

DFWA NSW BRANCH NATTER

A NEWS LETTER PRODUCED FOR THE INTEREST OF NSW MEMBERS JUNE 2015

GREETINGS FROM MICHAEL STUART-WATT NSW BRANCH PRESIDENT

After a whirlwind visit to the DFWA National Executive (NATEX) Meeting in Adelaide in late May, Alan Hind and I have returned with some tasks to both assist National Office in Canberra and progress issues concerned with improving our Governance and reporting activities. We in NSW have been fortunate to have access to a skilled Executive, though some moves will be on the cards in the near future.

In this Newsletter, advice on CMDR John King's situation is provided. We wish him our very best and thank him for his work in the area of Counselling and Pensions advice.

The DFWA (NSW) Committee is always on the lookout for anyone with some time and a penchant for the provision of Welfare support to serving members, their comrades and Families. As our Association is gaining greater influence and is representing and coordinating the views of the 'growing' and like-minded Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO), I would like to further expand the capacity of the NSW Committee and add some additional depth of talent.

In an average week, our new Office in BLDG 96 at the Victoria Barracks Paddington, is staffed through Mon-Thur at various times by our committed Office Manager Joy Jobbins, Alan Hind, Barry Wright, Robert Enos, Brian Armour and Ralph Hannaford who has recently joined the team.

The commitment of Committee members is between 4 and 8 hours per week, so it's not a great impost. Recently we fore-shadowed an expansion of our services to the Parkes in the Central West, where Tony Horsington has agreed to assist us. Details are yet to be finalised but I'm looking forward to his contribution and

additional pair of hands, no matter how distant!

Some of the more recent activities we've been involved in have centred around representing DFWA at the Casula Powerhouse in early May during which Mrs. Linda Hurley spoke on the impact on Families that Postings can have on wellbeing and relationships, and more recently at the annual Indigenous Commemoration Ceremony held at the War Memorial Reflection Pool in Hyde Park South.

As well, I accompanied DFWA's Executive Director, Alf Jaugietis, to a Business in Parramatta to discuss the prospect of attracting new sponsorship monies for DFWA activities. The Meeting was very fruitful and we'll hear more on this new opportunity in the near future.

NSW Committee members regularly attend the Resettlement Seminars run at Burwood, Newcastle and Nowra where other Ex-Service organisations are also in attendance, so flying the Flag is central to maintaining our visibility and reach.

As this Camaraderie is about to be distributed, our hard-working Raffle Coordinator, Ralph Derbridge will be mailing out tickets to NSW Branch recipients in late July, early August.

Good luck – Michael

LTCOL Brian Armour (Rtd) joined the NSW Branch in 1982 and has been Honorary Treasurer for the past three years. He now hands over to Ralph Hannaford and we thank him for his fiscal expertise in the job. We welcome Ralph as our new Treasurer.

THANKS JOHN FOR 17 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

Commander John King RAN (Rtd) retires as NSW Branch Counsellor in the fields of Compensation, Welfare and Superannuation. He hands over the baton to Dr Barry Wright.

John became a member of the DFWA in 1998 and was soon recruited as a volunteer to assist the late Group Captain Ron Mills in dealing with SRCA claims and later VEA Superannuation matters. Ultimately John also became the DFWA-NSW representative on the TIPCG until December 2014 and became part of the NSW Branch administration.

Over the years he provided advice to serving and ex-serving members and their families, in person or on the telephone, on how to proceed with claims and with referrals to other bodies on welfare issues. Many cases took a long time to reach a final decision for the client. In all John's records indicate that he had some 460 clients in his time in the job.

Not long after his 80th birthday he began to have a vision issue to his left side and visited his GP. He was diagnosed with hemianopia due to small infarctions in the brain's optic nerves (mini strokes). This confirmed that driving was not safe, and even walking on the streets was a problem.

With rehabilitation he is training himself to constantly scan with the head to the left to identify avoidable problems, but he has realised that it is now time to cut back on his work load and has regrettably retired from the Association.

Before the DFWA John had a long career in the navy. He joined the RAN National Service (Signalman) in July 1954 which included a 6 week trip to Japan in HMAS Vengeance returning No77 Squadron aircraft to Australia after the Korean War.

He then enlisted as a Seaman in an Officer training program and was sent to the UK to join the RN program. Promotion to Acting Sub Lieutenant followed, joining up with RN and RAN Officer training before returning to Australia to complete all the seagoing requirements for posting to billets in the Fleet.

Subsequently he served in 'Q' class frigates and training ships in the Far East and shore time in Darwin and the North Coast of Australia. Then followed specialist training in Underwater Warfare; sea time in UK and back to the Far East in the RAN (Malaysia and Borneo).

