

The Bosun's Call

Vol 15 No 2

Each for All—All for Each

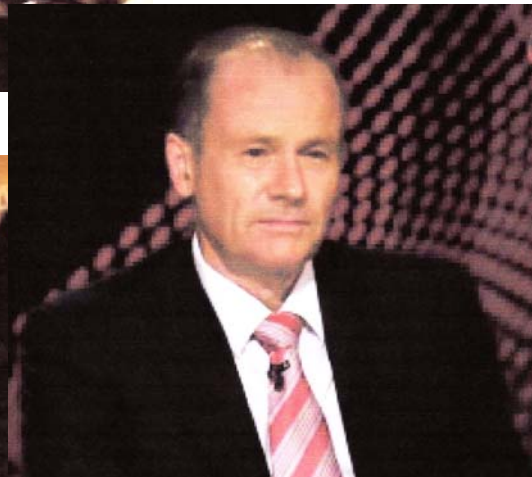
March 2010

The Question of Indexation of Military Pensions Raised on National Television.



The ABC's Q & A panel and audience looking at Peter Thornton on 15 February 2010 while he asks Lindsay Tanner (below), via the Chair, his question on the Federal Government's intentions regarding the indexation of Military Pensions

Photos ABC Television



At Left. Peter Thornton putting his question to the ABC Q & A panel chaired by Tony Jones

Events coming up
Sunday 28 February Fish 'n' Chips Canberra Yacht Club 1700
WEDNESDAY 3 March Monthly meeting MV Southern Cross at
Canberra Yacht Club
Commencing at 1930



Newsletter of the ACT Section of the
Naval Association of Australia



Printed by The Sports Club Kaleen

Naval Association of Australia ACT Section

Patron The Hon Sir William Deane AC KBE

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	David Manolas	
	Mike Hardwick	02 6253 6256
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Charitable Fund

Chairman Harry Beardsell

Contact Details

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General Meeting Dates and Locations

3 Mar	<i>MV Southern Cross</i>	1930 Wed
1 Apr	Kaleen Sports Club	1330
6 May	Manuka Services Club	1930
3 Jun	Manuka Services Club	1930
1 Jul	Manuka Services Club	1930
5 Aug	Kaleen Sports Club	1330
2 Sep	Manuka Services Club	1930
6 Oct	<i>MV Southern Cross</i>	1930 Wed
4 Nov	Kaleen Sports Club	1330
2 Dec	Manuka Services Club	1830
2011		
3 Feb	Manuka Services Club	1930
2 Mar	<i>MV Southern Cross AGM</i>	1930

President's Note

Now that the dust has settled and the Office bearers and an enlarged Committee have been elected it is time to get on with 2010.

The social programme is being reinvigorated but its success depends upon you attending the functions. The Naval Association started out as a way of getting together. Lets keep it up.

As you can see in this issue the Federal Government continues to thwart strenuous efforts by ESO's to get the indexation of military pension revised to take account of changes in the standards of living and the decline of the usefulness of the CPI Index over the last 30 years to maintain effective parity of our pensions with the current way of life. The NAA is a strong supporter of the DFWA in its attempt to bring the indexation issue to a satisfactory conclusion. Unfortunately, you should not hold your breath in the expectation of a good result.

The Membership Registrar's job has been taken over by Peter Launder. There are still a large number of members who have not put in their subs for 2010. A red dot has been placed on the address label of this Bosun's Call should you be one of those who have overlooked the payment of subs for 2010.

ANZAC Day is drawing near and, as for last year, the ACT Section has been invited by the HMAS Sydney and Escorts Association to participate in a post march get together at the East Lake Football Club in Kingston. An entrance fee will be charged for those of us who are not also members of the host Association, to cover the cost of the finger foods that will be available at the function.

*Cheers
 Peter Cooke-Russell*

**Annual Subscriptions
 are due Now
 Full Members \$25**



**Committee Meeting 1830
 3 March MV Southern Cross**

NAA ACT Section Event Diary

28 Feb	Fish and Chips Evening	Canberra Yacht Club foreshore 1700
28 Mar	Fish and Chips Evening	Canberra Yacht Club foreshore 1700
25 April	ANZAC Day March with post march social	Session at East Lake Football Club
7 Aug	HMAS Canberra Memorial Service	
7 Oct	Naval Memorial Service	

Arrangements are in hand for 2 BBQs and 2 lunch dinner events during the year

Dates for 2 BBQs and Lunch/dinner events yet to be determined

DVA Case Coordination—Businessline

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) new Rehabilitation and Compensation Group (RCG) Case Coordination: A single point of contact service for clients who are at risk and/or with complex needs. Advice to DVA Managers

Purpose

The purpose of this Businessline is to inform staff of the commencement of *RCG Case Coordination: A single point of contact service for clients who are at risk and/or with complex needs* and how to refer.

