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Defence Family Matters for the Families of Australian Defence Force Personnel

July 2013
WELCOME to the NEW-LOOK DEFENCE FAMILY MATTERS

We’ve REDESIGNED THE MAGAZINE to bring the focus onto your community, your stories and your wellbeing, and we’ve placed services that SUPPORT DEFENCE FAMILIES under the spotlight.

WHAT’S GREAT ABOUT THE MILITARY WAY OF LIFE? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS!

My family has met wonderful people and formed lifelong friendships. We lived in England and Germany in the early eighties, and when we visited twenty years later it felt like we had never left—my daughter says you don’t have one lifelong friend but many.

My children laugh about the many photos we have of natural arches and the long bushwalks where they were bribed with ice-cream to keep walking. They would ask, ‘Do we have to get out of the car to see another natural wonder?’

As an Army wife, I certainly developed self-confidence, and my children all agree that the military lifestyle gave them the self-assurance to make the most of every opportunity and new challenge. Defence families have the courage to reinvent their lives at each new place. They experience the rich rewards of each new community and together they have a unique underlying bond and precious connection.

My son summed it up when he said, ‘It honed my communication skills, I met wonderful people, I saw amazing things—but it isn’t for everyone!’

Linda Hurley
Patron of the Defence Community

Page 27 features a new range of support sessions from the Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Service that focus on family wellbeing, and on page 28 we profile Lifeline, the nation-wide crisis support and suicide prevention service.

Last but not least, check out page 33 for a nostalgic review of family-favourite The Muddle-Headed Wombat.

Ray Bromwich
Director General Defence Community Organisation

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE? Do you run events or activities that Defence families might be interested in? Do you provide support services of value to Defence families?

Are you a family member with a great story to tell? Contact us at DefenceFamilyMatters@defence.gov.au and we’ll feature your story here.

WANT TO READ THIS MAGAZINE ONLINE? DEF M is now available on our website in a format that is compatible with most devices. You can also choose to opt out of receiving the printed version of the magazine. To do so, visit www.defence.gov.au/dco and click on ‘Defence Family Matters’.

PAST EDITIONS: The current edition of DEF M, along with all past editions, is available online along with text-only versions of the magazine. Visit www.defence.gov.au/dco and click on ‘Defence Family Matters’.

CONTACT THE HELPLINE AT DEFENCEFAMILYHELPLINE@DEFENCE.GOV.AU or on 1800 624 608 anytime, day or night.

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On Saturday 25 May, the DCO Amberley team joined the Ipswich City Council to celebrate National Families Week. Free activities included children’s rides, circus and sport workshops, musical performances and the entertaining Australian Tug-of-War National Titles. Defence and community-based organisations hosted information stalls with loads of giveaways and kids had a great time exploring the emergency services vehicles on display, including one of the new RAAF fire trucks.

Held between 15 and 21 May, this year’s National Families Week activities celebrated working together, getting the balance right and living a happy and healthy lifestyle. As well as celebrating National Families Week each year, DCO hosts a range of activities and events across Australia throughout the year.

VISIT WWW.DEFENCE.GOV.AU/DCO FOR DETAILS

In May, DEFENCE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION offices around Australia hosted events to celebrate National Families Week.

AMBERLEY
On Saturday 25 May, the DCO Amberley team joined the Ipswich City Council to celebrate National Families Week. Free activities included children’s rides, circus and sport workshops, musical performances and the entertaining Australian Tug-of-War National Titles. Defence and community-based organisations hosted information stalls with loads of giveaways and kids had a great time exploring the emergency services vehicles on display, including one of the new RAAF fire trucks.

BRISBANE
Art, music, food, entertainment and marvellous weather made for a day of fun for families in the Brisbane region on Sunday 26 May. Accompanied by the delightful sounds of the Australian Army Band, artist Donna Gibb guided families in the creation of a ‘community canvas’. The colourful painting will be displayed at Gallipoli Barracks Community Centre. Postcards of the artwork will also be made to send to members serving overseas.

HOBART
Over 50 people attended a visit to Zoodoo, a wildlife park on the outskirts of Hobart, on Sunday 19 May. Families enjoyed the social time and a relaxed wander around the park and everyone was surprised and impressed by the unexpectedly beautiful Tasmanian weather!
MELBOURNE AND CERBERUS

Defence families from the Melbourne and Cerberus regions had a great day bowling, playing pool, meeting new families, eating pizza and even singing karaoke. Sapper Pat made a guest appearance, greeting families on arrival and mingling throughout the day. Kids and parents together created a 'My Family' mural, and Defence partner Aileen wrote in the next day to say, “Thanks to Sapper Pat—my three year old Aiden was so taken with him ... Perhaps it’s because we have the Sapper Pat books at home!”

NORTH QUEENSLAND

DCO North Queensland held an Art and Creative Writing Competition to celebrate Defence families during National Families Week. Entrants portrayed the unique strengths of their own family in paintings, short stories, poetry and even song. A presentation ceremony for entrants and their families was held Tuesday 21 May at the Army Museum of North Queensland, where the artwork was exhibited and enjoyed by the whole community.

PUCKAPUNYAL

DCO staff hosted a car rally on a chilly Sunday 19 May, taking in a scenic drive from Tallarook to Trawool where a delicious morning tea was devoured by hungry hordes. Incorporating visits to the Australian Light Horse Park, Vietnam Veterans Walk and a number of other interesting places, the rally ended at beautiful Goulburn Park where families enjoyed a sausage sizzle. If you would like to organise a rally of your own, contact 03 5735 7731 and we’ll provide you with our itinerary.

