

Australian Peacekeeper

SUMMER 2016

MAGAZINE

**HMAS Darwin
Concludes
Assistance in
Kaikoura**

**APPVA Successfully
Lobbies for a Senate
Inquiry into
DVA & Young Veteran
Suicides**

**UN Bolsters in South Sudan | APPVA National Conference in Townsville
DART-A Delivers Cyberspace Security**

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Australian Peacekeeper

MAGAZINE

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Australian Peacekeepers Magazine attempts to provide insight into the experiences of peacekeepers, Defence members and war veterans and the issues that confront them together with encouraging informed debate regarding issues dealing with but not limited to Commonwealth compensation, pensions, superannuation and occupational health and safety that affect peacekeepers and their families. We welcome input from members and would love to feature personal experiences in each issue. Please email the editor with any stories you would like to see printed. The views expressed in the articles are those of the particular author and not those of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA). The APPVA will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in the articles in this publication.

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HMAS Darwin's embarked S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopter prepares to drop emergency supplies from HMNZS Canterbury to a sports field in Kaikoura township.

Darwin evacuated civilians by sea boat and delivered food, water and emergency supplies using her embarked S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopter.

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Thank you Eyres.

We are unable to provide Gregs full name due to his classified contract.

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From the President's Desk

The APPVA held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Annual Conference at the Thuringowa RSL Sub Branch in Townsville over three days, 13-15 October 2016. The activities commenced on the 13 October 2016 with a one day Advocacy meeting which was well accepted by all advocates (welfare and compensation) in attendance. The day was highlighted by discussions about the new training platform the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) followed by welfare and compensation topics.

Day two was the APPVA Conference where invitees from various departmental groups and government where welcomed as guest speakers, it was good to see the Minister of Veterans' Affairs turn up and address the members of the APPVA, there was some robust topics from members of the APPVA and other associations on the day, the opening address was given by the Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP who talked about suicide among the Veteran Community and what can be done to address the problem.

The other guest speakers on the day where Mr David Morton, representing AVM Tracy Smart, Commander General Health who discussed "current handling of psychological conditions within the ADF. The association also invited Mr Jim Wain who addressed the association about the VVFA direction into the future and the model litigant rules.

Mr Peter Hindle the Qld VVAA President was in attendance who discussed current activities between APPVA and VVAA Townsville area and the need to further develop a good working relationship with other ESOs.

The outcome of this year's APPVA conference developed robust discussions concerning veteran's mental health and some issues surrounding model litigant rules that the DVA are utilising when dealing with veteran's claims. A special thank you to Kevin Ryan, our National Secretary and Rhonda Copeland, our National Treasurer for organising the movement and accommodation of the APPVA executives as well as our visiting dignitaries over the days leading up to our AGM.

I would like to now update you with some summary points from our most recent Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) in Canberra on 10 August 2016. The Chair welcomed Mr Rod White AM RFD to the ESORT as the newly-elected National President of the Returned and Services League of Australia.

The Chair also acknowledged Rear Admiral Brett Wolski AM RAN who attended his first ESORT as a member of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. The ESORT congratulated Ms. Narelle Bromhead on her Queen's Birthday Honour.

Minister's Address

The Chair welcomed the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, to the morning session of the ESORT. The Minister outlined the Coalition Government's election commitment to veterans, particularly in regards to \$6 million

towards veterans' mental health and \$1 million for ESOs to be provided with training around suicide. The Minister also expressed a commitment to further work around transition, especially in relation to the complex points in the process.

Chief of the Defence Force's Address

The Chair welcomed the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC, to the morning session. The CDF outlined several key focus areas in his role, such as the health and wellbeing of ADF members and their families. Integral to that focus is the ADF's mental health strategy, the Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme, annual mental health checks for serving members and working with DVA on suicide data matching.

Following the CDF's address, both the Minister and CDF held a round table discussion with members.

Transformation

Members were updated on the Department's Transformation initiatives and given a tour of the Veteran Centric Reform Lighthouse Project.

Evaluation of Alternate Dispute Resolution Trial

The ESORT was updated on the evaluation of the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Trial for Veterans' Review Board (VRB) hearings. The trial was evaluated by Mr Stephen Skehill. Members declared the trial a resounding success and supported the full implementation. The ADR will now be rolled out in a staged manner starting in 2016-17.

Advocacy Training and Development Program

An update was provided on the progress of the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP). As of 1 July 2016, the ATDP commenced managing advocacy training previously provided by the Training and Information Program (TIP). TIP courses will continue to operate while they are progressively replaced with the ATDP courses over the next six to 12 months. The ESORT was advised both TIP and ATDP are covered by insurance while the transition to ATDP occurs.

BEST Funding Formula

The ESORT discussed the BEST Funding Formula, particularly in regards to a number of environmental factors where changing the BEST grant calculation formula would be advantageous, namely:

- Introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Case Conferencing;
- Increasing aged care demands on Ex-service Organisations (ESOs); and
- Introduction of the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP).

There were several recommendations for changes to the BEST funding formula for Round 19 (2017-18), and for this funding round members supported:

1. an ADR workload rating of 15 points be applied and be subject to a review in 12 months following the national rollout of the ADR;

2. in principle, that the BEST formula provide a higher points rating for ATDP advocates and a lower points rating for TIP advocates from BEST Round 19 (2017-18) to encourage ESOs to move their advocates across to the new program; and

3. the revised opening dates proposed for applications under BEST Round 19 (2017-18 FY) and that late applications will no longer be accepted.

Private Hospital Procurement

The ESORT was further updated on the Department's private hospital procurement process.

86 of 87 private hospital providers have now agreed to the Department's revised terms and conditions.

Guest Presentations

The ESORT heard three guest presentations, two of which were continuations from the April ESORT meeting. Mr Bill

O'Chee from RSL Queensland returned to the ESORT to give a further update on veteran homelessness, while the Aspen Foundation's Mr Bruce Armstrong and Mr Andrew Condon CSC also returned to discuss their organisation's Ex-Service Organisation Mapping Project. Ms. Margot Kropinski-Myers from the Department of Defence delivered a presentation on Defence Honours and Awards, informing the ESORT of the Australian Defence Medal.

Member Submissions

The ESORT heard two member submissions from the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia, relating to inconsistencies in the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) and Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP), and Service Pension, Gold Card and SRDP Temporarily Totally Incapacitated Pension.

I look forward to updating you on current veterans' issues in my next Peacekeepers Magazine report.

Allan Thomas

National President



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From the Editor's Desk

Hello Readers,

2016 has seen a tumultuous year in lobbying by the APPVA and the Veteran Working Group into a Royal Commission into DVA. You may recall that on 1 March 2016, a Rally was conducted on the front lawns of the Australian Parliament House (APH). The effort placed into such lobbying by both groups has resulted in the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (FADT) Senate Inquiry into DVA and Veteran Suicides. This is a significant and positive step forward to discover what is happening to our veterans, the arduous life-styles they lead whilst awaiting Veteran Entitlements to be decided and what is causing our Younger Veteran Population to commit suicide?

The Minister does not want to engage widely with the ESO Community. It is highly unfortunate that the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Dan Tehan only wants to engage with one person representing the entire Veteran Community. Our group of veterans have special needs, have differing demographics to that of older veterans and it appears that our veterans are being targeted by the Department of Finance to significantly cut costs. We say to the Minister, that if he were the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, would he only consult with one ethnic group? This would be seen as favouritism to a particular group and the other ethnic groups would not have an active working relationship with the Minister. The same principle applies to Veterans' Affairs. In fact the other ethnic groups in this hypothetical would be potentially outraged and take the matter in the streets and the Media.

It is quite disappointing that the Minister does not want to spend time with a leading Subject Matter Expert ESO that specialises in Younger Veteran issues and advocacy. We have a lot to offer, however we are not being consulted. This approach only adds fuel to a burning fire on Social Media and the distrust continues within our younger veteran population with a number of ESO and the Minister. We are hoping that the Minister will change his approach and have an "open door policy", one that this Association has enjoyed with many of Mr Tehan's predecessors and even with the previous Repatriation Commissioners.

We enjoy such open doors with a large range of politicians and Senators, including LNP and ALP Backbenchers. The Independents such as Andrew Wilkie, Senator Jackie Lambie, Senator Nick Xenophon, Senator Whish-Wilson and many others continue to consult with us. The ALP Shadow Spokesperson on Veterans' Affairs Amanda Rishworth, MP, has shown great interest in the APPVA and the issues that we wish to consult. Arrogance will only result in lost votes and with an Election as close as it was in early August this year, the LNP cannot afford to demonstrate such arrogance in Government. It is quite possible that they lost the long held seat of Herbert, in the Garrison town of Townsville, as a result of a Veteran Rally in that Electorate, that lost the seat to the ALP by the slimmest of margins. Younger Veterans and Ex-ADF members, including Police Peacekeepers, will not tolerate such arrogance toward their ever diminishing entitlements.

The FADT Senate Inquiry into DVA and Veteran Suicides. We note with disappointment from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, in particular the Secretary, Mr Simon Lewis sent an email to all Staff indicating that DVA will be placing a "Strong" Submission into the Senate Inquiry. The word "Strong" was mentioned several times within the Submission, which was to be crafted together by former Major General Elizabeth Cosson AM CSC (Retired). The DVA Submission is available online as Submission number 156, link: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/VeteranSuicide/Submissions

There are approximately 500 submissions that have been received by the Secretariat of the Inquiry into DVA and Veteran Suicides. The majority have declined to release their story online and are under Parliamentary Privilege to not have their identity divulged. The several hundred submissions on line, also indicate that veterans are too intimidated by the Department to place their name to their submission, fearing retribution. Unfortunately, the wider Younger Veteran Community do not trust DVA. It is estimated that a couple of hundred submissions have not been published online. This is a telling factor of such distrust by veterans and also that their matters are highly confidential.

This is an area that DVA must turn around and be trusted, fair and applying very simple Proofs, of which the Briginshaw (1929) principle of evidence is simply someone attesting or signing a document that they are claiming their wounds, injuries or illness as a result of their Peacetime Service. Mr Bayles was reminded by the Chair of the Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse of Children within Institutions that this simple proof should satisfy any "corroborative" evidence that DVA has been using for many decades against the word of the primary level claimant.

Our veterans should not have to be told that they could not have PTSD as a result of combat duties, because they were an Improvised Explosives Device (IED) Dog Handler, who served in one of the most dangerous countries in the world. The Reasonable Hypothesis is the beneficial Proof for the veteran, whether they served on warlike service or non-warlike service. Peacekeepers have also been treated with similar approaches by the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (MRCC) Delegates and/or the Repatriation Commission (RC) under the Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) and the Veteran Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA), respectively.

Quite simply, a Public Servant claiming for an injury in the workplace, who claims under COMCARE (The Safety Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 1988) aka SRCA; has a 30 day turn-around time for acceptance or rejection of Commonwealth Liability. In contrast our veterans are waiting between 4-15 months to have their claims decided. This is where we are noticing veterans and their families being placed into financial hardship and they are in economic free-fall, until their entitlements have been completed. Many have waited over 2 years. The stress

placed on the veteran and his/her family is absolutely soul-destroying, while a Delegate “investigates” the claim. This is simply unsatisfactory.

The FADT Secretariat of the Senate Inquiry into DVA and Veteran Suicides has left the closing date open, as a result of the large number of submissions received. We strongly encourage you to lodge a submission, particularly if you have not been treated fairly by the Department, and/or know of the circumstances of a fellow veteran’s suicide. The more submissions, the stronger our case is for a Royal Commission and the overwhelming need to fix the problems that are affecting our veterans. Visit the Senate Inquiry into DVA and Veteran Suicides on this link: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/VeteranSuicide You may wish to upload a voice or video of your submission, rather than writing it.

The APPVA will be placing a submission under Parliamentary Privilege and will detail a number of areas that have not been actioned, nor considered by the Department for 10-15 years.

The Project Lighthouse has been welcomed by the APPVA, in order to streamline a number of conditions, which in turn will reduce the Time Taken To Process (TTTP). However, they are not necessarily conditions that would cause mental anguish for a veteran. There needs to be more work in order to streamline muscular-skeletal and mental health conditions. We are disappointed that VEA is not being placed into the same advantageous light as MRCA Clients under the Streamlining. Out of 13 conditions, VEA Clients have to prove the conditions were as a result of their service in 5 conditions. The total number of 13 conditions for MRCA Clients are streamlined and are deemed to be service caused. There needs to be a fair balance given to all veterans under both Acts. (Table provided).

DIAGNOSED MEDICAL CONDITION	STREAMLINED LIABILITY FOR CLAIMS UNDER VEA	STREAMLINED LIABILITY FOR CLAIMS UNDER MRCA
(RECENTLY ADDED) Chondromalacia patella	X	✓
(RECENTLY ADDED) Internal derangement of the knee	X	✓
(RECENTLY ADDED) Malignant melanoma of the skin	✓	✓
(RECENTLY ADDED) Pterygium	✓	✓
(RECENTLY ADDED) Tinea of the skin	✓	✓
Achilles tendinopathy and bursitis	X	✓
Acquired cataract	✓	✓
Non-melanotic malignant neoplasm of the skin	✓	✓
Plantar fasciitis	X	✓
Sensorineural hearing loss		✓
Shin splints	X	✓
Solar keratosis	✓	✓
Tinnitus	✓	✓

X - No, not covered by streamlining, but may be accepted after investigation, depending on evidence of a link to service.

We had a highly successful National Conference in Townsville during the period 13-15 October 2016. Of note is that there are a number of National Committee of Management (NATCOM) Members have indicated retirement in the Elections of 2017. We are always looking for good quality people to assist the APPVA in the Branch and NATCOM Levels. NATCOM Positions will be vacant in October 2017 for National President, National Vice President, National Treasurer, National Secretary, and “The Peacekeeper” Editor. Many of these people have served on the NATCOM for almost 10 years. A fresh change of new faces keeps the organisation relevant, with new people having new ideas. If you feel that you wish to be involved in a highly dynamic ESO, please contact your Branch Committee and get involved.

The APPVA will be focussing on the 70th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping Operations (14 September 1947) and the Dedication of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial, of which in this Edition, tentative activities and dates have been locked in. Please keep the period 10-16 September 2017 clear in your diary, for what will be a significant event of the commemoration of our service to International Peace, Security and Stability. The APPVA will be working closely with the APMPC with this highly important Milestone. We are trying to raise \$1.1M to complete the construction of the Memorial, which is currently being built. We need as many people as possible to assist with donations and sponsorships. Please visit the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project Committee (APMPC) site to explore how you are able to contribute on link: <http://www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au/>

In addition, it will be the APPVA’s 20th Anniversary, from when we were established as the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Association (APPA) in 1997, with a name change and new logo in 2004 to The Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans’ Association (APPVA). It has been quite a journey that we have embarked on since the humble late 90’s up to now and in the future. We look forward to commemorating this milestone in the history of the APPVA in Canberra on the evening of 15 September 2017.

Conclusion.

Whilst 2016 has been a very busy year for APPVA NATCOM and the respective APPVA Branches, 2017 is proving to be even more challenging. So, the more help we are able to receive, the easier it will be for the small nucleus of people who are always centre-point to the majority of our activities and it will provide some relief to our Dedicated teams, to have such help.

Please, have a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2017. We look forward to a challenging year and your help to make 2017 a highly memorable Commemoration.

Stay Safe and Well.

Yours in the Service of Peace,

Paul Copeland
Editor.

ADF nurse Sharon Bown fighting for improved PTSD care

Debbie Schipp news.com.au

November 2, 2016 7:21am

TO join Australia's longest war, Sharon Bown had to first survive the helicopter crash that almost killed her in East Timor.

It was June, 2, 2004 and back then she was Flight Lieutenant Sharon Cooper (her maiden name), an ADF nurse and, that day, part of a chopper crew to evacuate a woman experiencing birth complications.

The UN-contracted chopper crashed in torrential rain as it tried to land near the remote village of Same in East Timor.

Bown remembers the words "mayday", seeing trees rush towards her and preparing to die.

"I thought about my family. I thought about my partner, I said goodbye to them," she says.

"On the one hand I was very calm, On the other, the reaction of my body was this incredible adrenaline rush: the fight or flight response that gives you this intense fear.

"You're strapped into the back of a helicopter that's flying into the ground. There is no way to fight it, nowhere to run. You are in absolute fear but there is nothing you can do."

The chopper hit. A colleague found her unconscious, and dragged her clear, covered in aviation fuel. Her jaw was smashed, her back broken.

Twelve years on, and after a 16-year military career, retired Wing Commander Sharon Bown has been deployed with the Royal Australian Air Force on three operations, struggled to return to military service, mixed in military circles worldwide as Aide de Camp to the Minister for Defence, and commanded a combat surgical team during some of the most intense fighting in Afghanistan.

She relives her Afghanistan experience in a documentary to air soon on Channel Seven, Afghanistan: The Australian Story.

Afghanistan posting: Bown and colleagues at the field hospital at Tarin Kowt in the south of Afghanistan. Picture: SuppliedSource:News Limited

The program, launched by the Australian War Memorial on DVD pulls no punches in presenting what Australians did in Afghanistan and the price that was paid.

A total of 44 Australians died as a result of their service in Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds more have been wounded in what's known as Australia's longest war.

Many more, like Bown, continue to fight post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

She was diagnosed after a nightmare ten months which began with the chopper crash, and compounded with the

loss of her mother to breast cancer. By the time she lost ADF friends and colleagues in the 2005 crash of the Navy Sea King chopper near Sumatra, she was reeling.

But the former civilian nurse knew just one thing: she wanted to return to service.

"There was talk it meant the end of my career. And I wasn't ready to lose that," she says.

"I was going to fight to stay."

She asked for a year, their support, and a plan to pass the physical fitness requirements and "prove I was capable of doing my role again as an operational ADF nurse".

They gave them all, and she delivered — in Afghanistan she was commander of a combat surgical team during some of the most intense fighting in the region.

Afghanistan Reality

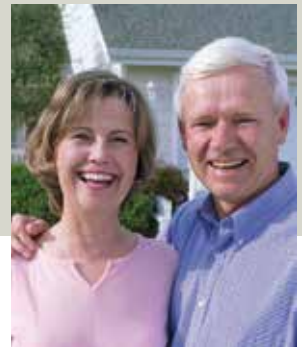
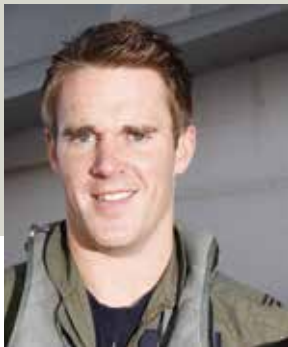
Relaying her experience for the documentary, Bown says many Australians "don't think that you lose health care people in ADF." The reality is, they offer "care under fire".

"The majority of our patients were Afghan nationals. And that's because we were in Afghanistan," she says.



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Department of Veterans' Affairs

Gordon Traill

My Journey to Baghdad, Iraq

September 11, 2001 is a day that is indelibly etched in my memory forever, for two reasons. The first was watching the tragedy unfold before my eyes of the Twin Towers coming down and the terrible loss of life. The second was a comment I made to my wife Shona. "If it can happen there, then it could happen here". I had been retired from the Army for three years. Shona knew that our lives were about to change once again.

I was back in uniform within six weeks, just my luck though, a desk job in Victoria Barracks Melbourne for two years. During those two years, I was to spend six months of each year traveling around Australia with work. During this time I was impressed by the facilities of the 1st Brigade in Darwin.

In late 2003 I received my posting to Robertson Barracks, Darwin. I was to spend three years with 5/7 RAR as the Warrant Officer Caterer. I was really glad to be going back to the unit that I had first served in as a young digger in 1976. At that time the unit was situated in Holsworthy, NSW.

