for a range of key capability acquisitions including:

Air 9000 Phase 8 Future Naval Aviation Combat System

This project will replace the current fleet of Seahawk and cancelled Super Seasprite helicopters with multi-role naval combat helicopters, weapons and related training, infrastructure, logistics and support arrangements.

Land 121 Phase 3 Project Overlander

Phase 3 will deliver Light and Lightweight unprotected Class vehicles and Medium and Medium Heavy protected and unprotected vehicles for land forces. While this phase of Overlander is post second pass, it will be reconsidered by Government when Defence completes the current tender evaluation activities for Medium and Medium Heavy protected and unprotected vehicles.

Land 121 Phase 5A Project Overlander

This phase of project Overlander will deliver further Light and Lightweight unprotected Class vehicles for ADF tactical training critical for our personnel in preparation for operations.

Joint Project 2072 Phase 2A Battlespace communications systems

This project will rollout the communication infrastructure to high readiness land formations and units of the ADF.

JP 2048 Phase 3 - Replacement Watercraft

This project will provide ship to shore vessels to transport forces and equipment ashore and re-embark them back onto the Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ships.

The Australian Government is continuing its investment in the package of enhanced force protection capabilities for our troops in Afghanistan.

Over the period 2009-10 to 2012-13, the Australian Government will invest \$1.1 billion for these force protection capabilities. This initiative includes \$480 million of expenditure in 2011-12. This is in addition to about half a billion dollars of existing force protection measures for a total over the financial period 2009-10 to 2012-13 of \$1.6 billion of enhanced measures for force protection.

Our forces in Afghanistan are performing extremely well in dangerous circumstances on a daily basis and their support and protection is, rightly, our highest priority.

More broadly the Government is continuing its investment in Force 2030, as set out in the 2009 Defence White Paper, Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century. A comprehensive package of air, land, maritime and networked information capabilities is being progressed to ensure the Australian Defence Force of the 21st Century will have the capabilities required to meet future strategic challenges.

For more information and access to the Portfolio Budget Statement go to <http://www.defence.gov.au/budget/11-12/index.htm>

Mr Smith's Office: Andrew Porter (02) 6277 7800 or 0419 474 392

Department of Defence: (02) 6127 1999

“Key Clicks and High Tension”

By: Barry Abley

This book is a Fictitious Historical Book of which the author Barry Abley, has articulated a number of key milestones in the history of Australia, particularly toward wireless communications during the early 1900s to 1917.

The beginning of the 1900s was the coming of age in terms of grasping wireless electrical communications and utilising this valuable technology to provide world-wide communications on a scale never seen before.

Barry Abley has articulated the character of the book, Thomas Adams, of the life of a bright young boy who grew up in the Geelong area during this golden age of technological advancement. He enthusiastically grasps Morse Code as a 15 year old, which after a visit to the Geelong Telegraph Office, changes his life toward a meaningful and satisfying career in wireless.

Abley places the historic radio contact with ships off Fort Queenscliff; and several years later Tom Adams is also involved with the significant radio communications to Tasmania, linking the Island state with mainland Australia in a unique manner, without the use of submarine cable. A major feat at the time.

The book is well researched and written by a Ham Radio Enthusiast, who has researched his subject well. This book would be of great value to anyone interested in the history of the first wireless communications in Australia, particularly the lead-up to the First World War, the technological research and development made during the period, and the reason for Coastal Stations after the disaster of the Titanic sinking. The story also tells of successful operations in Electronic Warfare (Electronic Support Measures (ESM)), also known as communications interception of wireless communications by the enemy. This is a matter that Tom Adams developed in his role with the Australian Intelligence Corps as an Engineer Wireless specialist. The description of the War of the “Tigris Corps”, the horrors, disappointments, appalling high numbers of death from disease and triumphs places the reader for a clear understanding of the difficulties of the war in Mesopotamia, otherwise known as Persia, under the Ottoman (Turkish) control. Many men were lost not from bullet, bayonet or artillery shell, but the harsh conditions of operating in the Middle East. As a proud Army Communications Specialist (Signalman) who served in the Regular Army for 20 years, I found the book very easy to read and could not put it down. The basics of radio operations that are described in this book, were very familiar toward the applications in modern military radio communications operations from transmitting, receiving, Signals Intelligence and delivering messages as quickly as possible in wartime as the vital link for commanders.

