



HOTLINE

March 2014 Edition

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Branch President's Report

I hope you all enjoyed your Christmas and New Year.

As part of my crusade to get information on veterans' services to the wider veteran community, this edition has an article on '**At Ease**'. This excellent portal is sponsored by DVA, and has a number of resources on mental health, wellbeing, alcohol and suicide prevention. I know this may not be directly applicable to our members but all of us know people who are serving or have served in the ADF whether they be friends, children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews and it behoves us to be aware of these issues so we can provide some guidance on the support available if required. Please have a look at the site <http://at-ease.dva.gov.au/>

The cyber warriors have been at it again. On this occasion, reports were circulating that the member for Eden-Monaro was supposedly putting a bill before Parliament to reduce Service Pensions and combine DVA and Centrelink. The misinformation was based on a 2005 report commissioned by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), an organisation he then worked for as CEO, not in his current role as a MHR. A lot of time and effort was spent explaining the issue to concerned veterans. The lesson here for all of us is to check the accuracy of rumours BEFORE forwarding them through our networks.

Veteran's Advisory Network (VAN) Offices. There was a bit of a panic when another rumour hit the streets that the Southport VAN office was going to close. The real story is that the current building is not appropriate and the office is relocating to Broadbeach in Sep 14.

DFWA Queensland Branch provided a donation to Young Diggers for an Assistance Dog. You will see an article on this dog later in Hotline. This is a great program and we are proud to be associated with it.

As I mentioned in the Queensland Branch report in Camaraderie, the State Government has advised that it will initiate a **Veterans Advisory Council (VAC)** which will give the opportunity for Veterans' matters to be raised at the highest level in the State. DFWA will be represented on the VAC. I think this is a positive move and mirrors what has happened in SA and Victoria.

....Continued Page 2

Branch President's Report continued...

I was invited to a meeting with Sen Ronaldson in January 2014. Two main issues arising from the meeting are:

- His office is currently working with Defence to draft a bill for indexation of DFRB/DFRDB pensions for the over 55s.
- In regard to rumours that DVA was going to be amalgamated with CentreLink - it is not going to happen.

There will be no election this year (thankfully as last year was really hectic) but we will have to keep an eye on the political landscape to ensure promises made are fulfilled (I talk here about the indexation of DFRDB) and that any mooted changes that have an adverse effect on the provision to services to Veterans are rigorously challenged. In the political arena we also have to bring to the fore the issues associated with MSBS and other issues affecting serving and retired members. Getting the Government to commit to this indexation was a win but we still have a war to fight.

Rob Shortridge

President

DFWA Qld Branch

InvoCare Partners in Queensland

Invocare is a major sponsor for DFWA. You will have noticed a promotional flyer for InvoCare on the reverse side of your address label with contact details for Service Providers in Brisbane. InvoCare partners can also be found in other parts of Queensland and these are shown below.

Metropolitan Funerals # George Hartnett Funerals # Somerville Funerals, Robina, Nerang and Southport # Drysdale Funerals, Tewantin, Nambour and Maroochydore # Burkin Svendsens, Cairns # Mackay Funerals # City Funerals, Mackay # Sarina Funerals, Mackay # Hiram Philp Funerals, Toowoomba, # Gatton Funerals # Beaudesert Funerals # and Guardian Funerals, Ballina, Casino and Lismore.

DFWA QLD Branch Committee Gets Stuffed!

Have you ever wondered how your ***Camaraderie*** and ***Hotline*** and other bits and pieces manage to come together in the plastic sleeve that ends up in your letter box? Well, here's the answer! With each edition, your Committee holds a 'Stuffing Day' to assemble the packages and send them on their way. It is a very hands-on process.



Committee members and other volunteers pitch in and make it a fun day. And of course, there is always the reward of a sumptuous morning tea to keep morale high. If you would like to help out by joining us in *getting stuffed* next time, just contact our Office and one of our friendly staff will fill you in with the details.

A 'BONZA' IDEA TO HELP VETERANS IN NEED



You might recall that your Branch Committee decided to help the *Young Diggers* with funding to train a new Assistance Dog for veterans. We are pleased to advise that the dog we have sponsored is named *Bonza*, and after six months of care and training, he has graduated from his special assistance dog course and is now in the care of an ADG who has been diagnosed with severe PTSD.

Bonza has a great story to tell. He started life in Sydney and was treated very harshly by his owner and ended up in a rescue centre. But this was a temporary reprieve because without any offer to rehome him, he would be put down. Fortunately, he was then rescued by the *Young Digger* people at the Bathurst correctional centre where his life changed for the better.

Bonza is a 2 year old male Husky/Shepherd/Labrador cross. He has a loving, quiet and gentle nature and is great with other animals and people. He is very intelligent and will do whatever is asked of him, but he also loves just lounging around and doing everything at a gentle pace.