The family road trip to Darwin was planned with military precision; we arrived in Darwin in January 2004. The first six days was uneventful as we settled into our new Defence house. I had just finished ironing my uniform around 5:30 in the morning when all of a sudden, a huge crash of thunder and lightning exploded. Expletives flowed from my mouth as I raced out of the house to have a look. I heard the guy from across the road yell out to me as he was having a cigarette outside. He said the lightning "lit up the house like a Christmas tree". We couldn't see any major structural damage in what light there was, as it was zero dark hours.

Later in the morning Shona rang me to say our kitchen roof had fallen in under the weight of the burst solar hot water tank. Defence Housing moved us to a hotel for two weeks while they made our house liveable again. Defence Housing moved quickly, but not as quick as the local paper. The journalist arrived with a photographer and put a photo and story on the front page of the NT News. Quite a feat to knock off a crocodile or cane toad story in the Top End. In early February my Commanding Officer (CO) spoke to me about being part of Security Detachment 4 (SECDET 4). SECDET was responsible for the Australian Ambassador and his staff to move around Baghdad in the safest possible manner to conduct official Government business.

I went home that night to discuss my deployment with Shona and our two daughters. Our sons (James doing his Masters degree in Melbourne and Joshua doing his Chiropractic degree in NZ) were definitely against the war in Iraq. The boys accepted the decision, as I had been a professional soldier for so long. They knew that this is what I did for a living and they respected that. The girls knew that going to Darwin could mean a deployment overseas was highly likely. Shona knew when we packed up and left Melbourne for Darwin that being deployed to Iraq was a



Gordon and Shona Traill his wife of 37 years

sure thing. The decision was made and the next morning I spoke to my CO, I was ready to go to war.

All soldiers go through so much training for war. They all want to know are they strong, tough and good enough to stand by each other in a crisis. My full attention was now focused on Iraq and especially Baghdad. I was glued to watching CNN and Fox News channels. Cpl Steve Riley was to work along side of me for this deployment. In the short time that I knew Steve I had seen many outstanding qualities in him. He was an excellent soldier as well as an outstanding cook. Steve had a wicked sense of humour; hard working, strong decision maker and I knew I could trust him with my life.

The training for the mission was very demanding for me at the ripe old age of 48. I was very fit and also the oldest member of SECDET, it felt like I was going to war with my sons. I felt at ease when I heard Major Spencer Norris was going to be SECDET 4's Officer Commander. My years of experience knew that Spencer was the right person for the difficult job that lay ahead of us.

There were many things that had to be done before we were ready to leave for Baghdad. Official passports, daily Intelligence briefings on Iraq, Nuclear Biological and Chemical warfare training were a real threat. Saddam had previously used chemical warfare against the Kurds in the North of Iraq. Constant day and night shoots were done to handle the weapon in any condition and wearing Night Vision Goggles. You never went anywhere without your weapon, it became an extension of your arm, 24/7.



Gordon in the back of an ASLAV, Baghdad 2004

Working with the Australian Light Armoured Vehicles (ASLAVs - 13 Tonne Armoured Vehicles), what were "actions on" if we had contact with the enemy whilst in the vehicles. Briefings on being taken as a POW. Lectures on welfare services that were available to family. Making sure that your Will was up to date and all your finances were in good order. It was very difficult to get life insurance coverage especially when you told the insurance brokers that you were going to Baghdad!

Training was incredibly time consuming especially with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's, car bombs). This was the new face of fighting modern warfare. We received daily Intelligence on how the insurgents used IED's in many different ways, under a pile of rubbish, under rocks, dirt tracks, side of the road, anywhere they thought they could kill or injure foreign forces. The insurgents would dig out a piece of concrete in the roadside gutters and place the IED's in and cement over it. They would use this method for setting up a daisy chain effect. By placing the IED's at different intervals along a road. They could hit a convoy and get maximum effect within the "killing zone". Land mine detection was also a concern as was shown in Cambodia and Afghanistan.

Riot training was an interesting phase of the pre deployment training for me personally. We did training with helmets, batons, shields for controlling angry crowds and how to use pepper spray. I thought to myself that if I got that close to an angry crowd I certainly wouldn't want to be using just pepper spray! The Military Police (MP) detachment all had large expansive grins on their faces during the individual spraying of everyone in SECDET. The MP's knew from their own training and using it in their job that it was better to be the giver than the receiver. To their credit the MP's did cop their spray with a lot of laughs coming from the rest of the SECDET members. There were numerous bets and banter going on amongst the boys. They were making outrageous statements on how long they would last before they had to fully submerge their heads into the buckets of water to flush away the pepper spray. I had never seen so many hard nut characters be brought to their knees, after getting a dose of spray, I was not any better. It feels like you have coarse sand paper rubbing the underneath of your eyelids as you

blink uncontrollably trying to flush away the spray.

Biological and Nuclear training was not much better either but necessary. Nothing in the pre-deployment training was taken lightly by any soldier of SECDET 4. It was time to leave Darwin and make our way to Iraq.

Food Asia, Singapore 1994. I had reached the pinnacle in my chosen trade as a chef. I was a member of the Australian National Culinary Team that competed for the 'Battle of the Lion' against seven other Nations. It was an amazing experience to represent your country on the world culinary stage. I was a Sergeant Cook competing with and against the best civilian chefs in the world.

Ten years later I found myself on a RAAF C130 Hercules aircraft flying into Baghdad, Iraq this time to represent Australia as a soldier.

Diary entry: Friday 7th May 2004

'Left Camp Doha which is situated in Kuwait and drove to a rundown Kuwaiti Air Force Base. It still showed the battle scars of Saddam's invasion years before. The C130 arrived, loaded Stores, Ammo and all the Security Detachment 4 (SECDET 4) personnel. The flight to Baghdad was very smooth until we began tactical flying. It was an adrenaline filled 15 minutes till we touched down. Tactical flying is the most exhilarating roller coaster ride you could imagine.'

Once on the ground we were briefed by Sgt Moriarty who was in charge of the armoured vehicles that were to take us to 'The Flats', a shell of a building that was to be home during my time in Iraq. It was located next to the Australian Embassy in the "Red Zone". After a tour of the building it was time for dinner. It felt good to get some food, as I hadn't eaten all day.

SECDET 4 was a self sufficient Battle Group of approximately 120 personnel made up of Infantry, Cavalry, Engineers, Signals, Cooks, Intelligence, Military Police, Medic, Mechanics and Q Store soldiers. Our role was to support and protect the Australian Ambassador and his staff in the most dangerous place on earth at the time, Baghdad.

Diary entry: Sunday 9th May 2004

'Mother's Day, once again I wasn't there to share the day with Shona and the kids.'

Being in Baghdad really bought home how special my wife really is as a Mother. She has been the one constant thing in our children's life. Shona is always there for them when I have been away with the Army.

My role during my time in Baghdad was to ensure that our soldiers got the best possible food that was available and ensure that there was plenty of bottled water to keep them hydrated. The temperatures ranged between 35 and 55 degrees with little change when the sun went down. My other role was to work in the Operations room which included manning the radios, keeping contact with the Diggers on guard duty, foot and mounted patrols in our Area of Operations

The room that was used as a kitchen was approximately 4 metres wide by about 8 metres long. It had no plumbing,

no kitchen sink, four toilet extractor fans on a side wall, a household stove, BBQ plate, two freezers, glass door fridge, stainless steel work bench and shelving to store cooking equipment. The room had a window, which was on the outer wall of the building. It was hidden by sandbags from floor to ceiling with wood and steel bars across them to minimise the damage that could be caused by rocket attacks, hand grenades, car bombs or small arms fire coming into the building.

In one corner of the kitchen was a sandbagged wall where the local gas bottles would be stored and spew out a horrible odour when they were nearly empty. The gas bottles would arrive by donkey cart and kicked off by the driver to land on top of one another. No wonder they were all banged up and in poor shape. The electricity was a constant source of ineffectiveness with blackouts that lasted hours at a time. At times evening meals would be cooked under torchlight.

Diary entry: Tuesday 11th May 2004

'There is always an Intelligence brief on the state of affairs in Baghdad and Iraq. I don't need the Intel brief to tell me that this is a bad arse town with all the bombs and rockets going off.'

A normal day in the kitchen would consist of a cooked breakfast, a light lunch due to the hot climate, and a cooked meal for dinner. The food we received through the supply chain, were American 50 man Ration Packs. Some of the



Chopper taken flying over the Green Zone, a rare image as I didn't get to go to the Green Zone much

interesting items were frozen laser cut fried eggs (yuck), grape jelly and grits (I never did get around to cooking them), dehydrated hash browns and inedible bread rolls. Steve and I had our work cut out for us trying to make the food suitable for our Australian tastes using the American rationing system. I would source local eggs, potatoes, flat bread, fresh vegetables, fresh dates, fruit to add variety and flavour.

Every Friday depending on the threat assessment of flying into Baghdad, I would receive a BBQ pack that was flown in from Kuwait. It comprised of lettuces, tomatoes, onions, cheese slices and thick steaks that were frozen and tough as boot leather. To fix this problem I would marinate the steaks and add Bi Carbonate soda to make them tender.

Bottled water was extremely important due to the weather conditions and wearing body armour. On average a soldier would drink between 6 – 8 litres of water a day. It was responsibility to have seven day Reserve Supply of American ration packs, Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's) and water. They are something that I never have to eat again thank goodness. Just outside the kitchen door was where we served the food. I had a large piece of cardboard which had a vegetarian MRE nailed to it with the words 'Complaints Book'. I never did get any complaints!

Diary entry: Tuesday 25th May 2004

'This was the worst day of the tour so far. A huge car bomb exploded right outside 'The Flats'. The jagged bits of car and shrapnel that were hurled through the air were found throughout 'The Flats'. I had never heard an explosion that loud before. There were locals killed which included children. This is a f - - - - d up place.'

One of the sayings that the boys used to say when explosions went off was 'if the building was not rocking everything was good'. The building did rock that day and that was not good.

Diary entry: Wednesday 16th June 2004

'Today was very hot in the kitchen, found a small fan just to circulate the hot air.'

The breakfast was quite large with eggs, bacon, pancakes,



My Diary I kept during my deployment, my miniatures, Dog Tags, Iraqi Freedom Challenge Coin and Shrapnel from a car bomb that detonated outside our front door of SECDET 4 Building. It once was a Black BMW!!



Boys back from patrol

hash browns, chipolata sausages, porridge, macaroni cheese and cereals. There was plenty of food for the diggers before going out on foot or mounted patrols. Lunch usually consisted of local flat bread and salad or left over dinner items to make toasted sandwiches. Dinner consisted of four main choices, vegetables and dessert.

I had a supply of sports and soft drinks that I had on ice in big eskies in the dining room. The ice came in metre lengths by 20 cm square-the frightening thing was the mud colour that ran through these ice bars. This was another good reason to use only bottled water for cooking and drinking. I swear I saw three headed fish in the Tigris River that curled its way around Baghdad!

One of the rituals the Cavalry boys brought to Baghdad from Australia was their 'beer and cigar night' that was held once a week. As the Middle East was a dry area there was a supply of American 'near beers' which had 0% alcohol. As you walked into their room smoke billowed out as you opened the door. There in front of you they would be smoking handmade Cuban cigars and drinking 'near beers'. There was always raucous laughter with the many jokes they told. A carton of Iraq cigarettes sold for \$5 US and Cuban Cigars were around \$3 US.

Diary entry: Tuesday 10th August 2004

'A Bomb threat was made against the Australian Embassy next door. More stand to's due to the threat.'

During these times you had to wear your body armour all the time except for sleeping. This made work in the kitchen all that more difficult due to the heat that was generated by the cooking appliances. The kitchen temperature ranged between 55-60 degrees. No need for a Jenny Craig diet in Baghdad.

Diary entry: Tuesday 21st September 2004

'Flying into Darwin the pilot announced that he had very special passengers on board who were returning home from their tour of Iraq. A loud roar and clapping filled the plane. My chest burst with pride and yet I felt very humbled'.

'Saw the girls and gave them a big hug. Shona wrapped her arms around my neck like a vice and wouldn't let go. I felt like a millionaire'.

'Went out to dinner, I felt weird with no weapon and felt very detached from the family. The feeling of guilt hung around my neck like a lead weight because I should have been ecstatic to be home. Sleep was very difficult to come by'.

My "My Journey to Baghdad, Iraq" was complete. My long journey returning "home" was just beginning, but that's another story...

Photos courtesy of G. Traill"



Home from Iraq



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True Strategic Partnerships Can Deliver

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has a vast expanse of air and sea space to monitor, highlighting the critical importance of the acquisition and sustainment of the right surveillance solutions to meet the country's needs.

The military-off-the-shelf maritime patrol and response aircraft were being procured through a government-to-government co-operative program. The ADF needed to secure expert support from industry to help deliver the project, and was acutely aware of finding the right partner that could seamlessly work as part of this international collaborative effort.

Defence was looking for a trusted strategic partner with an excellent relationship across the ADF which could provide:

- Broad and deep expertise across all acquisition and sustainment activities
- Low risk transition and assured delivery
- A cooperative and collaborative relationship focused on outcomes
- Efficient, transparent and flexible Strategic Support Partnership Contract (SSPC) management

Team Trident, led by RubiKon, was established in May 2016 to bring in partners to broaden its available skill sets, whilst retaining the customer focussed ethos already proven within the project office. The result was the creation of a single team with a single shared objective extending across both Team Trident and the ADF, with partnership working as the foundation.

The sense of being in this together and the importance of the relationship was even embodied in the contract as a core Key Performance Indicator.

To always ensure the ADF's objectives were met, Team Trident:

- implemented a 'Right Athlete' approach to create a competitive environment within the existing contract construct to guarantee that the ADF always gets the very best resources and value for money possible.
- enables scalable strength and depth through the addition of specialist acquisition and technical subject matter experts which can be accessed by the ADF through the Team Trident tier 2 partnerships.
- demonstrated confidence in the performance commitment to the ADF by placing 100% of profit at risk, guaranteeing timeliness, quality and relationship.

To date, this approach has ensured that every milestone has been achieved on time and on budget.

The first Airworthiness Board in September 2016 was achieved only 6 months after the SSPC commenced, and was especially significant as it was concluded without any Corrective Action Requests being issued, preparing the way for the historic delivery of the airframe in late 2016, on schedule.

The SSPC approach has provided the ADF flexibility in the contract management of its tasks and for RubiKon to proactively work with the ADF to jointly identify the work and priorities necessary to deliver the program schedule, in contrast to a traditional piecemeal task-by-task tendering approach. It has also enhanced communication across the entire project. Team Trident has members embedded in a US Navy P-8A sub contractor, the ADF acquisition and sustainment Systems Project Offices, as well as the end user at RAAF 92WG, enabling better coordination and facilitating working across traditional boundaries.

Whilst it is early days in the life of this unique partnering arrangement, all the signs point to it becoming a highly productive and value focused contracting solution.



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Which African Country is Worst at Fighting Insurgents?

Nigeria and Kenya get poor marks in new survey

By Obi Anyadike
Editor-at-Large (IRIN).
NAIROBI, 10 June 2016

Public approval in Nigeria and Kenya for their governments' handling of jihadist violence is low, and citizens have a poor opinion of the security forces that are supposed to protect them, according to a survey-based report released this week by Afrobarometer, a pan-African research network.

Both Nigeria and Kenya are facing ruthless insurgencies, but only about four in 10 of their citizens back the counter-insurgency efforts. That score contrasts with high approval ratings in regional neighbours Niger (96 percent), Cameroon (81 percent), and Uganda (83 percent), which also face security threats.

The Afrobarometer surveys were carried out in 36 countries at the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015 as face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with a maximum +/-3 percent sampling error.

They not only reveal that citizens in Nigeria and Kenya are unhappy with their governments' performance in dealing with Boko Haram and al-Shabab violence, but also expose significant levels of distrust in the security forces.

Out of all the countries surveyed, public confidence in the police was lowest in Nigeria (21 percent) and Kenya (36 percent) – compared to Niger, where almost nine in 10 citizens said they trusted their police.

When people were questioned on their perceptions of their armed forces, Nigeria's military was again the worst performer, with only 40 percent of people saying they were trusted. In Kenya, the military enjoyed more confidence at 68 percent.

By comparison, 86 percent of people polled in Senegal regarded their army as reliable; in Tanzania it was 82 percent.

Big caveat

"Context really matters," said report co-author Rorisang Lekalake. "At that time [of the surveys], there were large numbers of attacks in Nigeria and Kenya. In Nigeria, the situation was so precarious we couldn't conduct the surveys in three northern states."

Forty-five percent of Kenyans voted security as their number one concern, as did 39 percent of Nigerians. But the most concern was found in the middle-income island nation of Mauritius (48 percent), followed by Tunisia (47 percent).

By contrast, only 10 percent of Ugandans said they were worried, despite the country's long battle with al-Shabab in

Somalia. Sierra Leoneans were positively sanguine; just three percent mentioned security as an issue.

There are large local swings in the survey results. Nigeria's northern states, the home region of the Boko Haram insurgency, were more critical of the government's efforts than the southern half of the country, said Lekalake. In one telling result, more than one third of respondents believed that "all" or "most" Muslim citizens support extremist groups (the north is predominantly Muslim).

Boko Haram was seizing and holding northern towns in 2014, and a badly led and under-equipped Nigerian army was demoralised and on the back foot. In the survey, Nigerians blamed government officials, parliamentarians, and the military – basically anybody in power – for Boko Haram's success.

Unsurprisingly, President Goodluck Jonathan was dumped at the polls in 2015 – the first time an incumbent lost an election.

It's also political

In Kenya, support for the government's counter-insurgency efforts is highest in its biggest political constituency of Central Province (79 percent approval). It's weakest in North Eastern Province (12 percent), which borders Somalia, and which has felt much of the brunt of al-Shabab attacks and the security campaign.

Support for Kenya's five-year military intervention in Somalia is well over 50 percent across the country (in Central it's 80 percent). The exception is North Eastern, where only 31 percent of people approve.

The intervention was launched to halt cross-border raids, but cited by al-Shabab as a reason for their continued attacks – including those on the Westgate shopping mall and Garissa University that killed a total of 215 people. Yet two thirds of Kenyans said the intervention "has been necessary despite the terrorist problems resulting from it".

So what do people want their governments to do?

In Nigeria, the survey found the priorities were a strengthening of the military response (44 percent); more job creation (34 percent); outreach to religious leaders (17 percent); followed by an array of approaches, including better governance and community engagement.

"Nigeria has a much longer history of violent extremism," Lekalake told IRIN. "Even at the community level, people realise that the military response can't be the only response, and is not necessarily the best response."

By Emily Thomson

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health problem that can develop in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event that threatens their life or safety.

The main symptoms of PTSD are:

- re-experiencing the trauma (memories, nightmares or flashbacks)
- avoiding reminders of the trauma
- negative thoughts and mood
- being overly alert or wound up

Effective treatments are available to benefit PTSD sufferers, including psychological treatment and medication such as antidepressants. However, new research is emerging which suggests exercise can be a valuable component of a PTSD treatment plan. Low-intensity exercise has been proven to have a positive impact on the symptoms of depression and PTSD. Exercise can also optimise client health outcomes and treatment of associated comorbidities

(Diabetes, Obesity etc,) of PTSD and the commonly associated sedentary lifestyles of the Australian population.

We all know commencement of an exercise program is not easy and there are barriers that need to be considered for PTSD sufferers. The barriers include the presence of other mental health conditions as well as physical injuries/conditions often the result of the original traumatic event. Therefore, professional advice from an Accredited Exercise Physiologist is needed in order to partake in a safe exercise program.

This is where we can help! Achieve Exercise Physiologists are a team of professional Accredited Exercise Physiologists who specialise in designing individualised exercise programs focusing on you, not just your condition. We have three convenient locations throughout Townsville: Kirwan, Aitkenvale and CBD. So if you're interested to see how an Exercise Physiologist can help with your PTSD, come down and see



the team to book in for a free initial health assessment.

