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Chair's comments

Welcome to Issue No. 192 of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*.

As the incoming Commander, Australian Defence College, and Chair of the Australian Defence Force Journal Board, I am pleased to thank Major General Craig Orme for his chairmanship since 2011.

For this issue, the Board once again had before it more articles than needed, enabling it to be critically selective in its choices. The quality of prospective articles continues to be an encouraging development, enhancing the professional standing of the *Journal*. It also reflects what seems to be an increased willingness on the part of ADF members to contribute to the professional debate, which I will continue to promote both as Commander, Australian Defence College, and Chair of the ADFJ Board.

I am pleased to announce that the first article, by Major Michael Thomas on the topical issue of climate change, is joint winner of the 'best article' prize. His co-winner is Midshipman Nam Nguyen, writing on the complex and vexed issue of disputed claims in the South China Sea. As always, it is commendable that such relatively junior officers are contributing to the *Journal*, a comment applying also to the later article by Petty Officer Trish Dollisson.

This issue also features four geo-strategic articles by officers currently attending the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies at the Australian Defence College. The first, by Colonel Tony Rawlins, examines the challenges of Korean reunification. Group Captain Steve Goodman of the Royal New Zealand Air Force looks at China's growing presence in the South Pacific. Colonel Duncan Hayward addresses responses and opportunities for Australia and Indonesia deriving from the US pivot to the Asia-Pacific, and Brigadier David Wainwright questions Australia's policy framework for its relations with India.

As an aside, we are planning to publish similar contributions from students at the Australian Command and Staff College, with a selection of articles from each course featuring in successive issues of the *Journal*, with others posted on the Australian Defence College website, as is occurring now with the Defence and Strategic Studies Course (see <http://www.defence.gov.au/adc/publications/shedden.html>).

Returning to this issue, we have four other articles on a range of topics. Lieutenant Commander Rachel Jones examines the contemporary challenge of piracy. Squadron Leader Hyder Gulam provides an interesting article on Islamic law in relation to military service in Australia. Petty Officer Trish Dollisson writes on bullying in the workforce. And Dr Clint Arizmendi questions the value of the external review process into cultural change within the ADF.

The issue concludes with a selection of book reviews, with an additional selection in the on-line version. As always, we remain keen to hear from readers wishing to join the list of reviewers, who are sent books provided to the Editor by publishers. If you are interested, please provide your contact details and area of interest to the Editor at publications@defence.adc.edu.au

Our March/April 2014 issue will be a 'general' issue and contributions should be submitted to the Editor, at the email address above, by mid January. Submission guidelines are on the *Journal* website (see www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au).

In closing, I would like to mention two matters. The first is that the Board has decided to discontinue the practice of awarding a prize of \$500 for the best article in each issue. Instead, the Board will be considering alternative options to recognise and encourage contributions, with effect from the next issue. The second is that the Board is intending to modernise the website, as part of its e-publication strategy. We are aiming to have the new website operational by June, to coincide with the discontinuation of the printed version of the *Journal*.

Finally, I would like to thank Colonel Dennis Malone for his contribution as Army's representative on the Board. His replacement is Colonel Rodger Shanahan, non-resident fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy.

I hope you enjoy this edition and would encourage your contribution to future issues.

Simone Wilkie, AM

Major General

Commander, Australian Defence College

Chair of the Australian Defence Force Journal Board

Work Shouldn't Hurt

Petty Officer Trish Dollisson, RAN

Introduction

If you were asked the question 'what would you prefer: brand new state-of-the-art equipment to hone your war fighting skills or to see ten of your colleagues medically discharged after their mental health and sense of identity has been shattered?', you would believe it a rhetorical question because your answer would be predictable. Who in the ADF does not wish for new and exciting technology and the opportunity to deploy with it?

If asked 'what would you prefer: a cohesive unit, high in morale and fighting fit or a workplace pervaded with fear and plagued with health concerns?', again your answer would be obvious. The unit high in morale with the better equipment which allows you to focus on the primary mission of the ADF will always be the preference. However, to ensure that you have that option and can function well as a fighting force, you need to ensure that your workplace—whether on deployment in the Middle East area of operations or an office space at ADF headquarters in Canberra—is free from unacceptable behaviour.