Background

As part of an election commitment, the Government appointed Professor David Dunt to carry out a study entitled *Independent Study into Suicide in the Ex-Service Community*. Professor Dunt's study was released on 1 May 2009 and identified 21 recommendations covering broad issues of suicide to help identify ex-service members that are at an increased risk of self harm, common contributing factors among ex-service members who have committed or attempted suicide, the extent of suicide in the ex-service community, lifestyle or other factors that may be contributing to suicide in the ex-service community, and recommended administrative reforms or initiatives to help combat suicide in the ex-service community.

One recommendation specific to DVA, which was accepted by Government, was to implement a system of case coordination for clients with psychological issues that have caused, or may be in danger of causing, self-harm or harm to others.

Program Details

RCG Case Coordinators will assist clients who are identified as at risk and/or having complex needs to navigate **all DVA services and benefits** in order to minimise the risk of self-harm and maximise quality of life. This will be done by providing these clients and their families with **one person** for them to liaise with for all their DVA entitlements and assist with other psychosocial supports that may be required. This includes: an assessment of overall needs, setting goals for improved health and well-being, identifying appropriate services that will assist them achieving their goals and supporting them to manage their circumstances. Case Coordinators will oversee all that has to happen.

Case Coordinators will collaborate with RCG Managers, claims delegates, and other staff on all aspects of DVA's business activities to ensure that a client's DVA needs are being met in a timely manner. Case Coordinators will not be investigating or determining the clients' claims.

Circumstances where clients might be at risk and / or have complex needs include:

- Severe Psychological Condition
- Self Harm
- Suicidal Ideation
- Current or Recent Mental Health Hospitalisation
- Danger to Others (violence to others, domestic violence)
- Severe injury
- Complex/sensitive situations following a death caused by accepted conditions.

How to refer

Any staff member can complete a "Case Coordination Referral" form (see attachment A or the MRCA/SRCA Tools intranet site) and email the referral to the "**RCG Case Coordination Referral**" In-Box. Referrals must be made with the agreement of the Team Leader.

Case Coordinators will work with RCG Managers, Rehabilitation, Team Leaders and Transition Management Service to identify current clients who would benefit from case coordination.

All client referrals for case coordination will be assessed in relation to their at risk status and/or complex needs. To do this, Case Coordinators will consult with the referrer, gather information from multiple sources, identify how the client can best be assisted. Case Coordinators will advise the referrer whether the referral has been accepted or declined for case coordination. Where a referral has been declined, the Case Coordinator will provide feedback and where appropriate, recommendations for further action.

For accepted referrals, Case Coordinators will develop an agreed "Wellness Plan" with the client and then consult, liaise, and work closely with all staff involved in determining DVA entitlements. Once the goals of the "Wellness Plan" have been met, the plan will be closed and the Case Coordinator will then monitor the client for a further 12 months to minimise the likelihood of a relapse.

As this is a new and developing program, it is expected that the processes will be refined and/or new ones defined. Therefore, should staff identify any issues, please work with the Case Coordinators responsible for your location to determine the necessary remedial action.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Action Required

Could you please circulate the information below {Referral Forms} to all your relevant managers and staff.

John Fely
 Ag National Manager
 Rehabilitation & Compensation Group
 12 January 2010

More detailed description of circumstance criteria where clients might be at risk and/or have complex needs

If the client meets any of the below criteria, please refer to Case Coordination for a comprehensive assessment.

Severe Psychological Condition

- Current or Recent Mental Health Hospitalisation
- Danger to Others (violence to others, domestic violence)
- Self Harm
- Substance Abuse
- Suicidal Ideation
- Unstable-Aberrant Behaviour

Severe injury

- Combat/Peacekeeping/Injury/Loss of Limb
- Severe Mobility Issues
- Blindness
- Requires Critical Care (Long or Short Term)
- Injury sustained on operational service inc death.