This book is a tribute to a talented communicator and to the men and women who served in the campaign in Persia, which the sacrifice of tens of thousands of men, including

Australian soldiers and nurses, is much of an unknown in the community.

The patch identified by the character, Tom Adams, which was made in India, signifying a lightning bolt through wings is perhaps a badge of honour that the Australian Army should have retained for those who served in this most specialised and vital combat support arm.

To quote the end of the book: *“The soldiers of the Great War have passed into history, but the stories of their service and exploits live on.”*

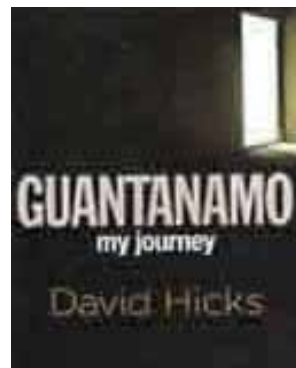
LEST WE FORGET”

“CERTA CITO”

Barry Abley, Key Clicks and High Tension ISBN: 1-921642-43-2 EAN13: 987-1-921642-43-2

The Reviewer:

Paul Copeland served 20 years in the Australian Regular Army (ARA) and was allotted the Royal Australian Corps of Signals in 1981, principally as a Radio Operator for a Light Infantry Brigade (3rd Brigade). He served in a range of Field, Strategic, Electronic Warfare and Special Forces units, finishing his career as the Force Development Warrant Officer and Acting Force Development Officer for the Combined Arms Training and Development Centre for the Communications, Information Systems and Electronic Warfare Battlefield Operating Space in 2001. Paul holds qualifications in Advanced Diploma in Communications Management (ARA) and Certificate in Radio Frequency Management (RAN). He continues to operate communications today in his voluntary role in Marine Search and Rescue.



Guantanamo: My Journey by David Hicks

Published by William Heinemann Australia RRP \$49.95 ISBN: 9781864711585 456 pages www.randomhouse.com.au

‘*Guantanamo: My Journey*’ is an autobiographical account of David Hicks’s life in Australia and his subsequent capture in Afghanistan which led him to the infamous Guantanamo Bay that would house him for five years. First of all, I am not a fan of David Hicks. The media release states **‘Everyone has an opinion on him. But only he knows the truth’**.

While reviewing this book ‘*Guantanamo: My Journey*’ there were a lot of mixed emotions for me. September 11, 2001 was a day that changed my life forever. I was a retired soldier when I watched the Twin Towers disappear before my eyes. I knew instantly that I would be wearing the iconic slouch hat once more. I went on to serve in

Iraq during 2004 as part of the Security Detachment in Baghdad and saw close-up the effects of terrorism.

Hicks states, *'My book will address how I came to Afghanistan and many other topics truthfully, honestly and in full detail. From my birth to events leading to Guantanamo Bay, what took place there and beyond'*. Hicks's mission with this book, in my opinion, is to clear his name. I don't believe he did this. Instead he unleashes a scathing attack on the Bush administration and the Howard Government blaming them for a myriad of things while he was at Guantanamo Bay.

There was one question I was hoping to have answered, but was never addressed by Hicks with an honest and direct answer. **What was he doing in Afghanistan?** He deflects this question with *'I would first answer with a few questions of my own'*. *Was the treatment handed out at Guantanamo Bay acceptable? What would warrant the torture, beatings and the miscarriages of justice that were dealt to me at Guantanamo Bay?"*

The first half of the book tells the story of Hicks growing up in South Australia, an only child, a loner, who never ventured far from home. Hicks's parents divorced and David decided to live with his father when he was 15. He was smoking pot, getting drunk and going nowhere fast. Feeling alienated, he headed to the Northern Territory to work as a jackaroo. Hicks buys a car, he is unlicensed, under aged and uses it to drive around the Northern Territory.