“ *Exercise can be a valuable component of PTSD treatment* ”



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UN says Situation 'Rapidly Deteriorating' in Embattled Afghan City

Kunduz fighting enters fourth day

Fighting in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz has led to a "rapidly deteriorating" humanitarian situation, officials said on Thursday, leaving thousands of people with limited access to food, water, or medical care.

Street-to-street gun battles have continued for four days after Taliban militants slipped past the city's defenses on Monday.

Government troops, backed by U.S. special forces and air strikes, have repeatedly declared that they are in control of the city, but residents report that heavy fighting has forced many people to flee.

The fighting has forced as many as 10,000 people from their homes in Kunduz, the United Nations reported, with those who remain facing serious water, food and electricity shortages, as well as threats from the fighting.

"Many families were unable to bring their possessions with them and are in a precarious position," Dominic Parker, head of the U.N.'s humanitarian coordination office, said in a statement. "We have had reports that some families have been forced to sleep out in the open and many have few food supplies."

Among those fleeing Kunduz are about two-thirds of the staff at the city's main public hospital, which was struck by several rockets and small arms fire, said Marzia Yaftali Salaam, a doctor.

Afghan security forces keep watch in front of their armoured vehicle in Kunduz city, Afghanistan October 4, 2016.



Afghan security forces keep watch in front of their armoured vehicle in Kunduz city, Afghanistan October 4, 2016. REUTERS/Nasir Wakif

REUTERS/Nasir Wakif

The 200-bed public hospital is the main provider of medical care in Kunduz after a more advanced trauma center run by Medecins Sans Frontieres was destroyed by an American air strike last year.

In the past three days, the hospital has been inundated by at least 210 patients, many of them civilians, including women and children, wounded in the fighting, Salaam said.

"Many of the wounded had to be carried to clinics in surrounding districts and private clinics in the city," she said. "If the situation remains the same, we may be forced to halt our services."

During a lull in the fighting on Wednesday, nearly 50 casualties were rushed to the hospital in the span of a few hours, said Hameed Alam, head of the public health department in Kunduz.

The U.S. military command in Kabul said Afghan forces are "defeating Taliban attempts to take Kunduz," with reinforcements on the way and commandos continuing to clear "isolated pockets" of Taliban fighters. The Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan with an iron fist from 1996 to 2001, are seeking to topple the Western-backed government in Kabul and reimpose Islamic rule.

"There is fighting in every street and the situation is critical," said Ismail Kawasi, a spokesman for the Public Health Ministry in Kabul.

Additional medical supplies and personnel were positioned in neighboring provinces, but they must wait for the fighting to subside before they can be flown to Kunduz, he said.

(Reporting by Sardar Razmal; Additional reporting by Mirwais Harooni in Kabul; Writing by Josh Smith; Editing by Nick Macfie and Dominic Evans)

Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-taliban-idUSKCN1260II> on 8 October 2016.

UN Chief Sacks Sudan Peacekeeping Force Commander

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has asked that the commander of the peacekeeping force in South Sudan be replaced (AFP Photo/Fabrice Coffrini)

United Nations (United States) (AFP) - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday sacked the commander of the peacekeeping force in South Sudan following a damning report showing failure to protect civilians during violence earlier this year in Juba.

The report from a UN special investigation found that a lack of leadership in the UN mission culminated in a "chaotic and ineffective response" during heavy fighting in the capital from July 8 to 11.

Peacekeepers abandoned their posts and failed to respond to pleas for help from aid workers under attack in a nearby hotel compound, according to a summary of the report.

The UN mission known as UNMISS has 16,000 troops deployed in South Sudan, which has been at war since December 2013.

"The special investigation found that UNMISS did not respond effectively to the violence due to an overall lack of leadership, preparedness and integration among the various components of the mission," said UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

Chinese peacekeepers abandoned their positions at least twice and Nepalese peacekeepers failed to stop looting inside the UN compound, the inquiry found.

Ban said he was "deeply distressed by these findings" and "alarmed by the serious shortcomings" of the UN mission.

The UN chief "has asked for the immediate replacement of the force commander," said Dujarric, adding that other measures would follow.

Lieutenant General Johnson Mogoia Kimani Ondieki of Kenya had been the force commander since May. UN mission chief Ellen Margrethe Loj of Denmark steps down at the end of November after more than two years in the job.

The fierce fighting in Juba involved helicopter gunships and tanks pitting President Salva Kiir's government forces against those loyal to ex-rebel chief Riek Machar.

Machar fled the capital during the violence, which derailed international efforts to form a unity government and restore peace to South Sudan.

- No response to screams -

About a dozen aid workers and UN staff housed at the Terrain hotel compound were attacked by South Sudanese soldiers on July 11, but the peacekeepers, just 1.2 kilometers (0.7 miles) away, failed to come to their aid.

There were multiple requests to the peacekeepers from



China, Ethiopia, India and Nepal for forces to be dispatched, "but each UNMISS contingent turned down the request, indicating their troops were fully committed."

During the attack, "civilians were subjected to and witnessed gross human rights violations, including murder, intimidation, sexual violence and acts amounting to torture perpetrated by armed government soldiers," said the report.

The investigation led by retired Dutch general Patrick Cammaert was unable to verify allegations that peacekeepers did nothing to help women who were raped during the heavy fighting.

But in a later incident on September 2, a woman was assaulted near the entrance to a UN compound "in plain sight" of the peacekeepers, the report said.

"Despite the woman's screams, they did not react" and other UN staff intervened, it added.

After the crisis, peacekeepers "continued to display a risk-averse posture unsuited to protecting civilians from sexual violence" and other attacks.

UNMISS soldiers refused to conduct foot patrols near UN bases and instead would "peer out from the tiny windows of armored personnel carriers, an approach ill-suited to detecting perpetrators of sexual violence and engaging with communities to provide a sense of security."

British Ambassador Matthew Rycroft described the report as a "damning indictment" and said the Security Council as well as the UN system must draw lessons from the failures.

The council is set to discuss the crisis in South Sudan on November 17.

Retrieved from: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/un-chief-sacks-sudan-peacekeeping-force-commander-164837610.html> on 3 November 2016.



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Above: Members of a graduating toloy (company) of new Afghan National Army officers, on parade during their graduation ceremony on November 3, 2016.

Below: Afghan National Army Officer Academy Instructors and new Afghan National Army officer graduates, on parade at their graduation ceremony on November 3, 2016.



ANAOA Graduation Parade and Ceremony

By FLTLT Jessica Aldred

Ahead lays leadership challenges for the 342 Officer Cadets, including nine women, of 1st Kandak (battalion) who recently graduated from the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) in Kabul.

ANAOA has now graduated around 2,000 Officer Cadets since its establishment four years ago.

The ADF, along with its coalition partners, mentor Afghan National Army (ANA) instructors to ensure the best training standards are met.

ANAOA is committed to developing leaders for a strong and resilient ANA.

Winner of the Sandhurst Medal for best instructor, ANA First Lieutenant Rahmatullah Rasolzay appreciated the mentors' support.

"The Australians are working with us shona-b-shona (shoulder to shoulder) in the field and the classroom," 1st LT Rahmatullah said.

"Working as an instructor and Platoon Commander for 1st Kandak, I am proud of my work sharing my knowledge with my students so they can fight the enemies of Afghanistan."

For the graduating students of 1st Kandak their training focused on key leadership skills as well as basic soldiering, military planning techniques and counter-insurgency tactics.

1st Kandak graduate, ANA Second Lieutenant Jumard Shirjan is proud to serve his country.

"I graduated from the Afghan National Army Officer Academy with my brother. We have learnt the best way here with leadership and field training so that we can teach our soldiers," Second Lieutenant Jumard said.

"I want to serve my country. I want Afghanistan to be the best country in future."

For the coalition mentors their role can be challenging but rewarding.

Australian 1st Kandak Badder Tolay (company) mentor, Captain Ben Carbis said the experience has been extremely rewarding.

"As a Tolay level mentor I cover off on three platoon commanders who are instructors here at the Academy. I work with them on a daily basis assisting them with all their lessons, field training and administration," CAPT Carbis said.

"It's rewarding to see the cadets graduate as they've been working really hard and are proud to be serving their country.

"For the instructors and me to see our cadets graduating is rewarding and exciting after many months of hard work," he said.

The nine women graduating as part of 1st Kandak brings ANAOA's total female officer graduates to almost 40.

The graduating class of November 2016 will help shape the Afghan National Army of the future for a strong and resilient Afghanistan.



Australian Army officer, Captain Angela Durant, mentor to the instructors and officer cadets at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy, congratulates the "Top Female Officer Cadet", Lieutenant Najibi Sadaqat, at her graduation ceremony on November 3, 2016.

Booby-trapped Bicycles

The terrifying legacy of Libya's IS explosives



A demining team works on deactivating a mine hidden in a fake rock. Tom Westcott/IRIN

By Tom Westcott

IRIN Contributor

SIRTE, 23 August 2016

Under the scorching midday sun and the rattle of heavy artillery and Kalashnikov fire, three men on the Libyan coast are deactivating mines with electricians' pliers, clad in flak jackets and helmets that will do them little good if a device detonates.

"One mistake here and basically you're dead," Mohammed*, 40, tells IRIN.

He is carrying three newly deactivated devices, including a frighteningly realistic fake rock packed with explosives. He is taking them off the battlefield in Sirte, where Libyan forces are edging closer to defeating the so-called Islamic State.

The militant group's mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have already left hundreds of Libyan fighters dead and maimed and, as government forces continue to advance into the centre of the town, poorly equipped demining units are struggling to deal with the aftermath.

International demining organisations are loath to work in Libya – a position that won't have been helped by the death of a British de-mining expert in the Iraqi city of Ramadi on Monday – so these explosives threaten to leave a terrifying legacy for civilians long after the war is over.

Understaffed and unprepared

Just 200 metres ahead of Mohammed and his colleagues, a child's bicycle lies in the middle of the road. It looks innocent but the men have spotted a trap; a thin wire leads from the bike to a rigged tank shell.

Anyone attempting to use the road would have to move the bicycle, triggering the explosive mechanism. To add to the

danger, Mohammed explains that the ground on either side of the road is also mined.

His unit – part of the intelligence services of one of Libya's three governments – was drafted in to help when Libyan fighters found the sheer numbers of mines and IEDs in Sirte unmanageable.

The assault on the city, led by fighters from the UN-backed Government of National Unity and the Tripoli-based government Mohammed is loyal to, began in May.

It has really put Mohammed's skills to the test. Trained in the United States back in 2004, he said IS has used tactics he's never seen before. Retreating militants have left a trail of devices across each district of the town, many disguised as, or rigged to, everyday objects.

"This stuff never existed before in Libya. We never saw a range of devices like these," he says.

Doors, windows, even furnishings, have been connected to explosives.

It's been deadly for the Libyan forces. Brigadier General Mohammed al-Ghasri, a spokesman for the military operation in Sirte, told IRIN that mines and IEDs had killed more than 400 fighters and injured another 2,000.

The dead include four commanders of military engineering units that specialise in deactivating and removing IEDs. Another demining officer lost both his arms when a device he was working on exploded.

"If the international community had helped us with this, we could have avoided a lot of bloodshed and losses"

"No international organisations or governments have given us any help with demining operations or even provided us with equipment we desperately need, such as metal detectors for finding mines," al-Ghasri complained. "If the international community had helped us with this, we could have avoided a lot of bloodshed and losses."

Al-Ghasri said the engineering units had dismantled 200 IEDs in the last fortnight alone. "But every day we find more and more, including explosives rigged with transparent fishing wire in civilian homes."

In recently liberated districts of Sirte, fighters have uncovered makeshift factories where IS has been hand-crafting explosives, including grenades, bombs and IEDs.

In one sprawling farm in the Hay Dollar district of Sirte, once a villa-lined luxury area favoured by former ruler Muammar Gaddafi's inner circle, soldiers found dozens of bags of fertiliser piled next to metal components, ready to be packed into bombs to create lethal shrapnel.

There were pipe joints stuffed with explosives, racks of chemicals and gas masks, as well as bomb "recipes".

In addition to these urban stockpiles, fighters have to deal with desert expanses and exposed rural areas on the

coastline that IS controlled until recently.

“We desperately need help with special technologies for detecting IEDs and mines,” said army officer Salah Jarbar, standing on charred tarmac outside the ruins of a police station destroyed two months ago by an IS car bomb in the village of Abu Grain.

Abu Grain’s outlying desert, 150 kilometres west of Sirte, was left heavily mined by IS. Like al-Ghasri, Jarbar said even metal detectors would be of great help. “They are a cheap technology but really we need a lot of them.”

The threat to civilians

Once Libyan forces finish off IS in Sirte, al-Ghasri estimates it will take at least another five months to clear the town of mines, IEDs, and unexploded ordnance.

A number of international humanitarian demining outfits, including Handicap International and the Mines Advisory Group (MAG International) were active in Libya after the 2011 uprising until fighting in Tripoli in 2014 prompted embassies and international organisations to flee the country. Libya’s ongoing instability, including in the capital, has left most wary of returning.

“MAG is not working in Libya and we currently have no plans to restart,” MAG Fundraising and Communications Assistant Gayle Gabe told IRIN. As of September 2013, MAG alone said it had removed more than 495,000 explosive remnants of war across the country, including those found in ammunition stockpiles.

For now, local people living in former IS-controlled territory live in fear that any accidental stumble could be their last.

In the Ghardabiya district south of Sirte, a former teacher still too scared of IS retribution to give his name, said that

with the group gone explosives were now his greatest fear and called on the international community to pitch in.

“We urgently need international mine-clearance organisations to come and check the areas around Sirte, especially in the desert areas, because there are just so many mines there,” he said. “We are afraid for our children and we are afraid for our future.”

Other areas already liberated from IS have begun to see the consequences of explosives left untended, with shepherds and herdsmen – whose livestock roam significant distances – in particular danger.

One shepherd from Bin Jawad, a town freed from IS in late May, has already fallen victim.

While searching for his sheep in late July, the shepherd drove over a suspected IS mine 10 kilometres south of the town. Local civil society activist Fadiel Fadel described the man – who sustained only minor injuries mainly from the shattered glass windows of his truck – as lucky, but said the incident showed the threat locals face.

As displaced former residents started to return to their homes after Bin Jawad was liberated, military engineering units dismantled IEDs left in homes but did not have the capacity to comb the outlying desert areas for mines, the activist explained.

“Mines are really dangerous and difficult, especially for farmers, and here we are looking at large areas that can’t be explored or cleared easily,” Fadel said. “The situation is quite critical and I don’t think Libya has the capacity to manage this problem alone.”

* Name changed for security concerns

A Libyan soldier shows a room in a former power station where IS was assembling bombs



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Army veteran Mick Quinn nominated for the Pride of Australia award

KATHRYN POWLEY, Sunday Herald Sun
October 8, 2016 8:00pm

AN army veteran with no law degree working from a cluttered office behind an op shop has become a powerful voice for ex-service men and women fighting for their entitlements.

Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association Victorian president Mick Quinn advocates for veterans dealing with the Veterans' Affairs Department.

The Pride of Australia nominee only takes on "harder end cases", often those incapacitated by psychological harm.

One of his worst examples was a man who served in infantry, then intelligence, then after discharge went on operations under contract.

"He came back from Iraq and had a breakdown," Mr Quinn said. The man suffered trauma watching a ground operation relayed from a camera on a drone.

His job was to tell those on the ground — including a close friend — what he could see. On the monitor he saw his friend blown up by an improvised explosive device. But

Veterans' Affairs said he did not qualify for payments because he didn't witness the death in person.

"He viewed this on the screen and it had an absolutely detrimental effect," he said.

Mr Quinn argued for a year and the man was awarded incapacity payments and compensation. He said the system lacked trust, goodwill and was adversarial and bureaucratic.

"It just goes on and on in terms of these ridiculous roadblocks that you just have to knock over as they're thrown at you as the case goes on," he said from his office behind the Aussie Veteran Op Shop in Boronia, which wife Fiona runs.

Mr Quinn served 21 years in army communications, including in Cambodia. He was "medically invalided out of the workplace" four years ago due to post traumatic stress disorder.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/army-veteran-mick-quinn-nominated-for-the-pride-of-australia-award/news-story/8756d5637dfd58586230b868b1c6098c> on 5 December 2016.



Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association Victorian president Mick Quinn advocates for veterans dealing with the Veterans' Affairs Department. Picture: David Smith



Master Seaman Boatswain Jason Pepin from HMCS Vancouver (left) and Able Seaman Electronics Technician Taylor Reid from HMAS Darwin clear debris from a road in Kaikoura township.

Below: Able Seaman Electronics Warfare Nicholas Bates (left) and Leading Seaman Electronics Technician Vincent Carroll cut shoring to reinforce a wall in the township of Kaikoura.



HMAS Darwin Concludes Assistance in Kaikoura Region

HMAS Darwin completed support to residents of the Kaikoura area following the earthquake that struck the South Island of New Zealand in mid-November.

The disaster relief stores flown by Australian and Coalition helicopters over the relief period included 13,000 kilograms of food, 2780kg of fruit and vegetables, 6000kg of rice, pasta and flour, four generators, two portable pumps and 10,000kg of pet food. The rail and state highway access into the popular tourist town had been cut as thousands of tonnes of rock and debris created landslides during the seismic action.

Initially rough seas and heavy rain prevented stores being flown into the town as the ships from Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada remained offshore.

“HMAS Darwin was diverted from her planned participation in the International Naval Review in Auckland and steamed to Kaikoura in response to a request from the New Zealand Government following the earthquake,” said the Minister for Defence, Senator Marise Payne at the conclusion of Darwin's task.

“The ship arrived in Kaikoura on Wednesday (16 Nov) evening. Her S-70B-2 Seahawk helicopter has been supporting the distribution of disaster relief stores over the past two days.”

Working with three other helicopters from Canada and the United States, the offload from New Zealand's amphibious sealift vessel, HMNZS Canterbury, into the damaged town was around 216 tonnes.

Minister Payne said HMAS Darwin provided a shore party of 23 to work alongside other Coalition partners in support of Civil Defence operational tasks including providing assistance into rural areas around Kaikoura which previously hadn't received relief.

“Additionally Darwin's ship's Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats assisted in the evacuation of 60 civilians from the town to HMNZS Canterbury,” Minister Payne said.

“Having HMAS Darwin already in New Zealand has enabled us to respond quickly to this request. The ship's company under Commander Phillip Henry have completed their tasks to the highest levels.”

Commanding Officer of HMAS Darwin Commander Phillip Henry (centre) with two members from HMAS Darwin arrive in Kaikoura to conduct discussions regarding ADF support to New Zealand earthquake recovery efforts.



Solomon Islands Aims to Rearm Police as Aust-led Peacekeepers Set to Leave



By Stefan Armbruster

As Australian-led peacekeeping mission RAMSI readies to leave the Solomon Islands, the South Pacific country faces the possibility of internal tensions being reignited.

The Solomon Islands is preparing to rearm its police force for the first time in 13 years as the Australian-led peacekeeping mission in the South Pacific region prepares to leave.

Rumours of renewed trouble that have surfaced on social media, including posts in the name of one of the country's most notorious militants, have been rejected by authorities as unfounded.

The Solomon Islands government is in talks with Australia over future security arrangements after more than \$2.6 billion was spent on maintaining the peace and rebuilding the Pacific island nation since 2003.

Australia led the 15 Pacific nations who participated in the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) to end five years of ethnic tensions over land that claimed the lives of hundreds of people and pushed the so-called 'Hapi Isles' to the verge of being a failed state.

"We have mixed feelings on this (RAMSI leaving). Some of us think it is too early, for me it's okay. We have reconciled the difficult parts and the real threat is over," said Father John Patteson Ngalihesi, chief advisor to the Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare.

"They have done great. The perspective ... is Australia is a saviour, they came in and saved this country, restored this country.

"Australia has done something, we need to pick up," Father Ngalihesi said.

The mission is due to end in June next year and one of its last goals is to oversee the rearmament of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF).