RICHMOND NSW

DCO Richmond invited Defence families living in the area to a fun filled day at the Australiana Pioneer Village in Wilberforce on Sunday 19 May. Families stepped back in time to the days and lives of the early settlers to see how they lived, worked and played. Sheep shearing, a working blacksmith display, penny farding rides, a World War One military display by 18 Battalion, horse and sulky rides, horseshoe tossing and more, topped off with a celebratory sausage sizzle, ensured a good day was had by all.

SALE

On Saturday 18 May, staff from DCO Sale and the East Sale Community Group hosted an activity at the RAAM Base East Sale Roulette Cinema. Before the movie, families met to share a sausage sizzle while the children played on a bouncing castle.

SYDNEY AND LIVERPOOL

On Sunday 19 May DCO Sydney and Liverpool hosted a Defence Family Day at the idyllic Arthur Byrne Reserve at Maroubra Beach. Over 90 Defence families enjoyed face painting, ceramic art, show bags, cakes, and a sausage sizzle, and a highlight for the children was the GymBus—a funky indoor playground. Local community groups attended, including the Defence Special Needs Support Group, Waratah Interest Group and Anklebiters Playgroup, whose presence and support rounded the day of fun off perfectly.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Sunday 19 May dawned clear and sunny—a perfect day for a family event at Perth’s Kings Park. More than 100 adults and children took part in games and activities provided by Navy Physical Training Instructors and Scouts Western Australia, with adults and children alike particularly enjoying the tug-of-war. DCO staff fed the crowd with hot dogs and provided guests with community information packs while Defence families enjoyed the opportunity to socialise with other families.

Families Australia hosts National Families Week every year to celebrate the meaning of family and make the most of time spent together. The week is dedicated to celebrating the importance of being a family and the diversity of families all around Australia.

This year the theme of National Families week was ‘families working together and getting the balance right’. During May, thousands of people and hundreds of organisations celebrated the importance of families at events big and small all across Australia.

02 6273 4885
www.familiesaustralia.org.au
The **DEFENCE COMMUNITY** is a rich and vibrant one. There are associations, groups, organisations, community houses, social groups, and playgroup networks from coast to coast for **DEFENCE FAMILIES TO ACCESS**. Get out there and connect with your community!

**DO YOU RUN A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION THAT PROVIDES SERVICES OF VALUE TO DEFENCE FAMILIES?**

Do you manage a playgroup, social club or community group that a Defence family may be interested in? Contact us at DFM and we’ll profile you here. Don’t forget to call the [Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608](tel:1800624608) to ensure your group’s details are on the DCO website.

[DEFENCEFAMILYMATTERS@DEFENCE.GOV.AU](mailto:DEFENCEFAMILYMATTERS@DEFENCE.GOV.AU)

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**QLD | AMBERLEY PLAYGROUP**

We provide a place for Defence and other families with young children to meet and socialise in a safe, friendly and fun atmosphere. Sessions are on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9.30 am and 11.30 am, including school holidays. First session is free, then $3 per family or $1.50 for each child aged under one. We have an outdoor play area and run a range of activities and outings for babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

31 Gannet St, Amberley
Heather, 0411 795 790 | Hannah, 0431 021 843 amberley.playgroup@hotmail.com
www.facebook.com/group/amberleyplaygroup

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**SA | NORTH EAST DEFENCE COMMUNITY INC**

The North East Defence Community Inc is a tri-service group based at RAAF Base Edinburgh. We organise events and activities to help Defence families and couples develop a support network—it’s all about making new friends and enjoying Defence life in Adelaide.

We host playgroup sessions, family barbecues, ladies’ nights, partner support sessions, a mums and bubs group, pot luck dinners, craft groups, sewing groups and coffee mornings. We also run various school holiday activities, family camping weekends and special events through the year such as trivia nights, Christmas in July, Easter fun days, kids’ discos and a Christmas party.

RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia
0438 644 157
nedc.edinburgh@rocketmail.com
www.facebook.com/groups/nedcfamily

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**NSW | ANKLEBITERS PLAYGROUP**

On Thursday 9 May Anklebiters Playgroup mums received a surprise bunch of chocolate roses from the Everyman’s Welfare Service, a not-for-profit charity, to thank them for all that they do during the year.

Lisa Southwood and Trish Delaney claimed first and second prize in the Mothers’ Day Raffle and the Playgroup raised just over $200 for the end of year Christmas Party.

Anklebiters is a Defence sponsored playgroup that meets from 9.30 to 11.30 am on Thursday mornings at Randwick Barracks in Sydney and is always looking for new members.

Building 153, Randwick Barracks
1800 624 608
DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au
www.defence.gov.au/dco

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**NT | LARRAKEYAH NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE**

We offer a number of activities for Defence families with or without kids. Our parent-run playgroup meets on the last Saturday of each month at 9 am and we run a kids’ night on the last Friday of each month starting at 5 pm. Our walking club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays and a bookclub convenes monthly. Friday is coffee morning day, and we hold a monthly ‘lovely ladies dinner night’. We also have equipment and nursery items for hire. Visit the ‘Community connection’ section of the DCO website for details.

