



EST 2004

[www.caffuk.co.uk](http://www.caffuk.co.uk)

**The Combined Armed Forces Federation UK  
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held  
in the Cowap Room of the Union Jack Club  
Waterloo, Thursday May 19<sup>th</sup> 2011**

---

**Present**

Chris Watkin	Chairman
David Robson	Secretary General & Treasurer
David Everiss	Committee Member
David Brown	Member
Geoff Meanwell	Member
Margaret Derham	Member

**1. Silence:**

The Chairman led the meeting in one minute's silence in remembrance of Colleagues and those who have fallen in defence of our Nation, followed by a full reading of the "Ode to Remembrance".

**2. Apologies**

Frank Rixon B.E.M.	Membership Secretary
Peter Holden	Committee Member
Denys Royle	Member

**3. Welcome:**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and was especially grateful for those who had travelled long distances for the meeting.

**4. Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the last meeting were received.

**5. Resignation:**

Members were sorry to hear that Peter Holden had resigned from the Committee and the Chairman was requested to write with everyone's good wishes.

## **6. Membership Report:**

Frank Rixon continues to be unable to travel so far, on account of age and ill health. However, he had been able to report that there had been 5 new members registering since the last AGM and that he had been in correspondence with Members and other officers on at least 250 occasions.

He is now concerned about the large number of individual files held by him and this is a matter which the Secretary General will have to consider, in the near future. He is also seeking agreement to commence a new Membership Campaign.

In relation to recruitment, the Chairman reported that there had been over 3,000 visitors to the website in the period from January – April. It was noted that the current parliamentary and media interest in the Military Covenant may assist recruitment.

Membership remains stable.

AGREED that:

- i) every effort be made to include those not currently in Membership, in order to ensure that they're not excluded, should we conclude our negotiations successfully
- ii). steps be taken to recruit an Assistant Membership Secretary
- iii). a closer relationship be developed with the Webmaster in order to capitalise on the site visitors
- iv). Members and the Committee seek to advertise CAFF UK with multiple notices in relevant organisations, and that the advertising programme be re-vitalised with the Membership Secretary
- v). the Membership Secretary be sincerely thanked for his work and constancy

## **7. Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer submitted the annual accounts for the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 and circulated copies to those present.

The process of maintaining the accounts has been continued with our main Current and Reserve Accounts retained with the Santander Bank - the Alliance and Leicester Bank having been taken over by Santander. The High Interest Reserve Account continuing with Standard Life Bank (Barclays)

Poor interest rates on the Reserve and Current Accounts have seriously affected our Income. All authority for payments rely upon the two signatures of the Chairman and the Secretary General – a third signatory needs to be appointed from the Committee, in order to ensure that we always have two signatures available.

Maintenance of the Federation's Membership is held on Computer. A monthly system for membership renewal and reminders is operated by the Treasurer, now supported by a Bookkeeper. Bank Statements are reconciled monthly via our computerised data base and amended with amounts received and when due.

Correspondence with members who move, change accounts or query payments are also undertaken at regular intervals.

Members pay by Annual Cheque (£24.00 per annum), and regular Standing Order (£2.00 per month)..

In brief, the accounts demonstrate a relatively stable and sufficient income to maintain our challenge to Government, although Members can expect increasing costs, as we now begin to look to professional help for our claim. Fortunately, we now have a firm base from which to operate and a strong argument which requires no further research.

AGREED that :

- i). the Report be received
- ii). that subscriptions be maintained at the current level (Annual Subscriptions £24.00 or £2.00pm through Standing Order)
- iii) the Treasurer be sincerely thanked for his work on behalf of the Federation

(Members who require sight of the audited accounts should contact the Secretary General with their membership Number)

## **8. Secretary General's Report:**

The Secretary General circulated his Report to the Members present which explained his considerable correspondence with MPs, the Pensions Ombudsman and the MOD. This had been protracted on account of changes within Government bodies, abandoning established routes of Appeal. Added to this were changes to Civil Servants, Government Ministers, Rules and Regulations – all seemingly creating a maze which was difficult to fathom, at times. Inevitably, many correspondents found excuse to refer things to others, as a way of settling issues for their departments. Thus MPs who had shown interest to support individual claims, were then able to delay actions, awaiting the decisions of one department or another. One had to say that it had all been a lesson in obfuscation of which “Sir Humphrey” would have been proud!