According to *Defence Instructions (General) Personnel 35-3: Management and Reporting of Unacceptable Behaviour (DI[G] PERS 35-3)*, there are several categories of unacceptable behaviour, including harassment, workplace bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, abuse of power and inappropriate workplace relationships, and conflict of interest. Recent media has focused on unacceptable behaviour in the ADF, the most common issue reported being sexual harassment and crimes of a sexual nature.

This article focuses on bullying and its impact on the ADF, as the author believes this remains a more prevalent and insidious form of unacceptable behaviour. Bullying affects more than one in five working-age Australians. In some industries, such as health, welfare, education, and government and semi-government services, the figures are far higher, ranging from 25 to 97 per cent of the workforce.¹

What is bullying?

DI(G) PERS 35-3 defines bullying as:

... an aggressive form of harassment. Bullying is a persistent, unreasonable pattern of behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons, which may create a risk to health and safety, including a risk to the emotional, mental or physical health of the person(s) in the workplace. Personnel at all levels can be affected.²

Bullying can place health, wellbeing, safety and careers at risk. In extreme cases, bullying can result in mental illnesses, such as depressive and anxiety disorders, complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), self-harm or suicide. As such, the prevention of bullying and the provision of safe work environments are essential, and guidelines to ensure this are outlined in the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*.³

While the health effects on a target of bullying can range from uncomfortable to clinically significant, many organisations seem to downplay the impact on emotional and mental health.

Resolving complaints at the lowest possible level can, at times, result in worse behaviour towards the target. Subsequent complaints that are dismissed or inadequately resolved begin to have a greater effect on the target which, more than 70 per cent of the time, result in the target leaving the organisation.⁴

If, on your way to work, you have ever felt a sense of dread, experienced anxiety, nausea, panic, sweating palms, increased heart rate or felt on the verge of tears, you are quite possibly manifesting some of the emotional and psychological symptoms displayed by the target of bullies. While all of us experience good and bad days at work, if the latter is the more common, you might begin questioning whether you are being subjected to bullying in the workplace.

It is important to point out that lawful, general orders given to subordinates by their superiors must not be confused with bullying. The duty of all members to carry out lawful, general orders must be maintained.

Findings of recent ADF studies

As outlined in the executive report of the *2010 ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study*, the prevalence of mental disorders in the ADF has the potential to have a substantial impact on individual wellbeing and operational capability.⁵ Results from the study indicate that 11,016 (or one in five) ADF members had experienced a mental disorder in the previous 12 months.

ADF personnel reported a significantly greater number of partial (rather than total) days out of role due to psychological distress than the general community. The data indicates that mental disorders have an impact on the ability of personnel to work, not only in terms of absenteeism, but also in the number of days where they are unable to perform at work. Individuals with affective disorders, for example, reported an average of 23 days off per year due to the disorder.

This loss not only reduces the member's wellbeing but creates a significant drain on the capability and resources of the ADF, with initial impacts felt by the member's workplace and then slowly across the whole ADF. The disorders primarily affecting absenteeism were panic attacks (32.7 per cent) and depressive episodes (32.4 per cent). The most frequently reported symptoms displayed by those who have suffered from bullying include both panic attacks and depressive episodes.

Physical stress-related damage from bullying

According to workplace bullying experts Dr Gary Narmie and Dr Ruth Narmie, the physical stress-related damage caused by bullying can include (but is not limited to):

- Cardiovascular problems from hypertension to heart attack
- Reduced immunity to infections: more colds and flu
- Itching, skin disorders
- Stress headaches and migraines
- Increased allergies and asthma
- Indigestion, colitis and irritable bowel syndrome
- Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue

- Hair loss
- Weight swings, and
- Diabetes mellitus.⁶

Emotional-psychological damage from bullying

In addition to the physical damage caused by bullying, Narmie and Narmie assert that the emotional-psychological damage that can result also includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Poor concentration and forgetfulness
- Loss of sleep and fatigue
- Stress and irritability
- Complex PTSD
- Mood swings, bursts of anger
- Spontaneous crying, lost sense of humour
- Indecisiveness
- Panic attacks and anxiety
- Clinical depression
- Feelings of insecurity, being out of control
- Nightmares about the bully
- Obsessive thinking about the bully
- Always anticipating the next attack (hyper-vigilance)
- Shattered faith in self, feeling of worthlessness
- Shame, embarrassment and guilt
- Altered personality, unrecognisable to family and friends, and
- Suicidal thoughts.⁷

The impact of physical illness, when combined with mental illness, can result in exacerbation of both or either aspects of an individual's suffering. In turn, this again can lead to self-harm, suicidal thoughts or suicide. A 2008 Yale study concluded that targets of bullies are between two and nine times more likely to contemplate suicide than those who have not experienced bullying.⁸ Many of the conditions listed can result in medical discharge, ruin lives or, in some cases, lead to self-harm or suicide.

If an ADF member died due to a workplace health and safety (WHS) incident involving the incorrect handling of electrical equipment, resulting in electrocution, questions would be instantly raised regarding the training of the member, and the WHS practices in the workplace—effectively, 'how could this happen when we are so careful with safety?'. It is doubtful that an ADF member who committed suicide after prolonged exposure to workplace bullying would have the same questions asked after their death. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the statements would more likely be that 'they took the coward's way out', 'they must have been soft' or 'there must have been issues at home we weren't aware of'.

Complex PTSD and associated stigma

The stigma attached to mental illness is acknowledged in Australian society but is even more prevalent within the ADF. While most of us have been touched by mental illness in our personal lives, either through direct experience or having a friend or family member affected, there is still a stigma that exists around mental illness, particularly in the workplace.⁹ Breaking down this stigma and opening the channels of communication around mental health means that people who are in distress or are unwell can receive help as quickly as if they had a physical health problem.

The Army has made significant steps to address this stigmatic barrier. With an increasing number of ADF personnel deploying (and redeploying) into war zones, there has been an increase in the number of PTSD sufferers being diagnosed. The Army's Joint Health Command, in collaboration with singer-songwriter John Schumann, has produced a 30-minute documentary entitled 'Dents in the Soul – Helping to Cope with PTSD', designed to address stigma, offer support and raise awareness of the issues surrounding PTSD for Army personnel and their families.¹⁰ Featuring Army members who share their own experiences with PTSD, the movie supports an important message: 'Look after yourself, your mates and your family.'

The documentary aims to 'de-stigmatise' PTSD and to show that it can potentially happen to anyone who has been exposed to a traumatic event. Developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress after exposure to trauma is not a sign of weakness—it is simply being human. Recovery rates from PTSD are high but early diagnosis and treatment are particularly important. Generally, the longer the symptoms persist—and go untreated—the longer the eventual recovery will take and the greater the disruption to the person's work, family and enjoyment of life.

What many people do not realise is that PTSD is not solely a reaction to the trauma of war. According to Farrell, some scientists now believe that the effects of PTSD may also be caused by a number of smaller incidents, causing what is known as 'complex PTSD'.¹¹ Many individuals will have a breakdown (of which there are different types) and suffer severe fatigue from lack of true rest. Simply put, stress does not allow the body and the mind to rest.

Since this article is specific to bullying, it is difficult to include more than a general introduction to the effects of PTSD. However, it is crucial that people know that the end-result of bullying (to adults or children) is a compromised and traumatised individual. In brief, people suffering complex PTSD as a result of bullying report some, if not all, of the following symptoms (which have been reduced for the sake of brevity):

- Fatigue, with symptoms of or similar to chronic fatigue syndrome
- Anger over injustice that is stimulated to an excessive degree (sometimes but improperly leading to the application of the words 'manic' instead of 'motivated', 'obsessive' instead of 'focused', and 'angry' instead of 'passionate', especially from those with something to fear)
- An overwhelming desire for acknowledgement, understanding, recognition and validation of their experience
- A simultaneous and paradoxical unwillingness to talk about the bullying or abuse
- A lack of desire for revenge but a strong motivation for justice
- Extreme fragility, where formerly the person was of a strong, stable character
- Clumsiness

