

Veterans Voice

Northern Suburbs Veterans Support
Centre Inc.

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Edition 2 – Volume 2

QUEENSLAND ARTIST PAYS TRIBUTE TO FALLEN SOLDIERS



A US-BASED Queensland artist is drawing closer to completing a big-hearted project that pays tribute to the 42 Australians killed while serving in Afghanistan.

Jason Swain has lived in Washington DC for 25 years, but his thoughts are never far from home.

The Sunshine Coast-raised painter, who has done portraits of luminaries including former president Bill Clinton, said he often donated pieces for different causes.

He said he had felt the need to give some comfort to families of Diggers lost overseas and decided to complete a series of portraits — from approved photos.

“This is my way of paying tribute to these warriors ... giving each family a personal gift to say thank you for their sacrifice.

“I couldn’t do one without doing them all and have done 31 of the 42 Australians killed while serving in Afghanistan (41 with the Australian Defence Force and one with the British Armed Forces).

“This has taken about six years as I’m working on them in my spare time.”

Swain paints for free, but has sought donations to assist with shipping and framing costs, which are about \$300 per painting. He has set up a Gofundme.com page called Portraits of Heroes so others can help.

He has just visited Australia, where he met relatives of fallen soldiers.



Among them was Susan Chuck, mother of Special forces soldier Private Ben Chuck, 27, a North Queensland who died in 2010 when his chopper crashed in southern Kandahar province.

Ms Chuck said that she was gobsmacked and overwhelmed when Swain contacted her to convey what he wanted to do.

Swain had heard about the tragedy because it had received media attention in the US due to an American being among the fatalities.

She said Ben was the first soldier painted and she kept the portrait in her office.

“It’s a beautiful thing to do for a family. I was so impressed with this stranger who had the compassion and desire to honour these boys who have paid the ultimate price.

“It was lovely to meet him in person ... his soul is amazing.



SWAIN CAPTURES MATTHEW LOCKE

Swain said he was often invited to functions and had been welcomed into the military community.

“It was great to see Susan and it’s always heartwarming to meet these amazing families,” he said.

“They are a tight-knit group bonded by what they’ve been through.

“They are appreciative (of the portraits) and I think they are glad that someone is still thinking about their sons.”

RAPID ADVANCES IN WARFARE POSE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS FOR THE ADF



The general held out the palm of his hand. "They're already making small, remote-controlled, UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] this big. It's incredible. Instead of having to risk the life of a forward scout to find out if there's anything behind the wall, you can send one of these to do the job for you. Technology is already changing the way we fight."

Spending a week at Adelaide's Land Warfare Exhibition comes as an utter shock to someone who thought they knew about the new dimensions of warfare.

Advances in computerization have dramatically shrunk the cost and size of the new weapons that will transform war. And you don't need to be some sort of military enthusiast to guess the follow-on effect this will have. Everyone, everyone, needs to understand what's happening because these changes are coming to seek us out, whether we want them or not.

Just recently, the "section" was the smallest unit in the army. It had one machine-gun, a corporal, and eight other rifleman carrying backpacks and plain-green plastic sheets that the soldiers would clip together to make tents, called hutchies, at night.

Today the soldiers have night-vision goggles, body-armor, and equipment that already makes the old army look like something out of the Napoleonic period.

Tomorrow the changes will be even greater.

Every soldier in the section will be connected by radio, wearing exoskeletons to distribute weight and boost strength, and carrying weapons capable of effective fire more than a kilometre out.

They'll be travelling in vehicles with reactive armour that's

capable of destroying missiles before they hit, and equipped with UAVs and computers to provide incredible situational awareness and communications to link them directly with aircraft so they can guide artillery fire directly and automatically onto the target, using the precision of an eight-figure grid reference.

The point of this description is not to glorify the technology of killing; far from it. It's simply pointing out that we now live in a new world – one where our comfortable assumptions of the past need to be thrown out because they are no guide to the present, let alone the future.

It will take time for these changes to ripple through society, but change us they will.

Prominently on display was Rafael (a Hebrew word meaning "God has healed"), with their "Iron Dome" missile shield that protects settlements in Israel's south-west and unmanned naval vessels. Arguments about whether these are defensive systems rapidly become irrelevant when civilians are being killed, and that's not the point. The message of this column is simply that conflict is already unrecognisable.

Australian companies are displaying similar agility. Queanbeyan's EOS defence systems has sold automatic vehicle-turrets overseas in hugely competitive markets. These developments all beg three, almost existential questions.

The first will be "where's the money coming from?"

The navy and air force are used to handing over (just) enough money for their poor relation to buy an armoured vehicle every decade or so, but the new

requirements are immense and show no sign of deflating.

Over the past 30 years the amount of the defence budget spent on equipment has already spiralled from 35 to 54 per cent feeding the urgent needs of those services. Now there are new requirements. We just can't afford the structure we've got and anyone who tells you otherwise is lying or living in cloud-cuckoo land.

At some point hard decisions will need to be made. Either the taxpayer will have to cough up more (not likely!) or politicians will have to take some hard decisions (not likely either!) about what capabilities we just can't afford. The real point is that politicians won't be able to send the soldiers off on missions if they're not equipped correctly. It's up to them to get serious.

