

Australian General Service Medal for Korea receives royal approval

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, the Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, today announced that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the official regulations and design for the award of the Australian General Service Medal for Korea.

“The establishment of this award is consistent with the Rudd Labor Government’s election commitment to fully implement the recommendations of the Post-Armistice Korean Service Review,” Dr Kelly said.

“The Australian General Service Medal for Korea is being struck to recognise former Defence Force personnel who completed 30 days participating in operations in South Korea. This includes any location within 161 kilometres seaward from the coast of South Korea during the post-armistice period from 28 July 1953 to 19 April 1956.”

It is expected that the medal will be available for dispatch to some eligible recipients before ANZAC Day 2010.

Former Defence Force personnel who served in South Korea during the post-armistice period are encouraged to submit their application to the following address:

Directorate of Honours and Awards
Department of Defence
PO Box 7952
CANBERRA ACT 2610

People who have previously applied for

the award do not need to reapply but should contact the Directorate of Honours and Awards if their address details have changed since applying.

Further Information:

Please call the Directorate of Honours and Awards on 1800 111 321 (toll free within Australia) or +612 6266 1050 (from outside Australia), or visit <http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/>

By way of introduction, and for those who don’t know me, my name is Peter Thornton and as an Ex-Military and Commonwealth Superannuant, I am seeking your IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE PLEASE to broadcast this message as widely as possible and to take part in the action as detailed below.

To explain, and if you are not aware; there has been a long term plight by a large number of Ex-Military and Commonwealth Retirees and Representative Bodies to seek justice in correcting the ongoing erosion of Government Retirement Pensions (i.e. to correct the poor indexation mechanism of DFRB/DFRDB, MSBS, CSS and PSS Superannuation benefits). If you need some instant measure of how much Government Retirees have been shafted over the last 20 years or so (or will likely be shafted into the future attention to all those who are yet to retire!) then the graph below will be a stark reminder and/or an instant reference to the injustice that has been perpetrated against Military and Commonwealth Superannuants the erosion effectively forcing many onto welfare over time.

As a consequence, and to aid in this fight, 3 audience seats have been secured at the

last minute for myself, John Coleman (Indexation Manager - SCOA) and Ian Scott (NSW State President - DFWA) in the upcoming ABC ‘Q and A’ program, this Monday evening, 15th of February, from 9:30-10:30pm. Here’s the link <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/> .

The purpose of obtaining seats on this specific occasion is because Lindsay Tanner (Minister for Finance) and Barnaby Joyce (Shadow Minister for Finance) will be on the panel and they are directly responsible for the carriage of this matter. As a consequence, the 3 of us will have the same pre-prepared question ready to ask the two Ministers about the ongoing injustice of current indexation arrangements and what the Government/ Opposition intends to do about it.

HOWEVER, we face a major uphill battle (without your specific and collective help) because the erosion of Military/C’wth Superannuation Pensions is not in the media spot light at the moment and because we will be overshadowed by approximately 220 other people in the audience who will be eager to ask questions about other current affairs issues such as the ceiling installation deaths, the Emissions Trading Scheme

BUT we believe that if everybody rallies as soon as possible to create a constant barrage of information flows on the Q and A website ... i.e. through their blog, submission of online questions, uploading of video questions etc then maybe just maybe it might be enough to convince Program Staff that our issue is truly a nationwide affair that affects up to 600,000 people (not including extended family) ... and is therefore worthy

of a question to be asked.

ACTION PLAN:

1. We ask that upon receipt of this email that you all IMMEDIATELY ON FORWARD it to your extended networks and in turn we ask that these subsequent contacts to do the same (even if they are not affected) so we can generate a multiplier effect in generating the numbers and action needed.

2. We ask if everybody could access the Q and A website here <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/> and begin immediately to submit a barrage of questions in text, video, SMS and/or Twitter formats where possible. WE NEED TO TRY AND DROWN OUT ALL THE OTHER ISSUES/QUESTIONS IF WE CAN!!!!

3. We need everybody to be as active as possible on the night in question i.e. in blogging in your feelings before and particularly during the program because we need you all to turn up the heat big time during the program so that Program Staff / Tony Jones will feel compelled to nominate one of us to ask the question.

DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION OR SOURCES OF INSPIRATION? THEN PLEASE ACCESS THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES

<http://www.scoa.asn.au/> (Superannuated Commonwealth Officer’s Association)

<http://www.dfwawelfare.org.au/> (Defence Force Welfare Association click on ‘WHAT’S NEW’)

I trust and hope you will all rally to this occasion and I apologise in advance if you have received this message in error or will receive it more than once in the next few days ... but under the circumstances ... I hope you will understand.

Kind regards

Peter Thornton
DFRDB (Ex-Army 1980-2001) & PSS
Superannuant (C'wlth 2001 – 2007)
02 6296 7003
0406 1944 69

PS I would like to commend this action to the memory of John Graham and Alan Hatfield (both recently passed), both of whom fought gallantly for many years in the fight for indexation justice

First Mercedes-Benz G Wagons Delivered

Greg Combet, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, today announced that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has taken delivery of eleven Mercedes-Benz G-Wagon vehicles.

“Under Project Land 121 the Defence Materiel Organisation is acquiring 1200 of the G-Wagon vehicles in order to replace the current fleet of Land Rover vehicles which have been in service since 1987,” Mr Combet said.

“The G-Wagon offers enhanced levels of mobility and operational functionality and will provide a new capability for Defence.

It is already used by the defence forces of Austria, Canada, Germany, Singapore and the United States.

“The G Wagon vehicles being delivered include four-wheel drive station wagons; cab-chassis units; and six-wheel drive vehicles in both single and dual cab-chassis configuration.

“These first G Wagons will undergo compliance and accepting testing program during 2010. Full production of the ADF’s G Wagon vehicles will commence later this year with deliveries to commence in 2011.

“The G Wagon is being manufactured in Austria and is powered with a Mercedes-Benz 3.0 litre turbo-diesel V6 engine that will be EuroV compliant.

“Specific models of the G-Wagon will be fitted with specialist modules (for example Ambulance and Command Posts).

“These modules will be built by the Australian Engineering firm G.H. Varley Pty Ltd of Newcastle. This will directly create 75 and indirectly lead to a further 100 jobs for the Hunter Region.

“The vehicles can also be fitted with additional armoured protection when required,” Mr Combet said.

A woman asks her husband at breakfast time, “Would you like some bacon and eggs, a slice of toast, and maybe some grapefruit juice and coffee?”

He declines. “Thanks for asking, but I’m not hungry right now. It’s this Viagra,” he says. “It’s really taken the edge off my appetite.”

At lunchtime, she asked him if he would

forced the December 2009 defeat of the Rudd Government’s emissions trading scheme (ETS), was anger at a policy of the British Empire to destroy Australia’s economy, since, for instance, the Copenhagen genocide agenda was pushed by the Queen at the CHOGM meeting in November 2009. Those people who expressed that anger, may not be conscious that the British Empire was the target. But, as the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote in A Defence of Poetry:

“At such periods, there is an accumulation of the power of receiving and imparting impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides, may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But, even while they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, that power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. ... it is less their spirit, than the spirit of their age.”

The spirit of the age now is to reject imperialism and all its associated surrogate forms of policy such as green genocide. The spirit of the defeat of the ETS has opened up an opportunity for Australia to break from the Commonwealth and become a sovereign republic, if Australians are willing to fight, and take up that opportunity.

This is still the issue governing the minds of Australians as 2010’s political circus begins. Before Australians become demoralised and beaten down by the amateur circus featuring Kevin Rudd and Tony Abbott that has resumed in Canberra, and will continue right up until the next federal election, the Citizens Electoral Coun-

cil suggests that all Australians watch our new bi-weekly video discussion show, called Australia Unshackled: Defeating the British Empire.

