

**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL**

SUBMISSION

Submission No: 35

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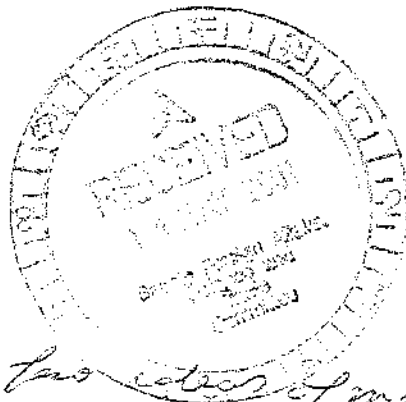
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To whom it may concern
in respect to this submission



I've only detailed a few notes of many I've had on reasons for federal recruiting drives. I didn't widen my views on what social security does in respect to selling a product "ie financial security as you get older". It was done on different subjects on different times and your knowledge grew with it. Perhaps recruitment needs to appreciate its information more into interest factors for the recruits etc after. I believe the interest is there but I'm not sure of the traditions there say. For instance many families used to have ongoing traditions in the services like police and other essential services. You may need to look at these specifics to plug the problems. The person who ran these seminars for social security was laid back and had a great rapport with his audience. He was a Chinese guy but Australian born, educated, you do well to get his ideas on promotion. I hope this is of some use in your deliberations. I am available if you wish to discuss anything.

regards
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The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade References Committee
Parliament House
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Inquiry into Recruitment and Retention of Defence Personnel

- Whether the current recruitment and retention strategies of the Australian Defence Force are effective in meeting the organisation's personnel requirements (including reserves).

In my submission I will be looking at what existed when I was in the service, what was expected and what was respected. The Services seem to be under one umbrella, this might be okay for efficiency but their different cultures and strengths need to be highlighted if this is to continue. I write this on the eve of ANZAC day when the traditions of all three services unite but keep their unique experiences of service and remembrance.

Today the services are branches as mostly hanging their washing on the one line despite the unique differences in what they do. Many of the problems in attacking cultures also destroy traditions and that myth that used to attract recruits like moths to a flame, what's gone wrong. I suspect a lot of things, mainly beauractic but I will look at my own experiences and suggest a few ways of turning things around.

Having been in the RAAF many years ago I feel I can make a contribution to what is a continuing problem of the recruitment and retention of people in the armed services.

Historically when I joined up in 1964 when armed services rosters were easy to fill probably only 2 or 3 out of 10 made it past eagle eyed recruiting officers. In my case I found out I needed glasses and some extra studies. I also think determination is a much under-rated criteria sometimes over rided by education results in today's recruiting. Today's recruits are certainly better educated but I'm not altogether sure they test their determination and interest in the armed services in the first instance. For it just being more than just a job. I think the aura and romanticism of the armed services of being more than just a job, a career, mateship has lost that heightened awareness it once had. The respect amongst the different ranks and different armed services branches has also been lost. Much is now seen as different coloured uniforms, rather than the separation of traditions and skills blended together but with the well acknowledged traditions of each service recognised.

You also have to remember the women and men's branches of the services were well rehearsed in what they did. Today, and in recent years there has been continuing controversy of women's roles in traditional men only service areas. Try as they may, many men leave the services for this reason as they see it as a cultural intrusion on long

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held male traditions in the armed services. I know many ex-servicemen who have got out for these very reasons. Many failed recruiting drives would seem to back that up. A similar example is like trying to recruit young men for primary school teaching these days. Because of the overwhelming female presence in teaching and other negative influences boys reject that career alternative. You may also see this issue in co-ed schools where boys are failing badly but do better among their own peers with male teachers.

It may well be that the loss of cadet traditions in schools adds to the problem in service recruiting. It exists today mainly in private boys schools where probably a lot of the best recruits come in the services. Parents see traditions, discipline and scholarships in private school cadet corps as crucial for their sons for successful careers. It's obvious that to commit these types of students to the armed services you need to convince their parents that the armed services are something more than just another job. It would appear that the lack of cadet units in state schools is not helping building up service traditions.

I would suggest that education traditions downgraded the old types of curriculum that promoted a historical perspective of a militant vigilant Australia to a more passive looking within type of curriculum having helped either.

I recognise that a culture can be both a strength and a weakness as many recent headlines have discussed for instance in our officer schools at the risk of being labelled sexist most of the types of bullying etc highlighted in various service instructions many of them seem to involve women complaining about their superiors and various sorts of discriminations. This word discrimination is rampant in the workforce today. Men have never accepted it as a justice issue for them and just try and work around it even to the point of giving in rather than test the issue. I wonder how women are really seen in the armed services. For my part in my day they didn't need headlines equal opportunity or discrimination procedures to gain respect. They were given it automatically without the drama we see everywhere today. Perhaps that's part of the problem too much too soon. Traditions and culture are not strange bedfellows they always belended well in time of war. So I imagine with the constant headlines and bad press, trying to change history and culture recruitment for your country is not high in many young men and women's agenda these days.

