

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

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

SUBMISSION

Submission No: 47

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Service Committee

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No. of Pages: 7

Attachments: No

THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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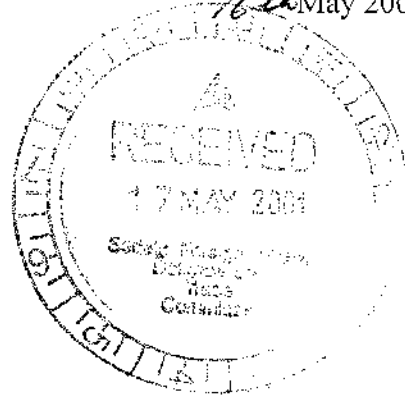


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16th May 2001

Mr Paul Barsdell
Secretary
References Committee
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Barsdell

Thank you for the opportunity of providing input into the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee's inquiry into *'Recruitment and Retention of ADF Personnel'*.

The Terms of Reference clearly call for detailed knowledge which the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) does not possess. However certain general observations can be offered:

- a. If the media reports which surface from time to time about pilot shortages, inability to man warships particularly submarines and the hollowness of Army units especially Army Reserve units are to be believed, then it is patently obvious that the current recruitment and retention strategies of the ADF are from effective in meeting its personnel requirements, and further that they have been so for some time now.
- b. It used to be that exit surveys were carried out of personnel leaving the services. This being the case, the ADF should have chapter and verse as to why people are leaving. The RSL does not have this sort of data, but what we can say is that the most consistent comment that comes up in private conversation with serving and recently discharged members of the ADF is the perception that the present day emphasis on management rather than any demonstration of senior leadership has contributed to the undermining of team ethos. There appears to be a lack of confidence that decision makers are actually committed to what they all proclaim is the most valuable of all resources – their people. Ambition and management are too often seen to be over riding service. Attached is a copy of Field Marshal Sir William Slim's address to the Adelaide division of the Australian Institute of Management in 1957 when he was Governor General. The content could have been written yesterday as it is very relevant to the challenges facing a Defence Force that appears to be experiencing difficulty demonstrating a commitment to the practice of good leadership and is thus missing the benefits that flow from it.
- c. It may well be that the ADF has retention problems because it strives to recruit the wrong sort of person. The RSL is of the view that too much

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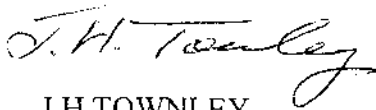
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emphasis has been placed on what might be termed 'lifestyle' recruiting, eg. the fighter pilot in his cockpit proclaiming that he is just a regular guy who goes home to his girlfriend at night. Does the ADF really want people who are looking for a 9 to 5 job which just happens to require the wearing of a uniform? Should not advertising stress the challenges of service life? The annual ANZAC Day marches and the crowds they attract seem to suggest that people still admire a hero, who in the words of the US Army Recruiting message of a few years ago will 'go the extra mile' or 'strive to be the best you can'.

Thank you again for the opportunity comments.

Yours sincerely



J H TOWNLEY
Chairman
RSL National Conditions of Service Committee

Enclosure:

1. 'Leadership in Management'

LEADERSHIP in MANAGEMENT

Field-Marshal Sir-William Slim, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, GBE, DSO, MC

Governor-General of Australia



This address was delivered by His Excellency to the Adelaide Division of the Australian Institute of Management on 4 April 1957. It is the fourth William Queale Lecture, a memorial established to commemorate the name and work of the late William Queale, who played a leading part in the development of the Institute. — Editor.

IN 1939 there were in Australia 27,000 factories employing half a million people; in 1955, 16 years later, there were 51,000 employing a million. That is a phenomenal expansion. It is still going on and must go on if Australia is to become, as we all mean her to be, a great nation based on a well balanced economy. But a movement of this impetus and magnitude holds perils as well as promises. Ill directed, unintelligently or selfishly directed, it will either collapse in ruin on itself or, losing its way, bring more in human misery than in happiness. There can never be growth on the scale required which is at the same time dynamic and healthy without sound direction. Yet already in Australia expansion is outstripping the supply of men trained in management. The most vital question in industry today is, therefore, where and how shall we find the right men to inspire and direct this expansion.