This show, created by the LaRouche Youth Movement and hosted by Glen Isherwood and Katherine Isherwood, aims to free Australians of the convict mentality—otherwise known as the “little me” who is so afraid of ‘they’ (whoever that is) that they exclaim “you’ve got great ideas, but it won’t happen, they won’t let you win”—that still governs the thinking of Australians today. It will discuss breaking political developments in Australia and the world, the developments around the mass-strike ferment of the Australian people, and the policies and organising activities of the CEC. It will also feature interviews with CEC organisers.

The first show, released on Australia Day, 26th January, features an interview with Craig Isherwood, leader of the CEC. Mr Isherwood discusses the breakthroughs in history research on Australia’s founding, recently documented in the CEC’s &New Citizen newspaper (Oct./Nov. 2009), as well as great republican figures such as Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang, and King O’Malley, who established Australia’s Commonwealth Bank as a national credit bank, making Australia the only country outside of the United States to ever have such a bank.

Watch the Australia Day edition, stay tuned for future shows, and circulate these everywhere! Have you become unshackled? If not, get started by joining the CEC!

planes and the navy some toy boats in the Prime Minister's bath), New Zealand only has one more level of escalation, which is "Shit, I hope Austrulia will come end rescue us". In the event of invasion, New Zealanders will be asked to gather together in a strategic defensive position called "Bondi Beach".

Australia, meanwhile, has raised its security level from "No worries" to "She'll be right, mate". Three more escalation levels remain: "Crikey!", "I think we'll need to cancel the barbie this weekend" and "The barbie is cancelled". There has not been a situation yet that has warranted the use of the final escalation level.

AHS CENTAUR WEBSITE AND HOTLINE

The discovery of the wreck of the Australian Hospital Ship Centaur (AHS Centaur) will enable families of the Australians on board the ship to know the resting place of their loved ones, 66 years after it was sunk north east of Brisbane.

A phone hotline has been established to assist relatives of those who were on board the ship when it was sunk in 1943. Relatives can now contact 1800 019 955 to receive information about a memorial service which will be held in March 2010.

A website also has details about the memorial service. It includes details of how relatives can register to receive more information about the memorial service.

The website can be found at http://www.army.gov.au/AHS_Centaur.asp

On the morning of 14 May 1943, the Australian Hospital Ship Centaur (AHS Centaur) was sunk by a Japanese submarine east north east of the coast of Brisbane.

The wreck of the ship was found by search teams on Sunday 20 December 2009. The project to find the remains was funded jointly by the Federal and Queensland Governments and with assistance from the Department of Defence.

Australia Unshackled: Defeating the British Empire!

A new political discussion show—Australia Unshackled: Defeating the British Empire—is now ready to watch on the Citizens Electoral Council's website. The new show will focus on everything Australians need to know to destroy the British system of monetarism, and unleash Australia's full potential.

Despite the recent hysteria over Prince William's visit, and the usual Australia Day identity debate that avoids the core issue of sovereignty, the Australian people have a rich desire to defeat the British Empire. Our history gives a couple of examples: the old Labor Party's knowledge and hatred of the London-based Money Power, and PM John Curtin bringing our troops home from Africa to save Australia in World War II, and allying with the United States led by President Franklin Roosevelt.

More recently, the mass-strike anger that

like something. "How about a bowl of > soup, homemade muffins, or a cheese sandwich?"

He declines. "The Viagra," he says, "really trashes my desire for food."

Come dinnertime, she asks if he wants anything to eat. "Would you like a juicy rib eye steak and some scrumptious apple

pie? Or maybe a rotisserie chicken or tasty stir fry?"

He declines again. "No," he says, "it's got to be the Viagra. I'm still not hungry."

"Well," she says, "Would you mind letting me up? I'm starving."

EMBARGOED TILL 3PM 24 FEBRUARY 2010 PENSION INDEXATION INQUIRY PREJUDICED ?

The Association has information suggesting there could be a close but apparently undisclosed relationship between Senator Nick Sherry and Mr Trevor Matthews the leader of the Review of Pension Indexation Arrangements in Australian Government Civilian and Military Superannuation Schemes, Review, and Mr David Harris who assisted in the "independent" review in late 2008.

David Jamison the National President of the Defence Force Welfare Association has expressed surprisE and concern that Mr Harris 'sponsored a trip' by Senator Sherry to the UK in 2005 when he was a member of the then Shadow Ministry and that both participated in 'closed door' discussions on matters relating to pensions and superannuation, including Defined Benefit Schemes, such as DFRDB and MSBS (the current military schemes). Additionally, as late as 2009 Senator Sherry participated in an international forum with Mr Harris in Washington DC.

Mr Matthews, who was commissioned by Senator Sherry to undertake the Review on 26 June 2008, held hearings in Canberra on 24 & 25 July 2008 and submitted his Report in December 2008. However, on 30 July 2008, some 5 days after holding hearings Mr Matthews commenced employment as the Chief Executive Officer of Friends Provident UK, among the biggest pension and insurance companies in the UK.

The degree to which the CEO of such a major company could find time to research, deliberate and then write a report on such a complex issue could prima facie be questionable. Mr Jamison noted that in his report, Mr Matthews placed emphasis upon his considerable reliance on Mr Harris and his associates in relation to the Review. Coincident with the submission of the Review report in December 2008, media articles indicate Mr Matthews presented a paper on behalf of Senator Sherry at a UK seminar.

The Association believes it is very important that ADF members have confidence in the independence, disinterest and objectivity of the Review Team providing recommendations on their superannuation scheme to the Government.

We will be seeking the Prime Minister's assurance that Senator Sherry and the Review Team members declared any associations during the Review contract selection process and asking the Prime Minister to release to Parliament all documentation relating to the selection and granting of a contract in June 2008 by Senator Sherry to Mr Matthews and Mr Harris to conduct the Review of Pension Indexation Arrangements in Australian Government Civilian and Military Superannuation Schemes.

Additionally, the Association asks the Prime Minister to inform Parliament about the

nature of any association between Senator Sherry and the Review team members and his and Minister Tanner's knowledge of it.

Major William Wallace (Ret)
120 Adair Street
REDAN VIC. 3350

16 February 2010

Hon Lindsay Tanner MP
Minister for Finance
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT. 2600

Dear Mr Tanner,

INDEXATION OF DEFENCE FORCE SUPERANNATION PENSIONS

Thank you for your letter making your position on this issue explicit; you have made your decision and you are not changing your mind.

Because of your dismissive and glib response to Peter Thornton's question on Q & A last night (15 Feb 2010), I felt that I should write to ask you to cease dressing the decision up with considerable media spin, and just state the real reason for your position.

Please cease hiding behind the Matthews Report. Many independent analysts are happy to say, (what you and I both know), that the Report does not stand up to academic rigor, being flawed in content and method. On Q & A you again stated that Mr Matthews is well qualified to undertake the review, a point never disputed, but that statement does not in any way imply that the result of his review was sound. Even the best brains get it wrong. Quite a few of the findings published by Albert Einstein, perhaps the greatest brain of the 20th Century, have been found to be wrong, and recently the best climate scientists in the world were found to be wrong concerning the rate of thawing in the Himalayan glaciers.

On Q & A, almost as an aside, you introduced a new spin, referring to the superannuation schemes as being "a condition of service". This is the first time I have heard this approach mentioned, and perhaps the reason you were not leading with this point, is that it too does not stand up to scrutiny.

When I was attested on 24 Jan 1964, at the Royal Military College Duntroon, by the adjutant of the Corps of Staff Cadets, Captain P N Greenhalgh, superannuation was never mentioned as a condition of service. All I was informed about, as I stood with a Bible in one hand and the other clasping the Australian Flag, was the need for me

Soon, though, security levels may be raised yet again to "Irritated" or even "A Bit Cross". Brits have not been "A Bit Cross" since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies all but ran out.

Terrorists have been re-categorized from "Tiresome" to a "Bloody Nuisance". The last time the British issued a "Bloody Nuisance" warning level was during the great fire of 1666.