Client is resource intensive (High Media and Political Profile/CLU client)

Complex Death caused by accepted conditions

Other – Potential Indicators

- Client is accessing / receiving multiple services (VHC, Counselling etc)?
- Telephoning DVA continuously?
- Does the client have high pharmacy / medication usage?
- Is the client seeing multiple doctors?

- Financial difficulties?
- Current Police issues?

- Does the client have an intense treatment regime?
- Is the client having any personal relationship issues?

Name	Office Location	Regional Coverage
Gareth James Jill Robinson Gary Edgley	Perth	WA, SA and NT
Jodi Ross Glenys Payne Rose Di Benedetto Mark Scott	Brisbane	Queensland
Jan Mannix Fiona Duffy Sundra Pichot	Melbourne	Victoria and Tasmania
Elizabeth Gippel Katie Marriner Marie Smithson	Sydney	NSW and ACT

Department of Veterans' Affairs to Continue as a Separate Agency

On 17 December 2009, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, reassured the veteran and ex-service community that the Government has no plans to merge the Department of Veterans' Affairs with other agencies.

"Consistent with our election platform, the Government remains committed to maintaining a separate and properly funded Department of Veterans' Affairs," Mr Griffin said.

"The Government understands that the needs of veterans and the ex-service community are unique. We recognise that delivering an appropriate level of service for this group requires a Department with a discrete budget and awareness of the special circumstances that exist within this community. Veterans should not be concerned by a recent announcement relating to the merger of agencies within the Human Services portfolio – my Department is not affected.

"The Department of Veterans Affairs will continue to work closely with both Centrelink and Medicare."

**The following letter has been received from the
DVA Secretary, Ian Campbell**

**Ambulance and Hospital Arrangements for the Veteran
Community**

I am writing to inform you of proposed changes to the arrangements which the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has in place for the delivery of ambulance services, and for the proposed extension of Hospital Services Arrangements with State and Territory governments until June 2012

Ambulance Services

Currently DVA contracts with individual States and Territories and a small number of private providers for ambulance services for eligible Gold and White Card holders. The new arrangements will put in place a single new agreement with each State and Territory for a simplified and uniform approach to subsidising the costs of these services.

It is proposed that the changes will commence on 1 July 2010. From that date, each State and Territory will be paid the same amount per eligible card holder in their jurisdiction,

The new arrangements will apply to all emergency and non-emergency services. An exception is the Royal Doctor Service which is separately funded by the Australian Government

The Australian Government remains committed to subsidising the costs of ambulance services, for eligible veterans. These changes will not impact on veterans' access to ambulance services - they will continue to access services in line with the service arrangements operating within individual jurisdictions. It is expected that veterans will notice no change in services.

The current ambulance arrangements with DVA are complex and cumbersome to administer. With every jurisdiction. DVA deals with different fees, different formulas for calculating payments and varying levels of subsidy. Data collection and administration is costly both for DVA and service providers. These changes will ensure national consistency and a more streamlined approach between DVA and individual States and Territories.

In Western Australia and Tasmania, DVA contracts with some private ambulance providers in addition to the main ambulance provider who services the general community. DVA will be negotiating with those governments to confirm that there is no diminution in services to eligible veterans.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Alan Griffin MP, has written to States and Territories outlining the new arrangements. The arrangements which

currently operate will remain in place until 1 July 2010.

Hospital Services Arrangements

Minister Griffin has also written to States and Territories about the current Hospital Services Arrangements,


Given the context of health reform now underway, the Australian Government intends to extend the existing Hospital Services Arrangements for an interim period until 30 June 2012.

It is proposed that this extension could operate through a deed of variation extending the Arrangement duration, and setting payment arrangements for the period.

Should you have any queries about this announcement, the contact in DVA is Ms Judy Daniel, National Manager Primary Care Policy Group on (02) 6289 6418 or by email

judy.daniel@dva.gov.au

Yours sincerely


Ian Campbell
Secretary
24.1.10

Five Minute Quiz

1. Which country has the only national flag in the world with just one colour and no design, insignia, or other details?
2. With a diving speed of around 320kmh, what is the world's fastest bird?
3. The alloy rose gold contains what other metal?
4. Operation Husky was the code word in WW2 for the landing of Allied forces where?
5. Radar is an acronym for...?
6. Stasi was the name of which country's secret police organisation?
7. What is a female donkey called?
8. In which country does gruyère cheese originate?
9. Which present-day country was called Lusitania by the Romans?
10. Which African nation was established as a homeland for freed African-American slaves?

