

# AUSTRALIA AND GLOBAL PEACEKEEPING — IS IT GOOD CITIZENSHIP?

## Exploring stories and aspects of Australian peacekeeping

During 2009 nearly 1400 students and 150 teachers from 133 schools around Australia have taken part in the Defence 2020 Youth Challenge series, focusing on the ADF's role in peacekeeping.



Students were asked to explore three key questions:

- What does peacekeeping actually involve?
- What qualities are needed for this peacekeeping to be carried out effectively?
- Is ADF peacekeeping good global citizenship?

In exploring these key questions students raised a number of aspects that needed to be considered and which would influence their decisions, including:

- Was the mission internationally sanctioned, or was it a unilateral one?
- Was Australia there out of self-interest, or to help others?
- Did the ADF personnel involved act responsibly?
- Did they show cultural sensitivity to the local people?

In this unit we look at some of the case studies that students investigated in their workshop groups at these Youth Challenges, as well as some additional information and testimonies from ADF peacekeepers about their experiences.

By exploring this information students will be able to come to their own conclusions about what happens during peacekeeping missions, what qualities are needed for them to be successfully completed, and what this tells us about the ADF and good global citizenship.

It will be useful with this unit to have an overview of all ADF peacekeeping operations since 1947 — see *STUDIES 1/2009* for a comprehensive summary of ADF peacekeeping operations over time.

# Your task

Your task is to create a summary of selected ADF peacekeeping operations, and use that summary to reach your own informed conclusion about Australian peacekeeping and good global citizenship.

The best way to do this is:

- 1 Allocate the six case studies among groups. Each group is responsible for summarising information on each of the aspects in the table below for their own case study.
- 2 Then each group can report to the class on their particular case study.
- 3 The whole class can develop a summary for all the case studies.
- 4 When the class has gathered all this evidence it can decide: **Is Australian peacekeeping good citizenship?**

KEY ASPECTS TO EXPLORE:	1 Borders/Truce	2 Rwanda	3 Somalia
When			
How many ADF involved			
International status of the mission			
Mission objective			
ADF Tasks – official			
ADF Tasks – Unofficial			
Behaviour of ADF			
Qualities shown (good and bad)			
Impacts/ effects on locals			
Impacts/ effects on ADF			
Evaluation: Good citizenship?			



# Exploring ADF peacekeeping

## CASE STUDY 1 Supervising a truce

One of the types of peacekeeping operations that ADF personnel have been involved in over time is the supervision of a truce or ceasefire between warring factions within a country. Here is an example of the sort of peacekeeping activities that have

been carried out by ADF military observers in such places as the Sinai and Kashmir. Read the following account of this type of peacekeeping activity and answer the associated questions.

### Source 1.1

As a rule two patrols go out each day, each consisting of two unarmed observers of different nationalities, together with an interpreter employed from the local community. These may be routine patrols ... that observe and report on any infringements by either side across the line, or informal patrols of the villages ... In the villages the observers may have formal meetings with the mayors ... to maintain contact with the local population, but quite often the patrol will consist simply of getting out, walking, having coffee, meeting with the children and their families, shopping in the markets and generally developing a rapport with the local population ... Because the observers are unarmed, they can relate in a non-threatening way to the population and, even through an interpreter, can gain the trust of local people and get a real feeling for their attitudes. That is a critical skill that the Australians are very good at ...

There are many challenges here ... [The peacekeepers] come into a country that they may know a lot about in theory but, working with interpreters, they find themselves immersed in the population every day. They work with different nationalities, with different standards of training, different levels of understanding of the mission ... For military people it is unusual to be unarmed in a threatening environment. Obviously, we wear the normal body armour and helmets, and operate whenever possible in armoured land cruisers or specially designed armoured scout vehicles. But in the end it comes down to training and awareness: if personnel feel threatened or uncomfortable, they will withdraw from the area, let the situation calm down, go back to their patrol base, reassess the situation, and then, as a rule, try to re-engage once the area has been secured by armed peacekeepers ...

The robust nature of the Australian character and the professional development [the ADF personnel] have had before coming [to the place] enable them to consistently perform well. They are confident and adaptable, relate to the local population very well and show huge amounts of empathy and compassion. Those local friendships assist them in understanding what is going on around them, which in turn helps with their force protection. They also take the opportunity to get out and explore, immersing themselves [in the local area and] travelling widely... a huge benefit for their development as [soldiers].

- 1 What is the main aim of the patrols?
- 2 Why would these patrols be unarmed?
- 3 What skills can you identify among the patrolling peacekeepers?
- 4 What is the importance of training?
- 5 What qualities are needed for this type of peacekeeping to be effective?

Andrew Meacham in David Horner, Peter Londey and Jean Bou, *Australian Peacekeeping. Sixty Years in the Field*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2009 pages 215-216

The RAAF provided and operated helicopters as part of the Sinai multinational force. This was a force of military representatives from 11 nations, set up to observe a ceasefire between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai desert.



Here is an account of some of RAAF pilot Peter O'Brien's experiences. Read it and answer the associated questions.

**Source 1.2**

[W]e went to Richmond and were there for about two or three days and during that time we were learning about the cultures, the cultures of the place, what you can't do and all the nasty things to watch out for, the flying conditions, so we had an idea what to expect. When we landed ... we didn't fly for a couple of days. We found out again about all the nasty things like insects and scorpions and snakes and what sort of things are out in the desert. We spoke to the other crews about the flying conditions and what to look out for and what to not do.

[W]hen we arrived ... the base was [already] set up and the contingents, especially the Australia contingent, had a very efficient and well organised area for the men to socialise and be billeted in. They had a good hangar and good procedures involved with the helicopters. It was excellent ... There was a large mess hall for everyone, all ranks, the food was excellent. You didn't have to do your washing. You just drop it into the Laundromat and it was done for you. There wasn't much else on the base. They had a swimming pool but we only used that some time of the year. The golf course consisted of sand and the guys would play cricket, or we'd just conduct some entertainment of a night time. Singing songs, carrying on or dances. We'd watch movies all the time ... Write home or ring home. If you were lucky you would get a trip into Tel Aviv for a weekend. I went in there once ... and we spent the weekend in ... Jerusalem. We went down to Jericho, Masada and looked around the old city, had a couple of beers and I think we went down to Tel Aviv for a little bit of a look. That was that weekend gone and then back to base ... I took a day trip into Cairo with the French. What happens is they fly us in early in the morning and you can go and do what you want to do. I just wanted to go and see the pyramids and go to the museum ...

[W]e used to fly around the Sinai quite a lot ... The Bedouins always loved seeing us. In fact, everywhere I landed I would always give the kids food. They would get stuff that they probably would never see. Fruit, all that sort of stuff. I made up sandwiches and that sort of thing. It was a treat for them. After a period of time I would take out crayons and pencils and paper and rulers and anything else I could to give to the kids. I remember we landed at one spot and the aircraft was just engulfed with all these little Arab kids, and I just didn't have enough to give them. You run out. But they were lovely people too. Such harsh conditions that they lived in. It was amazing. They were quite happy.

[W]e had an impartial role. We didn't take sides because our role was to separate the countries. So if you had the opportunity to mix with the Israelis you did and if you had the opportunity to mix with the Arabs you did. It was just a good situation to be in because you got to see both sides of what was happening.