The French government announced yesterday that it has raised its terror alert level from "Run" to "Hide". The only two higher levels in France are "Collaborate" and "Surrender". The rise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France's white flag factory, effectively paralysing the country's military capability.

It's not only the French who are on a heightened level of alert. Italy has increased the alert level from "Shout loudly and excitedly" to "Elaborate Military Posturing". Two more levels remain: "Ineffective Combat Operations" and "Change Sides".

The Germans also increased their alert state from "Disdainful Arrogance" to "Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs." They also have two higher levels: "Invade a Neighbour" and "Lose".

Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual, and the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels .

The Spanish are all excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.

Americans meanwhile are carrying out pre-emptive strikes on all of their allies, just in case.

New Zealand has also raised its security levels - from "baaa" to "BAAAA!". Due to continuing defence cutbacks (the airforce being a squadron of spotty teenagers flying paper aero-

Bayswater Hotel

The Baysie allows the Association the use of their Function Room every month for our meetings. This they have done at no charge as the Association is a non-profit veteran's organisation. All members are welcome to come along. Remember that our meetings are on the first Thursday of each month except January.

Dinner, at the Baysie, is from 1800 hours to 2030 hours and is relatively cheap, wholesome food. It is served as a Buffet Style meal and you can have hot dinners or a cold salad style meal. Should you wish to go more up-market you can order from the Al-a-Carte menu. If you wish to have a private function with a buffet style meal the Baysie staff is only too pleased to cater for you.

If you drive to the Baysie there is a Carpark at the rear with room for about 100 cars. Alternatively you can get to the Baysie by train. The Hotel is about 100m the north side of the railway line from the Bayswater Railway Station.

Further information can be supplied by the Secretary.

just an airline lunch. Probably wouldn't be worth five bucks. I'll wait till we get to Pucka'. His mate agreed.

I looked around at the other soldiers. None were buying lunch. I walked to the back of the plane and handed the flight attendant a fifty dollar note.

'Take a lunch to all those soldiers.' She grabbed my arms and squeezed tightly. Her eyes wet with tears, she thanked me. 'My young bloke was a digger in Iraq, it's almost like you are doing it for him.'

Picking up ten lunchboxes, she headed up the aisle to where the digs were seated. She stopped at my seat and asked, 'Which do you like best - beef or c h i c k e n ? '

'Chicken,' I replied, wondering why she asked.

She turned and went to the front of plane, returning a minute later with a dinner plate from first class. This is your thanks. After we finished eating, I went again to the back of the plane, heading for the rest room.

An old bloke stopped me. 'I saw what you did, I want to be part of it. Here, take this.' He handed me twenty-five dollars..

Soon after I returned to my seat, I saw the Captain coming down the aisle, looking at the aisle numbers as he walked, I hoped he wasn't looking for me, but noticed he was looking at the numbers only on my side of the plane..

When he got to my row he stopped, smiled, held out his hand, and said, 'I want to shake your hand.' Quickly unfastening my seat-belt I stood and took the Captain's hand.

With a booming voice he said, 'I was an army pilot a long time back.. Once someone bought me lunch. It was an act of kindness I never forgot.'

I was embarrassed when applause was heard from all of the passengers. Later I walked to the front of the plane so I could stretch my legs.

A kid who looked about 18 was sitting about six rows in front of me reached out his hand, wanting to shake mine. He left another twenty-five dollars in my palm.

When we landed I gathered my belongings and started to depart. Waiting just inside the aeroplane door was a man who stopped me, put something in my shirt pocket, turned, and walked away without saying a word. Another twenty-five dollars!

Upon entering the terminal, I saw the soldiers gathering for their trip to up to Puckapunyal. I walked over to them and handed them seventy-five dollars.

'It will take you some time to reach Pucka. It will be about time for a sandwich. God Bless You Blokes.'

Ten young blokes left that flight feeling the love and respect of their fellow Aussies.

As I walked briskly to my car, I whispered a prayer for their safe return. These soldiers were giving their all for our country.

I could only give them a couple of meals. It seemed so little....

A digger is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank cheque made payable to 'AUSTRALIA' for an amount of 'up to and including my life.'

THREAT LEVELS EX-PLAINED

The British are feeling the pinch in relation to recent terrorist threats in Islamabad and have raised their security level from "Miffed" to "Peeved."

to be loyal to the Queen, and to be prepared to unselfishly serve my country, and die for it if required.

At that time, the DFRB did not exist. There was an independently managed fully funded superannuation scheme (DFRDB), but as I was only 17, I was not eligible to become a member. Also, because I was a Staff Cadet, and not technically part of the Australian Regular Army (RMC was governed by a separate Act of Parliament and was not subject the Army Act and the Defence Act), I did not become eligible to become a member of DFRB until I was commissioned on 8 December 1967. At that stage I was permitted to buy back the 3 years and six months I had spent at RMC after my 18th Birthday, so that it could be recognised as qualifying service.

When the DFRDB was closed in 1973, the members were not given the opportunity to approve or reject the decision. By an Act of Parliament, all serving personnel were arbitrarily transferred to the unfunded DFRB Scheme. All of the assets of DFRDB were absorbed into Consolidated Revenue, and the then Labor Government introduced the sweetener of the largely unworkable 20 year scheme, which was closed 20 years later by a subsequent Labor Government.

When I was forced to become subject to the DFRB legislation, I had completed 12 months active service as a Platoon Commander in 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, for which I was handsomely rewarded by being paid \$1.50 per day over and above my normal rate of pay. When on 4 Jun 1969, I had 40 or 50 North Vietnamese soldiers really trying to kill me and my Platoon with A47 Rifles, 7.92mm Machine Guns, RPG 7 Rocket Launchers and Grenades, superannuation as a condition of service was far from my mind.

Even if the DFRB was considered a fixed condition of service, it appears that it would not be difficult to alter the indexation arrangements. The method of indexation for the pensions of Commonwealth Judges was altered in 1998, and the method of indexation of the pensions paid under the Parliamentary Superannuation Schemes in existence from 1948 until 2004 has been changed several times. Research shows that all pension recipients under the former arrangements benefited from the more beneficial indexation arrangements introduced. The "condition of service" argument was not an impediment to change.

Even on the issue of affordability, there is considerable room for discussion. It is implicit in your attitude, that you are quite prepared to allow Military Superannuation pensions to continue to be eroded, and this will mean that many more ex-servicemen will qualify for "safety-net" (your words) payments by way of part Old Age or Service pensions. Even now, my wife and I receive approximately \$700 per fortnight, as a part Service pension, and I receive \$900 per fortnight as my pension from DFRB. This money is all derived from the same source, the taxpayers of Australia. If my DFRB pension was higher, my Service pension would decline, resulting in no change to the payments for which the taxpayer is liable.

Admittedly, the National Accounts would show that the unfunded liabilities under DFRB would increase, but there would be no reduction in the unfunded liabilities for Service pensions, as these are a current liability. When the indexation of Old Age and Service pensions was changed in 1998, it added countless billions to the unfunded liabilities of the Commonwealth Government as there are currently more than 2 million eligible for these benefits, and the numbers will grow exponentially over the next couple of decades. It is now claimed that changing the indexation for a quarter of that number who receive other types of taxpayer funded pensions is not affordable. As stated above, it is only the administration of the money which is different, the money all comes from the same source.

Mr Tanner, your intransigence on this issue demeans your standing. You are resorting to the fallacious political maxim that changing your mind indicates weakness. History has countless examples which show that possessing courage to change your mind is a sign of greatness. In our time the decision taken initially by P W Botha, and finally by F W De Klerk to release Nelson Mandela, records these hard line South African National Party Presidents as great men of history. You stated last night that you wanted to change Australia to prepare us for the future, reinvigorating the drive for productivity gains and similar measures. Please remember the self evident truth: "If you cannot change your mind, you cannot change anything".

