

What a surprise!

THE STREAM™

Deployed US Navy has a Pregnancy problem, and it's getting worse.

A record 16 out of 100 US Navy women are reassigned from ships to shore duty due to pregnancy, according to data obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the Daily Caller News Foundation Investigative Group (DCNF).



That number is up 2 percent from 2015, representing hundreds more who have to cut their deployments short, taxing both their unit's manpower, military budgets and combat readiness. Further, such increases cast a shadow over the lofty gender integration goals set by former President Barack Obama.

Overall, women unexpectedly leave their stations on Navy ships as much as 50 percent more frequently to return to land duty, according to documents obtained from the Navy. The statistics were compiled by the Navy Personnel Command at the request of The DCNF, covering the period from January 2015 to September 2016.

The evacuation of pregnant women is costly for the Navy. Jude Eden, a nationally known author about women in the military who served in 2004 as a Marine deployed to Iraq, said a single



transfer can cost the Navy up to \$30,000 for each woman trained for a specific task, then evacuated from an active duty ship and sent to land. That figure translates into \$115 million in expenses for 2016 alone.

"This is an avoidable cost and expense, leaving a gap for other people to pick up the work slack," Eden said

A pregnancy takes a woman out of action for about two years and there's no replacement so everybody else has to work all that harder and on small ships and on submarines, you really have a potential crew disaster.



Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nathan Christensen told TheDCNF the Navy tries to plan for the unplanned. "Just as we deal with other unplanned manning losses due to injury or other hardships, we work to ensure that pregnant service members are taken care of and that commands are equipped to fulfil their missions when an unexpected loss occurs."

In January 2015, 3,335 women were pregnant aboard military vessels, representing about 14 percent of the 23,735 women then serving such duty, according to the data, but by August 2016 that number reached nearly 16 percent, an all-time high. The Navy reported that 3,840 of the 24,259 women sailors who were aboard Navy ships were pregnant.

The Obama administration understated the pregnancy problem throughout its eight years and even suppressed some data about the impact of its "gender-neutral" policies on the Navy. For decades, for instance, the Navy published results from exhaustive surveys of 25,000 men and women in a document called the "Navy Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey." The reports once were 75 to 100 pages long and disclosed attitudes among men and women and their behaviour, however, the Obama administration published only brief two to three-page summaries from 2012 onward.

A civilian attached to the Navy Personnel, Research, Studies and Technology group, which researched and published the surveys, told The DCNF full reports were completed regularly even though its detailed findings were not released to the public. The individual requested anonymity. "The military has been tight lipped over the years about these numbers. They don't like to publicize them," Eden told The DCNF.

The Navy has been dogged for years by lingering claims that some women get pregnant simply to avoid deployment. "We all know that happens. Women do it to avoid deployment," Eden told The DCNF. "There do seem to be coincidences," said Donnelly. "There is a lot of anecdotal evidence. This information is considered so sensitive. You just don't talk about it. And you don't ask. It's just something that everybody knows occurs. Don't ask, don't tell," Donnelly said. She served on the Defence Advisory Committee on Women in the Services and on the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces.

The sudden departure of pregnant women aboard military vessels severely hurts military readiness and morale for those left behind and who must pick up the slack. The expecting sailors must be transferred from a ship after the 20th week of pregnancy.



The Navy officially considered pregnancy incompatible with military service and women who became pregnant were automatically discharged, according to The Alliance for National defence, however, with the introduction of the all-volunteer military, the Navy provided many lucrative incentives to men and women — including free housing, medical care, recreation and educational opportunities.

But women got additional benefits, including free prenatal care, day-care, counselling, and special education for toddlers and children with disabilities or for other “special needs.” “Since benefits offered to recruits who are women are so very generous, it almost becomes an incentive,” said Donnelly.

“One feminist advocate many years ago referred to the military as a ‘Mecca for single moms.’” “I think there are so many carrots. The military has become a modern-day jobs program,” Eden said. Obama, during his eight years in office, sought to increase dramatically the number of women on ships. In May 2015, Admiral Michelle Howard (right) announced a quota of 25 percent of women on all ships. “We’re going back and looking at the ships, all of them and what percentage of women are on the ships. Over time, we’ll modernize them to make sure we get to about 25 percent on each ship,” she said.