Part Two of Hick's book is about his journeys to Japan, Kosovo, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay. It was during this time that Hicks saw footage from war torn Kosovo. Hicks decided that Kosovo needed his help and left Japan to join the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) at short notice.

Hicks talks about not doing basic training in Afghanistan as he had previously trained in Kosovo and Kashmir. *'The courses contained strategies to defend villages from hostile soldiers and deter them from entering, or strategies for mountain warfare. These courses are considered standard military training similar to what our Australian troops undertake'*. In his arrogance, Hicks presumes to know about Australian soldiers and their training.

Why did Hicks return to Afghanistan, post September 11 and how did he end up training with the Taliban? Hicks is obscure in this area stating, 'I wanted to return to Australia as I was tired and fed up with training'. Why did Hicks leave his passport and important documents at the Taliban-run camp when he decided to return to Australia via Pakistan?

'I regret making the decision to go back to Afghanistan. Rumor was that Afghanistan would be bombed due to 9/11. As the impending assault grew imminent, none of us (English speaking) wanted to get involved in this conflict. I just wanted to go home'. Hicks was subsequently captured and sent to Guantanamo Bay where he spent the next five years.

His story of what happened at Guantanamo Bay is more believable. He claims his treatment was harsh and denigrating. He assumed he should have been one of the first to be released from Guantanamo Bay. As he stated 'especially when I left Australia to help disadvantaged

people. *I was meant to have stood up to oppressors, not be accused of being one'*. *'All I had to do was plead guilty to the material support to terrorism charge and I could actually get out of Guantanamo Bay within a promised 60 days'*. This is where Hicks had the chance in the book to really stand up and give a decent account of why he was in Afghanistan and why he chose to plead guilty. Unfortunately, he did not.

In 2007, Hicks was released from prison in South Australia, and moved to Sydney. Hicks is now married and works in a Plant Nursery.

Gordon Traill, Editor
www.peacekeepers.asn.au

“Dig In“

Often when soldiers climbed a god forsaken hill
Soaking with summer sweat or shivering with winter chill

Even before the heavy loads were off their backs
The sergeant would yell “dig in, no time to be slack”

First it was just a shell scrape to provide some cover
Then it would be dug deeper by two military brothers
The walls and floor took shape with much toil
Then came a roof of logs, sandbags and more soil

They cut niches in the earthen walls for handy little things

Like spare ammo and grenades the boss made them bring

Camouflaged so the home could not be seen
So well hidden behind twigs and hessian screen

That cramped hole was kitchen, dining and bedroom complete

A toilet far away on a reverse slope with wooden seat
The good news was no rates, power bills or rent
Thus on R&R more money on women and grog to be spent

Then when the Diggers finally finished their home
The cry was “pack up and get ready to roam”
Once more they would march by day and night
Until again would come an order to dig in to fight

They were the days of soldiering on so many unnamed hills

Where now no one now lives and perhaps never will
Once a home of stale air and smothering darkness underground

Waiting, sharing, enduring; wishing to be homeward bound

Today most old soldiers enjoy the pleasures of civilian life

A quiet peaceful home, a comfortable bed and a devoted wife

Instant lights, hot and cold water and secure from strife
And no bloody Sergeant bellowing “dig in by last light”

George Mansford © February 2011

A Silent Soldier

by Trina Parry-Plater 2009[©]

I am a silent soldier,
I am a Commando's wife.
I have no uniform, I wear no rank,
Yet I live a Commando life.

I may not do a "selection test",
but my challenges are real,
my strength is tested time and again,
along with character, resilience and zeal.

I may not carry an "Army" pack,
but it's a pack of a different name,
it may hold children, groceries or rigors of life,
- I carry it, and block out the pain.

I may not be part of a Company,
and I often must survive alone,
but I hold my dear friends close at heart
and their support is my backbone.

I may not have a Mess to dine in,
or rations to swap with a mate,
the demands that are put upon me mean
some dinners are "zapped" on a plate!