I now feel so abused by the current situation, I will continue to write until you provide an explanation free of political spin and which stands up to scrutiny.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM WALLACE
Major (Ret)

To: Lindsay Tanner.MP ALP

18 Feb 2010
Hon Lindsay Tanner MP
Minister for Finance
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT. 2600

Dear Mr Tanner,

INDEXATION OF DEFENCE FORCE SUPERANNUATION

pensions and this came as a great disappointment to you and many in the veteran community. I believe the proper indexation of DFRDB pensions is an issue that demands real courage from our elected members. This is the sort of issue that President Kennedy wrote about. We have to stand up to the Department of Finance and the Treasury. We have to make the clear and compelling case that Military pensions are different from Commonwealth Public Service pensions...that military service is different from service in the bureaucracy. While DFRDB remains linked to public service pensions in policy terms, proper indexation will never be achieved for veterans. The Treasury and the government must understand that making changes now will actually carry a diminishing liability due to "claw back" and to the natural attrition in the number of DFRDB recipients. I call on my colleagues on both sides of the Parliament to join with me to accept that military service is a special service to our Nation and to push the government to modernise the indexation rules for military p e n s i o n s . It is inequitable to have our DFRDB recipients, who contributed 5.5% of their salary to the DFRDB scheme, receiving less than our Old Aged Pensioners and that their meagre income is indexed against the CPI, while the Old Aged Pensioners' income (to which they made no contribution) is indexed against the CPI or the MTAW, whichever is the greater. However there is yet another hurdle to be crossed that may result in delaying proper indexation for at least the next decade. Australia's finances have been wrecked by poor management of the Australian economy and reckless cash splashes. This has left huge debts to be paid off by our kids and grandkids. It has left Australia

paying overseas lenders a million dollars an hour interest right now on the government's borrowings. So any indexation of Veterans' pensions introduced now would have to be paid for from even more borrowings. This is very unlikely to happen. Having said that, ten years will be too late for many of our veterans and their f a m i l i e s . For its part, the Coalition appreciates that the superannuation provided to those who serve in the military must recognise the unique aspects of service and provide fairness, certainty and security for those who have contributed so much to our nation.

Airline Lunches

I put my carry-on in the luggage compartment and sat down in my assigned seat.

It was going to be a long flight from Perth. 'I'm glad I have a good book to read perhaps I will get a short sleep,' I thought.

Just before take-off, a line of diggers came down the aisle and filled all the vacant seats, totally surrounding me. I decided to start a conversation.

'Where are you blokes headed?' I asked the digger seated nearest to me. 'Puckapunyal. We'll be there for two weeks for special training, and then we're being deployed to Afghanistan'.

After flying for about an hour, an announcement was made that lunches were available for five dollars.

It would be several hours before we reached Melbourne, and I quickly decided a lunch would help pass the time.. As I reached for my wallet, I overheard a soldier ask his mate if he planned to buy lunch.

'No, that seems like a lot of money for

**MP CALLS ON COL-
LEAGUES TO ACT ON
DFRDB**

The Federal Member for Herbert, the Honourable Peter Lindsay, MP, and I have recently had a number of discussions on the complex issue of DFRB/DFRDB superannuation.

As a result, Mr Lindsay has issued the following email to his parliamentary colleagues. He has advised me that he has no objections if I distribute his message to the veteran community and to retired ADF members who may be receiving a DFDB/DFRDB superannuation.

I was recently reading John F Kennedy's book "Profiles in Courage". Although the book was written 56 years ago, I found myself thinking about the DFRDB issue and how political spin has not changed in five decades. The Pulitzer Prize-winning book is an account of men of principle, integrity and bravery in American politics and the struggles they faced in doing the right thing for their community. Yet the parallels with Australian politics today are so real. Kennedy quotes Walter Lippmann, an American intellectual who was twice awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his syndicated newspaper column, "Today and Tomorrow". Lippmann rendered harsh judgement on both the politician and the electorate. In this quote, I found myself identifying both our current PM and the Veterans Community! Lippmann said "With exceptions so rare they are regarded as miracles of nature, successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They

advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle, or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies. The decisive consideration is not whether the proposition is good but whether it is popular – not whether it will work well and prove itself, but whether the active talking constituents like it immediately". So let's now fast forward to the 2007 election campaign. You will remember DFRDB pensioners were given to understand that a Labor Government would properly index their pensions. But alas, just like so many other promises, it has been dishonourably broken. Yet this is to be expected of a government that has still not released its response to the recommendations contained in the Review into Military Superannuation Arrangements, which was published on 21 December 2007, and covers a range of issues pertinent to military superannuation reform. What is more disappointing is that when the current Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, was in opposition he stated that:

'the Government should clarify the [military superannuation] situation immediately as the morale of current members is being severely affected'.

Once again, the Rudd Labor Government has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to spin, when it should have committed to addressing the military superannuation system.

When the Rudd Labor Government released the Matthews' Report, it accepted the report's recommendation to continue to index Australian Government civilian and military superannuation pensions by the CPI. In doing so they ignored your views regarding indexation of DFRDB

Firstly, allow me to congratulate you on your performance on Q&A on the ABC on Monday night last. It was the greatest piece of obfuscation that I have ever witnessed.

Secondly, I would like to take umbrage with you over your insensitivity, your insincerity and your selective use of the truth on that same programme.

Your whole answer to the question of just and equitable indexing of DFRDB Superannuation was a regurgitation of the same old party line and waffle that we have had from you on so many occasions. You based your statements on the findings of the Mathews Report that more and more critics are holding in contempt as being a seriously flawed document, in both content and methodology. Indeed I suspect that the Report was done to Terms of Reference which led Mathews to come to the conclusions he reached and the recommendations he drew from them. An old trick; one that I have used myself on occasions, to good effect.

Either the TOR were engineered, or quite simply, Mathews made a mistake. Did you ever consider that possibility? Did you ever consider the possibility that you also made a mistake by accepting the Mathews recommendations? If you do consider that to be possible, would you be able to admit it? Your integrity should help you to decide.

You said that to increase the DFRDB superannuation indexation would cost \$ billions which the taxpayer cannot afford. That \$200 billion figure you stated is "rubbery" at best. What you conveniently failed to mention was that "claw-back" from various sources would reduce that figure by an estimated 50%, plus it would be further reduced by the increased spending power available to the superannuants. If we cannot afford to give the defenders of our great nation an equitable superannuation how can you spend billions like you do? We seem to be able to find the \$500 million for politicians' superannuation and the outrageous \$25 million for the Taliban to try and convince them to stop killing our Troops. God help us!

I won't repeat the statistics here on the yawning gulf between your superannuation, the aged pension and DFRDB superannuation; you already have the figures. Just a glance at them reveals a shameful situation which has existed for the last 20 years and growing steadily worse and widening year by year. These figures were recommended for correction by all 5 inquiries held prior to Mathews, yet ignored by him. And continue to be ignored by you.

It is inconceivable that members of Australia's Defence Force should be treated in such a manner. They put their lives in your hands when they serve in a theatre of war yet the best treatment they receive from you is to be used as a back drop for your (and your fellow Ministers) photo opportunities when they leave, and then they are treated as second class citizens, behind aged pensioners and even unmarried mothers, when they return. We seek no better treatment than that which is the right of all Australians. We only ask that we are granted the same indexation formula as at least

the aged pension. Not to grant us that is blatant discrimination, it is unfair and it is unjust. I would think that your Discrimination Act would have something to say about that.

You should be aware that there are some 600,000 DFRDB and ComSuper superannuants plus dependents out here in the voting community. At the last election we targeted Liberal seats which our analysis shows helped to get Labor elected; witness Eden Monaro amongst others. We did so because we heard Labor's election promise that you would correct this unfair anomaly in our indexation. This you have failed to do and, judging by your performance on Q&A, you remain intransigent. There are a lot of very angry and disillusioned superannuants out here (remember the thousands of emails Tony Jones received?) and I can assure that we, as a group, will do our utmost to garner as much support as we can in an attempt to remove Labor from office at the next election, because of the lies you have told to us and continue to do so.