20 Stevens Terrace, Larrakeyah Barracks
08 8935 5498 larrakeyah@bigpond.com
www.defence.gov.au/dco

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**TAS | DOWSING POINT COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Dowsing Point Community Centre was established in 1991 as an information and referral service for Defence families and as a central meeting place and focus for family orientated activities. Open between 9.30 am and 2.30 pm Mondays to Wednesdays, our regular activities include Monday morning craft, Wednesday playgroup, regular bus trips to the Launceston and Ulverstone craft fairs, and fundraising activities. We help Defence families integrate into the local community, and also welcome non-military families.

Dewrent Barracks, Glenorchy
Joyce George, 03 6237 7471
dpcc10@tpg.com.au
www.defence.gov.au/dco

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[Clockwise from left: Anklebiters Playgroup at their Mothers’ Day Raffle; Lewis, Daniel and Gemma playing at the Dowsing Point Community Centre; playgroup activities with the North East Defence Community Inc; Libby and Madalyna from the North East Defence Community Inc. Photos used with permission.](image-url)
I FELT THAT BY TAKING PART IN THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM I WOULD GROW AS A LEADER, A TEAM PLAYER AND A PERSON.

The Young Endeavour Youth Development Program provides young Australians aged 16 to 23 with a unique, challenging and inspirational experience at sea aboard Young Endeavour. Youth crew complete the Youth Development Program, an internationally recognised program that aims to increase self-awareness, build character and resilience, and develop teamwork, communication and leadership skills. Setting the sails, taking the helm, navigating using the ship’s charts, cooking in the galley, and climbing to the top of the 30 metre mast—the youth crew participate in all aspects of sailing Young Endeavour. As the voyage draws to a close they even take command of the ship for 24 hours.

I interviewed Jack about life on board Young Endeavour not long after he returned to dry land. Describe your experience of being part of a military family.

It’s certainly been an interesting life. I’ve lived in more places than most other families. Moving around and living in interesting places has equipped me well for life. It’s also been great to get an inside look at the Navy and
its workings. I can’t imagine there are many kids who can lay claim to multiple flights inside Seahawk helicopters or being taken on a guided tour of USS Kitty Hawk.

Why did you want to go on a voyage in Young Endeavour?

Being part of a military family, many people I know suggested that I go on a voyage, including my aunty who was a former youth crew member. I also felt that by taking part in the Youth Development Program I would grow as a leader, a team player and a person. How was the voyage challenging?

Adapting to life at sea was a challenge—particularly waking up in the middle of the night for tacking stations and watch changeover and suffering multiple bumps to my head walking down a congested corridor in rough seas. Struggling with seasickness was also very challenging. Describe your most valuable experience and memorable moment.

Forming close friendships with the youth crew members was easily my most valuable experience. We’ve already organised a six month reunion. Some of my memorable moments include standing at the bow of the ship as we bounced over four metre waves, a whale breaching at the quarterdeck in the middle of the night, and unfurling sails on the topgallant yard which is 28 metres high.

On their first night at sea, crew members are encouraged to climb the 30 metre mast. This can be a confronting experience, especially for those afraid of heights, but with the encouragement and help from fellow crew and staff many overcome their fear and this shared experience helps the new shipmates bond.

Tell us about commanding the ship for 24 hours.

It was daunting steering a course out of Port Stephens and a steep learning curve over the next 24 hours. But I had such a feeling of relief and satisfaction as we safely navigated the ship into Newcastle the next morning. It was also very rewarding to see the Command team and the rest of the crew work as a team and use our collective knowledge to solve any problems.

Command Day is an integral component of the Youth Development Program. The staff crew sit back and relax while the youth crew take command of the ship for 24 hours, demonstrating the knowledge of sailing they have acquired over their past week at sea and really testing their teamwork, communication and leadership skills.

You spent Anzac Day on the ship. Can you describe this experience?

The Dawn Service on board was easily the most meaningful Anzac Day ceremony I have ever attended. The significance of being on board a naval vessel on such a special day gave the whole event a deeper meaning.

What did you hope to achieve by taking part in a voyage in Young Endeavour? Did you achieve these goals?

I hoped that I would become a more confident person, a stronger leader and make a few friends along the way. I am happy to say that I achieved all of these goals and then some, without a doubt.

Why would you recommend a voyage to other young people?

It is a unique life experience. You learn to sail a tall ship in ten days but you also learn more about yourself and what you’re capable of.

On their final full day aboard the ship, youth crew often have the opportunity to participate in a half day sail with a community organisation. This is a great experience for youth crew as they test their leadership skills as they show their guests what they’ve learnt over the past ten days.

Once their voyage is complete, youth crew members receive a certificate of completion and become part of the Young Endeavour alumni. Alumni can be called upon to share their experience as youth ambassadors. They have the opportunity to visit the ship at open days and take members of the public on a tour of the ship, recounting their own experience.

A Young Endeavour voyage is not a leisurely cruise. It’s challenging and exhilarating. If you think you or someone you know has what it takes to join a voyage in Young Endeavour, visit the website to find out more about how to expand your horizons.

The Young Endeavour Youth Development Program provides young Australians aged 16 to 23 with a unique, challenging and inspirational experience aboard the national sail training ship Young Endeavour. The program is recognised internationally as a leading youth development program.

Visit www.youngendeavour.gov.au to find out more information about the program, the ship’s open days and how to get on board.
In April we hosted an **online competition** and asked Defence families to **post on our Facebook page** their **best tips and advice** for managing deployment and **family member absence**.

The familiar story of helping children with the emotional aspects of parental absence resonated with many of you. Annamari’s biggest challenge was helping her 12 month old remember her daddy, but she shared some great strategies for overcoming this. “We kiss photos of daddy at night … and talk about photos and videos of them doing normal things together … I think it worked because daddy got to see her walk ‘live’ for the first time when she toddled up to him at the airport!”