- Forgetfulness
- Hyperawareness and an acute sense of time passing, seasons changing and distances travelled
- A constant feeling that one has to justify everything one says and does
- A constant need to prove oneself, even when surrounded by good, positive people
- An unusually strong sense of vulnerability
- Feelings of worthlessness, rejection and a sense of being unwanted, unlikable and unlovable
- A feeling of being small, insignificant and invisible
- An overwhelming sense of betrayal, and a consequent inability and unwillingness to trust anyone, even those who are close
- An initial reluctance to take action against the bully and report him/her knowing that he/she could lose his/her job
- That later reluctance giving way to a strong urge to take action against the bully so that others, especially successors, don't have to suffer a similar fate
- Proneness to identifying with other people's suffering
- A heightened sense of unworthiness and non-entitlement (some might call this shame)
- An unusually strong desire to educate the employer and help the employer introduce an anti-bullying ethos, usually proportional to the employer's lack of interest in anti-bullying measures, and
- A desire to help others, often overwhelming and bordering on an obsession, and to be available for others at any time regardless of the cost to oneself.

Accountability and duty of care

There have been many out-of-court settlements reached in Australia as a result of legal action taken against bullies. A security guard, Devandar Naidu, suffered serious psychiatric injuries as a result of bullying while working for Group 4 Securities. His settlement, awarded in 2005, included \$2 million in damages.¹² In 2010, a 17 year-old received a \$290,000 settlement as a result of a claim lodged against the school where she was subjected to bullying that included threats of physical harm and physical abuse.¹³

In Victoria, individuals who engage in workplace bullying are now potentially liable for criminal sanction, including up to 10 years gaol. Is it so inconceivable that an aggressive bully in the workplace, having driven a subordinate or colleague to suicide shouldn't be charged for manslaughter? Why shouldn't a subordinate, having been exposed to prolonged and systemic bullying in the workplace, have the right to sue the bully under the provisions of the employer's failure to uphold the *Workplace Health and Safety Act*?

The primary duty of care under the 2011 *Act* outlines that a person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking. The follow-on legislation that took effect in January 2012 contains new and tougher provisions outlining significant penalties for those who fail to meet their obligations for WHS.¹⁴

Other significant changes include enhanced protections from discrimination, victimisation and coercion over WHS matters which go beyond what is currently available through anti-discrimination and other laws. Individuals found guilty of some offences under the *Act* can face fines of up to \$50,000 while Defence as a body corporate could be fined \$500,000. Particularly relevant are Section 104 – Prohibition of discriminatory conduct, and Section 107 – Prohibition of requesting, instructing, inducing, encouraging, authorising or assisting discriminatory conduct.

Furthermore, the Federal Government’s Human Rights Commission (HRC) can investigate complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying that have occurred because of gender, disability, race, age, sexual preference, criminal record, trade union activity or political opinion. The HRC advises that people who are bullied at work can report bullying incidents to state and territory WHS authorities.

Should members of the ADF feel the need to approach outside organisations for assistance with complaints or in their search for validation? The optimal answer to that question is ‘no’. However, some members do and, in the majority of those instances, it means that the systems we have in place to address unacceptable behaviour in the ADF have failed.

Cost of negative public relations on the ADF

Most people who stay abreast of current affairs would realise that allegations of abuse in Defence usually result in front-page stories. While dated, the HMAS *Swan* incident was the first well-publicised incident involving sex discrimination in the RAN. Following on from that, there have been numerous and highly-publicised cases, including the HMAS *Success* Commission of Inquiry, the ADFA Skype sex scandal and, most recently, the so-called ‘Jedi Council’ which exploited female colleagues and members of the community.

All of these cases have a profoundly negative impact on ADF recruiting. Parents have every right to ask ‘Do I want my child to join a service in which they may potentially be subject to some form of inappropriate behaviour?’ or ‘Am I confident that my gay child will be treated with respect and tolerance in the ADF?’ Young people looking for future careers may and do steer clear of a workplace with a track record of bullying and unacceptable behaviour.