I have no idea if you will answer this letter. You certainly failed to respond to my last communication. If perchance you do condescend to reply, please don't add insult to this injury by including any of the usual party line platitudes in that reply.

Yours faithfully

Peter G. Snowdon
Colonel (Retd)
Vietnam Vet and DFRDB Superannuation

Combat uniforms made in Australia

Contrary to some media reports this morning, combat uniforms worn by Australian Soldiers are manufactured in Australia.

No Australian troops are currently deployed, or in training, wearing combat uniforms made from Chinese fabric.

A tender was won late last year by a local clothing manufacturer from Bendigo, Australian Defence Apparel (ADA) to provide camouflage uniforms under an interim arrangement.

This is great news for the Bendigo economy and provides great support for local manufacturing and jobs.

ADA will be sourcing the fabric used to make these uniforms from Bruck Textiles in Wangaratta for the contracted period.

There was never a requirement to use Chinese fabric on combat clothing.

Under the contract ADA put forward an option to supply additional uniforms if required. For these uniforms ADA said they would source the fabric from a Chinese company.

This option has not been exercised by the Department of Defence and it will not be exercised.

The combat clothing that Australian troops will be supplied with is required to meet exacting specifications. All fabric used in uniforms is rigorously tested before use.

is now leading to development, ultimately improving lives of the local population now and well into the future," Lieutenant Colonel Hocking said.

Operation Pelatel Man'a involves the Oruzgan-based ANA 4th Brigade, MRTF-2, Dutch soldiers, and other International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners.

More than 30 weapons caches have been found since the operation began on 1 January 2010. Their contents have included rocket propelled grenades and mortars, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) components and thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition.

Australian mentors are working closely with ANA soldiers, who have found some of the caches independently from coalition forces.

"During searching the quala, I found two IEDs, that's anti-tank or anti-vehicles, not anti-person (IEDs)," said Private Ihsan, an Engineer with the 2nd Infantry Kandak of the ANA 4th Brigade.

"I like to be with the Army because it's very important for me when I find some things I am told 'you did a good job'."

Platoon commander with the 2nd Infantry Kandak, Lieutenant Zubair, said the operation has boosted his soldiers' confidence, reinforcing the belief that they can defeat the insurgency.

"My message is hope for the whole country, and for good security here in this area," said Lieutenant Zubair.

"I like working together with all coalition forces and whenever we are working with

them, there is a kind of knowledge for our soldiers and for myself. Everyday, we learn new things here."

The cache finds have saved lives and hampered the insurgent's ability to use IEDs, which continue to be the insurgent's weapon of choice and so often indiscriminately kill innocent civilians.

One of the Australian mentors, Sergeant Bradley Foster, said there are a lot of small achievements that are hard to measure at times, however, they all add up to building capability for the ANA.

"Whether it's just simple things, getting all their weapons zeroed, or for them to be able to do more complex manoeuvre, there's been a great deal of achievements made in that area," Sergeant Foster said.

Meetings are being held with key leaders throughout the Mirabad Valley Region to listen to their issues and work out ways of helping the local population, with the catch phrase being "help us, help you".

"Our efforts are now turning to the delivery of small scale development activities that will improve the daily lives of the people," Lieutenant Colonel Hocking said.

"Once the people trust the Government, this will enable the Government to bring economic development, which will be the lynch pin for long term security and stability in Afghanistan."

Operations such as these support Australia's strong commitment to building the capabilities of the ANA so that it can maintain security within Oruzgan Province.

“On behalf of all of Australia’s sailors, soldiers, airmen and Defence civilians, who are doing important jobs here, we thank you sincerely for the wonderful support that we receive every single day. We just couldn’t do our job without it,” Major General Cantwell said.

“We also know that many Aussies are doing it tough at home right now, with fires, floods and, of course, the ongoing drought. To all of you who have had a tough time, we think of you often and hope to hear of better times for you all soon.”

In East Timor, troops will be attending a cricket match on the beach organised by the Australian Embassy. A number of other sports competitions will be held.

Similarly in the Solomon Islands, sport will be a large focus of the day. ADF troops, along with members from the Australian Federal Police, will have the opportunity to participate in a sports afternoon, a church service and end the day with a barbeque.

Four married guys go fishing.

After an hour, the following conversation took place:

First guy: You have no idea what I had to do to be able to come out fishing this weekend. I had to promise my wife that I would paint every room in the house next weekend..’

Second guy: That is nothing, I had to promise my wife that I would build her a new deck for the pool.’

Third guy: Man , you both have it easy! I had to promise my wife that I would remodel the kitchen for her.’

They continue to fish. When they realized that the fourth guy has not said a word, they asked him, “You haven’t said anything about what you had to do to be able to come fishing this weekend. What’s the deal?”

Fourth guy: I just set my alarm for 5:30 am.

When it went off, I shut off my alarm, Gave the wife a slap on her butt and said:

’Fishing or Sex?’

And she said:..... ‘Wear sun-block.’

HOPE IN ORUZGAN

A major operation being conducted by Australian and Afghan National Army (ANA) Forces is being hailed as the start of a bright future for the people of the Mirabad Valley Region in Oruzgan province.

The Commanding Officer of the Second Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF-2), Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Hocking, said establishing security is the first important step in improving the lives of the Afghan population.

“There’s no doubt the continued presence of soldiers in the Mirabad Valley Region has dramatically improved security, which

The Government is committed to giving Australian products a fair go, as long as local industry is competitive on schedule, cost and capability.

Last year, the Government spent over \$6 billion in Australia on the acquisition and sustainment of defence materiel.

Have You Ever Danced?

An old prospector shuffled into the town of El Indio, Texas leading an old tired mule. The old man headed straight for the only saloon in town, to clear his parched throat. He walked up to the saloon and tied his old mule to the hitch rail. As he stood there, brushing some of the dust from his face and clothes, a young gunslinger stepped out of the saloon with a gun in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other.

The young gunslinger looked at the old man and laughed, saying, “Hey old man, have you ever danced?” The old man looked up at the gunslinger and said, “No, I never did dance... never really wanted to.”

A crowd had gathered as the gunslinger grinned and said, “Well, you old fool, you’re gonna’ dance now,” and started shooting at the old man’s feet. The old prospector, not wanting to get a toe blown off, started hopping around like a flea on a hot skillet. Everybody was laughing, fit to be tied.

When his last bullet had been fired, the young gunslinger, still laughing, holstered his gun and turned around to go back into the saloon.

The old man turned to his pack mule, pulled out a double-barreled shotgun, and cocked both hammers. The loud clicks carried clearly through the desert air.

The crowd stopped laughing immediately. The young gunslinger heard the sounds too, and he turned around very slowly. The silence was almost deafening. The crowd watched as the young gunman stared at the old timer and the large gaping holes of those twin barrels.

The barrels of the shotgun never wavered in the old man’s hands, as he quietly said, “Son, have you ever kissed a mule’s ass?”

The gunslinger swallowed hard and said, “No sir..... but... I’ve always wanted to.”

There are two lessons for us all here: Don’t waste ammunition. Don’t mess with old people.

I just love a story with a happy ending!

The Frog and Golf

A man goes out golfing. He is on the second hole when he notices a frog, sitting next to the green. He thinks nothing of it and is about to shoot when he hears, “Ribbit 9 Iron.” The man looks around and doesn’t see anyone.

Again, he hears, “Ribbit 9 Iron.” He looks at the frog and decides to

prove the frog wrong, puts the club away, and grabs a 9 iron.

Boom!

The golfer hits the ball 10 inches from the cup.

He is shocked. He says to the frog, "Wow that's amazing.

You must be a lucky frog, eh?"