Well, after breakfast we would hop in the crew van and go up to the crewroom and have our morning brief and allocation of crews. We would go to the officer and you would find out on the board what tasks you had been given, who the other crew members were and what aircraft you've got, what time you were taking off. Prior to that of course, you would go out to your aircraft and whatever the task was you would set your aircraft up ... Say you were on a task and that might take you hours and hours. You might have to stop somewhere, but say if you didn't stop somewhere some of the places that you go to are pretty sparse, so you might take our own meals otherwise you would go into their mess hall ... But generally we took our own meals with us. Some of the places were on plateaus and there was just enough room for the helicopter to land with the tail hanging over a precipice, you know. You just hop out of the aircraft and down some stairs and into their observation hut. Other places were quite good, you know, larger ... [Y]ou would go back to base and debrief about what you did that day, and then you would finish work and so you would go back and get changed and go to the surf club for a few beers, go and have dinner, go back to the surf club. And depending on what time you were flying, you always had a certain time you had to stop

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- 6 Were the ADF personnel well-trained and well-prepared for this mission?
- 7 How does this description compare with any image you might have of what happens during a peacekeeping mission?
- 8 Why would O'Brien have provided food, paper and crayons to the local children?
- 9 What effect or impact would it have?
- 10 Is this a desirable attitude to have? Why?
- 11 Why would these tasks be important to the mission?
- 12 Was there any danger involved?
- 13 Was there any special skill required?

>> Source 1.2 continued

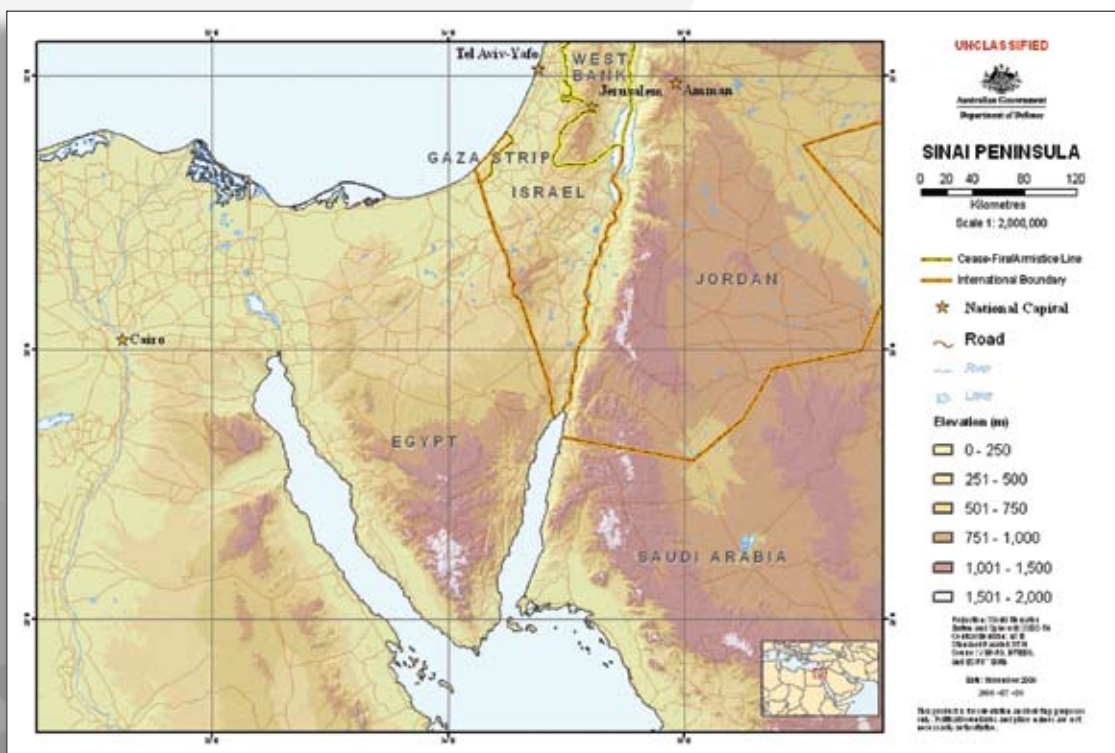
drinking, and not drink too heavily when you are on duty. And then you would go back and get up the next morning and go and do another task ... [We might] fly an Israeli around to check on what was happening in that area, and then we would fly an Arab around so they could check on what was happening as well ... You might fly a VIP [very important person] around from one of the contingents that wants to come out. He might be a general and he wants to go out and see his contingent in the field ... Our role was to resupply them at all times with rotation of troops, to supply them with fresh water, to supply them with food, to go and lift them out if they had medical problems. It could be just a night observation, checking the border or it could be training for our crew ... It might be night flying and it might be some rescue, some training in doing night rescues or whatever. We had to maintain certain standards at all times, so we were always being checked out ... [M]ost of it was resupplying and moving troops around so doing rotations and putting people out into the field and bringing people back, doing medivacs. Going out to the field if someone has hurt themselves and picking them up or going out and doing rescues on other aircraft that had lost an engine. The thing about that when it happens, and it didn't happen too often, anywhere you land out there you could be landing on a mine so you were trying to land on a track. There were certain places that we'd fly and if the weather got really bad we would pick on a road and race up the road because if we had to land somewhere, we would land on that road as opposed to landing in the desert ...

I felt sorry for the Arabs and that's why I helped the kids as much as I could. I felt sorry for the way they lived. But they had been living that way for centuries and centuries, the Bedouins. And if you went into their homes, I don't know if there was a tax involved but the roofs were never finished. They always had bits of steel and girders and that sticking out through the roof ... So the houses didn't look the best even though they were solid homes, and they were quite nice people too. They were hospitable. We had some people working for us on the base and they were quite nice. They were Bedouins. We had Arabs working doing our laundry and all that sort of thing. We didn't have any Israelis working there.

Well, it was a great opportunity to go overseas and be part of an historic peacekeeping mission like that because the flying was very challenging. It was a great experience, especially if you had trained for so long, and actually get out and do operational flying like that where you are away from Australia. And you are a self-contained unit and you are operating in a professional manner. We were highly regarded by everyone that worked in the Sinai ... [and] were looked upon in a high regard and under the Anzac tradition the great standards were set a long time ago, and they were maintained by the men that served in that area where the original Anzacs went through ...

[www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au](http://www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au)

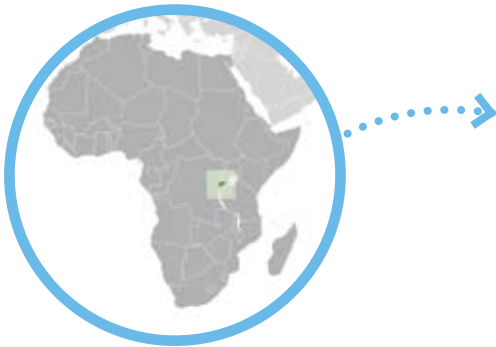
- 14 How does this paragraph show empathy for the local people?
- 15 How does it show cultural respect?
- 16 How did O'Brien benefit personally from the mission?
- 17 How did the local people benefit?
- 18 Complete the summary sheet on page 32 for this peacekeeping mission.



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# Exploring ADF peacekeeping

## CASE STUDY 2 Providing medical aid in Rwanda



Rwanda is a former Belgian colony that gained independence in 1962. Its two main ethnic groups were the majority Hutus (85-90% of the total population), and the minority Tutsis. The Tutsis, however, were the favoured and privileged ruling group.

In 1959 a Hutu rebellion overthrew the Tutsis. Thousands fled to Uganda. In 1990 the children of these exiles invaded Rwanda, leading to a bloody civil war.