Tarissa’s idea of a “daddy wall” proved popular. A photo of daddy, a calendar and a map showing his location helps her children maintain a personal connection to their father while he is away. She also gives her children a small whiteboard to write and draw the things they wanted to tell daddy during their next phone call.

Sharen agreed, saying “I think the photo wall is a fantastic idea. When my girls were little, I had photos of their dad everywhere and … we talked about him.”

Delighted by the sheer volume and quality of advice that streamed in, we knew we could not keep it to ourselves. Here we’ve pulled together some of the best advice for you to read.

**Your stories**
I SEE THIS AS A SELF DEVELOPMENT TIME WHERE I CAN ALSO ACHIEVE MY GOALS WHILE MY HUSBAND IS ACHIEVING HIS.

WHEN WE CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD IN A WAY THAT IS IMPORTANT AND ENRICHING TO US, WE BECOME MORE RESILIENT.

But it was Megan’s comment that particularly drew our attention. She saw deployment as an opportunity to concentrate on her career, her son, her study and her fitness. “I see this as a self development time where I can also achieve my goals while my husband is achieving his,” said Megan. Many of you agreed, as does DCO’s Julia Esprey-Barton. “Spending time focusing on your own needs, reaching your goals is critical to resilience, helping you feel better equipped to handle both daily life and more challenging times,” she says. “When we contribute to the world in a way that is important and enriching to us, we become more resilient.”

I SAW DEPLOYMENT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONCENTRATE ON MY CAREER, MY SON, MY STUDY AND MY FITNESS. I SEE THIS AS A SELF DEVELOPMENT TIME WHERE I CAN ALSO ACHIEVE MY GOALS WHILE MY HUSBAND IS ACHIEVING HIS.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WE CONGRATULATE the winner of this Facebook competition, BROOKE FROM SYDNEY. Brooke’s great tip received the most ‘likes’, making this comment the winner of our ‘post your best tip for deployment’ competition. We sent Brooke a copy of The Lost Diggers by Ross Coulthart by way of thanks. To read Brooke’s entry, and all the other excellent advice posted by Defence families, visit our Facebook page.

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO commented and liked and shared and posted. It’s great to see so many positive responses and to see the resilience of Defence families.

We will keep the event open permanently so that you can continue to read and post great tips and advice on managing deployment and family member absence.

www.facebook.com/DefenceCommunityOrganisation

AND THE WINNER IS...

The winners of our Facebook competition are...

A great place to start is the DCO website, which provides advice and information about the different types of support that families can access.

In particular, the ‘Community connection’ section provides information and links to local community support mechanisms and outlines events and activities run by community groups and organisations all around Australia.

Families looking for a detailed outline of support they can receive during a deployment can download the Deployment Support Booklet. The booklet takes families through administrative and emotional things to consider before, during and after their member leaves on deployment.

The Member and Family Care Plan, also available for download, is a practical tool for families to use while their ADF member is absent. The plan is designed to be completed together as a family before their ADF member leaves and is a place for families to record important information, like their member’s employment and contact details, the location of important documents, and details of financial arrangements.

DCO also offers face-to-face and online training to help families manage deployment and family member absence. The SMART suite of programs are tailored for partners, teenagers and young children and help Defence families develop their resilience, providing them with the psychological resources to manage the military lifestyle.

To check out the SMART training for yourself, visit the DCO website to complete a workshop at your own pace.

Your Stories

Technology prompted much discussion. Debbie and Kristen agreed that keeping the mobile phone charged is critical because one never knows when their deployed member will call and for how long.

It was acknowledged that while Skype and Facebook are great tools, the technology is not always reliable so it is important to find other ways of communicating. Kimberley sends lots of packages and letters, Nyline’s children share messages with their father using a teddybear, and many of you rely on email. “Routine, routine, routine,” was the catchcry from Brooke, who noted that to be ready for the military lifestyle you have to be organised—from arranging school uniforms in ready-to-go sets, to setting aside “me-time” in a gym, and storing ready-to-eat homemade meals in the freezer.

Jeanene felt that asking questions, being informed and seeking help from either Defence or your member’s unit can help you feel in control, while Michelle’s suggestions to “Stay positive, get a cleaner, try to get some time out from the kids, say yes when someone offers help,” were all popular.

Niarea agreed, going as far as saying never say no to anyone offering to help, while Sharen noted that she fared better when she enlisted help and support from a variety of sources.

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Thanks to generous community support, Sam the Assistance Dog joined a Defence family in the Northern Territory, bringing joy and companionship to a child with special needs. Joanna Butler spoke to DFM about her experience as a mother to a child with autism and life with Sam. We moved to Darwin when my husband, a Corporal, was posted to Larrakeyah Barracks. We only had a few days to say goodbye to our family and friends and our support network and move across the country. It was tough. Our second son Alex has autism, which helps explain some of his more unusual traits, like lack of eye contact and repetitive behaviours. I was alone with Alex and his siblings when my husband was on exercises and deployed to Afghanistan, and I felt the pressure. I have had a lot of support from the special school Alex attends, but with four other boys to look after as well as my volunteer job home life has been challenging.