Answers Page 11

PTSD—Picking Up the “PEACES”

Picking up the PEACES is a community organisation committed to raising awareness and the understanding of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

What is PTSD?

PTSD is a disorder that causes both physical and psychological problems. It results from the exposure to a traumatic event. There are three different forms of PTSD: acute, delayed and chronic.

Acute PTSD is when symptoms last for, at most, three months.

Delayed onset PTSD is when symptoms start to occur at least six months after a traumatic event.

Chronic PTSD is when PTSD symptoms last for over three months.

PTSD can be a disabling disorder and is associated with many other illnesses, like depression, anxiety, diabetes, asthma and borderline personality disorder.

PTSD Symptoms

There are three main groups of PTSD symptoms:

Intrusive re-experiencing

- Distressing thoughts, images or memories
- Nightmares

Physical anxiety (sweats, muscle tension etc)

Avoidance of Reminders and Situations

- Emotional numbing
 - Inability to imagine a future
 - Feeling detached from other people
- Losing interest or avoiding normal activities

Increased Arousal

- Sleep disturbance or insomnia

- Excessive startle
- Irritability and anger
- Concentration problems
- Poor memory

Excessively on guard and constantly scanning the surroundings

Early Detection

It is vital that practical help is sought during the first weeks after a traumatic event.

DO:

- Remove yourself from a traumatic event
- Encourage family and friends to be around
- Allow yourself time to process the trauma
- Try to keep a routine going
- Maintain a healthy diet and exercise
- Seek the right pain relief

Relax and get sleep

DON'T

- Use alcohol or drugs to cope
- Keep too busy
- Engage in excessively stressful situations

Withdraw from family and friends

For more information on PTSD, go to the web site

www.pickingupthepeaces.org.au

Or, call Katie on 0410 900 433

Other important phone numbers

- Life Line 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
- VVCS 1800 011 046

Information for Pensioners who Pay their Phone Bills with Cash

There is a soon to be introduced charge of \$2.20 if pensioners wish to pay their phone bill at the Post Office or Telstra by cash or cheque.

This charge can be avoided if you first phone **1800 445 708** and, after providing your phone number, name, date of birth and pension card number, you can register for exemption from this fee.

This can apply to your home phone and mobile phones.

ACT Section Financial Status

Members who are unable to attend meeting but wish to be advised of the ACT Section's financial status should ring the Treasurer Sylvia Sinfield on

02 6288 2350

ABC "Q&A" PROGRAMME - 15 FEBRUARY 2010

Peter Thornton, an ex Army Warrant Officer, raised the issue of Indexation of Military Pensions on national television -

Needless to say, the response from the Minister for Finance, Mr Lindsay Tanner, was shallow and inadequate .. read what DFWA has to say about this in their Press Release (Issued 16 Feb 10)

The full question and response from the ABC TV Website are on the following pages 8 and 19.



DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, 16 February 2010

TANNER WAFFLES ON AGAIN – AND VETERANS CONTINUE TO SUFFER

The Minister for Finance Lindsay Tanner did not cover himself with glory with his shallow and patently inadequate response to Peter Thornton's question to him on last night's ABC Program Q&A.

Responding to concerns about the deterioration in military superannuant's reducing standard of living due to unfair indexation arrangements compared to age pensioners (and particularly pre 2004 Federal Parliamentarians) Mr Tanner again referred to the "quick & dirty" Matthews Report as an "expert review". Matthews said military superannuation was a "condition of employment" so Mr Tanner at least got that right – but neglected to say that the condition of military superannuation was that it would maintain living standards and purchasing power. The CPI index may have done that 30 years ago – but now it's changed and doesn't. **That's exactly why the Government changed the index for aged pensioners so why not for military superannuants?**

Another issue Mr Tanner raised was that to change the indexation mechanism would be unfair on members who had earlier chosen to take a lump sum. What he ignored was DFRB and DFRDB members were never able to take their superannuation as a full lump sum. That right is a feature of the latest scheme started in the 1990s. In any case had they done so they would have enjoyed – by the Government's own admission – returns well above inflation so how would they be disadvantaged?

