Archipelagos of Peace

Australian Peacekeepers in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands 1997-2006

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University
Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that to the best of my knowledge it contains no material published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text. This thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part for a degree at this or any other university.

Kimberley Doyle

Date

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Abstract

SINCE 1945 Australians have served as peacekeepers across the world in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific. They have contributed to one of the most startling attempts at worldwide collective security in human history. That sweeping story has been well explored, but the experiences of peacekeepers themselves have remained rather elusive. And yet peacekeeping outcomes largely depend on what happens at the ground level between people. The central aim of this thesis is to pull these stories from obscurity and demonstrate that peacekeepers’ recollections, descriptions and perspectives are a central and necessary part of peacekeeping histories.

That story is explored here by examining Australian peacekeepers’ oral histories of serving in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor between 1997 and approximately 2006. These are valuable case studies because all three peace operations overlapped in the same decade, all occurred under the same Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and all were elided together in strategic and political discourse. More significantly, each was also bound, in Australian imaginations, to a nebulous region called ‘the Pacific’. This unique intersection of the three operations creates opportunities to explore broader questions about Australia’s relationship with the Pacific.

Though not exclusively used, peacekeepers’ narratives are central to this history. Over sixty Australians from across the country shared their stories for this work. The peacekeepers’ came from three different
organisations – the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Public Service and the Australian Federal Police. Exploring what peacekeeping meant to people across these three organisations means this history tells a more varied story than would be possible by focusing solely on one group. That variety also makes it possible to further dissect the nuances and connectedness of peacekeepers’ representations of national, regional and Pacific identities.

Ultimately, this is a history of peacekeeping is centred by peacekeepers’ own experiences. All History is, of course, people centred in its own way, but it does not inevitably follow that people are always the centre of the narrative. They often exist in and amongst events swirling around them, actors for sure, but not necessarily the stars. That has certainly been the case for peacekeeping histories so far. We need those stories, but we need the ones in this thesis too. Peacekeeping in the Pacific has very much been about relationships, about very human attempts to understand what it means to build peace in varied and complex contexts; and doing so while labouring under various historical and cultural inheritances that complicated and made specific peacekeepers’ struggles and experiences. This is a story that meets peacekeepers in that space while also showing that those experiences say much about being Australian, being a peacekeeper and being in the Pacific at the turn of the century.
The more we sweat in peace the less we bleed in war.

– Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit
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I hope the peacekeepers find some of their experiences reflected in these pages and that perhaps there is some new meaning or insight to be found too. I hope also that I have used their words, stories and ideas fairly, judiciously and in ways that ring true to them. I am sure I have fallen short in many ways. So, though they have made this work possible its errors and dissatisfactions are wholly mine.

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You have loved me, nursed and nurtured me, cheered me, and generally kept me anchored to the world and filled with enough spirit to keep going. Thank you for helping me to not give up.
Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACMC Australian Civil-Military Centre
ADF Australian Defence Force
ADDP Australian Defence Doctrine Publication
ADFWC Australian Defence Force Warfare Centre
ADSC Australian Defence Studies Centre
AEC Australian Electoral Commission
AFP Australian Federal Police
AHRC Australian Human Rights Commission
ANU Australian National University
ANZUS Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty
APEC Asia Pacific Economic Forum
AAPD ApoDeti Associação Popular Democrática
APPVA Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans’ Association
APS Australian Public Service
APS Australian Protective Services
ARA Australian Regular Army
ARAR Australian Regular Army Reserves
ASEAN Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASPI Australian Strategic Policy Institute
AusAID Australian Agency for International Development
AWM Australian War Memorial
BCL Bougainville Copper Limited
BIG Bougainville Interim Government
BRA Bougainville Revolutionary Army
BRF Bougainville Resistance Forces
BTT Bougainville Transition Team
CNRM Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere
CNRT Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense
CRRN Conselho Revolucionário da Resistência
DFAT Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoD Department of Defence
DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DPM&C Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
FADTRC Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Senate Inquiry
Fretelin Frente Revolucionária do Timor Leste Independente
HMAS Her Majesty’s Australian Ship
IDG International Deployment Group
IFM Isatabu Freedom Movement
Interfet International Force East Timor
IPMT International Peace Monitoring Team
ISF International Stabilisation Force
JSCFADT Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
MEF Malaitan Eagle Force
NLA National Library of Australia
NPLA New Panguna Landowners Association
NZDF New Zealand Defence Force
PIF Pacific Island Forum
PLA Panguna Landowners Association
PMG Peace Monitoring Group
PNG Papua New Guinea
PNGDF Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PSO Protective Service Officers
PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAAF Royal Australian Air Force
RAMSI Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
**RAN** Royal Australian Navy
**RAR** Royal Australian Regiment
**ROI** Record of Interview
**SPPKF** South Pacific Peacekeeping Force
**SRSG** Special Representative of the Secretary General
**SFADTRC** Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee
**SSCFADT** Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
**TMG** Truce Monitoring Group
**UDT** União Democrática Timorense
**UN** United Nations
**UNAMET** United Nations Mission in East Timor
**UNOMB** United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville
**UNPOB** United Nations Political Office in Bougainville
**UNSCR** United Nations Security Council Resolution
**UNTAET** United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor
**USSR** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
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Preface

This thesis is largely based on an oral history project conducted by the author and neither the recordings nor transcripts are currently available publicly – at a future date they will hopefully be available at the Australian War Memorial. As many participants have requested anonymity, this Preface sets out some technical issues so as the referencing and quotation style used throughout is clear.

Due to requests for anonymity each interview has been given a four digit record number that appears in citations as: ROI10XX. The number corresponds to the original identifiable audio file, but where necessary participants have been given pseudonyms. Further, in the case of participants who have remained anonymous or had wishes for aspects of anonymity, identifying information, such as rank and the specific department or ADF service to which they belonged have been omitted in the text. Where rank has been withheld ‘ADF member’ is used. In cases where such details as their specific job or the precise dates and location of their service would possibly expose the participant those details have also been withheld. In a very few cases, at either the participant’s request or at my discretion, I have withheld all information and referenced a participant simply as ‘Anonymous’. This is the case where a participant who has requested their real name be used throughout the project has needed or asked to be made anonymous in respect only to certain parts of their interview. I have kept these instances to an absolute minimum as they run counter to the historian’s desire for verifiability, but in these
cases reducing the possibility for negative consequences for a participant took precedence.

Each participant was given the chance to review a detailed written summary of their interview. A few participants made changes, though most did not. In instances where a quotation used in the text draws on the changes made by the participant to the written summary this is noted in the citation. Again, I have kept these instances to an absolute minimum given the difficulty of access to the transcripts and unresolved issues as to how they might be made public at a later date.

While the great majority of oral history material was created specifically for this project a few interviews, along with some personal papers, came from a private collection to which I was given access for a project with the *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and post-Cold War Operations*. As public access and other issues are still to be organised for those records I have used a mix of pseudonyms and complete anonymity where necessary. These instances are identifiable in the footnotes when ‘Private Collection’ is cited. I have, again, kept the use of these sources to a minimum.

Lastly, the thesis makes use of long transcriptions of interviews and there are a few technical issues to be noted. First, I have omitted verbalics, such as ‘um’ and ‘ah’. And for the most part I have also omitted constant repetitions of words, such as ‘and’, ‘so’ and ‘like’ which while unobtrusive in speech are distracting and disruptive in the written form. In cases where these obviously added meaning or help the written excerpt to make more sense they have been included. Second, I have used ellipses in two ways. An un-bracketed ellipsis indicates a prolonged silence in the conversation, while a square-bracketed ellipsis signals an omission of parts of the original conversation.
Introduction

[It is] only by drawing on the recollections of […] individual peacekeepers that a worthwhile history of the whole process can be written.¹

Peacekeeping is an evocative word. It suggests something grand; something fuelled by idealism and goodwill. Yet it is utterly contingent on experiences of violence, death, misery and sorrow. As a lived activity, peacekeeping is an attempt to suture these two parts together; it tries, often unsteadily and clumsily, to bring some kind of reconciliation. Even more impossibly, peacekeeping must reach for this lofty goal in real world situations filled with complicated politics, histories, cultures and communities.

This thesis enters into this messy nexus and seeks to untangle it by exploring peacekeepers’ own stories and experiences. It suggests that without peacekeepers’ own recollections our histories are lacking. They remain partial because peacekeeping is so thoroughly reliant upon the people keeping the peace. Operational, policy and political dimensions of peacekeeping are important and necessary to its understanding, but what peacekeepers thought, what they did, what they felt and what they understood are linked to the way an operation is carried out, to the way policies and processes are brought to life and ultimately to whether an

operation can achieve its aims. Exploring peacekeeping from the perspectives of those doing it tells us much of it was like to be a peacekeeper, and provides insight into the nature of peacekeeping itself. Peacekeepers’ stories say much about experiences of concepts such as nationality, regionalism, gender, international relations, violence and peace, which have all been so bound up in the practise of peacekeeping. Peacekeepers’ stories, therefore, not only give us an insight into the daily rhythms and richness of being on a peacekeeping operation, but they are a way to examine the human dimension of policy, operational and political decisions and plans. Indeed, they are crucial to more fully understanding those dimensions.

This thesis, then, shows what is possible with a peacekeeper-centred approach by drawing on the experiences of Australian peacekeepers who served in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor between approximately 1997 and 2006. The peacekeepers included in this study are those that came from the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the Australian Public Service (APS) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). One could stretch the group to include Australians working as United Nations’ employees and even those assisting a peace operation in non-government organisations, however, these latter groups have been excluded because a key inquiry of the thesis is how, if at all, a sense of being Australian influenced peacekeepers’ experiences. A sense of belonging to and representing the nation is a murkier process for those not deployed in an official capacity by their government.

These three organisations and three locations offer an interesting case study because they had much in common, yet also were distinct. Each operation overlapped to some degree, all occurred under the leadership of Prime Minister John Howard and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, all reflected a shift away from United Nations’ led peacekeeping to a more regional approach and all in some way were affected by the changing domestic and international political landscape of a post 9/11 world. Further, all three operations occurred in the nebulous region ‘the Pacific’; a region with which Australia has had complicated and varied historical relationships.
The choice of case studies and organisations combined with a peacekeeping centred approach means this thesis will sketch a rich, detailed narrative of Australian peacekeeping life in the Pacific, but will also critically engage with the factors shaping peacekeepers’ experiences. It will explore how what peacekeepers brought with them in terms of their cultural, organisational and historical inheritances affected their experiences and perceptions once they landed in the Pacific. In this way, this thesis will tell many small stories of peacekeeping life, but they will connect to larger stories about what being Australian, being a peacekeeper, being a soldier or public servant, a man or woman, and being in the Pacific at this time meant. It is a tangled story. A story not unlike a voyage on the Pacific Ocean itself – full of shifting currents, difficult to navigate and yet exhilarating and full of possibility.

Historical Background

![Map of Timor, Bougainville, and Solomon Islands](image)

Figure 1: Timor, Bougainville and Solomon Islands in relation to Australia. Courtesy of CartoGIS, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (ANU)

Peacekeeping is most immediately and popularly associated with the United Nations (UN) yet the UN and peacekeeping have an important predecessor to which they owe much of their history. In 1919, after the
end of the Great War, the League of Nations was created as part of the Paris Peace Agreements. The League was ambitious and idealistic. It was based principally on the notion of collective security derived from American President Woodrow Williams’s so-called ‘fourteen points’. Collective security referred to ‘the idea that all members of international society have a responsibility to engage in collective action to prevent and repel aggressors’. Never quite being able to live up to its principles, the League, by the 1930s, had become a largely irrelevant actor in the international community. With the coming of the Second World War the peacekeeping-like activities and ideals of the League gave way to another global round of all-out fighting.

It was with the end of that second major war that the institution so intimately tied to peacekeeping was created. In both principles and structure, the United Nations closely reflected its predecessor, especially in its core commitment to collective security. The UN advocated for conflicts to be resolved diplomatically and with mediation, but if one state was attacked by another the UN would mobilise its members to come to the state’s aid. Australia was an enthusiastic advocate for the UN. Australian jurist and Minister for External Affairs, Dr Herbert Vere Evatt became a notable figure during the drawing up of the founding charter. He pushed for the UN not to be solely an instrument for the great powers. However, it was not until the 1950s that UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld formalised peacekeeping – though it has never been

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4 Peter Londey, *Other People’s Wars: A History of Australian Peacekeeping* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004), xvii; for an exhaustive study of Australian relations with the UN throughout the twentieth century see: James Cotton and David Lee (eds.), *Australia and the United Nations*, (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012), see esp. 1-33; 34-65; 66-104; 228-264.
defined in the UN charter it became the core of the UN collective security role.\(^5\)

Although constrained for its first 45 years due to Cold War politics, the UN still deployed 20 peacekeeping operations throughout the world, with the first formal UN mission taking place in the Sinai to help curtail the Suez Crisis in 1956.\(^6\) But it was with the end of the Cold War and the freeing up of the Security Council alongside the coming of the so-called ‘New World Order’\(^7\) in 1989 that UN peacekeeping really found its stride.

Prior to the toppling of the Berlin Wall Major Cold War powers had essentially stalled the UN Security Council – the organ of the UN responsible for authorising peacekeeping operations. They were able to do this because of the veto power held by each of the five permanent members of the Council.\(^8\) Therefore if one superpower or allied faction suggested a particular action the rival superpower or faction vetoed it. In the context of the Cold War and the dogged effort to protect spheres of influence this veto was liberally used. The main players in this game were the US and the USSR, though of course Britain, France and China played their parts too. All of this meant that getting agreements about the need for, locations, aims and size of missions was largely impossible. This resulted in few missions and the ones that did occur tended to have very limited boundaries.

Another important feature of this post-Cold War ‘New World Order’ was a seemingly ever-increasing number of states facing crises due in large part to the decolonisation process along with the withdrawal of major

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\(^7\) Thakur, ‘UN Peacekeeping in the New World Disorder’, 3 – though not unique to or originating with him, Mikhail Gorbachev popularised this term to describe the restructured post-Cold War international system in his address to the UN on 7 December 1988.