The second issue is waste and this is also, far too often, the responsibility of government. Yesterday the navy welcomed its final MH-60R helicopter. We'd bought these after the 2009 White Paper identified an urgent requirement. I watched, years ago, as the first machines were being completed in Oswego, up-state New York. Tick for the navy, tick for Lockheed Martin. What could go wrong?

Well, a parliamentary works committee didn't approve money for a hangar back in Nowra, so we paid tens of millions to send 98 aircrew over to train in Florida for 18 months. The hangers are now the most expensive in the Southern Hemisphere, if not the world.

We're at the cutting edge of worst practice!

The third consequence follows from the new and rapidly evolving

capabilities, and closely aligned with this is the new destructiveness of weaponry,

There's always a tension between protection (armour) and assault (firepower).

Where will that new balance lie?

How much are we prepared to spend on equipment or, if you like, what's the life of a soldier worth? And, with the boundary between the front line and civilians increasingly porous, the inevitable question for a comfortable, prosperous society.

Are we ready to face another war?

*OFFICER AND DUNTRON
MAN BELIEVED IN HIS MEN:
AND WHEN IT MATTERED
THEY BELIEVED IN HIM*

OBITUARY

JIM HUGHES
Soldier

18-8-1929 – 12-8-2016



We buried Major General James Curnow Hughes one month shy of the 45th anniversary of the epic battle of Nui Le.

'Sunny Jim' was a man welcome at any Diggers' booze-up and the scourge of any indifferent officer; and the Colonel who took 4 RAR Battalion to Vietnam in 1971 and who came within inches of losing an entire company of 120 men to the 33 Regiment of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

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There are still people looking for this closure thing but Jim got all the closure anyone needs on that sunny Melbourne morning.

What a magnificent day it was. It took me nearly an hour to walk to the church from the hotel and I thought of no one else as I moved through the dappled sunlight of Melbourne's streets.

Jim Hughes was every inch an Australian and a Duntroon man. Born into a military family in Adelaide, he followed his older brother to Duntroon and then to Korea, where he won a Military Cross for his bravery at Maryangsan.

But the summit of his career must have been the command of 4 RAR battalion in Vietnam, where his easy sense of authority and willingness to share it came into full flower. The last time I spoke to him was at his Battalion HQ on Courtenay Hill in Vietnam in 1971. I was an intelligence officer in 1 ATF and I was there to discuss a special agent report that had placed the entire 33 Regiment at the foot of the hill barely two hours earlier.

I opened by asking if those reports were true, where was the 33 Regiment now? A couple of dozen HQ staff maybe, but 1500 heavily armed men? After looking closely at the plantation bathed in sunlight he agreed they weren't there: even for them, it would be impossible to conceal that many troops.

I then remarked that the NVA often hived off their HQ staff from the main body before a major attack in order to deceive the enemy. He agreed but neither of us went on to ask ourselves the obvious question: if this was a deception ploy, where was the

main body of the Regiment and where was it going to strike?

Twenty-four hours later, D Company had found the rear of 33 Regiment's position all right and was in a fight for its life. Jim Hughes and 120 of his soldiers had no further need of my insights.

The 33 Regiment had set a major ambush on Route 2, hoping to lure an Australian reaction force into a deadly trap but with no result. In fact, they were on the point of withdrawing when D Company stumbled upon their rear position and it was then game on, albeit a game that neither side had anticipated.

At this point, the reader needs to know a bit about 33 Regiment. This was the NVA unit that gave the Americans their first taste of real battle in the Ia Drang valley in 1966. As the US and South Vietnamese would always have air and artillery superiority, the NVA concentrated on an area where they could be superior: infantry field tactics.

General Giap called this "seizing the enemy's belt", where the NVA engaged the enemy so closely that they dared not use air strikes or artillery for fear of killing their own troops. Thereafter, the Vietnamese believed that their superior infantry skills would do the job. And they were usually right.

By late afternoon on September 21, 1971 they pretty well had D Company where they wanted them – almost totally pinned up against an impregnable bunker system with dozens of assault teams streaming into a creek bed behind them to close the nutcracker.

One blast from the battlefield director's whistle would launch hundreds of NVA troops into the

poorly defended rear of D Company and it would all be over in minutes.

But that didn't happen. Kept separated from his charts and radio by the zealous attentions of an NVA machine gunner, the artillery officer (FO) attached to D Company ended up lying face down in the mud in the gathering gloom doing the trigonometry for an artillery strike in his head and then yelling the fire mission coordinates to the radio operator.

A minute later, the distant stuttering of guns far to the west told him the shells were on their way, but where would they land and would they be in time?

The shells were in time and right on target. While they might not have terrified the assault teams of 33 Regiment, they must have given the Regimental Commander cause to reconsider. Accurate artillery fire and the rapidly falling night were new factors and he would not risk the lives of his men needlessly. Furthermore, the Australians might well have been trapped but they would not go down without a hell of a fight. Shortly afterwards, the assault teams were glimpsed going back out of the creek bed and by morning, the 33 Regiment had disappeared.

So where was Colonel Jim, the armchair strategist might ask? Well, physically he was on top of Courtenay Hill, anguishing about the fate of D Company and watching the dust and smoke billowing up from the battle several kilometres away. But he had already made his most telling contribution during the previous two years with his sunny confidence that their best WAS good enough.