Mr Tanner then suggested that a change would cost "billions and billions"... where is the evidence Mr Tanner – we have asked for this in the past but heard nothing. Tanner's emotive statement is meant to shock and simply does not add up - the reality is that the cost is affordable with Department of Finance revealing a full budget cost of \$16m in 2010-2011 and the Future Fund well on the way to covering the full superannuation liability. The ability of the Government to suddenly find funds for free to air television stations (\$250m), the Taliban (\$25m) let alone the \$40billion for "economic stimulus" makes a mockery of his assertions.

We applaud Tanner's honesty in declaring he is a member of the older defined benefit scheme for MPs with its incredibly generous indexing method. We may have been more impressed if the Government had committed to changing the old MP scheme to the same CPI based mechanism that is used for military superannuants !

Mr Tanner said that the Government is always looking at ways to improve things for current and past members of the ADF.

Mr Rudd – and repeated by Mr Tanner last night - talks about a fairer Australia.

**Well, isn't it time that military superannuants were treated fairly ?
Or will it wait till we all die off?**

Media Contacts

Executive Director:
Les Bienkiewicz 0411 444248

DFWA National President:
David Jamison 0416 107557

Transcript of the ABC Q and A Television Programme, broadcast on 15 February 2010, and dealt in part with the Indexation of Military Pensions.

TONY JONES: Okay, you're watching Q&A. You're watching Q&A, clearly the live and interactive forum where you get to ask the questions. Our next question tonight, and it's a very different one, it comes from Peter Thornton.

PETER THORNTON: Thanks, Tony. I'm here together with my colleagues Ian Scott from the Defence Force Welfare Association and Mr John Coleman from the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association, and we are here representing the interests of nearly 600,000 currently serving Defence Force and Commonwealth staff and retirees, and principally because retirement benefits, under successive governments, have continually eroded to a point that a lot of those - a lot of retirees now have to actually draw on welfare. So my question is - - -

TONY JONES: Specifically Defence retirees? You're talking about veterans, primarily?

PETER THORNTON: Well - - -

LINDSAY TANNER: And by welfare you mean the age pension?

PETER THORNTON: Correct. And in the case of war widows and orphans, the war widows pension and other benefits such as that. So my question, Tony, and to the panel, retired federal politicians have their pensions increased by movements in parliamentary salaries and allowances, and Age Pensioners have their pensions indexed by a combination of inflation and wages, rightly so. So why is it that retired Defence Force and Commonwealth personnel have their pensions adjusted by the Consumer Price Index only, when that index, that was rightly deemed to be insufficient in itself for age pensioners and others more than a decade ago?

TONY JONES: Okay. Just before we get you to answer that, Minister, we've been inundated with emails and web questions on this topic. Let me read you a couple quickly. John Forrest of Victoria quotes this: "A digger is someone who wrote a blank cheque made payable to Australia for an amount of up to and including my life," and Greg Carroll of Queensland says, "If your government is grateful to the Defence Force personnel who risk and give their lives for Australia, why are retirees struggling to live on pensions that are not even adjusted at the same rate as old age pensioners." Clearly a lot of passion around this issue. We got thousands of emails about this. Lindsay Tanner, is the government going to do anything about it?

LINDSAY TANNER: We came to office, Tony, with a commitment to conduct an expert review of this question. It applies with respect to public - - -

(AUDIENCE JEER)

LINDSAY TANNER: Well, thank you. It applies with respect to a set of former and some existing public servants but not new public servants. So the schemes that are in play there have closed, because it is an old defined benefit arrangement where people got a guaranteed pension and a guaranteed indexation. What we now have for new public servants and have had for a while is schemes where you basically bear the risk, and so there's no guarantee of any outcome. What you've had for politicians since 2004, is the same transition. So, yes, there are members of parliament, myself included, under the old arrangements but new politicians getting elected from 2004 onwards are under the same arrangements as

