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The Hon De-Anne Kelly BE MP

Federal Member for Dawson
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

Mr Les Dwyer
National President
Naval Association of Australia
GPO Box 711
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Dwyer

I am writing to provide you with a copy of the final report in the series of health studies of Korean War veterans: *Health Study 2005: Australian Veterans of the Korean War*. The study was commissioned by the Repatriation Commission, managed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and undertaken by Monash University. The study team progressed its work in consultation with the study's Scientific Advisory Committee and Consultative Forum.

I am confident that, together, the three studies will contribute substantially to the existing body of knowledge on the long-term health effects of war deployment. Sadly, this third study itself shows that surviving Australian Korean War veterans are reporting a poorer level of psychological and physical health and more hospital admissions, compared with a similarly aged group of men resident in Australia at the time of the Korean War. The reports demonstrate that the long-term effects of war service can be severe and often may not be significantly diminished by the passing of time.

The Australian Government, through DVA, provides health care and services to Korean War veterans. All Australian Korean War veterans now over 70 years of age are eligible for the Gold Card, entitling them to free health care for all medical conditions. I am advised that there would be extremely few Korean War veterans who would not yet be eligible for the Gold Card.

While the impact of past exposures and lifestyle cannot be changed, the Health Study results suggest that targeted health intervention may be effective in reducing ill health and improving quality of life in Australian Korean War veterans.


I will be writing to all Australian veterans of the Korean War who are resident in Australia, and whose whereabouts are known to DVA, to send them a copy of the Executive Summary of the Health Study report and a Health Awareness Kit to raise their awareness of existing DVA health services and preventive health programs such as *The Right Mix* and the *Men's Health Peer Education Program*, and the availability of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service.

Now that this series of health studies has concluded, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the ex-service representatives who have served as members of the studies' Consultative Committees over the last three years. The forums' valuable assistance has helped the Repatriation Commission provide a comprehensive soundly-based study of the health status of Australian Korean War veterans.

In conclusion, I would also like to mention that a major project to honour and commemorate the service of Korean War veterans is now completed. The official, commemorative nominal roll of the Australian veterans of the Korean War lists all Servicemen of the three Services who were deployed in Korea between July 1950 and April 1956. It also includes Australians who were deployed in Korea by philanthropic organisations. The roll is available on the DVA website at www.koreanroll.gov.au.

I hope this information is of assistance to you and your members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "De-Anne Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

De-Anne Kelly MP

- 5 NOV 2005