

MR. ELTON HUMPHREY.
C/- SENATE INQUIRY INTO INSTITUTIONAL CARE.
C/- PARLIAMENT HOUSE.
CANBERRA. A.C.T. 2600.

FROM: JOHN HEPTON.

I WAS BORN AT LAKE CARGELLICO ON THE 11TH MARCH 1941.

About 1943 the family [Dad, Mum, Mary, Jean and myself] went to live on a property called LENEVA just outside Hay. N.S.W. It was during this period our parents seperated and my youngest sister [Jean] and myself were taken to Sydney by our mother and placed in an orphanage-St. Josephs in Croydon.

Our father eventually traced us to Sydney and took us out of the orphanage and we went to live in Leeton N.S.W. I was placed in a foster home [Hetheringtons] and the girls were put into St. Mary's convent at Leeton.

Dad's sister, Dorothy Rawlings and her husband Charles came out from England and settled in Griffith. N.S.W. They had no children and I went to live with them until they moved back to England. About this time my father moved to live in Griffith.

THE SALVATION ARMY GILL MEMORIAL HOME FOR BOYS .GOULBURN.

My father then enrolled me in the Gill Memorial home for boys, a Salvation Army institution at Goulburn. N.S.W. I was about 7 years of age [1948]. I was to spend about 9 years at at Goulburn. By this time my sisters were in Salvation Army homes in Sydney. To the best of my knowledge one was at Arncliffe and one was at Croydon.

Most of the time the girls would go home to Griffith for the May, September and Christmas holidays. My father would only allow myself to go home for the January holidays. I would spend every Christmas at Goulburn. There were only about 6-8 there for Christmas, the balance [of 80 boys] had all gone on holidays. I can remember catching the train from Goulburn to Griffith [alone] a 12 hour journey with only 2 [two] jam sandwiches to eat on the trip. The officers never gave me any money to buy a drink, fruit or anything else. These people called themselves "CHRISTIANS".

There were 80 boys at the home. We were all there for different reasons. Some were orphans, some came from broken homes and some for other reasons. It seemed to be that once you entered through those big doors you were "open game" for the Salvation Army officers. The bashings, floggings and unbridled brutality inflicted on us had to be seen to be believed. We had no one to turn to. We were under their "CARE". No one believed us, not the teachers at school, not the police, no one. If you resisted you were flogged and bashed until you were subdued.

All the chores at the Gill were done by the boys, i.e: chopping and bringing in the firewood for the boiler, setting the breakfast tables, washing and wiping up, making sandwiches, mopping floors, polishing floors, scrubbing floors, hanging out the laundry etc. If the chores were not completed by breakfast time they had to be completed after breakfast before going to school. This was absolute child slave labour. No child was paid. The only "reward" you had to look forward to was if it wasn't done to the officers satisfaction [no matter how good] you got flogged.

Upstairs at the home the area was divided into two dormitories, high school and primary. After lights went out at night you would be quite often awakened by younger boys crying for their parents. If this wasn't sad enough, if the officer heard it, the doors would be flung open, the lights turned on and everyone had to stand at the end of their bed until the boy who had been crying was found. The officer then flogged the boy. When the officer had sated his thirst on this brutality we were allowed back to bed.

Only school books were allowed in the dormitories at night, any boy caught with comic books inside their books were dragged out of bed and belted with the hose.

on Wednesday evening we would have a religious service in the home chapel, on Sunday morning we would march to the Salvation Army citadel for a service, on Sunday afternoon there would be a service in the home chapel and on Sunday evening there would be another service in the home chapel. We had all this religion rammed down our throats by people who would call themselves "CHRISTIANS" and at the drop of a hat could turn into sadistic and brutal child beaters and child molesters. The amount of boys who suffered from child molestation will never be known.

THE BOYS AT THE GILL VERSION OF THE "ROAD TO GUNDAGAI."

There's a gaol on the hill
and they call it the Gill
along the road to Goulburn High.
you can hear the Sallies singing
and hear the stockwhip ringing
beneath the Goulburn sky.
When my mummy and daddy are thinking of me
I'm in the Sallies office copping six, four or three.
There's a gaol on the hill
and they call it the Gill
along the road to Goulburn high.

We used to sing this song on the way to school and after school, anywhere we could, just so long as the officers didn't hear it because we were well aware of the consequences.

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I can remember going down to the street after school for dental care and after treatment I would wait outside a bank door and try and catch Ralph Doughty's attention. [a former Gill boy.] He would come out and give me 2/- [two shillings] and I would go and buy some lollies. I would have to hide them so as the officers didn't find them. On one occasion they did find them and I received a hiding with the cane until I told the officer where I got the money. I told the officer I found the money on the footpath.