new public servants. The Defence Forces are still under the old arrangements, but there has been a question about possibly moving them to the new world. Now, the expert review that we had reporting to us by one of the world's leading authorities on these issues, who happens to be an Australian, said, "No, you shouldn't change the arrangements for the indexation, because it was a term and condition of employment and that would be, amongst other things, unfair to people who elected to take a lump sum as part of their entitlement and who therefore would be disadvantaged in retrospect, because they'd do their sums about the value of a pension as opposed to a lump sum and, more importantly than that, the cost of making this change would be, over the long haul, billions and billions of dollars. It would add very significantly to that longer term debt burden and there are literally hundreds of thousands of Australians out there who haven't been in these defined benefit schemes where they are guaranteed of a pension at a certain level and of indexation, who have seen the value of their superannuation diminish dramatically over the past year or two and we are in a position where we are having to clamp down on spending. Unfortunately, much as many of us sympathise with the position that people are in, the arguments being put and particularly people in the Defence Forces, we've got an expert review saying you shouldn't change the arrangements and we've got a budgetary situation which says the billions of dollars that you would add onto government debt are simply not - - -

TONY JONES: And yet I'm listening to all this complicated answer, and it is complicated. I appreciate that.

LINDSAY TANNER: Well, it's unfortunately a complicated issue.

TONY JONES: No, of course. But it seems pretty clear from the information we're getting from the people whose come in and the thousands who are emailing, that a lot of veterans are struggling to survive on their pensions and so the question is, everything aside including expert reviews, is there nothing the government can do about that?

LINDSAY TANNER: Well, we have actually got the response from an earlier process that the Howard Government initiated, which is about reforming the arrangements for military pensions, for veterans' pensions, which raises a different set of issues which are still being considered, but they don't effectively deal with today's pensioners problems. A lot of people involved here are actually getting part aged pensions, as well, so there is a safety net and the different with the aged pension, it is designed to be a safety net. Now, there are specialised issues for the military. I accept that and always the government is going to be interested in looking at ways of improving not just pension arrangements but all kinds of other things. There are military compensation issues, for example, associated with injuries that are currently in play that are also every important and very serious. So we're always going to be looking at ways of improving what is done for people in the Defence Forces, both current and past.

TONY JONES: We're fast running out of time. Look, I'm sorry, you're going to have to take what the Minister said and take the campaign up from here because we've got a few other things we need to talk about. We're fast running out of time. Let's go to our next question, which comes from Natalie Lammass.

The Battle of Cape Matapan

The Battle

On 27 March 1941, Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippell, with the cruisers *Ajax*, *Gloucester*, *Orion* and *Perth* and destroyers sailed from Greek waters for a position south of Crete. Admiral Cunningham with *Formidable*, *Warspite*, *Barham* and *Valiant* left Alexandria on the same day to meet the cruisers.

At 0755, on the 28th, the Trento group encountered Admiral Pridham-Wippell's cruiser group, which was heading to the southeast. Thinking they were attempting to run from their larger ships, the Italians gave chase, opening fire at 0812 from 22,000 metres. As was always the case, the Italian guns had trouble grouping their rounds, and had little effect. After an hour, the Italians broke off the chase and turned northwest to rejoin the *Vittorio Veneto*. The Allied ships also reversed course, and followed the Italians at extreme range.

At 1055 the *Vittorio Veneto* met the Italian cruisers, and immediately opened fire on the shadowing Allied ships from about 23,000 metres. The Allied cruisers withdrew, with slight damage from 15" shell splinters, although the Italians started a pursuit.

By this point Cunningham's forces, which had been attempting to join up with Pridham-Wippell's, had launched a sortie of Fairey Albacore torpedo bombers from HMS *Formidable*. They attacked the *Vittorio Veneto* without direct effect, but the required manoeuvring made it difficult for the Italian ships to maintain their pursuit. Realising that they might not be so lucky next time, Iachino broke off the pursuit at 1220, retiring towards his own air cover at Taranto.

A second sortie surprised the Italians at 1509. Lieutenant-Commander Dalyell-Stead flew his Albacore to 1,000 metres from *Vittorio Veneto*, hitting her outer port propeller and causing 4,000 tons of water to be taken on. The ship stopped while damage was repaired, but was able to get underway again at 1642, making 19 knots. Cunningham heard of the damage to the *Veneto*,

and started to pursue her.

A third strike, by six Albacores and two Swordfish from 826 and 828 Squadrons on *Formidable* as well as two Swordfish from 815 Squadron on Crete was made between 1936 and 1950. A torpedo, apparently dropped by Lieutenant F.M.A. Torrens-Spence, crippled the cruiser *Pola*, forcing her to stop. Unaware of Cunningham's pursuit, a squadron of cruisers and destroyers were ordered to return and help *Pola*, formed on the *Pola*'s sister ships, the *Zara* and *Fiume*. The squadron did not start to return towards *Pola* until about an hour after the order been given by Iachino, officially due to communication problems, while the *Vittorio Veneto* and the other ships continued to Taranto.

