



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPERS TO BE HONOURED

The important contribution of Australian peacekeepers in maintaining the peace and stability of countries in need will be honoured tomorrow on Australian Peacekeepers' Day, Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Mr Ian Campbell said.

Mr Campbell said 14 September marks the 63rd anniversary of Australia's contribution to the first UN peacekeeping mission to the Netherlands East Indies, now Indonesia, in 1947.

"Tomorrow is an opportunity for Australians to reflect on the vital role of peacekeepers and peacemakers in assisting the victims of conflict in often dangerous and unstable locations around the world," Mr Campbell said.

There are currently some 400 Australian peacekeepers deployed to East Timor and the Solomon Islands where they are working with the local governments to uphold law and order.

Australia's peacekeeping roles have included military observation, logistics support, ceasefire monitoring, landmine clearing, supporting democratic elections, humanitarian aid and repatriation of refugees.

"Australian peacekeepers have a proud record of service participating in more than 50 United Nations and multinational peace operations across the globe since 1947," Mr Campbell said.

Australia has contributed to peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia, Rwanda, Bougainville, East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Iraq and Afghanistan among other places.

Work is continuing on a study into the long-term effects on mental health and the quality of life of ex-serving Defence Force peacekeepers deployed through the 1990s to 2002. Funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and administered by the University of Melbourne, the study is investigating Australia's involvement in places such as Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, Namibia, Western Sahara and East Timor. The study is expected to be completed by the end of 2012.

A service will be held to commemorate the 63rd anniversary of Australia's involvement in peacekeeping, at the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial site on Anzac Parade, Canberra, at 11:00 am.

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