Former Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in September 2015 pushed the new policy, stating that the Navy SEALs and all other combat jobs in the Navy should be open to women, with no exemptions as part of the Pentagon’s new “gender-neutral” employment policy. Eden believes the policy of increasing women on ships results in failure. “It’s bad policy when you think of ships that have to be battle-ready and then have to transfer women off for pregnancy, something that has to do with controlled behaviour or voluntary behaviour,” she said.

It is unclear how President Donald Trump’s Secretary of defence Jim Mattis will handle women in the military. He has been a sceptic, but also said during his confirmation hearing he would support a combat role for women.

Bet it happens here too!

Wikipedia: I know everything!
Google: I have everything!
Facebook: I know everybody!
Internet: Without me you are nothing!
Electricity: Keep talking people!

Veterans Covenant - new DVA card design/issue:

[HERE](#) is a link to the DVA Fact Sheet outlining issue procedures for the newly designed DVA Cards aligning with the new Veterans' Covenant from the Australian Government. TPI/EDA will be embossed on cards as necessary.



Department's online services soon to be available to veterans and their families via myGov.



Veterans and their families will soon be able to lodge claims and update their contact details with DVA online by logging into myGov. Veterans and their families will soon be able to access DVA online services using one login and password at the Australian Government's [myGov website](#).

DVA is connecting all its online services to myGov to expand self-service options. The initiative is part of its program to modernise and streamline services. myGov is a secure way to access government services online with one login and one password. Users can link a range of government services to their myGov account in addition to DVA. These include the Child Support Agency, Medicare, the Australian Taxation Office, Centrelink, My Health Record and My Aged Care.



MyService was originally a pilot to explore different ways for veterans and their advocates to make their claims online. It will become DVA's new online channel. MyService replaces a 36-question paper claim form with an intuitive channel that asks as few as three questions. It is a simpler and faster way for veterans and their families to interact with DVA online while still having access to DVA staff for support.

MyService will soon be open to all veterans and their families. It is currently only available to veterans with a [PMKeyS](#) number. With more than 5,000 registered clients, initial results have shown that claims lodged through MyService are processed in around a third of the time taken compared to the standard, paper-based process.

Services moving to myGov.

Service	What is it?	How is it changing?
	<p>DVA's first online transaction platform, launched in 2011 to allow veterans and their families to update their details online, view payments and book medical transport among other features.</p>	<p>Accessible via myGov soon. Features to be moved to the MyService platform over the next 12 months before MyAccount is phased out altogether.</p>
	<p>Initially a pilot program, allows veterans and their families to lodge claims with DVA online quickly and</p>	<p>Becoming DVA's new online channel accessible via myGov soon. Will also be extended to allow veterans (including those without a PMKeyS</p>



Service	What is it?	How is it changing?
	easily. Currently only veterans with a PMKeyS number can use it.	number) to access online services. This will allow families and students receiving support through DVA's Education Schemes to submit claims and lodge supporting documents for Education Allowance online.
	A secure way to access Australian Government services such as Medicare, Centrelink, the ATO and soon DVA online with one login and one password.	Set to become the key entry point for veterans and their families to interact with DVA online.
Paper-based forms 	Available via the DVA website, in person at a Veterans' Access Network office or by post on request.	Remain available, but once DVA services are available via myGov, will no longer be needed for those who prefer to deal with DVA online.

Once registered with myGov, veterans and their families will soon be able to link to DVA to access DVA online services.

[Log onto MyService now](#)

On 21 January, DVA's online claiming platform, MyService, introduced a number of improvements and features to increase the DVA services available online.

These new improvements and features will enable you to:

- Submit claims for Incapacity Payments.
- Easily access information about Transport .
- Request a callback.