From 2003, in RAMSI's first year, the mission collected more than 4,000 guns from combatants, including about 1,000 weapons stolen from the police armouries, and disarmed the police after elements became partisan during the conflict.

The only armed force in the country, Australian-led RAMSI Participating Police Force (PPF), are less than 100-strong and local suspicions about the police linger.

"There are still concerns about the police force, and there are bound to be. We're slowly regaining the trust of the community," said RSIPF Commissioner Frank Prendergast, who will return to his post with the Australian Federal Police in Canberra later this year.

"The bulk of the Solomon Islands are supportive of rearmament in some form, because they recognise the need for an armed capacity.

"We're involved in limited rearmament of the RSIPF and that really is the final piece in the puzzle for us to say, 'We can police without assistance'," Commissioner Prendergast said.

Solomon police received extensive training from the RAMSI and now perform operational policing in the country, three years after the military component of the peacekeeping mission withdrew.

It is planned that only the public order and VIP protection units will be rearmed.

"We're talking pistols, shotguns and a very limited number of rifles, which are mainly for controlling crocodiles when they threaten communities," Commissioner Prendergast said.

"The final decision for rearmament is for the government and the plan is that it will occur before RAMSI finishes."

Australia has funded an armoury inside the Rove Police Headquarters in Honiara, where the weapons will eventually be kept.

Talks are also underway on how Australia will support the Solomons when RAMSI leaves.

In July, Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific Concetta Fierravanti-Wells flagged a "contingent of AFP based in Honiara" and for the Solomon to be able to access "emergency operational assistance".

During her first visit to the Solomons this month, and her first visit to the Pacific as minister since being appointed in



February, she played down expectations.

“We’re here to support in ways that Solomon Islands government needs us to support them,” said Senator Fierravanti-Wells.

“Can I say, at no stage were we going to put a police force in the Solomon Islands, I’d like to make that very clear. We will give post-RAMSI support, in terms of advisory capacity and a framework that is at the request and with the consent of the Solomon Islands government.”

The RAMSI legacy

The Solomon Islands is now one of the most aid dependent countries in the world.

“We’re friends and neighbours and we’re here to assist them as best we can,” said Senator Fierravanti-Wells.

“In due course that framework of the post-RAMSI presence will be announced.”

But the Solomon Islands is still recovering from the tensions. Militants and impacted villages continue to perform customary reconciliation ceremonies.

The trouble over land can be traced back to WWII when the United States used labourers from Malaita Island to build an airbase on nearby Guadalcanal, which then became the capital Honiara and home to many Malaitans.

“I think land is a big issue in the Solomon Islands, right through the country. The Solomon Islands government is working on long entrenched issues,” said Commissioner Prendergast.

“Are they going to cause us to go back? Not in my assessment.”

Tensions simmering?

RAMSI has been criticised that it just kept a lid on the problems that caused the “tensions” and they have not been resolved.

“They are problems that will have to be resolved by the people themselves, they are not problems that can be

solved by RAMSI,” said Father Ngalihesi.

Unfinished business remains over the use of an Australian-donated police patrol boat to strafe villages on Guadalcanal with its 50mm gun during the conflict.

“There are people who are still not reconciled, there are people who are still wounded, people who are traumatised. They speak out of no freedom, they speak out of fear, but when the trauma is healed, when they become peace builders, then there’ll be a national transformation, and people will speak about this country’s future with confidence,” said Father Ngalihesi.

“Our plan now in September is we’re going to make a big reconciliation on the Weather Coast (on Guadalcanal) for the patrol boat shooting.

“That is a hotspot. Once we do that, it’s over.”

Rumours resurface periodically about trouble returning when RAMSI leaves.

“When we hear rumours like that we take them very seriously, but we’re not finding anything to substantiate those rumours at the moment,” said commissioner Prendergast.

Countering the rumours

A Twitter account in the name of the conflict’s most notorious jailed militant, Harold Keke, has called for Guadalcanal people to rise up.

There is also talk that high-powered police weapons stolen during the tensions remain in the community.

“There’s a very low-level of gun crime in the Solomon,” said Commissioner Prendergast.

“There are less guns out there than people think, but there are more guns than I’m comfortable with. Intelligence says there are other firearms in the community that we’re not seeing.

“We’re very actively preparing to conduct another firearms amnesty and buy back to take more firearms out of the community, if they’re there.”



Retrieved from: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2016/08/24/solomon-islands-aims-rearm-police-aust-led-peacekeepers-set-leave> on 25th August 2016.

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DART-A Delivers Cyberspace Security

By Flight Lieutenant Eamon Hamilton

A HISTORIC Air Force Squadron is now at the leading edge of defending deployed units against cyberspace attacks.

Originally formed in 1942 as a bomber unit, No. 462 Squadron (462SQN) now forms part of the Air Warfare Centre's Directorate of Information Warfare.

It has now returned to operations, this time sending Deployable Assessment & Remediation Teams (DARTs) to the Middle East Region.

The first team – called DART-A – deployed in October and November 2016.

Officer in Charge of DART-A, Flying Officer Jordan Plotnek, said his team consisted of cyberspace security specialists focused on identifying vulnerabilities and risks.

"This is the first time an Air Force team has been deployed to look specifically at the cyberspace security of Air Force mission systems."

"Previously, we have conducted all security tasks on systems from within Australia prior to the systems' deployment.

"We've also previously contributed members to joint teams that have assessed deployed units."

Communication and Information Systems (CIS) are ubiquitous in modern operations, from daily administration, logistics and operational planning, through to aircraft maintenance support and mission systems.

All of these systems are viewed by opposing forces as valid targets for exploitation of information, denial of service, or outright attack.

"It's our role to ensure Air Force can conduct missions safely and securely, with limited impact from the cyberspace domain," Flying Officer Plotnek said.

"We conducted vulnerability, threat, and risk assessments of Air Force mission systems."

"DART-A's primary task whilst here is to give senior leaders the ability to understand and, if required, address any risks posed to air operations from the cyberspace domain,"

The DART is also intended to support existing CIS elements that form the backbone of deployed operations today.

"Although CIS and System Managers are responsible for maintaining their own cyberspace security posture on a routine basis, the 462SQN DART

teams provide subject matter expert advice," Flying Officer Plotnek said.

"We analyse the security posture of specific systems in order to help improve Air Force's cyberspace resilience at the system-level."

"In the rare cases where lapses in the cyberspace security posture of IT systems may be found, the team provides expert advice and assistance in remediating the issues as quickly as possible."

It's not the first time that 462SQN has stood at the forefront of providing cutting edge defence during operations.

Formed in 1942 in North Africa, 462SQN was soon using its Halifax four-engined bombers to fly some of the world's first airborne electronic warfare missions over Occupied Europe.

Crews were tasked with dropping large strips of aluminium foil that confused enemy radars and allowed large bomber formations to reach their targets.

The nature of 462SQN's work today could barely be imagined during the Second World War, however the squadron retains close historical links to its forebears.

"During the War, each 462SQN aircraft in the squadron had a letter for its identification – A for Able, B for Baker, and so on," Flying Officer Plotnek said.

"The second A in DART-A stands for 'Able', and is changed on each deployment in memory of 462SQN's history as a bomber squadron during World War Two."



Personnel from No.462 Squadron's Deployable Assessment and Remediation Team at (DART) Australia's main air operating base in the Middle East Region.

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Shelter for Strike Element Hornets

By Flight Lieutenant Eamon Hamilton

Shelter from the Middle Eastern sun is providing much-needed respite for F/A-18 Hornet maintainers deployed to Operation Okra.

A 4K Hangar – so named because it covers a surface area of 4000 square feet – was constructed at Australia’s main air operating base in the Middle East Region this year.

With flightline temperatures routinely exceeding 50 degrees Celsius during the summer, the hangar provides a climate-controlled facility that can accommodate a single Hornet.

This allows maintenance personnel to perform thorough servicing and repair work, according to Strike Element Senior Engineering Officer, Squadron Leader Aleisha Broadhead.

“The hangar is an excellent facility, and there were a lot of people who put time in to getting this up and ready,” Squadron Leader Broadhead said.

“Even though the weather has cooled down here somewhat, it’s fantastic because it gets the maintainers out of the heat and out of the sun.”

The hangar’s construction was undertaken by the Joint Task Force 633 Combat Support Unit, and Airfield Engineers from No. 65 Squadron.

It is an existing off-the-shelf design that includes a folding ‘door’, and an aluminium mat for flooring, providing a semi-rigid pavement whilst the Hornet is being serviced.

An example of the work conducted inside the hangar is servicing of the Hornet’s landing gear, which begins with maintainers using jacks to lift the 10.4 tonne empty weight of the aircraft off the hangar floor.

Originally designed to endure the stresses of aircraft carrier landings with the United States Navy, the Hornet

has benefited from a robust construction compared to its fighter stablemates.

Routine checks and servicing however is required to ensure each Australian Hornet remains battle-ready in the Middle East.

The hangar provides the workforce with a more comfortable working environment, and removes the distractions of a busy flightline, allowing them to concentrate on the job at hand.

“The maintenance workforce works extremely hard – 12 hour shifts, covering 24 hours per day, six days a week,” Squadron Leader Broadhead said.

“There is a significant amount of experience with keeping these jets in the air.”

“We have a myriad of people, from those who have worked on Hornets for their whole careers, some others who have come from other aircraft types and they bring a wealth of experience as well.”

The oldest Australian Hornet in the Middle East Region was accepted by the RAAF in November 1985.

Under Operation Okra, the Hornets with Air Task Group 630’s Strike Element will routinely fly missions of up to nine hours to the skies of Syria and Iraq.

They are relied upon to deliver precision air strikes against Daesh ground targets, supporting the ground campaign by Iraqi Security Forces.

“There is no doubt that the jets are performing excellently over here,” Squadron Leader Broadhead said.

“The Hornets have been operating for up to 30 years now, so we are very used to working with them.”

“We speak with our aircrew all of the time and they are really impressed and happy with our performance.”

Maintenance Personnel from the Air Task Group 630 Strike Element tow an F/A-18A Hornet in to the 4K Hangar at Australia’s main air operating base in the Middle East Region.



UN Bolsters Peacekeeping in South Sudan Despite Government's Objections

By RICK GLADSTONE AUG. 12, 2016

Soldiers with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in Juba last month. United Nations soldiers and aid workers have been repeatedly harassed and attacked, and in some cases killed. Credit Eric Kanalstein/U.N. Mission in Sudan, via Associated Press

The United Nations Security Council took vigorous action on Friday to greatly strengthen a peacekeeping force in South Sudan, the world's youngest country, ravaged by civil war and suffering for nearly three years. The South Sudanese government immediately vowed not to cooperate.

A resolution, passed by an 11-to-0 vote with four abstentions, basically gives the United Nations far more authority in South Sudan, backed by thousands of additional troops and lethal force if needed, to protect civilians and pressure armed antagonists in the conflict — including government soldiers. It also threatens to impose an arms embargo on the country.

The Security Council's approval came as the mandate of the current peacekeeping operation, known as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, or UNMISS, was about to expire. UNMISS has not been effective, as a peace agreement has been repeatedly ignored.

The resolution, sponsored by the United States, represents an unusually robust action by the Council, invoking its rarely used coercive power to militarily intervene when international peace and security are considered to be threatened.

David Pressman, an American ambassador at the United Nations who attended the vote, criticized the South Sudanese government for what he described as actions that had crippled UNMISS's ability to operate.

"Until the leaders of South Sudan are willing to put what is good for their people before themselves — putting peace ahead of personal ambition and power — and until they show the will to find a political solution to this grinding conflict, the people of South Sudan will continue to suffer from the bloodshed and instability their leaders wreak," Mr. Pressman said after the resolution was approved.

South Sudan's government opposed the strengthened peacekeeping mission, raising the possibility of clashes between the country's armed forces and foreign soldiers deployed there by the United Nations.

Reacting to the resolution, a spokesman for President





Salva Kiir of South Sudan, Ateny Wek Ateny, was quoted by Reuters as saying: “That is very unfortunate, and we are not going to cooperate on that because we will not allow our country to be taken over by the U.N.”

Under the resolution, the United Nations’ mission will be extended for at least three months, and a new 4,000-soldier “regional protection force” will be deployed in Juba, the capital, and other strategic locations, including the airport.

The new force represents an increase of over 30 percent in armed personnel for the United Nations mission of 12,000 troops, which has been unable to stop episodic bouts of killing and abuses, including widespread rape, by both government forces and rebel factions.

United Nations soldiers and aid workers have been repeatedly harassed and attacked, and in some cases killed. Thousands of South Sudanese civilians, fearing for their lives, have been living in United Nations sites in Juba and other locations.

The resolution specifies that the new force, which diplomats said would mostly be drawn from neighboring countries, will be authorized to “promptly and effectively engage any actor that is credibly found to be preparing attacks, or engages in attacks, against United Nations protection of civilians sites, other United Nations premises, United Nations personnel, international and national humanitarian actors, or civilians.”

The resolution does not impose an arms embargo on South Sudan, as Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, some member states and outside advocates, including international rights groups, had wanted.

But in what was intended as a coercive step, the resolution allows an arms embargo to be imposed if the government does not cooperate.

The resolution’s failure to achieve a unanimous approval of the 15-member Security Council partly reflected the

difficulties it has often faced in deciding on any action involving the use of military force.

Russia, China, Egypt and Venezuela, the Council members that abstained, had criticized some provisions in the resolution. Russia and China in particular have been reluctant to take actions that they view as incursions on another country’s sovereignty.

Still, the Russians and Chinese did not feel strongly enough to exercise their veto power, which both have as permanent Security Council members.

South Sudan’s promise as a newly independent state in 2011 devolved into civil war two years later, and has left tens of thousands dead and more than 2.3 million people displaced.

Soldiers loyal to President Kiir — who belongs to the Dinka ethnic group, South Sudan’s largest — battled troops led by Riek Machar of the Nuer ethnic group, which is believed to be the second largest.

Troops on both sides committed human rights abuses against civilians on a devastating scale, United Nations human rights officials and other groups have found.

A peace deal officially ended the fighting last year. Mr. Machar, who had served as vice president before he was dismissed in 2013, agreed to become Mr. Kiir’s deputy again and returned to Juba in April.

But fighting broke out again between the two sides on July 7, killing hundreds. Mr. Machar’s residence was destroyed and he fled the capital. He has refused to return to Juba until more international troops are deployed.

Retrieved: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/13/world/africa/united-nations-mission-south-sudan.html?WT.mc_id=SmartBriefs-Newsletter&WT.mc_ev=click&ad-keywords=smartbriefs&_r=0 on 19 August 2016.

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Always Time for Training

By Squadron Leader Bruce Chalmers

Being busy over Mosul supporting Iraqi Security Forces doesn't take away opportunities for "on the job training" which is exactly what elements of the Air Task Group have been doing with their US counterparts with mixed multi-tanker formation flying.

Multi-tanker formation flying is an important part of operations and four Number 75 Squadron F/A-18A Hornet aircraft, a Number 33 Squadron KC-30A Multi-Role Refuelling Tanker and a United States KC-10 Air to Air Refuelling tanker recently undertook the training activity en-route to tasks required by Iraqi Security Forces, which saw our Hornets attack Daesh positions.

The six aircraft departed the main operating airbase together flying in formation until arrival on station over the Mosul area, where the RAAF Hornets undertook their tasks for Iraqi Security Forces, and the US tanker moved to its station to refuel its allocated aircraft for the rest of the mission.

"Formation flying allows simultaneous refuel and transfer of large quantities of fuel," said Squadron Leader T, pilot of the RAAF KC-30A.

"It is practiced to provide, when necessary, mutual support in case of system failure.

"If one tanker had a problem another tanker is immediately available reducing significantly the chance of mission failure on critical missions.

"It also allows for expeditious departure and arrival of a large number of aircraft simultaneously.

With multiple refuels between takeoff and landing there are ample opportunities for formation flying training to take place, which is helpful, as United States Air Force pilots must fly three formation departures every six months to maintain currency.

With crew exchange arrangements in place between the United States Air Force and RAAF, the formation assists in reinforcing the already strong interoperability and cooperation structures built at exercises and now in theatre.

"Together we are developing Tanker Formation Standards and this training exercise is also helping develop and maintain our own expertise in all forms of tanker Air to Air Refuelling operations," said Squadron Leader T.

"The things learnt from this event will allow Air Force to refine and further develop the standards which will enable similar activities to occur more easily in the future.

"While we may not use these skills on this operation, other than in training, they are skills that are needed.

"For instance, when flying over a land mass as large as Australia, can you imagine if there was a problem with one tanker's refuelling drogue?"

"Flying in formation with another tanker makes it immediately available to refuel the accompanying aircraft and mission failure is avoided," he said.

The ability of the RAAF KC-30A to refuel a number of its own and foreign aircraft adds to the already sound reputation Air Force has within the US led coalition in the Middle East Region.

Personnel from The Royal Australian Air Force TG 630.1.3 Air Mobility Element in front of a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport after completing the first formation departure with the United States Air Force (USAF) at Australia's main air operating base in the Middle East on 25 October 2016. The USAF's KC-10 Extenders and the Royal Australian Air Force KC-30A are providing refueling support to several coalition airframes working to liberate the city of Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Tyler Woodward)



APPVA National Conference in Townsville, 13-15 October 2016

Amanda Rishworth's speech

Address to the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association National Conference. 14 Oct 2016

Thank you for the invitation to speak today at this important conference; it is a pleasure to be with you all.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners on whose land we meet, the Bindal People and the Wulgurukaba People.

I'd also like to acknowledge the following:

- The President of the APPVA, Mr Allan Thomas JP
- Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, and my Parliamentary Colleague, the Hon. Dan Tehan MP
- Representing, Commander General Health, Air Vice Marshall Tracy Smart; Director General Mental Health, Psychology and Rehabilitation, David Morton
- And all the members of the APPVA who are here today.

I am delighted to be here to introduce myself in my new role as Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel. I was particularly honoured to be appointed to this role in July because I believe government has a duty of care for those who have served their country and have put their life on the line for us all.

This conference offers a unique opportunity for engagement – on a variety of issues which are relevant to the peacekeepers and peacemakers veteran's community. I would like to recognise the strong representation which the APPVA provides to its members with routine input into relevant Parliamentary and other inquiries; it is your active involvement which ensures that we as legislators hear your voice and perspective.

Your perspective is important, after all, you are at the coal face. You are, or have, worked through the system, for yourself, or advocating for others, and you have invaluable firsthand knowledge. I look forward to hearing about your experiences and what you feel works and what you think could be improved.

I am a firm believer in the importance of an open two way dialogue and I very much look forward to working together to achieve our shared goal of assisting those whose service has left them in need of ongoing support.

Firstly I would like to emphasise how important I believe the portfolio of Veterans' Affairs is. My brother recently left the RAAF after serving 15 years and completing tours in Afghanistan, Iraq and East Timor.

Those that have served our country deserve respect for their service as well as world class care and support.

Peacekeeping and Peacemaking

The list of peacekeeping missions Australia has been

involved in is longer than I have time for, and could be spoken about at length, but I wouldn't be telling you anything you didn't already know.

I would like to again express my deepest gratitude to the peacekeeping and peacemaking community for their personal sacrifices to restore peace around the world.

With over 70,000 Australians who have been involved in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations since 1947, it is important we recognise their important role of providing the transition from conflict to peace, an incredibly unique task of our peacemakers and keepers.

As you would be aware Australia has had peacekeepers in the field with the United Nations continuously for over 50 years. Australia has a distinguished record in all respects and the particular role that it has been called upon to play in both peacekeeping and peacemaking.

The APPVA has been a strong voice for those returning from peacekeeping and peacemaking. Unfortunately, part of your service in peacekeeping does not always come without consequence.

In their efforts to create peace, peacekeepers are exposed to the dangerous conflicts around them. Unfortunately, peacekeepers are not exempt from the impacts of war, often finding themselves in confronting situations, at times finding themselves the target of attacks.

