

Veterans Voice

Northern Suburbs Veterans
Support Centre Inc.

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WELCOME HOME

The remains of 33 Australians, who were buried in military cemeteries in Malaysia and Singapore, have been returned to Australia.



Hundreds of people gathered at RAAF Richmond airbase north-west of Sydney on Thursday 2nd June 2016 to see one of the largest military repatriations in Australia's history.

The remains include those of service personnel and dependents interred at Terendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia, and the Australian who died during the Vietnam War and was interred in the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore.

Those gathered for the repatriation ceremony include several hundred Vietnam War veterans, servicemen and families of those who died.

Vietnam veteran Lieutenant Colonel Ian Henderson said it was "wonderful" to see the remains returned to Australia.

"When I saw the smoke of the nose wheel of the second aircraft I thought, they're at home," he said.

"In a way it's the culmination for Vietnam veterans that it's happened. That none of our compatriots are left overseas.

"This is right that this ought to happen and bring them back as they have."

Those in attendance also included the Governor General of Australia Sir Peter Cosgrove as well as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs Mr Dan Tehan (although by the look of the photograph he appears very bored!).

The remains were flown in on two RAAF C-17 Globemasters which touched down at 10:20am at RAAF Richmond.

The military bearer parties were drawn from each branch of the Australian Defence Force; Army, Navy and Airforce.

Prior to early 1966, it was Australian Government policy for soldiers killed in action to be buried near where they fell or their families had to pay £500 for repatriation of the bodies back to Australia. That would be the equivalent of AUD\$30,000 today, which most families simply could not afford.

After a Vietnam Veterans Association Australia, a public Change.org campaign which attracted 40,000 signatures and lobbying from family members over the past couple of years, the

Australian government finally agreed to right this wrong.

Lest We Forget

Australian servicemen being returned in the Terendak Repatriation:

Private Norman George Allen
Private Gary Alan Archer
Lieutenant Robert Graham Birse
Corporal Robert Walter Bowtell
Lieutenant David John Brian
Sergeant Ronald Thomas Carroll
Private Thomas William Checkley
Private Christopher Clark
Warrant Officer Class Two Kevin George Conway
Private Ronald Eric Field
Warrant Officer Class Two John Garrigan
Warrant Officer Class Two Max Powell Hanley MM
Corporal Reginald Hedley Hillier
Trooper Tony Holland
Private Neville Wayne Horne
Second Lieutenant Alan Douglas Jellie
Signalman Kenneth Charles Johnson
Warrant Officer Class Two Ronald Victor Lees
Corporal John Gregory Stinson Pearce
Warrant Officer Class Two Thomas Dudley Phillips
Lance Corporal Thomas Ross
Lance Corporal Thomas Ruduss
Corporal Francis John Smith
Signalman John Darrell Tassell
Private Mervyn Arthur Frederick Wilson

AFGHANISTAN VETERANS FLOCK TO DISABILITY SUPPORT

Two Afghanistan war veterans are going on to the disability support pension each day as Australian fighters increasingly claim multiple health conditions and render the hostilities potentially the worst of all recent conflicts for life-changing impact.



Department of Veterans' Affairs figures suggest that compared with other recent conflicts, proportionally more from the Afghan theatre will be totally incapacitated and needing maximum support.

In the past year, the number of Afghan veterans on disability support has grown by a quarter, increasing by more than 700 to 3777 as of the end of September.

With post-traumatic stress disorder, the largest condition with 1176. Hearing and back problems are the next most numerous conditions, followed by depressive disorders, where the number of accepted claims has quadrupled in three years to 643.

The number of Afghanistan veterans suffering alcohol dependence or alcohol abuse amounts to 350, with a further 103 suffering anxiety.

Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans Association president Allan Thomas warned that DVA will be hardpressed to meet the future needs of veterans in an atmosphere of government cost-cutting, and said some veterans were already waiting up to two years before having a claim accepted.

Afghanistan veterans on disability support are now suffering on average 2.85 conditions each. That is up from fewer than 2.4 conditions each three years ago.