The frog replies, "Ribbit Lucky frog." The man decides to take the frog with him to the next hole.

"What do you think frog?" the man asks.

"Ribbit 3 wood."

The guy takes out a 3 wood and Boom! Hole in one.

The man is befuddled and doesn't know what to say.

By the end of the day, the man had played the best game of golf in his life and asks the frog, "OK where to next?"

The frog replies, "Ribbit Las Vegas." They go to Las Vegas and the guy says,

"OK frog, now what?"

The frog says, "Ribbit Roulette." Upon approaching the roulette table, the man asks, "What do you think I should bet?"

The frog replies, "Ribbit \$3000, black 6."

Now, this is a million-to-one shot to win, but after the golf game the man figures what the heck.

Boom!

Tons of cash comes sliding back across the table.

The man takes his winnings and buys the best room in the hotel.

He sits the frog down and says, "Frog, I don't know how to repay you. You've won me all this money and I am forever grateful."

The frog replies,

"Ribbit Kiss Me."

He figures why not, since after all the frog did for him, he deserves it. With a kiss, the frog turns into a gorgeous girl.

"And that is how the girl ended up in my room Elin. So help me God or my name is not Tiger Woods."

BURIAL OF FROMELLES SOLDIERS BEGINS

Ninety-three years after they fell in the Battle of Fromelles, the first of 250 Australian and British soldiers have finally been buried with full military honours at a ceremony in France.

On the first day of burials for the Australian and British soldiers recovered last year from Fromelles, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, and Minister for Defence Personnel, Material and Science, Greg Combet, encouraged the Australian public to pause and reflect on the sacrifices of those who serve in the Armed Forces.

"These men have not been forgotten and today marks the start of the solemn duty of finally laying them to rest", said Mr Griffin.

"The discovery of these men, so long after World War One, provides new generations of Australians with an opportunity to honour their service."

The soldiers are being buried in individual graves in the purpose-built Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery. Mr Griffin said the new cemetery is the first full cemetery the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has constructed in more than 50 years.

The burials will occur throughout

Also Remember Those Who Have Served And Returned; and for those presently serving in the Armed Forces.

TROOPS CELEBRATE AUSTRALIA DAY WITH SPORT AND BBQ

As Australians celebrate Australia Day and 'throw another shrimp on the barbie', so too will Aussie troops deployed overseas gather around the hot plate and grill, less the beer.

The Deputy Chief of Joint Operations Command, Air Vice Marshal Greg Evans, said Australia Day is a significant day of celebration for all Australians, including those serving on operations.

"Australia Day unites us as a community, works to heal divisions, and gives us a unique view of the world," Air Vice Marshal Evans said.

"We are regarded by our partners and those countries in which we work, for our compassionate approach to the local people and getting the job done. Although our men and women serving on operations can't take the day off, we send them our best wishes and heartfelt thanks for the hard work they are doing on behalf of Australia."

Australian troops from the Middle East are especially embracing the spirit of Australia Day and that of Australia's 'Lambassador', Sam Kekovich, with the recognition of their own unofficial Australian Defence Force (ADF) Lambassador for the Middle East, Air Load Team member Corporal Dean Bickley, of Perth.

"Thanks to all the lamb farmers from Gidgegannup to Alice River for the fare that will be barbequed tomorrow," Corporal Bickley said.

In Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan, members of the Second Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF-2) and other Australian units, will be celebrating the special day by pitching the officers and senior non-commissioned officers against the soldiers in a cricket match.

"There will also be a bit of international rivalry when the Australians take on the Dutch and the United States in cricket later in the day," MRTF-2 Regimental Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer Class One Darren Murch said.

Volleyball games will also be held against the US, Dutch and Slovaks as well as Aussie rules, handball and rugby league competitions. Elsewhere in Afghanistan, thong throwing and softball have been added to the traditional barbeque lunch and cricket game.

HMAS Stuart will be continuing its operations in the Gulf of Oman, conducting counter-terrorism operations but will take time to celebrate Australia Day a few days early. On Australia Day, Stuart will be alongside in Abu Dhabi, taking part in a multi-national maritime security exercise, incorporating personnel from Jordan, United Arab Emirates, United States Coast Guard, Qatar and Canada.

The Commander of Australian Forces in the Middle East, Major General John Cantwell wished every one back home a wonderful Australia Day for 2010.

to find out about its humble beginnings. Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the American Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate.

But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the

pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as 'The Last Post' used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

Day is done.
Gone the sun.
From the lakes
From the hills.
From the sky.
All is well.
Safely rest.
God is nigh.

Fading light.
Dims the sight.
And a star.
Gems the sky.
Gleaming bright.
From afar.
Drawing nigh.
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise.
For our days.
Neath the sun
Neath the stars.
Neath the sky
As we go.
This we know.
God is nigh

I too have felt the chills while listening to 'The Last Post' but I have never seen all the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse. I also never knew the story behind the song and I didn't know if you had either so I thought I'd pass it along.

I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.

Remember Those Lost and Harmed While Serving Their Country.

February and be conducted by members of both the British and Australian Armies.

A commemorative event to open the cemetery is scheduled for the 94th anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 2010.

Mr Combet said the Government was hopeful that anthropological, archaeological, historical and DNA information will lead to the identification of some of the men.

"While identification of the remains is an extremely complex process I remain hopeful that we will be able to identify a number of those that we have found," said Mr Combet.

The battle on 19 July 1916 was the bloodiest 24 hours in Australian history with 5,533 Australian soldiers killed, wounded or missing.

Sixth anniversary of the opening of the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat

The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support yesterday attended the sixth anniversary of the opening of the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial in Ballarat.

The memorial was opened on 6 February 2004 and annual ceremonies have been conducted to mark the dedication of the memorial.

"This unique memorial marks the suffering and deprivation of liberty of some 35,000

Australians who were held as prisoners of war during the Boer War, the two World Wars and the Korean War," Dr Kelly said.

It is the first memorial outside the Australian Capital Territory to be officially recognised for its national significance.

"I'm enormously proud that the Rudd Government declared the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial a National Memorial in 2008," Dr Kelly said.

"I would like to recognise the efforts of Catherine King MP, Member for Ballarat, and the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Hon Alan Griffin MP, for their ongoing support of the memorial. I would also like to pay tribute to the community of Ballarat, which invested so much effort to make the memorial a reality, including the exhaustive research that went into listing all the names of the prisoners."

"The occasion was particularly meaningful for me as my grandfather is among those listed on the memorial as he was a prisoner on the Burma-Thai railway and endured enormous suffering and the needless loss of mates."

"This memorial will serve as a reminder to future generations of the sacrifice of those Australians who were held as prisoners of war, and I thank the Ballarat community for its ongoing support of this unique memorial," Dr Kelly said.

Another step forward for Defence Health

Greg Combet, Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, today

announced the appointment of Mr David Morton as the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) Director General of Mental Health, Psychology and Rehabilitation.

"Mr Morton's appointment is another step in the ADF's ongoing commitment to protecting and enhancing the health and well being of Australia's servicemen and women," Mr Combet said.

"His leadership and expertise will be vital for Defence as we continue to implement the recommendations from the 2009 Dunt Review into mental health.

"Mr Morton's appointment will result in better and more efficient health care as part of Defence's ongoing health reforms and restructure.

"The establishment of the Mental Health, Psychology & Rehabilitation branch is also a clear demonstration of the progress Defence is making in providing holistic care to ADF members."

Professor David Dunt completed a thorough mental health review last year at the Federal Government's request. The Dunt Review provided the catalyst for major health care reform and the Government is supporting Defence with an additional \$83 million over the next four years to implement recommendations.

"The health and wellbeing of personnel is a priority for Defence and all wounded ADF members receive comprehensive support, whether it is for physical or emotional wounds," Mr Combet said.

"The ADF has one of the largest workplace mental health support systems in Australia, with a range of mental health

and counselling services available to ADF personnel."