As we know, wounds are not just physical; they can be psychological as well.



The Shadow spokesperson for Veterans' Affairs, Amanda Rishworth, MP, presents to the members at the APPVA National Conference in Townsville

The burden of witnessing atrocities beyond the imagination; the Rwanda Genocide - as one example - is a testament to this. We know these sights can rightly affect people differently and can come at the cost of mental health.

Overall, 30 per cent of peacekeepers who served in missions during 1989-2002 suffer from at least one mental health condition, including higher levels of PTSD. And in the case of Rwanda even higher levels of suffering. We know these psychological wounds are just as incapacitating as physical wounds and can lead to complex social problems, including family breakdown, unemployment, homelessness and suicide.

Veterans' Suicide

When it comes to suicide, one life lost to suicide is one too many. It is a tragic end if we do not address mental illness and social stressors.

Early intervention is critical to prevent issues getting to crisis point. As a former psychologist I have seen that good social psychological treatment and strong social support can lead to recovery from the most debilitating mental illness.

Addressing mental illness as an impact of war and other operations is a challenging area with many of our ex-service personnel suffering in silence.

There is a stigma about mental illness which we need to overcome if we want to move forward. Combating stigma around mental illness is critical to ensure that returning veterans can ask for help. Raising awareness and supporting families is also critical as they provide encouragement to seek help.

Asking for help is a critical step but they then need to adopt support.

It is important that veterans who are currently struggling with mental health issues are adequately supported. I am particularly concerned about recent reports which were highlighted by the Townsville Bulletin that veterans are being told there is a cap on the number of counselling sessions they can access.

This is a stark contradiction to the Department's claims that these services are demand driven, not capped. I believe that we need to ensure that there is a consistent message given to our veteran community about supporting their mental health.

The issue of equal access across the country to mental health services for our veteran community has also been raised with me.

For veterans not living in our big cities, access to support services are limited and in some cases non-existent. If veterans aren't able to access support services early on and as needed, problems exacerbate and can lead to crisis. It is vital we are able to support our veterans before they reach a tipping point, not only for them, but also for their families.

Labor has welcomed the Government's announcement the National Mental Health Commission will analyse the effectiveness of suicide and self-harm prevention services

provided by Defence and DVA.

There is no doubt that we need to do better in treating mental health and implementing suicide prevention for our veterans as well as our current service men and women. However, if we do not properly understand the extent of the problem we cannot start to address it in a comprehensive way. The rate of veterans suicide and the way in which it is recorded continues to raise concerns within the veterans community and wider public.

Labor noted the lack of comprehensive data or the 'under-reporting' of veterans' suicide, which has been of particular concern. The DVA is only officially notified of the suicide of a veteran through a dependant's compensation claim process.

Part of Labor's pre-election policy, was our commitment to working with States and Territories to build an accurate picture of deaths by suicide and suicide attempts and agree to a national minimum data set for suicide prevention.

Furthermore, there is currently no comprehensive system to collect data that allows governments and service providers to identify homeless veterans. To address this information gap, Labor made the pre-election policy to address a national minimum data set.

If we are able to realise and identify an accurate picture of the level of veterans' suicide and homelessness, we can ensure services meet the needs of our veteran community.

Such a policy would support future development and better targeting of existing veterans' support and services, as well as providing a benchmark against which prevention initiatives can be assessed.

Transition from the ADF can be complex. We need to do better at helping ADF member's transition to civilian life once they have decided to leave - whether that is support with employment, in finding appropriate health services or finding housing. There needs to be a greater focus on the transition process, as it can be complex and unfriendly during a time which personnel require support. Complexities during transition can exacerbate any overwhelming feelings intensely and can affect mental health. For a member leaving as a result of medical condition, transition can be even more difficult.

A reoccurring theme in conversations I have had with veterans' is concerns about the claims process through DVA. Time and time again it has been raised with me that the claims process is complicated and can be difficult for someone who has been medically discharged or has some medical problems as a result of service.

In addition, the adversarial nature of the claims process, issues around processing delays, disclosure of private information, and overpayment of entitlements and continued high level of complaints undermine confidence.

It is for this reason Labor committed prior to the election to undertake a First Principles Review of Veterans' Affairs.

Our proposal for a First Principles Review, was a holistic, end to end review of the Department, based on a set of agreed upon first-principles. The review would examine the Department and seek to rectify administrative, governance

and process failings, to ensure the department is able to meet existing and future challenges in a clear and efficient manner.

Most importantly, this review would help to re-establish the veterans' and their representative organisations trust in DVA. It would ensure we have a system in place which works for the people who need it the most and put our veterans first.

I believe a First Principles Review would help identify a pathway to a less adversarial claims process.

Labor will always encourage and support measures designed to ensure that existing programs take account of the mental health requirements of veterans. We are always prepared to talk to all sides of parliament about how we can best support our veterans'.

That is why Labor supported the recent establishment of a Senate Inquiry into suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel. With submissions now closed, this Inquiry is due to report to the Senate by the end of March next year.

Inquiries and reviews into mental health are important to understand the extent of the problem and shine a light on a topic not easily solved. However, it is also important that we take practical steps to help our veterans.

I believe it is our duty to assist our veterans, who put their lives on hold to serve our country. And for those whose lives are never the same again, who are no longer able to live their lives in the same way, we owe not only our gratitude but our unwavering support for them into the future.

In closing I would like to thank you again for having me here today. I would like to acknowledge those who are on peacekeeping missions at the moment, as we assist the United Nations in with its mission in the Republic of South Sudan and look forward to their safe return.

I look forward to continuing our discussions about how we can work collaboratively to improve the lives of our veterans, particularly those from the peacekeeping and peacemaking community.

Thank you.

Dan Tehan, MP Speech

Can I start by saying to you all: thank-you very much for what you do on behalf of the veterans' community.

Often we don't take the time to sit back and acknowledge the people who are prepared to volunteer their time for very, very important and worthwhile causes.

So can I just start by saying 'thank you' for what you do, on behalf of our country and on behalf of our veterans.

As an organisation, you play a very important role and that needs to be acknowledged. I thank you for the engagement that you've had with me since I became Minister – there has been frank feedback from you, and that is what I expect in this role.

Today I would like to talk about what have been my priorities since taking on this portfolio — and there's really been two key priorities.



The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Mr Dan Tehan responds to answers from the members of the Conference.

When I became Minister for Veterans' Affairs the first thing I wanted to do was get out into the veterans' community and with the ESOs and hear about the issues that you think need addressing.

And there were two major pieces of feedback I got back from those consultations.

The first was concerns around the length of time it was taking to process claims and the other piece of feedback was concerns about how mental health issues were being dealt with, particularly in regard to younger veterans.

So in this year's budget we started a process of focusing on those two issues. You would have seen in the budget there was a very important change in direction on how we deal with mental health. As of 1 July, if you have served one day as a permanent member of the ADF, you are now eligible to get free mental health treatment for PTSD, depression, anxiety and alcohol and substance abuse disorders. DVA will send you what is called a White Card that can be used to pay for your treatment and the idea of this is to take the stress out of the claims process. This treatment is called 'non-liability health care' which means to claim the cost of treatment for those conditions, you don't have to prove it was related to your service.

The second thing I've focused on are the issues related to the claims process. The fact of the matter is that DVA has been operating using an IT system – a computer system – that is out-of-date. It's still in part paper based and in the 21st century we need to change that, so we have provided about \$48 million towards a first phase redesign of the DVA IT system.

In my view this will be the single biggest change to DVA since it came into existence. We're going to be able to revolutionise how DVA operates by redesigning the IT system which is

absolutely fundamental for a department operating in the 21st century. As part of that process the Department has been engaging with ESOs and the veterans community and asking them, 'in the new IT system, how should this work? How should this operate?'

Now the first phase involved the design of the transformation process. The next phase, which is the build, gets a little bit more complex. What I want to get out of next year's budget is a lump sum of money that will probably be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

What I need is your help and support, as I do from all the ex-service organisations, to make a convincing case to the government that this is the next step and this is what we need to do.

Being very frank, this is work that should have been done ten years ago, but it's been put off and put off by both sides of politics.

But the time has come that DVA is given the proper tools to deliver its support and services in the 21st century. We need to do it and we need to get started on that process straight away.

That's why I need your support and the support of all the ex-service organisations and the veterans' community to push for change.

I have got to prosecute and win that battle within Government for this project because there are many competing interests within every government and many of them are worthwhile and deserving of support, but this DVA upgrade, to me, is critically important.

If we can, together, get an outcome we will be able to stand very proud and say we have set up the Department of Veterans' Affairs to deliver support for our veterans in the future.

So that's what we did in the budget this year.

I also want to touch on a couple of our election commitments.

We've given \$6 million towards the Centenary Institute with Phoenix Australia to do work into PTSD and veterans' mental health because, and I've seen this first hand as a local member of Parliament in western Victoria, we need to make sure that our doctors across the country understand how to deal with the specific issues of veterans who come to them for help.

We need to make sure doctors are properly educated and that is what Phoenix Australia is embarking on — to undertake world-leading research into best practice that can be taken out to doctors on the ground so they have the knowledge and understanding of how to help veterans who come to them.

Recently we introduced legislation into Parliament on the single appeal pathway. This is about, once again, reducing claims time and ensuring that we have a process that makes it easier for our veterans. This legislation was designed to do just that.

So making the claims process easier and improving access to mental health support are the two issues I am focused on. They are not the only issues, and work continues to improve DVA across the board, but those are the two issues that are the priorities that I, as Minister, want to deliver on.

I thank you, the Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans Association, once again for what you do on behalf of our veterans.



www.peacekeepers.asn.au

APPVA National Committee holds Annual Conference in Townsville 13-15 October 2016

The APPVA NATCOM ventured north this year for the Annual National Conference and AGM. Thursday was a day of Advocacy discussions and workshop, hosted by Allan Thomas, with Mick Quinn and Rod Thompson. On Friday the National Conference began with a short service at the Thuringowa RSL Cenataph, where the attendees paid their respects to those Peacekeepers who have fallen and since passed on. The Conference was conducted with a range of VIPs visiting and speaking including: The Minister for Veterans' Affairs Dan Tehan; Shadow Spokesperson for Veterans' Affairs Amanda Rishworth. Defence Mental Health Director David Morton gave a very informative presentation on ADF Health initiatives and studies. The Conference was well attended, whilst members enjoyed the hospitality of Townsville. Minutes are available by request to the National Secretary, Kevin Ryan JP.



The Annual National President's Award went to Liz Hill JP, for her dedicated service to the NSW/ACT Branch as an Administrative Officer and Far North Coast Welfare Officer.



APPVA AGM Delegates and Members.



At the APPVA National AGM on Saturday 15 October, in Townsville, the National President, Mr Allan Thomas awarded Life membership to Mrs Fiona Quinn (APPVA Victorian Branch Treasurer) and Mr Bruce Relph (APPVA NSW Branch President), for 10 years of dedicated service as Committee Members to the APPVA.



The National Committee of Management [NATCOM] Certificates of Appreciation went to John "Jock" O'Connor, and Kim Miniken for their exemplary service in raising funds for the APPVA QLD Veteran Centre.

Events

Notice of Activities for the 70th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping Service and the APPVA National Conference and AGM 10-16 September 2017.

From discussions with the Deputy Chair of the APMPC and again discussion to follow with DVA Commemorations Branch, we found that our dates for the APPVA National Conference and National AGM will clash with some other activities that has already been put into place in Canberra during the week 11-16 September 2017.

Another limiting factor is that Floriade in Canberra commences on 16 September and runs for that week

Please note the following Dates and Activities planned for the APPVA National Conference and 70th Anniversary Activities during the period 10 – 16 September 2016.

Sunday, 10th September 2017: Bump-In. APPVANATCOM members arrive PM. Set-up of the Conference facility to occur late Sunday afternoon/evening.

Monday, 11th September 2017: The APPVA National Conference (Details TBA);

Tuesday, 12th September: National AGM & Elections (Details TBA);

Wednesday 13th September: A reception at Government House linked to the Dedication of the Peacekeeping Memorial, with the Governor General (GG), His Excellency General Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC.

1. APPVA have been requested to advise of desired VIP to attend, along with a list of members to attend.
2. It is recommended that Our National Patron, MAJGEN Ian Gordon AO (Retired); & the Immediate past National Patron MAJGEN (Professor) John Pearn AO, RFD (Retired); and
3. The National Executive and State Branch Heads attend (?NATCOM?). Notification of names needs to be in advance.

Activity for those Members who are unable to attend GG Reception is the Last Post at the AWM, along with the Projection of Images on the AWM Rampart. Previous admission to view the Special Peacekeeper Exhibit set-up to commemorate the 70th Anniversary.

There will also be a National Press Club Guest Speaker to talk about International Relations, Conflict Resolution and International Peacekeeping; in order to coincide with the 70th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping Operations. This is usually a lunchtime event going up to 1430h. There may be a place for an APPVA Member to attend, representing the APPVA. TBC.

Thursday 14th September. The Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary and the Dedication of the National Peacekeeping Memorial.

1. A Parade is proposed with all groups of various deployments since 1947 onward. It is proposed that individual placards are produced with individuals who served in the various operations e.g. East Timor, Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda etc, march behind the

placards. This will demonstrate the large number of operations that Australia has contributed troops toward International Peace, Security and Stability.

2. ? Perhaps include the Old APPVA Banner, which has a large list of operations on it ?
3. There will then be the Dedication at the Memorial Site. It is planned to have a fly past of Aircraft and the Australian Federation Guard (AFG) to perform Ceremonial Duties.
4. The GG has been requested to Dedicate the Peacekeeping Memorial.
5. After the event, Lions Club will have refreshments available.

Last Post Service at the AWM will be for a lost ADF member who died on Peacekeeping Service. This will occur approx. 1700-1730.

Friday 15th September. UNAA AGM, and APPVA 20th Anniversary Dinner.

1. UNAA has invited all APPVA members to the UNAA AGM. If interested, please provide name. It would be a courteous gesture of the APPVA to send a Representative(s) to this UNAA Conference, as the Official Representative of the APPVA.
2. Other suggested activities would be to visit the Preparation of Floriade in Canberra, see the sights, visit APH etc.
3. A Reception of the UNAA with the GG will occur. At this stage, this conflicts with the APPVA 20th Anniversary Dinner, unless we wish to send along an interested Representative of the APPVA to attend this Reception and they will be able to attend the Dinner a little later?
4. The APPVA 20th Anniversary Dinner is to occur this evening. Preparation will be required several hours prior to the time of guests arriving. Therefore a working party is needed to assist in the set-up during Friday afternoon.

Saturday 16th September. Bump-Out or Return Home.

1. Floriade in Canberra opens.
2. Closure of the UNAA Conference in Canberra.
3. Limited Accommodation from this time.
4. Flights returning to home are suggested to be cheaper, due to influx into Canberra for Floriade.

Of note: Depending upon the finances of the APPVA National in the FY 17/18, it may have to be decided whether or not that the costs of travel and accommodation for NATCOM members is supplemented, rather than paid in full, due to the extended period of the activities of the 70TH Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping, the 20th Anniversary of the APPVA and the Dedication of the Peacekeeping Memorial. The period of activities will extend for up to 6 nights upon the proposed arrival on 10 September and departure 16 September 2017.

2017 presents a highly demanding year for the APPVA, particularly with The APPVA National Events Manager Lucy Wong and the APPVA Representative to the APMPC, of which we will be seeking APPVA assistance with the heavy lifting.

Further information will be disseminated as information comes to hand.

Yours in the Service of Peace,
Paul Copeland.



Above : HMAS Perth shows support for Aussie Hero Quilts in Muscat, Oman.

Below :Air Task Group Strike Element personnel, Sergeant Craig More (left) and Sergeant Tom O'Neil on the flight line of Australia's main air operating base in the Middle East region.



Quilts have Deployed Personnel Covered

LEUT Ryan Zerbe (author), Used with acknowledgement to Navy Daily

Canberra base, HMAS Harman, welcomed representatives from 'Aussie Hero Quilts (and Laundry Bags)' during reception at the Bonshaw Mess recently to thank them for their support to members deployed overseas.

The reception brought together representatives from around Australia to express their appreciation to volunteers from the group, with many attendees having received a handmade quilt or laundry bag while on operations.

The quilts and bags are hand crafted by the volunteers and sent to personnel serving overseas, bringing comfort and a reminder their service is making Australia proud.

Retired Rear Admiral Trevor Jones highlighted the significant achievements Aussie Hero Quilts had made in recent years.

"Aussie Hero Quilts has become an iconic organisation among Australian Defence Force personnel serving on operations as well as those suffering serious illness," Rear Admiral Jones said.

"The quilts, lovingly embroidered, often to each individuals' desire, become family heirlooms which offer, in many instances, operational memorabilia of more personal significance than the campaign medals accompanying operational service."

Rear Admiral Jones described the wonder, joy, gratitude and sense of purpose which passes across the face of each recipient when they open their quilt for the first time and show them off to their mates.

Aussie Hero Quilts was founded in 2012 by Jan-Maree Ball who had previously made and sent personalised laundry bags to a team of soldiers deployed in Afghanistan.

"Aussie Hero Quilts is a community based organisation that makes and sends personalised quilts and laundry bags to our deployed men and women serving overseas to say thank you for your service and the sacrifice that service asks of you and your loved ones." Ms Ball said.

"This is a rare opportunity for my Aussie Hero Friends to get a better understanding of the impact of their quilts and laundry bags on our deployed men and women first hand."

Rear Admiral Brett Wolski, Head People Capability and Chair of the Navy Relief Trust Fund, and Warrant Officer of the Navy Gary Wright, presented Ms Ball with a cheque for \$2,000 in recognition of Aussie Hero Quilts and its volunteers' hard work. The funds were from a grant approved by Keeping Watch, the Navy's official charity.

Ms Ball was thrilled to receive the funds, which will be used to make many more quilts for personnel serving overseas.

Ms Jan-Maree Ball (centre), founder of Aussie Hero Quilts, with RAAF Base Richmond personnel and several custom made quilts following a morning tea held on the Base.



Trijicon Machine Gun Reflex Sight

For more than 25 years, U.S. and International Armed Forces have relied on Trijicon's brilliant aiming solutions in magnified and reflex optics. In life-and-death situations, soldiers know they can depend on their Trijicon optics to provide precision, durability and dependability. With the introduction of the Machine Gun Reflex Sight (MGRS), machine-gunners can rest easy with the knowledge that their optics will perform with traditional Trijicon superiority.

The inherent abuse from the jarring, rapid recoil produced by fixed and turret-mounted machine guns is tough on regular optics, making existing units less than reliable. But the new MGRS is created to withstand the constant, violent battering. Forged out of 7075-T6 aluminum, which is 80 percent stronger than more commonly used 6061 material, the MGRS allows machine-gunners to achieve first round hits on target and follow-up shots remain accurate, day or night. The MGRS features a large objective lens with a 3-inch-by-2 inch viewing area and a 35 MOA segmented circle reticle. Centered within the reticle is a 3 MOA dot for precise aiming. Segmented circle designs provide the ability to quickly acquire and maintain holds on targets from close combat to extended ranges. The unit is powered by a single CR123A battery mounted at the front of the housing to provide more than 1,000 hours of continuous operation, and an optional three-power magnifier is available for accuracy at longer ranges.

The MGRS offers seven brightness settings, two facilitating the use of night-vision optics and five providing amplification for current conditions, including a super-brilliant setting for bright daylight.

Zeroing is easy with 1 MOA adjustment increments and 100 MOA total travel of adjustment. Trijicon provides two interchangeable range knobs at the rear of the housing that are ballistically calibrated for use on the M240 and M2 machine guns. When properly zeroed to the weapon platform, the range

knob allows the user to dial the correct range as a mechanical Bullet Drop Compensation (BDC) for accurate engagements.