University of Melbourne professor of health economics Philip Clarke said the numbers suggests that Afghanistan veterans are more likely to eventually be eligible for the Special Rate Disability Pension and entitled to a "gold card" covering all their healthcare costs.

"There is this continuing big proportion of claims for PTSD, so the question is whether there is any more active work we should be doing to better tackle this," Professor Clarke told The Australian.

The department tips that those supported under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act will rise by more than 8000 over the next five years from 19,561 this year to 27,900 by 2020.

Veteran John Bale, of veteran support charity Soldier On, said veterans were putting their hands up sooner than those from previous conflicts

For some time now those involved with the Department as either Pension Officers or Advocates have become increasingly frustrated with the Decisions made by Delegates as well as the delays and obstacles that the Department has placed in front of Veterans seeking compensation for injuries received during their operational and/or peacekeeping service.

Practitioners across the country have assisted 1000's of clients with welfare, pensions and advocacy services on a shoestring budget which makes their dedication all the more impressive. The Department has

been reducing this budget every year in the hope that ESO's will either close down or cease to carry out this much required work.

Politicians, Departmental Heads and senior Public Servants often roll out the old adage of: **"we owe our veterans a debt of gratitude and that the role of the Military is unique etc."** particularly election time or responding to questions on Veterans matters but nothing ever changes.

In actual fact DVA direction is driven by the number of claimants that die.

Since 1999 46 Soldiers have died in combat and yet over 240 have committed suicide because they could not get the support that they needed from DVA, the Department that has a duty of care to look after those Veterans.

DVA Staff are constantly complaining about caseloads (not individual Veterans), have little understanding or respect for the nature of military service, don't actually understand the legislations, how and what effect their decisions may have on the veteran and lastly that Beneficial Provisions apply under all legislations. Sadly, this is compounded by Defence's inability to keep adequate records or their unwillingness to promptly supply answers or documentation to questions posed by DVA in regard to alleged incidents.

It is actually amazing how much information Defence have when issued with a subpoena from the AAT or Federal Court so why was this not able to be provided in the first place?

DVA have spent tens of millions of tax payer dollars on reports, studies and research into a myriad of veterans issues including the Gulf War Veterans' Health Study, the Timor Leste

Families Mental Health Study, Children of Vietnam Veterans' Health Study, The Dunt and Clarke Reviews to name just a few and little or none of the recommendations have been properly implemented (that is if DVA actually asked for recommendations in the case of the Timor study DVA specifically requested no recommendations).

Any logical person would think that DVA, after being aware of all the problems raised above would commit to being consultative and start addressing the serious flaws in both the legislation and service delivery but unfortunately not, DVA has become paranoid and now monitors veterans and client's social media under the guise of an employer as MRCA and SRCA incapacity payments are considered wages and are generated through the Defence pay system.

Not surprisingly the Privacy Commissioner did not see it that way when an overzealous review delegate started stalking a veteran on social media and even used extracts (out of context) from her FB posts to reject one of her claims. DVA have fallen foul of the privacy commissioner a significant number of times in the last few years for their unethical behavior.

Under the VEA Veterans are very well looked after comparatively to those under MRCA and SRCA (which does not have a TPI, it ceases at 65 with no Gold Card).

The DVA have failed to fairly administer 3 separate legislations none of which are mutually co-operative and many veterans now fall under 2 if not 3 legislations and these long serving members are the most legislatively discriminated against of all.

THIS IS 'POLITICISING'? GIVE US A BREAK

JUNE 11, 2016 10:00PM - MIRANDA DEVINE: NEWS CORP AUSTRALIA NETWORK:



The Australian Defence Force never had a problem when Labor MP Mike Kelly campaigned with photos of himself in Army uniform in the last three elections.



The ADF never had a problem when its personnel marched in uniform in Sydney's highly political Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade for the last three years.

Alongside Queers against Detention, Bronny Takes a (helicopter) Ride, Australian Marriage Equality, the Greens and the usual anti-Catholic floats, we have marchers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Defence Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Information Service (DEFGLIS).

