

Courage Under Fire

Dear

Today we want to update you on the progress since last writing about the courageous personal battle of **Bernard Gaynor**. [Good News Update 89 'In Defence of Religious Freedom'](#), dated 12 February 2014, explained his stand in regard to uniformed members of the Australian Defence Force marching in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. Thank you to the many who stood with him then, and now we ask you to continue to stand with him in some recent developments.

In April 2013, Major Bernard Gaynor had lodged a complaint with the Chief of Defence Force stating that *"uniformed participation in the Mardi Gras breached Defence orders forbidding uniformed involvement in any political activity and violated Defence policy on unacceptable behaviour."*

Last week, on Wednesday 9 July 2014, Paul Sheehan of the Sydney Morning Herald [reported](#), *"On June 30, the Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley, AC, DSC, on his last day in the job, wrote to Gaynor detailing why he was no longer fit to serve in the Army Reserve."* Sadly, on 10 July 2014, the **Australian Army terminated Major Bernard Gaynor's commission**.

In his original 26-page complaint, Major Gaynor, a distinguished Army Intelligence officer and father of six, documented how the 2013 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade:

- mocked and denigrated Christian beliefs;
- hatefully campaigned for homosexual 'marriage';
- ridiculed politicians opposed to homosexual 'marriage';
- allowed many instances of public nudity and sexually-explicit activity and
 - knowingly exposed spectating children to all of the above.



And so it was clearly shown that the Australian Defence Force support of the Mardi Gras violated its own policy. Defence members are not permitted to publicly take part in acts of sexual indecency or engage in political or religious harassment.

The initial response to Bernard Gaynor's

complaint seemed positive. On 16 April 2013, a Defence Quick Assessment Report conceded his core points saying, *"the ADF traditionally avoids overt support of specific political viewpoints. By allowing official participation in the 2013 Mardi Gras by uniformed personnel the ADF could be seen as now being comfortable in supporting politically polarising issues."*

But three months later General David Hurley, in August 2013, sent a Notice to Show Cause for Termination of Appointment giving Major Gaynor until midnight 5 February 2014 to respond.

It was soon after Major Gaynor made his final response that we asked you on 12 February 2014 to write an email to the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon David Johnston with copies to the Assistant Minister for Defence, the Hon Robert Stuart MP and our Prime Minister Tony Abbott. From different reports, we believe the Minister for Defence received many hundreds of emails in support of the courageous stand of Bernard Gaynor.

On 25 March 2014, the Ministerial and Information Management wrote a letter to Major Bernard Gaynor on behalf of Assistant Minister for Defence, the Hon Stuart Robert MP, stating that the *"Defence leadership decision to permit participation in the Sydney Mardi Gras was ... in recognition of the cultural significance of the event for ADF members identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex"* and that *"Defence is two years into a five-year cultural reform program."*

Much of this re-making of Defence is the legacy of the previous Labor Government who desired a new politically-correct 'progressive' military. But this letter seems to indicate that the Abbott Government is also supportive of Australian Defence Force involvement in the Mardi Gras.

In response to this unsettling letter, Bernard Gaynor took another courageous step. On 8 April 2014, in an Australian Army minute, Major Bernard Gaynor launched the [Defence Conservative Action Network](#) (DEFCAN). In doing so he asked that this new network receive the same support and recognition that has been given to the Defence Force Gay and Lesbian Information Service (DEGLIS) which was instrumental in the decision for Australian Defence Force personnel to participate in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Then to force the issue, Major Bernard Gaynor requested permission for uniformed participation at pro-life and pro-marriage events starting with the **March for Babies** which will be held in Melbourne on 11 October 2014.



With renewed optimism, Major Gaynor blogged on 24 June 2014 that Defence had removed all links from its website to the Defence Force Gay and Lesbian Information Service. Major Gaynor believed the reason why this happened was that Defence didn't want to put links to the DEFCAN website on their webpages. This small but significant victory raised hopes that Defence would eventually be forced to withdraw their support of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Personally, Bernard has shared with us that the final news of his decommissioning in many ways was not a surprise, but even so it has affected him deeply. He has written in his [blog](#), *"Please rest assured, I will continue to write and fight for family values and our Christian heritage. This is a personal defeat but the war goes on. And when we are*

in God's Army, victory is assured!"

As we consider the on-going courageous stand of Bernard Gaynor, let us find strength in the way the apostle Paul endured many hardships **"through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report, sorrowful yet always rejoicing, in truthful speech and in the power of God" (2 Corinthians 6:7-10).**

- Please pray the Australian Defence Force will support marriage and family and religious freedom in Australia by withdrawing its support of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.
- Please pray for strength for Bernard Gaynor and his family to recover from the shock of recent developments. You can send an email of encouragement to personal@bernardgaynor.com.au.
- Please write another email to the Minister of Defence, Senator the Hon David Johnston at senator.johnston@aph.gov.au with copies to the Assistant Minister for Defence Hon Robert Stuart MP at Stuart.Robert.MP@aph.gov.au and Prime Minister Tony Abbott through his [Contact Your PM website](#). Ask that the case be reconsidered and decision reversed.

Thank you!

Yours for standing together for faith, freedom and family,

David Rowsome and Warwick Marsh

PS: Please don't forget to write a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Recognition of Foreign Marriages Bill 2014. As stated in **Good News Update 102** submissions close 31 July 2014. This is a bill to legalise homosexual marriage by default and the issue is very much in the news. Read this [article](#) in SMH. This Bill puts adults' rights above children's rights. This is all about numbers so a single sentence detailing your opposition to the bill would be sufficient. See the [Saltshakers Campaign](#) for more ideas. Tell your friends to do the same.

Address your email to the Committee Secretary, Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 legcon.sen@aph.gov.au. Be sure to include your name and address.

www.canberradeclaration.org.au

Protecting Our Australian Values

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The Canberra Declaration is the work of many people and organisations. The administration of the initiative is being supported by the [Australian Christian Values Institute](#) and Australian Heart Ministries.

A big thank you to those who have already contributed! Every donation makes such a difference.

Your help would be greatly appreciated.
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