I have on video an interview with JOHN DALZIEL [Salvation Army] where he described the treatment we received as "TOUGH LOVE". How can "TOUGH LOVE" be:

1. Bashing and flogging 6/7/8 year old boys because they wet the bed.
2. I was punched in the face by an officer and had my nose broken because I had dropped and broken a plate while wiping up.
3. Locking up two boys [who were caught after running away] in a dark vault for a week. When we arrived home from school and on Saturday and Sunday the boys were brought out in front of us and given 6 "cuts" on either hand with a rubber hose, taken back to the vault and locked in with no beds, pillows or blankets. They were deprived of all washing and showering.
4. Having cold showers in winter and being wacked on the penis with a cane whenever the officer felt like it.
5. Having to try and sleep on your stomach during the night for fear of being sexually molested.
6. One day somebody had scribbled crayon all along a wall. The Major called us all together and said all sport and privileges would be banned unless someone owned up. I wanted to play football so I owned up. The Major gave me 12 "cuts" with the rubber hose and told me to go over and stand against the wall. After about 1/2 an hour he called out "come over here no. 3". [my number] and I know you didn't do it and gave me another 12 "cuts" for telling lies. The next day at school the teacher asked me "what is wrong with your hands, why can't you write?" I told him why. He took me to the headmaster and I explained to him. All the headmaster said was "GO BACK TO CLASS." Nothing was done. We were all alone. We had no one to turn to. All we could do was suffer and bare it.
7. Standing in line to drink 1/2 a pannikin [mug] of epsom salts every Saturday morning. If you drank the salts you were given 6d [6 pence] worth of boiled lollies. If you didn't drink the salts you got flogged about the body with the hose and didn't get any lollies. The pannikin was then filled to the top and the boy/s had to stand there until they drank the salts no matter how long it took. I used to see some poor boys stand there for hours because they couldn't drink it, some of the boys would end up wetting themselves because they were scared stiff and were not allowed to move and as a result of this they were given a belting. Some times the officers would tire of this and would pour the salts over the boys and then lash them for not drinking the salts.

8. My mother told me later on in life that she had written to me on numerous occasions and had sent gifts to me every year for my birthday and Christmas. I never ever received any of the mail or gifts. Why? Only the Salvation Army officers could answer that. Was this "TOUGH LOVE?"

9. I also have on video an interview [on S.B.S.] with Ralph Doughty and it brought back to me how cruel, brutal and sadistic some of the Salvation Army officers had been to us boys.

10. I could never eat turnip/swede and I cannot remember how many times I was flogged and had the food rammed into my mouth until I would vomit.

11. I can remember Lt. Cathcart provoking an older boy into a fight. Lt. Cathcart needled the boy by pushing him with his hands until the boy had taken enough and the boy punched Lt. Cathcart in the eye, closing it and blackening it. The boy was the "home captain." I think the boy was expelled from the home.

12. Some of the Salvation Army officers at the Gill Memorial Goulburn thrived on brutality. There was no rhyme or reason for some of the punishment handed out. Anyone who can flog and bash 6/7/8 boys should have been ashamed to call themselves "CHRISTIANS." The most violent of the officers in my time at the Gill was a Lt. Wilson. There was no boundry to his brutality and cruelty. He was just a vile and evil human being.

My marriage failed, I have no communication with three of my children, I live on my own and have become a real loner. I don't trust people and I don't let many people near me. I have a wall around myself. There are only two people I really trust, my oldest sister Mary and my youngest daughter Deslie. My treatment at the Gill Memorial Goulburn has been bottled up for over 50 years. The physical abuse, the emotional abuse and the sexual abuse. I feel reparation should be forthcoming from the Salvation Army and the Government. I never told my wife about Goulburn because I felt so humiliated and I felt it was better to hide it and try to forget about it. I had been abused for so long and I have no doubt it affected my role as a father, especially with our older three children. My wife and I separated and divorced when our youngest daughter was 9. My ex wife remarried not long after and our daughter went to live with her and her new husband. The relationship I have with our youngest could not be better compared to the relationship with the three older children. It had to be her upbringing in a different enviroment. I was never shown love and had never been given love as a child growing up and I feel I failed dismally as a father because of the treatment I received at the Gill Memorial.

Some officers I can recall, other than those already mentioned, were Lt. Riddel [Riddle], Majors Mckay [Mackay] and Nicholson. I have nothing but hate and contempt for these officers and any other officers who were commisioned at the Gill Goulburn. I think this treatment had to be condoned by the Salvation Army, how else can the Salvation Army explain that from Ralph Doughty 1941 to James Luthy [approx] 1963 to David Walshe [approx] 1970 that this brutality was allowed to be continued.

John Dalziel [Salvation Army] said in the interview when asked " how do you feel for these men and women who were abused." He replied: I FEEL THE SALVATION ARMY BETRAYED ITS TRUST. And later on in the interview he states: AND IN THESE CASES WE HAVE JUST BEEN TALKING OF TODAY THAT TRUST HAS BEEN BETRAYED INTO THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC NOW. I APOLIGISE. " NOW." "NOW?." John Dalziel, what about all of us boys over all the years who were in the Salvation Army "CARE". Did it have to take these men to come forward before the Salvation Army would admit this abuse and brutality ocured?.

