



Robyn Collins
General Manager



In early 2013, DefenceCare introduced a new database that tracks how many people we help. Since then we have been progressively increasing our data collection to provide information to our donors and supporters and monitor how we are helping the defence community.

From now on, we will be able to provide statistics on a number of key areas.

Feel free to let us know if you would like different information in the future and if we can provide it, we will. We know you understand that we cannot provide detailed information on our clients and we can only share the stories of those who feel comfortable telling their story.

In February 2014:

- DefenceCare received 466 calls for help, the highest month ever, beating January's 435.
- Of the calls for assistance, 152 were for help with DVA entitlements and claims; 68 were calls about appeals to the VRB; 131 were calls for counselling, financial help and other community support; eight were serving members transitioning out of Defence; and 107 were for other assistance.
- A total of 18 new claims were submitted to the DVA in February and 44 claims were finalised, with 48 per cent of finalised claims under MRCA.
- At the end of January we had 195 open cases at the Veterans' Review Board.
- Community support provided services on 241 occasions, a doubling of the number of services provided six months ago.

WOMEN'S AUXILIARIES' LEST WE FORGET QUILT RAFFLE TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE



Tickets now on sale for the 'Lest We Forget Quilt', a handmade patchwork quilt celebrating 100 years of Australian Defence Forces. The quilt is the loving work of members of the NSW RSL Women's Auxiliaries. Tickets \$2. All proceeds to DefenceCare to help veterans and their families in crisis. Drawn 1/11/2014. Proudly supported by Ingleburn RSL Club. Tickets: Pauline 0416 247 635.



DefenceCare
Always there

www.defencecare.org.au



We have also started to collect statistics on the amount of money we spend in each of the categories of assistance such as medical equipment, house cleaning and gardening for injured veterans and help with funeral payments. In time, we will be able to bring you information on this as well.

PEOPLE WE HAVE HELPED

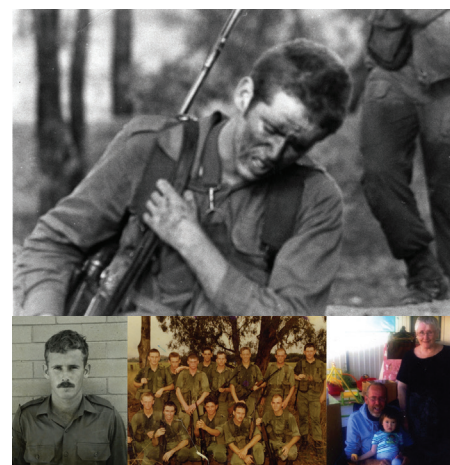
... a veteran who passed away from cancer

David joined the Australian Army when he was 16 and served his country for 10 years. He loved serving his country, but had to leave due to a motorcycle accident.

When we first met David, he was diagnosed with melanoma and it had progressed to his brain. He was living with his young family in a granny flat

without proper cooking facilities and no couch or soft chairs.

DefenceCare purchased an oven and a powerlift recliner so David could rest comfortably when he was not at hospital. We also paid for medication and at



David's request, arranged for a solicitor to visit him and prepare his will while he could still talk reasonably clearly.

Sadly David passed away at 50, eight months after discovering he had cancer.

DefenceCare contributed to the cost of David's funeral and arranged accommodation for his mother Barbara and his brother when they travelled from Lismore to attend the funeral and say goodbye for the last time.

Defencecare also helped lodge a claim with the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"The first three months after David died were hard for me. All I did was cry. I cannot get over the help DefenceCare gave me because I did not know where to turn," said Barbara, a pensioner and carer for her son who has a disability.

"They were so fantastic. I have never asked for anything in my life and to have complete strangers calling me and asking if I was OK and if they could help, was just wonderful."

After living through the tragedy of losing her son, Barbara is remaining positive. "I take it a day at a time and it gets better. David was a happy man who was a worker, enjoyed his life and loved his daughters. I could also never forget the silly grin he always had on his face . . ."

... an Afghanistan veteran returns home to his wife

A serving member of the army for over 10 years was deployed in Afghanistan. When he was about to come home, he found out his wife had breast cancer. He was sent home three weeks earlier than anticipated to be with his wife. Unfortunately, after almost 18 months of treatment, his wife found out the cancer was no longer curable. The couple have a young child together.