The dog has already made a tremendous difference to the young airman's life and he and *Bonza* are best mates.

INCOME FROM SOLAR POWER

With the installation of rooftop solar panels becoming more popular, DVA has recently received a number of letters from veterans concerned that the direct payments they receive from electricity companies, in return for electricity generation being fed into the grid, may reduce their service pension, income support supplement or age pension.

Where the electricity company offers the alternative of applying the solar credits as a reduction or offset against the veteran's current or future electricity bill and no income is actually received, there is no impact under the income test. However, **direct payments** received by pensioners from electricity companies are treated like any other forms of income.

The income test that applies to the calculation of income support pensions covers any income amount which is received by a person. It does not distinguish between income received from a electricity company and income received from more common sources such as employment, superannuation or deemed income on bank deposits.

There is no discretion within the income test which allows DVA to ignore payments received from electricity companies. The lump sum payments received are assessed by being averaged over the following 12 months. This policy is applied by both DVA and Centrelink, so all income support pensioners are equally treated. It should be noted that pensioners receiving income from any new source are still better off, as pension is only reduced by 50 cents for every dollar of additional income above the free area threshold.

(Extract of an Article from Vetaffairs)

Wally's Words...

Words of wisdom from our esteemed Treasurer/Senior Advocate

Wearing my Treasurer's hat:

Let me begin by thanking all those who renewed their subscription, those who re-joined after an absence of a couple of years and the new members.

The "direct debit system" for subscriptions works well with a slight glitch. I received moneys from several members, but unfortunately, at least two of them haven't followed up their deposit with their personal details. So I know their names but I haven't got a clue as to where I should send the receipt, or for that matter where to send the next issue of *Camaraderie*. Because of the privacy act, the banks will not give me their addresses. So if anyone out there knows where **John Ison** and **RB De Visser** are, please let me know.

Wearing my Advocate hat:

There are changes to two *Statement of Principles* (SOP) that may affect you. The SOP concerning prostate cancer has a new factor added to it:

- ca) for current smokers only, smoking at least 40 pack-years of cigarettes, or the equivalent thereof in other tobacco products, before the clinical onset of malignant neoplasm of the prostate.

The SOP concerning PTSD will soon have an additional "stressor" or change of wording as a result of a submission sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans' Federation. The Specialist Medical Review Council has decided that PTSD might be caused by having a reasonable perception of threat and/or harm to the integrity of the self or a colleague as a consequence of being in any or all of a threatening, hostile, hazardous and/or menacing situation and/or environment.

I still come across many Veterans and ex-service people, both female and male, who are not aware of what assistance is available to them from DVA, so at the risk of repeating myself: DVA will provide health care for certain conditions, **whilst they will not be necessarily accept them as having been service caused.**

These medical conditions are **malignant neoplasia, (any type of cancer), pulmonary tuberculosis and post-traumatic stress disorder.**

The forms required to obtain the treatment can be found on the DVA website www.dva.gov.au/

PTSD: TL219.1 Application for health care in respect of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Cancer: TL219.2 Application for health care in respect of cancer.

Note: A veteran might stop being eligible to be provided with treatment under this Part for an injury or disease if the veteran is entitled to treatment under the MRCA for the injury or disease (see sections 85A and 85B of this Act).

The VEA definition of Veteran includes a Commonwealth veteran; an allied veteran; an Australian mariner; an allied mariner; or a member of the Forces, or a member of a Peacekeeping Force, as defined by subsection 68(1) of the Act.

Also, if you are a retired serviceman or woman in receipt of a disability pension from DVA, but not entitled to a Service Pension, when you reach the age of 65 and get the old age pension, have it paid through DVA. CentreLink deems your disability pension as income and will deduct \$0.50 for every dollar. If you get it paid through DVA you will get the fifty cents back.

Until next time.....



Please Note: ERRATA—Camaraderie

The reference to **Workplace Remuneration Agreement** referred to on pages 7 and 8 of *Camaraderie* should read... **Workplace Remuneration Arrangement.**

2013 & 2014 CHRISTMAS DRAWS

First Prize winner in the **2013 Members' Draw**, LTCOL Coulthard, was a little shocked when we contacted him to tell him about his win. He didn't know he'd even entered it. Second Prize winner, Mrs Williams, was over the moon with her win; she managed to scratch up \$20 from the prize tickets, but then misplaced them. However, she says her son loves the shirt and wears it all the time.

Third Prize winner, Mr Waldie, was also happy with his package and hopefully it was helpful around Xmas.