Mr Combet said that Mr Morton was well placed to make a very valuable contribution in this new role.

"David Morton's addition to the Joint Health Command leadership team will provide the final piece in the Command's areas of expertise and responsibilities," Mr Combet said.

"Mr Morton's previous work with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service and his intimate involvement with delivering support services to Australia's war veterans deserve special recognition and will be a cornerstone of his work with Joint Health Command."

The ADF's Surgeon General and Chief of Joint Health Command, Major General Paul Alexander, said that "Defence is bringing the concepts of health and well-being together as a complete package. It's critical to understand that physical and emotional injuries require support to mend long after visible scars have healed. This is vital for the ADF to meet our commitment to providing best practice healthcare.

"The success of our rehabilitation programs is remarkable. Last year 87 per cent of all personnel who undertook rehabilitation returned to duties.

"One of the major aims of the ADF's Mental Health Strategy is to de-stigmatise mental health problems and to encourage personnel to come forward for treatment sooner rather than later. Early treatment in these cases is one of the keys to successful

should have all along. I am the beneficiary of their sacrifice. Not only for the freedom they, like veterans from other wars, ensured, but for how well our country now treats my fellow Diggers and I. We are the beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

From an Unknown Australian Digger

VALE

Keith Jones (Jonesy)

This message was received from John Dumble.

Hi Jim,

It is with sadness that I report the death of Sgt Keith Jones RAEME (Jonesy) he was 81 years of age. Keith passed away morning of 12 Jan. His funeral is this Friday 11am. 15 Jan. at Gregson and Waites Crematorium Caloundra, Sunshine Coast Qld

I joined EIS at HQ1MD in the later 1970s, he was my Sgt and knew the job backwards. He was always there to guide me and never once made an issue of who knew most (him) or who was the boss (me).

A true soldier is the greatest accolade I can offer him. Rest In Peace.

Donald Cockerell

This message was received from Len Avery, the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer of the 161 Recce Flt Association. It was received on the 9th January. My apologies, I have been on Fraser Island.

It is with deep regret that I advise that Donald Cockerell collapsed and died last night, 08 January 2010.

Don's wife Pam has sent through a message advising of Don's death.

Don was born on 17 March 1940 at Cobden

in Victoria.

Don has been battling cancer for quite some time however, until an autopsy is carried out we will not know the cause of death.

Don and his wife Pam lived at Morphett Vale in South Australia.

We will advise funeral details as soon as they are known.

Don was one of our original 161 Recce Flt members serving in Vietnam at Bien Hoa and then Vung Tau from 14 September 1965 until 20 September 1966.

Don was a fixed wing pilot and his first operational flight in Vietnam was carried out on 23 October 1965. Whilst in Vietnam Don flew just over 500 hours.

He joined the Army as a 12th intake Army Apprentice in 1957.

Don features in the attached photo taken at Bien Hoa in 1965-66, second from the left, along with John Black, Jimmy Crook, Trevor Winterton, Frank Finnigan and Bevan Pearson.

May He Rest In Peace.

Regards

Len

THE LAST POST

If any of you have ever been to a military funeral in which The Last Post was played; this brings out a new meaning of it.

Here is something everyone should know. Until I read this, I didn't know, but I checked it out and it's true:

We have all heard the haunting song, 'The Last Post' It's the song that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested

occurring” Minister Combet said. Mr Combet also dismissed claims by the Opposition that the Defence Health budget may be subject to cuts under the \$20 billion Strategic Reform Program. “It is ridiculous for Mr Baldwin to criticise this Government on its contribution to the Defence Health budget, given that we are spending more on health services for our soldiers, sailors and air men and women than was spent by the previous government. “The reforms being made under the Strategic Reform Program will make sure that we are able to spend even more on frontline services, such as priority programs to support the health and wellbeing of ADF members.”

A Thank You to all Vietnam Vets from a Soldier in Afghanistan

A guy gets time to think over here and I was thinking about all the support we get from home. Sometimes it's overwhelming. We get care packages at times faster than we can use them. There are boxes and boxes of toiletries and snacks lining the center of every tent; the generosity has been amazing. So, I was pondering the question: “Why do we have so much support?”

In my opinion, it all came down to one thing: Vietnam Veterans. I think we learned a lesson, as a nation, that no matter what, you have to support the troops who are on the line, who are risking everything. We treated them so poorly back then. When they returned was even worse. The stories are nightmarish of what our returning warriors were subjected to. It is a

national scar, a blemish on our country, an embarrassment to all of us.

After Vietnam, it had time to sink in. The guilt in our collective consciousness grew. It shamed us. However, we learned from our mistake. Somewhere during the late 1970's and on into the 80's, we realized that we can't treat our warriors that way. So ... starting during the Gulf War, when the first real opportunity arose to stand up and support the troops, we did. We did it to support our friends and family going off to war. But we also did it to right the wrongs from the Vietnam era. We treat our troops of today like the heroes they were, and are, acknowledge and celebrate their sacrifice, and rejoice at their homecoming ... instead of spitting on them.

And that support continues today for those of us in Afghanistan. Our country knows that it must support us and it does. The lesson was learned in Vietnam and we are all better because of it.

Everyone who has gone before is a hero. They are celebrated in my heart. I think admirably of all those who have gone before me. From those who fought to establish our country Australia in the late 1770's to those I serve with here in Afghanistan. They have all sacrificed to ensure our freedom. But when I get back home, I'm going to make it a personal mission to specifically thank every Vietnam Vet I encounter for THEIR sacrifice. Because if nothing else good came from that terrible war, one thing did. It was the lesson learned on how we treat our warriors. We as a country learned from our mistake and now we treat our warriors as heroes, as we

treatment.”

“David Morton will work with me and the rest of the Command to make sure those who are diagnosed with injury, including mental health conditions, access the extensive rehabilitation programs available.

“Mr Morton's appointment is another significant milestone in the important and far-reaching reform. It will give every member of the ADF, and the public, greater confidence in the delivery of Defence's high-quality health care services,” Major General Alexander said.

Manure:

In the 16th and 17th centuries, everything had to be transported by ship and it was also before commercial fertilizers were invented, so large shipments of manure were common. It was shipped dry, because in dry form it weighed a lot less than when wet, but once water (at sea) hit it, it not only became heavier, but the process of fermentation began again, of which a by product is methane gas. As the stuff was stored below decks in bundles you can see what could (and did) happen. Methane began to build up below decks and the first time someone came below at night with a lantern, BOOOOM! Several ships were destroyed in this manner before it was determined just what was happening. After that, the bundles of manure were always stamped with the term ‘ Ship High In Transit ‘ on them, which meant for the sailors to stow it high enough off the lower decks so that

any water that came into the hold would not touch this volatile cargo and start the production of methane. Thus evolved the term ‘ S.H.I.T ‘, (Ship High In Transit) which has come down through the centuries and is in use to this very day. You probably did not know the true history of this word. Neither did I. I had always thought it was a golf term.

Australian Army turns 109

One of the oldest institutions in Australian turned 109 years old today, as the Australian Army celebrated its birthday at the Australian War Memorial.

To mark the occasion, a commemorative service was held at the Australian War Memorial around the Pool of Reflection.

Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie spoke to the officers and soldiers about the importance of the occasion.

“As Army marks its 109th year, we have a great deal to be proud of in the service our people continue to give their country,” said Lieutenant General Gillespie

“Today, we pause to remember the great work of this fine institution and to reflect on the manner in which the Australian Army has served this nation.

“We will continue to grow as an organisation and ensure that the traditions of Army are maintained and carried into the future.”

The Australian Army has a proud history

and now has soldiers deployed on major operations in the Middle East, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

The history of the Australian Army goes back over a hundred years to the year of Federation.

Each of the six colonial governments was responsible for the defence of their own colony until Federation on 1 January 1901. It was then that the Australian Constitution stated that all defence responsibility was vested in the Commonwealth Government.