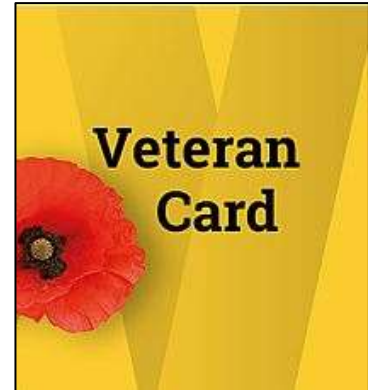
As DVA continues to expand and change their online services they will keep you updated.



If you have a DVA health card, next time you log into your MyService account, you will notice the digital version of your health card has a new design and is now called a Veteran Card.

The new-look card will replace existing DVA health cards providing veterans with access to their regular health benefits and physical versions of the new card will be sent via mail to new and existing cardholders in the coming months.

The introduction of the Veteran Card is part of the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant and serves as an opportunity to offer acknowledgement and respect to those who have served.



More information about the Veteran Card and the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant is available on the [DVA Website](#).



To get your Veterans Card!

If you already have a DVA card...

There is nothing you need to do – your existing DVA card (both physical and new look digital card) can be used until you receive the new Veteran Card in the mail.

If you want to register for a Veteran Card...

Log in to your [MyService](#) account, select 'Veteran Card' in the navigation panel and follow the prompts to apply.



TPI Rate.

Legislation fails to state how VEA war-caused injury compensation and VEA loss of income compensation is messed into one payment via government policy.

VEA client scenario using the current TPI rate:

A person is in the workforce and was granted injury compensation at 100% of the General Rate of \$250.30 a week.

After a while this person cannot work any longer and is granted TPI status, his/her payment is increased to \$704.00 a week.

That person's total monetary compensation for being granted TPI status is really only \$453.70 a week because he/she was already receiving the General Rate at \$250.30 a week - that vanished into thin air after gaining TPI status.

From the above scenario, the magical 100% of the General Rate injury payment just disappears into thin air bringing about a grand total of just \$453.70 a week in total as compensation for loss of earnings. This is very much real and it is a real disgrace that the hidden combination of two unidentified components makeup VEA TPI compensation.

All VEA TPI's are short-changed their loss of income compensation because one of the two compensation payments should be nothing short than the Minimum Wage as loss of income compensation.

Defend yourself

If you don't have a gun, this is the best defence against a knife attack I've ever seen; this guy is good. He is a military defensive tactics instructor. Watching this video could save your life.

Click [HERE](#).

Productivity Commission inquiry into Veteran Support **A critical comment on the Draft Report**

Ten days before Christmas, the Productivity Commission issued a draft report on its inquiry into the compensation and rehabilitation of veterans. Frankly, the report comes up with some disquieting recommendations.

You can read those concerns [HERE](#).



Self Protection.

A friend of mine, who lives in a bad part of the City asked me what he needed to defend his home. He has several college degrees. I suggested as minimum a 9mm, a couple clips, and a box of shells.

A few days later, he sent me [this picture](#) and asked me how to make it work!!

Roper River Camp Site

Little is known of this piece of paradise as it is closed to the general public and open only to Roper River Veterans Group in August. It is an ideal winter getaway with bitumen to the station gate, with Pristine riverfront campsites and maybe a Barra or two - if you're lucky. The peace, tranquillity and camaraderie of the setting is unsurpassed.

You can see further info [HERE](#).



The Good old days!

Oh for the good old days once again, no worries about the kids getting hurt or home late, kids made their own fun, life was so simple way back in the 40's and 50's.

It's a shame our future generations will never experience these great simple days of pleasure and a stress-free life we had. Have a look [HERE](#)



The Great Escape.

Untouched for almost seventy years, the tunnel used in the Great Escape has finally been unearthed. The 100 metre long passage nicknamed 'Harry' by Allied prisoners was sealed by the Germans after the audacious break-out from the POW camp Stalag Luft III in western Poland. Despite huge interest in the subject, encouraged by the film starring Steve McQueen, the tunnel was undisturbed over the decades because it was behind the Iron Curtain and the Soviets had no interest in its significance.

But at last British archaeologists have excavated it, and discovered its remarkable secrets.



Many of the bed boards which had been joined together to stop it collapsing were still in position, and the ventilation shaft, ingeniously crafted from used powdered milk containers known as Klim Tins, remained in working order.