No politicisation here, folks, just "diversity".

The ADF never had a problem when senior Naval officer Mona Shindy engaged in Islamic politics, promoting theocratic Islamist Imams, criticising Tony Abbott, and campaigning against the Australian Liberty Alliance using the Official Royal Australian Navy Islamic Advisor Twitter account."

That was just "diversity.

The ADF only had a problem when adverse publicity forced it to close down @navyislamic, but not before Captain Shindy was showered with awards for promoting "diversity and cultural change".

Even after the Twitter account was deleted, the ADF never uttered a word of reproach, but claimed it was part of a move to "consolidate" the Navy's social media platforms.

The ADF never had a problem when Air Force Squadron Leader Vince Chong, the head of DEFGLIS, testified in favour of same-sex marriage to a Senate Committee, describing the status quo as the "inequality in marriage law" and recommending laws preventing religious organisations from hiring whomever they want.

The ADF never had a problem with Navy personnel engaging in "dawah" (proselytising Islam) on behalf of Saudi Arabia at the Prince Sultan International Military Holy Quran Memorisation Competition.

The ADF never had a problem when the Army, under former chief David Morrison, launched a campaign of blatant gender political "cultural change" that destroyed the careers of many good soldiers, and hastened the retirement of many more.

So, you see, the ADF politicised itself a long time before Andrew Hastie became a Liberal politician in the WA seat of Canning last year, and used a photograph of himself in uniform in the background of campaign billboards.

The only time the ADF had a problem with “politicisation”

in election campaigns was when the Liberal Party found as fine a candidate as Australia has ever seen in the upstanding conservative Christian ex-SAS commander.

So, when the Department of Defence sacked Hastie from the Army Reserve last week for “politicising” the ADF, it drowned in its own hypocrisy.

Islamist tweets, Mardi Gras, Labor candidates, Koran memorisation, Marxist gender politics — all that was fine, but along comes Hastie, and the Army goes into meltdown about its “apolitical stance”.

Give us a break.

The only “diversity” the ADF doesn’t embrace is conservative.



For instance, when Army major Bernie Gaynor wanted to march in uniform in the anti-abortion March for the Babies, permission was denied because the event was “political in nature”.

The truth is that the ADF has no problem with politics as long as it is of the politically correct sort.

But picking on Hastie was a bridge too far.

To even up the score, the ADF has also ordered Brisbane Labor

candidate Pat O’Neill, and Kelly, for the first time, to remove uniformed photographs from their campaign material.

But Hastie, 33, was unrepentant last week. He is justifiably proud of his 13 years of service in the ADF, including three tours of duty in Afghanistan, and says the voters of Canning are entitled to know what their MP has been doing almost his entire adult life.

“I’m proud of that and I think it’s good to let taxpayers know that their money, a lot of which has gone into my professional development, has been well spent.”

He made the point that: “David Morrison politicised the ADF long before I ever put my mug on a billboard. In fact, he hastened my exit from the army into politics.”

Hastie was busy fighting the Taliban when Morrison made his infamous “Jedi Council” speech in 2013 and toured every post and outpost of the Army to thunder about “systemic sexism”.

When the then chief of Army arrived in Afghanistan, battle-weary frontline troops, including Hastie, expected some form of acknowledgment and support for their efforts in dangerous and difficult conditions. Instead, Morrison gave them a gobful about how sexist and unforgivably macho they all were, and curtly repeated the slurs privately while sitting alongside them at dinner.

Morrison was singing straight from the song-sheet of anti-male political feminism, undermining the morale of the troops most crucial to Army operations. Yet the ADF had no problem with that.

OUR SHAMEFUL TREATMENT OF VETERANS MUST CHANGE.

Wendy Squires April 15 2016

Post-traumatic stress disorder affects many who have served this country but little is being done to meet their needs.