William Queale was a man, who, rather sooner than most of us, realized this outstanding and growing need in industry. These annual lectures commemorate his life and work, but his real memorial is the influence he had, and which is still felt, in the remarkable industrial advance of South Australia. As an enlightened exponent of individual and private enterprise, he was not content, as some successful men have been, merely to make a financial success of his undertakings. He took pains to be as good a citizen as he was a business man; to see that his commercial and industrial achievements benefited many besides himself and that they were a real contribution to the whole community in which they operated. Much of his success was due to his farseeing views on management, and it was his practical interest in the subject that

led him to take a leading part in the foundation and growth of the Institute of Management in Australia.

Three of these annual lectures have already been given. One by the Prime Minister of Australia and one by the Premier of this State both men who have played a large part on the political level in Australian industry and its development. The other lecture was delivered by a distinguished University professor, who had made a study of the financial structure of industry. That all three were well qualified to speak, with knowledge and authority, on aspects of industrial affairs was obvious. What is perhaps not so obvious is why a soldier—a general—should be asked to give this, the fourth lecture. What could a general have to say that was worth listening to about management? What a queer choice!

Yet is it? Consider a moment. In any great city—Adelaide, if you like—day and night, an immense variety of activities, public and private, go on. Hundreds of thousands of people are fed, clothed, housed, moved, educated and entertained. Vast quantities of materials are transported; largescale construction, manufacture, and maintenance are carried out; police, public health, water and communications services are provided. Churches are active, law courts function, the output of newspapers and the radio is ceaseless. A thousand other needs of a modern community are met. Yet there is no activity among all these that is not daily carried on also in the Army—and carried on, too, often under conditions far more difficult than ever municipality or industry has to grapple with.

What industrial corporation has attempted an enterprise comparable in extent, complication, or difficulty with the invasion of France or with any of a dozen operations of the last war? Yet generals planned, organized, co-ordinated and carried out those vast undertakings—they managed them and, on the whole, managed them very successfully. Why shouldn't they? After all, soldiers were the first to practise—and what is more to study—organization and management. We should, after the thousands of years we have been practising management and passing or failing our tests in it, have learnt something about it. So perhaps, after all, a soldier need not be too shy at speaking on management even to such an informed audience as this.

There is one point, however, I must make clear. People are always ready to tell generals what they ought to do—or more often what they ought to have done—I am not returning the compliment. I am not telling you how to run your own businesses. All I will try to do is to say something about the Army view of management. How far, if at all, anything I say could be applied to your work and your problems is entirely for you to judge.

The problems met at the top of any great organization whether military or civilian, are basically the same—questions of organization, transportation, equipment, resources, the selection of men for jobs, the use of experts and, above all and through all, human relations. Now while the problems are much alike, there are certain differences between the military and the civil approach to them and in the climates in which they have to be solved.

To begin with, we do not in the Army talk of "management" but of "leadership". This is significant. There is a difference between leadership and management. The leader and the men who follow him represent one of the oldest, most natural and most effective of all human relationships. The manager and those he manages are a later product, with neither so romantic nor so inspiring a history. Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision; its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, of statistics, of methods, time tables, and routine; its practice is a science. Managers are necessary; leaders are essential. A good system will produce efficient managers but more than that is needed. We must find managers who are not only skilled organizers but inspired and inspiring leaders, destined carefully eventually to fill the highest ranks of control and direction. Such men will gather round them close knit teams of subordinates like themselves and of technical experts, whose efficiency, enthusiasm and loyalty will be unbeatable. Increasingly this is recognized and the search for leadership is on.

What should we look for? Where are we likely to find it? When we have found it, how shall we develop and use it? Can the experience of the Army be any help? Let us see.

In this matter of leadership we in the Fighting Services have, of course, certain very marked advantages over civil life:

- (i) The principle of personal leadership is traditional and accepted.
- (ii) Besides, there is a strict legal code for the enforcement of obedience to lawful direction.
- (iii) Officers and men recognize that they are on the same side, fighting together against a common enemy.
- (iv) Then commanders do not, in war at any rate, have to pay so much regard to the financial effects of their action.