Equally, it would seem that many MPs were relying upon a standard response to Members, since they all contained the same mis-information. Members should refer their MPs to The Combined Armed Forces Federation UK's Researched Report in the House of Copmmons library (2 Copies). Members can also refer to specific advice on the CAFF UK Website – [www.caffuk.co.uk](http://www.caffuk.co.uk)

He explained why only the pre 1975 members of the Armed Services were excluded from the preserved Pension Rights and Transfer arrangements of the Social Security Acts 1973 and 1975. Members were referred to the detailed correspondence between himself, and his MP (Caroline Dineage) which was available on the website

The details of the complications in raising the issue with central government departments are given in his Report which is now available on the website for all Members to access. We are, however, encouraged by the interest being shown by Mike Hancock MP who is seeking to gather all those other MPs who have expressed interest. Since over 120 MPs, signed the Early Day Motion 67, supported by considerable debate in the House in January 2007, led by Colin Challen MP, it was felt that much latent support is still available to us, notwithstanding that many MPs have since left the House.

He concluded by thanking all Members for their continued support, without which, the Federation would be starved of the wherewithal to maintain the challenge.

AGREED that:

- i) the Secretary General should be commended for his tireless efforts on behalf of all Members throughout the World
- ii) in view of the support offered by Mike Hancock MP, all Members should be encouraged to write to their MPs
- iii) the Chairman and the Secretary General correspond directly with Members on this matter, so that the maximum number of MPs are involved
- iv) an alternative strategy, investigating legal action should be prepared, for future information, if an approach to Government through Mike Hancock MP does not succeed.

#### **9. Election of Officers:**

AGREED:

**Chairman:** Mr CJ Watkin

**Secretary General:** Mr D Robson

**Treasurer:** Vacant

**Membership Secretary:** Mr F Rixon

**Co-opted Members:** Mr G Nash, Mr G Meanwell, Mr D Everiss

**Overseas Secretary  
(Spain & Mediterranean)** Vacant

#### **10. The Pensions Ombudsman:**

In view of the above discussion, it was disappointing to report that the Ombudsman had found reason to not consider our case, again on technicalities of time lapse, which decision was questionable, in any case. It was noted that the Gurkhas had also received similar, unfounded, rebuffs in their campaign, but had found success as a result of the high profile brought to the attention of the public by Joanna Lumley.

- i) the Chairman seek to ascertain contacts of other service organisations through the Veterans' Association

## **11: Honoraria:**

Members present noted that Honoraria levels had remained static for some years and took opportunity to discuss this matter, during the absence of the executive officers in the break for refreshments. On return, it was

AGREED that

- i) honoraria levels be raised by 10%:
- ii) the Executive Officers be thanked for their efforts on behalf of Members
- iii) an appropriate gift, acknowledging Members' appreciation be sent to the Membership Secretary, expressing Members' good wishes for a complete recovery to good health.

## **12. Intellectual Property Office (IPO):**

The Investigation by the Secretary General into irregularities relating to the Trade Mark Act etc., by the IPO and the consequences, continues as and when he is able to devote time to it. His immediate priority being the pursuit of the Pensions' Claim.

## **13. Chairman's Remarks:**

The Chairman reviewed all the activity which had been undertaken, during the year, and drew attention to the fact that the Federation's case remained strong, based upon the published research, and that this was wholly due to the work undertaken by the Secretary General. Whatever route of Appeal the Federation now took, it would remain as the basis of our case; it was the obligation of Government to answer that case.

As far as he was aware, no other group had produced any evidence whatsoever and, it would appear that they had been relying upon lobbying MPs on the basis of an emotional appeal.

The responses to detailed investigations during the year had been disappointing, but probably could have been anticipated, but Federation Members should be contacted about the interest being shown by Mike Hancock MP (Portsmouth South) who was willing to draw together all those MPs with an interest in this case. Those present recalled the large number of MPs (217) who had signed the Early Day Motions in January 2007.

An appropriate letter will be sent to all UK Members to advise them about this important action, and he will include a letter of appreciation to Mike Hancock.

The replies which Members are receiving from their MPs, appear to be a standard reply, probably prepared by the MOD and, as such, the Federation has a robust response, which will be made available to Members – we still hold the Moral High Ground - the Gurkhas had been similarly rebuffed, until the public became aware of the disgraceful injustice being forced upon them by Government and we must consider other high profile support for our campaign. However, our colleagues in the AFPG continue to pursue that route and so we must consider alternative strategies open to us.

The Hudson & Others v the MOD & Treasury (2003) case, still hampers us, and still remains on the books, notwithstanding the unsafe nature of the judgement. The Federation's Executive Committee have no intention of pursuing a similar route, at this stage, but it would be wise to consider such alternatives, for future action..

AGREED that:

- i). All Members resident in the UK request their MPs to support Mike Hancock MP, in his attempt to change Government policy.
- ii). That preparations be made for alternative legal action, if necessary.

#### **14. Next Meeting:**

The meeting closed at 4.00pm and the Chairman thanked all those present for their attendance and it was:

AGREED:

That the next AGM will take place on:

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at 1.00pm for 1.30pm**  
**Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, Waterloo, London**