In 1993 the United Nations authorized a 2500 strong military intervention force to supervise a peace proposal. But the assassination of the Hutu President led to mass revenge killings by the Hutu military. It is estimated that between 800 000 and 1 000 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred, ending only with the overthrow of the Hutu government in 1994.

Australian troops and medical personnel were part of the UN force sent to try and restore stability. Under the United Nations Rules of Engagement for this conflict — the set of rules that UN peacekeepers had to abide by — the medical workers were really only to provide care for UN troops rather than local people, and the

armed soldiers were forbidden to fire their weapons unless they or the medical personnel were being attacked. This resulted in a terrible outcome for these troops.

Here are some extracts from a soldier's memoirs of being in Rwanda in 1994-1995, and witnessing the horrific massacre at a refugee camp at Kibeho just to the east of Butare. Read this source and answer the associated questions.

### Source 2.1

The [government soldiers] tried to intimidate and provoke us. They were just looking for the chance to start shooting at us, waiting for one of us to fire at them. Only our discipline as Australian soldiers stopped us. One incident sticks in my memory. An old lady near us stood up and raised her hands in surrender. A [government] soldier went to her and escorted her to the top of the hill. *That's good*, I thought, *she will be safe now*. But then, to our horror, the soldier turned around, looked at us with a big smile on his face, pushed the old woman to the ground and shot her in the back. I have no doubt he did this deliberately, as if to say. "The UN is not in control here, I am." Basically, he was giving us the big finger and daring us to do something about it. We couldn't do anything at all. And he knew it. They all knew it ...

While on duty at the hospital one night I was sitting on the balcony quietly talking to [another soldier] when he told me how he had stood between a [government] soldier and the person he had just shot ... I thought, So what? Didn't [this soldier] know many [Australians] had done something similar? Jordo had plucked a child out of the line of fire. Tim had worked on several casualties at once while the wall he was against was peppered with bullets. Nico looked after several casualties on the back of a truck and kept working during the firefight. Carol repeatedly ventured into the [refugee] hospital to retrieve casualties even though she was ordered by the [government soldiers] to stop or she would be killed ... One soldier grabbed a stick a [government] soldier was using to beat a [refugee], snapped it in half and told the soldier to '---- off'. I had treated many casualties while intense firing went on all around us and had sat in front of casualties to protect them from incoming fire while waiting at the landing zone for the next chopper ... Everyone had tried to do something.

*continued>>*

- 1 Describe what happened with the old woman.
- 2 Why did the government troops kill her?
- 3 What was the message that they gave the Australian troops?
- 4 Why did the Australian troops not help the old lady?
- 5 How do you think they might have felt about this?
- 6 Why does the author list what the various people did?

>> Source 2.1 continued

[Soon after] we were told that there was going to be a demonstration by local people outside the Australian headquarters compound and a march past the hospital compound in protest at the Australian soldiers having stood by and watched the Kibeho [massacre of at least 25 000 refugees] unfold. I went to the roof and watched the march. There was a lot of loud chanting, but it was peaceful ... [The Australian Commanding Officer] had no answers as to why we could not intervene during the massacre and protect the [refugees] with our weapons except that it was a decision from UN headquarters. He did tell us that there was absolutely no doubt if we had not been at Kibeho the whole camp of around 100 000 people probably would have been slaughtered and the world would have been none the wiser. He estimated that apart from our lifesaving [medical] work, our presence in the area had saved more than 65 000 lives. It helped put a more positive perspective on what was disturbing us but for me it still only helped a little ...

Terry Pickard, *Combat Medic, An Australian Eyewitness Account of the Kibeho Massacre*, Big Sky Publishing, Brisbane, 2008 pages 74, 113-115

- 7 Why did the local people blame the Australians for the massacre?
- 8 Did the Australian troops achieve anything?

The 'Carol' referred to in the above document is Captain Carol Vaughan-Evans, a medical doctor. Here is her account of the events of the Kibeho massacre.

## Source 2.2

I'm an army doctor; I'm a general practitioner with an interest in emergency medicine. [F]rom August '94 through to August '95 the Australians established a contingent ... to provide medical support, in the primary role to the United Nations Force in Rwanda, which was a peacekeeping force. I guess with any of our missions that the Australians provide to any other mission we tend to have a spare capacity that we use on the locals as well. So ... with 'mission creep' [a mission increases in scope] as it happens we spent most of our time treating locals and assisting United Nations as we could ... [S]o what was initially meant to be a role specifically for the United Nations distorted into a role of one where through compassion and interest alone we were treating the locals ... I think it's a reflection of the Australian compassionate soldier, anyone wants to provide as much aid as they can. So if you're given a mandate that doesn't specifically address the locals, you can't help but care. So with whatever spare capacity you can muster you will help. And I think that helps with the mission in the long run is that you establish some sort of bond and reliability with the locals, they know you can be trusted and that you're there ... to help them.

My medical element was ... specifically tasked to go to Kibeho, which was a very large camp ... The government forces had surrounded the camp and in an effort to clear the locals out ... had ... forced the people out of their homes, basically denying them water, food and shelter, in order to get them out. The locals didn't want to do that — they had fears about returning to their homes where they had lived in previously, because returning there often there'd be squatters there. They'd be accused of murder and stoned. [There was] pressure within the camp to stay too because in fact there would have been Interahamwe [meaning "Those who stand (or fight) together" in Rwandan] which were the murderous gang members, hiding in the camp and they were saying, "No don't go," because they could hide among the masses. So whilst the government forces were extremely intent on closing the camp the people were reluctant to go.

So it was thought that if [we] sent medical along, and obviously medical always goes with security forces ... we could actually help with the people and their conditions as they left the camp ... [W]e certainly weren't wanted, the government forces made that very, very clear, but did respect the UN's presence ... So they made our life difficult and insisted that we only treated people who had decided to leave the camp, we couldn't advertise, we had to have no more than two minutes with people, we couldn't feed them ... All the same we did our best and over the few days proceeding that Saturday the mood within the camp became worse and worse. Desperate people I guess, and on a regular basis there'd be riots within the camp, the soldiers would shoot overhead, or sometimes into the crowd. And there'd be machete wounds in the morning, that would greet us when we'd come into work.

But on the particular Saturday when the massacre happened, we arrived [at the hospital near the camp] and there'd been incredible unrest in the camp on the preceding night ... with well over seventy patients [in the hospital] who'd been massacred and shot from the previous night ... there were machete wounds all over the body ... So having arrived we ... thought we'd do our best to help so we established a treatment position ... and decided to ferry the people up to that position. Over the morning the feeling within the camp deteriorated incredibly, the government forces were extremely aggressive indicating that if we didn't

*continued >>*

- 9 What is meant by 'mission creep'?
- 10 Why did the Australians allow this 'mission creep' to occur?
- 11 What were the effects or impacts of this?
- 12 Summarise the relations between the government troops and the refugees.
- 13 Summarise the relations between the soldiers and the ADF peacekeepers.

>> Source 2.2 continued

empty the hospital they would, and their means were one of going through and killing people who remained, so we ... took everybody, we left no one to have the government forces go through. The mood deteriorated further and whilst we were working on these people, people within the camp decided to run for their lives, I don't actually know what precipitated it. But they ran through the human barricade of government forces, and ... they didn't succeed, they were shot, bayoneted, and the government forces chased them down. That went on for some period of time; there was a storm at the same time so it was really was quite a tumultuous event. It eventually settled, we were continuing on with treating our patients and, and trying to evacuate them, but the government forces weren't allowing us to do much about that in terms of exiting their camp, because it is their area ... Eventually though in the afternoon they said we could get the helicopters in, and ... they started to come in, the landing zone was fairly distant from the treatment area so we drove down all these patients, and we had a great number of them. And I guess us in the distance with our blue helmets on and our blue body armour, again we must have attracted attention to the locals stuck within the camp and they thought they'd try and run again. Which they did, and yet again the government forces shot them down. Whilst they weren't shooting at us they were shooting at people running at us. There was no constraint at all, so that continued until we evacuated all the people we could ... We returned to the [hospital area] and started collecting more patients, and it continued on. So that's the massacre at Kibeho ...

