

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence

– Public hearings for the Victoria Cross Inquiry

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, Senator David Feeney, today announced that public hearings will be held around Australia as part of the Victoria Cross Inquiry.

Following the nationwide call for submissions in April this year, the hearings will be another opportunity for the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal to receive evidence in relation to specific acts of gallantry or valour performed by the following naval and military personnel:

- Gunner Albert Neil (Neale) Cleary – Army
- Midshipman Robert Ian Davies – Navy
- Leading Cook Francis Bassett Emms – Navy
- Lieutenant David John Hamer – Navy
- Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick – Army
- Lieutenant Commander Robert William Rankin – Navy
- Able Seaman Dalmorton Joseph Owendale Rudd – Navy
- Ordinary Seaman Edward Sheean – Navy
- Leading Aircrewman Noel Ervin Shipp – Navy
- Lieutenant Commander Francis Edward Smith – Navy
- Lieutenant Commander Henry Hugh Gordon Dacre Stoker – Royal Navy
- Leading Seaman Ronald Taylor – Navy
- Captain Hector Macdonald Laws Waller – Navy

“I am pleased that the Tribunal is now in a position to speak face to face with people who can contribute further to this important Inquiry,” Senator Feeney said.

“Many Australians have fought for years for further recognition of these 13 naval and military personnel. The Tribunal has received about 55 written submissions from across Australia in relation to acts of gallantry and valour.

“To make sure the Inquiry has all of the relevant and accurate historical evidence before it, the Tribunal is inviting a wide range of people to provide more information to the Inquiry.

“The Tribunal will invite historians, authors, former members of the Australian Defence Force, and representatives of ex-Service associations to give evidence.

"The hearings will be open to the media and in 2012 the Tribunal will consider a further 89 submissions which propose additional names of ADF personnel who may be considered for recognition of military valour," Senator Feeney said.

The Inquiry is headed by the Chair of the Tribunal, Mr Alan Rose AO.

He will be assisted by Tribunal members:

- Professor David Horner AM, Military Historian;
- Vice Admiral Don Chalmers AO (Retd), former Chief of Navy;
- Brigadier Gary Bornholt AM, CSC (Retd), former senior Army officer; and
- Air Commodore Mark Lax OAM, CSM (Retd), former senior Air Force officer.

Hearings will be run by the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal and held in Canberra, Melbourne and Launceston in December 2011. In 2012, the Tribunal will hold public hearings in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane.

Locations have been chosen by the Tribunal and reflect where the 55 written submissions have been received from.

Interested members of the public are invited to attend these hearings and witness the proceedings. Those interested in attending are asked to register their interest (for administrative purposes only) by contacting the Tribunal via telephone (02) 6266 3486 or via email to DHA.Tribunal@defence.gov.au. Please note that only those invited by the Tribunal to speak will be able to do so.

The Terms of Reference can be found at:

<http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2011/04/16/parliamentary-secretary-for-defence-victoria-cross-inquiry/>

Timetable of Public Hearings

City	Date	Location
Canberra	1 – 2 December 2011	Hotel Realm 18 National Circuit BARTON
Melbourne	14 – 15 December 2011	The Mercure 13 Spring Street MELBOURNE
Launceston	16 December 2011	Country Club Tasmania Country Club Lane PROSPECT VALE

City	Date	Location
Sydney	8 – 9 February 2012	Details will be announced in early 2012
Adelaide	14 February 2012	Details will be announced in early 2012
Perth	15 – 16 February 2012	Details will be announced in early 2012
Brisbane	13 March 2012	Details will be announced in early 2012

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