Off to war: It’s time our nation’s government provided better services to our veterans, many of whom suffer ongoing conditions such as depression and PTSD upon their return. Photo: ABC Publicity

As a kid during school holidays, I would be sent off to a country town to stay with elderly friends of the family, who I called Nan and Pop. There, I would roam the streets unsupervised from morning to dusk, saying hi to neighbours and patting their dogs.

There was one particular man I was scared of, however, who would sit on his front porch all day, several doors down from Nan’s. He had only one leg and would stare blankly for hours on end.

He looked so sad, it seemed as if he was perpetually crying. Generally there was a respected truce between us. He would see me and I him but neither would acknowledge the other.

One day I asked Nan what had happened to the man’s leg and why he was so sad.

“He lost his leg in the war,” she answered. “Don’t be scared of him. Reg is a lovely, gentle man. I’ve known him since he was a kid. He’s just not been right since he came home from the war. A lot of the boys who went from here aren’t.”

I took this on board as well as a seven or eight-year-old can, and

the next day I decided to wave to Reg. To my delight, he waved back.

That afternoon I took the 20 cents I had earned cleaning out Nan's chook pen and bought two Paddle Pops, one for me and one for Reg. I was tenuous climbing those stairs to his porch but Reg's reaction was worth my tiny terror. The soldier's face lit up and a tear trickled down his bristly cheek.

Reg didn't say much but I visited him every day during that stay, telling him how Nan's chooks kept escaping and how she swore as she tried to catch them. Sometimes Reg would have a Mintie or a biscuit for me. I believe we became firm friends.

It was a year before I returned to the town and the first thing I noticed was Reg wasn't at his porch, so I ran to ask Nan why. She looked distressed and put me on her knee and told me Reg was "gone".

"He just couldn't take it anymore," she said. "We can only hope he is in a happier place."

I couldn't comprehend suicide at the time, but hell – I do now. I've had several friends and many more acquaintances take their own lives over the years, and today I have one dear friend I worry about daily, who I fear may do the same.

It's because my friend today has the same blank look as Reg, half here and half somewhere else he doesn't want to be. My friend was a policeman and now suffers acute post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

If it wasn't for his loving family and their constant care, I have no idea how he would survive. The fact that the very force he suffered for has all but abandoned him to deal with an aggressive and cruel

insurance company for compensation is beyond me. It disgusts and angers me to my marrow. And the police force is only the tip of an insidious iceberg of neglect in this country.

Tomorrow I will be attending a rally in Melbourne, on the steps of Parliament House, joining veterans, families and supporters calling for a royal commission into the Department of Veteran Affairs.

From 1999 to the start of February 2016, some 249 soldiers returned from wars in the Middle East have committed suicide, more than 30 in 2015 alone. This is only a roughly accrued estimate – the actual number is probably far more. Compare this to how many soldiers died in war in Afghanistan – 41 dead and 261 injured – and it becomes clear the real battle these soldiers face is not at war but home, in the country they fought for.

Since 1975 Australia has deployed 120,000 troops on overseas operations. The numbers suffering mental illness is estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000. Yet these men may have been better off staying in battle, where at least they would have received attention, because little is happening here.

As the number of post-1975 veterans has been growing, the DVA has been reducing staffing numbers and cutting back entitlements. There are different processing elements, depending where you are in Australia, with most still operating a single file, paper-based system. Veterans have no way of telling where claims are up to or in which state they are being handled, and files are often lost.

Veterans are required to attend up to five appeals to gain their proper compensation because of this poor administration, and the use of adversarial work cover assessors under-evaluating veteran incapacities to lower compensation amounts.

From lodgement of claim to payment – if the claims go through the appeal process – can take up to five years.

This is too long! These people are suffering now – good men like Reg, haunted by what they have seen and done protecting our freedom. It is a national disgrace and one every citizen should get on board to protest.

And while we're at it, let's look at the police force leadership and demand they treat their own with respect, dignity, care and compensation too. Because I will be damned if my friend decides there is "happier place". That place should be his home, and it is up to all of us to ensure it is.

Saturday Age columnist Wendy Squires is a journalist, editor and author.

