

defence

FAMILY



MATTERS

Edition 1
Dec 2000

Seasons Greetings

Welcome to this first edition of *defence FAMILY MATTERS*. I am pleased to introduce this publication, as I firmly believe that the support provided by service families makes a vital contribution to the operational effectiveness of the Australian Defence Force. This newsletter recognises that families do matter, and sets out to provide information to enable you greater access to Defence services, resources and assistance networks, both nationally and in your local area.

As you know, it has been another busy year for Defence personnel and their families both in Australia and overseas. The ADF presence continues in East Timor under UNTAET; in Bougainville there are approximately 250 ADF and civilian staff working as part of the Peace Monitoring Group; and there are Australians working as military observers and headquarters staff to the Multinational Force and Observers mission based in Egypt.

Australia has Defence staff working with the UN Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East; on exchange with British Army units in the Balkans; in Mozambique as part of the UN Development Program to remove land mines; and in Cambodia with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre - to name just a few of the initiatives in which Defence is involved.

All these are important and worthwhile endeavors undertaken by dedicated Defence personnel, but our continued success comes only with the wholehearted assistance of Defence families. So, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unwavering support. Christmas is a very special time of year, and I know there are a lot of Defence families who are not able to be together at this time due to Defence operational



requirements. I am conscious of the special difficulties faced by families who cannot be together over the festive season because of these requirements. To them I extend my gratitude and appreciation for your selfless support to our servicemen and women. I hope you enjoy this first issue of *defence FAMILY MATTERS* - a newsletter dedicated to all Defence families, and I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Bruce Scott
Bruce Scott

Minister assisting the Minister for Defence

FAMILY INFORMATION NETWORK FOR DEFENCE



The Family Information Network for Defence, or FIND as you would know it, is a phone service that provides easy access to personnel information.

FIND is a confidential service that is available to every ADF member and their family, anywhere in Australia, in absolute confidence, free of charge.

FIND is part of the Defence Community Organisation (DCO), and is staffed by Defence Service and civilian personnel with experience in personnel management and policy matters relating to Service conditions.

When you ring FIND, our staff will answer your questions with the help of a computer databank, that provides an up-to-date, plain English version of personnel provisions and issues. If the information you want is not readily available, we will phone you back with the information you need. A copy of that information will then be available via email, facsimile or by mail if you need it.

By calling FIND, you are not committing yourself or your family to anything. Neither will your enquiry be discussed with anyone other than your FIND representative without your express

permission. The information you receive, however, does not give you an entitlement to any provision.

Basically, FIND can answer any question, no matter how trivial, and advise you of the nearest contact officer in order for you to pursue your enquiry.

What else do the people at FIND do?

FIND looks after the DCO Internet computers located at most DCO office locations and Defence sponsored neighbourhood houses/community centres. The computers can be used by Defence families to access community information and to contact military partners when on deployment, via email.

FIND is responsible for the ongoing administration and operations of the DCO Web Site at www.dco.dod.gov.au. If you should experience difficulties accessing or using our site please contact FIND.

Contacting FIND

You can call FIND 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The phones will be staffed between 9am and 4pm AEST, Monday to Friday. Outside these hours and on public holidays, an answering machine will take your message.

Or email: find@bigpond.com •

A message from Major General Simon Willis

Welcome to the first edition of *defence FAMILY MATTERS* - a newsletter for Australian Defence Force families.

It has long been recognised that the ADF relies heavily on the support of its families to assist ADF members to successfully meet the demands of their often challenging jobs. It is now time for Defence to return this steadfast and loyal support by providing families with a newsletter aimed at providing up-to-date and relevant information to assist in making their often turbulent lives a little easier.

The *defence FAMILY MATTERS* newsletter is your newsletter. It aims to provide ADF families with a single information source relating to matters that directly affect you and your loved ones. It will cover a range of common services and points of interest to ensure that ADF families are fully informed of issues

that might affect them. Future editions of the newsletter will also incorporate information of particular relevance to your local area - making *defence FAMILY MATTERS* a valuable information source for ADF families wherever they are located.