\(^8\) The permanent members are: United States, Russia (previously USSR), United Kingdom, China and France. Other nations periodically rotate terms on the Security Council.
Cold War support or interference. In 1989 for instance, 4500 troops, 1500 police and 2000 civilians were deployed to Namibia to assist with a peaceful transition to independence. The success and complexity of this mission sparked a period of idealistic optimism about the UN’s role and ability to spread peace across the globe. This sense of the UN’s expanding horizons and responsibilities was exemplified in the seminal report, *Agenda for Peace*, presented by then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992. These early years were transformative for the UN and peacekeeping.

Not only did the UN establish more missions than it had since its creation, it was increasingly deploying multifaceted missions on a fairly regular basis. In these years, as the UN sought to respond to conflicts that were intra rather than inter-state, peacekeeping moved beyond being based on principles of consent and impartiality to being more intrusive and not necessarily based on consent. Practically speaking, this meant that peacekeeping in the post-Cold War period shifted to an activity that frequently involved state-building and armed enforcement components. Of all these changes, perhaps the most significant was the move away from the Westphalian notion of nation-state sovereignty being inviolable. While the UN did always try where possible to secure a host society’s permission for a peacekeeping intervention – in some cases there was no functioning government from which to seek consent – there was a growing belief that in some circumstances, humanitarian or international security necessities could trump claims to sovereignty. That is, in some instances a lack of consent might not prevent a peacekeeping deployment.


The other important change in post-Cold War peace missions, deployed as they often were to places without a functioning government or a severely crippled one, was that they often included extensive nation-building agendas, such as in Cambodia. This focus reflected an emerging conviction among major Western member states that the promotion of liberal-democratic peace and its attendant infrastructure was a necessary part, if not the goal, of peacekeeping operations. This idea grew out of the view that peacekeeping, to be successful, had to offer more than temporary relief from conflict. Rather, it had to contribute to, encourage or facilitate peace in ways that allowed societies to prosper in the long-term. Such an approach was inherently more complicated and challenging than simply pausing or preventing conflict, and consequently has faced much discussion and debate. For example, one of the major critiques about this style of peacekeeping has been that in attempting to create long-term peace, operations have rather exclusively taken their form from Western liberal political cultures and institutions. This has resulted in claims that peacekeeping has become a form of Western neo-imperialism and this has created an enduring challenge in terms of the legitimacy of peacebuilding efforts.

Whatever the criticisms, by 1995 the UN had fielded more operations and spent more money on peacekeeping than at any other time in its history. By 1995 it was spending around $3.5 billion annually on some seventeen missions with approximately 80,000 personnel serving or having served on the various operations. Yet despite the impressive numbers, UN peacekeeping would be much weakened by year’s end.

Although the United Nations had often dealt with criticism about its post-Cold War limitations, it was with a series of very public failures that the seams really began tearing apart. The death of American soldiers in

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12 For a succinct overview of the major changes to peacekeeping see Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (SSCFADT), Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, Senate Inquiry, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 26 August 2008), 13-25.
13 Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, Understanding Peacekeeping, 75-92; Thakur, ‘UN Peacekeeping in the New World Disorder’, 3-22.
what is now commonly known as the ‘Black Hawk down’ incident in Somalia in 1993 and the subsequent withdrawal of the peace mission was a crippling blow to the UN.\textsuperscript{16} Somalia was followed by a genocidal catastrophe in Rwanda in 1994 during which UN soldiers were unable to do anything to stop the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of civilians. In this situation the UN had been constrained by under-resourcing and the post-Somalia demise of any will amongst powerful Western nations to do anything more forceful to stop the genocide. The final blow came in 1995 when peacekeepers in Bosnia could not prevent the massacre of thousands of boys and men in Srebrenica. This situation resulted from an array of factors, but like Rwanda was connected to a lack of international will for peacekeeping, poor resourcing and command structures as well as confusion about impartiality and its relationship to the use of force. To make matters worse, the UN’s reputation was further sullied by the involvement of peacekeepers in the sex trafficking of women and girls from across Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{17} The UN was now seen, and, to be fair, had been rendered by the international community, as ineffectual and utterly incompetent in the realm of peacekeeping. Its position as a so-called ‘force for good’ was now highly questionable.

By 1996 peacekeeping personnel numbers fell to just under 20 000.\textsuperscript{18} In the shadow of these failures and the concomitant reticence of Western nation-states to commit their troops, UN peacekeeping went into a lull for the next few years. When it had something of a resurgence towards the end of the decade it did not do so unscathed or unchanged. Western nations, upon whom the UN had relied for technical expertise, logistical support and competent commanders and command structures, now had

\textsuperscript{16} ‘Black Hawk down’ is a colloquialism made famous largely by a film of the same name. It refers to an incident in 1993 when two US Black Hawk helicopters were shot down by Somali militants. Eighteen soldiers were killed and many wounded in the battle. Some of the US soldiers’ corpses were later dragged through the streets of Mogadishu.


\textsuperscript{18} Arnold and Ruland, ‘The “Prehistory” of Peacekeeping’, 29; Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, \textit{Understanding Peacekeeping}, 75-85; for more on the UN post-Cold War transformation see Thakur and Thayer, (eds.), \textit{A Crisis of Expectations}, 3-162.
largely lost confidence in the whole enterprise. UN peacekeeping in the
second half of the decade would look very different. Most certainly the
exuberance and grandiose idealism of the early years was over.

With a subdued recognition of this situation the UN and the
international community turned to missions led by regional coalitions
rather than the UN, though UN support and endorsement remained
important. Though regional approaches had always had a part in
peacekeeping they would, from the late 1990s onwards, be a much more
central and critical feature of all deployments.\textsuperscript{19} Nations, especially
Western ones, were now far less likely to contribute significant troop
numbers to places outside of their regional spheres and pushed for
coalitions of peacekeepers from within the appropriate region. This was
the case, for example, in all three missions in the Pacific.

These trends would only continue with the coming of the ‘War on
Terror’ ignited by the September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City,
and followed by the bombings in Bali and London in October 2002 and
July 2005, respectively. After 9/11 concerns about ‘failing states’ and
havens for terrorism came to play an increasing role in peacekeeping
discourse and it fed the growing tendency to see peacekeeping through
specifically regional and almost exclusively security lenses. While the UN
was negotiating these shifting global contexts so too were individual
states. In this context, Australia was becoming increasingly concerned
with how these global issues would affect its immediate region, the
Pacific. The ways Australian governments grappled with Australia’s
responsibilities and vulnerabilities within that region directly affected its
approach to and participation in peacekeeping in the Pacific.

Though Australia’s participation in the Pacific was significant, it was by
no means the nation’s first foray into peacekeeping. Australia had sent
thousands of peacekeepers across the world by the time they first arrived
in the Pacific. Australian peacekeeping contributions, aside from the
Pacific missions, have, for example, included a whole battalion to Somalia
in 1993, varying numbers of police to Cyprus for the last 51 years, a
contingent of about 600 military personnel to Cambodia in 1992, as well

\textsuperscript{19} Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, \textit{Understanding Peacekeeping}, 85-87.
as varying numbers of personnel to places such as Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda and across the Middle East. Australia was also a founding member of the United Nations and with varying numbers has contributed to missions all over the world since 1947.\footnote{For a concise history of Australian peacekeeping participation see Londey, \textit{Other People's Wars}.} As such, Australia has been caught up in, to greater and lesser degrees, the same peacekeeping travails and triumphs as the UN.

Certainly, the missions in the Pacific reflect both the wider international landscape and history of peacekeeping, but they also speak of distinctly Australian experience of that larger peacekeeping landscape. As well, they were contingent on a whole range of historical experiences and relationships with the Pacific as a region and with Bougainville, Timor and Solomon Islands individually. These factors intermingled and left distinctive imprints on the Australian experience of the missions in the Pacific, and on the nation’s ideas of peacekeeping more broadly.

Pre-Cold War Australian governments had varying attitudes towards peacekeeping and the United Nations. In the early years of the UN under the leadership of Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley and his Minister for External Affairs Dr H. V. Evatt, Australia eagerly worked through the UN. However, a war-weary citizenry and a small military with ongoing commitments in the Korea War as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces meant there was a reluctance and limited ability to send troops overseas.\footnote{Londey, ‘Inventing Peacekeeping’, 25.} The Liberal government that followed in 1949 under Prime Minister Robert Menzies and External Affairs Minister R. G. Casey was hugely driven by fears of ever-encroaching communism particularly in Asia and especially in Indonesia. Consequently, traditional alliances with Britain as well as with the United States and an emphasis on their necessity were prominent features of foreign and defence policy throughout the 1950s and 1960s.\footnote{Christopher Waters, ‘Casey: Four Decades in the Making of Australian Foreign Policy’, \textit{Australian Journal of Politics and History}, 51 no. 3 (2005): 380-388.}

Things shifted slightly with the election of a Labor government under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in 1974. There was a renewed enthusiasm for the United Nations. And with the ending of the Vietnam War the
military was now more available and indeed welcoming of peacekeeping service as it was the only way for personnel to get operational experience.\textsuperscript{23} Still, the lingering bruising from the increasingly unpopular and polarising war in Vietnam meant that both Liberal and Labor governments were reluctant to send large numbers of troops overseas for the next two decades.\textsuperscript{24} Not that there were many large peace missions to be found wanting. Beyond Australia, the Cold War constraints on the UN Security Council meant that peacekeeping was a relatively uncommon occurrence in the decades following Vietnam.

Undergirding this broader foreign policy landscape were particular responses to and ideas about the Pacific. As historian Chris Waters has shown, Australian political opinion had largely desired the region to decolonise as slowly as possible due to fears of small unstable microstates vulnerable to communism populating the waters to the north of the continent. Indeed, the 1950s witnessed something of an effort to establish and expand Australian imperialism in the region with a push under Paul Hasluck, the Minister for Territories, to take over British Solomon Islands and eventually amalgamate it with Papua New Guinea (PNG). Another idea towards redrawing colonial boundaries featured the establishment of a Melanesian Federation to include at least PNG, West New Guinea and British Solomons. Still, Australian attempts to slow the pace of decolonisation were not successful and decolonisation across the Pacific surged ahead over the coming decades.\textsuperscript{25} That process and then the end of the Cold War in 1989 created new challenges and imperatives for Australian policy makers.

Closer to home, the late 1980s also brought the energetic Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans to office. It was a perfect union of timing and personality. Serving under Labor Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating between 1988 and 1996, Evans was an enthusiastic, proactive foreign minister who had deep convictions about the

\textsuperscript{24} Horner, ‘Australian Peacekeeping’, 41-42.
possibilities for peace in the post-Cold War world. He was a driving force behind the Cambodian peace settlement, with the peace operation there – the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia – being considered one of the major successes in UN peacekeeping history. Politics scholar, Derek McDougall has suggested that Evans was concerned with being a moral international citizen and believed that national interests should not always trump the moral imperative. Evans was also a keen regionalist and strongly advocated for cooperation in the pursuit of peace and security for the whole region. Evans, of course, was not acting alone. He served under two prime ministers who looked increasingly towards Asia and the Pacific and tried to emphasise Australia’s belonging to that region. Indeed, it was Prime Minister Hawke’s initiative in 1989 that went a long way towards establishing the influential Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Defence policy also began to take a more regional approach just prior to the end of the Cold War. Most notably, in March 1986 an influential report, Review of Australia’s Defence Capabilities (popularly known as ‘The Dibb Review’) by ministerial consultant, Paul Dibb, argued that the greatest threat to Australia was aggressors gaining access to the continent via the countries to the north in southeast Asia and the southwest Pacific. Defence policy and capabilities therefore, he argued, needed to be less reliant on the alliance with the United States, but rather develop a more independent policy focused on maintaining or establishing regional security. Most significantly for the Pacific peacekeeping operations, the

‘Dibb Review’ used, though did not invent, what by the end of the 1990s would be a popular way to characterise the massive stretch of space to Australia’s north: ‘the arc of instability’.\(^{31}\)

It was an oversimplified and extraordinarily generalised term, as well as being racially, culturally and historically reductive.\(^{32}\) It also ignored the many other ways in which the notion of region had been or could be defined from other perspectives. Both Greg Fry and Epeli Hau’ofa have explored the ways in which the very idea of the Pacific region and what it means has been fluid and contested from non-Australian perspectives.\(^{33}\)

Nonetheless, in Australia, the ‘Dibb Review’ and its conception of the region was important for foreign and defence policy choices. Though the Dibb Review was not a new approach it was the fullest expression of these ideas and, more importantly, how to implement them. The Defence White Papers that followed in 1987 and 1994 consequently focused around regional security and self-reliance. However, it was the 1994 White Paper, responding to the politics of a post-Cold War rapidly decolonising world and an increasingly busy ADF, which first articulated the growing importance of peace operations.\(^{34}\) Thereafter, though not for the first time, defence and foreign policy paid ever increasing attention to ‘our neighbours’ in the Pacific. Of great concern was the region’s perceived systemic instability, state failure and turbulence. This was especially so after Indonesian President Suharto fell following the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis.\(^{35}\) It would be the ripples created by that economic crisis.


and their coinciding with a new Australian Government that would help trigger the three peacekeeping missions in the Pacific.

Australian approaches to its region and the role of peacekeeping in foreign and defence policy changed in some ways when in 1996 a Liberal Government under Prime Minister John Howard took office. These ‘Howard years’ (1996-2007) have been seen by many as years when Australia saw the Pacific as an inconvenience that had to be dealt with only if absolutely necessary. Yet it was under the leadership of Prime Minister Howard, along with his Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer, that peace operations were deployed to Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor.

While the Howard government generally built on and strengthened the approaches in defence policy that it inherited, it did redefine elements of foreign policy in regards to alliance arrangements and Australia’s place in the region. Critical of much of Labor’s foreign policy, Howard and especially Downer, drew on the Liberal party tradition built by Casey in the first half of the decade. As such, they were focused on reemphasising traditional alliances with Britain and the US. Howard’s approach led to the claim that he had created a new defence and foreign policy doctrine. Commentators called it the ‘Howard Doctrine’. It was crystallised when Australia aided the US in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 and 2003, respectively. Howard accepted, however diffidently at times, the importance of regional security but was a pragmatist about it. He was not attracted to, indeed he was strongly against, reshaping Australian identity in more Asian or Pacific terms, even though he would preside, in the end, over one of the busiest peacekeeping periods in that region. In many ways, the region, especially post-9/11, was a place in which Australia saw itself as having a special responsibility due to its

38 Waters, ‘Casey’, 380-381.
status as a major regional power, and international middle power. This was especially so because the region was understood as a place filled with ‘failing states’ that posed a significant threat as they could become havens for terrorists. Though this was by no means a new Australian vision of the region (or itself for that matter), the country’s increased focus on securitisation and interventionism post-9/11 oftentimes strained relations with Pacific countries.\(^{41}\)

The Howard government was also less concerned than its predecessor with making decisions based on moral considerations, unless, again, it was a practical option that favoured national interests or was politically expedient.\(^{42}\) This also extended to relations with the UN. It is important to note that in fact the shift away from the approach of the previous Labor government was by many measures more rhetorical than practical.\(^{43}\) Still, rhetoric is important in diplomacy and it certainly played its role in the peace missions in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor.