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

ANZAC DAY IS A TIME FOR REMEMBRANCE, NOT SHOPPING

Anzac Day is time to remember the more than 102,000 Australians who have made the ultimate sacrifice and died in the service of our country and not for shopping, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin said, expressing his disappointment in Kmart's application to trade on Anzac Day.

"Anzac Day draws together our community in paying tribute to the men and women who have served. It is the one day of the year we stop, as a nation, to remember their sacrifice and courage," Mr Griffin said.

"It is unnecessary and disrespectful to open shops while our veterans march in Anzac Day parades.

"Shops can open on almost every other

day of the year. I feel strongly that the solemnity of Anzac Day should be preserved and that commercial enterprises can be put on hold for a few hours.

"Anzac Day is a public holiday so that people are free to attend services and pay their respects.

"I'm pleased to say that each year we see more people attending services, including young people, paying tribute to all our servicemen and women.

"Anzac Day is an important day to honour the men and women who have served in wars, conflicts and peace operations, and those who continue to serve in the Australian Defence Force, and I encourage Australians to attend a service and remember them, not to go shopping."

ADF PAYROLL AND PAY SYSTEM REFORM

Greg Combet, Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, today announced the immediate establishment of a high powered Australian Defence Force (ADF) Payroll Task Force and number of initiatives to accelerate reform of the ADF Payroll and Pay System.

"There is no doubt the ADF payroll system still needs remedial work. These ten measures are aimed at rectifying current deficiencies," Mr Combet said.

"The Task Force will drive the ongoing reform of the ADF pay and personnel processes, and report to Ministers on a monthly basis. In keeping with the Strategic Reform Program, this will include the consolidation of all military payroll processing under one area of responsibility within 18 months."

Over the next three months the Government and Defence will:

* Immediately establish a Task Force for

It is great regret that i announce that this will be the last Horse's Mouth that i will have the prilivadge to Edit. Due to work and family commitments i will be handing over the reigns for someone else to steer. If anyone is interested please contact one of the staff members listed on page two. I am more than happy to help you get started. Ed.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ADF MEMBERS A PRIORITY

Greg Combet, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, said today that the Government was determined to support ADF members who have been wounded overseas.

"The health and wellbeing of Defence personnel is a top priority for the Rudd Government, and that is why we are putting considerable funding into new and improved Defence health initiatives" Mr Combet said.

"For example, the Government is investing over \$150 million over the next decade into the ADF Rehabilitation Program which helps wounded ADF members return to service or transition to the care they need. "In fact, last year, that program achieved an 87 percent return to work rate which is above the national average for similar programs."

"Since coming to power the Rudd Government has also completed a thorough mental health review within Defence, and has allocated funding of an additional \$83 million over the next four years to implement the recommendations of this review.

"This includes enhancing the mental health workforce, improving mental health

training and expansion of programs to support members who are suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. These funds are also targeted at improving the transition services provided to members."

"We are also researching and investigating new health care technologies to support our troops in the field, including digital radiology and improved surgical capability during deployments.

"We will continue to provide our personnel with world class health care, that is why we are also funding a comprehensive e-health system to improve the maintenance of ADF health records," Minister Combet said.

Mr Combet also commented on reports in the media today about the number of individuals who have been wounded on deployment.

"Over the last decade there have been a number of people who have been wounded or injured during their course of their deployment. This is an unfortunate result of what can be very dangerous work.

"This is why the Government is committed to improving health and wellbeing programs for ADF members and the reason we have increased spending in these areas.

"Of the 22,232 ADF personnel deployed to East Timor and the 25,650 deployed to Middle East Area of Operation (MEAO), 3,605 individuals have made injury claims.

"I am advised by General Alexander, the head of Defence's Joint Health Command, that this health data shows that our defence force compares very favourably in relation to our allies on the number of injuries and the percentages of injuries that are

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DEADLINE

All contributions for the next edition of THE HORSE'S MOUTH must be with the editor no later than the 22nd of MAY 2010.

DISCLAIMER

Thoughts expressed in articles in THE HORSE'S MOUTH are those held by the writer/contributors and not necessarily those of the Association.

EDITORS NOTE

Welcome to the Autumn edition of THE HORSE'S MOUTH. We have been running low this quarter on submissions and fun emails from our world wide au-

dience (must be something to do with the economic downturn!) If you have any suggestions feel free to email them in to wahorsesmouth@raeme.org.au.

ADF Payroll and Pay System Reform to be co-chaired by Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General David Hurley, and Deputy Secretary (Defence Support), Mr Martin Bowles;

* Review and report on the adequacy of existing payroll procedures and compliance with them;

* Create a small specialist deployed civilian payroll administration cell that will drive consistency between the in-theatre and in-country payroll processing;

* Undertake quality assurance checks of International Campaign Allowance payments;

* Promote a common customer access channel including the 1800 DEFENCE number for members and their families to contact about pay related issues;

* Review the entire process for payment of deployed allowances and put in place revised checks and balances to ensure members are paid correctly;

* Enhance quality assurance processes that provide greater focus on control, supervision and checking of personnel data from local commander to the transactional processing area;

* Widen the current performance management regime to include control and compliance reporting on payment of ADF allowances;

* Develop a systematic forward looking Audit program to support the controls and compliance reporting around payroll processing; and

* Issue further official advice outlining the steps being put in place to improve the payroll system. This advice will also emphasise the obligation of personnel to meet their responsibilities on payroll matters including review of payslips and notification of errors as soon as possible.

The Task Force will be responsible for oversight of these initiatives and the

achievement of greater integrity and accuracy in the ADF Pay and Personnel processes.

“The initial steps of the Task Force will include remediating pay issues that arise for individual ADF members, including the recent overpayment of the International Campaign Allowance,” Mr Combet said.

“Additionally, the Government has endorsed a long term plan which would replace Defence’s current three pay systems with a more modern personnel ICT system.

“This will result in complex transactions and manual processing being undertaken by one central authority, not fragmented as is currently the case.

“Defence have already embarked upon a “technical refresh” of the current human resource and payroll system. This refresh will upgrade the technology and provide a modern platform that will stabilise the current system and prepare for the development of a robust payroll system of the future.

“It is important Government and ADF members can have confidence in the integrity of pay and personnel processes.

“Continuing problems in the area of pay for the ADF are unacceptable to the Government. It is also unacceptable to the individuals and their families who are paid incorrectly, and who are required to enter into repayment arrangements.

“The Government understands that the volume of manual transactions, which last year amounted to over 3 million, means human error is always a possibility. But the number of incorrect payments is unacceptable,” Mr Combet said.

Twass the month after Christmas

Twass the month after Christmas,
And all through the house,
Nothing would fit me,
Not even a blouse.

The cookies I'd nibbled,
The chocolate I'd taste
At the holiday parties
Had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales
There arose such a number!
When I walked to the store
(less a walk than a lumber),

I'd remember the marvellous meals I'd prepared;
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you, please."

As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt...
I said to myself, as I only can,
"You can't spend a Summer, disguised as a man!"

So, away with the last of the sour cream dip.
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip.
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
Till all the additional ounces have vanished.

I won't have a cookie, not even a lick.
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie.
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore...
But isn't that what January is for?
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.
Happy New Year to all, and to all a good diet.



*The Role Of RAEME Is To :-
" Provide Maintenance Engineering , Materiel Maintenance ,
Modifications , and Recovery Support to the Army."*

The Horse's Mouth

The Newsletter of the RAEME Association of WA (Inc.)

Autumn 2010

This newsletter is the official journal of the **ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF WA (INC.)**. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month, except for January, at 7.00pm, Bayswater Hotel, 78-80 Railway Parade, Bayswater, in the Function Room. Membership or other enquiries may be made to any of the committee members. A list is printed on Page 2 of this journal.

Post Print PP609596/0002

Volume 16 No. 1