



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**

**PROOF**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Anglesea Barracks Peacekeeping  
Memorial, Australian Peacekeeper  
and Peacemaker Veterans Association**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 18 August 2011**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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## SPEECH

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Senator BILYK (Tasmania) (18:10): Tonight I wish to start by acknowledging that today, 18 August, is Vietnam Veterans Day. This day pays tribute to all servicemen who fought and fell in the Vietnam War, and I call upon all here to remember them.

Recently I had the honour of attending the unveiling of the Anglesea Barracks peacekeeping memorial in Hobart, Tasmania. This much deserved memorial was unveiled on 29 May, International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and the 63rd anniversary of the first peacekeeping operation authorised by the United Nations Security Council: the supervision of the truce after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Since 1947, the brave personnel of the Australian Defence Force have been involved in around 50 peacekeeping operations, serving with distinction and honour. They have fought to build a better world for millions of men, women and children that have suffered oppression and vilification, violence and injustice. Most of these peacekeeping operations were conducted under the United Nations banner, while others still were under the British Commonwealth banner and others under regional bodies. Indeed, Australia's first peacekeeping operation, in Yogyakarta in Indonesia in September 1947, predated the first United Nations peacekeeping operation.

Australia's peacekeeping missions have been to such nations and regions as Indonesia, Cyprus, Iran, Afghanistan, Western Sahara, Kuwait, Iraq, Cambodia, former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and Zimbabwe, then named Rhodesia. At least 30,000 Australians have taken part in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. These have included overseas emergency relief operations to Papua New Guinea, Sumatra, Pakistan, Iran and various Pacific nations.

In addition to peacekeeping operations, Australians have also served in numerous warlike operations. The Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans Association describes these as 'peacemaking' operations. When both peacekeeping and peacemaking operations are taken into account, the number of ADF personnel who have served in the post-Vietnam era rises to almost 90,000. All of them selflessly risked

their lives to help others and, tragically, some made the ultimate sacrifice.

Located in the grounds of Anglesea Barracks, the oldest Australian barracks still in use, the memorial is surrounded by other memorials to Tasmania's involvement in past conflicts: the sandstone monument to the 99th Regiment that left Tasmania to fight in the Maori wars, a pine tree planted by the last ANZAC, Alec Campbell, and the Korean war memorial, constructed from rocks transported back from Korea. While titled the 'Anglesea Barracks peacekeeping memorial', this memorial not only honours those that have served in peacekeeping operations but also recognises those that have served in peacemaking operations: the first Gulf War, Namibia, Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq.

This memorial seeks to link all veterans of peacekeeping and peacemaking operations since 1975, whether they be defence, police, UN personnel or civilians who have served on defence operations. In this place, with these surroundings, it also links them to those that have served before them. It is a memorial in loose terms, in that while it commemorates those who have given their lives on UN or post-Vietnam operations it also serves to recognise the contributions and commitment of those serving on current and future operations. Tasmanians have a proud tradition of serving their nation through their involvement in the defence forces. Despite the small population base and the lower numbers of defence units, Tasmania still provides more recruits to the ADF per head of population than any other state. Mr President, I ask you to remember those, including Tasmanians Corporal Richard Atkinson, who was killed in Afghanistan earlier this year, and Captain Mark Bingley, who died in the Black Hawk crash off Fiji in 2006, who have given their lives in service of this country. Recently 16 Tasmanian reservists from three units returned from peacekeeping operations in the Solomon Islands. Other Tasmanian based members are currently deployed to Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste and England.

The memorial itself was expertly designed and crafted by Geeveston sculptor Mr Bernie Tarr. He is a gifted Tasmanian artist, and Vietnam veteran, whose work utilises the beautiful timbers of Tasmania. Bernie's sculptures are now featuring in towns across Tasmania,

but in particular in his home town, Geeveston, where they line Main Road. The memorial depicts a fearless Australian soldier rescuing a small child. While the soldier is armed, with a rifle slung over one shoulder, his arms enwrap the child, shielding it from harm. The statue was modelled on a 6th Battalion soldier on leave in Tasmania on compassionate grounds, following the loss of two of his counterparts in Afghanistan. Painstakingly chiselled from a slab of King Billy Pine by Bernie over a number of years, it reminds us of Australia's obligations to protect the vulnerable. It embodies Australians' sense of fairness and justice, of our natural tendency to defend the weak from injustice and oppression. The design was chosen by a committee which was headed by Major Tony Richings. This committee included representatives from the Returned and Services League, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Defence and the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association, who looked over three submissions before choosing the design that is now in place. The Department of Defence provided outstanding assistance for this project.

The memorial unveiling was attended by the Governor of Tasmania, and my parliamentary colleagues Julie Collins MP, member for Franklin and Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services, and Andrew Wilkie MP, member for Denison, as well as the Tasmanian Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Scott Bacon MP. Perhaps more importantly, though, the memorial unveiling was attended by members of the 12th/40th Battalion, the Royal Tasmania Regiment, including its commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Colin Riley, members of the Second Force Support Battalion, represented by Lieutenant Colonel Paul Grey, and members of the No. 29 Squadron, Navy Headquarters Tasmania, represented by Commander Steve Bliss.

A number of organisations, departments and companies generously contributed, in various ways, to the construction of this memorial, and their generous contributions should be acknowledged. These include: the Naval Military and Air Force Club; Defence Health; Department of Defence; Returned and Services League Hobart sub-branch; Blackmore's Australia; Foxhole Medals; Anglesea Barracks Sergeants Mess; Anglesea Barracks Officers Mess; 12th/40th Battalion Regimental Trust Fund; Returned and Services League state branch; the Tasmanian state government; Delta FM; and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Tonight I would also like to recognise the work of the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans Association. The APPVA is a non-profit veterans organisation that encompasses all peacekeeper and peacemaker operations that have involved Australian and New Zealand defence forces service men and women, federal and state police, philanthropic

organisations such as Everyman's Welfare Service, Red Cross and the Salvation Army, and Defence civilians. It represents its members' interests, provides advice, promotes fellowship and raises the profile of its members' contribution to world peace and security. Its Tasmanian president, Lieutenant Colonel Phil Pyke; Tasmanian vice-president, Major Tony Richings; his wife, Sandy; and Colonel Mike Romalis need to be congratulated for the drive and dedication they showed over many years to get this memorial constructed. Thanks to their hard work and dedication, there is now a place for the younger veterans to commemorate International Peacekeepers Day and the Australian Peacekeepers Day, held in September. It is a place for us all to remember those Australians who have served, and are serving, with defence, police and the United Nations on peacekeeping and peacemaking operations around the world. It is also a place for us to give thanks for all that we owe them.