You know I didn't actually have time to think [about danger], I was so busy thinking about the patients, my role was to treat patients, was to organise the evacuation of them. Certainly I wasn't the only medical personnel, I had medics there and I had the soldiers acting as stretcher bearers. But my primary role as the only medical officer was to make sure that I got people out of there alive. So I wasn't focused on the danger at all, in fact it took people to remind me that in fact perhaps you should get your head down. But I realised in fact yes there was an element of danger ...

I'm very proud of what we, as the entire group, achieved. It showed incredible maturity and discipline from within our ranks, to continue on with the job, where the gut reaction really was one to want to engage the government forces, and that was not our mandate, not at all. So the discipline there, I am extremely proud of that. On a personal level I wish I could have done far more. So whilst I'm proud of the group, I'm disappointed.

[www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au/aawfa/interviews/1960.aspx?](http://www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au/aawfa/interviews/1960.aspx?)

14 Describe the nature of the massacre.

15 How were the Australians involved?

16 What qualities enabled the Australian peacekeepers to manage in this situation?

17 Did the Australians succeed?

War artist George Gittoes was present at these events. Read his description and answer the associated questions.

### Source 2.3

There was one stage at Kibeho where the Australian soldiers were carrying wounded and all of a sudden they came under heavy machine gunfire themselves. They didn't drop the wounded to take cover. All Australians can be proud to know that they held the people that they were carrying and went on, even though that made them bigger targets and saved them.

And one of the most beautiful pieces of courage I've ever seen was from the Australian woman soldier Dr. Carol Vaughan-Evans. There was a stage when we went down where many people had been killed during the night and there were people with terrible wounds. Carol and the other Australian medics stitched their wounds together, put bandages on them and then it was a slow process of taking them back on stretchers to where they could be helped more in the field hospital. We got back to the field hospital and the people who



were doing the killing came up and said you can't go back, we're going to finish them off. That is, kill the people that the Australians had bandaged. Carol was the senior officer, all the other soldiers looked to Carol, for all of us. She said 'No I'm going back'. And everyone was so relieved. She knew that she was risking the lives of the soldiers under her to go back [but] the soldiers were able to get everyone that they treated and get them back. And they were under heavy fire. It was an act of extraordinary courage but it was the right thing. I felt very proud to have been there and to have witnessed it.

Interview 2005. See [www.defence2020.info](http://www.defence2020.info), and go to Interactives, George Gittoes.

18 What qualities did the Australians show?

19 What qualities did Captain Vaughan-Evans show?

20 Complete the summary sheet on page 32 for this peacekeeping mission.

**TO SEE MORE about Peacekeeping at Rwanda go to [www.defence2020.info](http://www.defence2020.info) and go to Interactive Modules, Acts of Good Citizenship**

# Exploring ADF peacekeeping

## CASE STUDY 3 Distributing humanitarian aid in Somalia



In 1993 Somalia was engaged in a bloody civil war. The previous ruler had been overthrown, but was fighting to regain control. The violence meant that a humanitarian crisis developed. The United Nations sent a force to distribute humanitarian aid to civilians — but it had to be done in a situation in which local armed warlords controlled various areas, and were prepared to attack UN troops to maintain control of their areas. Some of you will be familiar with this situation from the film *Black Hawk Down*. In 1993 an Australian Army battalion was sent into an area that had previously been under the control of United Nations troops. The Australians provided an alternative approach to peacekeeping, as explained in this document. Read it and answer the associated questions.

### Source 3.1

Somalia represented a significant failure for the United Nations, and for the international community: a society in chaos was left in chaos, from which it is only today starting to extricate itself.

The causes of that failure are contested ...

[One view is] that the problem lay ... with the [previous United Nations' troops] 'sheriff's posse' approach to peacekeeping in Mogadishu, picking and choosing among the warlords as allies or enemies, depending on maximum firepower to impose order, and trying to hasten a solution in order to get out quickly.

On this view, the Australians in Baidoa provided an alternative model: with [the Australian Commanding Officer] acting more or less as a military governor, the Australians adopted counter-insurgency tactics to ensure they dominated the town and the surrounding countryside.

The Australians were aggressive enough to ensure Somali respect, and made disarmament of the population a central objective; their relentless patrolling, including extensive patrolling on foot, provided an important presence on the ground, and they created secure conditions in which the aid agencies could work.

And in the key area of civil-military relations, the Australians avoided working with the Somali Liberation Army, which had been powerful in Baidoa, and preferred a 'bottom-up' approach involving local clan elders in creating police and a judicial system, and reinstating the Somali penal code.

In these ways and by helping recreate physical infrastructure, they showed that a peace enforcement operation could help Somalis rebuild their society.

Peter Londey, *Other People's Wars*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2004, page 192-193

- 1 Explain the significant differences between the approach of the United States and the Australian peacekeepers towards controlling the area, and distributing the aid.
- 2 What qualities did the Australian approach require?
- 3 What were the outcomes?



Australian Defence Force

Not all Australian troops were involved at the 'sharp end' of the food distribution. Here is an account of RAAF logistics officer Group Captain Sue McCready's role in the process. Read it and answer the associated questions.



### Source 3.2

Logistics officers in the Air Force look after a really broad range of activities from purchasing to loading aircraft, looking after catering and feeding the troops, transport and distribution, warehousing, and providing all the support for aircraft — spares and fuel and tyres and everything else.

My first deployment was to Somalia in 1994. We did three weeks of training and then we arrived in Somalia on the 20th of May and were there until the end of November. We were based in the capital, Mogadishu.

I was in the United Nations headquarters in Mogadishu and I was the movement staff officer. So my job was to organise with the United Nations headquarters in New York to charter commercial aircraft to come in to Mogadishu to pick up the troops that were ready to go home and to bring in their replacement troops as well. I think we have over twenty five contributing countries and they were in a rolling rotation program, so pretty much every week I was receiving a new contingent into the country and sending another contingent home. The United Nations is a large bureaucracy and sometimes it moves slower than the government of a country, for example, so the organising of the aircraft sometimes took a little bit longer that we would had liked.

While we were there also the Australian contingent sponsored two orphanages. One was in Mogadishu itself and one was up country in a little town call Baidoa where the First Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment had been positioned for six months as part of the initial response to the Somalia disaster. They were there primarily to provide security in the town and to ensure the orderly and appropriate handing out of food every day that was coming in through the World Food Program.

So we had the two orphanages and it was nice to go and visit the orphanages where we took out our excess food rations. If we had some clothes or books or something sent in from Australia then we took them and gave them to the kids, and they also liked the few lollies that we got sent from Australia. To see the kids in that environment, which was very different to seeing the kids on the streets and how they had been affected by the civil war in Somalia and had lost their parents, to be able to bring some sort of joy to their day with a toy or some lollies or something like that was very nice to be able to do.