In the chapel at the Gill Memorial Goulburn was a motto on the front of the speakers podium which read "QUIT YOU LIKE MEN BE STRONG". What did that mean? For whose benefit was it? Was it for us boys to "BE STRONG" under the continual brutal and sadistic treatment or was it for the officers to "BE STRONG" and to keep up their oppressive tactics?.

I never ever told my father about any of this brutality because of the FEAR factor. The fear of what he might say and the fear of what he might do. If I had revealed this treatment to my father and he challenged the officers over it, they would have denied it and I would have had to go through the next 12 months of pure hell. The officers normal behaviour was bad enough and they didn't need any encouragement to increase their brutality. Perhaps another reason I didn't tell my father was he had the utmost respect and admiration for the Salvation Army and he would have found it hard to grasp, and I wasn't prepared to find out his reaction.

My sister sent me a page from the Daily Telegraph [Feb.7.2004]. The headline read " OUR HOMES OF TORTURE." And guess what the top picture [photo] was of: THE SALVATION ARMY GILL MEMORIAL HOME FOR BOYS. GOULBURN.

After reading the part in the article about Ralph Doughty I thought it was time. Time to get the "monkey" off my back. I decided to go and see the local Salvation Army officer. I took the article out of the paper with me. I asked the lady officer did she know anything about the article. She told me she knew a little bit. We spoke for a while and I said to her my interest was I had spent about 9 years in the home in the photo, and could she put me in touch with someone who I could discuss this matter with. She rang Major Margaret Sanz. [Secretary, Moral and Social Issues Council]. After some discussion the audio was fading on the mobile phone and I told the Major I would ring her from home and hung up.

I didn't know the officers name and she didn't offer it. So I asked her " what is your name?" She told me Lyn [Lynne] Cathcart. The name straight away rang a "bell". I asked her were her parents Salvos?. She said yes. I asked her was her father Pat Cathcart?. She said no, her mother is Pat Cathcart and her father is Noel[?] Cathcart. She wet and got a photo album and showed me a photo taken of her father a long time ago. I can't describe the feeling that

came over me seeing a photo of this man, the memories all came rushing back to me and I felt quite ill. I said to her "THAT" is the Lt. Cathcart who was at the Gill. She said she knew and that her father was only there for 12 months. She asked me was he good or bad. I replied he was a SALVO.

Here I was sitting in the lounge room of the daughter of Lt. Cathcart, a man who didn't have any trouble with brutality at the Gill while I was there. I left the officers house and felt that she had not been completely honest with me and after all these years in 2004 not much had changed. I went home and wept. I was reliving all this nightmare which I had tried to forget for about 50 years. There is no doubt I have been emotionally scarred.

I also have no doubt that the enviroment and the treatment I received at the Gill retarded me from reaching my full potential in life. All I wanted to do was to get out of there. The continual fear of having to leave school and going back to the Gill every day and fearing what were they going to do to me today.

While I was talking to Major Sanz I asked her would I be able to get a copy of my admission and departure from the Gill. She told me yes, and she would forward it to me as soon as she received it. I received the paperwork from Major Sanz and to my absolute disgust and dismay I was told " we have not found a record of you being at Goulburn Boys Home". Instead I received a copy from Bexley Boys Home stating that I had been there for about 6 1/2 years, my birthdate 11.2.41, being sent to my mother, and my mother being my future guardian. None of this is correct, I spent about 9 years at Goulburn Boys Home, [I was never ever at Bexley] my birthdate is 11.3.41, and I was sent to my FATHER, and my FATHER was my future guardian. It also states on the form, reason for admission: " CARE AND TRAINING". How could they get it all so wrong?. If they couldn't get the paperwork right is there any wonder they couldn't the " care and training" right.

GET

I watched the morning T.V. programme "Sunrise" [25.03.04] and on the programme talking about the refugee problem was Senator Vanstone and John Dalziel. [Salvation Army.] Part of what John Dalziel had to say was the Salvation Army had helped refugees who had left behind often a life of "torture and dreadful circumstances." And the Salvation Army had helped more than ten thousand [10.000] refugees throughout the country in the last "12 MONTHS". He went on to say in Victoria we made sure the people in that vital first month have furniture, vital electrical goods, food and clothing, and then "after that" they often are needing some kind of "support".

I would like to ask John Dalziel didn't a lot of people who went through Salvation Army homes and institutions have a life of "torture and dreadful circumstances?". And wouldn't these same people "after that" be needing some kind of "support?".

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There are three things I would like to put to the Senate Inquiry:

1. What can the Salvation Army and the Government do to assist me now and in the future?
2. Why is it that Governments keep paying past providers of homes e.g. The Salvation Army, funding when they haven't been made accountable for the PAST brutality, injustices and suffering incurred on defenceless children?
3. If the Government can hold a Royal Commission into the Building Industry, why can't the Government hold a Royal Commission into the treatment of children in orphanages and childrens homes?.

JOHN HEPTON.




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