



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA082

Monday, 14 September

PEACEKEEPERS' CONTRIBUTION HONOURED TODAY

The important and ongoing contribution of peacekeepers will be honoured today on Australian Peacekeepers' Day, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin said.

Laying a wreath to mark the day during a service at the proposed site of the National Peacekeepers' Memorial, Minister Griffin encouraged Australians to recognise the role of peacekeepers in helping to restore peace around the world.

"Australia has been involved in peacekeeping operations for 62 years and there are currently more than 1200 Australian Defence Force personnel deployed to ten peacekeeping operations overseas," Mr Griffin said.

"Peacekeepers serve in dangerous and unstable locations around the world, seeking to restore peace and order and assisting the victims of conflict. Today is an opportunity to honour their valuable contribution.

"Australia has a proud record of peace operations over the past 62 years. More than 30,000 Australian peacekeepers have participated in some 50 United Nations and multinational peace operations across the globe since the first operation in Indonesia in 1947."

Australia's peacekeeping roles have included military observation, logistics support, cease-fire monitoring, landmine clearing, humanitarian aid and repatriation of refugees.

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

"Australia's peacekeeping operations have involved men and women from the Australian Defence Force, federal and state police forces and Australian Government agencies," Mr Griffin said.

The Australian Government is also funding a study investigating the long-term effects on mental health and the quality of life of Defence Force peacekeepers deployed through the 1990s to 2002. The study, funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, will consider Australian involvement during this time in places such as Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, Namibia, Western Sahara and East Timor and complement the current Deployment Health Surveillance Program being undertaken by the Department of Defence.

"This research will help us to better understand and respond to the future health needs of peacekeepers and peacemakers," Mr Griffin said.

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