The first time I went to the orphanage in Baidoa it was in a small aircraft, about a ten seater, and the Somalis came running from everywhere and they see the Aus camp uniform, the Australian camouflage uniform, and they were yelling out: 'Australia, Australia, Australia number one!!!!' 'No, no, no Somalia number 1!!!!' 'No, no, no Australia number 1!!!!' And that sort of said to me that the guys from the First Battalion when they were there must have done amazing stuff to win the heart and minds of all of these people in Baidoa, and by the time we got there the battalion had been gone for well over twelve or maybe eighteen months, so their memory lasted that long, particularly of the uniform, and they associated as Australians and you know that it is good.

Similarly when we drove to Mogadishu in our armoured personnel carrier, initially we were just in a green army vehicle and we could have been from any country, because all they saw was our heads sticking out of the top of the turret with a green helmet on. There was a lot of bad blood in the country between Somalis and some of the peacekeepers because of some of the stuff that had had happened, so we painted 'skippys' on the side of our personnel carrier and got cloth helmet covers for our helmets which were in the same pattern of the Australian camouflage, so then you'd drove through the streets and then you got again 'Oh Australian, Australian' and they'd wave to you. The Somalis who were still running around the streets with fifty calibre machines guns on the roof of their vehicle, you know when a lot of the convoys went past they will take a very aggressive stand and they would point their guns at the convoy that was passing. But the Australians would go past and out of courtesy they would dip their weapon up so they wouldn't be pointing the weapon at us and wave at us as we go through, so I think that was a mark of respect, that the Australians were firm but friendly in their relations with the local people. The guys who were with the First Battalion in Baidoa, you know the way that they had set up their relationships, they were firm but friendly and they really espoused the good Aussie value of the fair go to everyone, and they did not, you know, just because you were the mayor of the town or you were a clan leader or anything you did not get any special treatment when it come to food getting handed out, everyone lined up and everyone got their fair share of the food.

Interview June 2009

- 4 Many of the missions that ADF peacekeepers have been involved in were as part of a United Nations force. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of being part of a UN force?
- 5 Why did the Australians take on these extra duties?
- 6 How did the reaction of the local Somalis suggest that the Australians had been popular?
- 7 How did the behaviour of the Somalis in Mogadishu suggest this?
- 8 Why had the Australians made such a strong and positive impression?

**TO FIND OUT MORE** about  
**ADF peacekeepers** go to  
[www.defence2020.info](http://www.defence2020.info)  
and select **Profiles**

# Exploring ADF peacekeeping

## CASE STUDY 4 Helping a nation create itself in East Timor/Timor Leste



East Timor has been Australia's biggest commitment to peacekeeping. In 1999 this Indonesian province was allowed to vote to decide if it would become independent, or remain a part of Indonesia. The vast majority of people voted for independence. The Indonesian military backed the local pro-Indonesia militia, who objected to the vote, and proceeded to devastate the country, and start massacring the inhabitants. A multi-national force, led by Australia, quickly intervened to stop the killing and destruction, and to help the East Timorese prepare themselves for independence. The early months, when stability was being restored, were dangerous times, with armed militia intent on frustrating the process. Later UN missions were less dangerous, but were important in helping East Timor restore its infrastructure and economy, and to become the nation of Timor Leste in 2002. Australians are still part of the UN mission continuing to help Timor Leste establish itself. Here is an account of patrolling in East Timor in 2000. Read it and answer the associated questions.

### Source 4.1

Patrolling is the key to keeping an area secure — by being constantly around, the militias and their supporters don't have a chance to re-gather and re-assert themselves.

A patrol is normally a routine thing - you walk, keep alert, note what's happening, interact with the locals. It's 'hearts and minds' stuff as well as showing your strength to any potential 'nasty'.

We rarely have contacts, but on one patrol near the border we had just stopped for a break. We saw some suspicious characters with weapons, so the scout went ahead to report. Suddenly there were shots. Well the training really came to the fore so we deployed into a defensive position. I can tell you that the adrenalin was running now — I felt alert and excited, but still calm at the same time.

We saw a couple of groups, and there were occasional shots coming in at us from several different places.

I requested permission to engage, got it, and aimed at a bloke I could see about 1500 metres away with an AK 47 rifle. I tried to take wind and distance and everything into account, but the shot fell about a metre short. The unfriendlies quickly disappeared.

How did I feel? I remember thinking 'What if I get him?' But also What if I miss?' I have to say that I'm disappointed to have missed him. There's been all the training, all the preparation. all the frustration of having got here too late to save some of the killing and the destruction, and there's also the feeling that it would have 'closed the circle', been the logical completion of what we have been prepared for.

We have been shown to be well-trained, well-armed and disciplined. I think we have really made a difference to the locals, inspired them with confidence, and have shared a real affection and like. I feel very proud of the Australian effort here.

Interview with a member of B Company 3 RAR in East Timor, February 2000

- 1 Explain the purpose of patrolling.
- 2 What skills or qualities are required?
- 3 What does 'hearts and minds' mean?
- 4 Why was good training so important here?
- 5 What does this show about the operation of Rules of Engagement?
- 6 What was the dilemma that the soldier felt about his missing the shot?

Here is another account from the same time of the experiences of an Army helicopter pilot, John Fraser. Read it and answer the associated questions.

**Source 4.2**

I had to go pick up some murderers that day. Just one of those things, I was on standby. These very brave [militia] guys had murdered a couple of priests and a nun and we thought, "You're very brave, aren't you?" So we went down there and made sure they were securely seated in the back of the Blackhawk and made sure their harness was just that extra little bit tight, which basically cuts off the circulation and makes it hard for them to breath, stiff shit. And one of them accidentally bumped his head on the roof. That happens sometimes, you know. I tried to stop it but just couldn't do it. [We] treated them as POWs [prisoners of war]. We have our rules of engagements, the rules of the UN and the rules of war and that so we just basically, you know, we didn't starve them; we didn't sort of keep them thirsty. We gave them rations, we gave them water, but we also let them know, "Well, you know, you're prisoners now. We'll treat you fairly but be good boys." So basically we had, we just absolutely loathed them but we're professionals, we had a job to do.

The females? Fine. Greeted just as well as the guys. Probably they've got that feminine touch so the kids probably like them a bit more, but I find, like in Cambodia the kids loved us. We'd give them toys and balloons and tennis balls and stuff like that and play with them, and in East Timor it was the same thing. We used to go around, once things got a bit more established, we'd go around in a Land Rover and we'd basically hand out books and colouring pencils and toys and this and that and it was well received by all the kids. And I think too, especially with the medics we had, like having the females, they did a really good job. Once again it's that feminine touch, but also they're there to do a job as a soldier. So they've got the feminine touch but they've got no problems with putting a couple of rounds in your chest if you basically go to attack what they're defending. So they do a very good job. We had one female Blackhawk pilot, Ivana Gorlan ... I did a couple of missions with her, challenging missions ... She was the captain of the aircraft and flew soundly, make some very solid decisions, overrode the co-pilot's ideas for a few silly things and actually did a good job. So the women of the Australian Army, they do a really good job.

When we go 'hunting' [seeking out the enemy] we have rules of engagement. We can't just shoot them on sight. We usually try and capture them, but if they break the rules of engagement then we're allowed to engage and we don't shoot to wound, we shoot to kill. You're not going to sort of give a guy a second chance to get you. If you shoot him in the legs he can still fire back. No, take him down regardless. So basically we just flew around tree top level, weapons at the ready. In fact while we were doing that these two guys on a motorbike crossed the bridge and crossed the border into our territory and we were just going like, "What, are you stupid?" They realised what was going on. They knew we were there, and basically we just came along and flew parallel to them down the road and we had two SAS [Special Air Service] snipers watching them. I had my door gun ready, basically just ready to turn them into clouds of pink mist, and they ran into 11 SAS guys waiting for them. Next thing you know they're on the ground in some very uncomfortable position and getting questions of, "What ... are you doing here?" They didn't have any weapons, so, and they didn't do anything dangerous, so we couldn't do anything. So it was just the way it went. But, like, hunting may sound a bit clinical but we hunt within the rules of the game, and it's like when the infantry patrol are on the streets, they're patrolling but they're actually hunting.