Luckily, we now have Sam. Sam was given to us by Assistance Dogs Australia in May this year, thanks to the generous donations from the Maitland community in the Hunter Valley NSW. Sam is an assistant dog—a golden retriever who has been trained to perform everyday tasks for people with disabilities. Dogs like Sam work hard for people with special needs, increasing their independence, reducing their reliance on caregivers, and acting as an icebreaker that helps overcome social isolation. The best part about Sam is that he provides constant companionship and unconditional love to Alex. Sam is an amazing addition to our family and the dog we always hoped for. He is bonding with Alex and his brothers and has already nudged Alex a few times during some of his little meltdowns and made him giggle by lovingly licking him on the cheek. It will be amazing to see their relationship grow.

If you would like to sponsor a dog like Sam to be trained to help another child like Alex, visit the Assistance Dogs Australia website, or ‘like’ their Facebook page to receive updates in your newsfeed. 1800 037 674 www.assistancedogs.org.au www.facebook.com/assistancedogsaustralia

If you’d like to talk to Joanna Butler more about her experience raising a child with autism, or life with an Assistance Dog like Sam, contact the Defence Special Needs Support Group. www.dsnsg.org.au 1800 037 674 national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au


To celebrate its 90th anniversary supporting Australian families, Legacy will mark its 90th anniversary on 13 October through local Legacy Clubs. Former Junior Legatees, widows, volunteers of the Club, supporters and Legatees and anyone who has been touched by Legacy are invited to share their Legacy story and celebrate the lives of our veteran families. Visit the Legacy website to share your story. You are also welcome to attend one of the many events planned around Australia on 13 October through local Legacy Clubs. 1800 534 229 reunions@legacy.com.au www.legacy.com.au
ALL RELATIONSHIPS HAVE CONFLICT—IT’S INEVITABLE, BUT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE DESTRUCTIVE.

INCREASE THE PEACE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

‘CLASHING’ is an integral and INEVITABLE PART of any relationship, military or civilian. Here are some insights to help you QUARREL CONSTRUCTIVELY and APPROPRIATELY.

Honest communication involving intense feelings is necessary in all intimate relationships and couples need to feel safe to express difficult thoughts and feelings to each other. Learning to ‘respond instead of react’ to problems, and understanding your and your partner’s stressors, can help you avoid pressing each other’s buttons simply to get a reaction. Avoiding manipulation or making comparisons, and taking ownership of your thoughts and feelings will help your partner feel safe to express their own.

It’s important to ensure your relationship remains the priority, not your reaction or the conflict itself. Writing down the things that bother you before you raise them can help you focus on specifics and work out what the real problem is. Ask yourself, “What is really going on here?” Owning up to your true feelings about the situation drives out fear.

During conflict, remain calm and ask your partner questions for clarification. Acknowledge that it’s perfectly acceptable to disagree, and listen carefully to each other without making value judgments or becoming defensive.

Life needs to go on after a conflict—remember that you have a relationship, not a short term contract. If discussions get out of hand or off track, mutually agree to call a truce. Have some time out, and resume discussions when you’ve both cooled off.

Conflict is inevitable, but it doesn’t have to be destructive. Couples can make their point in a kind, considerate manner, and even if you are the only party to try this approach be patient and persevere. It may not be easy, but it is possible. If you don’t get it right, have the courage and grace to say you didn’t—there will be a next time! Remember, it’s not really a failure unless you don’t learn anything from it.

When things go wrong, do you automatically jump to conclusions? Do you think it’s all your fault, or all someone else’s? The biggest obstacle to tapping into our inner strength lies with our thinking style and the way we view the world and interpret events.

All too often we think, This is being done to me or, This is happening to me because of my failing and shortcomings. These emotional reactions cloud our perceptions and affect our ability to assess and recognise what the situation really is. We become ‘stuck’ and overwhelmed, unable to plan the best way forward.

The way we choose to think about situations is the biggest predictor of just how stressful a situation will become. Listening to your thoughts will help you to identify how you typically approach being faced with a challenge, and will help you understand how your thoughts affect your feelings and behaviour.

One way to reframe your thoughts is to ask yourself—Is this about me? Do I have influence over this? What power do I have here? The very act of noticing your response to difficult situations can help you change your ability to handle these situations.

The next step is to catch yourself when you’re slipping into overly negative and stress-inducing patterns of thinking and challenging them. What are some other ways to interpret the same set of events? When you’re looking at something negative, see if you can change your self talk to use less strong, less negative words.

Better Health Channel
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Wellbeing Australia Network
www.wellbeingaustralia.com.au
Beyond Blue
www.beyondblue.org.au

Our EMOTIONAL HEALTH and WELLBEING is strongly connected to our thinking patterns. Here, I reflect on reframing thoughts and EMBRACING CHANGE and challenge.
Opening in early August, a **NEW EXHIBITION** at the **AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL** will present stories of the war in Afghanistan through the eyes and voices of our veterans and their families.

**AFGHANISTAN**

**THE AUSTRALIAN STORY**

**AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL**

In March this year, the **DCO North Queensland** staff visited the communities of Mount Isa, Weipa and Thursday Island. We spoke to Area Manager, **Kim Copeland** to get a real sense of life in the remote tropics.

Moving to a remote area of Australia may seem daunting at first, and many Defence families worry about adjusting to life away from the comforts of a metropolitan lifestyle. "While life in remote Australia is definitely a far cry from a city existence, there is a sense of adventure, challenge and belonging that is quite unique," said Kim.

"One thing that surprised us was the social strength and inclusive nature of isolated communities that made it easy for Defence families to settle in to their new town." Local Defence families told Kim how life in the remote tropics provided an opportunity to develop close friendships and strengthen their own relationships with their families.