HMAS SYDNEY: NAVY SEARCHES FOR ANSWERS TO IDENTIFY UNKNOWN SAILOR USING MITOCHONDRIAL DNA



The Navy is calling on families of sailors lost aboard HMAS Sydney to consider genetic testing, so one of the country's great maritime mysteries can be solved — the identity of the unknown sailor from the ship. HMAS Sydney was lost off the Western Australian coast in November 1941, after a short

but vicious battle with a German raider, The Kormoran. All 645 men aboard Sydney were lost without a trace, save for one body which washed up in a life raft on Christmas Island in February 1942. Naval historian Greg Swindon, who is in charge of the project to identify the sailor, said with this year's 75th anniversary of the ship's loss, answers were vital. "It's important not just for the country but the families of those lost on the Sydney to discover the identity, so he can be given back," Mr Swindon said. "It's also Australian government policy to try and identify our unknown sailors, soldiers and airmen when they are found." Ten years ago, DNA recovered from that body was sent to the ancient DNA lab at Adelaide University to try find a match with a living relative. Head of the lab, Dr Jeremy Austin, said one reason the quest was taking so long was that DNA testing in real life was nothing like an episode of CSI, where answers come at the click of a mouse. "That's a really good question," he laughs. "There wasn't any trouble getting the DNA, the trouble is finding the relatives."

DNA passed through maternal line Dr Austin said that was related to the nature of the DNA recovered from the sailor. "It's mitochondrial DNA which is present in a much higher number in cells and so it survives much longer in degraded remains," he said. "It's the same type of DNA that was used to trace relatives of Richard III who died over 600 years ago." The disadvantage with mitochondrial DNA is that it is passed through the maternal line, from mother to child. Whoever the unknown sailor is, his direct descendants; sons, daughters, grandchildren do not share his mitochondrial DNA and so there

would be no point testing them. Mr Swindon said that makes for a much more complex family tree.

"That's the hard part, to find the suitable relatives and in many cases when we do locate a suitable relative they have no idea they are related to a sailor lost on board HMAS Sydney," Mr Swindon said. "In some cases we've had to go back to the sailor's grandmother and in one case a great grandmother and then trace down the line to find a suitable relative to test." To make the task easier the Navy drew up a short list of 120 of Sydney's crew for family testing, based on dental records and other observations of the remains. But while the identity of the Sydney sailor remains elusive, it is helping to produce a much more nuanced genetic picture of Australia and the Australian Defence Force.

Remains from both world wars tested at Adelaide lab Along with the Sydney project, remains from other battles in both world wars are being tested at the ancient DNA lab. Dr Austin said while most Australians back then were from an Anglo-Saxon background, things were not so black and white as assumed. "We are now seeing that there are a small frequency of people from non-European backgrounds who were in the Australian forces in the first and second world war," Dr Austin said. "We know Aboriginal Australians fought in both wars and also Australians with Chinese heritage." Dr Austin said in the case of remains from Kokoda trail in Papua New Guinea, it meant genetic markers of Asian ancestry were no longer assumed to automatically point to a Japanese soldier — he could be Australian. Mr Swindon said people who think they may be a Sydney sailor relative should contact him, so a

DNA sampling kit can be mailed out, which will then be forwarded to Dr Austin in Adelaide. "Every set of remains was someone's father, brother, husband, uncle and so there are still people alive in Australia who care deeply about who these people are," Dr Austin said.

THE BATTLE AT BROKEN HILL - THE FIRST ISLAMIC TERRORIST ATTACK ON AUSTRALIAN SOIL



On January 1, 1915 two Broken Hill men, both former camel drivers, armed themselves with rifles, and a homemade flag bearing Islamic insignia and a large supply of ammunition and launched a surprise attack on the Picnic Train about 3 kilometres outside Broken Hill.

The train carried about 1200 Broken Hill residents to Silverton where a picnic to celebrate the New Year was to take place.