It's very hard. I feel sorry for my girlfriend. Sometimes I torture her so much. We've been together for 10 months and it's only once or twice she's been in the firing line for my anger. I don't abuse her or hit her or anything like that, but I just take my frustrations out on Natalie and it's really unfair. She just wants to love and support me. We actually just had a spat the other day and it had nothing to do with her at all, but she just got in the firing line, so we're going to see my counsellor and see my psych and get a strategy to deal with that because I love her very much. She loves me, and it's just so unfair and it's, like, not her fault and it's not my fault. But yeah, it's a thing you've got to manage 24/7, and for the work I do with my counsellors, with my psychs, having PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] is bad enough but I've got to deal with chronic back pain. I've got my left knee, my pelvis, my spine and my right hip and then PTSD ... [M]y strategy there is ... whatever I'm doing is stop, get home as fast as possible, shower, a really good hot shower, a cup of tea, some pain medication, kick on the air con and watch a comedy movie with some friends or watch something funny. So I've learned to deal with it pretty well. I've never had a drink in my life. I've never taken illegal drugs ... I try and follow a diet as best as I can and I exercise as much as I can. Lately it hasn't worked, but now I've got my gym set up I can really get stuck back into things and also having my dog makes the world of difference. If I'm having a really bad day he's having a sleep with me, he's up there. He knows when I'm down. He can read it, that's the thing. He says, "Are you OK?" And he's got his head in my lap. "I'll just hang around you a little bit." He gets more clingy. He knows when I'm stressed from the pain, because he sleeps beside my bed and he's got his head on the bed, "Up you come." So he jumps up and actually he actually takes a bit of pain away because he'll basically nuzzle up to my back and his body heat will actually heat up my back for me so that sort of helps take the pain away, plus having the comfort of him here makes all the difference.

- 7 The suggestion here is that the offenders were deliberately roughly handled. Do you think this is understandable?
- 8 Can it be justified?
- 9 Was there a professional attitude shown towards the enemy?
- 10 What qualities did women peacekeepers show?
- 11 Does that detract from their ability to carry out war-like as opposed to peace-like roles in the ADF?
- 12 What attitudes did the ADF show towards the local people?
- 13 Was this appropriate behaviour in the circumstances?
- 14 How did this individual's service in the ADF affect him?

[www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au](http://www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au)



Australian Defence Force

Others in the ADF were in more of a support role. Read this interview with Commander Greg Swindon, a logistics officer in the Australian Navy, and answer the associated questions.

### Source 4.3

My job in East Timor was to get into the country from Australia all the fuel that was needed, all the bottles of water and the provisions and ammunition. I made sure that it got into Dili, which it was our main headquarters area, was stored properly, and was then moved out to various parts of East Timor when it was required to. Fuel was a big activity because aircraft do not fly without fuel, and trucks do not move without fuel and ships do not sail without fuel, so that was a very constant activity, particularly in the wet season when there were a few floods and we needed to evacuate people and there were a lot of helicopters flying and they need constant resupply of fuel. That was my job, get the fuel to them.

When I was in East Timor the troubles were over and we were there to stabilise the country, bringing in as much support as we could, moving logistic support to the various different companies we were looking after in different areas, making sure they were supported and therefore could preserve the peace. I think East Timor was probably the most satisfying part of my career, to go there to put the training and skills that I spent many years learning into practice and to see the work of various peacekeepers, not only from Australia but from other countries as well, that they were doing to establish East Timor and to rebuild the country. Certainly Australia took a strong lead in that activity but just getting out and seeing the local people and talking to them and finding out how life for them had improved since the peacekeeping forces had been put into East Timor, in particular the children. The Australian soldiers or the Australian personnel whenever they around, walking around, the kids will always come up to you and say 'hello', which they did not do generally to some of the other peacekeepers. I think they quickly realised what the Australian uniform looked like and they always knew that Australians were friendly people and ... may be good for some chocolate or lollies or something like that. The Australian tended to be more personable and more outgoing and so the kids particularly were more than happy to come and talk to you.

You learned that you do not know everything and that you need to rely on your other team mates to get everything done and the most junior person in your team may be the person that comes up with the good idea of how to do something. Just because you are the senior person or you are in charge, you are not necessarily the person that has all the ideas. Do not be arrogant, listen to everyone and get their ideas because it may be the junior person that comes up with the idea which becomes the plan of how to do something. Also Australians do tend to be a little bit arrogant when they are overseas on peace keeping operations, thinking that we always know best so the other countries that are involved, such as Pakistan or Bangladesh or Kenya or even Ireland in the case of East Timor, you've got to realise that they are there trying to do their best as well and their idea may be the better idea and just being an Australian it does not mean that you always right.

← **15** What qualities did the ADF show in East Timor?

← **16** What criticisms does this person have about Australian attitudes?

**17** Complete the summary sheet on page 33 for this peacekeeping mission.

**TO SEE MORE about the ADF and Peacekeeping go to [www.dfeence2020.info](http://www.dfeence2020.info)**



# Exploring ADF peacekeeping

## CASE STUDY 5 The RAMSI mission to the Solomon Islands



For the past six years Australian soldiers and police have been working with forces from other regional neighbours to rebuild the strife-torn Solomon Islands. The operation named RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands) has been a major Australian activity in the Pacific region. Read this newspaper report on the mission and answer the associated questions.

### Source 5.1

Beverley Komasi holds out hope for the future of her country. She takes joy from the thought of the small improvements she can still make to the Mercy School, the take-all-comers, dirt-floored schoolhouse she runs in Burns Creek, a small village just outside the Solomon Islands capital, Honiara. Four years ago, the school did not exist. When she arrived from the neighbouring island of Malaita, the local children played, scavenged for food — some even lived — in the nearby rubbish dump. “I was shocked to see my own people living in this poverty,” Komasi says. “Many kids, they were running around aimless without a plan in their life, nothing to do.” So, gathering whatever help she could from local and international donors, particularly the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), she created a school and gave the children of Burns Creek a future. Today, the school has a building (though its land tenure is far from secure), there are blackboards and books for the 380 children and 14 volunteer teachers help Komasi with lessons ...

RAMSI arrived as a reluctant emissary to the Solomon Islands in 2003 when “the tensions” — the long-standing ethnic enmity between islanders indigenous to the main island of Guadalcanal and those from nearby Malaita — erupted into widespread violence. With an empty treasury, no army, and a police force that was seen to fuel violence rather than stop it, the Solomon Islands bordered on being a failed state. RAMSI, carrying the imprimatur of the Pacific Islands Forum, but led and dominated by Australian soldiers and police, was quickly successful in quelling the conflict that had torn the country apart. But, six years on, Australia and its partners remain in the Solomon Islands and talk has turned to how and when they should depart and what sort of country they will leave behind. How long should Australia stay before it becomes a hindrance, rather than a help, to the Solomon Islands learning to rely on its own machinery of state? When does assistance lead to dependence?

Australia’s commitment to the Solomons is not small, nor is it cheap. About 150 soldiers and 200 federal police officers are stationed in the country, along with 140-odd civilian advisers working within government departments. The Federal Government has committed \$777 million over four years to the mission.