Kim explained how being prepared: some things to know

The **SOARING HEAT AND HUMIDITY** will affect electricity bills considerably.

Relying on ‘**SNAIL MAIL**’ for Christmas and birthdays can be tricky as freight can take weeks rather than days.

**AFGHANISTAN: THE AUSTRALIAN STORY**

**AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL**

**Australian Army Chinook Helicopter, en route from Qathit to Laylough forward operating base, Afghanistan.**

**There is a sense of adventure, challenge and belonging that is quite unique to the remote tropics.**

**TROPICAL DAYS**

**CHANGE & OPPORTUNITY**

**KIM COPELAND**

In these remote localities it is evident Defence families are well-connected, strong and flexible. They draw on their strengths to adapt, improvise and overcome challenges and they do so with a sense of humour. DCO staff returned to their city life with a healthy respect and renewed admiration for the resilience and positivity the families displayed.

"We are grateful to the members and families for sharing their experiences so generously during the visits," said Kim.

**BEING PREPARED: SOMETHING TO KNOW**

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**Inside this edition**

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Your family’s health is an important priority, but keeping track of their key information can be difficult, especially during the posting season. The Australian Government established the eHealth record system to help families take control of their health information and to make health care in Australia better, safer and more effective.

An eHealth record is a secure electronic summary of your key health information drawn from records already held in different parts of Australia’s healthcare system. Registering you and your children is a simple and secure way to manage and keep track of their health information.

By registering for an eHealth record, you and your healthcare professionals can access your family’s key health information online when it is needed—for example, if your child gets sick in the middle of the night. Having an eHealth record makes it easier to keep track of important details, like whether your child’s immunisations are up to date, tests family members have had, and any allergies or adverse reactions to medication.

Registering for an eHealth record also helps ensure that your health information travels with you. Healthcare professionals participating in the eHealth record system can access your key health information online, with your consent. This will help ensure they have the information they need to provide you and your family with the more appropriate care, which is particularly helpful if you’ve recently moved home due to a new posting in Australia.

Having an eHealth record also benefits veterans by recording information such as data from Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which provides a range of pharmaceuticals and dressings at a concessional rate for the treatment of eligible veterans, war widows/widowers, and their dependants.

You can register for an eHealth record online or by visiting your local Medicare service centre or at an Assisted Registration event. More detail on the national rollout will be released over the coming months, so be sure to “Like” the ADF Family Health Facebook page and check our website regularly to stay up to date with all things family health.

The ADF Family Health Trial will be extended until 31 December this year, and from January 2014 the program will be rolled out nationally.

This is great news for Defence families all over Australia who can soon take advantage of this initiative—no matter where they live.

If you live in one of the eight trial regions you have an additional six months to join and receive benefits. The ADF Family Health Trial is an initiative of the Commonwealth Government to trial the provision of free basic healthcare to dependants of ADF members. To be eligible for the ADF Family Health Trial you must be a Defence-recognised dependent of a permanent ADF member or Reserve on continuous full time service, live in a trial region, and be recognised dependent of ADF families.

The trial provides medical reimbursement direct to your bank account of gap expenses when you visit a general practitioner. For example, if your GP charges $60 and the Medicare rebate is $35, Defence will reimburse you $25.

Additionally, Defence will provide $330 per dependant per calendar year to use towards a wide range of allied health services such as optometry, dental and physio. For private health insurance holders, the trial benefit can be used in addition to the private health benefit.

This is great news for Defence families all over Australia

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02 6266 3547
www.defence.gov.au/health
ADF.DependantHealth@defence.gov.au
www.facebook.com/ADFFamilyHealth

eHEALTH PORTABLE HEALTH RECORDS
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING

REGISTERING FOR AN eHEALTH RECORD ALSO HELPS ENSURE THAT YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION TRAVELS WITH YOU.

THE FUTURE OF DEFENCE FAMILIES’ HEALTH

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Gallipoli has special significance to many Australians. For the families of those who fought at Gallipoli, and in the other battles and campaigns of the First World War, the upcoming centenary commemorations are particularly poignant and there is already considerable public interest in attending the centenary services. The Anzac Commemorative Site at Gallipoli can safely, securely and comfortably accommodate 10 500 people. In 2015, this will comprise places for 8000 Australians, 2000 New Zealanders and up to 500 official representatives of all countries that served in the Gallipoli campaign. Widows of Australian First World War veterans do not need to participate in the ballot and are included as part of Australia’s official representatives, and they can travel with a companion. Four hundred double passes have been set aside for direct descendants of veterans of the Gallipoli campaign, with preference being given to the children of Gallipoli veterans, and for veterans who have qualifying service or who have deployed on any operations outside Australia, whether they are warlike, non-warlike or peacetime operations.

Another 400 places, to be allocated and managed through the states and territories, have been reserved for representative secondary school children and their chaperones. To register for the ballot you must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia and be a minimum of 16 years of age on, or before, 25 April 2015. All passes allocated through the ballot will be double passes—successful applicants can choose one person to accompany them to the commemorations.

Details on how to register for the ballot will be available later in the year. www.gallipoli2015.dva.gov.au

Focusing on Families

Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Service

Defence families can attend free family counselling services at Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Service (VVCs) centres around Australia. Over half of the veterans who receive support from VVCs are under the age of 50 and have served since 1999 and many have, or will have, parenting responsibilities. Raising a young family in the veteran community can be challenging. One or both parents may be on deployment or absent for extended periods due to work commitments, and transfers between bases means being away from extended family and having to find new schools and local supports.