The Senate committee would need to face these sorts of issues head on as they certainly exists in areas of male dominated careers, police armed services etc. or as the girls call it blokey stuff despite the company policies that make them hygienic. So in this sense how do you make the armed services more attractive while it's trying to fight bushfires everywhere over change? I have to say at the outset I'm against womens being part of direct conflict with any enemy. This is somewhat compounded by the success of Israeli women in their armed services and others in the middle east, perhaps the committee should have a look at how they do it there. Maybe they should check out the schools students in about grade 10 test them and take them away on a camp that gives the perspective that the services can cater for individuals tastes and learn how all these things

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blend to make a good soldier. perhaps a mini interest recruitment drive for the better students with a good sales pitch. One of the problems with the armed services is that they have to suffer the political whims of those in power. Like how many shells or rockets they can fire when a budget restraint is on. When a change of government is due how labour downgrades or a coalition upgrades. The services needs guarantees of funding for their technicians, war games to keep experts. This has been another problems for decades where career servicemen highly trained are restrained by civilian beaurcrats who don't give a damn about traditions except for the budget figures. police, prisons are essential services which not armed services.

I think also the services should dump the idea of being adaptable to the whims of putting itself last and go back to the system of obeying orders. If you are transferred you go unless it's something life threatening. If it's an essential service again you'll attract the type of people who will welcome that sort of tradition back, they will join up for the good of the nation it should be an insurance policy with built in pledges by both and penalties incurred if they are broken. In other words toughen it up again, overseas trips promotion, good behaviour and combat records should work both ways with the government holding the strings. Make it a service again not an outfit continually looking for crisis counselling. Im not advocating bullying but in today's world you have to dare to be different. I would also suggest that businesses could be best ally in doing it. There are oodles of them around who say my service life made me what I am today! for instance we read all the time of our national athletes footballers business executives use specialist army training instructors to toughen and motivate their teams. Do we ever read about these people in army recruitment drives? Who are they; what do they do? What about using old solders and recently retired servicemen for mentoring advice or volunteers. What's the old adage old soldiers never die they just fade away. It's about time the government got into the fame game like everybody else does these days and change its focus.

For instance I would change the whole way of recruiting to proactive. Like cold calling seminars of what its all about and change recruitment staff continually. Many see it as a cushy job but it needs to sell itself as an ideas organisation. A couple of years ago social security were running financial seminars which were excellent. It was nice to know they done other things besides chasing pension rorters. You may not be interested to know that the armed services shouldn't have to be popular at the polls to do their job. As an essential service they need to be treated and funded as such and oblivious to the whims of whoever is in power to destabilise them.

Australia has always lacked unlike America for instances a third arm like the national guard in America. My understanding is this group are often ex-servicemen and some graduate into their armed services through its channels as a volunteer group Australia could perhaps look into how they are organised. Though I think some of them are paid. We need such a service if we can't have national services for customs and naval off shore protection. This could also tape into the essential services area firefighting police prisons

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who take up the exservicemen for their experience. Many exservicemen/women leave in their early forties to find other careers. Why completely lose them. I know some go the reser but are they used. Id better london to a brick they would line up tomorrow if the government mentioned your country even as volunteers. I say use them in wheatever capacity they can best service. Ill bet they would love it and not fade away.

It's generally accepted these days in organisations that volunteers are valuable acquitsitions. Governments dont seem to want to use this valuable acquisition because of either workplace safety procedures or do it through other organisations which adds greatly to administration costs. The Federal government is probably the biggest employer in Australia that doesn't use the services of those it trains and retires to foster loyalty and drive towards the good of the country. Many probably do it anyway but I wonder if those would really want to be paid to put something back in. It would be nice to put the usual public perception of public servants on another plain. I was in at the olympics and courts amazed at the number of public servants involved.

I know these days integrated service specialists are the go in combat. It seems this sort of idea could be widened to include specialists in industry being given service recognition and rank. They do it in the judiciary, medical. Some Qantas pilots are RAAF pilots. Why not sp[ecialists] in other industries given rank etc. There could be some sort of PT training involved even a sort of national service if services come smaller as is the way of the moment. The services need to be seen as something you can't refuse when asked if they train you. It can't afford to let these people disappear after spending millions training them. Im not advocating selling vacuum cleaners just get to the basics of what the services is all about. You train you work, you get the rewards.

At present recruitment is usually by advertisement interest and call up. Its obvious this has to be more aggressive than at present. It has to be more than just recruitment for recruitment's sake and keeps some things hidden.

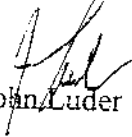
In an age of mass communication the recruitment specialists need a logo like "Do you want to service your country before yourself" Social security ran effective financial seminars because they covered everything people wanted to hear and it was presented very well with adequate question time. I would suggest these types fo recruitment drives might give you a wider audience. They were done in pubs and clubs and always over subscribed and different to anything they had done before.

In conclusion I reiterate that people have to want to be in the services and not just for what they get out of it. This is what tradition is. By using exservicemen in recruitment campaigns or as volunteers who offer their services this shows an ongoing commitment and duty to their profession and their country. In the schools they need to hear of success commitment and duty to those other than themselves. Business heads often tell of their service life giving them commitment discipline and success in li[fe]. Most of them would want their children to carry on this commitment. The loss of the school cadet corps in the state schools needs to be reingited. A third line of defence other than regular and civilian

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military is needed. A national guard could be the match dow for the armed and emergency services. Servicemen of twenty years service should be asked of their voluntary commitment. This should be unpaid ~~decision~~ on commitment. The days are probably gone when recruitment can soft sell. its now hard sell with the benefits for both. REcruitment needs to sell the merits its training offers industry linke Canungra. To me if it wants to an armed service it has to look and act somewhat like its forebears. Anything like the destruction of traditions without replacement is doomed to failure. That's what you need to keep when you dare to be different.

Yours sincerely


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