I hope you enjoy this first edition of *defence FAMILY MATTERS*, and am confident that with your support the newsletter will greatly enhance Defence's communication with ADF families.



HDPE, MAJGEN Willis (third from right), and COL Baker (second from right) discuss the transfer of displaced citizens through the checkpoint at the Timor border on HDPE's recent visit.

A new book for ADF families!

Home is Where the Family is - Moving House with Children

The Australian Early Childhood Association, specialist early childhood publishers, had received requests from parents, including some ADF families, to write a book about moving house.

The Australian Early Childhood Association approached the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) about two years ago to explore the option of writing and producing a book together that would be of benefit to Defence families and to the wider community. DCO agreed that such a book would be invaluable to ADF members and their families

Home is Where the Family is - Moving House with Children is written by Pam Linke, who has written several other best selling early childhood titles. Pam

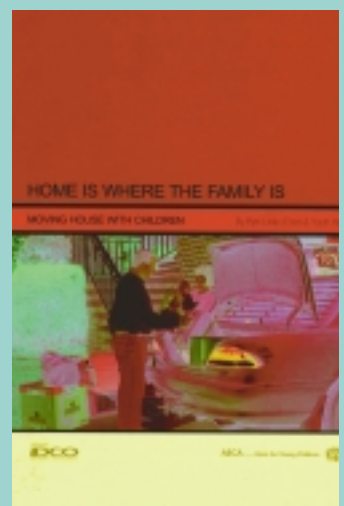
trained as a social worker and has completed further studies in children's literature and early education.

To gather first hand knowledge of the challenges and experiences of ADF mobile families, Pam visited a number of Defence child care centres and interviewed ADF members, their families and DCO staff. DCO also provided editorial comment, ensuring the book provided solution and advice to meet the challenges experienced by ADF families.

Home is Where the Family is - Moving House with Children will be of assistance to families who have children in the early childhood years and will provide suggestions and ideas for managing the move.

DCO has purchased 5000 copies of Home is Where the Family is - Moving House with Children for distribution to ADF families and these books can be obtained from the local DCO office in your area.

Home is Where the Family is - Moving House with Children was launched by Minister Bruce Scott at Parliament House on 2nd November 2000.



The Defence Special Needs Support Group

DEFENCE SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT GROUP



The Defence Special Needs Support Group (DSNSG) was formed in 1994 by a small group of Defence families brought together by a common bond - they

had someone in their family with special needs and they found it frustrating finding appropriate services due to being mobile. The families decided that it was easier helping each other out with information and support rather than going it alone.

The Defence Special Need Support Group has now grown into a well respected national organisation with many local support groups and several hundred families located both around Australia and overseas.

The DSNSG provides support, information, assistance and advocacy for all ADF families who have a dependant (child, spouse or other dependant) with special needs. The term special needs covers the full range of medical, disability, therapy and education needs. Special needs includes, but is not limited to, the following, and can apply to both adults and children:

- intellectual disability
- physical disability
- sensory disability
- learning disability/difficulty
- ADD/ADHD
- developmental delay
- speech and language disorders
- chronic illness
- epilepsy
- Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder
- gifted and talented

The DSNSG maintains a comprehensive data base on special needs information around Australia and operates a national parent-to-parent network, as well as producing a national newsletter.

For further information on the Defence Special Needs Support Group visit the DSNSG web site at <http://www.dsnsng.com.au>.

To contact the National Coordinator of DSNSG, Margaret Fisk, please email her at national.coordinator@dsnsng.com.au or by telephone on (03) 9395 1609 •

Your Window to Personnel Information

The New Defence Personnel Executive Internet Site

Are you looking for information on personnel issues on the Web? The Defence Personnel Executive (DPE) has recently established an Internet site to meet your needs.

The new site contains information on what DPE does, and who to contact about any personnel issue. You will also find a feedback mechanism that you can use to contact us with any question or concerns. We keep a *frequently asked questions* section with answers to questions on the latest issues so you can find out what you need to know straight away.