Of the families seeking VVCs assistance, 21 per cent seek help for relationship issues and 17 per cent for family issues. Recognising this, VVCs partnered with The Bouverie Centre, a specialist family service and research centre, to address family and parenting concerns with a specific focus on the impact of the veteran experience and the needs of families where a parent has a mental health issue. VVCs now offers two specific services where families work in consultation with a counsellor to develop strategies that address the needs of the whole family.

A Family Consultation comprises one to three sessions during which the ADF member, their partner and other family members work together with a VVCs counsellor to identify their family’s goals, strengths and areas of difficulty, and develop strategies for more positive family relationships.

‘Let’s talk about children’ sessions help ADF members and their partners work with a VVCs counsellor to talk about their children’s wellbeing, general parenting issues, and those specific to military life. Including partners and family members in these counselling sessions can improve relationships and family wellbeing, deliver more sustained member recovery, and improve the understanding of mental health issues and their impact on parents and children.

VVCS is a free, confidential counselling service dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the ex-service and veteran community and their families. For more information on VVCs services or to check your eligibility for services please visit the VVCs webpage at www.DVA.GOV.AU/VVCS or call 1800 011 046.

What is VVCs?

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This year, Lifeline celebrates 50 years of suicide prevention services in the Australian community. The idea of a crisis line, later to be called Lifeline, originated on a Sunday night in early 1960 after Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker, then Superintendent of Wesley Mission, took a phone call from a distressed young man. “This is Roy speaking,” said a quiet voice on the phone. Dr Walker, who had trained as a nurse, listened to the distraught young man.

“Don’t know me, but can I speak with you a few moments? I have just written you a letter, which you will receive on Monday morning. By that time I will be dead. I’m sorry to worry you but there is really nobody who cares what happens to me.”

The loneliness and desperation of this man prompted Sir Alan to take action to prevent suicide. Determined not to let isolation and a lack of support be the cause of more deaths, Sir Alan planned a 24-hour crisis support line, which operated from the Wesley Mission in Sydney’s CBD. On 16 March 1963 the first call was taken from a distressed young woman.

In its first week of operation Lifeline received 350 phone calls and this number swelled to more than 15,000 calls in its first year. Lifeline has continued to grow over the past 50 years and now operates from 41 centres in every state and territory in Australia, answering over 600,000 calls per year.

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DEFENCE FAMILIES CAN ALSO ACCESS SUPPORT FROM THE VETERANS AND VETERANS’ FAMILIES COUNSELLING SERVICES.

It’s good to see that there have been a few policy changes and opportunities that will benefit Defence families this year.

The 2013 Defence White Paper and Budget Outcomes outline a positive outcome for families in the increase of support to families from the Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Service.

Another great outcome for families is the expansion of the ADF Family Health Trial that is set to roll out nationally in January 2014. It is pleasing to see that more Defence families will reap the benefits of these services.

I recently participated in a panel discussion on the topic of the Defence lifestyle. Hosted by Defence Housing Australia and ABC Radio National’s Big Ideas program, the panel featured Australian War Memorial Director Dr Brendan Nelson, retired Major General Roger Powell and Lieutenant Commander Steven Bell, and was a great opportunity to enhance awareness of Defence families in the wider civilian community.

ADF exit surveys over the last ten years have pointed to family needs among the top three reasons an ADF member will leave Defence, so reminding the community of the importance of families is helpful. You can listen to the ABC broadcast of this discussion online on the Big Ideas program on the ABC’s Radio National website.

ADF Family Health Trial that is set to roll out nationally in January 2014.

We're here to help - visit the DCO website at www.defence.gov.au/transitions to access support from the Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Services.

The program was developed for ADF members and their partners who are about to leave or have recently separated from the military. Attending a Stepping Out session is also a good opportunity for members to meet others in the same situation and to gain insight into their experiences.

For support during and after separation from the military, Defence families can also access support from the Veterans and Veterans’ Families Counselling Services. Their Stepping Out program is a two-day workshop designed to give transitioning members and their partners the skills and strategies to help prepare for the social and emotional changes that come with leaving the military.

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ADF EXIT SURVEYS OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS HAVE POINTED TO FAMILY NEEDS AMONG THE TOP THREE REASONS AN ADF MEMBER WILL LEAVE DEFENCE, SO REMINDING THE COMMUNITY OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILIES IS HELPFUL. YOU CAN LISTEN TO THE ABC BROADCAST OF THIS DISCUSSION ONLINE ON THE BIG IDEAS PROGRAM ON THE ABC’S RADIO NATIONAL WEBSITE.

ADF service, in order to assist with post-separation employment.

For a bird’s eye view on transition support, members and their families should consider downloading the ADF Transition Handbook from the DCO website. The handbook is an all-encompassing resource that provides detailed information about returning to civilian life and the support provided by Defence and other agencies like the Tax Office, Centrelink and Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

There’s even a checklist that guides members step-by-step through the process before, during and after separation from the military.

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Four generations of the De Witt family welcome Army Reservist Private Cory De Witt home from a four month deployment to Solomon Islands with Operation Arakar. Photo by Major Ian Toohill.
DFA WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS AT THE DFA CONFERENCE.

ABOUT DEFENCE FAMILIES OF AUSTRALIA

DEFENCE FAMILIES OF AUSTRALIA (DFA) is a volunteer network chartered by Defence and Government in 1985 to provide independent representation of Defence families and to provide advice in policy making and service provision planning. Families can contact their DFA representative to advocate with them and for them at a local level.