The battalion withstood the very best the NVA threw at it, but not with any Hollywood-style antics on his part. He had already said what needed to be said and it was now up to his soldiers to make those words good. And they did.

Canberra was obsessed with getting our troops out of Vietnam and the award of medals for courage in this battle was almost flippant. Medals were sprinkled throughout D Company but the FO, the man who saved their lives through the rumble of incoming artillery shells at the very last minute, got nothing.

After Vietnam, the promotions and senior jobs in Australia must have been an anti-climax. Jim finished up as the Commander of Logistics Command based in Melbourne and then became the chairman of Legacy and an active member of the Korean War Veterans Association.

Was this the best use we could make of such a talented officer?

I'll always remember him cheerfully talking with the soldiers as they wolfed down a meal after a field exercise near Townsville. When I offered to get him some food, he replied without any pomposity: "No thanks Greg. Officers eat last." If it was a rebuke, it was a gentle one; if it was a lesson, it's one I have always tried to honour.

Duntroon graduate Greg Dodds was on the staff of 1 ATF at Nui Dat in 1971.

SERGEANT PETER HEALY, 3 SAS SQUADRON:

The day the music abruptly died as the Battle of Long Tan erupted.

PATROL Sergeant Peter Healy and the men of 3SAS (Three Special Air Service) Squadron knew something was brewing.



They had been sent to establish a base in Phuoc Tuy province at Nui Dat, 75km southeast of Saigon, in an area of high ground surrounded by rubber plantations.

They were among the first on the ground in June 1966 and had to set up the Australian camp from scratch. After serving in Malaya, the jungles of Phuoc Tuy province were familiar territory for Brisbane-bred soldier Healy, who was 25 and on his first tour to Vietnam.



Sergeant Peter Healy and a fellow member of Three Special Air Service Squadron in Vietnam. Courtesy: Louise Evans

During initial patrols around the perimeter of the new base, Healy and 3SAS only had to venture 200m beyond the barbed wire to get shot at by the ever-watchful Viet Cong.

As the Australians secured their territory, they began patrolling further afield in the nearby Nui Dinh jungle-covered hills, some 7km from taskforce base.

The hills provided not only good cover for the local Viet Cong but a good vantage point to observe the Australians, who set out on foot in stinking heat and humidity to negotiate terrain thick with bamboo, tall trees and man-high scrub. They encountered and engaged with numerous Viet Cong at close quarters over the weeks and months that followed. It was hot, dirty, nerve-racking and extremely dangerous work.

One of Healy's early patrols identified several enemy positions and they gauged by the VC's relaxed manner there was a bigger camp in the area. They were right.

On July 19 Healy's patrol discovered a platoon-strength camp of VC. He called for an air strike and retreated the prescribed distance to be extracted by helicopter.

The taskforce commander called them "hunter/killer patrols" and 3SAS proved so effective in flushing out enemy positions, the Viet Cong called them Ma Rung – Phantoms of the Jungle.

In the two weeks leading up to the Battle of Long Tan, the Australians frequently engaged the enemy, detaining and killing both male and female Viet Cong, and they alerted taskforce command to a heavy enemy build-up.

History would later reveal that the locally based VC 275 regiment was preparing to attack the Australian base at Nui Dat in the early hours of August 17, 1966.

On one patrol when a 3SAS man fell down a hole and accidentally fired a shot, a company-size VC force attacked the position the following day. Healy and his men got out just in time.

About 2am on August 17 the Viet Cong fired on the Australian base. Healy and 3 Squadron were sleeping in two-man tents, protected only by sandbags, when the shells began falling. The attack lasted just 10 minutes and injured 24, including seven SAS soldiers.

This was, however, just the beginning. The VC plan was to attack the base to lure the Australians out on patrol and attack them again outside the base, thereby inflicting heavy casualties.

The VC was right in assessing that the Australians would come looking for them after shelling the base.

Despite the VC attack the previous day, daytime concerts featuring Little Pattie, Col Joye and the Joy Boys band were allowed to proceed in the open air at the base on August 18, 1966.

Australian teenage pop sensation Little Pattie (Patricia Amphlett), who was just 17, plus Joye, an original member of Brian Henderson's Bandstand television program, were in Vietnam entertaining the troops at the invitation of the Australian Government.

They had been instructed to wind up their last concert by the 4pm curfew. But the concert was dramatically cut short by the Battle of Long Tan, which erupted just before 4pm when D Company 6RAR, which had been in pursuit of the VC outside the base since midday, came under heavy fire from thousands of Viet Cong.

Little Pattie was given the signal to get off stage – the sign of a finger being passed across the throat – and she was bundled into a jeep and onto a chopper as both the rain and live gunfire started

teeming down. She told ABC Radio three years ago that not a word was spoken during the short ride in the jeep or on the chopper.

"I remember sitting right near the edge next to the soldier. I was looking down and I could see thousands and thousands of orange lights, which were the tracers, and that was the battle in the jungle," she said.

Just 5km away from where she'd been standing on stage, a horrific firefight had erupted and continued for the next three hours. Healy and 3SAS heard the Long Tan fire-fight from taskforce base, which sprang into action, sending more men and ammunition to fight off an estimated 1500 to 2500 Viet Cong.

That, together with artillery fire from the Australian base, eventually silenced the Viet Cong. The VC also failed in their mission to evict the Australian base. Instead of being spooked, the Australians dug in harder.