You can also find electronic versions of personnel publications such as *the KEY*, *DETMAN* and *INDMAN*, as well as this newsletter on the site.

The DPE site is a gateway for all of our other Defence Personnel related sites on the Internet. Through our *Links* page you can get to the Defence Community Organisation site, the Defence Equity Organisation site, the National Consultative Group of Service Families site and many more.

So next time you need to find information on personnel issues, visit the new DPE Internet site at www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ •



Did you know there is a group that represents you?

The National Consultative Group of Service Families (NCGSF) has been operating since 1986 representing the needs of Defence families. We are spouses and family members of full time serving personnel and we work closely with the ADF to improve the quality of life for Defence families. We are appointed by Minister Bruce Scott and are fully Defence funded.

The NCGSF is made up of a National Convenor in Canberra, a Delegate in each State or Territory and over 60 Area Representatives across Australia. We let the Minister and the Chief of the Defence Force know what issues are concerning families. We work closely with DHA, DCO, Removals Australia and any other bodies to help clarify or resolve any issues concerning families. We are often invited to sit on Committees and Reviews to represent the views of Defence families. The Convenor is a Director on the DHA Board and is a member of the RSL Conditions of Service Committee and the Gulf War Health Study.

We have a Patron, Mrs Julia Anderson, the wife of the Deputy Prime Minister. Mrs Anderson is the daughter of a Naval Rear Admiral and has four young children. She feels strongly about mobile family issues such as children's education and was recently on the 'Today' show to help promote the problems Defence families' face in moving children between schools and states.

Some of the issues that NCGSF is currently working with include:

- Local removals and FBT
- Children's education in a mobile family
- The Gulf War Health Study
- The new Allocations Services provided by DHA

If you would like more information or have an issue concerning you, please call us. Our details are with FIND or on the website

www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ncgsf

Judy Swann

Convenor 02 6266 9117



Where can I find the latest information on personnel issues?

Are you looking for factual information on the latest changes in the personnel world? The Defence Personnel Executive produces a newsletter six times a year called the KEY, which provides updates on current Defence Personnel Policies and initiatives that affect you and your family as members of the Defence community.

You can read every issue of the KEY on the Defence Personnel Executive Internet site. Just visit www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ and click on the KEY button.

You can also receive a free hard copy of every issue of the KEY by sending an email to thekey@cbr.defence.gov.au. Make sure you include your name, mailing address, and how many copies you would like to receive. Alternatively, you can phone, fax or write to us at *defence FAMILY MATTERS* and we will put you on the distribution list. Contact details can be found on the back page of this edition.

East Timor Deployment Support

When ADF members are deployed to East Timor, Defence offers a range of support assistance to their families - this assistance is also being extended to other deployments. Most families will not require assistance, but we do try to ensure that you know who to contact if you do need help or advice.

As a family member you will be advised of the unit's welfare and family support services and contact details. As part of this process, the family will be required to complete the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) Family Registration Form. The NWCC is a tri-Service organisation designed to meet the needs of the ADF.



BRIG Gillespie (right), MAJGEN Willis (second from right) and a Navy member on the beach at Suai discussing transport arrangements for when roads are cut due to the wet season.

Accurate filling out of the Family Registration Form is very important, as it provides Defence with the necessary details for us to contact you when your ADF family member is deployed.

When the NWCC receives the Family Registration Form, your details will be registered on their database and then forwarded to your local Defence Community Organisation (DCO) office.

NWCC will send you a Deployment Information Pack that provides Defence support services contact information and other information that will be of



WO1 Ashley in his office at Balibo

assistance during the deployment of your ADF family member. NWCC also maintains a 24 hours a day, 1800 toll free number for you to contact if you need assistance.