Every negative media release about unacceptable behaviour in the ADF has a significant impact on the morale of the ADF—and lowered morale can lead to retention issues. For a fighting force to be effective in operations, a high level of morale is required and negative media will not assist us in achieving this aim. Recently, Chief of Army, General David Morrison called on innocent members to ‘show moral courage’ and take a stand against those who displayed degrading behaviour in the ADF.¹⁵ He concluded ‘If you’re not up to it, find something else to do with your life. There is no place for you among this band of brothers and sisters’.

The financial cost of bullying – a case study

If, until this point, the reader has felt that the above facts are ‘wishy washy’ and/or ‘touchy feely’, perhaps putting a financial cost to bullying will provide a different perspective. Rather than citing more of the intangible effects of bullying, such as mental and emotional trauma, the author has conducted a case study on an ADF member who reported a period of prolonged bullying and the effects it had on them and their career.

As part of their conditions of service, ADF personnel are provided with free medical and dental services. However, the term ‘free’ is ambiguous in the context of bullying, as the financial cost of supporting ADF members through the potential physical and mental illness impacts can be approximately measured and can be considerable as demonstrated by the case study below. This particular case study examined the financial impact that bullying had on a senior non-commissioned officer, who was a technical specialist in a critical trade on approximately \$80,000 per annum including service allowance.

Table 1: Hypothetical assessment of the cost of bullying

Condition/treatment	Cost
Two months’ sick leave for severe depression and acute anxiety	>\$13,333
Reduced working hours, on average five hours per day over a four-month period = loss of 240 working hours	>\$6,672
Cost of external psychology services (in excess of 12 sessions)	>\$1440
Fortnightly medical officer reviews, approximately 90 minutes each, including travel	>\$500
Specialist medical consultations and tests to diagnose fatigue relating to mental illness	>\$3000
Time out of work for tests (in excess of 10 hours)	>\$278
Pharmaceuticals, including antidepressants and blood pressure medication	>\$360
Approximate medical costs over a six month period	>\$25,583
Salary for 11-year period not including training and travel costs	>\$693,400
Approximate cost of losing a member to medical discharge	>\$718,913

For argument’s sake, if ten members per year were to suffer a mental breakdown as a result of prolonged bullying and be medically discharged due to mental illnesses suffered as a result, it would cost Defence in excess of \$7.18 million. This does not include other potential costs such as DVA pensions, compensation and the ability of the member to access other assistance, such as the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme and outplacement services which they would not otherwise be entitled to with 11 years’ service alone.

Following on from the case study presented, in the event that those ten members had not suffered as a result of being bullied, the ADF could have an additional \$7.18 million to spend on procurement. To put this figure in context, \$7.18 million could purchase:

- 1 x Blackhawk helicopter with spare parts (\$5.9 million)
- 3 x M1A1 Abrams tanks (\$2.4 million each)
- 7 x magnetic resonant imaging machines (>\$1 million each)
- 90 x annual salaries of \$80,000
- 259 x combat soldier’s kits (\$27,700 each), or
- 160,000 x ration packs (\$45 each).

Raising awareness

Through education programs such as *Pathway to Change*, ‘New Generation Navy’ and ‘Navigating the Change’ awareness program in 2011-12, the ADF is beginning to address the impact that bullying can have on our workplace. Every member of the ADF is required to

undergo annual awareness training that covers alternative resolution and equity, and suicide awareness. This, however, is only the very first step towards acknowledging the extent to which bullying can affect our workplace and destroy lives.

It should be acknowledged that as a government department, the ADF is open to public scrutiny, unlike private institutions such as universities and corporations. One fact is that ADF establishments are not required to employ roving security in order to prevent high incidents of rape or assault, such as that required by Australian universities at their college accommodation. Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick recently commented in relation to the Inquiry into the Treatment of Women at ADFA that the National Union of Students (NUS) had ‘uncovered an alarming rate of sexual harassment and serious sexual assault’ (at academic institutions).¹⁶

The figures cited by the NUS found that more than 67 per cent of female students surveyed had experienced an unwanted sexual experience, whereas Ms Broderick reported that, in contrast, only 27 per cent of women surveyed at ADFA reported some form of sexual harassment. These figures clearly demonstrate the relative safety of ADF establishments in comparison with civilian universities. Viewing these comparisons might make many ADF members feel that superior glow of a job well done.