Working with Defence Community Organisation (DCO), DefenceCare arranged for household cleaning services for the young family. "I want to make

the most of the time I have with my wife, doing things she enjoys and the family enjoys . . ." said the serving member.

"House cleaning was one less thing I had to worry about as my wife goes through chemotherapy. It may sound like a small thing, but to us it is really big."

... a number of young veterans with their everyday financial needs

DefenceCare has worked with a number of veterans and their families to ease their financial stresses and give those with injuries, the best chance of recovery. To do this, last month DefenceCare provided assistance with household cleaning services and utility and grocery bills for a number of veterans. This gave them relief during a crisis and helped them get back on their feet.

VETERANS' HEALTH SURVEY

Calling Aussie Veterans aged over 55 to complete a survey on their experiences with mainstream health services. You can complete the survey whether or not you receive DVA benefits. The results will help to ensure the best possible health care is available to veterans in the future. The online survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/VeteranHealthCare. Alternatively you may like to complete the paper version in this issue of *Reveille* which also has an included envelope to send it back, all that is required is a stamp to return your completed survey. If you know someone who is not online but would also like to complete the survey, please call or email Frances Russell 02 8978 4376 or frances.russell@acu.edu.au for a paper version.

WAR HERO AND ASPIRING PARALYMPIAN DAMIEN THOMLINSON BECOMES A DEFENCECARE AMBASSADOR

While serving in Afghanistan with the 2nd Commando Regiment, Damien

Thomlinson's life was changed forever. In April 2009, whilst on night patrol in Southern Afghanistan, Damien's unit drove over an improvised Taliban bomb. Damien suffered horrendous injuries in the explosion, which resulted in both of his legs being amputated. The damage to his body was so severe his medical team claim it is a miracle he wasn't killed. In fact there were many times throughout his immediate treatment and beyond that medical staff did not think he would pull through.

Damien threw himself into his rehabilitation and set about reclaiming his life. With a great deal of commitment and hard work he taught himself to walk again with state of the art prosthetic legs.

A keen surfer prior to his injuries, Damien took up snowboarding as part of his personal challenges during rehabilitation, and now aspires to represent Australia at the Winter Paralympics. He has also participated in the TARGA Tasmania classic car rally, and has walked the demanding Kokoda Track.

Damien has written about his story in his autobiography *Without Warning: A Soldier's Extraordinary Journey*. Damien's positive attitude and larrikin, never-say-die spirit are an inspiration to all of us, and the story of his journey is humbling, heartbreaking and truly awe-inspiring.

"I have seen first-hand the impact that crucial veterans support services play for returning service men and women. DefenceCare is a forward-thinking organisation that understands that these needs are ever-changing, and I am proud to be an Ambassador and do what I can to bring some extra attention to these initiatives," said Damien Thomlinson.

Damien Thomlinson will be speaking at DefenceCare's Health and Wellbeing Seminar at RSL NSW State Congress on 26 May.

DO YOU CARRY DETAILS ON YOUR CURRENT MEDICATIONS WITH YOU?

We had a suggestion from an Auburn sub-Branch member and welfare officer, David Noreen, for people who are on medication to carry details of their medication with them in case of emergency. Including details of any allergies is also a good idea. Thank you, David – a great tip!

PARTNERS TOUR STATE CONGRESS

DefenceCare is hosting a relaxing partners' tour during RSL NSW State Congress 2014.

The tour will go to Headland Lookout, Sawtell, The Honey Place, Urunga, The Old Butter Factory, Bellingen and Bellingen Township. The cost is \$31.50 per person and includes morning tea.

Bookings and payment: By cheque or credit card. Please call the Coffs Coast

Visitors Information Centre on 1300 369 070 or email tourism@coffscoast.com.au. Please ask for the RSL Congress Tour. Please book early, numbers are limited.

DEFENCECARE TO BENEFIT FROM DIGGER'S VEST SALES

To commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC, the iconic sheepskin vest first made in 1914 has been reproduced and called the Digger's Vest.

The vest comes in a range of colours and finishes and can be personalised by adding a commemorative patch containing the service details of a much loved soldier. To view more about its history, the recreation history and how to purchase and personalise your own vest please logon to www.facebook.com/pages/Diggers-Vest or www.mortels.com.au/shop/home.php?cat=37

CONTACT US

DefenceCare. Always there.