I can well understand a businessman saying, "If we had all that, management would indeed be simple!" So, lest you should think that military management is too easy, I would remind you that:

- (i) Personal leadership exists only as long as the officers demonstrate it by superior courage, wider knowledge, quicker initiative and a greater readiness to accept responsibility than those they lead.
- (ii) Again military command is not just a matter of bawling orders that will be obeyed for fear of punishment. Any commander's success comes more from being trusted than from being feared; from leading rather than driving.
- (iii) Officers and men feel themselves on the same side only as long as the officers, in all their dealings, show integrity and unselfishness and place the wellbeing of their men before their own.
- (iv) In war the general may not be haunted by finance, but his is the responsibility for good management and economy in matters more important than money—his men's lives.

These things, not stars and crowns or the director's Rolls-Royce, are the badges of leadership anywhere.

When we talk of leaders in the Army what sort of men do we picture? Not the explosive old generals of the comic strips, whose complexions are indicative of blood-pressure and of the consumption of port—both high; whose conversation is limited to reminiscences of Poona and of blood-sports; whose only solution to any political or social problem is "Damn it, sir, shoot 'em". If those generals ever existed in real life they were well on the way out before I joined the

Army. No. the first things we require in a leader are character, of which I will speak later, and an alert mind. Of course, it will be a military mind. Every profession produces its own type of mind which shows itself in its trained approach to any given question. A scientist, for instance, if you ask him something, will probably answer, "I cannot tell you now. Come back in six months when the experiments I am engaged in will, I hope, be completed and I shall have compared my results with those of other research workers in the same field. Then I may be able to tell you."

If you ask an engineer what sort of a bridge should be put across a river, his answer will be, "Before I can give an indication I must have exact information. What is the width of the river, its depth, its flow? What are its banks like, its bottom, what is the highest recorded flood? Is the site accessible; is labour available? What is the climate? How much traffic will the bridge be expected to carry in the future?"

But your general cannot answer like that. He knows the information he has is far from complete: that some of it is bound to be inaccurate. He is only too well aware that there are all sorts of factors over which he has no control—the enemy, the weather and a dozen others. Yet he has got to say promptly, clearly and with every appearance of complete confidence, "We will do this!" Other professions are trained quite rightly not to reply until they have the exact and correct answer, some to give an answer made up of alternatives or possibilities. The military mind has to provide, not necessarily the perfect answer, but one which, in the circumstances as far as they are known, will work. That given, the commander has to back his judgement, face the risks, force his plan through and stand or fall by the result. It seems to me that wouldn't be a bad kind of mind to initiate and carry through enterprises in other fields—possibly even in those of commerce and industry.

What is leadership? I would define it as the projection of personality. It is that combination of persuasion, compulsion and example that makes other people do what you want them to do. If leadership is this projection of personality then the first requirement is a personality to project. The personality of a successful leader is a blend of many qualities—courage, will power, knowledge, judgement and flexibility of mind.

Courage is the basis of all leadership, indeed of all virtue in man or beast. Courage is no less in the higher than in the lower levels of command, but the greater the responsibility the more the emphasis shifts from physical to moral courage—a much rarer quality. Rare, but essential to higher leadership.

Will power is, I suppose, the most obvious requirement in a leader's makeup. Without it no

man can remain a leader for he will have to force through his purpose, not only against the enemy, but against the weariness of his troops, the advice of his experts, the doubts of his staff, the waverings of politicians and the inclinations of his allies. I am sure these obstacles are duplicated in industry; will power is as needed in the board room as in the council of war.

The main task of a leader is to make decisions, but if he has not the judgment to make the right decisions, then the greater his strength of will, the higher his courage, the more tragic will be his mistakes. When looking for your leader, make sure of his courage and his will power, but, for the love of Mike, see that he has judgement, that he is balanced.

I said he must have knowledge. A man has no right to set himself up as a leader—or to be set up as a leader—unless he knows more than those he is to lead. In a small unit, a platoon say—or maybe a workshop gang—the leader should be able to do the job of any man in the outfit better than he can. That is a standard that should be required from all junior leaders. As the leader rises higher in the scale, he can no longer, of course, be expected to show such mastery of the detail of all the activities under him. A Divisional Commander need not know how to coax a wireless set, drive a tank, preach a sermon, or take out an appendix as well as the people in his division who are trained to do those things. But he has got to know how long these jobs should take, what their difficulties are, what they need in training and equipment and the strain they entail. As the leader moves towards the top of the ladder, he must be able to judge between experts and technicians and to use their advice although he will not need their knowledge. One kind of knowledge that he must always keep in his own hands—is that of men.

