



Speech by

JOHN ENGLISH

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Hansard 11 December 2001

MAJOR GENERAL J. PEARN

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (9.48 p.m.): On Saturday, 24 November I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a plaque acknowledging the work on Coochiemudlo Island by the 42nd Landing Craft Company. On that day I had the privilege of meeting one of God's true gentlemen. Of course, I speak of Major General John Pearn. Major General Pearn was the presiding officer on the day of the unveiling of this plaque and spoke eloquently of the contribution of the 42nd Landing Craft Company to the Australian war effort during World War II.

It is important to note Major General Pearn's commitment to improving Australian society. Professor John Pearn is a professor of paediatrics and child health and a senior consultant paediatrician based at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane.

Mrs Sheldon: A wonderful man.

Mr ENGLISH: Professor Pearn is also the deputy head of the School of Medicine at the University of Queensland, which is Australia's largest medical school. As I said, Professor Pearn is a major general in the reserves section of the Australian Defence Forces. Major General Pearn is a former surgeon general of the Australian Defence Forces and has seen operational service as a regimental surgeon in Papua New Guinea and later as a physician to the Australian and New Zealand forces in the Vietnam campaign. He served as a resuscitator, intensivist and senior physician as a member of the forward surgical team within the Australian contingent as part of the United Nations deployment to Rwanda following the genocidal events in central Africa in 1994 and 1995.

Major General Pearn is an enthusiastic toxicologist and botanist. He was awarded his higher doctorate of medicine for his work in experimental pathology on the effects of the toxins from the wild indigo plant. He has published more than 100 papers on plant and animal toxicology in the international medical literature. He is an enthusiastic historian. He was founder and later president of the Australian Society of the History of Medicine. He is a member of the world executive of the International Society of the History of Medicine.

As I said, Professor Pearn is one of God's great men. Following my collapse on that day from a bout of heat stroke and viral illness, Professor Pearn treated me on Coochiemudlo Island. He had a very pleasant bedside manner and a very self-deprecating manner. Following my collapse, I saw my uncle, Dr Brian Donohue, to get myself checked out. I spoke to my uncle about Professor John Pearn. My uncle knew him very well and could not speak highly enough of him as a doctor, a physician and, more importantly, as a person. Professor Pearn has a residence on Coochiemudlo Island, and all the residents on the island hold him in the highest esteem.
