

# south east asian treaty organisation (seato)

december 2002 nurse update: 5

## Review of Veterans' Entitlements

The latest news is .....

As you know the Review Committee was granted an extension by Minister Vale for the delivery of their report to Government. Originally set for mid November, the time frame was extended to early December.

It now looks like the Report will not be finalised until just prior to Christmas and forwarded to the Minister sometime in January 2003. The release of the Report to the public is another story, but we are led to believe that the printing will not be completed until the end of January so it will be sometime after then at a minimum.

The delay is apparently due to the volume of material and breadth of the issues the Committee has had to consider. It is expected the Report will run into three volumes!



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year  
From the ANF Federal Office

## COMCARE NEWS

As a result of a recent decision, SEATO team members in receipt of incapacity payments under COMCARE can now seek an increase in their weekly compensation payments.

Greg Isolani, the solicitor acting on behalf of a number of SEATO nurses lodged an appeal against a determination by COMCARE concerning the method of calculation of a person's compensation rate. COMCARE has always based the rate payable on a Registered Nurse Level One, Year 8 rate regardless of the person's actual level of employment at the time of deployment to Vietnam.

As a result of his submissions, COMCARE has revoked their decision in relation to this particular case and increased the payments by \$312.00 per week.

The decision has created an opportunity for those SEATO members who are already receiving compensation payments, (or members considering making a claim), to seek a reconsideration of the calculation of normal weekly earnings. However an increase is not automatic. Consideration needs to be given to the position held prior to and at the time of deployment to Vietnam and, in some cases, the duties that have been undertaken up to the time of ceasing employment and having an entitlement to compensation payments. If you have any queries or would like further assistance contact Debbie Richards ANF Federal Office on 03 9639 5211 or Greg Isolani at KCI Lawyers on 03 9606 0777.

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Vale  
Margaret O'Connor

Died October 10, 2002, Aged 59

Margaret was an inaugural member of the CN-ASTV group. She was a member of a St Vincents Hospital (Melbourne) Team, serving as Long Xuyen, March-August 1966. For many years Margaret battled a rare respiratory disorder, which she believed was related to the spraying of agent orange. Her doctors did not support this theory, however current research in the USA is seeking to determine the relationship between the development of lung fibrosis and chemical exposures. More recently she was diagnosed with a brain tumour. In spite of her illness, Margaret remained an active member of the nursing profession. She served on the Council of the Royal College of Nursing, Australia and was a member of the Nurse Registration Board of Victoria for many years. She was also active in the pursuit of educational programmes in rural health for nurse practitioners. She will be greatly missed.