Vietnam service in HMAS PERTH in 1968/9 was followed with training Command Teams in the UK again and time in the RAN Submarine Squadron staff. He then had a year as Executive Officer of HMAS VAMPIRE.

John next worked in the Office of the Chief of Naval Staff and after promotion to Commander, in the Directorate of Naval Training. He also spent two years at HMAS NIRIMBA (as XO) and one year as XO of HMAS SUPPLY. At the end of 1982 he resigned to avoid further desk time in Navy Office.

A year in administration at what is now the University of Western Sydney followed, before starting with the DFWA and ANMM working on HMAS VAMPIRE as a volunteer.

NSW Branch wishes you good luck and good health in your retirement

Dr Barry Wright offers free DVA Claims Advice. Contact him on phone: 8335 5447

A BOER WAR MEMORIAL FOR CANBERRA

For the past eleven years a group of dedicated volunteers has been striving to have a memorial to the Boer War erected in Canberra's War Memorial precinct with monuments to Australia's other conflicts, one each to our New Zealand and Greek allies, and even one to an enemy, Turkey's Mustafa Kemal. Our first war as a nation, however, is not commemorated.

A programme to correct that deficiency has so far achieved the observance of Boer War Day each year on the last Sunday of May throughout the nation; the creation of a magnificent NBWMA website; allocation of the memorial site on Anzac Parade in Canberra in April 2007; its on-site dedication on 31 May 2008; and incorporation of the National Boer War Memorial Association (NBWMA) in February 2011.

A design featuring four mounted troopers on patrol was approved by the National Capital Authority, and unveiled in Canberra on 1 March 2012. The first statue is finished and paid for.

The Association has been granted Donor Gift Recipient status. More recently, a dedicated Funding Sub-committee has been formed, with prominent industrialist Mr Michael Crouch AO as its Chairman.

2nd Lieutenant T.A. "Tim" Fischer AC GCPO (RL) is its Patron. Its job is to garner the \$3.5m needed to pay for troopers two, three and four.

A national database of Boer War veterans' descendants and relatives, and any other persons interested in the NBWMA's objectives, now exists. Australians in those categories are invited to register. They that do will receive *gratis* a copy of the Association's, informative newsletter.

To register, go to www.bwm.org.au and follow the prompts, or phone (02) 8335 5209 when the office is manned which, by the voluntary nature of the NBWMA, is not all the time.

Mail can be addressed to NBWMA, Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW 2021. To make a tax-deductible donation, consult the website.



Renowned Melbourne sculptor, Louis Laumen, has completed the first of four statues and has started on the second. MBWMA President, Colonel John Haynes OAM (retired), of average stature, is standing by the mounted trooper. In bronze, one and a half times life size, it features accurate Boer War Accoutrements.

OVER 60 AND STILL WORKING? YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR A SERVICE PENSION

*Is your age pension being paid by Centrelink? From March 2015, the Service and Age pensions income cut off limit changed to **Single Pensioners \$1,990.40 p/f (\$48,890 pa)** and **Couples (Combined) \$2,877.60 p/f (\$74,817 pa)**. These rates are updated every 6 months. This will be good news for those with partners who are working and/or are in receipt of DFRB pensions (classed as Superannuation).*

Returned ex-service personnel can apply for the Age Service Pension at 60 years of age, even if they are still working. Contact Sydney DVA and they will be able to discuss with you the Service Pension eligibility.

Subject to the generous income and asset tests, male veterans can obtain the Service Pension (same rate as old age pension) at the age of 60 even if they are still working. It is important to have your super and investments in order prior to turning 60. Those under this age and cannot work more than 8

hours per week may be eligible under the Permanently Incapacitated provisions.

Persons who receive Centrelink Age Pensions **and** a DVA Disability Pension at any rate can have their Age Pension paid via DVA so that you only need to deal with one government department. It is quite simple to transfer, just complete the DVA form D0664 'Claim to transfer of payment of Centrelink Age Pension to DVA'. **For information call DVA Helpline: 1800 624 608.**

THE WEARING OF MEDALS AND DECORATIONS

War medals may only be worn on the left breast by the persons upon whom they were conferred. The honour afforded remains with the individual and does not pass to a widow, parent, son or relative when the recipient is dead. Similarly, the same rules apply where a posthumous award is made.

The policy as it stands is that on the death of a recipient, technically, any honours and awards revert to the commonwealth in the first instance. *The reality of course is that family members have an ambient claim and the commonwealth would not seek to intervene in medals being passed on directly within the family.*

For uniformed personnel, on ANZAC and Remembrance days only, modification of normal service dress code is allowed whereby they wear their own medals on the left breast accompanied (if they wish) by their ancestor's on the right.