The commanding officer of the Australian troops in the Solomons, Lieutenant-Colonel Neil Grimes, says the aim of the mission has changed. “In the very beginning, RAMSI basically took control and said, ‘right, it’s not working, we need to take charge here, to restore some order.’ The government institutions had broken down, the police force was gone, the weapons had been distributed among all the “tension” militants.

1 How have the ADF and other peacekeepers in RAMSI helped achieve this outcome?

2 Does this commitment to the Solomons Island seem to have been a selfish or a selfless one?

3 What does this show about how the aims of a mission need to change as the situation develops?

*continued>>*

>> Source 5.1 continued

The first thing was to capture the bad guys, enact a gun amnesty to take all those weapons off the streets, and then set out building for the future.

"Now we're in the capacity development phase, which is all about the Solomon Islands taking control: getting the parliament to take full control, having stable government, and then all the stable public institutions behind that." ...

Colonel Grimes believes the conclusion of the four-year budget is the right time to begin winding back, if not ending outright, RAMSI's presence. "I think that's the expectation. That RAMSI over the next four years will start to step back and as the Solomons continues to grow, it will continue to take back charge of every aspect of the community here."

But others believe Australia will be needed in the archipelago much longer. Professor Sinclair Dinnen, a senior fellow in the state, society and governance in Melanesia program at the Australian National University, credits RAMSI with restoring peace and fostering much of the recent development in the Solomons. But he says RAMSI will be judged by what it leaves behind. "The big question is, will the progress continue once the RAMSI mission begins to draw down? Is it sustainable?" he says.

"Some of the work in financial management, in treasury, that might be complete within a couple of years. But some of the more difficult areas, like working with police, might need to go on for at least another 10 years."

Much of the concern over the Solomons' long-term future is economic. There are few established industries and fewer still are able to attract legitimate foreign investment. Uncertainty over land tenure and security has prevented large-scale investment in gold and nickel mining, and Guadalcanal's oil palm plantations are too small in scale to provide many jobs.

The only large-scale industry in the Solomons is logging but it is largely unregulated. Logging once provided nearly 70 per cent of the Solomons' export earnings, but the rapacious felling of trees means the country's supply of harvestable timber could run out in two years.

Fish stocks are being similarly plundered. Most islanders rely on subsistence fishing, but according to a recent University of Queensland report, overfishing in the region is devastating fish stocks to the point where the Solomons may soon be unable to feed its own population.

continued>>

4 What dilemma faces the Australian Government in deciding whether Australia should maintain its commitment to the mission?

5 What economic problems face the Solomons Islanders?

6 How do these affect the nation's stability?

7 How do they affect the region's stability?



>> Source 5.1 continued

But the fish are not being caught by locals. Pacific Island countries catch \$200 million worth of tuna from island waters each year while foreign nations take more than \$1 billion worth.

Life for the vast majority of Solomon Islanders is one of subsistence and their economy goes little beyond roadside markets. "Economically, there is a whole series of very, very grave challenges, and I'm not so sure that RAMSI, or anyone else for that matter, has the answers," Dinnen says.

The head of RAMSI, special co-ordinator Graeme Wilson, says a new framework agreement between it and the Solomon Islands Government, which is expected to be endorsed at next week's Pacific Islands Forum in Cairns, will outline a plan for RAMSI's gradual withdrawal. Rather than imposing a deadline, it will look at phasing out certain areas of involvement when conditions are met.

The parliamentary secretary for Pacific Island affairs, Duncan Kerr, says the Government remains committed to the Solomons mission and to encouraging self-reliance and achieving a lasting peace. To that end, imposing artificial deadlines for a withdrawal would be counterproductive. "On all sides people realise it is a finite commitment that will be brought to an end, ultimately, when the key objectives have been achieved. But certainly we're not trying to put a deadline of four years on it," Kerr says.

RAMSI remains popular in the Solomons. The most recent survey of Islanders found 89 per cent support the mission's presence and 48 per cent believe violence would return were RAMSI to leave now.

In the streets of Honiara, soldiers are greeted warmly, with handshakes and thumbs up, by locals accepting of a foreign force's presence. Most soldiers have picked up enough pidgin to hold a conversation, and market stallholders are grateful for an overt security presence in a country that, for years, had none.

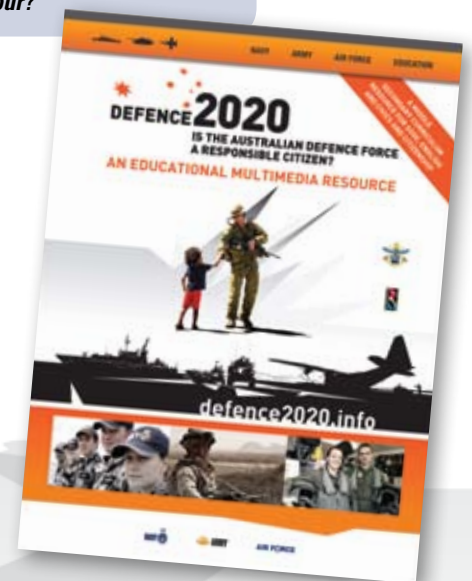
Elsewhere, Australian troops supervise the guards at the capital's notorious Rove Prison, while Australian Federal Police train their Solomon Islands counterparts and army medical officers run health clinics in villages that had never before seen a doctor. And in the jungle beyond Honiara's airport, known as Hell's Point, bomb disposal experts sweep the forest floor for unexploded World War II mortars that locals modify to make bombs to use for fishing.

Beverley Komasi sees RAMSI as "like a big brother — there to help and make sure everybody is behaved. It helps a lot, especially for children and for mothers; now we can relax because we feel safe. There is still a lot of fear in the Solomons, but RAMSI gives us confidence."

Ben Doherty, *The Age* 29 July 2009

- ← 8 What evidence is there that the RAMSI forces have been good citizens?
- ← 9 Has Australia been a good citizen with this mission?
- 10 Complete the summary sheet on page 33 for this peacekeeping mission.

**TO SEE MORE** about the ADF in the Pacific go to the *Defence 2020* resource sent to every secondary school in Australia during 2009 and go to the unit *Climate Change in the Pacific: Is the ADF a good regional neighbour?*



# Exploring ADF peacekeeping

## CASE STUDY 6 The ADF in Iraq and Afghanistan



Australian military forces have also been involved in combat operations designed to create an eventual outcome of peace and stability. They have just withdrawn from Iraq, and are heavily engaged in Afghanistan. Read this evaluation of the ADF by the editor of *Australian and New Zealand Defender* magazine, John Farrell, and answer the associated questions.



### Source 6.1

The sheer diversity of people that become soldiers these days doesn't readily allow stereotyping ... I was looking back at our covers not long ago and I realised that we'd had a huge range of ethnicities and coloured Australian Diggers on our covers, bound through time – reflecting the changing nature of the ADF.

All of the stereotypes are breaking down, like, quite frequently the platoon commander is not the most educated man in his platoon anymore. It's not unusual for a young officer to go to war with a platoon of soldiers that include privates with masters' degrees, and things like that. I'm always having my intellectual horizons expanded during conversations on a sandbag somewhere by someone who's reading some obscure historic book or scientific text, so, intellectual life is alive and well in the ranks and that's one of the things I can see that Australia's glitterati don't really appreciate.