As is clear from this brief history of peacekeeping and Australia’s participation in it, it has been one of the most startling attempts at worldwide collective security in human history. Peacekeeping has been a global phenomenon that has seen international efforts move from manning buffer zones and monitoring ceasefires to massive enterprises of rebuilding and rekindling whole communities and even nation-states. That sweeping story is one that shaped Australia’s relationships to peacekeeping. Ye changing international political landscapes and attitudes to peacekeeping were all mediated by the varying and historically complex


\(^{42}\) McDougall, ‘Australia’s Peacekeeping Role’, 600-603.

domestic approaches to peacekeeping, defence, foreign policy and regional relationships in the Pacific.

These political and practical changes that make up peacekeeping’s history in Australia and internationally are fundamental to understanding why and how the three peacekeeping operations in the Pacific came about and were executed. Yet what they do not tell us is what it was like to live in that tangled context. And yet peacekeeping outcomes largely depend on what happens in that context between people. How peacekeepers behave, think, act and understand what they are doing matters inordinately to the local response to a mission, and therefore its enduring success. This thesis pulls these stories from obscurity. More than this, it demonstrates that peacekeepers’ voices are not the backing vocals to some grander song of peacekeeping’s political, operational or strategic histories but are themselves a core part of the whole melody.

Chapter Overview

The thesis begins with a methodological discussion that sets out the way the oral histories were created and broadly interpreted. This section also situates the oral histories within peacekeeping scholarship as well as placing them alongside the other primary sources that are used throughout the thesis. There is also a brief overview of some of the problems with peacekeeping terminology and an explanation of how various terms are used in this thesis.

After the methodological discussion, the thesis is divided into six chapters. The first three are case studies of the conflicts, peace operations and peacekeepers’ daily lives in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands. Although different in emphasis each chapter explores a range of issues that shaped peacekeepers’ experiences. These include factors such as training and selection procedures, peacekeepers’ interactions with local people, the varying jobs and tasks peacekeepers had, peacekeepers’ perceptions of and engagement with the physical landscape, as well the kinds of interactions Australians had with other Australian peacekeepers.

The fourth chapter binds the previous three together in comparative analysis. It is structured in the same way as each of the earlier ones and in
Introduction

each section draws out and explains the shared themes as well as key differences between peacekeepers’ experiences in the Pacific. It suggests that the specifics of each peace mission set out in the preceding three chapters intermingled with other factors unique to Australians. That is, broader issues such as Australian ideas about the Pacific as a region to which Australia had a special responsibility, as well as region with which Australia has had complex historical relationships had a significant impact on peacekeepers’ experiences.

The penultimate chapter pulls back from an exclusive look at the Australian and local Pacific contexts to examine the multi-organisational and international elements of the peacekeeping operations. It explores Australians’ experiences of working with international colleagues, with the United Nations and then examines how this context influenced peacekeepers’ ideas and struggles with some of the big ethical quandaries of peacekeeping. This chapter explores some questions of whether peacekeeping has been a neo-imperial exercise by the West and how Australians as members of a Western country managed those claims.

The final chapter returns home with peacekeepers. Peacekeeping duties might have ended once peacekeepers left the Pacific but the meaning of that service continued to be made and remade in the years following their return. This chapter contends that national narratives of Anzac profoundly affected how peacekeepers and the nation have evaluated peacekeeping. Further, the advent of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and their continuation for most of the duration of peacekeeping in the Pacific affected this process in explicit but paradoxical ways. In the shadow of Anzac and the Middle Eastern wars peacekeeping has found a very unsettled meaning.

Together, the chapters work to create a rich picture of Australian peacekeeping in the Pacific between 1997 and 2006. Collectively and individually they draw out the many rhythms, tones and shapes of peacekeeping lives. In this sense there is a personal intimacy that threads through the chapters. Peacekeepers’ oral histories create a space where we can walk along with them as they recall and weave their memories in particular ways. Yet the chapters are also bound together in an expansive
way. They dive in and out of the personal narratives so as to explore broader questions about what these lived stories can tell us about the communities, countries and world from which their narrators came. In this way, the individual stories of peacekeepers open out onto a wider landscape of what it meant to be an Australian, a peacekeeper and what it meant to be both in the Pacific in this decade.
Peacekeeping Conversations
A Methodological Discussion

Sources and Methods

Since the early 1990s historians, military historians in particular, have done much work on the operational, strategic and political elements of Australian peacekeeping, both generally and in regards to specific missions. An example of this work is Peter Londy’s, Other People’s Wars, which remains the only exhaustive history of Australia’s participation in peacekeeping since 1947.44 An ‘Official History’ of Australian peacekeeping, led by David Horner, is currently underway and will likely add much in this area. The two currently published volumes out of a planned six have explored a number of themes and missions across the years 1988-1993. The volume exploring the operations in Bougainville and Solomon Islands is forthcoming and efforts towards an East Timor study are ongoing.45 There have also been parliamentary reports and edited collections from conferences throughout the 1990s involving academics, policy-makers, planners as well as peacekeepers. These offer

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Archipelagos of Peace

much in terms of tracing the development and challenges of peacekeeping in an Australian context. Overall, however, the scholarly interest in Australian peacekeeping has been slow to develop. Further, it has been overshadowed more recently because of scholarly and popular interest in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Outside of this historical literature there are broad case-studies on the individual operations in the Pacific, as well as studies of the political and historical dimensions at play in each. These add much depth and breadth to the histories mentioned above. The large long-term project ‘Peacebuilding Compared’ led by John Braithwaite and Hilary Charlesworth has offered much insight into peacebuilding’s roles and abilities in relation to justice, democracy and governance. Their three studies of Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor are particularly valuable for placing those operations in their international contexts.

Alongside this project another similarly large one exploring the role of police peacekeeping in the Pacific has sparked many conversations and

46 Hugh Smith, (ed.), Australia and Peacekeeping (Canberra: Australian Defence Studies Centre [ADSC], 1990); Hugh Smith, (ed.), Peacekeeping: Challenges for the Future (Canberra: ADSC, 1993); Hugh Smith, (ed.), International Peacekeeping: Building on the Cambodian Experience (Canberra: ADSC, 1994); Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (SSCFADT), United Nations Peacekeeping and Australia (Australian Senate, May 1991); Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT), Australia’s Participation in Peacekeeping (Canberra, 1994); for a more contemporary collection and report see Horner, Londey, and Bou, (eds.), Australian Peacekeeping; SSCFADT, Senate Inquiry into Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, (Canberra, 2008).


offered insight into peacekeeping in the region from a non-military perspective. For this thesis this latter work has been essential to sketching the experiences of AFP peacekeepers. There is, as yet, a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of APS peacekeepers, and this thesis goes some way towards filling it. Rich though this work is, none of it is focused exclusively, or in any sustained way, on peacekeepers’ experiences or perceptions. As such, this thesis has had to draw together the literature described above with a wide range of scholarship from a variety of international contexts.

International relations theorists, legal scholars, anthropologists and sociologists have studied various elements of peacekeeping in a range of international settings. Two prominent areas have been the study of connections between post-Cold War peacekeeping operations and ideas of imperialism and legitimacy, as well as studies of the role of

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masculinity and militarism in peacekeeping. Importantly for this thesis, some of this work has also explored a whole range of factors shaping relationships between local people and peacekeepers. The ideas, approaches and theories in this work need particular attention because they are appropriated throughout this thesis in different ways.

In her work on how local communities interpreted peace operations in El Salvador, Cambodia and Haiti, political scientist, Béatrice Pouligny has shown how a range of intersecting structural influences shaped and limited the kinds of interactions and impressions local people had of peacekeepers. She outlines how engagement and perceptions were shaped by a range of features such as the local geography and distribution of peacekeeping personnel, the peacekeepers’ home-organisations and the specific jobs of peacekeepers while on mission. She also identifies how local demographic and civic factors shaped interactions. For example, a small rural community would interact with and expect certain things from peacekeepers in ways that could be quite different compared to people from urban centres. Similarly, Pouligny reminds us that the term ‘local people’ needs to be understood as shorthand not for a passive homogenous group of people, but as a dynamic adjective denoting diversity and activity. ‘Local people’ describes all kinds of groups and individuals from political elites, to UN employees, to farmers, bureaucrats, mothers, students and children. Each of these will have their own agendas, wishes, and relationships to the peace process and peacekeepers. Further, underlying any and all of these factors will be a constantly shifting and almost always muddied political landscape in the host community. This will continually make and remake peacekeeping

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contexts for both peacekeepers and local people. Pouligny’s work highlights the inherent variability and constant state of flux that generally characterises most, if not all, peacekeeping missions.

Sociologists, Paul Higate and Marsha Henry have also explored local perceptions of peacekeepers. Their work concerns operations in Haiti, Liberia and Kosovo. They have foregrounded how these peacekeeping contexts were influenced by the way peacekeepers performed and presented themselves. Higate and Henry show how local communities actually saw peacekeepers in terms of their uniforms, nationality, equipment and physical bearing and how this was profoundly important to the way they understood and evaluated how well or not peacekeepers were providing security. They demonstrate, for example, that local people often had higher expectations of peacekeepers from wealthy countries because they were known to be more competent and more richly equipped than poorer counterparts. These expectations could remain irrespective of actual experience of nationalities during an operation.

While this work is specific to the operations in Kosovo, Haiti and Liberia and focuses on notions of security it points to the ways tension can arise between local communities and peacekeepers due to mutual misunderstandings not just of actual behaviour and relationships but also of perceptions and expectations.

Further, the issues raised by Higate and Henry speak to the idea that peacekeepers tend to have a highly symbolic presence. As the public face of a mission, peacekeepers always represent a whole range of ideals, hopes and assumptions of local communities as well as the international community. Anthropologist, Robert Rubinstein has shown that UN peacekeeping has been built upon a ‘root metaphor’. The UN, he argues, has long been understood to be a benevolent organisation equipped and willing to feed the poor, protect the weak and settle conflicts peacefully. This creates certain expectations as to what a specific mission stands for and can do at a macro level, and also shapes what is expected to occur.

between peacekeepers and locals at a micro level. As peacekeeping operations have grown to be larger, more complex and involved in state-building the ability of peacekeepers to meet these ideals and expectations has become more difficult, if not impossible. Irrespective of the actual involvement of the UN, peacekeeping has become so synonymous with that organisation that long before peacekeepers ever arrive somewhere they already represent and embody certain ideals, hopes, histories and identities associated with it.

Scholars from across a range of disciplines have also employed categories of gender, militarism and race to help explain peacekeeping contexts. Questioning the use of militaries to bring about peace has long been a central question in peacekeeping practice and theory, but exploration of these issues gathered pace as scholars sought to understand common peacekeeper behaviours in major operations in the early 1990s. Some of this behaviour included extreme unlawful violence, involvement in prostitution and human trafficking. Two prominent examples include the murder and torture of a teenaged boy by Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia, and peacekeepers’ involvement in the human trafficking trade in Bosnia, both in the early 1990s. These have rightfully captured scholars’ attentions. In grappling with actions like this, scholars have so far generally relied upon notions of military masculinity to explain them and make broader conclusions about peacekeeping generally.

Military masculinity can mean slightly different things or have different emphases amongst scholars but is generally used in this field to represent a gender identity that is constructed via a socialisation process in the military. That process cultivates and rewards, implicitly and explicitly, values such as aggression, violence, physical prowess, maleness, racism, and virulent heterosexuality. Coming from a feminist critical theory perspective, Sherene Razack and Sandra Whitworth, two prominent contributors to this field, suggest that unlawful violence, both sexual and physical, were the logical conclusion of a military masculinity.

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that prized violence, power, racism and misogyny. They go further and suggest that using soldiers in any peacekeeping operation is antithetical to the very idea of peacekeeping because values of violence and militarism do not belong in a peace context.\textsuperscript{56}

Razack and Whitworth contextualise, though to different degrees, their critiques and analyses in relation to what is commonly called the ‘Somalia Affair’. This involved, amongst other things, the torture and murder of a teenaged Somali boy, Shidane Arone, by Canadian peacekeepers, specifically by the Airborne Regiment, a combat paratrooper unit.\textsuperscript{57} They both connect their work to the specific circumstances within the Canadian Forces in the early 1990s when the incident occurred and within the particular Canadian relationship to peacekeeping.\textsuperscript{58} They argue that this behaviour should be no great surprise given that soldiers whose military masculinity was created and cherished were then asked to restrain those very characteristics in a peace-zone, which unlike a war-zone calls for the restraining of violence, power and aggression.\textsuperscript{59}

Neither explores in any sustained way or gives much credence to the role other factors, such as how leadership, or its breakdown and failure to be more precise, might have allowed a toxic undisciplined culture to fester within that unit. Instead, that unit and incident are used as an example of an all-encompassing generic Western military culture. Other scholars have responded to that rigidity with a more flexible model. Scholars such as Claire Duncanson and Paul Higate, drawing on the work of gender theorist RW Connell, argue that there are actually many military masculinities in any one military. They suggest that there exist at any one

\textsuperscript{56} See their major works for a comprehensive account of this approach: Sherene Razack, \textit{Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Sandra Whitworth, \textit{Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis} (Boulder, Co: Lynne Reiner Publishing, 2004).

\textsuperscript{57} Razack, \textit{Dark Threats} 4-14; Whitworth, \textit{Men, Militarism}, 91-98.

\textsuperscript{58} For Canadian specific discussion in Whitworth, \textit{Men, Militarism}, see, 85-118.

time many different kinds of gender identities and hierarchies in a military which necessarily produce a range of perspectives and behaviours.60

One last important element of this body of literature is that peacekeeping, again in a general sense, has been a process of civilised nations (Western ones) pacifying and enlightening the unruly parts of the world. Therefore peacekeepers’ actions must also be understood as complex performances of imperial identities and histories.61 This argument is not just that structurally and politically peacekeeping has been a kind of imperialism, but that Western peacekeepers’ actual behaviour while on mission has been influenced by being a part of the so-called civilising nations of the world. Therefore, it has contributed to them acting in superior and sometimes brutal ways.