And now for the **2014 MEMBERS' DRAW**

1st Prize	100 Instant Scratch Tickets + a DFWA Clothing Pack
2nd Prize	50 Instant Scratch Tickets + a DFWA Clothing Pack
3rd Prize	25 Instant Scratch Tickets + a DFWA Pack

Terms and Conditions

The draw will be held in late November 2014, so it could be several presents for family members or one big present for you.

The **DFWA Clothing Pack** consists of a choice of a monogrammed Bisley Shirt or Polo shirt, plus a monogrammed cap, lapel pin, various stickers and a satchel bag. The **DFWA Pack** consists of a cap, a pin and car stickers.

To be in the draw your membership has to be fully paid up to 2014.

There are some members who are currently in arrears, and this will give you the chance to get fully paid up. To find out where you stand financially, check the cover sheet that came with your Camaraderie package. Above your name there is a number that represents your current financial year status with the DFWA. If this number is below **2014** you will not be eligible for the Members' draw unless you renew your membership in the next few months.

So why not renew your overdue membership NOW?

But Wait ...There's More! Any members who kindly make donations to DFWA QLD Branch during 2014 will automatically receive extra chances in the draw. For every \$5 donation you will receive one additional entry.

HOW OLD AM I?

I was born before television, polio shots, frozen foods, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill.

There were no credit cards, laser beams or ball-point pens.

Man had not yet invented pantyhose, air conditioners, dishwashers or clothes dryers.

I was before gay-rights, computer-dating, dual careers, daycare centres, and group therapy.

I had never heard of CD's, electric typewriters, yogurt, or guys wearing earrings.

Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and instant coffee were also unheard of.

"Grass" was mowed, "coke" was a cold drink, "pot" was something your mother cooked in,

"chip" meant a piece of wood, "hardware" was found in a hardware store and "software" wasn't even a word.

And serving our country was a privilege; living in this country was a bigger privilege.

No wonder people call us "old and confused" and say there is a generation gap.

How old am I?

I am 61 years old, born in late 1952.

GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, DOESN'T IT?

Getting Help with DVA Mental Health Resources

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is committed to ensuring that current and former serving members can access mental health advice and support when they need it. DVA is active in developing tools and providing services to help individuals achieve good mental health, promote recovery and access professional care when needed.

The key to good mental health is to take action early:

Talk to your GP, who may refer you to a psychiatrist, psychologist or mental health social worker if needed. DVA pays for treatment for an eligible veteran with diagnosed PTSD, anxiety or depression without the need to establish that his or her mental health condition is related to service. From July 2014, these arrangements will also cover treatment for alcohol and substance disorders.

Talk to the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS). VVCS provides counselling and group programmes to veterans, peacekeepers and eligible family members. VVCS is a specialised, free and confidential Australia-wide service, call 1800 011 046, 24 hours a day.

Go online to DVA's mental health portal *At Ease* (www.at-ease.dva.gov.au). *At Ease* helps serving and ex-serving personnel and their family members to recognise the symptoms of poor mental health, recommend self-help tools, mobile applications and advice, and helps them access providers and treatment.

At Ease: Serving and ex-Serving Members, Veterans and Families

Recognise the signs of poor mental health, take action, find self-help tools and advice, access professional support and learn about treatment options. Families can find advice on how to keep their family healthy while caring for someone with a mental health condition.

Wellbeing Toolbox

This is an interactive self-help website designed to help those making the transition from the Australian Defence Force to civilian life. It offers help in areas such as problem solving, building support, helpful thinking, getting active, keeping calm and sleeping better.

The Right Mix

DVA's alcohol management site uses interactive tools to provide practical information and strategies to raise awareness about alcohol-related harm and to get the 'right balance' of alcohol, diet and exercise to achieve a healthier and more enjoyable lifestyle.

Operation *Life* Online

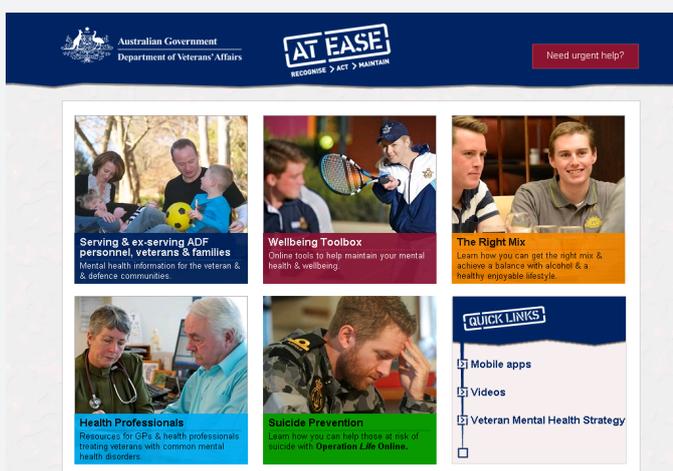
Learn about suicide and how to prevent it at Operation *Life* Online. Along with useful contacts and resources, the site offers learning tools, case study videos and a comprehensive quiz to test your knowledge.