Like all Trijicon products, the MGRS is built for battlefield use, waterproof up to 2 meters and dry-nitrogen filled to prevent fogging. It's easy to maintain and resistant to corrosion and chemicals. The MGRS is backed by a 5-year warranty from the manufacture date.

MGRS Quick Facts:

Magnification: 1x

Sight Window: 3.0 – 2.0 inches

Adjustment Range: 100

MOA Total Travel

Dimensions: 8.78 X 4.17 x 5.22 inches

Weight: 66.9 ounces

Illumination Source: LED Powered by CR123A (Lithium Battery)

Battery Life: More than 1,000 hours of continuous use (brightness setting 6 of 7 at 70-degrees Fahrenheit)

Brightness Settings: 7 Settings (2 Night Vision, 5 Day Settings)

Parallax: Parallax-Free

Corrosion: All materials and coatings are corrosion- and chemical-resistant

Waterproof: 6.6-feet (2 meters)



For more information on the Trijicon MGRS and the complete array of Brilliant Aiming Solutions™ for the military and law enforcement markets, contact Trijicon, Inc. at (248) 960-7700 or visit www.trijicon.com.



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South Sudan: Politics, Protection and Peacekeeping

23 Aug 2016 Lisa Sharland

On 12 August, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2304 authorising the deployment of a further 4,000 troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) as part of a regional protection force. The mandate shift took place amidst recent reports of yet more failures by peacekeepers to come to the aid of civilians. Unfortunately, unlike many UN peacekeeping mandates, the Council wasn't united in its approach. Russia, China, Venezuela and Egypt all abstained on the resolution. It's not the first time there have been differences of opinion over the mandate for UNMISS. Yet the growing chasm within the Council comes at a time when UNMISS is being tasked to do even more to secure South Sudan's capital, Juba, and protect the civilian population.

The latest outbreak of violence in South Sudan erupted in the capital, Juba, just days prior to the five year anniversary of independence for the world's newest country on 11 July. For most of the population of South Sudan—some 12 million people—there was very little to celebrate anyway. The country has been trying to extricate itself from a violent civil war since December 2013, which has resulted in the displacement of more than 1.6 million civilians internally, forced more than 700,000 to flee across the borders, and resulted in between 160,000 to 200,000 civilians seeking protection at UN sites across the country at any one time. Horrific atrocities and human rights abuses have been inflicted on the civilian population. This has been compounded by an acute humanitarian emergency, with estimates that 4.8 million people are food insecure.

This isn't the first time that the Security Council has tried to draw South Sudan back from the precipice. Following the outbreak of civil war in December 2013, the Security Council increased the size of the mission and significantly reconfigured it to focus primarily on protection of civilians. Yet the mission continued to limp along in the absence of any political solution to the ongoing conflict until August 2015, when the two major protagonists—President Salva Kiir and the now deposed First Vice-President Riek Machar—eventually signed onto an agreement that would provide a political pathway forward to resolve the largely ethnic-based conflict. The mission mandate was then extensively adjusted again. But not surprisingly, commitment to the agreement wavered from the outset and sporadic fighting continued. That reached boiling point on 7 July 2016 with brutal armed clashes in the capital forcing yet more civilians to flee.

Resolution 2304 is the latest attempt by the Security Council to coerce the Government of South Sudan to resolve the conflict within its borders. However, the UN has been backed into a difficult corner. The political situation is far from conducive to a UN peacekeeping mission. As Aditi Gorur and I note in this report following our visit to South

Sudan last year, efforts by UNMISS to move about the country are frequently obstructed by parties to the conflict. Notwithstanding these significant challenges, however, the mission remains the default tool to provide some measure of physical protection for the civilian population. Yet unfortunately even those efforts have been significantly flawed.

Despite protection of civilians being part of the mandate since UNMISS deployed in July 2011, peacekeepers are still failing to respond when civilians come under attack. This has had tragic consequences in South Sudan, not only for the local population but also for foreign aid workers. Adjusting the mandate alone won't respond to these deficits in the mission. If UNMISS is to be effective when it comes to protecting civilians, then UN personnel need to be held accountable when they fail to intervene. And that message will only be sent if under-performing troop and police contributors are repatriated home when they fail to act.

But this again presents another problem for the mission. It now needs to generate an additional 4,000 military personnel to fulfil the new mission mandate of 17,000 troops. Past experience has shown that will be difficult. When the mission reconfigured in December 2013, efforts to generate an additional 5,500 military personnel were still underway nearly two years later. While recent UN peacekeeping summits have shown that countries are willing to engage, force generation efforts are likely to be compounded by the difficult relationship with the Government of South Sudan, as well as ongoing concerns among contributing countries about the volatile security situation on the ground.

Ultimately a UN peacekeeping mission isn't the solution to the conflict in South Sudan. Political pressure needs to be brought to bear on the protagonists to fully implement the peace agreement. The arms embargo threatened in resolution 2304 could provide the necessary coercive 'stick'. But that will require two items in short supply—a degree of political unity in the Council and regional willingness to implement the embargo.

In the absence of any political solution in South Sudan, UN peacekeeping remains the default mechanism to physically protect some of the tens of thousands of civilians seeking a reprieve from the current conflict. Australia is among the more than 60 countries providing uniformed personnel as peacekeepers to UNMISS. And like all those countries, we have an interest in ensuring UNMISS can fulfil its mandate, protect the civilian population and support efforts to find a political resolution to the conflict.

Author

Lisa Sharland is a Senior Analyst at ASPI and Non-Resident Fellow at the Stimson Center in Washington DC.

Service Eligibility

Service eligibility under the VEA, SRCA and MRCA

Type of Service	3 Sep 1999 To 2 Jan 1949	3 Jan 1949 To 6 Dec 1972	7 Dec 1972 To 21 May 1986	22 May 1986 To 6 Apr 1994	7 Apr 1994 To 30 Jun 2004	On or after 1 July 2004
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Continuous full-time service (CFTS) – (known as 'defence service' from 7 Dec 1972)

Service ended before 7 Apr 1994 (did 3 years CFTS or was discharged on medical grounds)	VEA (see eligible war service)	SRCA 1930 SRCA 1971	SRCA 1971 VEA	SRCA 1971 SRCA 1988 VEA		
Did not do 3 years CFTS nor was discharged on medical grounds	VEA (see eligible war service)	SRCA 1930 SRCA 1971	SRCA 1971	SRCA 1971 SRCA 1988		MRCA
Enlisted before 22 May 1986 (served up to and after 7 Apr 1994)		SRCA 1930 SRCA 1971	SRCA 1971 VEA	SRCA 1971 SRCA 1988 VEA	SRCA 1988 VEA	MRCA
Enlisted on or after 22 May 1986 (did 3 years CFTS or was discharged on medical grounds by 6 Apr 1994)				SRCA 1971 SRCA 1988 VEA	SRCA 1988	MRCA
Enlisted on or after 7 Apr 1994					SRCA 1988	MRCA
Type of Service	3 Sep 1999 To 2 Jan 1949	3 Jan 1949 To 6 Dec 1972	7 Dec 1972 To 21 May 1986	22 May 1986 To 6 Apr 1994	7 Apr 1994 To 30 Jun 2004	On or after 1 July 2004
Eligible War Service (non-operational) Enlisted before 1 July 2004 or enlisted for 2 years in Interim Forces on or after 1 Jul 1947	VEA	VEA (ended 30 Jun 1951)				
Operational Service (Eligible war service)	VEA	VEA	VEA	VEA	SRCA 1988 VEA	
Hazardous service (Operational Service)				SRCA 1971 SRCA 1988 VEA	SRCA 1988 VEA	
Warlike Service Qualifying Service	VEA	VEA	VEA	VEA	SRCA 1988 VEA	MRCA
British Nuclear Test (Defence Service)		VEA				
Peacekeeping Service (Operational Service)	VEA	VEA	VEA	VEA	SRCA 1988 VEA	MRCA
Warlike Service or Non-Warlike Service (operational Service)	VEA	VEA	VEA	VEA	SRCA 1988 VEA	MRCA
Part-time Service (Citizen Forces, Reservists, Cadets) (Peacetime Service)	VEA	SRCA 1930	SRCA 1971	SRCA 1971 SRCA 1988	SRCA 1988	MRCA
Type of Service	3 Sep 1999 To 2 Jan 1949	3 Jan 1949 To 6 Dec 1972	7 Dec 1972 To 21 May 1986	22 May 1986 To 6 Apr 1994	7 Apr 1994 To 30 Jun 2004	On or after 1 July 2004

Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC) Eligibility

Service	Service eligibility	Conditions covered
<p>Service in wartime</p> <p>Operational deployments</p> <p>Participation in British Nuclear tests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible War service (VEA) WWII Service in most parts of Australia • Operational service (VEA) • Warlike/Non-warlike service (VEA + MRCA) • Peacekeeping service (VEA) • Hazardous service (VEA) • British Nuclear Test defence service (VEA) 	<p>VEA Section 88A (1)(a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anxiety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depression <p>VEA SubSection 85 (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Use Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substance Use Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cancer (Malignant Neoplasm) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis
<p>Peacetime Service Between 7 December 1972 – 6 April 1994 (inclusive)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed 3yrs Continuous Full-time Service (CFTS) by 6 April 1994 <i>or</i> • Completed less than 3yrs CFTS but discharged on the grounds of invalidity or physical or mental incapacity to perform duties, but who were engaged to serve not less than three years <i>or</i> • National Servicemen who were serving on 6 December 1972 and who completed a contracted period of service. 	<p>VEA Section 88A (1)(d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anxiety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depression <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PTSD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Use Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substance Use Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cancer (Malignant Neoplasm) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis
<p>Peacetime Service Since 7 April 1994</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed 3yrs Continuous Full-time Service (CFTS) <i>or</i> • Completed less than 3yrs CFTS but discharged on the grounds of invalidity or physical or mental incapacity to perform duties, but who were engaged to serve not less than three years. 	<p>VEA Section 88A (1)(d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anxiety <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depression <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PTSD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Use Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substance Use Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cancer (Malignant Neoplasm) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis



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From Peacekeeping to Counterterrorism: Africa Matters Australian Institute of Strategic Policy (AISP)

23 Nov 2016 Ash Collingburn.

UN peacekeepers are often deployed when there's no longer any peace to keep. In the current strategic environment of non-state actors, peacekeeping has also become increasingly complex and non-traditional in character. Despite those new challenges, we rarely hear about UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, as the news is dominated by the Middle East.

It's now time for strategic decision makers in the West to appreciate why Africa matters. Of the 16 current PKO missions, nine are on the African continent. Of the roughly 100,000 uniformed peacekeepers currently deployed, 82,000 of them are based in Africa. Those statistics are significant because terrorist organisations—like the so-called Islamic State (IS)—thrive in unstable and insecure environments. Those are the same places that typically require UN peacekeeping operations. That situation will become even more apparent once the IS caliphate is reduced in the Middle East and the group looks elsewhere for safe havens from which to train and launch attacks.

In the future, peacekeepers need to be capable of conducting the full spectrum of peace operations, from humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations through to missions with a more offensive mandate. For example, the current MINUSMA operation in Mali requires more of a counterinsurgency mindset than a traditional peacekeeping approach. But the problem is that many UN peacekeepers are neither trained nor equipped to deal with evolving threats in the contemporary operating environment.

Of the 100,000 peacekeepers currently deployed, just 39 are Australians. Yet the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has more than 2,300 troops deployed on operations elsewhere around the world. Coalition operations, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, are seen to more directly serve Australia's defence interest of maintaining a rules-based global order. If there was an urgent need for UN intervention in Southeast Asia, however, we'd likely see Australia playing a leading role.

In balancing ways and means to achieve its national security objectives, Australia—as the world's 12th largest economy—provides more funding than troops for peacekeeping operations. Notably, Australia is the 11th largest financial contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget and the 9th largest donor to the UN peacebuilding fund, which serves to prevent conflict in fragile states. Within our region, the peacebuilding fund is currently supporting peacebuilding projects in Myanmar, PNG, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka.

Within the UN's Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, Australia has pledged the use of C-130 and C-17 aircraft for strategic airlift, capacity building for troop and police contributing countries, and counter-improvised

explosive device (CIED) training. At the September 2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Meeting in London, Defence Minister Payne announced additional funding of \$1.2 million over five years to further enhance regional UN peacekeeping capacity.

That's is a noteworthy contribution given Australia's strategic interests, but Africa deserves more attention. It's important to Australia for several reasons.

Firstly, Australian companies have billions of dollars invested in Africa—an investment surely worth protecting.

Secondly, just as in the Middle East, we have a moral obligation to protect civilians, particularly women and children in conflict zones. We can't stand by to allow another Rwanda-like genocide to unfold in Africa. Prevention requires positive action.

Thirdly, the US military has steadily increased its military presence in Africa as a result of growing instability and the rapid expansion of terrorism on the continent. We live in a complex and interconnected world and the terrorism phenomenon is a global threat that will have consequences here if sanctuaries are allowed to exist over there.

UN peacekeeping operations also provide our service men and women with valuable operational experience. I've benefited greatly from serving on UN peacekeeping operations in East Timor (UNTAET), Lebanon (UNTSO) and Sudan (UNMIS). UN missions enable a unique and diverse perspective, different from other coalition operations.

Australia can do more. Our service personnel are highly effective trainers who are building partner capacity all over the world. The ADF's Peace Operations Training Centre (POTC) already trains hundreds of peacekeepers from more than 50 countries every year, but the Centre should be better resourced to increase its rate of effort. POTC should be expanded to become an international centre of excellence for peacekeeping operations.

Additionally, the UN needs to better harness technology in peacekeeping to improve early warning and enhance the ability to detect, deter, mitigate and respond to threats, particularly in an asymmetric environment with non-state actors. Developed countries—like Australia—can contribute more to PKO in the future by providing niche capabilities, like drones, CIED and intelligence sharing.

It's time we think big picture, look strategically and anticipate future threats. The problems in Africa won't be fixed overnight. We're likely to see further atrophy before improvement. As such, terrorist organisations will look to the African continent for opportunities.

About the Author: Ash Collingburn is a visiting fellow at ASPI's Counter Terrorism Policy Centre. Image courtesy of Flickr user US Army Africa.

UN Document says Morocco Violated Western Sahara Cease-fire

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Aug. 29, 2016 9:13 PM EDT

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A confidential U.N. document says Morocco violated a 1991 cease-fire agreement with the Polisario Front independence movement by sending armed security personnel and equipment into the contested Western Sahara region without prior notice to U.N. peacekeepers.

The note to the U.N. Security Council from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, obtained Monday by The Associated Press, said the Polisario Front deployed 32 armed military personnel in response, also in violation of the cease-fire.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed deep concern Sunday at "the tense situation that has developed in the narrow buffer strip in southwestern Western Sahara between the Moroccan berm and the Mauritanian border," his spokesman said.

The U.N. chief said this was the result of "the introduction of armed units from Morocco and the Polisario in close proximity to each other" and urged both sides to respect "the letter and the spirit of the cease-fire agreement," the spokesman said.

Morocco annexed Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, in 1975 and fought the Polisario Front. The U.N. brokered a cease-fire in 1991 and established a peace-keeping force known by the acronym MINURSO to monitor it and help prepare a referendum on the territory's future, which has never taken place.

Morocco considers Western Sahara its "southern provinces" and has proposed wide-ranging autonomy, but the Polisario Front insists on self-determination through a referendum.

Morocco expelled more than 70 U.N. civilian staffers with MINURSO in March to protest the secretary-general's perceived gaffe in using the word "occupation" to describe Morocco's annexation of Western Sahara. Twenty-five staffers returned last month but MINURSO is still not fully operational.

The confidential note said MINURSO confirmed through multiple ground and air patrols over the Aug. 16-25 period that Morocco "was conducting what it maintained to be clearance of damaged vehicles in order to reduce the capacity of smugglers to operate, along with road laying activities" in the southern part of Western Sahara.

"This was initiated without prior notice to MINURSO, contrary to requirements specified in Military Agreement No. 1" of the cease-fire, the note said, "and with the support of armed security personnel from the Royal Moroccan Gendarmerie."

It said Morocco confirmed these activities on Aug. 18, and in response MINURSO significantly reinforced its monitoring activities in the area and is carrying out

extensive consultations with both sides to de-escalate the situation and avert a resumption of hostilities.

The Polisario Front sent a letter to the U.N. secretary-general on Aug. 15 urging him to end Morocco's violation of the cease-fire agreement.

Polisario Minister of Defense Abdallahi Lehib Belal said in a letter to MINURSO's chief of staff on Sunday that he deployed military forces to the area on Sunday morning "to prevent further Moroccan activities beyond the berm, including the asphalted road it has started to build."

The Polisario Front has said that if the road is built Morocco would have to maintain it, which would give its military a permanent presence in the restricted area.

A Moroccan Foreign Ministry official told The Associated Press on Monday that "it is the Polisario that has been engaging in provocation" — not Morocco.

"We launched our anti-smuggling campaign in cooperation with Mauritania, then the Polisario began sending in troops this past Friday night/Saturday morning near the border," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The U.N. peacekeeping department said in the confidential note that Morocco informed MINURSO on Sunday that it observed 20 Polisario Front "elements" in the buffer strip. It said the Polisario Front told MINURSO later Sunday it was establishing a checkpoint "to stop the Moroccan construction works" — but not civilian traffic.

The Polisario Front was informed by MINURSO that the deployment of its forces in the buffer strip was a violation of the cease-fire agreement, the note said.

It said MINURSO plans to set up a special working group to review the potential violations by both sides.

Retrieved from: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/e8085398ed0644848a41e4fb8bbe6691/un-document-says-morocco-violated-western-sahara-cease-fire> on 1st September 2016.



LTCOL Gary Barnes, COMASC ASC2 OP CEDILLA (MINURSO) talks to a Polisario Commander in Western Sahara, 1992

The Danger of Fighting Fire with Fire

Civilians in Congo turn to self-defence groups to stop massacres



IDPs in North Kivu's Masisi region by Frederic Bonamy/EU/ECHO)

By Muhindo Sengenya Claude

Freelance journalist based in Beni, and regular IRIN contributor

BENI, 26 August 2016

People in the eastern Congolese city of Beni have had enough of massacres. Angered by the inability of the army to protect them against shadowy armed groups, some are secretly forming their own self-defence units.

But it's a decision that can't be taken lightly. The last thing the Democratic Republic of Congo needs is more militias, and there are voices in the community urging caution.

"The young have understood that they cannot fold their arms when faced with the killers that the state and its partners no longer know how to stop," said Jean-Paul Ngahangondi, national coordinator of the Beni-based Convention for the Respect of Human Rights.

But "there is a danger," he said. "The risk is using any means necessary, [leading to the creation of more] armed groups."

People in Beni are still reeling from the latest attack on 13 August, when unknown men raided the Rwangoma suburb of the city and used machetes to kill more than 50 people, including women and children.

The Kyaghanda Yira cultural association (Yira is the majority ethnic group in North Kivu Province) said the attack, the deadliest to date, brings to more than 1,500 the number of civilians killed since October 2014.

"The genocide will only continue. Innocent civilians are being executed while the Congolese government fails to come up with any retaliatory or preventative measures," said Jules Vahikehya, secretary general of Kyaghanda Yira.

"The international community must recognise the Beni massacres as a genocide, with a view to taking the

necessary measures to avoid the situation escalating like it did in Rwanda"

In an open letter to President Joseph Kabila, a coalition of civil society groups listed the humanitarian toll of the violence. Aside from the deaths, it includes "more than 1,470 people missing, more than 1,750 huts burnt down, semi-deserted villages, and schools and health clinics destroyed".

The toll

The displaced include people like Masika Kaghoma. Her family moved to Erineti, outside Beni, to escape the violence. But running short of food, her husband and eldest son took the risk to return to their fields.

"Half-way, they met the cut-throats who decapitated them with machetes. Having learnt of this new atrocity, I took my four other children and walked with them to Beni town centre," she told IRIN.

