



State Minister's Message Issue 52 (4 February, 2010)

A regular update from the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon. Michael Atkinson M.P.

Fromelles Soldiers Laid to Rest

Minister Atkinson welcomes the news that the first of 250 Australian and British soldiers have been buried with full military honours at a ceremony in France, over 93 years after the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July, 1916 - 20 July, 1916.

On the first day of burials for the Australian and British soldiers recovered last year from Fromelles, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin says that the soldiers are being buried in individual graves in the purpose-built Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery. Mr Griffin said the new cemetery is the first full cemetery the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has constructed in more than 50 years.

The burials will occur throughout February and be conducted by members of both the British and Australian Armies.

Fromelles was the first major battle fought by Australian troops on the Western Front. The battle has been described previously as the "bloodiest 24 hours in Australia's military history", the failed attack resulted in 5,533 Australian and 1,547 British soldiers being killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

A commemorative event to open the cemetery is scheduled for the 94th anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July, 2010. Minister Atkinson encourages a new generation of Australians to honour the sacrifice of these brave men, and notes that as a nation it is our duty to ensure we reflect on the sacrifice of each and every person who has given his or her life in our name.

Upcoming Veterans' Advisory Council Meeting

The Veterans' Advisory Council will hold its first meeting of 2010 on Thursday, 4 February, 2010. Items for discussion will include:

The Ministerial Advisory Board on Ageing, proposed Centenary of ANZAC Projects, the release of the ex-service commemorative calendar, the concessional treatment of veterans, veterans as a special needs group, the Matthews Review of indexation arrangements in military superannuation schemes, mental health beds capacity at the Repat, entitlements for South East Asia Treaty Organisation civilian surgical and medical teams that worked in Vietnam, the naming of major infrastructure projects, the review of military compensation arrangements, taxi driver training, security on the Pathway of Honour, South Australian Victoria Cross recipients and the National Veterans' Affairs Officers meeting to be held in Adelaide on 10 March, 2010.

For more information about any of the items mentioned, please contact Veterans SA on 8207 1723.