DefenceCare is a charity helping current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in times of injury, illness and crisis. DefenceCare is part of RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution and is a Tier 1 RSL NSW recognised charity.

ABN: 61 603 206 488.

DGR: 752 766 491. CFN: 12317.

If you would like to discuss how DefenceCare can assist you and your family, please contact us.

ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 8088 0388 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm). Fax: 9261 4558

Email: defencecare@rslnsw.org.au

Website: www.defencecare.org.au

Facebook: DefenceCare

Twitter: DefenceCare

The BIDET SHOP® Funding Options Available*



The Bidet Shop has been proudly supporting the Australian Senior Population over the past 10 years by providing payment plans and funding options for our Bidet Health Care Products.

Just replaces your existing toilet seat

- Remote control Bidets
- Warm water wash
- Warm air dryer
- Heated seat
- Soft Close lid

Installs in minutes

QUOTE RN7
To receive up to
30%*OFF RRP
*conditions apply

Phone TODAY to see how we can help you!

8005 5730 (Local) **1300 243 387** (National)

www.thebidetshop.com.au **RN7**

The Best Birthday Gift Ever!

"Usually for my birthday, my children buy me towels or pillows and once even a basket for the cat. Last year, after a wonderful lunch in the park with my family, we came home and I found that for a birthday gift my son had organised the replacement of my old toilet seat with an electronic Bidet toilet seat. I had seen them advertised on TV and thought what a great idea. I was absolutely shocked and thrilled to find I now have one on my toilet."

My daughter explained that she had recently purchased one from The BIDET SHOP® herself and found her husband and children loved it so much they decided to buy one for me as a birthday gift.

After two weeks of having my new Bidet, I wondered how I had ever survived previously without it. All I have to do is sit down on my nice warm seat and go to the loo, and once I am finished I simply press



a button and I get a warm water wash and a gentle stream of warm air dry.

Now almost a year later, it has changed my life, I have saved a fortune in toilet paper and, I see going to the toilet as a time of luxury.

It is the best birthday gift I have ever received!

(Sylvia Ross)

For more info, call

The BIDET SHOP® today on
1300 243 387 (National) OR
8005 5730 (Local)
www.thebidetshop.com.au

RN7



Meet Damien Thomlinson

Author of 'Without Warning: a Soldier's Extraordinary Journey'.

Hear the war hero's inspirational story.

Date: 26 May 2014

Time: 9am – 12 noon

Location: Coffs Ex Services Memorial & Sporting Club
Rainbow Room, 1 Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour

Cost: FREE

RSVP: defencecare@rslnsw.org.au

Meet Damien and get your copy of 'Without Warning' signed. Copies of the book will also be on sale.

This talk is part of DefenceCare's Health and Wellbeing Seminar for veterans and their families at RSL NSW State Congress.

Other speakers at DefenceCare's Health and Wellbeing seminar.

9:00-9:30	Chronic Pain and Posture. Marc Seymour, Exercise Physiologist, Optimum Health and Wellbeing.
9:30-10:00	Nutrition. Dr David Watson MBBS, with Post Graduate training in General Medicine and Paediatrics. Australian Air Force Reserves (Pilot Officer).
10:00-10:10	Tai Chi. Paul Parramore, supporter of the Australian Vietnam Veterans' Mine Clearing Team in Cambodia.
10:10-10:30	Morning Tea.
10:30-10:40	Tai Chi. Paul Parramore, supporter of the Australian Vietnam Veterans' Mine Clearing Team in Cambodia.
10:40-11:10	Brain Boot Camp. Melissa Harries, Psychologist, Mindset Abilities.
11:10-11:50	Afghanistan Veteran 2 Commando. Damien Thomlinson's personal journey after life changing injuries in Afghanistan. Aspiring Paralympian. Author of <i>Without Warning</i> .
11:50-12:00	Questions & Lucky door prize.

FREE giveaway bags available at the DefenceCare stall.

DefenceCare is a charity and not-for-profit organisation helping current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in times of injury, illness or crisis.



DefenceCare
Always there

Proudly part of RSL NSW

Level 5, ANZAC House
245 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

T: (02) 8088 0388 (8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday)

F: (02) 9261 4558

E: defencecare@rslnsw.org.au

W: www.defencecare.org.au