SENATE INQUIRY IN SUICIDE OF VETERANS AND ADF PERSONNEL

The Northern Suburbs Veterans Support Centre Inc. has been one over 200 individuals and/or organisations to provide a written submission to the Senate Inquiry in suicides of Veterans and ADF Personnel.

Terms of Reference

Inquiry into suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel with particular reference to:

- the reasons why Australian veterans are committing suicide at such high rates,
- previous reviews of military compensation arrangements and their failings,
- the Repatriation Medical Authority's Statements of

Principles, claims administration time limits, claims for detriment caused by defective administration, authorised medical treatment, level of compensation payments, including defence abuse, as contained in all military compensation arrangements,

- to investigate the progress of reforms within DVA,
- the administration of claims by DVA and the legislative or other constraints on effective rehabilitation and compensation for veterans, and
- any other related matters.

While the committee requested that submissions to the inquiry be received by 7 October 2016, it will continue to consider and accept submissions after this date.

As a large number of submissions have been received for this inquiry, including many of a sensitive and personal nature, there may be a delay between a submission being provided and it being considered and approved for publication by the committee. Thank you for your patience in this matter.

You can ask the committee to keep your submission confidential. Include the word confidential clearly on the front of your submission. Confidential submissions are only read by members of the committee and the secretariat.

In terms of setting expectations, the committee emphasises that it is not in a position to address individual claims of rehabilitation or compensation for veterans and ex-service personnel. The committee's focus is on the broad issues raised in the terms of reference of the inquiry.

The committee recognises that this inquiry will deal with matters which could be distressing for some persons.

Persons interested in the inquiry who are seeking support or information about suicide prevention can contact several organisations including:

- Lifeline on 13 11 14;
- the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046; and
- MensLine on 1300 78 99 78.

IT'S TIME TO STAND TALL

Two legged blinkered sheep play
"follow the leaders" in busy streets
Indifferent to amber signs of
threat that our flock could soon
meet

Dressed in space age cloth,
texting and asking 'What's in it for
me'?

Yesterday is forgotten and who
cares of tomorrow in a land so
free

There are gatherings where
zealots chant "kill Jews and
infidels"

While those who disagree are
branded racists and bound for hell
Why is it we ridicule the lessons of
Jesus Christ who preached love?
Yet ignore rabid fanatics vomiting
evil, wielding swords high above?

Why so many stark images of
drowned children on a lonely
beach?

Understandably we weep, grieve
and blame leaders far from reach
Yet infants crushed and torn on a
French street for obsessive
beliefs

Are masked by complacent
blankets to calm outrage and grief

How false is our honour to past
generations who gave all?

While we remain passive to
threats that our way life could fall

Can't we see that a Trojan horse
is entering our happy domain?
Or do we flounder in mires of
political correctness once again
Be you from the cities, country
towns or beyond the black stump
afar
It's time to remind Canberra Suits
who the bloody hell we are
No matter religion or lack of it; our
message must be loud and clear
So stand tall now to ensure we
protect a valued way of life so
dear

George Mansford © July 2016

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A POLITICIAN IS LIEING!

Politicians from both sides often
say words that are supposed to fill
Veterans with pride, especially
around ANZAC Day, Vietnam
Veterans Day and Remembrance
Day, but what they say and do are
two totally different things.

For the last 8 – 10 years we have
heard from Politicians that they
will endeavor to put right the
wrongs being experienced by our
wounded and injured brothers
and sister only to be told after an
election that it wasn't a "core
promise" or that the previous
Government has left such a huge
black hole (deficit) that we cannot
possibly pay more for our
wounded and injured Veterans.

Many of you may think that we are
being cynical but let me remind
you of some of the great
"motherhood" statements that
have been made by our
Politicians over the past few years
that have failed to eventuate:

***"We honour the Diggers of a
century ago in many ways but
there is no better way than in
supporting and caring for
today's Diggers, today's
veterans and their families".***

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull
25/4/2-16.

"We must never forget the price that our Vietnam veterans paid for their service".

Veterans Affairs' Minister Dan Tehan 26/05/2016

"We want every veteran to know we are grateful for their service. We are committed to the continual improvement of the support and services provided to our veteran community"

Coalitions Policy for Veterans
25/06/2016.

"Respecting our Veterans. Veterans are entitled to a package of financial support that provides for an equitable standard of living".

Labor's Plan for Veterans June
2016

"It is vital that we never forget the service and sacrifice of the men and women who served our country".

Veterans Affairs' Minister Dan Tehan 18/07/2016

"As a nation we must keep alive the memory of every Australian who defends our values and freedoms as a reminder of the tragedy of war and a reminder of their bravery and mateship".

Veterans Affairs' Minister Dan Tehan 22/07/2016

"The 100th anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice of those who served in the First World War and also the one million who have served and continue to serve, in defence of our country".

Veterans Affairs' Minister Dan Tehan 23/07/2016

"We should also reflect on more than 350 Australians who paid the ultimate price and did not return home from the Korean War. Today a grateful nation says thank-you for that service".

Veterans Affairs' Minister Dan Tehan 27/07/2016

VETERANS WINNING RED TAPE WAR

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has announced new streamlined arrangements for processing a number of veterans' medical claims expected to reduce the time taken to deal with around 600 claims a year.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Dan Tehan said five new medical conditions would be streamlined under the move which took the total number of conditions streamlined for acceptance of liability by the Department to 13.