Fraudulent wearing of Medals

No person, with the exception of a direct descendant of a deceased service man or woman, may wear medals which have not been awarded to him or her personally. This also applies to the wearing of miniature medals and medal ribbons. *Fraudulent wearing of medals attracts penalties under Federal regulations.*

VASEY HOUSING OFFERS DIGNIFIED INDEPENDENCE

Vasey Housing is named after its founder, Mrs Jessie Vasey, the widow of Major General George Vasey who was killed in WWII. As a war widow, Mrs Vasey fought for the rights of all war widows, many of whom were living in, or near to poverty on a miniscule pension. It was almost impossible for these ladies to gain even modest accommodation and it was only by Mrs Vasey's personal efforts and fundraising that 'Vasey Housing' was born.

The Association has been very successful over the decades having expanded its accommodation range and scope to assist with anyone with Service connections.

Now Vasey self-contained apartments are available to both single men and women with Military Service connections over the age of fifty-five years who wish to pursue an independent and dignified lifestyle.

The Vasey Sydney properties are located at Maroubra, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Epping and Waitara, all in garden settings within a reasonable distance of amenities and transport.

An elected Board of Directors, most having a Military Service background, exercise control over Vasey. The day to day management of the villages is carried out by a small staff. Compliance with the necessary Government Acts and Regulations is assured.

The Vasey Housing Association maintains its 'not for profit' status and continues to offer great value, comfort and security to all of its residents.

Anyone seeking accommodation solutions at a modest cost are invited to contact Mr David Elkins, the CEO of Vasey on (02) 9299 3951.

Defence Housing Australia

You might be interested to know that as part of its Smaller Government Reform Agenda, in the 2015-16 Budget ***the Government advised that it would not proceed with a sale of Defence Housing Australia*** at this time.

However, the Government will review Defence Housing Australia's accounting, information technology and business reporting systems to improve the transparency of the cost of providing services.

Fleet Discounts for .T.P.Is

Ex-Service personnel who receive a "Special Rate" Pension from DVA are eligible for National Fleet Discount, known as a T.P.I. Pension.

Recipients of the T.P.I Pension are eligible to purchase vehicles GST free. Vehicles must have private registration to be eligible and be registered in the same name as the T.P.I. pensioner.

Also available to service personnel who have returned from active duty overseas within 6 months of return.

NSW BRANCH DONATIONS SINCE JANUARY 2015

Thank you very much for the donations we have received recently, your generosity is keeping the Association going. Just a gentle reminder to renew your subscription if you have not yet done so as numbers count when it comes to lobbying politicians.

Mrs L Adams, Harrington; CMDR A J Birtchnell, Pokolbin; Mrs M A Burnes, Maclean; SQNLDR J M J Campbell, Turramurra; CAPT D J Dalton, Bondi Junction; Mr M J Fara, Cessnock; Mrs J L Gernhoefer, Frenchs Forest; Mrs G Gladstone, Double Bay; RADM G R Griffiths, Castle Cove; LTCOL I M Guild, Neutral Bay; Mrs B J Hayles, Lugarno; SURG LT CMDR P J Hoare, Lake Haven; Mrs L Hoath, Penrith; Mr A C Horsington, Parkes; Captain M T Kaminski, Mittagong; Mrs I M Keefe, Bomaderry; LTCOL R B Knight, North Rocks; LTCOL G R Lovegrove,

Coffs Harbour; Mr K Marsh, Normanhurst; Major R C McMurray, West Pymble; Mrs L Millar, Mosman; AVM J W Newham AC, Church Point; Mr V J O'Brien, Edgeworth; Mr L O'Dea, Cessnock; Mrs P M Page, Saratoga; Mr K R Phipps, Richmond; Mrs G Rice, Preston; Mr K N Ryan, Mudgeeraba; Mr D J Sibraa, Armidale; Mr M A Skinner, Abermain; Mrs F Smith, Blaxland; GPCAPT L J Tindal, Winston Hills; CAPT H E Tooth, Wyong; COL C S Watson, Cambria via Dungog; Mr P J Williamson, Toronto.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (EFT) IS EASY

If you wish to pay membership fees or make a donation just quote your surname and initials and the nature of your deposit, for example membership, donation etc to:

***Defence Bank. A/name: Defence Force Welfare Association
BSB No. 803-205 Account No: 20370943***

Please note: Use the word 'Defence' NOT DFWA in the descriptor

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