There is an intense call amongst humans to be warriors. It doesn't strike everybody, but it strikes a good proportion of people. The other thing, of course, is it's a high adventure; it's a high adventure with high costs; you know, you get injured or wounded, but on the whole it's a, it's a life changing adventure, and I think many of them join because they want to know if they're made of the same stuff as the Diggers of old. One of the things that television – even though it's a remarkable medium that has bought home truth and information to the population in a way that non other has really managed – but it divorces you from

*continued >>*

**1** How might the make-up of the ADF affect its behaviour in peacekeeping activities?

**2** How is this comment, about the conditions in which ADF peacekeepers and combat troops serve, relevant in making a decision about whether they are good global citizens in their activities?

>> Source 5.1 continued

the heat, the dust, the smell of Iraq. People don't even believe the temperatures in Iraq. It can get to 66, 70 degrees when you're in one of the concrete defensive positions within Bagdad. And then if you get into an APC, it can go to 80 degrees: can you imagine being wedged in a steel box for two or three hours, at 80 degrees, with a whole lot of other people staring at you? That is one of the hardest things for me to accept when I'm back in Australia; is the judgemental way that many in the Australian population view the actions of the soldiers from the safety of their couches in their safe lounge rooms – and expect soldiers decision making processes to conform to very civilised ideals that may be appropriate for a lounge room in Glebe – but have no bearing on the reality on the ground in one of Bagdad's worst suburbs. Afghanistan is outrageous. It is like stepping back into the seventh century; you're talking about communities where a plastic bucket is a status symbol; where it's the seventh century in many ways except that there is a plethora of Warsaw pact small arms and some very knocked around Toyota Hyluxes in the middle of it. It's an amazing country. Every photo you take is like something out of a movie. It's simply on set really. Also, Afghanistan is; it's a soldiers' fight where as Iraq; it's a political war in many ways. The other major difference is that the soldiers you fight beside in Afghanistan give you a great deal of confidence in their ability to look after you. I've never felt that in Iraq with Iraqi security forces.

I think there's a number of levels of emotional upset caused by war. First and foremost one is: having to get your mind around extraordinary trauma, usually visited upon the innocent civilians that inhabit warzones – that, I have seen visibly shake senior soldiers who have been through a number of tours. The second one is: that you're away from home in a fast moving world and a lot of soldiers leave Australia as part of a family or a husband and wife team or a boyfriend/ girlfriend situation and then come home and find that the six months was too long to maintain those relationships and that's devastating to a lot of people. The dear John letter is not something from World War Two – it's alive and well today and I find that most of the people I know that have been extremely upset; that was a major element within it. And of course there's the trauma of fear. In our modern world we get divorced from fear where as in the battle field fear comes and places its hands on your shoulders and after you have been frightened; the world is no longer the same . . . There is something about your first contact, something about the first bullet that whacks into the wall next to your ear and at that point there you go through a bit of a psychological change not always for the better. But, once you've been in a serious . . . a two-way range where there's bullets flying in both directions and you analyse your behaviour afterwards; it changes the way you think about yourself.

I was once sitting on the dock in Iraq and I'd been embedded with some Australian Naval Special Forces and we were part of a larger US naval special forces group and I was sitting with some senior US Navy SEALs and we were just sitting on the ground drinking bottled water and one of the privates from an Australian landing craft that had ventured into Iraq and landed came up in full Australian issue kit. And as he walked passed us in his fancy deep PDU (camouflage) uniform with all of the webbing and the Steyr assault rifle these American Special Forces – Tier 1 Special Forces – said to me: "Who's he?" And I said: "He's the cook from that old landing craft". And they said: "No"! And I said: "Yeah mate, he's the cook. I know him. I met him a few weeks ago". And then they looked at each other; touched their noses and said: "Alright, he's the cook," and nodded in knowing smiles. They had never seen a soldier as well equipped.

ABC Radio National *Counterpoint* 6 October 2008



3 What impacts does peacekeeping and combat have on the peacekeepers?

4 What does this anecdote tell us about the equipment of the ADF peacekeepers and combat troops?

5 What other responsibilities does the Australian Government have towards its ADF personnel who are involved in peacekeeping and combat activities?

6 Complete the summary sheet on page 33 for this peacekeeping/ combat mission.

**TO SEE MORE about the Australian involvement in Afghanistan go to [www.defence2020.info](http://www.defence2020.info) and go to Interactive Modules and open *Australia and Afghanistan***



Australian Defence Force

You have learned a lot about the role of the ADF in specific peacekeeping missions, and the qualities needed to carry out those missions successfully.

- 1 Here is some final generalised information. Read it and decide if you will add anything to your summary on page 32-33 .

### Australians as peacekeepers

- 1 Australians in general seem to make good peacekeepers. They are well trained, disciplined and effective and well equipped. More significant than that, Australians seem to feel a genuine and instinctive concern for the local people. In many operations Australians have used some of their spare time carrying out voluntary aid projects for local people, or just visiting them to spread some cheer.
- 2 At the same time Australians can be intolerant. Contingents must operate with others whose military equipment, doctrine and procedures do not mesh with our own. This always causes friction and often conflict; among Australians, and no doubt among other nationalities as well, it leads to an enhanced belief in their own superiority.
- 3 Cultural differences are an even greater problem; for example, in the Sinai, the Australian contingent with the MFO pressed the force's catering contractor not to employ local Egyptian labour in the mess due to concerns over hygiene. The contractor naturally (and properly) did not want to discriminate against locally hired staff. Cultural differences of this sort are inevitably difficult to deal with in a multinational environment.
- 4 Australians can be arrogantly inflexible. Giving briefings in East Timor, they were criticised for their failure to make due allowance for listeners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- 5 Australians are highly effective peacekeepers. Their attitude that they are there to get a job done, while it may come across to others as arrogance, also makes them effective. Their intolerance in some areas does not prevent them from getting out and talking to local people, making friends, gathering information and helping the community. Their relatively high standard of equipment does not prevent them from putting their bodies on the line by patrolling on foot, imposing a presence on the street and getting among the population.
- 6 Peacekeepers also have a strong tendency to gravitate instinctively towards one side of the conflict or another; the professionalism of Australia's peacekeepers nevertheless appears sufficient for them to maintain neutrality in their behaviour, however much they may incline emotionally towards one side.
- 7 We may expect too much of peacekeeping. We send peacekeepers, often lacking in material and political support, into complex situations and expect solutions; indeed we expect [the outcome to be] that most complex state of human affairs, peace. A peacekeeping force can rarely deliver such a comprehensive result. But along the way, they will have brought improvement to many people's lives. A military observer cannot prevent violence, but on occasions will deter it or will help identify the culprits. Each aid convoy which Australians protected in Baidoa [Somalia] helped people eat. Every person who did not step on a mine because de-miners had cleared it was given a gift they did not even know about; to vote in a free election is to be given political control and self-respect; even to meet a peacekeeper gives a message that suffering has not been ignored. Peacekeepers may not solve problems, but that is not to say they do not improve lives.

Peter Londey, *Other People's Wars*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2004, page 264-268

- 2 Now complete your individual case study, report to the whole class on it, and take notes about the other groups' reports.
- 3 What are your final answers to the three key questions:
  - What does peacekeeping actually involve?
  - What qualities are needed for this peacekeeping to be carried out effectively?
  - Is ADF peacekeeping good global citizenship?

**In *STUDIES 3/2009* we will look at how Australian peacekeeping has been represented in the past, and how it is being commemorated in the new National Australian Peacekeepers' Memorial. What do you think should be on the Memorial? What words and images and symbols would be most appropriate and meaningful? To find out more about this go to [www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au/](http://www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au/)**