This conception somewhat simplifies the causal link between violence and Western histories of imperialism. For example, how this argument might apply to the peacekeepers not from Western nations who commit atrocities and abuses is not made clear. This is not to say that issues of colonialism and imperialism have no role, as many of these nations have been erstwhile colonies themselves, but that the discussion of those issues needs to be both problematised and more multifaceted in literature of this kind. This is a question which deserves much greater and sustained analysis because since 1996 peacekeepers from the developing world, and especially Asia and Africa, have been the largest troop contributors to UN peacekeeping operations.62

Nonetheless, issues of gender, militarism, race and imperialism offer a way to ask questions across peacekeeping operations and groups of peacekeepers in ways that offer a broad analysis. When combined with the frames offered by this work we are left with a tool kit of sorts. These tools provide various approaches for deep and wide comparative understanding of peacekeeping. Issues of peacekeeper symbolism,

61 See esp., Whitworth, Men, Militarism, 1-43; Razack, Dark Threats, xi-14.
performance, structural factors, local and international perceptions, histories and expectations were all at play in Australian peacekeepers’ experiences and behaviours in the Pacific.

This thesis uses these frames of analysis to examine peacekeepers’ own stories. Peacekeepers’ oral histories are largely the foundation for this thesis. The missions being studied here happened so recently that there is, as yet, not much publicly available archival material. Because of this and out of the need to have access to peacekeepers’ thoughts, memories, descriptions and perceptions a large oral history project was undertaken. To that end, I conducted oral history interviews across the country with 61 peacekeepers from the ADF, APS and AFP.

Though the oral histories are important and drawn on frequently they have been used alongside variety of other sources to create a broad discussion about Australian peacekeeping in the Pacific. Other source material has included Australian and international newspapers, including English-language newspapers from Solomon Islands and East Timor. Parliamentary reports, speeches, legislation and other government publications have also been used widely. There is a small collection of peacekeepers’ personal papers and oral histories available at the Australian War Memorial that also proved valuable, as did the many published memoirs of peacekeepers. Additionally, I have had access to a range of material, especially oral histories and personal papers, for a project with the Official History of Australian Peacekeeping. Much of this material has ongoing issues related to copyright and public access outside of that project so has been used only exceptionally, but it needs mentioning because much of it has guided my own oral history work and indirectly informed the thesis.

The Oral Histories

Oral historians Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki suggest that reflecting on our struggles and indeed our triumphs in our oral history work is not just methodologically helpful, but in the context of oral
history it is a part of the story itself.\textsuperscript{63} Though this thesis is not built on an exclusive use of the oral histories, or one that closely examines just a few narratives and narrators it is still necessary to sketch out the particularities of the project and the main methodological approaches used.

The oral history project was advertised in a range of newspapers and publications across the country. Over 80 people from all over Australia registered interest and 61 of these became participants. Participation required service with any Australian government organisation in any capacity in the peacekeeping missions in Bougainville, Solomon Islands or East Timor. After initial expressions of interest potential participants answered a short questionnaire outlining their service and some biographical details. If their answers fitted the parameters of the work they were accepted into the project and interview arrangements were made. Not all of those who volunteered were accepted. Some declined to go any further once they had more information about the project and what participation involved. Also, a few were to be interviewed, but for various logistical reasons we were unable to make that happen.

The final group of participants ended up being a mix of people from across the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Australian Public Service (APS) and Australian Federal Police (AFP), as well as one Timorese woman and one Australian man who worked for the United Nations. These latter two participants were interviewed even though they did not fit the parameters of the project because their experiences were closely connected with Australian peacekeepers and they offered a chance to very tentatively explore some of the ways their service was different or similar to Australian peacekeepers. The Appendix details individual participant numbers based upon organisation, sex, age and place of service. As a general overview, 44 participants belonged to the ADF, 11 to the APS, and seven to the AFP as well as the two UN employees.\textsuperscript{64} Ten of the participants were women. This small number – roughly one-sixth of the overall total – is not surprising given that ADF personnel were the


\textsuperscript{64} Please note that some totals do not add up to 61 because a few participants served with more than one organisation and have been counted in each.
majority of participants and women were a minority in that organisation representing only 13.7 per cent of personnel in February 2011. At the time of interview people ranged in age from 29 to 69. For military participants, there was a spread across ranks, as well as participants from each service, though Army personnel represented the greatest number. This, again, is unsurprising as the Army was the largest of the services and provided the majority of personnel to peacekeeping operations. As most participants were ADF members, many of whom were still serving, they were generally based in the eastern states as well as the Northern Territory because these places are home to large military bases and communities. Similarly, the small number of public servants and AFP agents came almost exclusively from the Canberra region as most Commonwealth departments are based there.

The reasons why the sample ended up ADF heavy are not precisely clear, but a few issues may have been influential. Certainly, large numbers of ADF personnel have been deployed over the life of these missions and so present a large pool of potential applicants, but not insignificant numbers of civilians and police deployed too. Other noteworthy factors could have been the concerted effort by one of the participants to spread information about the project to other ADF members through their email network, as well as the many individuals who did the same amongst their own circles of friends and colleagues. However, a similar word-of-mouth process from a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade contact also directly raised the numbers of public servants, especially from that department.

A key factor that may explain the large ADF cohort is that there are a number of publications and associations that cater to the ADF and veteran community and I had much more success advertising the project in these than in similar publications for the other groups. Overall, five defence or peacekeeping-specific publications or groups ran advertisements and each produced volunteers. This meant that along

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66 The publications were: *Air Force News; Army News; Navy News; Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association*; and *Vet Affairs.*
with the state and national newspapers, ADF personnel had more chances
to hear about the project.

Though the size of the ADF group needs to be kept in mind, the
largest issue with the range of participants is the small number of AFP
personnel. There were a whole range of reasons for the low number of
police. AFP personnel still employed by that organisation – none of the
final participants were in this category – needed specific permission to be
a part of the project in a way that ADF and APS employees did not.
Further, I was also required to submit an ethics application for specific
AFP approval. This was in addition to the one approved by the Australian
National University Ethics Committee. In the end, this process had to be
abandoned due to time constraints. Yet even if neither of those issues had
been at play a contact in the AFP explained that there had been a number
of projects seeking police participants over the last five years and she
suggested that there was quite a bit of ‘research fatigue’ across the
organisation. Fortunately, some of this research has been published and
has been used in this project as much as possible to explore the AFP
experience. Ultimately, the spread of participants has resulted in a project
that oftentimes tends towards an overly ADF focus. However, as already
noted, the oral histories are used in conjunction with other sources and
this is particularly so when discussing the experiences of AFP and APS
peacekeepers.

While the range of participants presented challenges it would not be
fair to characterise it as unrepresentative. Any ‘sample’ is more than the
sum of its members. The participants do reflect a shared experience and
thinking about peacekeeping. Yet they also represent something
individual and personal in that they have their own private realities,
personalities, histories and perspectives. There is always a limit as to how
much any one person’s experience can represent something collective or
vice versa. This is especially so when those experiences are drawn out in the
process of oral history which encourages particular ways of remembering
and storytelling.67 Even though an oral historian is in the privileged

67 Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working
position to listen to many people’s stories and so hear commonalities and differences, no group, irrespective of the variety of participants, could wholly represent every individual or shared experience. In this way it might be more fruitful to substitute the notion that the oral histories are representative with the more realistic idea that they are ‘indicative’ or ‘suggestive’. Together, the collective and individual memories do weave together as mutually constitutive parts of a whole that can never quite be complete. Seen in that light, this group does point the way and gives a sense of what it was like to be an Australian peacekeeper in the Pacific in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Beyond just the limits and possibilities of their organisational background, participants’ stories also need to be seen in relation to their motivations for being a part of the project. A number of people had been involved with other oral history projects or had donated personal materials to public archives. Their desire to participate seemed to grow out of a keen interest in history, but especially in this topic and military history more generally. Of this group a few also had worked in a professional or volunteer capacity as historians, and so had a sense that what they had experienced was important. Quite a few peacekeepers said they wished to participate because they wanted to help me achieve my research goals, with some having experience in research projects themselves. A few had openly stated agendas. Of these, the most common was to ensure that all the ADF services were included and that this not be another Army-centric history – this was my first introduction to inter-service rivalries and diversities! For others, their reasons for participating were not clear to them. They just wanted to ‘tell their story’. These initially vague desires often turned out to mean a myriad of things when discussed during interviews. They could range from simply wanting to be heard, or to have the chance to begin or continue processing traumatic experiences, or just to leave a story behind for posterity.

As the interviewer, I too came with certain ideas and approaches about how to do and then interpret the interviews. So many factors are at play in any oral history interview, from simple things like the place it occurs to...
more complicated issues such as the rapport (or lack of it) between interviewee and interviewer. It is not possible to either recognise or understand all of the factors at work in any one interview let alone across 61. Nonetheless it is important to grapple with not just what was said but why. The following discussion attempts to do this, but it is necessarily subjective based, as it is, only on my experience and understanding of the interviews. Participants are likely to have a different view of our time together.

The interviews were conducted between April 2012 and October 2013. They were not life history interviews, which involve long, often multiple interviews about a person’s whole life story. Rather, they were focused on a specific moment in a life – namely, the participant’s operational service. The average length of an interview was about two-to-three hours. I adopted Michael Frisch’s nuanced concept of ‘shared authority’ so that I understood the oral histories as fundamentally co-authored. From the start, the key aim of each interview was to make the participants the centre of the process, while not negating the fact that I had an agenda and was also a part of the process. 68 To that end I did have a list of questions, but aside from a few sessions I set it aside and tried to make the meetings as open as possible so that participants could direct and shape the interview in ways meaningful to them. To make the interviews more conversational I adopted a ‘dialogical’ approach. That is, I participated in the conversations rather than maintaining a researcher’s distance. I would often share my ideas and doubts about the research as well as answer participants’ questions either about myself or the project. 69 Though I tried to shape the interviews in this open and shared way, I also recognised the limits of my approach. I understood that oral histories are not little blank canvases on which we can create whatever we like. Long before an interviewer ever asks a question personal narratives and ways of

remembering have been made and remade in endless variation. The oral history is but one more iteration of an already explored area.  

Nonetheless, some of my actions did shape certain elements of the conversations. I created boundaries for participants’ remembering. I encouraged a chronological storytelling by asking them about their childhood and early careers, and then making them focus only on memories of the missions. Within that context I was as flexible as I could be and would follow the participants wherever they wanted to go. Of course, that meant that some interviews did go down the proverbial rabbit hole, and while I would try to steer us back towards relevant areas, I let myself be guided by the person as much as I was capable. Sometimes my needs would be met, and at other times theirs, though more often than not these were not mutually exclusive.

The other key approach I used, albeit with varying degrees of success, was to listen in a multitude of ways. Taking cues from feminist oral historians, I listened ‘in stereo’ to facts and feelings. The practicalities of people’s peacekeeping experiences – where they lived, what they ate and what job they did – were just as important as how they felt and thought about that experience. This approach was also about allowing me to use the interviews as fully as possible rather than just mining them for pieces of factual information. This was an attempt to see the interview holistically, placed in the full complex context of its human subject.

The task of listening like this was not an easy one. It constantly required me to treat each interview as a standalone event and not direct it in a way that I thought it might fit into the project. As Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack have lucidly outlined, we must turn our hearing right up when we already think we know where what we are being told fits into our thinking. This is exceptionally hard to do in practice as each of us, interviewer and interviewee, do not arrive without a sense of each other,

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70 Passerini, Fascism in Popular Memory, 8.
or assumptions about what each person knows or wants to know. It is the burden of the interviewer though to come to it as ‘fresh’ as is possible. The earlier interviews suffered in this regard because I was not good at this in the beginning. This reality became awkwardly apparent during an interview when the participant seemed unable to answer questions about interactions with local people, which, at that point, was the focus of the project. This occurred a few more times before it became obvious that my own ideas about the peacekeeping experience were constraining my ability to hear what participants were actually telling me. My approach became much more flexible and responsive after this and the oral histories rightfully began to shape the thesis.

My listening approach also involved paying attention to non-verbal communication. I gave weight to silence, or its absence, and to the movement of the body as well as the melody and beat of participants’ language. A shift in the seat, a hastily rushed thought or changes in the pitch of the voice were all a part of people’s stories too. Silence was especially difficult to ‘listen’ to. Some scholars suggest it is often an indication of forgetting which in turn can be suggestive of suffering. Yet there are many other possible reasons for it, such as gathering thoughts, uncertainty, confusion and just plain forgetfulness. Sometimes it was obvious what silence meant. For example, in interviews with people who had memory loss and commented upon their silences to indicate as much, or with participants who became upset recalling difficult memories. Oftentimes, however, the silence was inexplicable and perhaps meaningless. Non-verbal listening is a slippery game and there are limits as to how far you can and should be willing to interpret the meaning of non-verbal communication. There are even greater limits when it comes to translating it into any coherent truly meaningful written form – something this thesis has not attempted to do. Still, whatever the limits, these parts of our conversations were a part of my experience of these

people and their stories and they have inescapably, though intangibly, informed the ways I understood both.

On last key way I tried to listen was in the space between the collective and the individual. As anthropologist, Geoff White has argued, memories always remain just possibilities on a wide spectrum of options. They are never static discrete visions. So much meaning is derived from the interplay between collective and individual memories. Listening this way makes room for both the shared and the diverse. As other scholars have shown, that space of exchange, contest and dialogue reveals much about the meaning and value of the memories that emerge, and at the same time leads the way to the social and political processes that are at work in shaping them. From this perspective, it is possible to see that collective and individual memories are not binary opposites but instead mutually constitutive parts of a whole. The one informs the other and both are continually reconstituted in their retelling so as to find new meanings and forms.

