

Submission 3
TT 10 May 2006



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs
Office of Australian War Graves

Reference: TREATIES TABLED 10 MAY 2006

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Secretariat
FAX 6277 2219

Dear Ms Mackay

I refer to the *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the Governments of Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the Treatment of War Graves of Members of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth in the Territory of the Republic of Namibia* and the proof transcript of the hearing, 19 June 2006.

There were three questions taken on notice by Major General Paul Stevens, both the questions and the responses are attached.

Further, there was an error in spelling in question 1 by the Chair on the second page relating to this treaty, *contacted* should be *contracted*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Mitchell'.

Kathy Upton-Mitchell
Deputy Director

28 June 2006

13 KELTIE ST
PHILLIP ACT 2606

PO BOX 21
WODEN ACT 2606

TELEPHONE: (02) 62896297
FACSIMILE: (02) 62894861
INTERNET: <http://www.dva.gov.au>
EMAIL: kathy.upton-mitchell@dva.gov.au

Saluting Their Service

Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the Governments of Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the Treatment of War Graves of Members of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth in the Territory of the Republic of Namibia

Questions on notice, Major General Paul Stevens AO (Retd) – Monday 19 June 2006

1. Is it true that the task of maintaining Commonwealth graves in Namibia is being contracted out to a private company, Kriegsgraber Fursorge Namibia?

The CWGC are and will remain responsible for the care and maintenance of all CWGC graves and co-located German graves from WWI. As has been the custom some of the physical maintenance tasks are contracted out such as:

- a. the maintenance of the cross of sacrifice site in Windhoek and the contractor is a Mr J Knoetze a local resident.*
- b. The Namibian branch of the German organisation Kriegsgraberfursorge receives a yearly financial contribution from the South African Agency (the CWGC office in South Africa) to support the efforts in maintaining the German graves from WWI.*
- c. From time to time local contractors are appointed to carry out needed maintenance and repairs.*

2. Do you know whether this company is going to continue to have the responsibility for maintaining Commonwealth graves?

The above arrangements will continue.

3. What is the status of Namibia - as this treaty was in operation until 1990, presumably - as South-West Africa was a territory of South Africa?

When Namibia was under South African control the South African Agency carried out the work under the authority and protection of the Instrument of Agency.

After Namibian independence and prior to the MOU the work continued to be carried out although no formal agreements existed. During this time there was no contact with the Namibian officials but there was also no interference from them.