I may not run an Exercise,
or instruct on the "CQB",
but I multi-task with the best of them,
- I administer a family.

I may not hold a position,
that can be reduced to an acronym,
for I have many hats to wear –
more so, in the absence of "him".

I may never have a "Chain of Command",
to issue a "call-out" in the mid of night,

but alone I will waken many times,
to comfort children or dry tears from a fright.

I may not have a career mapped out,
with guidance from peers above,
my career is bent, broken and compromised,
sacrifices I make for my love.

I may never receive a payment,
for the quiet soldiering that I do,
my work often goes unnoticed,
and is appreciated by just a few.

I may never fight an enemy,
or return injured or scarred from war,
but I mend "his" heart, I ease "his" mind,
and the wounds I dress are raw.

I may never carry a weapon,
but I will always protect my own,
I won't drop my shield or lose my ground,
I defend my love, my family and home.

I may never have the comradeship,
to spin "warries" of the past,
but the bonds with friends – shared fears and tears,
forge friendships that will last.

I may never receive a medal,
or march on ANZAC Day,
but I stand tall in the quiet knowledge,
that I too, have a role to play.

I am a silent soldier.
I am a Commando's wife.
No uniform nor rank – just pride in knowing,
I live a Commando's life.

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Aussie Soldier – Peacekeeper

Book Questionnaire

Denny Neave and Craig Smith, authors of the Aussie Soldier series, are currently researching the third book in the series. Aussie Soldier - Peacekeepers.

In our first book, Aussie Soldier up close and personal, we looked at the core values of the Australian soldier. In our second book, Aussie Soldier Prisoners of War, we looked at POWs from the Boer War to Korea and tried to depict their life behind the wire. We now wish to tell another story, that of Peacekeepers, Peace Enforcers, Observers, Humanitarian and Reconstruction Operations.

Since our first Peacekeeping operation in 1947 until now, more than 40,000 servicemen and women have served to keep the peace. From Korea to Afghanistan the story of our soldiers who served on these operations needs to sit as proudly alongside those of our ANZAC foundations. Our professional soldiering within this

theatre on the world stage needs recognition.

We are asking Australian soldiers who were involved in Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcing, Observing, Humanitarian and Reconstruction Operations, to contribute to this book. The format of the book will be similar to the previous Aussie Soldier books. We target a general aspect of soldiering and focus on your perspective of being a soldier next to others from 1947 to 2009.

The chapters are likely to be:

- The Peacemaker
- The Observer
- The Trainer
- Complexities of Inter-Agency operations
- Cultural Challenges of operations
- Battle Book (which will list some/all of the following)
- The Peacekeeper
- The Humanitarian
- Reconstruction

Africa	Middle East	Asia/Pacific	Europe/Americas
Somalia	Israel	India Pakistan Kashmere	Croatia / Bosnia / Herzegovina / Mac
Rwanda	Lebanon	Korea	Yugoslavia
Egypt	Syria	Indonesia / Dutch East Indies	Guatemala
Condo	Jordon	West Iran Jaya	Haiti
Uganda	Iran	Cambodia / Laos Thailand / Vietnam	
Rhodesi	Persian Gulf	Bougainville	
Namibia	Kuwait	East Timor	
Western Sahara	Irqu/Kurdistan	Solomons	
Ethiopia	Turkey	Vanuatu	
Sudan/Darfur	Afghanistan	Tonga	
Mozambique			

We invite you to participate in this book by completing, in as much detail as you like, the following questionnaire. Whilst we cannot guarantee your story will be published, we will try wherever possible to include as many stories, quotes and anecdotes as possible. At a minimum, all those who do complete the questionnaire will have their names published in the acknowledgments to thank you for your assistance. Your participation will assist in documenting part of our Australian military history and will be of value to all who read.

If you have any further questions or wish to assist in other way please contact one of the authors:

Denny Neave Email: denny@bigskypublishing.com.au
 Craig Smith Email: craigedwinsmith@yahoo.com

Questionnaires should be returned no later than 16

July 2011 to either of the above emails or hard copies can be sent to:

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