"Flexibility of mind" is becoming more and more important to leadership. The world, in material and scientific matters, is advancing much more rapidly than most men can keep up with. A leader is surrounded by new and changing factors. What it was wise to do yesterday may well be foolish today. Some invention, some new process, some political change may have come along overnight and the leader must speedily adjust himself and his organization to it. The only living organisms that survive are those that adapt themselves to change. There is always the danger that determination becomes only obstinacy; flexibility mere vacillation. Every man must work out the balance between them for himself; until he has he is no real leader.

Now if a man has all these qualities—courage, will power, judgment, knowledge, flexibility of mind—he cannot fail to be a leader in whatever walk of life he is engaged. Yet he is still

not the leader we seek: he lacks one last quality—integrity. Integrity should not be so much a quality of itself as the element in which all the others live and are active, as fishes exist and move in water.

Integrity is a combination of the old Christian virtues of being honest with all men and of unselfishness, thinking of others, the people we lead, before ourselves. Moral reasons are, strangely enough, the ones that both in war and commerce tell most in the long run, but apart from its spiritual aspect this attitude—and there need be nothing soft or sloppy about it—has a practical material value. The real test of leadership is not if your men will follow you in success, but if they will stick by you in defeat and hardship. They won't do that unless they believe you to be honest and to have care for them.

I once had under me a battalion that had not done well in a fight. I went to see why. I found the men in the jungle, tired, hungry, dirty, jumpy, some of them wounded, sitting miserably about doing nothing. I looked for the CO—for any officer: none was to be seen. Then as I rounded a bush, I realized why that battalion had failed. Collected under a tree were the officers, having a meal while the men went hungry. Those officers had forgotten the tradition of the Service that they look after their men's wants before their own. I was compelled to remind them. I hope they never again forgot the integrity and unselfishness that always permeate good leadership. I have never known men fail to respond to them.

So much for the type of man we want as a leader. How, in a big organization are we to find him? In the Army we believe it is vitally important to recognize the potential leader at an early stage of his career. Then, while cultivating the natural root of leadership in him, to graft on to its growth the techniques of management. To uncover the natural leaders in our own ranks—to attract them from outside, too—and then give them the chance to get out in front and lead.

I think we have done this more deliberately, more systematically and more constantly in the Army for the last forty years than has been done in industry.

From the day he joins, a recruit is scanned constantly for signs of potential leadership. Within a few weeks at his depot if his alertness, intelligence, education and general character justify it, he finds himself in either the potential officers' or potential NCO's squad. When he joins his unit, watched for leadership all the time, he may be recommended for a commission. A Selection Board tests him and if he satisfies it, he moves on either to an Officers' Training School for a National Service Commission or a Cadet College for a Regular one. Over that hurdle, the young officer joins his unit

where for some time in decent obscurity he should learn the bolts and nuts of his trade and, equally important, gain his first real experience of leadership.

Our aim is to extract the potential officer at the start of his career and begin his grooming for leadership as soon as possible. Too long in the ranks is not good for him and the sooner he enters junior management the better. Responsibility breeds responsibility; the best training for leadership is leadership.

Schools, where the use of weapons and tactics are taught, staff colleges which study not only the techniques of staff work-management, but the principles and practice of command leadership all help to turn the young officer into a leader. In this the annual Confidential Reports submitted on every officer help a great deal. A study of his reports over a period of years will give a very fair idea of an officer's character, capabilities and what sort of post he will fill best. Eventually he may be placed on the select list of officers, whose careers are planned some years ahead to give them the kind of experience they will need to be fitted for high command. Such officers are well up in management and the very highest appointments are coming within their reach.

Of course the pyramid narrows rapidly towards the top and on the climb there many are dropped out, but by starting in management early, being watched all the time and given varied experience the best men do get to the top. One of the most difficult but none the less important things about estimating a man's capacity is to be able to recognize his ceiling—the point beyond which he will be tested too highly.