Scattered throughout the tunnel, which is 10 metres below ground, were bits of old metal buckets, hammers and crowbars which were used to hollow out the route. A total of 600 prisoners worked on three tunnels at the same time. They were nicknamed Tom, Dick and Harry and were just 2 ft square for most of their length.

It was on the night of March 24 and 25, 1944, that 76 Allied airmen escaped through Harry.



Barely a third of the 200 prisoners, many in fake German uniforms and civilian outfits and carrying false identity papers, who were meant to slip away managed to leave before the alarm was raised when escapee number 77 was spotted.

Tunnel vision: A tunnel reconstruction showing the trolley system.

Only three made it back to Britain. Another 50 were executed by firing squad on the orders of Adolf Hitler, who was furious after learning of the breach of security. In all, 90 boards from bunk beds, 62 tables, 34 chairs and 76 benches, as well as thousands of items including knives, spoons, forks, towels and blankets, were squirreled away by the Allied prisoners to aid the escape plan under the noses of their captors.



Although the Hollywood movie suggested otherwise, no Americans were involved in the operation. Most were British, and the others were from Canada, (all the tunnelers were Canadian personnel with backgrounds in mining) Poland, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa.



The site of the tunnel, recently excavated by British archaeologists.

The latest dig, over three weeks in August, located the entrance to Harry, which was originally concealed under a stove in Hut 104.



The team also found another tunnel, called George, whose exact position had not been charted, it was never used as the 2,000 prisoners were forced to march to other camps as the Red Army approached in January 1945.

Watching the excavation was Gordie King, 91, an RAF radio operator, who was 140th in line to use Harry and therefore missed out. 'This brings back such bitter-sweet memories', he said as he wiped away tears. 'I'm amazed by what they've found.'



Bitter-sweet memories: Gordie King, 91, made an emotional return to Stalag Luft III.

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who had been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain
- Why the early bird gets the worm
- Life isn't always fair
- And maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.



Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault. Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death,

- by his parents, Truth and Trust,
- by his wife, Discretion,
- by his daughter, Responsibility,
- and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 5 stepbrothers

- I Know My Rights
- I Want It Now
- Someone Else Is To Blame
- I'm A Victim
- Pay me for Doing Nothing

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.

Veterans accuse Federal Government of 'ripping off' thousands from retirement benefits.



The Minister, Darren Chester, is a National Party colleague of Mr [Llew O'Brien](#) but it has not stopped the first term MP taking a serious swipe at his more senior colleague.

In the letter Mr O'Brien said:

"I am extremely concerned that when members of the DFRDB scheme were sold the option of taking a portion of their pension as a lump sum advance, they did so without the proper and reasonable information from the Australian Government that clearly indicated the deduction would be permanent against the full value of their pension, for the remainder of their life."

He added:



"I have been unable to find any clear advice warning those members who took out a lump sum advance, that their pension would be permanently reduced and would not be restored to its full value once the amount of the lump sum advance was repaid."

Mr O'Brien described the situation as "disgusting and abhorrent". He said he believes the Australian Government will "continue to profit significantly from the underpayments and must make restitution".

"People have been sold a financial product by the Australian Government and they haven't been given proper or reasonable information about it when they were sold it," he said. "Some of the things that I've had outlined to me not only don't pass the pub test, they don't pass the Australia Day test — they don't pass any Aussie test that would be put forward."

Llew O'Brien



"These are people, who are considered Australian military heroes, have seen battle like you and I can only ever read about in a book and now the Government is making a profit out of them in their senior years ... it's disgusting." Llew O'Brien did not hide his distaste for the response from the Minister and decided to go public.

"I've asked the Minister to do costings on how we can remedy this, what the cost to Government would be to right what is a fundamental wrong, and what the evidence that I've seen tells me is an un-Australian type of an act," he said. Mr O'Brien said the Minister had so far dismissed all his approaches. Mr Chester's office has not responded to interview requests from the ABC about this story.

'The Government owes me': veteran

One of those military heroes is retired Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith who commanded the Australian troops during the 1966 Battle of Long Tan.