Three months on, she now lives in nearby Butembo, surviving through scavenging in the market. "Me and my children do the rounds at the supply depots," she said. "If there's a banana that falls during unloading, I grab it. This is how life is for us these days."

The government blames the violence on the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist rebel group with links to Uganda. But critics say it's not that simple. Behind the narrative of an Islamist menace, there is evidence of Congolese military involvement, with potential links to smuggling rackets.

In May, the Congolese army and the UN's Force Intervention Brigade launched a new operation to destroy what was billed as the last remaining pockets of ADF.

But the ability of the killers to still penetrate Beni, getting past military checkpoints, leaves people shaking their heads.

"More than 18 months after the beginning of the massacres, the Congolese army deployed on the ground, with several thousand heavily armed soldiers, hasn't been able to identify to the population the true identity of the killers and adapt its operating model accordingly," said Vahikehya, of Kyaghanda Yira.

Julien Paluku, governor of North-Kivu, is more upbeat. "The last operations by our armed forces, at the end of July and the beginning of August, succeeded in destroying the enemy bases in Nadui and Mwalika, which were allowing these terrorists to be very mobile around the peripheries of Beni," he said.

UN Get's its Share of Blame

It's not only the Congolese army that's being criticised for its performance. The UN's peacekeeping and stabilisation



MONUSCO/Clara Padovan The army has failed to protect civilians from the violence

mission in Congo, MONUSCO, is also heavily condemned.

“We no longer understand the attitude of the international community, these great powers, these powerful international organisations,” said Mbindule Mitono, national minister for North-Kivu and key member of the Union for the Congolese Nation, the second largest opposition party.

“We are in the process of counting thousands of dead, but they [the UN] still don’t take any action, as they are doing elsewhere, for example in Mali, in Libya, in Syria, where they are engaged against terrorism.”

On 17 August, at the end of three days of national mourning declared by the government in memory of the victims of the Rwangoma massacre, student groups in Beni issued a three-day ultimatum to MONUSCO to leave the country.

“MONUSCO has proved its uselessness and its negligence in protecting civilians,” declared Riginal Masinda, spokesman for the Beni students.

“The international community must recognise the Beni massacres as a genocide, with a view to taking the necessary measures to avoid the situation escalating like it did in Rwanda,” said Franck Mukenzi, a local youth council leader in North-Kivu.

Rather than UN peacekeepers, he called for an Operation Artemis-style intervention, a European Union-led mission in 2003 to quell violence by ethnic militias fighting in northeastern Ituri Province.

A “hellish cycle”

Feeling angry and abandoned, the idea of the community taking care of their own defence is gaining currency in Beni, and groups are beginning to emerge.

Some are unarmed, with the goal of merely tracking the insurgents. But at least one, called Mazembe, has been

launched with the aim of fighting back, a law student at the Catholic University of Graben in Butembo told IRIN.

He said he had been approached to join, and the recruiter’s argument was that the scale of the massacres in North-Kivu meant it was now time for a “popular force” to defend the community.

“He told me to tell my friends about it,” said the student, who asked not to be named. “He is waiting for our decision to organise an awareness-making meeting and some tattooing that will make us invincible to bullets.”

“Today, the young people of Beni want to guarantee their own protection,” said Jackson Sivulyamwenge, a journalist from the Catholic radio station, Moto d’Oicha. “But they are hesitant to come out openly, for fear of reprisals by the security services, which might see them as creating militias.”

For some, the idea of creating more armed groups recalls the dark days in eastern Congo, when a multiplicity of ethnic-based so-called defence units preyed on the population.

According to Nicaise Kibel Bel’Oka, who heads the Centre for Geopolitical Study and Research in Eastern Congo, “to train young people in the logic of these self-defence groups is to want to plunge the region into a new crisis.”

For Ngahangondi, of the Beni-based Convention for the Respect of Human Rights, the government has to be able to find a way to reassure people that it’s on top of the problem, before young men start arming themselves.

“If not, we risk returning again to the hellish cycle of self-defence militias,” he warned.

Retrieved from: http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2016/08/26/danger-fighting-fire-fire?utm_source=IRIN+-+the+inside+story+on+emergencies&utm_campaign=1362051a63-RSS_EMAIL_ENGLISH_ALL&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-1362051a63-1572610

Australia Seeks Permanent Federal Police Station in Solomon Islands



Australian Federal Police arrive in Solomon Islands for elections in 2014.

By Stefan Armbruster
Source: SBS News

Australia is negotiating a security deal with Solomon Islands that would see a permanent federal police presence in the country.

The Australian-led, 15-nation RAMSI peacekeeping mission in the Solomons will end next June after 14-years in the Pacific island country.

“The end of RAMSI should be seen as a vote of confidence in the Solomon Islands,” Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells told the Australia Solomon Islands Business Forum in Brisbane, attended by Solomon Islands prime minister Manasseh Sogavare.

“While RAMSI might be leaving Solomon Islands next year, Australia is not going anywhere. In short prime minister, we are here to stay, to be with you and along side you,” she said.

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was deployed in 2003 to end a bloody conflict known as the “tensions”, that claimed hundreds of lives, and to disarm combatants.

An emergency assistance agreement between Australian and the Solomons in case of future civil unrest is also being prepared.

“While the details are still being finalised, it will almost certainly contain details of a contingent of Australian Federal Police, based in Honiara, under the umbrella of the Australian High Commission, working closely under the Solomon Islands police force counterparts,” Ms Fierravanti-Wells said.

“We have also commenced discussion about a mechanism that would allow Solomon Islands to seek emergency operational assistance from Australia, if an emergency

arose in the future.”

An Australian-led military peacekeeping force made up of Pacific Island soldiers ended its role in the RAMSI mission in 2013.

A Lowy Institute report in 2014 calculated the decade of peacekeeping cost Australia \$2.6b and the results achieved were at a 'massive and disproportionate' cost to Australia.

Retrieved from: http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2016/07/22/australia-seeks-permanent-federal-police-station-solomon-islands?cx_navSource=related-side-cx#cxrecs_s on 25th August 2016.

Submit your Story

The APPVA likes to hear from its members and ADF or Police Members deployed on Peacekeeping Operations, with stories of interest and simply about your tour of duty. Veterans of Peacekeeping are most welcome to send articles of their service with Peacekeeping Operations or any other Operations that are of interest and historical value to not only the APPVA by the wider readership. Our stories are kept in Trove by the National Archives of Australia and are also kept for historical content at the Australian War Memorial.

So, the more we learn about your tour of duty, no matter how long ago it was, we are most interested to learn of your experiences. Images are of course most welcomed and will be accredited to you as the source. The images tell a thousand words. We need good quality images, so scan them at least 300 dpi or at hi-res (high resolution). The APPVA is not judgemental of what type of deployment you were on, as far as we are concerned, no matter the Operation, you as an individual have contributed to making other people's lives safe, secure and have given them a better future.

The more stories veterans provide us, the better awareness of such service is given to the General and Veteran Communities.

The Deadlines for Editorials for the APPVA Magazine in 2017 are the following:

22 February 2017,

23 May 2017,

1 August 2017, and

9 November 2017.

We would of course appreciate the article within 7 days of the Editorial Deadlines, so that we are able to review the article and seek other information and/or images at the correct resolution (hr-res 300dpi).

For Branch Committees. We would love to hear more of what your Branch is doing, activities, commemorations and general overviews of your activities during the quarter. This provides your Branch members an insight as to what you are doing on behalf of your members.

Yours in the Service of Peace,

Paul Copeland.

UN Removes South Sudan Rebels From Congolese Wildlife Reserve

Eric Ombok eombok
September 16, 2016

The United Nations removed hundreds of fighters loyal to former South Sudan Vice President Riek Machar from a game reserve in Democratic Republic of Congo.

The UN peacekeeping mission, known as Monusco, extracted 752 "armed elements and civilians affiliated with the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement in Opposition" from Garamba National Park at the request of Congo's government, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in an e-mailed statement Thursday. Machar, his wife and son were among those moved out of the reserve, he said.

"The mission also reiterates that its operations were conducted on humanitarian grounds and within the role of contributing to stability in the DRC," Dujarric said. "At all times, the UN has informed the authorities of South Sudan and of DRC of Monusco's actions on the ground."

Resurgent violence in July killed hundreds of people in South Sudan's capital, Juba, worsening a conflict that began in December 2013 and left tens of thousands of people dead, while uprooting 2 million from their homes. The UN Security Council in August approved 4,000 extra regional peacekeeping troops for the nation with the third-biggest crude reserves on the continent.

Garamba National Park was previously home to the world's last known wild population of the Northern White Rhinoceros. The sub-species is probably extinct because of poaching and conflict, according to the Save The Rhino campaign.

Retrieved from: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-09-16/un-removes-south-sudan-rebels-from-congolese-wildlife-reserve> on 17 September 2016.

Letter from Mrs Ashleigh Bayly, daughter of the late Chris "Smokey" Dawson

Ashleigh Bayly z.bayly@bigpond.com
27 October 2016.

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Ashleigh Bayly, and I am the eldest Daughter of the recently deceased Christopher 'Smokey' Dawson. Chris was the Queensland APPVA state president who fought tirelessly for our returned service men and women. Earlier this year he fought an unbeatable battle of his own to an aggressive service related cancer in just 12 short weeks. It came as a complete shock to the entire family and we still feel the loss of his presence every day.

My parents had sold their house almost 2 years ago purchased their dream Kedron off road caravan and were readying for their dream trip around Australia. Funnily



SGT Chris "Smokey" Dawson, whilst serving as the Supervisor of the Air Dispatch Service, Force Communications Unit, UNTAC (Cambodia) 1993.

enough my Dad had informed my Mum earlier this year that October 20th was the leaving date as it worked in well following the AGM he had planned at the Thuringowa RSL. He never got the chance to attend the AGM or drive out of my driveway towing their Kedron.

Following my Dads funeral my Mum still felt the need to still go on her dream trip, but without my Dad to handle the long driving and Caravan towing skills or reversing she wouldn't be able to go it alone. That's where my brother comes in he suggested he would take her himself, and everything has snowballed from there. My brother Trevor is now bringing his wife and kids, my husband and I are also taking the 6 months off with our kids and joining in a 4wd and camper trailer. Since we have posted this on Facebook others have also shared their desire to join our Smokey Convoy in his remembrance. My father's 2 younger sisters are now joining as also is some old close army mates of my Dads.

That's where the idea came for raising funds for the association as we would like to continue my father's work by raising funds in any way we can. We are considering a go fund me page and blog for our trip which is set to depart mid-2017. We would like to raise awareness of the association and also raise funds for the construction of the National Peacekeeper Memorial in Canberra, which I know my Dad was a huge advocate for.

My Dad would be so proud that we as a family are ensuring Mum still gets to go on her dream trip around Australia, whilst sharing memories and creating new ones as well.

Respectfully Yours

Ashleigh Bayly

Kokoda

by Geoff (Lofty) Evans, OAM

I am

I was born on the 9th of July 1900, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia is my birth certificate. The bloodlines of the world run in my veins, because I offered Freedom to the oppressed. I am many things and many people. I am Australia

I am millions of living souls, and the ghost of millions who have lived and died for me. I am Edward Hargraves, and Charles Cowper. I stood at the Eureka Stockade and fired the first shot which was heard around the world I am John King, Burke and Wills. I am Dennison Miller, Breaker Morant, Private John Simpson, Lance-Corporal Albert Jacka and the ANZAC boys. I am John Flynn, Charles Kingsford-Smith, Harold Lasseter, King O'Malley and Jack Lang.

I remember the Burma railroad, the Kokoda track and Tobruk. When Freedom called, I answered and stayed until it was over, over there. I left my heroic dead at Flanders field, on the rocks of Gallipoli, the desert of Palestine, the beaches of World War Two, on the slopes of Korea, in the jungles of Vietnam, the mountain tracks of Timor, ancient cities of Iraq and vast valleys of Afghanistan.

I am the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the wheat fields of the west, and the Snowy Mountains of the south. I am the coalfields of Queensland, and the timber in Tasmania, the Overland railway, Ayres Rock, and the Barrier Reef. I am the dog that sat on the tucker box, and the black stump.

I sprawl from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, three million square miles, In past years I throbbed with industry, and had two million farms.

I am forest, field, mountain and desert. I am quiet towns and cities that never sleep.

Yes, I am the nation, and these are the things that I am. I was conceived In Freedom and, God willing, in freedom I will spend the rest of my days. May I possess always the integrity, the courage and the strength to keep myself unshackled, to remain a citadel of freedom and a beacon of hope to the world.

I am Australia.

Poem - The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels

Many a mother in Australia, When a busy day is done,
Sends a prayer to the Almighty For
the keeping of her son,
Asking that an Angel guide him And bring him safely back
Now we see those prayers are answered
On the Owen Stanley track.
For they haven't any halos, Only holes slashed
in the ears,

And with faced worked by tattoos,
With scratch pines in their hair,
Bringing back the wounded, Just as steady as a hearse,
Using leaves to keep the rain off And as gentle as a
nurse.

Slow and careful in bad places,
On the awful mountain track,
And the look upon their faces, Makes us think
that Christ was black.

Not a move to hurt the carried,
As they treat him like a Saint,
It's a picture worth recording, That an Artist's yet to paint.

Many a lad will see his Mother,
And the Husbands, hug their Wives,
Just because the Fuzzy Wuzzy Carried them
to save their lives.

From mortar or machine gun fire,
Or a chance surprise attack,

To safety and the care of Doctors,
At the bottom of the track

May the Mothers in Australia, When they offer
up a prayer,

Mention those impromptu Angels,
With the Fuzzy Wuzzy hair.

Sapper H "Bert" Beros NX6925, 7th Div., RA

Ode

They went with songs to battle
They were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye
Steady and aglow,
They were staunch to the end
Against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.
They shall not grow old
As we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
And in the morning
We will remember them
We will remember them
Lest We Forget
Lest we forget

“It is a pity Australia lacks the historians and poets of ancient Greece. The legend of the 300 Spartans who held the pass at Thermopylae against thousands of Persians has lived on for nearly 2,500 years. We had our Thermopylae, in which several thousand young men, their average age – 21 years – fought some 24,000 Japanese for seven weeks in July and August, 1942, and saved their country from enemy occupation. But they are almost entirely unremembered and unhonoured.

When their part in the battle of the Kokoda Track, in New Guinea, was over, our Spartans had lost 350 men killed in action (the whole campaign cost 1,300 Australian lives). Hundreds more were seriously wounded, missing in action, or racked with disease or illness. Our Spartans entered their great confrontation with the Japanese at Isurava, on 26 August 1942. The Anzac legend, forged in the cauldron of Gallipoli, is enshrined in Australia’s history. The courage, endurance and mateship shown by the Diggers, sixty years ago now, forms part of our national spirit.

Similarly, the Diggers of the Second World War left their indelible legacies of selfless sacrifice. If Gallipoli symbolises the ANZAC spirit in the First World War, then the Kokoda Track is its equivalent in the Second World War.

Over sixty years ago, a handful of young Australian Diggers clambered along the treacherous Kokoda Track and stemmed the seemingly invincible onslaught of Japan’s Imperial Army.

The Diggers of the Kokoda Track formed Australia’s ragged last line of defence against a Japanese war machine which had swept unchecked through Asia and the Pacific. Some were young militiamen, hastily trained and untried in combat. They were joined by the young Diggers returning from the Middle East. Together, they were outnumbered and outgunned by their battle-hardened opponents.

Nevertheless, the Diggers overcame the terrain, their lack of support and initial setbacks to rally and to inflict the first defeat suffered by the Japanese in the Second World War.

The ANZAC spirit was rekindled. If Gallipoli was Australia’s baptism as a nation then Kokoda was her confirmation.

Sir William Slim of Burma wrote: ‘Some of us may forget that of all the Allies, it was the Australians who first broke the spell of invincibility of the Japanese.’ So why aren’t our Diggers of Kokoda a national legend? If 15,000 people can gather at Gallipoli every Anzac Day, why are the locations where these young men gave their lives in the defence of their country so over-looked? Why are there no memorials on these hallowed grounds?

Unfortunately, Australia had surrendered her sovereignty during this period (of the war) to General Douglas MacArthur, a notorious self-publicist, who totally controlled war news disseminated from and within Australia.

MacArthur was lobbying Washington for American reinforcements and it suited his purpose to denigrate the fighting ability of the Australians. His chief of staff, Major-



All lined up for the obligatory group photo before we step off from Kokoda for a gentle stroll of just over four hours up a few mountains to Deniki our first overnight stop.





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Australia Veterans run and own business all around the country. The diversified roles that defence force veterans are involved in are mind blowing.

Skills learnt and talents honed whilst deployed in defence roles have been readapted, modified, and adjusted into unique civilian business and positions.

The talents and entrepreneurial skills of former soldiers, airmen and naval personnel have given rise to a new wave of success stories

Loyalty, honour and the badge of courage can be transformed into original employment benefits for those transitioning into civilian opportunities

Australians have a long tradition of supporting Veteran run organisations, some that started as grass roots social aid have turned into multimillion dollar concerns. The history is long but it is the new dynamic Veteran owned business that is deserving of our custom as fascinating stories evolve.

We are proud to announce a new section in the Australian Peacekeeper Magazine highlighting some of the fine Australian Veteran owned business that are operated and owned by ex-defence management and owners. This quarter we would like to introduce.

Robbie's Chop Shop the last male sanctuary, traditional barber shop, where you can style your hair while having a chat with mates or have a traditional razor shave with the boys. When you get your hair cut at the chop shop you know Robbie will be looking after you. There is nothing better than getting looked after at Robbie's Chop Shop, the for men by men.

Here you can just walk in and sit down for a men's haircut or a traditional hot shave (is there anything better?). Get your beard trimmed or threaded. Bring the kids or dad in for a seniors cut. All at fabulous prices. Robbie's specialises in wedding packages for that big day. Go to www.robbieschopshop.com.au for prices and details.



General Richard Sutherland, described Australian soldiers as 'undisciplined, untrained, and useless.'

Frank Devine refutes this by referring to an interview he had with Lieutenant-General Tsutomu Yoshihara, chief of staff of Japan's South Seas army, who said of our Spartans: 'In the Kokoda battle their qualities of adaptability and individual initiative enabled them to show tremendous ability as fighting men in the jungle.

They were superb.'

Unfortunately, Australia is yet to honour the legend of Kokoda. Our politicians make the appropriate speeches on the appropriate occasions but their words seem a little hollow when judged against the actions taken to preserve and perpetuate the spirit of Kokoda.

The Track itself is a neglected shrine. Aircraft, weapons and munitions lay rusting in the jungle. Weapon pits, in which our Diggers fought for their very lives, lay unmarked. The location of Deniki and Isurava have been lost. The location of the Brigade Hill Battle is uncertain. The legendary "fuzzy-wuzzy angels" are yet to be officially recognised for their sacrifices.

The Australian population is largely ignorant of the details of the significance of the Kokoda campaign.

Compare this national neglect with the American approach to a battle of similar significance in 1836 – the Battle for the Alamo. The odds against the Australians were greater at Isurava than they were against the Americans at the Alamo yet virtually nobody has heard of the village of Isurava! The Americans created legends out of their heroes of the Alamo – Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone, Jim Bowie and Colonel Travis. We are yet to hear of our heroes at Isurava and Brigade Hill: Bruce Kingsbury VC, Charlie McCallum DCM, Claude Nye, "Lefty" Langridge and Colonel Honner!

Our lack of commitment to the legend was recently demonstrated by the refusal of the Sydney Olympic Games Organising Committee (SOCOG) to accept a proposal to carry the Olympic Torch across the Kokoda Track en route to the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. They took it to American Samoa, but not across the Track. The ghost of General MacArthur still hovers in the corridors of Canberra, and the subservience of our politicians has not changed.

We have spoken of the deeds of our Diggers enough over the past sixty years. Now it's time to take action to ensure the legend is enshrined in our historical teachings and in our psyche.