As is clear, oral history is about more than just passive listening. It is about critically engaging with how you are being told things. It is also about trying to understand the reasons why you might be being told some things and not others. One of the key factors here was the relationship and rapport I developed with a participant. Each of us came with our own ideas about not just what made a good interview but with assumptions and expectations of and about each other. An interesting and challenging aspect of the project was the sheer variety of participants. They ranged in ages, came from different organisations, served in different operations and times, lived in different parts of the country and

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so forth. This meant I was never really able to sense what kind of rapport I might be likely to have with a person before meeting them. This can sometimes be possible with a group of similar participants. For Alistair Thomson, for instance, all of the participants in his project on WWI Australian veterans’ and the Anzac tradition were much older than him, around the same age as each other, were all male and had all served in the same war. He found he developed similar relationships with his participants due to their treating him as a younger man with whom they could share their stories as ‘elders’.\footnote{Thomson, Anzac Memories, 231-232.} There was no one sense of rapport in the same way in this project. For example, interviews with participants who were closer in age to me often featured more informal bantering and less cohesive authoritative storytelling. With the participants who were older than me I experienced a similar type of relationship as Thomson did with his participants. In these situations, stories also tended to be more narrative and the participant would tend to talk without much prompting from me.

Other factors such as my sex and my status as a student sometimes played into the rapport between us. In interviews with military personnel my status as civilian also mattered. For example, when I would ask questions about sexual relations or sexual violence as well as about military culture – questions I was not always comfortable asking – some of the colloquialisms I know to be common amongst military personnel only occasionally made an appearance. This may have been because of my civilian status or that I was female or because it was clear I was uncomfortable asking these questions. Their responses may have therefore been an effort not to offend me, or because they too were uncomfortable talking about certain issues either professionally or just in my company.\footnote{Ibid, 232.} In other ways, perhaps my sex and the fact that I was outside the defence community meant that some things were told to me. For example, many participants, especially those from combat units, talked about the way masculine culture negatively affected their units and the ADF overall. I obviously was not, and at that time could not be, a part of that gendered culture so perhaps it was easier to converse about these
things with me than it might have been with a man and especially one from the military.

There are also influences on the interview outside the relationship between participant and researcher. In this project a sense of audience as well as the physical location of the interview each had their role to play. There was a degree to which the interviews had an air of gravitas because of the authority of the elite institution that I represented, as well as the presence of a recorder and the possibility of the interview being officially archived and also published. As other oral historians have observed in their work, some participants in this project did have a change of tone and a different way of phrasing once the recorder was on.  

This was influenced by me too. By the stage of recording, participants were aware of what it was I was interested in hearing about. Theirs were the stories I had deemed to be historically significant, the ones that mattered. This was especially emphasised in the first ten or so interviews during which I insisted on recording the formal introduction to the interview in front of participants. I could not have more obviously set the stage for a performance. Once I stopped doing this, things became a little more relaxed (for both of us) but the notion that it was a recorded interview was never entirely escaped. Occasionally, I was asked to switch off the recorder and ‘off-the-record’ stories were shared. Those stories sounded different. This was the same when we would chat before and after an interview, as we often did. This was colloquial talking that felt more like a regular private conversation with a new acquaintance. There was a sense in which once the interview had begun we each assumed our characters of ‘historian’ and ‘story-teller’ and switched on our public personas.

Still, this was not really just about either of us or the recorder, but what those conversations and that recorder symbolised. As Alistair Thomson has explored, once the recording process begins interviewer and interviewee are joined by a third party: ‘the audience’. Who that audience was imagined to be for each participant is hard to say with certainty, but is likely to have included the general public, colleagues and other

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peacekeepers, parents and families. Of course, I had an audience in mind too. I was, especially early on, very influenced by the notion that these recordings would eventually be made public and used by other historians. This resulted in noticeable self-consciousness and formality in my questioning style. Whatever the specific audience we each had in mind, both of us performed to a degree for posterity; we both knew there were ears in the room besides our own. It is also worth noting that many participants were still working in the organisations with which they served and had to follow certain guidelines, particularly ADF members, when discussing some issues. The recorder must have only emphasised the need to do that.

One final influence worth discussing is place. The interviews happened in many locations – a pub in Rockhampton, people’s homes in the suburbs, over coffee at cafés around Melbourne, on military bases from Sydney to Darwin and in offices across Canberra. Place noticeably mattered. The interviews that occurred in less formal settings, such as cafés or people’s homes were more conversational. Rapport was more easily created as participants and I relaxed more quickly in these familiar casual environments than we did in the more formal clinical spaces of offices. For participants, this seemed especially so when it involved them coming to their interview at unfamiliar offices at my university rather than their own offices. I too was far more at ease in these more comfortable and often vibrant spaces. In these situations both of us could interact with other people such as waitresses, participant’s spouses or children, and oftentimes also with family pets. These small moments eased the artificiality often present in more formalised spaces and acted as props in a way. Thoughts were gathered while stirring sugar into tea, small talk and ice-breaking came in sharing afternoon or morning tea treats or while pouring over family photographs. Certainly, the sound quality of recordings could suffer in more social places, but what was lost on that

85 Thomson, Anzac Memories, 231-233.
87 Ibid.
count was more than made up in the quality of the rapport and resulting conversations.

Place worked in other ways too. One of the very early interviews occurred on a military base – a space initially completely foreign to me. Camouflaged vehicles, people in uniforms, large military installations, signs staking out the place as ‘Defence Property’ and others warning of ‘troops crossing’ or the proximity of a ‘firing range’ created an intimidating alien environment. The resulting interview was awkward, lacking in rapport and overly reliant on questioning rather than listening. As I spent more time on military bases all of these things became more normal and familiar to me. So, instead of being intimidating these places eventually created a greater understanding of participants’ stories. Having that somewhat sequestered world opened meant that I could see and experience more intangible things such as watching the effect of rank on people’s behaviour, or noticing the more relaxed atmosphere of an Air Force base compared to an Army one, or seeing the ships used on some of the peacekeeping missions while at Navy bases. This all provided context for understanding how and why people could have a diverse set of experiences while deployed together. Perhaps most importantly, interviewing in these environments demystified the defence participants and their work for me. This ultimately resulted in better interviews, and, I hope, more nuanced and reflective analysis.

There is no possible way to properly capture all of the factors, flaws and successes that shape just one oral history interview let alone a large group of them. This discussion has been aimed at just setting the scene, at providing some background to the stories, analyses and ideas that follow. More detailed and particular discussions on certain features of the oral histories and their interpretation feature throughout the thesis and so build on and deepen the broader picture sketched here. Nonetheless, it is my hope that by providing some overall sense of what happened in that space between participant and oral historian this thesis can be read as it has been made – in reflective conversation.
Terminology

Any work on peacekeeping much less also on the Pacific has many contested and confusing terms to juggle. As modern peacekeeping has undergone numerous changes since 1945, and especially since the end of the Cold War, various terms and definitions have grown around it. Peacekeeping is not defined in the United Nations Charter that governs it and so an uncontested stable definition has never really existed. Not even a simple notion of ‘stopping hostilities’ or ‘preventing hostilities recommencing’ adequately captures the complexities of trying to keep or create peace. In many ways this has been a good thing as it reflects the \textit{ad hoc} and flexible nature of peacekeeping – a necessary characteristic given that the situations peacekeeping attempts to redress are themselves dynamic and unique. Nonetheless, there have been various peacekeeping definitions and explanations that have circulated and that need brief discussion. More historical detail and analysis of peacekeeping concepts feature throughout the thesis.

Some of the earliest peacekeeping operations have most comfortably been called ‘peacekeeping’ as they usually involved facilitating adherence to a peace agreement through means such as monitoring buffer zones or borders. These missions generally had very clear and limited mandates and were often characterised by peacekeepers’ impartiality, the presence of consent from host governments and the use of minimum force. These operations have also sometimes been called ‘First Generation’ peacekeeping or ‘Chapter Six’ peacekeeping as they were generally authorised under that chapter in the UN Charter. They could also be called ‘peace-monitoring’ operations. More broadly, these missions were limited in scope largely because of Cold War politics, and its restraints on the UN Security Council.

With the end of the Cold War and the concomitant freeing up of the UN Security Council, peacekeeping operations flourished in number and widened in scope, approach and aims. These operations, sometimes called ‘Second or Third Generation peacekeeping’ were more often authorised under Chapter VII of the Charter which allowed for the use of more robust force. Consequently, they have also sometimes been called
‘Chapter Seven’ operations. They were also often called ‘peace-enforcement’ rather than ‘peacekeeping’ or ‘peace-monitoring’.

Importantly, these missions, unlike their earlier counterparts, did not treat sovereignty as an always and everywhere sacrosanct principle and so consent became a more negotiable concept. Further, these operations tended to be much larger with troop and civil peacekeeper numbers growing exponentially in comparison to the small numbers in Cold War operations. Perhaps the most significantly different feature of these missions was that they often involved state-building components. Rather than only facilitating or enforcing the cessation of hostilities, operations now inserted themselves into civil administration and sought to build or rebuild governments. At times this has seen these operations called ‘peacebuilding’. Some of the earliest missions of this kind occurred in Somalia and Cambodia in the first years of the 1990s.

The difficulty with all of these definitions and descriptions is that they suggest an easy demarcation between operations when that has not been the reality. Most missions will contain elements from across each of these definitions and will shift between them throughout the life of the operation. This occurred in East Timor, for example. At times it certainly fell into a peace-enforcement style mission with very robust rules of engagement – legally binding rules governing peacekeepers’ use of force. Yet as local circumstances changed so too did the parameters of the mission making it more like peacekeeping rather than peace-enforcing. Also, the idea that peacekeeping has seamlessly progressed from one style

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of approach to another across time is misleading. The operation in Bougainville, for example, most comfortably fit within the definitions of Cold War operations as peacekeepers were unarmed, present under a peace agreement and with the consent of opposing parties, and the operation overall prided itself on impartiality.

This is just a brief overview of the names and debates around peacekeeping. Yet it is obvious why it has largely resisted a workable all-encompassing definition. This thesis is of the view that attempts at assured classification are often more confusing than clarifying. So, though it does so with recognition that it is not a simple term the title ‘peacekeeping’ is used throughout the thesis to embrace all three case-study missions.

Similarly the term ‘peacekeeper’ is used to describe all personnel from the ADF, AFP and APS. The use of that title is not simple either. The term often changes depending on how the mission has been defined. Those that served in Bougainville have often been called ‘peace-monitors’, for example. There is also some tension in using the term as expansively as it is here because there is not widespread consensus about what types of personnel should be called peacekeepers. This is especially so in the case of APS personnel who did not engage in any enforcement capacity like their colleagues from the ADF or AFP. This is an issue which will be discussed throughout the thesis. There is also space to consider whether staff of non-government organisations (NGO) also ought to fit under the umbrella of ‘peacekeeper’. As this thesis does not study NGO participation or personnel this issue is beyond its scope. Therefore, while not aiming to erase the nuance, debates or specificity, ‘peacekeeper’ is used throughout the thesis in an encompassing and inclusive way for all peacekeepers sent by the Australian Government. This is both for simplicity but more importantly to indicate the view that a peacekeeper is not one thing at the expense of another but is any person sent by their country to assist a peace operation in any capacity.

More technically, throughout the thesis police peacekeepers are referred to as AFP yet the AFP was not actually formed until October 1979. Police sent overseas as peacekeepers prior to this came from the
Commonwealth Police (the AFP’s predecessor) as well as the state organisations. Even since the creation of the AFP, police from the states and territories have still been sent as peacekeepers but have been seconded to the AFP to do so. Nonetheless, for the sake of simplicity all police peacekeepers are simply referred as belonging to the AFP.

There is one final note to make on terminology. This thesis liberally uses the term ‘the Pacific’ to capture the region home to Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor. As any glance at a map will make evident it is not entirely clear what that region is and is not or whether it rightfully houses all three case studies. Other names like Oceania or Asia-Pacific could well have been used instead – though neither of these is unproblematic either. Throughout the thesis the difficulty of naming that region, if it should be a region at all, and the inadequacies of the term itself will be discussed. For now, what is important is that the thesis uses ‘the Pacific’ not because it is a perfect uncontested term but because this is what the peacekeepers themselves used most often in their interviews. Given this is a history largely built around peacekeepers’ ideas, experiences and stories it was most appropriate to reflect their way of naming and describing the region.

90 For more on the development of the AFP see AFP History Project, *Australian Federal Police - The First Thirty Years* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).
Bougainville

1997-2003

Figure 2: Bougainville Island. Courtesy of CartoGIS, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University (ANU).
Historical Background

About 1000 kilometres east of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, lies Bougainville island. Though it now sits alone it used to be connected to the chain of islands making up what is now known as Solomon Islands. Bougainville’s history is intimately connected with that greater land and ocean space. It has been inhabited for thousands of years by culturally and linguistically diverse peoples. It was originally settled by people moving west from Southeast Asia, and is now famous for the uniquely black skin colour of its inhabitants. Much of the island’s long history involved complex patterns of migratory and geological movement as well as many cultural and language shifts across more recently drawn geopolitical boundaries.¹

The movement of people, so central to Bougainvillean history, eventually included Europeans when in 1768 two French ships, commanded by Louis de Bougainville, anchored off the island.² By the late 1800s Europeans were involved in forcing Bougainvilleans (though some perhaps volunteered) to work as indentured labourers in Queensland, Samoa, New Britain and Fiji. This was a process known as ‘blackbirding’ and occurred across the Pacific, not just Bougainville. ‘Blackbirding’ had long-term and widespread effects for communities left behind and the labourers themselves. It disrupted family and community life and also created populations of marginalised worker populations in host countries.³

² Griffin and Regan, ‘Introduction’, in Griffin and Regan (eds.), Bougainville Before the Conflict, xxvii.
Beyond the labour trade, Europeans were also quick to redraw Bougainvillean boundaries. In 1884 Bougainville was annexed to German New Guinea, while Britain took the southerly Solomon Islands, forming the British Solomon Islands. In 1906 Australia entered into these transactions by taking control of British New Guinea. After the upheaval of the Great War, the League of Nations gave Australia a mandate to govern German New Guinea. After World War II Australia re-formed it into the Australian Territory of Papua and New Guinea. This territory later became Papua New Guinea and stayed an Australian mandate until 1975. The separation from Solomon Islands and the attachment of Bougainville to Papua New Guinea ignored the fact that Bougainvilleans were less culturally identified with Papua New Guineans than with Solomon Islanders. Resentment of this colonial re-positioning and partitioning contributed, at least in part, to the future civil war. Another key element contributing to that war, however, would be gold mining.

