



AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION

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The Australian Veteran & Defence
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The Kindred Organisations & Unit
Associations Committee (KO&UAC)
The Victorian Younger Veterans
Coordinating Committee (VYVCC)

Registered Ex-Service Organisation with the Department of Veterans' Affairs
Registered Ex-Service Organisation with the Returned & Services League – Victorian
Branch

Sunday, 25 October 2009

Mr Steve Gower,
The Director,
The Australian War Memorial
G.P.O Box 345,
CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

Our Reference: APPAVIC061/01

**Subject: REQUEST FOR RATIFICATION OF PEACEKEEPER & PEACEMAKER
ISSUES – AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL**

Dear Mr Gower:

The Australian Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association (APPA) is an association that represents and focuses on a younger veteran community of up to 43,500 current and ex-serving personnel. Of that number, we have served in 48 Countries around the world on 41 Missions, since 1947. Of the Peacekeeping & Peacemaking (PK/PM) missions, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) tempo in operations increased significantly from 1989 to the present. Of note is that the 1990s saw a dramatic increase in ADF deployments and personnel serving these deployments since World War II (INTERFET – 9000 ADF personnel). These figures do not include the Korean War and the current deployment of ADF assets to South West Asia.

To highlight our case, APPA members over the last three years, have observed how PK/PM are represented in the AWM. Unfortunately, there are many members who have looked at the Peacekeeping Display in the AWM and believe it falls far short of an appropriate representation to the missions in a military historical environment.

The APPA wishes to have a number of anomalies ratified with a consultative working relationship environment of APPA members and AWM staff.

The following anomalies and recommendations are made:

1. **Australian War Memorial Peacekeeping Display.**

From what many PK/PM veterans have observed in visits to the AWM THIS YEAR (2001), there is a poor representation of Peacekeeping, in which individual missions need to have its own separate representation, medals, honours, mission statement, maps, and display. Each mission is unique with varying hazards. The current Peacekeeping Display basically places all missions since 1947 into a corner without much detail, leaving the veterans of other missions disappointed as their service has not been appropriately recognised or explained in detail for the education of all who visit the AWM. This may be overcome by dialogue with the APPA, who have a vast array of veterans that have served in many missions.

2. **AWM listing of Peacekeeper & Peacemaker deaths.**

To date, there have been 10 Peacekeepers/Peacemakers who have died whilst on PK/PM missions in all parts of the world, since 1965. One of our members was advised by an AWM Customer Service Officer in September 2001, that the reason the deceased were not on the honour roll (alongside the Pool of Reflection), is that the missions were not under Australian Command. If this is AWM Policy, then questions are raised of the command status of the many of Australia's involvements since we first went to War. The Boer War (British Command), WWI (Gallipoli - British Command (along with Indian and British Troops on all points of the Peninsula, The Western Front - British Command), the Pacific Campaign in WWII, as it was commanded by McArthur (US), The European Campaign (Commanded by UK, with the USA), Korea (Commanded by the UN), Borneo/Malaya (By the UK (British Commonwealth)), Vietnam (Overall commanded by the US) etc.

This is clearly an insult to those service personnel who have died **In the Service of Peace** and their families. Of the 10 deaths, only 9 of these names are listed within the "Australians and Peacekeeping" web pages, however one name is missing. That is of a Royal Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineer Corps (RAEME) Soldier of 145 Signal Squadron that drowned, whilst on service in Bougainville (OPERATION BEL-ISI) in early 2001.

3. **AWM Veteran and Mission computerised listing of all Peacekeeping and Peacemaking Missions.**

The East Timor Campaign has been listed and continues to be updated each 6 month rotation (1200 names biannually), however apparently all the other missions since 1947 have been "Classified"¹. We see this as an administrative obstacle that should be ratified with the support of the AWM. It clearly insults our intelligence, in that it does not support the Younger Veterans' deeds in the Service of International Peace and Security, whilst risking their lives. There appears to be an unnecessary placing of bureaucracy as the reason for not acknowledging PK/PM.

Service records are not held by the AWM and, under the Archives Act, access is generally unavailable to official records fewer than thirty years old. No official records are as yet held by the AWM. The private records collection for the Gulf War is small, encompassing the RAN contribution to United Nations forces and service of Australians with Allied forces. Most photographs of the Gulf War are donations by members of the RAN. Documents of Australian experiences in the Sinai, Somalia and Afghanistan include letters to and from family members². This falls short of any comprehensive and educational history to the Australian public of the deeds and service of Australian PK/PM, particularly when reliance of an enhanced display is placed on ex-serving members of the various contingents to provide their memorabilia.

A conciliatory commencement of record obtainment from 1947 to 1971 would be appreciated, which should fall within the 30 year Rule. We are also curious, that under the Archives Act, how the Vietnam War has been able to be openly displayed within the AWM for a great number of years? The Vietnam War ended for Australia in mid 1973. The 30-year rule in this case is at odds with Peacekeeping missions from 1947 to 1971, and shows inflexibility to proudly display Australian Military accomplishments from 1989 – 1997.

4. In conclusion, we are respectfully requesting assistance from the AWM to promote the accomplishments of Australian PK/PMs since 1947 to the present. Only interactive consultation will provide a realistic historical account of Australians serving their country in War Zones, in the service of world peace.

Respectfully,

W. Lyons
National President

¹ Discussions between APPA member Mr Deema Johnston & various AWM Customer Service Officers, 5 September 2001.

² Beaumont, J. 2001, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence Vol 6, Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, p. 592.