The Sunshine Coast-based veteran was prematurely forced to retire from the Army at 43, due to a parachuting accident in 1976. Lieutenant Colonel Smith elected to "commute" \$10,000 of his superannuation so he could buy a house. He understood his pension would be reduced as he paid back the money but believed once he reached 72 and the "advance" was repaid his fortnightly income would return to the full amount without any deductions.

More than a decade later and the now aged almost 86 he continues to receive the reduced pension because it did not return to the higher amount. "For 14 years I have been living without that money, so the Government owes me in round figures around \$5,000," Lieutenant Colonel Smith said.



Harry Smith.

"The Government should repay the amount that veterans were deducted for their commutation because they've paid back the loan if you want to call it a loan. "I have been ripped off. Yes, I borrowed some money, [but] I paid it back.

"We paid back a loan and we should have reverted to the original amount and there's no argument about it. "I expect the original superannuation payments to revert to their full amount and further that when I die, if I die before my wife, that my widow will get her percentage of my superannuation to which she's entitled until she dies.

"But she is not going to get the full amount because the overall figure is not what it should be."

Lieutenant Colonel Smith said successive governments would not pay the money back that he believed they owed him. "And they don't want to put things on paper when the original deal was made — in my case back in 1976.

"I was simply told that your superannuation deductions will revert to their original amount when you have reached your actuarial age."

According to Lieutenant Colonel Smith, a common sense approach to the issue would be to change the legislation and reinstate the full amounts. "Not just me but all the other veterans who served, as in my case 24 years, and were entitled to superannuation."



Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith (right) with other Vietnam veterans at Remembrance Day celebrations in 2018.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith said he wanted Llew O'Brien to bypass Minister Chester and push the Prime Minister to order the Department of Veterans' Affairs to investigate how many people are affected and the cost of repaying the money. He said he did not believe the total amount would be significant and he wanted the Government to show compassion.

"They talk about the veterans... have put their life on the line but when it comes to money it's a whole different story," Llew O'Brien said. "They don't want to do what they should do in terms of money."

Veterans want families cared for

The Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (VVAA) has also added its weight to Llew O'Brien's push to convince his colleagues of the need for a rethink. VVAA national president, Ken Foster, said there had "always been a disappointment among career soldiers" that when they realised that they got to a certain age their pensions were not going to revert to the full amount.

"I haven't found anyone that didn't believe that it would go on for life so ... [it's a] disappointment that will hang on," Mr Foster said. "We feel that we are being ripped off here and we never got a meaningful explanation or a costing of why they couldn't put it back."



"We've gone back to the Government and said, 'Show us the information that we were given at the time that we signed that commutation paper to say that it was for the whole of life' and they say, 'Some of that documentation is no longer available'.

Ken Foster.



"There's always an excuse why they can't explain it. 'It was for the whole of life ... but nobody really wants to address it to look at it as a social issue.' Mr Foster said it would mean a lot to veterans to have the money repaid and the ongoing payments increased to the appropriate level. He said the biggest concern for the majority of veterans was providing for their families after they have died.

"I'd like to make sure that my wife is looked after — at least to the manner that she has been while I've been around," Mr Foster said.

A call for compassion

Ken Foster is uncertain how many Vietnam veterans are affected by this issue. "I know that number is decreasing every year, every week, every month because the older veterans are dying," he said. "This group is decreasing ... in a few year's time it probably won't apply so I don't believe it's a great amount of money."

Mr Foster is also appealing to the Government to help.

"They're always on about the service of the younger veterans and how we've got to look after the younger veterans. They've also got to consider the older veterans. "Those that were there through Korea and Malaya then Vietnam and so on that are now getting towards the end of their lives. "They're the ones that were involved with this pension scheme and a little bit of compassion, a little bit of consideration.

"At least give us some reasonable costings that explain why you can't do it and have a meaningful discussion about the whole thing and explain why in the Government's mind they can't be a little bit more sympathetic to what is seen by the veteran community as a worthwhile argument," Ken Foster said.

"We see it as a very simple resolution. The fact they rely on us for publicity. They're always there when there's a photo shot at a memorial or something but when it comes to this sort of thing it's apparently all too hard."