A large gold and copper deposit was discovered in Panguna in mountainous central Bougainville in 1964. By 1972 a large open-cut mine run by Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) — largely underwritten by Australian company, Conzinc Riotinto — was operating. The PNG Territory Administration acquired 20 per cent of the equity as well as 1.25 per cent on revenue from copper-concentrate sales. Initially, local landowners, mostly from the Nasioni people, were granted one-off compensation payments, but very little of the tax revenue made its way back to Bougainville from Port Moresby. Moreover, this type of one-off payment was at odds with Bougainvillean ideas of land ‘ownership’ which...
was based on matrilineal principles and deeply rooted in ideas of collective custodianship. Younger generations therefore were denied access to their ancestral lands, and received no direct benefit from the compensation money received by older men.\(^6\)

These resentments were deepened by the influx of over 10,000 workers into the Naisoi region of just 14,000 people. Many of these workers were Australians and Papua New Guineans, or ‘white skins’ and ‘red skins’ as they were called by locals. This was in contrast to the ‘black skins’ of Bougainvilleans. They caused further dislocation and disruption to Naisoi society. In 1974 in an effort to appease secessionist rumblings, Bougainville was granted an Interim Provincial Government and given 5 per cent of the 1.25 per cent revenue paid to PNG. However, it made little difference to the destruction already wrought on the land and traditional family and social systems.\(^7\)

These financial deals, much like the mine and the necessary land purchases, were rather hastily pushed through during the 1960s in an effort by Australia to make PNG capable of economic independence – an issue which itself was looming ever larger during this period. By 1975 Australia had granted PNG independence but ignored Bougainvillean calls to secede. Even in the face of an actual declaration of independence from Bougainvilleans Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam refused to grant independence. Like his predecessors for much of the twentieth century, Whitlam saw a stable PNG as vital to Australian defence and believed a Bougainvillean secession would be a deeply destabilising force for the newly independent country.\(^8\)

Foreshadowing policy discussions in

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\(^8\) Downer, *The Bougainville Crisis*, 3-9; Braithwaite and Charlesworth, *Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment*, 12-13; Regan, *Light Intervention*, 13-14; for more on
the 1990s, the last thing Australia needed, it was thought, was a slew of allegedly dysfunctional and weak micro states to its north.

Whatever Australia’s defence concerns, by 1978 landowners who had been opposing the mine since the 1960s, became more organised and formed the Panguna Landowners Association (PLA). Although they were successful in negotiating the compensation package mentioned above, a new generation of landowners saw these deals as unfairly profiting the PLA board and in 1987 formed a resistance group of their own: the New Panguna Landowners Association (NPLA). Under the leadership of Francis Ona the NPLA came to successfully link mining and land issues with the secessionist cause. Frustrated, the NPLA was soon mounting attacks on the mine. The tipping point came in 1988 when the group cut power lines and placed explosives in and around the mine causing significant damage and disturbance. In response, the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (Riot Squad) as well as the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) were deployed to quell the violence, and did so quite brutally. This event triggered the formation of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) formed out of the NPLA, and cemented the organisation and the secessionist cause together. Severe fighting ensued over the following months and by May 1989 BCL had had enough and closed the mine.9

For the next decade Bougainville endured a civil war. Initially, it was the BRA fighting against the PNGDF. For its part, Australia stood aside and deemed this an ‘internal issue’ to which the PNG government was free to respond however it wished.10 But the use of Australian helicopters by PNGDF as gunships as well as transports to dump bodies into the sea caused outrage in Bougainville, and did little to improve perceptions of


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Australia. 11 Pacific scholar Anthony Regan has suggested that a form of ethnic cleansing took place in this period as the BRA threatened and harassed non-Bougainvilleans, causing most to leave. 12 By March 1990 a ceasefire of sorts led the PNGDF to withdraw while the BRA momentarily laid down their weapons. The cessation of violence was not an indication that relations had normalised. Papua New Guinea imposed a sea and air blockade that stayed in place until the mid-1990s.

The blockade brought much suffering and cost countless lives. It created a severe lack of medical facilities and generally poor living conditions, particularly in the notoriously squalid ‘care centres’ scattered across the island. Many Bougainvilleans escaped to Solomon Islands during this time, but as Bougainvillean Josephine Tankunani Sirivi recalled, those who ‘could not afford to send their sick people across the Straits, lost their loved ones to preventable disease’. 13 On May 17, in a move never recognised internationally, Francis Ona unilaterally declared Bougainville independent. By the middle of the year he had formed a political wing of the BRA – the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG). 14

The BRA had never enjoyed universal support, however, and during 1992-93 various groups formed into the Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF). They were linked with the PNGDF and often supported it in fighting against the BRA. Yet the issues at stake were not simply for or against secession, but were also connected to local tensions and familial disputes. It was not at all uncommon to see members of the same families taking opposing political sides in an effort to settle personal scores, for instance. Whatever side people took, the price was great. Though there is

12 Regan, Light Intervention, 21.
13 Josephine Tankunani Sirivi, ‘Running the Blockade’, in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Havini Taleo (eds.), ...As Mothers of the Land: The Birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom, (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2004), 53; for more on the blockade see Oliver, Black Islanders, 235-245; for more personal stories on the effects and experiences of the blockade for Bougainvilleans, especially for women, families and communities, see articles in Tankunani Sirivi and Havini Taleo, (eds.), ...As Mothers of the Land, esp. 35-62.
14 Regan, Light Intervention, 22.
debate over exact figures, a conservative estimate of combat related
deaths is 1000-2000. But there were also large numbers of people
dislocated, perhaps upwards of 60 000 by 1996, and countless deaths
from the blockade. Most infrastructure was destroyed and Bougainville,
previously relatively wealthy compared to the rest of PNG, was deeply
impoverished by war’s end.\textsuperscript{15}

Lasting peace came in fits and starts. The first formal international
effort at peace came in September 1994 when there was an attempt at
convening a peace conference in Arawa, the capital city. A peacekeeping
group – the South Pacific Peacekeeping Force (SPPKF) – was deployed
to provide security. Australia took responsibility for most of the funding
and organising but other Pacific nations also contributed troops.\textsuperscript{16} While
not a success, this effort, like many others, was important in keeping
peace on the agenda and setting the foundations for a more lasting truce.\textsuperscript{17}
Most importantly, rippling under these international efforts at peace was a
constant process of informal peacemaking by Bougainvillians engaged in
localised reconciliations.\textsuperscript{18}

Local peace initiatives were being pursued long before international
efforts commenced. While these involved a cross section of society,
Bougainvillean women, especially through church groups, were key
players and leaders. Cooperation between women for peacemaking was
not unique to Bougainville. As Nicole George has discussed, Pacific
women have long been working together across the Pacific region to
promote peace and regional cooperation.\textsuperscript{19} However, the role of women
in Bougainville did have its own specific features and was absolutely
fundamental to the success of the peacekeeping mission that was to
come.

\textsuperscript{15} Regan, \textit{Light Intervention}, 20-26; Braithwaite and Charlesworth, \textit{Reconciliation and
Architectures of Commitment}, 87-91.
\textsuperscript{16} For comprehensive coverage of SPPKF see Bob Breen, \textit{Giving Peace a Chance: Operation
Lagoon, Bougainville 1994: A Case of Military Action and Diplomacy}, (Canberra: Strategic
Defence Studies, Australian National University, 2001); see also: Regan, \textit{Light Intervention},
\textsuperscript{17} Braithwaite and Charlesworth, \textit{Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment}, 31-46.
\textsuperscript{18} Regan, \textit{Light Intervention}, 36-40; Braithwaite and Charlesworth, \textit{Reconciliation and
Architectures of Commitment}, 67-78; for more on reconciliations see Liz Thompson, \textit{Breaking
Bows and Arrows} (Firelight and Tiger Eye Productions, 2001).
\textsuperscript{19} Nicole George, ‘Pacific Women Building Peace: A Regional Perspective’, \textit{The
As mentioned earlier, Bougainvillean society is organised around principles of matriliney especially in relation to the use and governance of land. As such, Bougainvillean women had much power to influence and shape the peace process. The centrality of women’s connection to church groups, and Christianity at large, was also an important feature of their peace work. As Ruth Saovana-Spriggs has shown, women’s roles in the peace process were inextricably linked to their Christian faith, which itself was threaded with their local customs and traditions. Anna-Karina Hermkens has described the interconnections between Bougainvillean traditions of motherhood and matriliney and their Catholic Marian devotion and the ways this fed into conflict and peace. Further, it was from a sense of faith and a belief in the holiness of their land that women drew strength and confidence as women, mothers and as participants and leaders in peacemaking. These elements, faith and matrilineal customs and principles, undergirded Bougainvillean women’s roles in bringing about peace.

A few examples of specific efforts by women illustrate the essential role they played and how those roles were rooted in these local customs, principles, Catholicism and cultures. Helen Hakena, Executive Director of the Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency, outlines how her organisation was active in peacebuilding efforts. Formed in 1992 in response to the conflict in Bougainville, the agency worked in community education and advocacy at national and international levels. It worked to reduce gender violence in Bougainvillean communities and in 2000


partnered with the ‘Strengthening Communities for Peace’ project, funded by AusAID. Leitana volunteers were spread across the province and worked on key issues in the peace process such as skills development, reduction of home-brew use, and counselling.\(^{22}\)

There were other efforts too. Amongst other examples, Ruth Saovana-Spriggs describes the actions of a group of four women selected by the Catholic Women’s Organisation. In early 1999 they were tasked with organising a meeting between two armed groups of men who had each killed members of the opposing groups. This was an example of a localised conflict getting caught up in the broader civil war. Getting these groups of men together was a challenging task that involved mountainous hiking, nights spent in run-down out of the way buildings. After two initial meetings there was little in the way of lasting reconciliation between the parties. It took nearly five months of tireless efforts by these four women, but eventually the groups reconciled. Not only was there a large reconciliation ceremony but the men discussed how to prevent conflict in the future.\(^{23}\)

These efforts, multiplied by many across the island, made possible the conditions for more formal international peace processes and they also sustained those processes once they had begun. Though their work often gets marginalised in the bigger international stories of peace accords and peace operations the role of Bougainvillean women gave lifeblood to peace efforts in Bougainville. This was no less true when it came to developing and sustaining the formal peace agreements that led to the peacekeeping operations being deployed.\(^{24}\)

That formal international peace process really got underway in 1997. Ironically, the final proverbial straw was the PNG government’s attempt to end the conflict. In a major misstep they tried to do so with hired mercenaries. In brief, the PNG government, under Prime Minister Julius


\(^{23}\) Saovana-Spriggs, ‘Bougainville Women’s Role in Conflict Resolution’, 207-208, see also 205-212 for more examples of women’s work towards peace; for a broader Pacific discussion and examples of the variety of women’s actions for peace see, George, ‘Pacific Women Building Peace’, 45-47.

\(^{24}\) In addition to the references already provided, see the following for more on the roles and experiences of women in the Bougainville conflict and peace process: Tankunani Sirivi and Havini Taleo … As Mothers of the Land.
Chan, hired mercenary company, Sandline International to assist the PNGDF with quelling the violence. An international and domestic crisis followed. In July 1997 a new Prime Minister, Bill Skate, was elected and was much more committed to finding a better solution to the conflict.25 By July 18, 1997 the first formal peace accord, *Burnham I*, was signed. It was the result of two weeks of peace negotiations between the Bougainville factions and local NGOs. The talks were facilitated largely by New Zealand though with significant Australian help, especially by Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer.

*Burnham I* was a step, but not a solution.26 The factions simply agreed to work together toward peace. When Skate came to power he took time to create a consensus amongst his own officials that talks between Bougainvillean leaders and PNG were now needed. So, in October of that year the parties, this time including PNG representatives, reconvened in Burnham, New Zealand and made a new agreement. *Burnham II* was more decisive than its predecessor. The parties agreed to a truce, and most importantly to the deployment of a neutral monitoring force. Just one month later they met again in Cairns, Australia and agreed to the establishment of the Truce Monitoring Group (TMG).

**The Peace Operation**

In November 1997 the TMG – sometimes known in Australia as *Bel Isi I*, as this was the Australian Defence Force (ADF) operational name – led by New Zealand arrived in Bougainville to monitor the temporary ceasefire. The team consisted of about 250 personnel, with the majority made up of New Zealand troops. Australia contributed about 120 personnel, drawn from the Australian Public Service (APS), the ADF and a small number from the Australian Federal Police (AFP). Fiji and

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26 For Downer’s role see Braithwaite and Charlesworth, *Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment*, 83-86.
Vanuatu also contributed about 20 personnel together. The role of the TMG was to liaise with local people about the peace process and to report breaches of the ceasefire, as well as to facilitate community meetings, reconciliations and events which would help the peace progress. The peacekeepers were unarmed and they worked in teams of about twenty, living amongst the local people at team-sites scattered all over the province in Arawa, Buin, Buka, Wakunai and Tonu. There was also a headquarters in Arawa and a support base at Loloho, in central Bougainville. Each team had a mix of civilian and military personnel as well as having at least one woman. An effort was also made to include Māori personnel as far as practically possible.

New Zealand took the lead of the TMG as it was unacceptable to many Bougainvilleans for Australia to do so given its historical involvement in the mine as well as its connection to the PNGDF. The BRA/BIG were entirely against Australian participation, especially by the military. For that reason, Australian defence personnel were strictly limited to support and logistic roles. Many Bougainvilleans were also suspicious of Australia’s motives regarding the mine, and indeed some Australian peacekeepers were tested by locals offering them gold to see if they would be tempted. While Bougainvilleans may have been suspicious of Australians, they wanted Australia to take some responsibility for the crisis and its resolution, especially because it was seen a powerful neighbour with links to the conflict. This sentiment was expressed in speeches made to a visiting Australian Parliamentary Delegation in 1994. For example, Naona Taniung, Chairman of the Central Bougainville Interim Authority said in his statement, ‘you must begin to understand us. As Big Brother we will need you. We must work together to create an environment that would be conducive to both Papua New Guinean and Australian interests’.

27 Londey, Other People’s Wars, 220.
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While the TMG was at work in this complicated situation, the parties continued talking and by April 1998 they had agreed to a permanent ceasefire. These discussions took place in January at Lincoln University, New Zealand and the accord that followed is known as the Lincoln Agreement. It provided for: a permanent and irrevocable ceasefire; the continuation of a regional monitoring group; the establishment of a UN observer mission – United Nations Political Office in Bougainville\textsuperscript{30} – and the development of a reconciliation government to help unify the people and negotiate a political solution for all.