According to Mr Tehan, if a veteran's doctor now diagnosed one of the 13 conditions, DVA could accept it as service-related which meant less paperwork and reduced processing time.

Mr Tehan said DVA was moving to a more client-focused model and was examining further streamlining options.

"Reducing DVA claims' processing times and making the claims process easier to complete were important improvements," Mr Tehan said.

"Streamlining the liability component of claims for these medical conditions, once diagnosed, will reduce the amount of paperwork required by veterans and doctors."

He said the time-saving change would also allow DVA to focus on ensuring veterans enjoyed

access to appropriate medical care, rehabilitation and compensation for their service-related health conditions.

"This is part of a broader process to reduce the time taken to process claims and make the claims process easier and more stress free for our veterans," the Minister said.

He said the new medical conditions included chondromalacia patella, internal derangement of the knee, malignant melanoma of the skin, pterygium and tinea of the skin.

Unfortunately, the first claim lodged by this organisation after the announcement by the Minister was rejected despite having a GP sign off on the injury.

SLY MOVE BY THE GOVERNMENT A SLAP IN THE FACE FOR VETERANS

Veterans and their families have been left in the dark following legislation passed through the lower house, stripping them of their rights to fair appeal and compensation processes.

Slater and Gordon Military Compensation Lawyer Brian Briggs said the legislation had been sneakily slotted into the Budget Savings Omnibus Bill at the eleventh hour.

"This legislation was previously blocked by the Senate in November last year following several submissions demonstrating that vulnerable veterans would be significantly worse off," Mr Briggs said.

"Despite this, it has now reappeared in the Budget Savings Omnibus Bill without any further consultation with the defence community. "The single appeal path under the Military Rehabilitation & Compensation

Act will have a severe impact on our Veterans, stripping them of their rights and allowing timeframes for appeals against Department of Veterans' Affairs decisions to blow out.

"The miniscule short term savings to the budget is a drop in the ocean in comparison to the cost that it will have on the lives of our Veterans.

"At a time when a Senate enquiry into suicide in the Military and the operation of DVA is presently underway, I cannot fathom why the Government would think it's appropriate to try to undermine our Veterans by stealth.

"By extinguishing appeal paths, our Veterans will end up being worse off than the Commonwealth Public servants who process and determine their claims.

"This is a slap in the face for the Veteran and defence communities who will be stripped of their rights if this legislation is passed. "On behalf of injured Veterans and their families, I call on Senators from all parties to vote with their conscious and protect our most vulnerable service men and women." The High Res website is available on DVA's At Ease mental health portal.

'WHOLE NEW WORLD OUT THERE': VETERANS STILL PAY PRICE FOR SERVICE



George Newton, Mackay Veterans Support Group veterans' advocate, knows all too well how difficult it is to transition from military life back into a regular existence.

GEORGE Newton knows better than most about the harsh cost of military life and its long-lasting consequences. The 65-year-old Mackay Veterans Support Group veterans' advocate lost two mates while fighting as an Australian Army infantry Private in the Vietnam War from 1970 to 1971.

Like many of the Mackay's 2500 or so veterans (including roughly 350 "contemporary" veterans who served in the Defence Force after Vietnam, including in modern conflicts such as the war in Afghanistan), Mr Newton struggled for years to make sense of civilian life after a strictly regimented military existence.

But the difficulties can go beyond the pain of loss, or the trauma of battle - the stress of fitting into a 'normal life' can affect those who never saw combat.

Mr Newton said the nearly unshakeable punctuality, discipline and perfectionist streak present in many former military personnel was often a liability in the relatively relaxed, "peace loving" community environment.

"Employers, family and friends often don't really understand it. You go from a 24-hour-a-day regimented lifestyle and suddenly you need to adapt - transform into a simplistic way of doing things," he said.

"The transition is a very traumatic time. Irrespective of how well a discharging member fits into the system, his or her family or friends will often tell you it's the total opposite.

"It's traumatic for the partners, for the children and it seems at the

time like no one in the civilian world can help them."

Mr Newton said he personally found it "unbelievably difficult" to transition after his five years in the force. "It was a whole new world out there and you're conditioned to doing everything by the book," he said.

"The civilian workforce and health professionals just can't seem to understand how we operate."

For these reasons, Mr Newton will host a Veterans Health Week information evening at Souths Leagues Club, Milton St from 6.30-8pm on October 25, in partnership with The Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"It's a very tough career in the Defence Force. I'm finding even with the people who haven't served overseas, they've got as many injuries and disabilities as ones who did serve overseas," he said.

"It's not unusual to get a guy who comes to us with 15 to 20 injuries, just from the sheer work done while serving. It's very hard yakka, there's no shortcuts.

"The information night is something I've wanted to do for many years. I want the community to come together and see how they can understand ex-Defence Force members and how they can best help them.

"And it's about making veterans aware of the support that is currently available."

Mr Newton has invited veterans (whether they saw combat or not), their families and friends, key Mackay region employers, health services (including mental health providers), community groups and more to come along and learn about the cultural shock of transitioning from the Defence Force back into the community.