The two Muslim men, Gool Mohamed originally a Pashtun tribesman from Afghanistan and Mullah Abdullah from what is known today as Pakistan, decided to wage jihad against Australian infidels after Australia and the Ottoman Empire officially joined the opposite sides in the WWI.

Despite attempts from "progressive" authors, who try to explain the actions of the two Muslim men as acts of misplaced patriotism or as a desperate response to brutal racial persecution, the reasons for the terrorist attack were clearly stated by the perpetrators themselves. Both men knew very well they

were going to die and (as any present day terrorists do) and left notes explaining that they had to become martyrs - DEFENDING THEIR FAITH and the caliphate.

The attack was not spontaneous. It was a very well planned and a premeditated act. Both men wanted to inflict as much damage and kill as many infidels as possible and having almost the entire population of the tiny settlement packed into forty open, wooden carriages where people sat in rows, shoulder to shoulder on flat wooden benches, presented a great opportunity to do just that.

Gool and Abdullah knew very well that each January 1st, the Manchester Unity Order of Oddfellows held its annual New Year's Day picnic. The train carriages were normally used for taking ore to Port Pirie but once a year they were washed thoroughly, fitted with wooden benches and transformed into the Broken Hill Picnic Train. It was a perfect target in a flat area, with the train moving slowly and people sitting close to each other without much chance to hide or run anywhere.

The two Muslim men used Gool's ice-cream cart to transport their rifles, the flag and ammo to the place previously selected by them for the ambush, to avoid raising any suspicions.

The train left Broken Hill Sulphide Street station at 10 a.m.

About two miles out of Broken Hill, an ice cream cart flying a Turkish flag was noticed by those on the train. It was on the northern side of the line close to the railway fence and two men, later identified as Gool Mohamed and Mulla Abdulla, lay in a trench beside the track within 30 yards of the passing train. They began

firing as the train drew level with them. The firing continued as the train passed with 20 or 30 shots being fired in total.

The train was brought to a halt further up the line. It was found as a result of the attack on the train two people were killed and seven wounded.

(Six not seven people were wounded on the train the seventh injured person was a police constable, who was wounded during the pursuit, which followed the assault)

The murdered passengers were: 17-year-old Alma Cowie and William John Shaw who died instantly.

The six wounded people were: Mary Kavanagh, George Stokes, Thomas Campbell, Lucy Shaw (daughter of William Shaw), Alma Crocker and Rose Crabb.

Soon after the assault Gool and Abdullah withdrew towards the west. During their attempted escape they came across and murdered Alfred E. Millard who had tried to hide in his hut. By this time the police were in full pursuit and when they sighted the two running assassins they fired their guns above their heads in order to force them to surrender, but instead Gool and Abdullah returned fire and seriously wounded Constable Robert Mills.

The police sought the aid of the local rifle club, shooting at the range that day. At the time, men had to serve in the militia which involved rifle club shoots, so these men were summoned to help the outgunned police. They were instrumental in the demise of the brave jihadists.

The murderous pair made their last stand at the top of a hill where they found good cover behind large rocks. They were both shot

dead by the police during an hour and a half gun battle.

Interestingly, the locals as well as most of the contemporary Australians, did not understand the nature of this terrible "incident".

First of all, it did not appear possible to the people that the pair acted simply out of religious Islamic fanaticism. Patriotic zeal or even a simple act of revenge were blamed but religious piety was not even considered a valid reason for the massacre.

Secondly, people could not believe that the pair acted alone without any links and orders from a larger, organized group, as for most of non-Muslims it simply doesn't occur that the orders to kill them are not given from enemies in this material world but by Allah himself from the depths and core of the Islamic religion.

As a result, the authorities suspected that the men acted on orders issued by their local German or Turkish handlers and the fact that the two were not even closely related to Turkey, or that they openly admitted in their letters to acting in the name of Allah just did not make any sense.

Conclusion:

Islamic loyalties cannot be changed because their allegiances are hard-wired into their religious doctrine. There are many examples from the past, similar to the tragedy described above, and so it would be natural that our current leaders and "social visionaries" would come to a logical conclusion that forcing Muslim immigration upon an innocent population will all work out in the end – but in reality it is just like setting a time bomb with a hope that the timer will somehow stop ticking.