In May 1998, the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) – or Bel Isi II in Australia – took over from the TMG, but was this time led by Australia. New Zealand had a new government and it was not as keen as its predecessor to continue command, particularly for financial reasons. The PMG had just over 300 personnel. About 240 of the initial force were Australian and the rest were troops from Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu.\textsuperscript{31} Again, there was a focus on including a wide variety of people in the teams. It continued to operate in teams of peacekeepers scattered at team sites across the province. Figure 3 (overleaf) is an example of a small patrol group that was a part of typical peace monitoring team. The PMG was responsible for all the same duties as the TMG, but from 2001 it also provided logistical and technical advice to assist the disarmament process which was being supervised by the UN office.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30} In PNG, this title was too sensitive so it was known there as the UN Observer Mission Bougainville (UNOMB) and was officially changed to this in January 2004.
\textsuperscript{31} Londey, Other People’s Wars, 222.
\textsuperscript{32} For more extensive discussion of formal peace processes leading to TMG/PMG see Regan, Light Intervention, 27-108; Braithwaite and Charlesworth, Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment, 35-65; Londey, Other People’s Wars, 219-225; Australian Civil-Military Centre (ACMC), Partnering for Peace: Australia’s Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Experiences in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and in Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste (Canberra, 2012), 19-23; Jim Rolfe, ‘Peacekeeping the Pacific Way in Bougainville’, International Peacekeeping 8, no. 4 (2001): 38-55.
Finally, in 2001, after much negotiation and considerable effort by Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, the parties agreed to a political solution on the secession issue. Bougainville would remain a highly autonomous part of PNG until a referendum on secession could be held 10 to 15 years after the establishment of an Autonomous Bougainville Government – this happened in 2005. So, despite Bougainvillean leaders wishing it to stay to continue building confidence in the peace, the PMG – now regarded as an overwhelming success by both Bougainvilleans and the peacekeeping nations – was withdrawn on June 30, 2003. It was briefly followed by the Bougainville Transition Team which was made up of 13 Australian, Fijian, ni-Vanuatu and New Zealand civilians spread across Arawa and Buka. Its mandate was to help maintain belief in the peace process. The Team was withdrawn in December that year, while the UN mission stayed until June 2005.

Alexander Downer suggested that the Bougainville crisis not only distorted and strained relations with PNG, but more generally changed the way Australia interacted with the South Pacific by forcing the

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government to focus on what it could and could not do in the region.\textsuperscript{35} It was by no means the last time that Australians had to wrestle with questions of their so-called responsibilities in the region. And Bougainville certainly did not indicate a shift from the government’s pragmatic foreign policy approach.

Enter the Peacekeepers

This section outlines how peacekeepers were selected to serve as well as some of the training they received. It is not possible to give a detailed account of how every peacekeeper or group was selected and trained as this depended on many variables and changed over time. The organisation a peacekeeper came from, as well as the department or unit affected selection and training processes. So too did the timing of a peacekeeper’s service; mission selection and training often differed over the course of an operation as its needs and goals changed. What follows is a range of the selection and training experiences described by peacekeepers. This section also explores what peacekeepers thought about the purpose of the peace operation as well as what they knew of the places they were going to serve. Together, these explorations give a sense of what peacekeepers experienced and thought before they arrived in the Pacific.

The operation in Bougainville was largely a new kind of mission for the three organisations. It was a mission that initially needed people on the ground quite fast and that also involved the novelty of mixed teams of people from the ADF, AFP and APS all working intimately together in small teams. They were being sent to Bougainville unarmed and with a mandate that demanded close relationships with local communities. This rather boutique approach meant that all kinds of training and selection process occurred and peacekeepers could have quite different experiences of preparing for their service.

For APS personnel their journey to Bougainville generally began with an application and selection process. Billy Packard recalled that notice went around his department calling for applicants and that he had to do a

\textsuperscript{35} Downer, \textit{The Bougainville Crisis}, 1, 8-9.
range of psychological tests and fitness tests and he was ‘lucky enough’ to get in. He decided to apply for a chance to get on the ‘coal face…and not have my whole time here in Canberra’. Pearl Hudson said she found out about applications being open at a dinner party with work colleagues. She said, ‘it really appealed to me to be part of something that seemed really worthwhile’. DFAT officer, Sarah Storey recalls that for her it was very rapid process of selection. Like Packard an announcement came through her department’s internal network and within two weeks she had applied, was interviewed and chose to go. She applied because she saw it as an opportunity ‘that I thought would never be repeated for a civilian to participate in peace operations’.

The selection process for the small number of AFP personnel also often involved a similar application and selection process. For some though, like Agent Don Barnby they were asked to go because of their experience and skills. Agent Barnby, like many colleagues from all organisations, got little notice he was being deployed, just three weeks. Like some of his APS counterparts he ‘welcomed Bougainville because it got me out of the office, I just hate being in the office, that 9-5 thing’.

For ADF personnel the process was variable. Depending upon a person’s home unit and what service (Air Force, Navy or Army) they belonged to they may have been simply told they were deploying. This most often happened when a person deployed as part of a formed unit or were part of a certain ship’s crew. This was the case for instance for Navy Lieutenant Commander David Hannah who was just told he would be sailing with his ship and crew a few weeks before they departed. Air Force Flight Sergeant John de Haan was similarly just told he was going even though he did not want to go. Yet most participants in this project were invited to apply or simply asked if they would like a position on the team. Often, people were asked to apply or chose to do so because they had specific skills that were needed on the operation. For Warrant Officer

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36 Billy Packard, interview with author, 13 August 2013, ROI1056.
37 Pearl Hudson, interview with author, 21 August 2013, ROI1057.
38 Sarah Storey, interview with author, 27 September 2013, ROI1058– quotation from participant’s written summary.
39 Don Barnby, interview with author, 21 May 2012, ROI1005.
40 David Hannah, interview with author, 4 June 2012, ROI1009.
41 John de Haan, interview with author, 13 November 2012, ROI1042.
II Wally Meurant he was asked if he would like to go. He said he ‘jumped at it, of course I wanted to go’.\textsuperscript{42} Navy member Sacha Bergmann was also asked if he would like to go. He said, ‘I didn’t have to go but I put my hand up for it. It was only short notice but I was happy, it was something interesting’.\textsuperscript{43} Another Navy member, Melinda Fernandez, also volunteered when a call for people with her skills came up. She said she applied ‘for the chance to work out of a tent and in tough conditions’.\textsuperscript{44}

After their specific selection processes most personnel, depending upon how quickly they were needed in-country, spent some time, anywhere, from four days to a week, at Randwick Barracks in Sydney for mission-specific training. Many Navy personnel did not do this training as they often deployed as part of their ship’s crew to provide important logistical and security support and so did not need specific training for the kinds of onshore peacekeeping activities their colleagues would be doing.\textsuperscript{45} Yet it is important to note that irrespective of mission-specific training the very nature and culture of the ADF is one of preparedness. So, it is in the very marrow of the ADF to constantly train and be ready for a whole range of deployments.

Of the peacekeepers who were sent to Randwick – home to training battalion, 39\textsuperscript{th} Personnel Support Battalion – they underwent a range of classes in language, history as well as briefings on health and hygiene, safety and other deployment necessities. Personnel also had medical and dental examinations as well as fitness tests while at Randwick.

Though the training improved and grew more streamlined over the seven years of the peace mission, some of the early training gives a good sense of just how new and fast the deployment to Bougainville was for all involved. Joan Gardner, an APS employee, who served in the first rotation with the TMG recalls that some of the information and briefings in her round of training appeared to be pulled together hastily because of the speed the peace process required people to be in Bougainville. She also thought there was a general sense that they just did not really know

\textsuperscript{42} Wally Meurant, interview with author, 4 October 2012, ROI1032.
\textsuperscript{43} Sacha Bergman, interview with author, 31 October 2012, ROI1036.
\textsuperscript{44} Melinda Fernandez, interview with Author, 21 November 2012, ROI1039.
\textsuperscript{45} See for examples, John Perryman, interview with author, 31 May 2012, ROI1007; Hannah, interview; Anthony Hilton, interview with author, 1 June 2012, ROI1008.
what to do with the trainee-peacekeepers. She, along with others in this early period of rotation, also recalled a particular briefing on landmines that scared them and proved to be unnecessary. DFAT officer Sarah Storey said of the briefing, ‘I remember one gruff guy giving us a session about disarming a landmine and saying “if you’re mate goes up in a pink cloud this is what you do” and we’re just sitting there thinking “oh God”’. Storey, as well as AFP Agent Don Barnby also recalled that in this period there was not even a process for equipping the teams. Instead, they had to go out to camping and military supply stores to buy items such as clothing and camping gear. As would be expected, as the mission wore on and people gained experience and expertise training became much more standardised, responsive to the actual needs of Bougainville and more streamlined.

After Randwick, personnel were sent to Bamaga and some other Torres Strait Islands in far-north Queensland to participate in intensive ADF-organised military-style training for two weeks. This was extensive and unique training at the time. Participants learned basic survival and first aid skills, how to hike in strenuous conditions and how to live outside in simple camp-site conditions. Language, cultural and history training were also a part of the package. This was an innovative programme designed to acclimatise and equip civilians to working in what would be a military-dominated environment. APS employee Kate Binton described it. ‘The two weeks at Bamaga […] were like boot camp for civvies where they try and get you used to the whole Army thing’. It was also to begin the team-bonding process required of peacekeepers who were going to live and work with each other for months in remote areas.

47 Storey, interview – quotation from participant’s written summary.
48 Ibid; Barnby, interview.
49 Kate Binton, interview with Author, 20 September 2012, ROI1028.
Peacekeepers described their experience in Bamaga in varying ways. For those who had already had some experience with the military it felt like basic and easy training. APS employee Billy Packard had experience with the Army Reserves and said in Bamaga ‘we did sort of the more living out in the sticks […] I called it Army training but [from] from my Army Reserve background it wasn’t very Army-like but it was certainly very Army for someone who had no background in that area’.\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, AFP Agent Don Barnby who had served in Vietnam described it as really basic training but only because it was second nature to him. He said that Bamaga was ‘living in the bush, lots of fitness stuff […] I took my little team off and just showed them really basic stuff like how to pick a hutchie site […] how to literally open a tin of food with an Army can opener’.\textsuperscript{52}

Others without this experience describe it as being tough. APS Officer Kate Binton said,

\begin{quote}
I remember when I was up in Bamaga they took us […] we did this two day walk in the bush and it was really really tough you’re literally chopping with knives through to get through the vines in the jungle and then you’re having to walk through seven foot grass that you couldn’t see anything over trying to get a compass point […] they talked about some team sites still doing some patrols and I just to the psych at the end I made it through that and I know I can do it, but God don’t send me anywhere they’re doing these patrols […] it’ll kill me! [and then I got sent to one of the last outposts] and in the end I was really glad they did because I loved it and it wasn’t as bad as I thought it was gonna be and it wasn’t nearly as tough as what they put as through in Bamaga.
\end{quote}

All of this training equipped peacekeepers with varying physical and practical skills as well as some background information on Bougainvillean history, geography and the journey towards peace. Whatever its shortcomings the training was vitally important, especially because it seems as though many peacekeepers knew very little about Bougainville before they deployed. Army Sergeant Deta Kerschat said, ‘I didn’t know

\textsuperscript{51} Packard, interview.  
\textsuperscript{52} Barnby, interview.  
\textsuperscript{53} Binton, interview.
anything about Bougainville, the first time I really heard about it was when the conflict was going on’.\textsuperscript{54} Navy member Melinda Fernandez said she knew probably I knew more than most I think because I bothered to look it up’.\textsuperscript{55} For some, especially for those from the ADF, any familiarity at all came from knowledge of WWII. Able Seaman Anthony Hilton said that he only knew that Bougainville ‘was a Japanese-held island somewhere in the Pacific’.\textsuperscript{56} As will be shown, knowledge of WWII history was a feature of peacekeepers’ knowledge about and perceptions of Solomon Islands and East Timor as well.

Whatever the amount or kind of knowledge peacekeepers had about Bougainville, many understood it as belonging to the Pacific region and that in this larger strategic sense the operation was necessary because it would help keep the region stable. More pointedly they also tended to think that Australia had a responsibility in safeguarding the region. This is a common theme amongst peacekeepers across all three missions. Peter Smith, for example, who served in Timor and Bougainville with the ADF said he thought that ‘we have a responsibility in our area, we have a community responsibility […] I think there needs to be a teacher in the playground keeping an eye on what’s happening’.\textsuperscript{57} Billy Packard who served with the APS and ADF in Bougainville and Timor also said, ‘I think the whole strategic outlook from Australia’s perspective is “these are our neighbours and we don’t want things to go too bad on our doorstep”, so to speak’.\textsuperscript{58}

Invariably, peacekeepers from the three organisations experienced some similarities in deployment and training procedures, but there was a diversity of experience too. Though one can rightly ask a question about whether one can really be prepared to keep the peace in a foreign environment, it is clear that some peacekeepers received more and better training than others. As will be shown throughout the thesis approaches to preparing peacekeepers grew more sophisticated and systematic largely as a result of the demands of the peacekeeping operations in the Pacific.

\textsuperscript{54} Deta Kerschat, interview with author, 6 September 2012, ROI1026.
\textsuperscript{55} Melinda Fernandez, interview with author, 21 November 2012, ROI1039.
\textsuperscript{56} Hilton, interview.
\textsuperscript{57} Peter Smith, interview with author, 30 November 2012, ROI1050.
\textsuperscript{58} Packard, interview.
Largely, the often *ad hoc* nature of training was indicative of the novelty of this kind of peacekeeping operation at the time. An interesting theme to emerge from peacekeepers’ discussions about their preparedness and knowledge prior to deployment was that on the one hand they knew very little about Bougainville itself, yet had very clear ideas about the strategic importance of keeping peace there because of its placement in the Pacific region; a region that Australia had a particular obligation to.