NATIONAL DELEGATES

ACT/SOUTHERN NSW
c.nsw@dfa.org.au
CENTRAL AND NORTHERN NSW
central.nsw@dfa.org.au
NORTH QUEENSLAND
nth.qld@dfa.org.au
SOUTH QUEENSLAND
sth.qld@dfa.org.au
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
wa@dfa.org.au
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
sa@dfa.org.au
VICTORIA/TASMANIA
vic.tas@dfa.org.au
NORTHERN TERRITORY
and KIMBERLEY
nt@dfa.org.au

DFA CONFERENCE

DFA would like to invite you and your family to share your ideas at the DFA conference held during August in Canberra each year.

The conference is an opportunity to provide advice to DFA about how best to influence the allocation of Defence community resources. Previous conferences have helped DFA achieve improvements in housing standards, base access, health, child care arrangements, and education and deployment support services.

Before the conference, Defence families meet with delegates around the country to discuss their views and priorities. These issues are presented at the conference along with the results from DFA’s 2013 Family Survey.

Please keep an eye out for dates of the pre-conference meetings on the DFA website or Facebook page, come along for a chat and some morning tea, or feel free to email the delegate in your state with your ideas.

MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT FOR YOUR RESUME?

The ACT/Southern NSW and North QLD National Delegate positions will become vacant in next few months.

If you have a strong interest in the Defence community, are able to attend monthly meetings, check your email regularly, and can travel to Canberra for two weeks each year in February and August then please read the selection criteria on the DFA website.

LATEST NEWS AND ADVOCACY

Family services We have requested new money to support family services, with families able to access support independent of their ADF member.

National job board We are lobbying for the creation of national job board to assist in finding employment after relocation or exit from the ADF.

Voice book We are continuing to accept submissions for the second edition of Voices, DFA’s collected stories of Defence families. Send your story to convenor@dfa.org.au, and email Alexander.Trotter@defence.gov.au if you’d like a copy of the first edition.

Housing policy Last year we recommended that non Defence-recognised dependants be allowed to reside in service residences, to assist with child care without loss of entitlement to housing. This policy is currently being amended—check FACMAN for details.


BOOK REVIEW:

THE MIDDLE-HEADED WOMBAT, BY RUTH PARK

Leila Fetter

Together they wander through a string of adventures that produce laugh-out-loud moments for adults and children alike.

With Noela Young’s simple but evocative illustrations, these stories effortlessly leap off the page and into the heart of the reader. Wombat, Mouse and Tabby live together in Big Bush and share adventures, like joining the circus, building a treehouse, visiting the seaside and skiing. Wombat’s muddle-headed view of the world usually gets the friends into a pickle but they always extricate themselves and end up safely home.

Park created the character of Wombat after her four-year-old daughter said mournfully that there was nobody in the world who she was smarter than. Wombat has many good qualities, but brilliance is not one of them. His turn of phrase and inside-out view of things have great comedic appeal.

The writing is well-pitched for a young audience and Park’s style of elegant simplicity ensures mums and dads are also entertained. Park is a writer of rare skill and it is with good reason that the Middle-Headed Wombat remains one of her most enduring creations.

The first volume of Muddle-Headed Wombat stories, which contains four separate adventures, remains in print in both hardcover and paperback. The second volume is much rarer and is the province of well-stocked secondhand bookshops and online auction sites.

WOMBAT’S TURN OF PHRASE AND INSIDE-OUT AND UPSIDE-DOWN WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS HAVE GREAT COMEDIC APPEAL.

NEXT IN OUR SERIES of retrospective reviews is one ESPECIALLY FOR THE KIDS: Ruth Park’s stories about the Muddle-Headed Wombat.
Are you Stepping Out?

Stepping out from the ADF and stepping out into civilian life can be challenging. The Stepping Out program helps you to make your transition from the ADF to civilian life easier. This two day program is free to members of the ADF and their partners and will help you:

• Prepare for the social and emotional changes of transition;
• Prepare and plan for the future;
• Stay motivated and adaptable; and
• Maintain relationships and know when to seek support.

Call 1800 011 046* for further information or to register for a program in your area.

*Free from landlines. Calls from some mobile phones may be charged at mobile rates.

Are you a NOT-FOR-PROFIT

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATION

OFFERING SUPPORT and SERVICES of value to Defence families? Contact DEFENCEFAMILYMATTERS@DEFENCE.GOV.AU to secure your FREE ADVERTISING space.

Find out why. Watch this.

Watch the video or order the DVD on the website www.adfconsumer.gov.au

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Defence Special Needs Support Group

Helping Defence families with special needs since 1993

1800 037 674
dsnsg.org.au

Australian Defence Force Family Health

www.defence.gov.au/health

Defence Families of Australia

A voice for Defence Families

www.dfa.org.au

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service

A service founded by Vietnam veterans

CALL 24 HOURS 1800 011 046

Lifeline 13 11 14

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service

A service founded by Vietnam veterans

CALL 24 HOURS 1800 011 046

Fringe Benefits Tax Understanding

VOLUME sEVEn

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Need advice, support or connection with your local community?

Call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608

The Defence Community Organisation offers a range of programs and services to help Defence families manage the military way of life.

The best way to access these services or gain referral to a local DCO office is to contact the Defence Family Helpline at DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au or on 1800 624 608.

The Helpline is available 24-7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

You can also email the Helpline on DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au