

APPVA Commemorates International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers – 29th May 2009

The message today from the Minister is a thoughtful gesture in relation to recognizing the 61st Anniversary of The International Day of UN Peacekeepers. This commemoration is a result of the UN General Assembly Resolution 57/129 that particularly recognises the courage, sacrifice and service of over 1,000,000 UN Troops and Police who have worn the “Blue Beret”. More than 2,400 UN Peacekeepers have been killed on UN Operations since 29th of May 1948.

Although Australia commemorates the 14th September 1947, as Australian Peacekeeper’s Day, which is a result of the UN Good Offices Commission (UNGOC) of which four Australian Defence Force Officers first deployed into the field in Batavia, then the Dutch East Indies; the UN Organisation recognises the 29th of May 1948, as the first Peacekeeping Operation with the establishment of the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in the Middle East.

Australian Defence Force and Police have served side-by-side with many of these UN Peacekeepers from around the world with the primary aim of world peace and security, so those who are in need are able to determine their own future in a free and democratic society.

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted its landmark Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. For the first time in an omnibus resolution, the Council recognized that women bear the brunt of armed conflicts, and should have a commensurate role in their prevention and resolution.

The resolution stressed the importance of women’s equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Among its many recommendations, the resolution called for an expansion of the role and contribution of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations, including in military, police, and civilian roles, as well as in positions of leadership.

As of April 2009, The UN Organisation (Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had: 10,298 Police; 79,900 Troops; 2,457 UN Military Observers; Total current Contribution of 92,655, UN Military & Police deployed on 16 Current UN PKO. 120 Countries have committed troops and police to these operations, which is now an all time high. 132 Peacekeepers lost their lives on PKO in 2008.

Adding to the value of this contribution, female peacekeepers act as role models in the local environment, inspiring, by their very example, women and girls in the often male-dominated societies where they serve. Demonstrating to these women and girls that they can do anything – in the realm of politics, security, law and order, medicine, journalism and beyond – the female blue helmets truly embody the concept, “Power to Empower.”

The APPVA welcomes the Government's recognition to this significant date and the ongoing fund-raising for the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial. Further details of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial are at the website:
<http://www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au/>

Donations and membership are more than welcome to assist the Project Committee to raise funds and realize our dream of an appropriate memorial in remembrance of Australian Peacekeepers in our Nation's Capital – Canberra.

On behalf of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacekeeper Veterans' Association (APPVA) National Committee of Management and our members, I thank The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon Alan Griffin, MP, for publicly recognizing the importance of International UN Peacekeeper Day. (Please Read attached below).

LEST WE FORGET THE FALLEN.

Kind Regards,

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