The Allies detected the Italians on radar shortly after 2200, and were able to close without detection. Italian ships were not supposed to meet enemy ships by night and had their main gun batteries disarmed; they also had no radar and could not detect British ships by means other than direct sight, so the British battleships *Barham*, *Valiant* and *Warspite* were able to close to 3,500 metres unnoticed by the Italian ships, from where they opened fire. The Allied searchlights illuminated their enemy. Some British gunners witnessed the cruiser's heavy turrets popping up dozen of metres into the air. After just three minutes, two Italian



HMAS Vendetta was the first Allied ship to come under fire in the Battle of Matapan

heavy cruisers, *Fiume* and *Zara*, had been destroyed.

Two Italian destroyers (*Vittorio Alfieri* and *Giosué Carducci*) were sunk in the first five minutes. The other two destroyers, *Gioberti* and *Oriani*, managed to escape, the former with heavy damage. Towing *Pola* to Alexandria as a prize was considered, but it was getting light and it was thought that the danger of enemy planes was too high. The British boarding parties seized a number of the much needed Breda anti-aircraft machine guns. *Pola* was eventually sunk with torpedoes by the destroyers *Jervis* and *Nubian* after her crew had been taken off. The only known Italian reaction after the shocking surprise, was a fruitless torpedo charge by some destroyers and the aimless fire of one of *Pola's* 40 mm guns in the direction of the British warships.

The Allied ships took on survivors, but left the scene in the morning, fearing Axis air strikes. The location of remaining survivors was broadcast and the Italian hospital ship *Gradisca* came to recover them. Allied casualties were a single torpedo bomber shot down by *Veneto's* 90 mm antiaircraft batteries, with the loss of the three-man crew. Italian losses were up to 2,303 sailors, most of them from *Zara* and *Fiume*.

Effects of the Battle

After the defeat at Cape Matapan, the Italian fleet never again ventured into the Eastern Mediterranean, conceding it to the Allied navies until the Fall of Crete. The Italian naval command lost all faith in German promises to protect their fleet from attack here. Hence, Cape Matapan was an important strategic victory for the Allies who could now concentrate most of their stretched resources against the Afrika Korps in North Africa under General Rommel after the fall of Greece to German forces in late April 1941.

There is still controversy in Italy regarding the orders given by the Italian Admiral Angelo Iachino. In fact, one or two destroyers could easily have towed *Pola* away from the British battleships and managed to escape in the case of an enemy encounter, while an entire division of heavy cruisers (*Zara*, *Fiume* and four destroyers) was completely useless both for towing operations and in protecting *Pola*: Italian heavy ships (all ships heavier than destroyers) were, in fact, not trained or equipped for night fighting and had orders to avoid enemy contact at night.

Re-issue of DVA Cards

DVA will reissue all Repatriation Health Cards (DVA cards) from March 2010. DVA has taken the opportunity to make some improvements to the cards, with the aim of improving them for the eligible veterans, war widows/widowers and dependants who hold them.

The improvements are:

The addition of a magnetic strip on the card containing the card holder's name, file number, card type and the card expiry date (which is also shown on the front of the card)

The addition of a micro printing and a DVA registered hologram, which are additional security features to ensure the cards cannot be reproduced illegally.

The magnetic strip will let providers swipe DVA cards as they currently do for Medicare cards or private health care cards. Hopefully, this will increase the number of providers who accept DVA cards, since they will be easier to use.

No sensitive information will be contained in the magnetic strip, just the basic details which are currently on the front of the card. These additional features will not reduce or change current eligibility to hold a DVA Card.

For the first time, eligible veterans, war widows/widowers and dependants who live overseas will receive a DVA card. This means they will no longer have to obtain a 'letter of authority' from DVA when they need to receive health care in Australia.

Entitlement to treatment overseas is limited to those veterans who have an accepted disability (or disabilities) which DVA funds treatment of. The process for receiving treatment while overseas will not change.

The reissue of DVA cards will start March 2010 and is expected to be finished by the end of April. If you currently have a DVA card and do not receive a new one by the end of April 2010, please contact your local VAN Office.