5RAR – HAT DICH, SOUTH VIETNAM, 1969

Gather around, young ANZACs
and listen of your proud past
So many deeds in battles and its
London to a Brick, not the last
There are many proud tales to tell
of all those yesterdays
Now there's a new page for you
who wear the proud badge today

From Japan to Afghanistan and
now IRAQ once more
In recent times, so many tasks as
you come and go from war
Your proud battle honours sewn
on sacred cloth do fly
All salute as your history carried
high with escort marches by

Soon the Tigers, young and old
will gather at the Den
To recall one of many battles
fought so long ago by them
They attacked the enemy well dug
in and who knew what to do
At close range your roots met
heavy fire and casualties grew

Battle discipline, teamwork and
drills came into play
These young Nashos and Regs
were not about to go away
Despite the odds, murderous
heavy fire and terrible deafening
din Our young warriors stood fast,
resolute and with a will to win

Artillery and air support quickly
joined the fray
All for one and one for all slowly
and surely won the day
Leadership and courage had
been so evident to see
Surely an example of Duty First
for you and old bas-ards like me

Today you follow in the footsteps
of those who went before
Your mission is as was theirs;
“Duty First” in peace or war
To pass the torch to all those
eager cubs who will follow

Then you too will watch with pride
as the Regiment seeks tomorrow

George Mansford © August 2016

HMT EXTENDA HIGH MOBILITY VEHICLE, UNITED KINGDOM



The vehicle offers superior mobility, protection, payload and firepower, and is available in both 4x4 and 6x6 configurations."

HMT Extenda is a high-mobility vehicle produced by Supacat to meet the requirements of Special Forces. The vehicle offers superior mobility, protection, payload and firepower, and is available in both 4x4 and 6x6 configurations.

Supacat signed a £23m (\$35.8m) contract with the Norwegian Defence Logistic Organisation (NDLO) to deliver a fleet of HMT Extenda high-mobility vehicles, along with a comprehensive through life support package in May 2015. The contract also includes an option for a follow-on order for additional vehicles.

The rolling chassis of the Extenda vehicle are being built in a facility based in Devon, US, while assembly and integration are anticipated to be performed in Norway.

Supacat is in discussions with TINEX, a full-service engineering company based in Oslo, to choose it as the preferred partner for the execution of the NDLO vehicle contract.

The first production vehicle is scheduled to be delivered in late-2016 and deliveries will conclude between 2017 and 2019.

The Defence Material Organisation (DMO) placed a \$105m contract with Supacat for 89 Special Operations Vehicles - Commando (SOV-Cdo) for the Australian Defence Forces under the JP2097 Ph 1B (REDFIN) programme. The new SOV-Cdo is a derivative of the latest MK2 variant of HMT Extenda.



Design and features of HMT Extenda

HMT Extenda is a unique and versatile platform, which is transformable to a 4x4 or a 6x6 configuration. The self-contained third axle unit can be removed or fitted to make HMT Extenda a 4x4 or 6x6 vehicle. The modular hull of the vehicle also supports the rapid conversion of the platform.

The 4x4 vehicle measures 5.93m-long, 2.05m-wide and 2.44m-high, while the 6x6 variant has a length of 7.04m. The gross vehicle weight of 4x4 and 6x6 variants are 7,600kg and 10,500kg respectively. The 4x4 vehicle can carry a payload of 2,100kg, whereas the payload capacity of the 6x6 version is 3,900kg. The vehicles offer seating for a driver and three passengers.

The vehicle also allows for the integration of weapons, communication, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR), and force protection equipment to fit a range of operational roles.

The optional equipment includes run-flat tyres, locking differentials, self-recovery winch, weapon

mounts, remote weapons station, smoke grenade launchers, infrared (IR) lights, right hand drive (RHD) or left hand drive (LHD).

Armament and self-protection



The vehicle can be armed with a range of weapon systems including 12.7mm / 7.62mm machine guns and 40mm automatic grenade launchers, and offers space for two crew-operated weapons.

The vehicle is optionally equipped with ballistic and mine blast protection kits, as well as mine blast protected seats to safeguard the crew against ballistic threats. It integrates armour developed in co-operation with Jankel Armouring.

Engine and power

HMT Extenda is powered by a Cummins 6.7L, six-cylinder diesel engine coupled to five-speed automatic transmission. The engine develops a maximum power output of 180hp and torque of 700Nm. The onboard power is supplied by a 24VDC electrical system.

HMT Extenda mobility

The vehicle is available in 2WD / 4WD drive configuration and is equipped with power-assisted steering, independent suspension with air-adjustable ride height, limited slip differentials, 335/80 R20 tyres and brakes integrating air over hydraulic system and anti-lock braking system (ABS).

The vehicle offers a maximum ground clearance of 485mm.

HMT Extenda has a maximum speed of 120km/h and maximum road range of 700km for the 4x4 version and 800km for the 6x6 version.

The vehicle has an approach / departure angle of 40° and ramp over angle of 150°. It can negotiate a gradient of 60% and side slope of 35°. The fording depth of the vehicle is 1,000mm.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR TRANSITION AND SOME STEPS TO ASSIST WITH DVA CLAIMS

One of the most important issues facing members discharging from the ADF is the submission of any claims on DVA for health care and compensation.