However, while we may lead private organisations in our own statistics, this is only a reflection of reported incidents. Yes, in comparison to reported figures we are employing cutting-edge education and training to great effect. But this does not mean that we can comfortably rest on our laurels and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done—indeed, we should be using these figures to spur us on in our efforts to completely eradicate unacceptable behaviour from our workplace. Only once we can confidently and proudly state that no member of the ADF has suffered some form of mental or emotional trauma as a result of a colleague’s unacceptable behaviour can we say ‘stand easy’.

Everyone in Defence is required to be treated with respect, fairness and without harassment. Defence requires everyone to accept personal responsibility and accountability for their actions and to think clearly about the consequences of their actions. *DIG PERS 35-3* states that a commander or manager must act on all unacceptable behaviour complaints brought to their attention in a prompt, fair and impartial manner. Even if you are not a bully, simply by observing unacceptable behaviour in the workplace and doing nothing to address it means you are a silent accomplice to the bully. Theodore Roosevelt aptly captured this sentiment when he said, ‘Knowing what’s right doesn’t mean much unless you do what’s right’.¹⁷

Conclusion

If a member believes they are being subjected to bullying, they should consult their chain of command, *DIG PERS 35-3* or an Equity Adviser. Support and resources are available and those listed below provide a starting point for anyone questioning whether they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour or for those who are wondering whether their own treatment of others would ‘pass muster’ if questioned.

Before dismissing the next complaint presented to you as ‘just whinging’, carefully consider the costs of bullying: financial, medical, legal, mental, social and moral. As members of the ADF, we have a responsibility to defend the rights of those who are unable to do so for themselves—

and we need to apply that thinking to our brothers and sisters in arms before we can direct our energies more effectively to the needs of others.

The mission of the ADF is to fight and win wars against the enemy, not each other. Three brand-spanking new M1A1 tanks or ten members left emotionally and socially crippled, reducing the ADF's ability to fight and win wars? Cutting-edge equipment is worthless without the personnel to utilise it effectively. It's not rocket science: work shouldn't hurt and bullying is just bad business.

Petty Officer Trish Dollisson joined the RAN in 2002 as an Electronic Warfare Linguist. She speaks seven languages other than English, specialising in Indonesian and South West Pacific languages. Trish has completed a variety of deployments with the RAN, the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Australian Customs Service, as well as undertaking specialist technical training with the US Marine Corps in Hawaii.

Trish has represented the ADF on the Parliamentary Exchange Program, and has participated in the Navy Women's Leadership Program, the Australian Women's Leadership Symposium and the Australian Regional Women's Leaders Conference. She is also a graduate of the My Mentor program and the Australian Applied Management Colloquium. Trish is currently Staff Officer to Director General Chaplaincy Navy.

SUPPORT FOR DEFENCE MEMBERS

The Defence Equity Advice Line is **1800 DEFENCE** and provides a confidential information and referral service for all Defence members. Callers can ask about their rights and options before taking action relating to any form of harassment or discrimination.

Resources

<http://www.bullyinginstitute.org/>

<http://workingwomenaustralia.com.au/>

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/>

<http://www.bullying.com.au/workplace-bullying/>

Alternative resolutions and equity: <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/People/sites/ARE/comweb.asp?page=51021&Title=Home>

Management of workplace conflicts and disputes and unacceptable behaviour: http://intranet.defence.gov.au/People/sites/ARE/Docs/WorkplaceBehaviour_2803web_.pdf

DI(G) PERS 34-4 – Use and management of alternative dispute resolution in Defence

DI(G) PERS 35-3 – Management and reporting of unacceptable behaviour

DI(G) PERS 35-4 – Reporting and management of sexual misconduct including sexual offences

DI(G) PERS 35-7 – Defence Equity Adviser network

DI(G) PERS 45-5 – Whistleblower scheme

NOTES

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