I have talked so far about those destined for the higher appointments but the Army in which the only leaders are the generals will win no victories. All down the line there must be leaders. We have the equivalent of the supervisors and foremen of industry; they are our Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers. You will note we call them officers. They are very definitely a part of the management, feel themselves that they are and are recognized by others as such. It has seemed to me that the position of the equivalent ranks in industry suspended as they often are, between management and workers, must be terribly difficult. I have sometimes thought the American system where they are made to feel much more a part of management has advantages.

The greater the size of an army, of an organization, the more difficult it becomes for the leaders to make their ideas and intentions clear and vivid to all their thousands of subordinates. All sorts of ways of doing this have been attempted. There has even grown up in industry a special class of officer whose job roughly is to

keep touch between management and work. I think there is some danger they may interpose rather than correct. Leadership is a very personal thing and like some germs it is weakened by passing through other bodies.

In my experience there are many things that can be done to keep touch, but if they are to be effective they must all be based on two things:

- (i) The head man of the army, the firm; the division, the department; the regiment, the workshop must be known as an actual person to all under him.
- (ii) The soldier or the employee must be made to feel he is part of the show and what he is and what he does matters to it.

The best way to get known to your men is to let them see you and hear you by going among them and talking to them. The head man should be able to walk on to any parade ground in his command or into any factory in his firm and be recognized—even if it's only "Here comes the old so-and-so". It's surprising how soldiers and workmen can use an uncomplimentary expression as an endearment. The boss should talk to individuals as he moves about and occasionally—only occasionally, as it should be something of an event—assemble his staff and workers, mixed together for preference, and tell them something of what he is trying to do. It's not more difficult, I should think, to talk to a meeting of employees than to one of shareholders—and I do believe it's worth more. To talk to men like that doesn't require great eloquence: only two things are needed—to know what you are talking about and to believe it yourself. That last is important.

To make anyone feel part of a show you have to take them into your confidence. We soldiers have long grown out of the "theirs-not-to-reason-why" stage. Any intelligent man wants to know why he's doing things and what for. It's not a bad idea to tell him; let him look a bit farther along the chain of which he is a link. Personally I believe a good system passing on to every man information of what is going on outside his immediate view is worth more than such things as joint consultation which really only reach a few. Security, I know, may enter into this as it does in military matters, but a little risk with security is more than repaid by the feeling chaps get that their leaders have confidence in them, that they are let into the know and that they belong.

From washing machines to electronic brains we live increasingly by technology. Technicians are vital to our industry. But we don't make a man a general in the field because he is an expert in explosives; the most brilliant surgeon is not necessarily the best man to run a great hospital; nor the best-selling, author to run a pub-

lishing business. The technically trained man is not the answer to the management problem. There has in some quarters been a tendency to make managers out of technical men. Some of them may make good managers because they have in them the qualities of leadership, but the better the technician, the better to use him in his own field.

Industry in the past has produced some managers who were true leaders; you have had your share in Australia, in South Australia, but management itself is now a specialized field. It is little use any longer to let men work their way up in haphazard fashion; then grab the nearest at hand, make him a manager, hoping he will learn the techniques and provide the leadership as he goes along.

We anxiously calculate stocks of raw materials, seek new minerals, study technical advances overseas and push them on at home; we devise new processes, we equip our factories with new machinery. In all these matters we take great thought for the morrow. Yet too often we just hope that tomorrow's leaders will, by some miracle, bob up when needed.

The only way in which the growing need for leadership in management can be met is to find the potential leader and then start his training and give him his chance to lead.

Here in Australia, believe me, there is no lack of potential leaders—the climate, the freedom, the tradition of this country breed them: Leadership material is lying around in every factory, office and university in Australia. Unless we spot it and give it a chance, a lot of it is doomed to rust. That would be a tragedy but a greater would be that our expanding industry should lack leadership.

The raw material of leadership is there and the Australian worker, properly led, from what I have seen of him, is as good as any and more intelligent than most. But the words properly led are vital. Australian industry deserves and will need leaders, not just efficient managers.

In industry you will never have to ask men to do the stark things demanded of soldiers, but the men you employ are the same men. Instead of rifles they handle tools; instead of guns they serve machines. They have changed their khaki and jungle-green for workshop overalls and civvy suits. But they are the same men and they will respond to leadership of the right kind as they have always done.

Infuse your management with leadership; then they will show their mettle in the workshop as they have on the battlefield. Like me, they would rather be led than managed. Wouldn't you?

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