When the local DCO office receives your family information from NWCC, a staff member will make contact with you as soon as possible, and advise you of local contact details and the local support activities. Some of these support activities include:

- Pre and during deployment briefings, often in conjunction with the unit
- Providing a point of contact, in addition to the NWCC, for families to gain information regarding support services
- Establishing and coordinating the activities of spouse support groups. This may include running group meetings to discuss relevant issues, e.g reunion workshops
- Handling compassionate and welfare matters that may be initiated by the deployed contingent, the member's family, or any other Defence agency
- Conducting professional counselling of the member's family and coordinating their referral and follow-up with other agencies
- Assisting with post deployment programs

Please remember that it is very important to ensure that the NWCC Family Registration form is completed accurately and that any changes your details are passed on immediately to the NWCC.

If your loved one has deployed and you have not received a Deployment Information Pack, or DCO has not contacted you, please call NWCC on 1800 80026.

MAJGEN Willis addresses RAAF members at the Comorro Airfield Support Group

Products and Services available to Defence Personnel

The Defence Personnel Executive has printed a brochure - *Products and Services Available to Defence Personnel*.

This brochure can be found on our DPE Internet site (www.defence.gov.au/dpe) and will soon be available from the shopfronts at all Defence establishments.

The brochure lists information on products and services that are available to members of the Defence Community such as:

- holiday accommodation
- air travel
- car hire
- canteens
- emergency personal loans
- home loans
- health and life insurance

Visit our Websites for comprehensive information on these products and services, and for a full guide to eligibility.

DPE Internet site www.defence.gov.au/dpe; or

DPE DEFWEB site (the Defence Intranet)
defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpe

Just click on the "Publications" link. •



A new initiative of the Spouse Employment Assistance Program

The Defence Community Organisation (DCO) is now better able to assist ADF spouses in their search for employment through Work Readiness Training - a new initiative of the Defence Spouse Employment Assistance Program (SEAP).

Spouses should first register with Centrelink to obtain any assistance available to them under current Government initiatives. If a spouse is not entitled to Centrelink assistance, DCO can offer Work Readiness Training.

Work Readiness Training offers these spouses a choice of DCO endorsed Job Network Members who can provide Job Search Training. The assistance offered is similar to that offered under the Centrelink provisions, but without the qualifying conditions and family income test.

DCO endorsed Job Search Training can provide individually tailored assistance with resume preparation, interview techniques, advice on how to market your skills, exploring new career paths and provision of job placement assistance.

DCO may also be able to help with childcare costs while you are in the training program.

For more information on Work Readiness Training and other initiatives available under the Spouse Employment Assistance Program, contact your local Defence Community Organisation representative or visit the DCO website at <http://www.dco.dod.gov.au>

Contact: Allan McGuckin (02) 626 64434

email - allan.mcguckin@cbr.defence.gov.au •



Defence Spouses use the SEAP

RESERVES – A juggling act

Being a Reservist is not easy - in fact serving in the Australian Defence Force Reserves could be described as a juggling act. Not only do Reservists have to meet the demands of their part-time military careers, they also have to balance the needs of their families, their civilian jobs and, in many cases, their study commitments. As a Reservist myself, I am acutely aware of these demands.

Effective Reserve service is not possible without the support from Reservists' spouses, partners and families. Over 51% of Reservists are married or in common law relationships, and the sacrifice that the families and partners make in supporting Reservists in their military endeavours is significant and gratefully appreciated.



A lot of exciting things are currently happening in the Reserves world as we create a more supportive environment that will make Reservists more readily available and able to contribute to the ADF's operational requirements. However, this is not a one way street and we are developing a number of initiatives that will make Reserve service more attractive to Reservists themselves and to those who support them. Much work is being undertaken to enhance the ADF Reserves and the initiatives will result in partnership arrangements on many fronts.

For news on these initiatives and for general information on the Reserves please visit our website at <http://www.defence.gov.au/reserves>. The Website will be updated as the initiatives are developed and applied.

Contact:

Major General Darryl Low Choy AM, MBE, RFD
Assistant Chief of the Defence Force (Reserves)
(02) 626 53454 •

NCGSF VACANCY

The National Consultative Group of Service Families (NCGSF) currently has a vacancy to fulfill the role of Delegate in South Queensland. The Delegate's duties are varied and interesting as the Delegate is the Minister's official Defence family representative in that region. For more details, please call Judy Swann (02) 6266 9117.