Probably the most important thing to remember is you should NOT make any claims without the assistance of an Advocate, available from your nearest Ex Service Organisation such as NSVSC. You can put in a claim on DVA yourself but the process is complex so before you consider putting in a claim consider finding a pensions officer of advocate from your friendly Ex Service Organisation to assist you. These services are free. Some lawyers will also help, but at a cost

That said, here are a few steps to help with your claims:

1. Get a treating specialist to provide advice (Psych, Ortho's etc).
2. Get a confirmed diagnosis before putting in your claim.
3. Ensure your injury/ Illness meets the relevant SOP if you are MRCA/VEA. (if you don't understand what this means .. ask your Advocate !!)
4. Know which legislation you are covered by MRCA / SRCA /

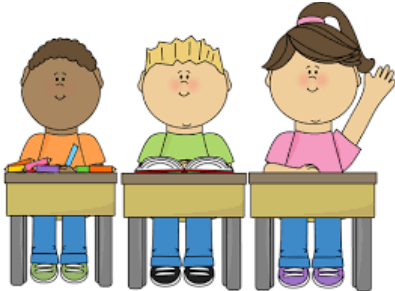
VEA (again, check this with an Advocate, not DVA).

5. Ensure you get a copy of your Medical records - copy them during your discharge process or FOI them before you lodge your first DVA claim.
6. Do not assume anything - work on facts. Your Advocate will help.
7. If your illness / injury is preventing you from working get a medical certificate and request incapacity payments from DVA if you are under SRCA / MRCA (but note that the injury / illness must first be accepted by DVA).
8. If have a psych or cancer illness, DVA can, in many cases, provide non-liability health care. Again see your Advocate for the forms (don't assume DVA know you are struggling!)
9. Remember that anything you claim must be able to be linked to service under the relevant Act. If you are under more than one Act (rule of thumb if you joined before July 2004) you are probably covered under at least 2 Acts. Again ... seek advice from an Advocate!
10. REMEMBER It is you claim, your life, your future so be proactive and do your research, keep informed, know what is happening, keep copies of your dealings with DVA, ESOs, Advocates and anyone else who is involved (Centrelink, Comsuper etc.). If things do go pear shaped a paper trail is very important, ask for everything in writing or email.
11. If you are suffering financial hardship, don't depend on DVA to quickly resolve your claim, that rarely happens. Don't be reticent to reach out

for assistance, for example most ESOs have funds available to assist you this.

Our thanks to Rod Thompson, APPVA National Entitlements Officer, for this brief

THE VETERANS CHILDRENS EDUCATION SCHEMES



VCES and MRCAETS provide financial assistance, student support services, guidance and counselling for eligible children to help them achieve their full potential in full-time education or career training. The schemes cater for children undertaking primary, secondary and tertiary study and are normally provided only for full-time study within Australia.

In each State there is a Veterans' Children Education Board (VCEB) and a Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education & Training Board (MRCETB) responsible for assisting with the administration of the Education Schemes. Board members serve in an honorary capacity and include respected members of the community experienced in matters relating to the welfare and education of children. The Board oversees each student's progress and provides educational guidance and counselling where necessary.

Under the VCES, an eligible child is someone who is:

- under 16; or
- between 16 and 25, undertaking full-time education; and
- the child of a veteran or a present or past member of the

Australian Defence Force who is receiving (or was receiving prior to their death) a disability pension: at the special rate (commonly known as T&PI);

- at the extreme disablement adjustment (EDA) rate;
- at an increased rate because of multiple amputations, or multiple amputations and blindness; or
- the child of a veteran or a present or past member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) whose death was war or defence caused; or
- the child of a veteran who was an Australian prisoner-of-war and is now deceased.

If a student, whose deceased veteran parent had operational service but whose death was not war or defence caused, has also lost their other parent, they are also an eligible child. This loss may be through death or where the surviving parent is not maintaining them. A student who is the child of a Vietnam veteran (or who is or has been dependent on a Vietnam veteran) but who does not qualify under any of the above criteria may be eligible in certain circumstances.

Who is a child of a veteran, member or former member under the VCES? A child of a veteran, member of the Forces or member of a Peacekeeping Force can be:

- a biological son or daughter or an adopted son or daughter of the veteran or member; or
- a child who is wholly or substantially dependent on the veteran or
- member, including, but not limited to:
- a child who by law the veteran or member is liable to maintain; or
- a child who is in the care of the veteran or member and for whom the veteran or member

is legally responsible for day-to-day care, welfare and development; or

- a child who is wholly or substantially in the veteran or member's care.

Under the MRCAETS, an eligible child is someone who is:

- under 16 years old; or
- between the ages of 16 and 25, undertaking full-time education and who is not ordinarily engaged in full-time work on his or her own account; and
- has been compensated as an eligible young person under the MRCA for the death of a deceased member of the ADF; or
- is the dependant of a member or former member who is eligible for the Special Rate Disability Pension safety net payment (SRDP); or
- is the dependant of a member who has satisfied the criteria for eligibility for SRDP at some point in their life; or
- is the dependant of a member or former member who is eligible for maximum permanent impairment compensation under the MRCA (assessed at 80 or more impairment points).

For more information on the Education Schemes please go to www.dva.gov.au or contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs:

Tel 13 32 54 (metro), or for non-metropolitan callers, 1800 555 254.

REPLACEMENT MEDALS POLICY

Prior to 2003 lost, stolen or destroyed medals could only be replaced directly to the individual who earned them.

In 2003, this policy was extended, allowing replacement when deceased individuals' service

awards were lost in specified natural disasters.