At Ease Professional

A website which provides resources for GPs and mental health professionals to improve assessment and treatment of serving and ex-serving ADF personnel with common mental health disorders.

Other tools accessible via the **At Ease** portal are:

YouTube videos: 'Don't suffer in silence' is the key message in a series of online videos about the impact of mental ill health on current and former serving personnel and their families.Continued P7



Continued from Page 6..... Featuring veterans, family members and leaders within the veteran community and the ADF, the videos are available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/DVAAus.

PTSD Coach Australia: A self-help mobile app designed to help current and former serving personnel understand and manage the symptoms that may occur following exposure to trauma. The app provides education about PTSD, information about self assessment and professional care, and tools to manage the stresses of daily life with PTSD. The app is free and downloadable from both App Store (iOS) and Google Play (Android).

ON TRACK with The Right Mix: A self-help mobile app to help serving and ex-serving personnel manage their alcohol consumption. Users can track of the number and type of drinks consumed; the amount of money spent and review the impact this has had on their wellbeing and fitness.

Committee Member Bio: Rod Brittain

Secretary DFWA QLD Branch

After some 45 years of full time and part time service with the RAAF, I “volunteered” to take on the *highly paid* job of QLD Branch Secretary, mid-way through 2013.



Like many others, my interest in serving with the RAAF was nurtured by membership of the Air Training Corps of which I was a member until the end of 1966. Two and a half years of service with the Citizens Air Force then followed (mostly serving with HQ QATC) until I joined the Permanent Air Force as a Clerk Equipment on Friday, 13 June 1969. While the date spelled doom for some, it turned out to be a great day for me as it signaled a long career with the RAAF. After recruit course at RAAF Edinburgh I was posted to 2SD, Regents Park NSW. I was commissioned as an Equipment Officer in 1971, served at RAAF Base East Sale, Canberra, Butterworth and finally Toowoomba where I was the unfortunate CO of 7SD that had to announce to the city that we were to close the unit down.

Somewhere along the way Equipment Officers became Logistics Officers.

After transferring to the RAAF Reserve Staff Group and carrying out a few minor duties, I eventually, as a RAAF Active Reservist, found myself at the Army Aviation Training Centre (AvnTC) at Oakey, QLD working for the Defence Materiel Organisation's, Army Aviation Systems Branch as a Project Support Officer. Duties were many and varied, ranging from managing projects to setting up helicopter flying training and maintenance contracts. I relocated with part of the branch to Brisbane in 2007 and worked with them until my retirement on reaching 65 on 23 Jan 2014.

I am looking forward to providing support to the DFWA in whatever role that may be in the future, however, it is rather obvious when one sits at the weekly business meetings, that we need to engage with younger members of the ADF, either serving or past members, both male and female to be able to sustain our continued support to all members of the Defence Community. All current DFWA members can assist in this endeavor by spreading the word of our existence and what the organization offers.



DFWA SHOP

Our Contact Details:

DFWA QLD INC Victoria
Barracks Brisbane
ENOGGERA QLD 4051

Phone: 07 3233 4480
Email: qldbranch@dfwa.org.au

Your Order Details:

Title.....Initials.....Surname.....

Address:
.....

Phone No.....Email:

Item	Size Code	Quantity	Postage	Unit Price	Total
Bisley Blue Shirt - Men's 	XL, L M, S		xxxxxxx	\$39.95	
Bisley Blue Shirt —Women's	XL, L, M, S		xxxxxxx	\$39.95	
DFWA Cap with embroidered badge 	xxxxx		(See Notes)	\$15.00	
DFWA Lapel Badge 	xxxxx		(See Notes)	\$5.00	
DFWA Polo Shirt (JB's Wear) 	XXL XL, L M ,S		(See Notes)	\$30.00	
DFWA Satchel 	xxxxx		xxxxxxx	\$5.00	

Notes:

- Shirt Size Code: Extra Extra Large XXL; Extra Large XL; Large L; Medium M; Small S.
- Please note that Bisley shirts are generally one size larger than most other brands.
- Postage: Bisley shirt prices include posting and handling. If ordering other items with shirts, no additional postage is required. If ordering a cap together with a badge, cap postage only is required.
- With increases in postages charges, we now calculate postage (when applicable) based on the mailing address. Please check with your post office or contact us in advance for postage costs for your location.

Subtotal: \$.....
Postage: \$.....
Balance Due: \$.....

Payment: Internet Banking/Direct Debit: Bank of QLD BSB 124 076 Account: 10 480 398
OR Enclose Cheque/Money Order: \$.....Signature:.....Date:/...../.....