

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

Please note the AGM for this year has been arranged for – Thursday 13th May from 1 - 6pm in the 'Writing Room' of the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, opposite Waterloo Railway Station.

Apologies are not required if you cannot make the AGM but please inform Michael Kennedy, Treasurer CAFF UK, 7 Whitehouse Road, Ruskington, Lincs. NG34 9TP or Email- treasurercaffuk@btinternet.com ASAP if you are attending.

Once again apologies for the lack of information over the last two months. The delay has been due to a complete review of all the evidence prior to making an application to the Pensions Ombudsman's Service. This has now been completed and will shortly be forwarded on our behalf by John Thurso MP.

We are hoping to make our claim an 'Election Issue' and give it as much publicity as possible. However it has been decided that since many MPs will be standing down this time, Members are requested to write to their MP 'after' the General Election once the results are available, and the Political situation has settled down in early June. A suggested letter you can download and send will be posted on our Web-site – www.caffuk.org.uk – by the first week in June. Alternatively you are welcome to write your own letter to bring our claim to their attention of course.

The Daily Telegraph always produces a detailed account of General Elections with all the Constituencies and successful Candidates, so check out the name of your post election MP. The address to write to is - Joe Bloggs MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. This is vitally important.

The Daily Mail Newspaper made a very generous donation towards the cost of publishing our 'Researched Report' and I will be writing to them and other Media outlets seeking their support in the run up to the Election. So keep an eye on The Daily Mail in particular over the next few weeks!

Questions were submitted to the 'Ministry of Defence' in January last year by John Thurso MP on our behalf, but it wasn't until 4th July 2009 when we eventually received a reply – 6 months later! So much for this Government's rush to protect its core values of 'Fairness and Equality'. The same questions were subsequently submitted to the 'Cabinet Office' along with others besides those detailed in my letter to John Thurso MP dated 22nd January 2009. A reply was received from the Cabinet Office on February 4th 2010!

I regard all the responses to date from both the MOD and Cabinet Office as either 'totally irrelevant and/or false pretences in an attempt to benefit cheat and defraud our Membership of their legal rights to Occupational Pensions and Gratuities for years of service in the Armed Forces prior to 1975.

We have a legal claim to the above under the following legislation.

1. The Social Security Act, Schedule 16, 1973.

2. The Social Security and Pensions Act 1975.
3. The Pre 1975 Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme for those of our Membership taking up Government Service on leaving the Armed Forces under Parliamentary Commands 675 & 945.
4. The Contributory Civil Service Widows Pension Scheme for those of our Membership as in 3 above. This relates to a refund of contributions to this scheme made prior to 1978.
5. The 'Reconstruction Competitions' related to the Pre 1975 Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme for those of our Membership joining the Civil Service in accordance with these Competitions.

Social Security Act 1973, Schedule 16, Section 63 (1) specifically states –

Requirements as to Preservation of Benefit under Occupational Pension Schemes, Part 1 Interpretation, Paragraph 3 (1) –

'Pensionable Service', in relation to a scheme and a member of it, means service in relevant employment which qualifies the member (on the assumption that it continues for the appropriate **period**) **for long service benefit under the scheme, including** service before the appointed day. i.e. April 6th 1975.

The appropriate period in Schedule 16 is given as 5 years and aged 26. Now reduced to 2 years.

Membership should take note.

Not a lot of Government Ministers and Members of Parliament know that, or the High Court and the Appeal Court, including Deputy Minister of State for Defence, the Government's Long Stop for the Minister of Defence, Mr Adam Ingram MP.! Perhaps he was busy developing his 'Taxi Service' at the time of the Parliamentary Debate on EDM 67 in the House of Commons on January 31st 2007. His Taxi Service is worth £175,000 according to the National News! He was busy telling Parliament that our Pensions were 'simply unaffordable!'

In November 2009 a request was made on our behalf by John Thurso MP to put our case before the Defence Select Committee. In February 2010 he was informed by the Chairman of the DSC that due to the imminent General Election there is now no time for a presentation! What a pity I'm not as pretty as Joanna 'Lovely'!

Members should also please note that the Royal British Legions – "The Nations Greatest Ever Salute" - does not apply to National Service Men or ex Regular Members of the Armed Forces who stood guard, and sometimes lost their lives from 1945-1975! It's just as though we never existed?

One particular question you will be interested to know was not addressed or answered by the MOD or the Cabinet Office is as below.

‘Could the Minister of Defence also state categorically who the other employees are, either Public or Private, besides ex members of the Armed Forces, whose Transitional and Transfer long service benefits were not taken into account when transferring from one Occupation Pension Scheme to another after 1975 as claimed by Mr K. Jones MP?’

The lack of response to this question above is of particular importance since in the past the MOD has claimed time and time again that the ex Regular Armed Forces Pre 1975 are not alone in this respect. I know from my own research this is a false pretence!

See also the other questions as set out in my letter to John Thurso MP dated 22nd January 2009 attached to this report and submitted to both the MOD and Cabinet Office.

Finally may we as a Committee thank our Membership for your continuing support. We are all working very hard on your behalf although the lack of information on the Web-site may well give the opposite impression. The overall problem is that we do not have a Publicity Officer locally, and even if we did, I would have to keep him/her informed anyway and there is only so much I can do in the time available.

Please note. This will be the last time the Minutes of the AGM will be sent to those Members not on the Internet, by Post. This is because most Libraries nowadays have access to the Internet and the time and cost to print and inform Members can no longer be justified.

We are here to stay, we are not going away, and intend to persist for as long as it takes!

David Robson
Secretary General