SANDAKAN

They were from a generation of
not so long ago

All had heard the call to fight our
nation's foe

From many walks of life they had
gathered as one

To serve their land down under as
loyal Aussie sons

War condemned them to terrible
trials, again and again

Yet as Prisoners of War there was
never any shame

Starving and tortured, they still
fought the good fight

Enduring all with love of nation
and for a cause that was right

Their invisible shield steeled with
duty, honour and love of country

Sharp spears of defiance,
brotherhood and far distant family

Secretly in restless sleep, they fed
greedily on sweet memories

Their spirits lifted by a past way of
life in a big brown land so free

Perhaps they heard the
kookaburras with their loud
cackling calls

Or smelt the sharp scent of wattle
showered by trees so tall

The crashing boom of froth
flecked waves reaching golden
shores

Camped in the silent bush with
glittering stars above and much
more

The grim Reaper was busy but
none were afraid to die

Until the very last, courage
glowed in resolute eyes

Perhaps in that last moment, a
final fleeting thought of others

In a home where loved ones
waited and for a band of caring
brothers

George Mansford © February 2016

COMINGS AND GOINGS!

Since the last Edition we have lost
another Executive Committee
Member namely Richard Doorne
through health reasons. We wish
Richard a very speedy recovery
and all the best for the future. We
will always be here for you.

SURGE IN DEFENCE SPENDING ON THE CARDS

Australia has announced a surge
in defence spending, a move that
reflects concern over military
expansion in the region.

Military spending will grow by
A\$29.9b (\$21.4b, £15.4b) over
next 10 years, the 2016 Defence
White Paper outlined.

The largest investment will be
made in submarines, with
investment also being made in
additional naval vessels, fighter
jets and personnel.



Under the plan defence spending
will comprise 2% of Australia's
GDP by 2021.

The report outlines the
government's defence priorities to
2035.

Australia's Prime Minister
Malcolm Turnbull said the threats
faced by Australia were not
limited to foreign conflicts, but
also included terrorism, cyber-
warfare and climate change.

"[This] is a plan to become more
powerful on land and in the skies,
and more commanding both on
the seas and beneath them. It is a

program to be more resilient in the
cyberspace, to be more
innovative with technology, and to
have greater situational
awareness thanks to our
advanced intelligence
capabilities," Mr Turnbull said.

It says that about 25% of the
additional spending will be put
towards the most "comprehensive
regeneration of our Navy since
the Second World War".

Construction of 12 "regionally
superior" submarines at a cost of
more than A\$50b represents
Australia's largest-ever defence
procurement.

The submarines, which will have
a "high degree of interoperability"
with US forces, will begin to enter
service from the early 2030s.

In addition to three Hobart class
air warfare destroyers already
scheduled to enter service in the
early 2020s, nine new warfare
frigates optimised for anti-
submarine warfare will be built by
the late 2020s.

The white paper also provides for
an increase in personnel of
around 2,500 to a total of 62,400
across the Australian Defence
Force.

The purchase of unmanned
drones, plus previously
announced plans to buy seventy-
two Joint Strike Fighters and 12
Growler electronic warfare
aircraft, were also outlined in the
paper.

The China question

The white paper identified three
strategic defence interests for
Australia: securing Australia's
northern borders and
communication lines, ensuring
security in its immediate region,
and maintaining a "rules-based
global order", particularly in the
Indo-Pacific region.

It reaffirms Australia's commitment to the US but expresses ambivalence on China, calling on it to be "more transparent about its defence policies.

The paper also reiterates Australia's opposition to the reclamation of land in the South China Sea and urges ASEAN and China to agree on a code of conduct for the area as soon as possible.

Dr John Blaxland, a senior fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at Australian National University, said the language on China was more robust than in the 2013 Defence White Paper.

