

# A new report reveals that 800 alleged sexual and physical abusers still serve in Australian Defence Force

**UP to 800 alleged abusers are still serving in the Australian Defence Force — many senior officers. Their glossary of depraved sexual abuses is shocking.**

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News Corp Australia Network NOVEMBER 27, 2014 6:37 AM



Systematic abuse in the Navy ruined John Atkins' life and two marriages. He supports a Royal Commission to get to the truth. *Source: Supplied*

SENIOR officers are among almost 800 alleged abusers still serving in the Australian Defence Force and a royal commission is needed, the final report of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (DART) has found.

The sobering document, tabled on Wednesday, details more than 2400 allegations of sexual and physical abuse in the ranks between the 1940s and today.

[The Army](#) tops the abuse score sheet with 879 cases, followed by [Navy](#) and the [RAAF](#).

More than 1100 victims have been paid compensation totalling \$49 million.

The report also includes one of the most bizarre “glossary of terms” ever published with references such as “chooking” (butting out a cigarette on a wet backside) and “gargoyling” (forcing an individual to urinate in their own mouth or doing it to them), explained in some detail.

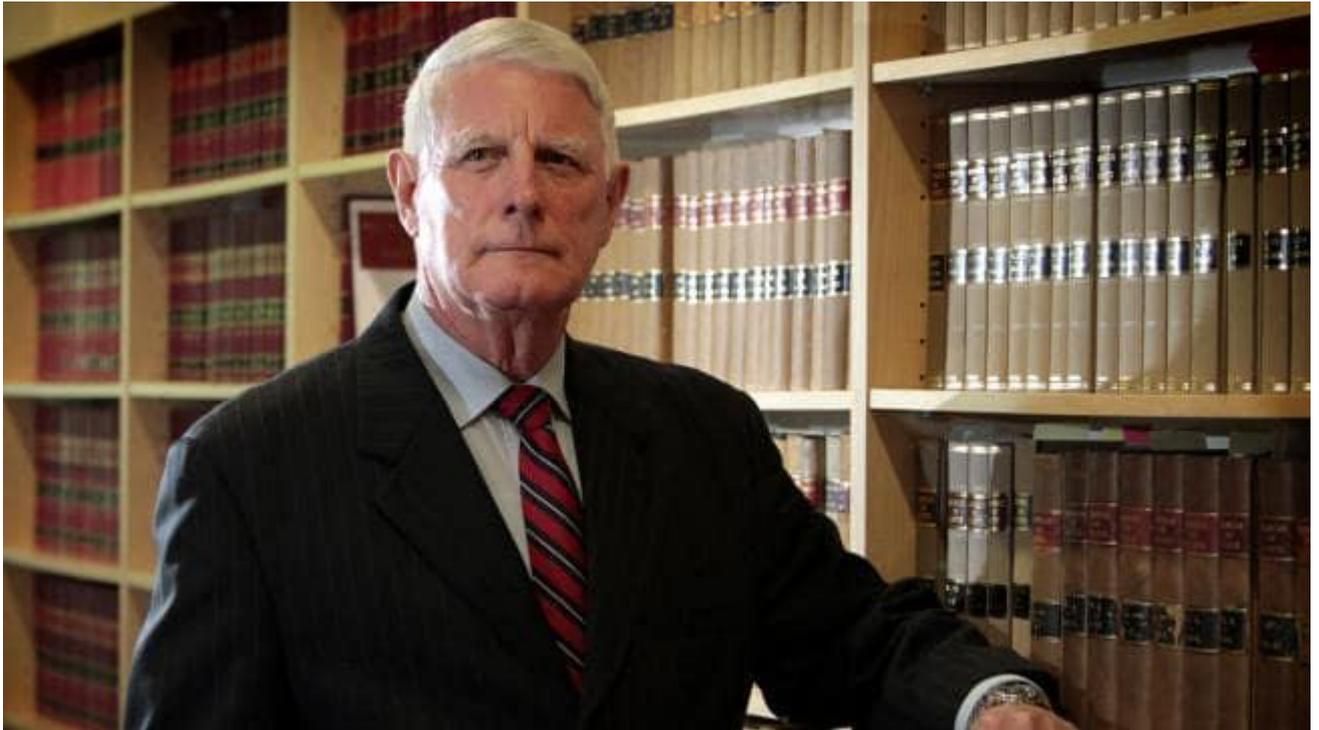
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A separate report into abuse at the [Australian Defence Force Academy](#) recommends [a Royal Commission to properly test serious allegations of rape and assault](#) at the elite military academy between 1986 and today.

“The Taskforce has concluded that the only way of ensuring confidence that the allegations of very serious abuse at ADFA can be thoroughly and completely investigated — and appropriately dealt with — is by way of a Royal Commission,” said retiring Taskforce chairman and former WA Judge [Len Roberts-Smith](#).

**COMMENT BELOW: Should ADFA abuse be investigated by a Royal Commission?**



Len Roberts-Smith QC headed the independent task force into abuse in the Australian Defence Force (ADF). *Source: News Corp Australia*

[Slater and Gordon](#) military compensation lawyer Brian Briggs said the Taskforce had established dozens of cases of abuse at ADFA, most of which occurred during the 1990s, and nearly all of which involved serious sexual or physical abuse.

“What’s most concerning is the Taskforce has identified 60 alleged abusers who are either still serving or working in the public service who have never been held accountable for their actions,” he said.

The DART says that as of October 2014 there were 594 alleged abusers serving in the full-time force, 204 in the Reserves and another 341 in the inactive reserve.

“The Taskforce has found that Defence mismanaged many actual reports of abuse, including by taking no action, or inappropriate or inadequate action, in response to reports of abuse,” it said.

Abuse victim John Atkins, who was raped and tortured at the Navy recruit school HMAS Cerberus in Victoria as a 13-year-old in the early 1950s, said the only way to rid Defence of abuse was through a Royal Commission.



John Atkins as a proud Navy Lieutenant. *Source: Supplied*

He said that he believed there were many more than the 800 alleged abusers still serving.

“In addition to victims we need to hear from abusers and those who turned a blind eye to abuse,” Mr Atkins said.

“We must make changes to bring fairness and balance into the workplace without fear.”

He said one of his abusers went on to become an Admiral and another who turned a blind eye also became an Admiral and served in very senior roles.

“Their names are in the secret DLA Piper report along with the names of many, many more senior officers,” Mr Atkins said.

Defence Chief Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin welcomed the report.

“While we remain committed to action against alleged abusers, we also have a responsibility to do no further harm to complainants,” ACM Binskin said.



The Chief of the Defence Force Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin. Picture: Gary Ramage. *Source: News Corp Australia*

“I believe we are making real progress on cultural change across Defence to become more fair, inclusive and respectful.”

The DART report is based on more than 2400 allegations of abuse including 1600 credible cases pursued by the Taskforce.

Of the victims paid compensation, 654 received the maximum of \$50,000.

“It is impossible to read or listen to the harrowing personal accounts included in these reports without being affected,” Mr Roberts-Smith said.

Former head of the Attorney General’s Department Robert Cornall has been appointed as new chairman of the DART.



Robert Cornall, the new head of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce. *Source: News Corp Australia*

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Source: <http://www.news.com.au/national/a-new-report-reveals-that-800-alleged-sexual-and-physical-abusers-still-serve-in-australian-defence-force/news-story/c2f9919522e387fb32b67ea1bbf3abaa>