For more info, see the following web page, which has been created by DVA and which will be updated when new information comes to hand.

http://www.dva.gov.au/benefitsAndServices/health/health_cards/Pages/changes_march_2010.aspx

(Note: The spaces between characters are underscored)

An email facility has also been set up for members of the DVA community who may wish to provide feedback – the email address is:

DVACARDS@dva.gov.au

Navy Takes Command of Major Multi National Task Force for First Time

On 7 December 2009 a team of 25 Royal Australian Navy officers and sailors departed for the Middle East to form the command group of a Coalition Naval Task Force engaged in maritime security operations throughout the region.

Combined Task Force 150 conducts counter terrorism and maritime security operations in the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Gulf of Oman.

As Commander of the Task Force, Commodore Richard Menhinick will have tactical control of Coalition ships and aircraft from many nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Iraq, Pakistan, Germany and Australia's HMAS Stuart.

Chief of Joint Operations, Lieutenant General Mark Evans says it is the first time an Australian Officer has been assigned to this coalition command position – one of the most senior naval appointments in the Middle East Area of Operations.

“Commodore Menhinick and his team will be responsible for a combined crew of up to 1600 personnel; it is a very important role and a great endorsement for the professionalism of the Royal Australian Navy,” Lieutenant General Evans said. “I would like to especially thank the families and friends of these personnel for their ongoing support and wish those deploying continued success and safety.”

Commodore Menhinick says he is confident his team is prepared for their mission. “I am fortunate and privileged to lead such a capable and experienced team. We will meet all challenges directly and professionally and build upon the outstanding reputation of the Australian Defence Force in the international community,” Commodore Menhinick said.


“Our mission will be to sustain maritime security in the region, which includes deterring and countering terrorist movements at sea, to keep the seas open and safe for international shipping.”

Volunteers Wanted

The Section is suffering from the fact that it seems to be the same people, year after year, who do all the work. It is time the rest of you became involved in some way, especially you younger members, i.e. those under 65 years of age.

Become engaged with the Section and get involved in its activities. If you have suggestions for change, let's hear it; you may have a suggestion for some activity that may appeal to other members, so it could happen. On the other hand, it may well be that it has been tried before without success. That doesn't necessarily mean that it would fail again.

This is your Section and it is the members who make it function. So, come along, have a say and participate.



The NAA ACT Section is very grateful for the support provided by the Canberra Southern Cross Club



**March
2010**

John Aaron, Mike Baranovsky, Ted Bryant, Jerry Carwardine, Gordon Johnson, Deidre Jones, Bryan Lynch, John McCorrison, Barry McGlynn, Bob Ray, Derek Robson, John Small, Hugh Stevenson and John Yaldren;

A Happy Birthday to you all.



Answers to Five Minute Quiz:

1.Libya (green); 2.Peregine falcon; 3.Copper; 4.Sicily; 5.[Raido]election [a]nd [r]ang[ing]; 6.East Germany's; 7.A jemy; 8.Switzerland; 9.Portugal; 10.Liberia



Rivers Dining

At the Sports Club Kaleen
(sponsoring the printing of Bosun's Call)

...relax and enjoy yourself!!

Weekly Bistro Attractions

Monday Night Schnitzel

Plus a complimentary middy of beer, glass of wine or soft drink.

Tuesday Lunch Raffle

Purchase a meal from our Bistro between 12 pm and 1.30 pm and receive your complimentary ticket to go in the draw for a 1st prize of \$100 food hamper and three other prizes.

\$8.50 Friday Lunch

Great choice, great value!
Select from T-bone or Rump Steak,
Tempura Battered Fish or
Chicken Schnitzel with Chips & Salad

\$9.00 Sunday Family Roast

A meal the whole family will enjoy! Enjoy a selection of tender Roast Meats, Roast Potatoes, Roast Pumpkin & fresh Seasonal Vegetables.

Senior's Menu

are smaller portions

- Fish of the Day \$10.00
(Battered or Grilled)
- Roast of the Day \$10.00
- Chicken Schnitzel \$10.00
- Weiner Schnitzel \$10.00
- Parmigiana Topping \$ 1.50

Lunches Daily \$7.00

Rivers Dining Bistro is open seven days a week:

- Lunch 12 - 2 pm
- Dinner 6 pm - 9 pm

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