

Are Australia's Peacekeepers responsible Citizens?

I have decided to base this paper on the peacekeeping mission to Rwanda in 1993 to 1994. The mission was called *UNAMIR* UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda. Rwanda asked for assistance from the United Nations because there was a civil war in their country. Australia sent six hundred and sixteen peacekeepers. They went in two teams of three hundred and eight for a six month stint each. They were sent as medical teams and were based in the capital of Rwanda, Kigali. They worked at the hospital operating the only blood bank, x-ray machine, air conditioned surgery room and intensive care unit in Rwanda. They also included peacekeepers to protect the medical staff. They were there mainly to perform medical practices on the United Nations Peacekeepers and then they could assist the locals.

The civil war was between two groups the Hutus and the Tutsi. The Hutus want to kill every one who wasn't for them as they had held power ever since they received their independence in 1962. The Tutsi wanted change so they attacked from Uganda. This started a three year civil war in 1990. In 1993, the Rwanda government called the United Nations for assistance after eight hundred thousand people had been killed in ninety days from April to July that year. That was about ten percent of the population of Rwanda. The government had also taken control of most major cities and the capital, Kigali. The Hutus were even killing their own people who questioned their leaders. When the first Australian team arrived in the last week of August in 1993 the hospital had unfortunately been damaged. It had a lot of holes in the roof and wall but there was one room that had not been damaged. That room was set up to be the operating theatre. The medical staff also trained the local Rwanda people so that they would be able to continue to treat the injured or sick when they returned home.

During the time that the Australian peacekeepers spent in Rwanda three of them were wounded and some now suffer from post-traumatic disorder because of what they saw and could do very little or nothing to help. They could do very little to help most of the time because when you are peacekeeping you may only fire once you have been fired upon. You are there to teach and help the locals recover from the war not stop the war.

I believe that these activities showed great citizenship because they spent time away from their families and made a Rwanda a better place for the work that they did. They followed the rules and regulations when peacekeeping. They taught many different life skills to the locals. There were many times when they wanted to kill some one that had killed many people but they didn't. I believe that they represented Australia and the United Nations very well.

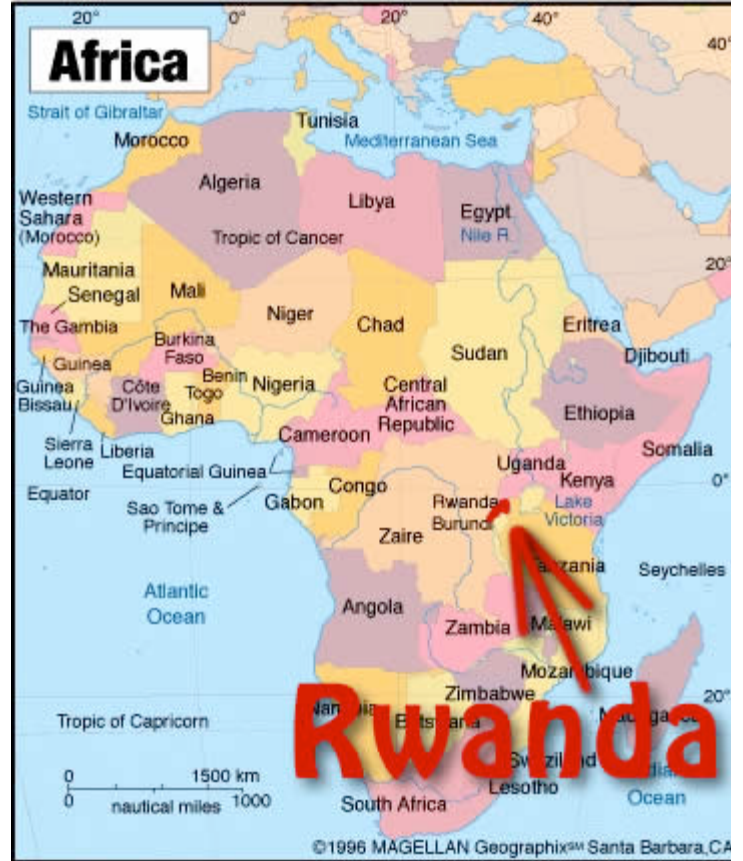
The Peacekeepers showed all the desirable qualities shown in the defence forces, Army, Navy and Air Force. They showed courage, reliance, organisation, persistence and hope. If they didn't show these qualities and many other qualities they wouldn't have made such a difference in Rwanda.

My idea of how Australian peacekeepers should be remembered is by having a massive hand reaching out to hundreds of little hands reaching up. This should be surrounded by all the names of people who have died peacekeeping for Australia. It should be placed somewhere along ANZAC Avenue in Canberra, at the Australian War Memorial end, would be best as they have been over in war torn countries like the soldiers remembered at the Australian War Memorial.

Map of Rwanda



Map of Africa with Rwanda Marked



Flag of Rwanda



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