In December 2014, the Hon Darren Chester MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence agreed to a revision of this policy, which now allows for the medals of deceased individuals to be replaced in the following circumstance:

- Replacement medals will only be issued to the holder of the deceased individual's medal/s. The medals cannot be replaced in the circumstances where an individual has died and the medals cannot be found.
- The loss, damage or destruction of the medals occurs in circumstances beyond the control of the holder of the medals: for example as a result of a house fire or theft.
- The loss, damage or destruction occurred after 1 December 1974.

Defence can only replace medals it is authorised to issue. As such, it cannot replace honours or decorations that were issued under the Imperial or Australian honours system, such as meritorious and gallantry awards, or foreign awards. However, replicas of these awards may be purchased from a commercial medals dealer.

Medals replaced by Defence will be engraved with the initial 'D' to denote 'duplicate' unless the damaged original medals are recovered and returned to Defence.

To apply for replacement medals, claimants may complete the online application form, which is available on the Defence Honours and Awards website at:

www.defence.gov.au/medals/content/applications.asp

Alternatively, the application form can be downloaded from the website to be completed and then returned to:

Directorate of Honours and Awards - CP2-L
Department of Defence
PO Box 7952

CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Claimants are to include with their application form a statutory declaration describing the circumstances of the loss or damage. Additional evidence such as police or insurance reports, and any evidence showing proof of the claimant's relationship to the original recipient would also be useful in assessing eligibility.

The revised replacement medals policy does not affect currently serving or former members of the ADF who are still living. Defence will replace the medals for living recipients except when they have been sold, gifted or otherwise supplied to another person.

DVA TAXI ISSUES – VETERAN TRANSPORT

Over the past few months this organisation has received several complaints regarding the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) use of taxis and the attitude of several taxi drivers towards Veterans. I took the liberty of contacting a colleague in DVA as well as with the Department of Transport (DoT) with whom I use to work with many years ago to find out what avenues, if any, were open to Veterans who had complaints regarding this matter.

For issues relating to the service in general, meaning lateness, non-appearance and other disputes the first point of contact is with DVA as follows:

Transport Supervisor
Repatriation Transport Scheme
Department of Veterans' Affairs
GPO Box 9998
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: nswrtu@dva.gov.au

The preferred method of communication is by the above email as it is then registered and the Department has ten (10) days in which to respond. Any complaint must include:

- Name of Client
- Who made the Booking (Client or Dr etc.)
- Date and Time of pick-up;
- Name of Driver (if possible); and
- Taxi Number.

For complaints regarding the standard of the taxi, abuse by driver and any other problems associated with a taxi a complaint should be lodged with the following:

On Demand Transport
Department of Transport
GPO Box C102
PERTH WA 6001

Email:
compliance@transport.wa.gov.au

Likewise, when making a complaint the preferred method is by email as the DoT also has a restricted time frame of 10 days in which it can retrieve any on board CCTV coverage to substantiate any complaint. The information required is the same as for DVA.

For individual complaints regarding the attitude of drivers and/or cleanliness of taxis the Veteran should lodge a complaint with the Taxi company as follows:

Swan Taxis
PO Box 4058
VICTORIA PARK WA 6100

Email:
admin@swantaxis.com.au

For those Veterans that have access to the internet there is an online Customer Complaint Form at

www.swantaxis.com.au/customer-complaint.php.

Black & White Taxis
Unit 1
33 Frederick Street
BELMONT WA 6104

For those Members that have access to the internet there is an online Customer Feedback Form at:

<http://www.blackandwhitecabs.com.au/contact-2/>.

London Cabs
PO Box 184
BELMONT WA 6984

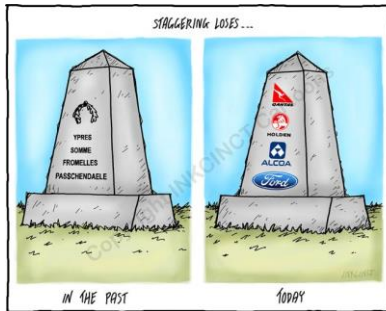
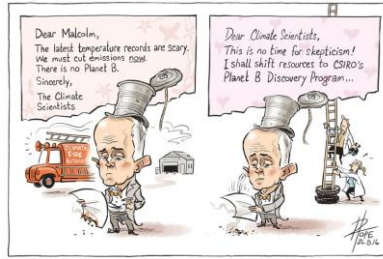
London Cabs is part of the Black & White Taxi company although it operates as an independent entity the Customer Feedback Form from Black & White Taxis can be used to lodge a formal complaint if needed.

SOME FUN

Ducky's Words of Wisdom:



32% of men admit to doing a household chore badly so they don't get asked again (the other 68% are doing their best, they're just useless).



More Things To Consider By Maharishi Fattifatbastard:

1. If you had to identify, in 1 word, the reason why humanity has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be "meetings."
2. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
3. People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.
4. You should not confuse your career with your life.
5. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
6. Never lick a steak knife.
7. The most destructive force in the universe is gossip.
8. A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person.
9. You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
10. There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age eleven.

WHO WE ARE

Northern Suburbs Veterans Support Centre Inc.

PO Box 492

QUINNS ROCKS WA 6030

Tel: 08 – 9305 9015

admin@nsvsc.org.au