China's economic muscle meant that it was more likely to ignore rules that didn't suit its interests, which was evident both in territorial disputes and in developments in the cyber domain, Dr Blaxland said.

"It's not that concerned about the rules, about a global order that it didn't write."

He said the government's defence plan was "not an unreasonable insurance policy" and would have a strong impact on capacity if implemented properly.

"The global average spend on defence is between 2.1% and 2.3% of GDP, depending on what measure you use, so Australia's plan to spend 2% is not unreasonable," he said. China has responded angrily to Australia's Defence White Paper which outlines a surge in military spending.

A boost of A\$29.9b (\$21.4b, £15.4b) over the next decade reflects concern over military expansion in the region.

The white paper reiterates Australia's objection to the

reclamation of land in the South China Sea and urges ASEAN and China to agree on a code of conduct.

China says it is "seriously concerned" and has expressed its "dissatisfaction" over the defence strategy.

Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Hua Chunying asked Australia to "take realistic actions" to work with China to maintain peace and stability in the region.

"In the hopes of relieving tensions and the possibility of an arms race, we hope that relevant countries can give up joint drills and stop increasing their military presence in the region," Ms Chunying said.

The largest investment outlined in the White Paper on Thursday is for submarines to replace Australia's current diesel and electric-powered Collins Class vessels. At a cost of more than A\$50b it represents Australia's largest-ever defence procurement.

About 25% of the additional spending will be put towards the most "comprehensive regeneration of our Navy since the Second World War", the Defence document says.

Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the threats faced by Australia were not limited to foreign conflicts, but also included terrorism, cyber-warfare and climate change.

"[This] is a plan to become more powerful on land and in the skies, and more commanding both on the seas and beneath them. It is a program to be more resilient in the cyberspace, to be more innovative with technology, and to have greater situational awareness thanks to our advanced intelligence capabilities," Mr Turnbull said on

Thursday. However, tensions between Malaya and Indonesia were also simmering in the post-colonial unrest of the era.

AN ELECTION IS LOOMING – USE YOUR VOTE WISELY!

On 2nd July we are being asked to vote for another Government and as usual we are being inundated with propaganda from all the parties trying to win our vote.

I recently received a letter from my local Federal Members asking me to vote for him and the reasons why I should. I read the material very thoroughly and decided to ask him some pertinent questions in relation to my favourite subject namely the treatment of Veterans.

I also decided to write to all of the major party candidates asking the same question, what is their Party going to do to overcome the disparity between DVA Disability Pension and the General Pensions?

You guessed it, I am still waiting for a reply some 5 weeks on! Just goes to show what Politicians think of the Veteran Community doesn't it. So think very carefully who you vote for on 2nd July.

AMERICAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR VETERANS



The Americans have long revered their Veterans which is something that Australians should adopt.

Wherever you go in the USA Veterans are openly thanked for their service and receive a hand shake or a hug from complete strangers, something I found out

about during a recent trip to Honolulu, Las Vegas and Los Angeles.



During my three week trip there wasn't a day when I wasn't thanked for my service even though I was an Australian Vietnam Veteran.

At first I found this need to recognize Veterans a bit daunting but as the days went by and I spoke to numerous other Veterans I came to realise that this recognition goes a long way to helping those who suffer from the trauma of war and is something that we in Australia should perhaps take on.

After all looking after Veterans in need takes more than one day a year (ANZAC Day).



The US Government has just announced that is releasing over \$600 million dollars to refurbish old derelict hotels and to turn them in to hostels for homeless Veterans as there are thousands of Veterans sleeping rough every night.

The USA Minister for Veterans' Affairs has made a public appeal to the people of America to never forget the sacrifices made by their Veterans past and present. Unlike our own Minister who believes that it is inappropriate for Veterans and Advocates to contact him in regard to issues affecting the wellbeing of

Veterans. Australia has a lot to learn!

SOME FUN!



ALL men see in only 16 colours, like Windows default settings. Peach, for example, is a fruit, not a colour. Pumpkin is also a fruit. We have no idea what mauve is.



WHO WE ARE

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