

Day one of Royal Commission into sexual abuse within the ADF hears graphic stories of rape, abuse

DEFENCE Force cadets were raped and forced to have sex with each other, a Royal Commission has heard. **WARNING: Graphic content.**

Rohan Smith and AAP JUNE 22, 2016 12:31PM



Eleanore Tibble took her own life after being forced to resign from the Air Cadets following claims of fraternising with an instructor. *Source: Supplied*

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CADETS within the Australian Defence Force were raped and forced to have sex with each other, a royal commission has heard.

Day one of the official inquiry into sexual abuse within the ADF commenced in Sydney on Tuesday.

It will examine the experiences of survivors of rape and abuse at Fremantle's HMAS Leeuwin between 1960-1980, the Army Apprentice School Balcolme between 1970-1980 and within cadet ranks from 2000 to present.

The commission has heard from 111 people who experienced physical, mental and sexual abuse within the ADF. Of those, 50 involved child abuse at HMAS Leeuwin and at Balcolme in Victoria. Thirty people are expected to give evidence before commissioners Justice Peter McClellan, Robert Fitzgerald and Professor Helen Milroy.

It follows the establishment of a taskforce in 2012 to deal with as many as 2400 historical complaints.

The commission heard in graphic detail what cadets experienced. One of them, who adopted the pseudonym CJA, joined the Navy at Leeuwin in 1967 before he was subjected to vicious and humiliating abuse.

"On multiple occasions I was snatched in the middle of a night and dragged to a sports oval," he said.

"I was forced to suck another recruit's penis or lick a junior recruit's anus ... Other times I was forced to have anal intercourse with junior recruits or I was raped by another junior recruit who was directed to do so by the older recruits or base staff."

Another victim was 16-year-old Eleanore Tibble but she is no longer alive to tell her story. The inquiry learned that she was 14 when she joined the ADF in Hobart in 1999.

Angus Stewart SC, counsel assisting the commission, said Eleanore's case would be an important backdrop to the commission's investigation.

It is expected Eleanore's mum, Susan Campbell, will give evidence about how her daughter was engaged in a sexual relationship with a 30-year-old instructor.

It is alleged an officer told Eleanore she could either resign or be dishonourably discharged. Her mother says she took her own life in November, 2000, because the RAAF forgot to tell her it was not going to charge her.

Adair Donaldson, a lawyer acting for survivors, told ABC News [he hoped the royal commission would lead to action](#).

“What we are going to hear is a number of courageous survivors who are prepared to tell their stories about the horror they experienced,” Mr Donaldson said.

“By telling their stories, they hope that they will make a difference for the future and that what they experienced will never be experienced by any other member of the ADF.”

The hearing continues in Sydney on Wednesday when two former ADF officers and a chaplain based at HMAS Leeuwin take the stand.

Geoffrey Curran, who was a divisional officer at the base in 1971, and Peter Sinclair, who was second-in-charge from 1973-1975, will both tell their version of events.

Former Leeuwin chaplain Peter Ball, who allegedly told one abused boy his life would be in danger if the others found out, will also be in the witness stand.

For support and information about suicide prevention, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800.



Susan Campbell will give evidence in the coming days at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse within the ADF. *Source: News Limited*

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