A 17 year old veteran of the Kokoda campaign, Private Burton, wrote: 'Now on Kokoda Day when the names are read out of those killed in action, I know them all and still see them as they were. They will never become old or embittered. Just laughing kids forever.'

The commander of the young militiamen of the 39th Battalion, Colonel Ralph Honner DSO MC, paid the following tribute: 'They have joined the immortals; and of their immortality this searching and revealing history is both faithful testimony and enlightening testament. Time may dull even the untarnished gold of their emblazoned battle honours; but the loom of ages cannot blur the pure oblation of their lives. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.



Efogi - the halfway mark - soaked from sweat and the rain. Looking untidy, focused and loving it!



The Bomana War Cemetery, just off the road to Port Moresby is the largest war cemetery in the Pacific. It was established in 1942. There are 3069 known Australian and 237 unknown Australians buried there. There are also 443 Allied Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen. It is a very moving place to visit.

About the Author: Geoffrey "Lofty" Evans OAM, is the former APPVA North Queensland Representative and his interests include travelling, along with being the Volunteer Curator of the Signals Museum at the 3rd Combat Signal Regiment, Lavarack Barracks, Townsville.

First P-8A Poseidon Touches Down

Australia's newest maritime surveillance aircraft, the P-8A Poseidon, has been welcomed into the Air Force.

The P-8A Poseidon is a cutting edge maritime surveillance and anti-submarine aircraft which will dominate the skies around the nation's coastline. It will greatly enhance Australia's ability to keep our borders secure and guard our maritime approaches.

The Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, the Minister for Defence Industry the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP and the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection the Hon. Peter Dutton MP, together with the Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Leo Davies, welcomed the new Poseidon aircraft at a ceremony in Canberra on 16 November 2016.

These new aircraft will strengthen Australia's existing comprehensive maritime surveillance capability, helping secure the nation's borders, playing a vital role in the fight against people smugglers and providing state of the art anti-submarine defences.

The P-8A Poseidon is a modern, highly reliable aircraft based on the commercially-proven Boeing B737, modified to incorporate the latest maritime surveillance and attack capabilities.

Designed by the US Navy to dominate in Anti-Submarine Warfare, the aircraft will work closely with existing Australian Border Force assets to protect our border.

This is the first of 15 aircraft the Government committed to in the 2016 Defence White Paper, with 12 already contracted to be delivered by March 2020.

These aircraft will be based and sustained at Edinburgh, creating over 30 direct jobs.

The acquisition includes development and sustainment cooperation with the United States Navy and will keep

the RAAF P-8A at the forefront of maritime patrol aircraft innovation for years to come.

The 15 P-8A Poseidon aircraft and up to seven MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft will together provide an advanced maritime surveillance capability to replace the ageing AP-3C Orion platform



Aeromedical Traveller

Lyell McEwin Hospital Emergency Department is a long way from the Middle East but Gina Noble still works in the casual pool when she's home in Australia between world travels.

A Nursing Officer with the Royal Australian Air Force's Combat Support Unit at Australia's main operating air base in the Middle East Region, Gina is midway through her first overseas deployment.

A graduate of the University of South Australia, Gina went to school in Gawler, at Gawler Primary and Xavier College, perhaps to avoid extra homework from her mother who is a teacher at St Brigid's Primary School.

"I'm one of four girls in my family and the first to join the Australian Defence Force which has led me to travel the world," said Flight Lieutenant Noble.

"My nursing degree was sponsored by the Royal Australian Air Force and I worked at the Lyell McEwin Hospital during my graduate training. I still pick up odd shifts here and there when I'm not working in my primary nursing role at RAAF Base Edinburgh".

"I have completed Aeromedical Evacuations from the Middle East Region and even became a member of the health support team that was in place at Woomera Test Range in the recent Hi Fire 5b rocket launch which was the first for many years".

"Netball has been my sport of choice and I have very happy memories of my time with the Gawler Centrals and the Barossa Netball Club and I miss the fun we had together".

The Air Task Group (ATG) is operating at the request of the Iraqi Government within a US-led international coalition assembled to disrupt and degrade Daesh operations in the Middle East Region (MER).

The ATG comprises six RAAF F/A-18A Hornet fighter aircraft, an E-7A Wedgetail airborne command and control aircraft, and a KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport air-to-air refuelling aircraft. Additionally, the ATG has personnel working in the Combined Air and Space Operations Centre, and embedded with the 'Kingpin' US tactical Command and Control Unit.



Officer In Charge of the Medical Detachment at Australia's main operating air base in the Middle East Region, Flight Lieutenant Gina Noble.





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Supporting Veteran Employment Opportunities

The Turnbull Government will ensure all Australian Defence Force Personnel (ADF) are ready for the opportunities of post-service life with the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program.

Getting a good job, launching a new career is essential to ensuring our veterans make the most successful transition from the ADF. Our ADF personnel leave the military with unique skills and can make valuable contributions to business. It is in everyone's interests to recognise the talents of our veterans and encourage the private sector to take advantage of that expertise.

The private sector is best placed to develop strategies to recognise the skills of our veterans during the recruitment stage and to retain them in employment. Today the Government announced the formation of an Industry Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment of leading Australian business people that will consider how to mentor ADF personnel and translate ADF skills for the private sector. All participating businesses will be given the title 'Veteran Employment Ambassador'.

The excellent work done by small, medium and large businesses employing veterans will be recognised at an annual Prime Minister's Veterans Employment Annual Awards. The criteria for the awards will be developed in consultation with the Industry Advisory Committee.

Businesses will be encouraged to partner with a local Ex-Service Organisation, such as the RSL and Soldier On, to develop strategies for driving veterans' employment through an Ex-Service Organisation Industry Partnership Register.

The Government will help our ADF personnel by improving the transition from the Defence force into their post-service careers. All personnel will have appropriate documentation, including health records, superannuation and training records, and participate in the formal transition process before separating from the ADF. All separating ADF personnel will also have access to employment coaching services to help them seek and obtain employment.

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) will participate in the transition process and develop a toolkit for veterans seeking employment in the public service. The APSC will also improve information for veterans seeking employment in the public service and launch an online tool for aligning ADF rank to APS classification. The new APSJobs website will include specific information for veterans seeking employment in the APS when it launches in 2017.

An information page for veterans will be created on the Government's jobactive website. Employers uploading job vacancies will have the option to nominate if the position would be suited to a former ADF member.

The Government has a responsibility to the men and

women who defend our liberties. Raising awareness about the unique skills our veterans can bring to any business and smoothing their transition out of the ADF will help even more veterans continue their contribution to Australia.



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FPE-6 at Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC)

By FLTLT Jessica Aldred

Around 80 ADF personnel are providing assistance as mentors and support staff at Camp Qargha's Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) west of Kabul.

And for them force protection is critical.

Mentoring Afghan Officer Cadets requires a mentor's full attention – so it's the members of the Force Protection Element 6 (FPE-6) detachment that provide for their security and any quick reaction force if incidents occur.

Corporal Brett Deacon-Shaw said force protection is integral to achieving the ADF's work in Afghanistan.

"Since June this year we have been providing integral force protection, working as guardian angels, a quick reaction force and camp security to personnel operating out of Camp Qargha," Corporal Deacon-Shaw said.

"We also support mentoring missions at ANAOA and field exercises for the Afghan Officer Cadets at the Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC) and Darulaman training area."

A recent field exercise at the KMTC was an opportunity for the Officer Cadets to conduct both section and platoon level patrolling and ambushes.

Lance Corporal Albert Graham said the work requires constant threat assessment.

"We had to make quick assessments on external and internal threats as well as take into account movement, vehicle positioning and all other threats prevalent in the Afghan environment," LCpl Graham said.

Throughout the exercise the guardian angels were highly professional - offering advice on infantry operations, providing protection and maintaining a high level of morale throughout.

Australia's operation HIGHROAD in Afghanistan is focused on training, advising and assisting the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), and Afghan security institutions at the operational, institutional, and ministerial levels.

The UK-led ANAOA mission is part of the international community's effort to provide long-term support to the Government of Afghanistan.

ANAOA is also supported by New Zealand and Denmark.

An Australian Army 'guardian angel' adjusts his backpack during his 'over-watch' of mentors as they work with the Afghan National Army Officer Academy instructors and trainees at the Kabul Military Training Centre, Afghanistan, Kabul.





NEO and HADR Operations Conclude Ex Croix du Sud

Ile Des Pins (Isle of Pines), a tropical paradise, was the majestic backdrop to the tactical phase of Exercise Croix du Sud (CDS) 2016 in New Caledonia.

EX CDS 16 moved into the Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) phase of the exercise, which saw the ADF respond, with their regional partners, in a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) role following a simulated cyclone in the area.

Adding some complexity to the scenario, role players acted as disgruntled locals who grew more and more frustrated at the lack of food and water available to them following the 'natural disaster'.

The 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR), with attached soldiers from Tonga and New Zealand, worked alongside their French counterparts to move in and assist with security operations in the area, as well as establishing a collection point for the role player refugees to get processed and searched before being moved to the airfield for an evacuation flight.

Captain David Caligari, Liaison Officer for the exercise said the training was vital to ensure a prepared force was equipped to react and provide assistance.

"Exercises like Croix du Sud are really important to ensure that, as a multi-national force, we are ready to respond in the Pacific when required," CAPT Caligari said.

"These opportunities provide valuable training in an area where Australian troops can expect to be required to respond.

"Our region is prone to natural disasters like cyclones and the ADF are often called upon to respond and help.

"We assisted in Fiji earlier this year and it's important to keep up our skills and working with the other nations allows us to test our procedures and processes, and to form professional relationships," he said.

Major Ronald Jean of the French Armed Forces New Caledonia found it to be an interesting experience and welcomed the opportunity to work with the Australians.

"To me, this is the biggest exercise for the French Armed Forces New Caledonia and really important for us, because we are part of the Pacific and need to work together to offer help," Major Jean said.

"I would be very happy to work again with the Australians. I have worked with them five times before and it would be an absolute pleasure to work with them again."



Planning a move to civi-street?

Jo Payne has a unique perspective on the transition process: she's been an Air Force member, her husband separated from the ADF last year, and she works in ADF transitions.

Jo points out that families are a key part of transition and that partners in particular can be of real help to members as they work their way back into the civilian world.

"Transition affects the whole family," explained Jo.

"The member has been part of the ADF for such a long time and to some extent they're stepping into the unknown.

"We encourage partners to come along to our ADF Transition Seminars because they've been part of the member's career, so it's great to continue the support through the transition process."

Jo advises that ADF members should contact their nearest ADF Transition Centre as soon as they start thinking about separating.

"This will maximise your time to plan and it gives you more time to use any benefits."

At a transition centre, staff conduct interviews with military personnel to provide practical guidance and information to help them plan their separation and complete administrative obligations.

"Partners are a great asset during these transition interviews as they can provide real-world advice, particularly in the medical and financial areas," said Jo.

"An interview is much easier when the partner is there to expand on the advice we're giving the member."

Jo has another practical tip for members and partners.

"Download the ADF Transition Handbook before your first appointment and have a look. That way you get an overview of what you need to do.

"An officer said the other day that it was easier to join the ADF than it is to get out, and we're here to support and guide you through what can seem a daunting process."

Defence is committed to providing ADF personnel with comprehensive and effective support services, not only throughout their military service, but also during their transition from the ADF.

Visit www.defence.gov.au/dco to download the ADF Transition Handbook, check out the Transition Seminar calendar, and get detailed information on the transition process.



2016 ADF Transition Seminar Calendar

ADF Transition Seminars have been designed to assist with preparing your transition from Defence, by providing impartial information and directing you to additional sources of information.

The following topics are addressed during the seminars:

- Your Career and You
- Your Money and You
- Transition Support Benefits
- Transition Support & Administration
- Reserves
- Superannuation
- Health Insurance
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Services

To find out more about the ADF Transition Seminars contact your nearest ADF Transition Centre:

http://www.defence.gov.au/transitions/my_nearest_adf_transition_centre.htm

http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/Moving_back_into_civilian_life.htm

Date	Location
9 - 10 March	Sydney
15 - 16 March	Brisbane
22 - 23 March	Townsville
13 - 14 April	Adelaide
19 - 20 April	Canberra
18 - 19 May	Melbourne
25 - 26 May	Darwin
1 - 2 June	Perth
15 - 16 June	Newcastle
21 - 22 June	Wagga
12 - 13 July	Brisbane
20 - 21 July	Sydney
26 - 27 July	Cairns
2 - 4 August	Shoalhaven
10 - 11 August	Hobart
7 - 8 September	Canberra
14 - 15 September	Adelaide
21 - 22 September	Darwin
12 - 13 October	Melbourne
18 - 19 October	Brisbane
25 - 26 October	Townsville
2 - 3 November	Liverpool
16 - 17 November	Perth

Air Force Contributes to Australia's Train, Advise, Assist Capability in Afghanistan

By FLTLT Kate Kennedy

Flight Lieutenant Mitchell Keene recently completed a deployment to Afghanistan as an Air to Ground Integration Adviser with the Train Advise Assist Command – Air (TAAC - Air).

Air to ground integration is a new and developing capability for the Afghan Air Force (AAF).

FLTLT Keene was part of a coalition team that trains AAF Joint Terminal Air Coordinators (JTACs). His role was to develop training packages for the JTACs that would help in the advancement of Afghanistan's air power capability in the fight against the Taliban.

According to FLTLT Keene the Afghan JTACs are successfully supporting AAF attack aircraft both in the engagement of planned targets and close air attack in support of ground troops.

"It was a real highlight to witness their increased skills throughout my time with them, but also to promote an awareness of the vital role that JTACs play in combat," FLTLT Keene said.

"The mission reports of the guys we've trained speak for themselves.

Many JTAC students transfer from other corps and trades because of their desire to contribute to Afghanistan's fight in a meaningful way.

"As Afghan Commanders have seen the value of JTACs, higher quality students are being put forward for training. And as a result we've seen more effective use of air power in their operations."

Apart from the growing success of the Afghan JTACs, FLTLT Keene's deployment highlights included working closely with the Afghan Air Force and US Air Force.

"I gained a solid understanding of how Australia's biggest coalition partner operates. Shared information on how our RAAF works and developed some really strong effective working relationships.

"But most importantly, helping to develop the skills of the Afghan Air Force JTACs was a great feeling."

The Resolute Support mission is a key to the international community's engagement in Afghanistan - assisting Afghan authorities in providing security and stability while creating the conditions for reconstruction and development.

Around 270 personnel from the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army, the Royal Australian Air Force and Defence civilians are deployed to Afghanistan as part of Australia's commitment to the Resolute Support mission.



FLTLT Keene (left), Air Advisor with the NATO-led Train, Advise, Assist Command - Air unit based near the Hamid Karzai International Airport.

Below: FLTLT Keene (kneeling) with members of the Afghanistan National Army.



UNMISS

Members of Operation ASLAN deployed as part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) commemorate the 101st Anniversary of ANZAC Day at Australia House in Juba.

The ADF has contributed personnel to UNMISS since 2011. The commitment assists the UN to protect the people of the Republic of South Sudan by monitoring human rights and delivering humanitarian aid.



South Sudanese Government Troops man a Check Point outside of an Internally Displaced People's (IDP) Camp

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Account: APPVA **BSB:** 803 205 **Acc:** 20638827 **APPVA Membership No:**

Lodgement Reference Field: include your name and or membership number (if known)

Surname: Enter AUS (1st 3 letters of acc name), then enter amount required

Enter Member No: 153601 (if required)

For All other Financial Institutions:

Account: APPVA **BSB:** 803 205 **Acc:** 20638827 **APPVA Membership No:**

Reference field: Include your name and or membership number (if known)

If unsure of APPVA Membership No. – Contact secretary@peacekeepers.asn.au

Membership Type - Please select criteria

Full Member

Open to any member or ex member of the Australian or New Zealand Armed Forces, Police Forces, Government Organisations or Defence Civilians who have Served on Warlike Operations; Peacekeeping or Peacemaking Operations; or Non-Warlike Service. In addition, Peacetime serving and ex Serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Full voting rights

Associate Member

Open to members of other National Armed Forces or Police Forces who have served in War, Peacekeeping or Peacemaking Operations. Persons who have served with Non-Government Organisations. No voting rights.

Affiliate Member

Open to all persons who have not been discharged for reasons of discipline, War Widows / Widowers, Defence Widows / Widowers, Partner(s), Parents and Children of an APPVA Veteran. No voting rights.

Persons applying for membership as a member or ex-member of an Armed Force, Police Force or, as a Defence Civilian meeting the above criteria for Full or Associate Membership, are required to complete the Service Details above. Persons applying for Affiliate Membership as a Parent, Partner or Child of a current APPVA member are required to complete the "Parent / Partner / Child" section in the Contact Details area above, to confirm the membership of the APPVA Member.

**AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER &
PEACEMAKER VETERANS' ASSOCIATION**
MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM



(INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA)
ABN 59 558 194 094
APPVA
2603 Moggill Rd, Pinjarra Hills QLD 4069
E: andrea.appva.advocacyq4@gmail.com
Website: www.peacekeepers.asn.au

Patron: Major General Ian Gordon AO (Retired)

MERCHANDISE	QUANTITY	OPTIONS – Please Circle	COST (incl gst)	SUB TOTAL
Navy Blue Polo Shirt		S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL MENS/WOMENS	\$30	
Pink Polo Shirt		WOMENS size 10-16	\$30	
Short Sleeved Chambray Shirt		Size: M XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL MENS	\$45	
Short Sleeved Chambray Shirt		Size: 10 12 14 16 WOMENS	\$45	
APPVA Cap Navy Blue		One Size	\$20	
APPVA Cap Pink		One Size	\$20	
APPVA Stickers			\$6	
Book - COMBAT MEDIC			\$29	
Book - SOLDIERS' Tales			\$19	
Book - Aussie SOLDIER			\$29	
Stubby Holder black with gold logo			\$8	
Postage and handling costs for all items as below: 500gm bag \$8.25 Less than 3kg \$13.40 Less than 5kg \$17.10 Any other larger posted items will be notified of costs as necessary with purchaser.			TOTAL	

CREDIT CARD

Send order form with completed details to Merchandise - APPVA, 2603 Moggill Rd, Pinjarra Hills Qld 4069

Please charge my credit card for the amount of:..... Visa Mastercard

Credit Card No _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ **Expiry Date** _____ / _____

Name..... **Signature**.....

CHEQUE OR MONEY ORDER - Post cheque or money order payable to APPVA, 2603 Moggill Rd, Pinjarra Hills Qld 4069

DIRECT CREDIT - Internet Transfer

For Def Credit account holders:

Account: APPVA (AUS) BSB: 803-205 Account: 20638827 Member No: 153601
Include your name and the word "Merch" in the reference field and mail the order form.
Enter Member No 153601 (if required)

For All other Financial Institutions:

Account: APPVA BSB: 803-205 Account: 20638827 Member No: 153601
Include your name and the word "Merch" in the reference field and mail the order form.
Enter Member No 153601 (if required)

DELIVERY DETAILS

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr (Rank) Address
Last Name City
Given Name(s) State Post Code
Email..... Country
Mobile.....

The Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) will accept returned products / merchandise where:

- The product is faulty, or not fit for the purpose
- The product does not match the sample or description

Proof of purchase (APPVA merchandise receipt) must be provided in order to:

- Obtain a refund (if paid by credit card, the credit card will be credited), otherwise a cheque will be provided, or
- Re-issue a like article

IMPORTANT NOTES:

The APPVA will take the utmost care in packaging; however, we will not accept any responsibility for goods damaged in transit.

The APPVA will not accept returns where the product or merchandise is ordered specifically for an individual (e.g. Montage, clothing, etc).

All queries for return of merchandise must be received within 30 days from date of purchase and directed to APPVA Merchandise Officer at merchandise@peacekeepers.asn.au. Item returns will be at the discretion of the APPVA Merchandise Officer provided the above criterion is met in the first instance. Please choose carefully as APPVA cannot accept returns due to change of mind.