

- **national**

Defence Abuse Response Taskforce exposes horrific accounts of abuse

DECADES of rape, abuse and harassment in the ADF have been exposed. These are the whistleblowers' shocking stories. Warning: Disturbing content.

LIZ BURKE

NOVEMBER 26, 2014 10:32PM



Defence Abuse Response Taskforce report has exposed shocking abuse within the ADF. *Source: Supplied*

DECADES of rape, abuse, harassment and a “culture of violent hazing” in the Australian Defence Force have been exposed in a shocking 370-page report released today.

The Defence Abuse Response Taskforce report is not an easy read, detailing serious allegations of abuse and accounts of individuals who have come forward and revealed their suffering while serving in our Army, Air Force, Navy, and other Defence units.



I started to block it out as soon as it happened — male Army member. *Source: Supplied*

Two reports were released today, with one highlighting the nature of cases in the Defence Force over a 70-year period. While the second, specifically on the Australian Defence Force Academy, covered a smaller timeframe and 76 complaints, recommended a Royal Commission. 2400 complaints were received in total into the two reports from former and current military personnel. It said it presented a “disturbing picture of the nature and extent of abuse”.

These are their shocking stories:

As I was showering five or six senior [others] attacked me — they turned off the lights, tied my hands behind my back and proceeded to do things to me. I was held down while one of them put his penis in my buttocks, they were all laughing. Then they proceeded to masturbate on me. I was absolutely shocked, at that age I had never even known about things like this. I guess I started to block it out as soon as it happened. *(Male Army member, late 1980s)*

He did so many things to me. He wiped s*** (literally) on my cabin door handle. He put s*** on my car door handle. He spat on me. Would spit on the door handle. He threw a bottle in my face and cut my eye. I sought medical treatment at the hospital. I told them what had happened but didn't mention his name. *(Male Navy member, late 1990s)*

They began with [my friend]. Together, they [harassed my friend]. When I told them to stop, they attacked me. [One of the men] grabbed me and gave me a wedgie until my undies broke, then he pushed me onto the bed. He then picked up a vacuum cleaner pipe and bent me over. He pushed it in between my buttock cheeks until it began to push up my anus. *(Male Army member, early 2000s)*



'I find it difficult to admit that I was a part of the Defence Force' — Male air force member *Source: Supplied*

I was dragged by my [colleagues] (one guy on each arm and one guy on each leg) out the back of the Armament Section towards the ablution block. I recall kicking and screaming in a state of disbelief, helplessness and absolute horror, as my clothes were torn from me. I felt betrayed and violated. ... Though there were quite a few of my non-commissioned officer superiors present, both during and after this incident, none offered me assistance of any kind. (*Female air force member, early 1980s*)

[A male peer] broke into the locked room I was sleeping in and raped me while three friends of his photographed the assault. ... The words that have haunted me [ever since]: "Forget it ever happened ... get over it" said by a RAAF policeman. (*Female air force member, early 1990s*)

[The officer] castigated me for the [intoxicated] condition I was in. My mate tried to tell him we were all right and that we did not need any help. He was trying to protect me. [The officer] ordered him to leave and said that he would take care of me. [The officer's] room was at the top of the stairs which led to our sleeping mess. He ordered me into his room and then locked the door. In his cabin he attempted to have oral sex with me and then brutally raped me. I found out later that [the officer] had a reputation on the ship for sexually molesting junior sailors. (*Male Navy member, early 1990s*)



I recall kicking and screaming in a state of disbelief — Female air force member. *Source: News Limited*

Knowing what I know now, I can see that what went on was not acceptable behaviour. I knew it then too, but being out of Defence completely enables me to see it more clearly and understand how inappropriate it really was. I find it difficult to admit that I was a part of the Defence Force, given the treatment I have received. I no longer support my family members in pursuing a defence career. *(Male air force member, late 2000s)*

Last year, at age 75, I finally summoned the courage to divulge the sordid truth to my family. Time will not heal but may help us understand the massive impact that these life changing events have had on all of us. *(Male Army member, early 1950s)*



Len Roberts-Smith, Chair of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, presented the report today. *Source: News Corp Australia*

News Limited Copyright © 2017. All times AEDT (GMT +11).

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/national/defence-abuse-response-taskforce-exposes-horrific-accounts-of-abuse/news-story/7a002a304168c609cc26ab5ba069e6f7>