**Working for Peace – Local People and Places**

Whatever their training or preparation, very few peacekeepers knew quite what to expect as they disembarked planes and ships into their new surroundings. Sometimes it was scenes of jubilation from excited locals, sometimes there was no fuss at all, perhaps just a colleague sent to pick you up to take you to your new workplace or home. Many recalled the heat and humidity as their lasting first impression. AFP Agent Don Barnby said, ‘Arawa was alright, it was really busy and pretty organised, Tonu [his team site] was pretty basic, half the roofs blew off when the chopper landed! […] It was so hot and humid and everything would just be wet and start to stink’. ADF member Melinda Fernandez said, ‘oh it was hot! It was like walking into a wet blanket, it was very hot. […] it was kind of deserted […] there weren’t a lot of people around there were no vehicles other than the defence vehicles it was an island at war there was no doubt about that’. Navy Lieutenant Commander David Hannah who served in Operation Lagoon in 1994 and then again in 2003 recalled, ‘Bougainville’s funny because […] you can smell it before you can even start to see it. It’s a really nice smell. It’s like hot rotting vegetation and smoke. It’s like going to a barbeque where someone’s cooking a pig. It was exceptionally hot when we were there’.

Even though some peacekeepers found Bougainville deserted, torn apart, basic and overwhelmingly hot, many were continually astounded at the beauty of the place. Captain Gerry McGowan said of Bougainville, ‘it was paradise on earth and I went to so many wonderful places where

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59 Barnby, interview.
60 Fernandez, interview.
61 Hannah, interview.
you’d be surrounded by just the most amazing and serene rainforest and then […] thirty seconds later you’re on a beautiful white sandy beach with crystal clear waters’. ADF member Sebastian Davidson described Bougainville as an,

absolutely beautiful tropical paradise […] It’s what a lot of Australians flock to Bali for and Bougainville’s just there and it’s a lot better […] just a lovely place, pristine, the waters were just crystal clear, lovely light blue, the beaches were great, vegetation, no pollution, fresh, lovely, the climate was good, hot.63

Whatever their first impressions, peacekeepers’ interactions with local people and impressions of the landscapes grew over time as they set out for their team sites and settled into jobs and routines that were so connected to the everyday life of Bougainvilleans. In an operation like Bougainville there was very little option for most peacekeepers but to get caught up in the rhythms of local life. It was an operation that had relationships at the heart of its mandate – talking about and facilitating the peace in villages and towns across the province could require no less. Much of this work had a formal edge to it in terms of holding organised peace meetings with local groups. Figure four (overleaf), for example, shows a DFAT officer conducting a peace meeting and information session with Bougainvilleans.

However, spreading the peace message was also necessarily ad hoc. Winning the trust of and getting to know local people meant peacekeepers had to move beyond formalities and share in community life. This meant that peacekeepers had a huge variety of experiences doing their work. Captain Gerry McGowan, for instance, hosted groups of rebels to tea and smokes at the team’s house so as to foster fruitful conversations about peace. Joan Gardner, a public servant, and her team went to church frequently to talk with people because this was a significant meeting place for the community. It was also a sign of respect

62 Gerry McGowan, interview with author, 8 March 2013, ROI1055.
63 Sebastian Davidson, interview with author, 10 August 2012, ROI1017; for more on peacekeepers’ geographical descriptions see, Hudson, interview; Foley, interview; Sacha Bergman, interview with author, 31 October 2012, ROI1036.
as Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism, was central to Bougainvillian life. Major Bruce Tarrier was a team leader so he got invited to lots of events and talks in villages and recalled how important food and hospitality were. He remembered getting to try all kinds of foods like ‘flying fox’ and having to be flexible and polite because he was considered important. He also said ‘we used to get invited to events purely because we had an ice-machine making machine!’

The nature of this operation also allowed some peacekeepers to form friendships with people because they would see them often. Kate Binton, who served with a Federal department, described how during her time at the Wakanai site her team would often stay in a village during patrols with husband and wife, Gina and Solomon. Binton developed a meaningful friendship with the couple. They shared meals together and the peacekeepers tried to bring extra provisions, as well as speciality items to help the couple in their work and life. Gina, for example, was a midwife so the peacekeepers bought her a miner’s headlight so she would be able to safely deliver mothers in night-time labour. When Binton was

64 McGowan, interview; Gardner, interview.
65 Bruce Tarrier, interview with author, 13 August 2012, ROI1018.
transferred north to the Buka team site on short notice, she and her team made the not inconsiderable effort, given the very difficult road conditions, to drive to Buka so that she could say a proper goodbye to everyone along the way. 66

Local communities felt a sense of responsibility to the peacekeepers in terms of keeping them safe and making them feel very welcome so as to keep the much wanted peace-process moving forward. This was especially heightened as the peacekeepers were unarmed. This sense of responsibility helped shape the work occurring across the province and left an impression on many peacekeepers. Joan Gardner, an APS peacekeeper, recalled receiving lots of gifts, especially foodstuffs, from Bougainvilleans and especially remembered getting a box of live crayfish sent to her. 67 DFAT officer Sarah Storey recalled that during an overnight patrol to a village the team were sleeping out under the stars and a local woman named Mary came with her baby and slept right next to her. Storey thought she was just being very kind but as she learned Tok Pisin Mary was eventually able to explain that she had done that to protect Storey because she was not sure she would be safe without a local person nearby to her. Storey said, ‘it was incredibly generous of her’. 68

Though there was much local goodwill for and ownership of the peace agreement, part of the peacekeeping process also involved monitoring breaches of the ceasefire agreement. This meant that peacekeepers were exposed to moments of violence or at least the threat of it. Most of the incidents tended to be more criminal or petty in nature rather than politically motivated breaches. 69 The key issue here was that Bougainville was a place thrown into peace after a very long-protracted civil war; a war that effectively stopped education and employment for two generations. Now, the island was full of young men, dismissed from military service but with little to no education, little, if any, experience of peace and now facing high unemployment and few happy prospects. This disenfranchisement was combined with the widespread use of ‘home bru’

66 Binton, interview.
67 Gardner, interview.
68 Storey, interview – quotation from participant’s written summary; for more discussion on protective nature of Bougainvilleans see McGowan, interview.
69 Tim Davies, interview with author, 1 October 2013, ROI1060.
and other substances; that there was a simmering petty violence is hardly surprising.

Department of Defence officer, Patrick Foley, told a story about returning to his car after a visit with a village chief and finding it surrounded by drunken young men holding machetes. While being apprehensive that the situation could get out of hand he remained friendly and manoeuvred his way back to the car without any trouble. Like other peacekeepers in Bougainville he took the incident to be a reflection of easy access to locally made alcohol, sometimes called ‘home bru’ or ‘jungle juice’, mixed with boredom.\footnote{Patrick Foley, interview with author, 27 September 2013, ROI1059; see also Meurant, interview.} RAAF Flight Sergeant John De Haan described how in the market area just outside of his base in Loloho some of the local people would be on betel nut\footnote{Betel nut is a plant based drug commonly used throughout the Pacific. It is known to produce feelings of wellbeing and euphoria and is also an effective appetite suppressant.} and ‘they’d come running up to you with blades in their hands and scare the living daylights out of you’.\footnote{de Haan, interview.} Gerry McGowan shared a similar story of threatening locals. He said,

> there was a guy, he was an ex-rebel and on Saturday nights he would get drunk and he would drive past my house in Arawa and he would shoot it. And he did it more often than not. Initially we would all jump into the safe room in the middle and we’d wait and we’d be calling up going ‘we’re getting shot at again’ and after a couple of weeks [...] I just didn’t even get out of bed anymore.\footnote{McGowan, interview.}

While the nature of the specific job peacekeepers were doing really defined so much of their engagement in local life, sometimes this was affected by other factors, such as a peacekeeper’s sex. Female peacekeepers in Bougainville were generally given responsibility to work with local women’s organisations and groups, though this did not mean they were excluded from other activities or meetings that involved men. Women were given this role because Bougainvillean society had a matrilineal culture and, as discussed above, women had been heavily involved in the independence movement and were crucial in bringing
about peace. However, the women were also often shy during public meetings and it was thought female peacekeepers would be able to have more productive and forthright meetings. Sarah Storey, a DFAT peacekeeper, also suggested that many local women, despite their authority, felt intimidated and scared because many had suffered sexual violence during the conflict. Therefore, female peacekeepers were able to draw them out a little more.74

The female peacekeepers in this project did not begrudge being given these roles, many indeed relished the time spent with and conversations had with Bougainvillean women. APS peacekeeper, Joan Gardner said that one of her favourite memories was just spending time with local women. She said,

when evening’s approaching and you’ve got to find somewhere to have a bath you’d go to the river and you’d go to where the women are sitting and you’d just sit there and talk […] or if you’re not busy you go to the river and they’d be doing the washing or whatever and you’d just go and sit and talk about things […] [we’d talk about] all kinds of things [they’d] tell me about their life and their experiences during the civil war, aspirations, you know, just what women talk about!75

Female peacekeepers recognised the importance and success of having women in the teams and their taking on these kinds of roles. Yet for some there was frustration because they thought that women’s, aspirations and concerns were being marginalised in the peace process by both Bougainvillean and Australian leaders.76 Pearl Hudson who served with a Federal department said that she thought there was something of an attitude in the mission that women’s issues were not ‘hard’ political issues and so did not deserve the same attention. She described how despite resources being allocated to a range of men’s meetings she had to

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74 Storey, interview.
75 Gardner, interview.
have a ‘pitched battle’ to get some water to a women’s peace meeting in Arawa.\textsuperscript{77} Melissa Bray, a civilian monitor, commented that she thought the men in headquarters saw women’s issues as a ‘quaint diversion’ from the real business of politics.\textsuperscript{78} Bougainvillean peace groups and activist groups have also long spoken about the ways in which women’s issues or women’s roles in the peace process often got marginalised. This was at various points during the peace process but especially once more formal processes began.\textsuperscript{79}

It is clear from these interactions that peace is so much more than just talking about it, but about modelling and living it. The mandate in Bougainville placed so much emphasis on the building of peaceful communities, on cultivating and nurturing the small experiences of living in peace. One surprising way that peacekeepers and locals tried to do this was through sports. It restored a sense of normality, injected a sense of lightness and fun back into life and most importantly brought people together peacefully. Wendy Otis an APS officer in Bougainville said,

down in Buin […] there was volleyball game every afternoon with the locals because we were right next to a school and when we’d go out to the towns every town had a volleyball court. It didn’t matter how tiny the town was so we’d take a ball along and everyone would play with the locals. Sometimes you’d have twenty people either side of that volleyball net\textsuperscript{80}

One of the more interesting, and now rather famous, approaches to peacekeeping came via music. Iain ‘Fred’ Smith, a DFAT peacekeeper in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, used his talents for singing and song-

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{77} Hudson, interview.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Wendy Otis, interview with author, 10 July 2012, ROI1014.
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writing to assist during peace meetings. With the help and contributions of Bougainvilleans he also helped to put on a large farewell musical concert when the Peace Monitoring Group left in 2003. He then went on to make a record *Bagarap Empires* about his time in Bougainville. In a documentary on Smith and the peacekeeping process, prominent leader Joseph Kabui and peace monitor colleagues reflected on the way Australians had overcome Bougainvillean suspicions because of their friendliness – something Smith embodied in his relaxed nature, openness, humility, humour and music. Another prominent community leader and peace activist, Sister Lorraine Garasu from the Nazareth Sisters said Smith earned her respect because he really spent time with people and looked at his role in peace in a different way. Smith wore his peacekeeper role lightly and incredibly responsively to local people. His affectionate and open approach is summed up in a well-received joke he shared with former combatants at a peace meeting: ‘[it’s interesting that] a professional group of ass kickers, are here to persuade former and wannabe ass kickers that ass kicking is just not on’.81

Another way that peace was brought to life was through reconciliation ceremonies. These were occasions, facilitated by peacekeepers, but thoroughly owned by locals, when former enemies would come together to help bring peace back to their communities. Ruby Jacobs, a DFAT officer who served in Bougainville in 1999, attended a large ceremony of about five hundred women. They were crying and speaking about wrongs done by and against them but at the end they all came together. They held hands, exchanged gifts and sang songs. Jacobs recalls crying and thinking, ‘this is why I’m here’.82 Department of Defence peacekeeper, Patrick Foley also described a reconciliation ceremony. He said,

> when we got there the two groups basically lined up and everyone had a say and then this guy brought an elder in and he listened to everyone and then he put his hands up and said, ‘it stops now’. It was amazing. Everyone sort of broke out into tears and cheers and


82 Ruby Jacobs, interview, 11 May 1999, Private Collection.
screams. It was like everything had been released, like some church scene.\(^{83}\)

Though this kind of peacekeeping work, so closely entwined with local life, was not the only kind of peacekeeping work Australians were doing. A peacekeeping operation requires many working parts and people in many different roles to be a success. Some of these roles had very little to do with interacting directly with local people, and though they can consequently appear less directly helpful to locals they were absolutely essential for the success of the operation.

Those in headquarters roles in Arawa or Lolobo for instance generally had very little to do with Bougainvilleans in the course of their work. Though not in a headquarters position many Navy personnel also had very little to do with locals because they spent the majority of their time aboard their ships. This was the case for Petty Officer Graeme Wall who served in all three missions. He spent very little time ashore in any of them and when he did he was mostly confined to base.\(^{84}\) Yet Navy personnel were vitally important in transporting personnel, equipment and life’s necessities to and from and around the island. Warrant Officer John Perryman who served aboard HMAS *Success* said,

\[\textit{Success’s role […] was essentially to provide logistic support and whatever other kind of support necessary. We had to remain on the horizon patrolling up and down the coast. […] we only came into Loloho about four times […] I got to go ashore once for four hours at Arawa.}\(^{85}\)\]

Some personnel did recall a uniquely Navy experience with locals pulling up alongside their ships in canoes to trade fruit or knick-knacks. Lieutenant Commander David Hannah who served in Bougainville and Solomon Islands described this experience. He said,

\[\text{there were banana boats around all the time […] the second trip to Solomons we had a number of people […] who would come out and sell us carvings […] one of the guys who came on board was selling ebony}\]

\(^{83}\) Foley, interview; for another description of reconciliation ceremony see, Storey, interview.

\(^{84}\) Graeme Wall, interview with author, 7 September 2012, ROI1027.

\(^{85}\) Perryman, interview – quotation taken from participant’s written summary.
carvings [...] so we got some beautiful stuff from them [...] I didn’t see too much of that in Bougainville’. 86

At times even though a peacekeeper’s role might have kept them from engaging with locals the way their colleagues in team sites were able to do, some did get the chance to build relationships because they worked alongside local employees. In military language these people were called Locally Employed Civilians or LECs. Sergeant Deta Kerschat worked with locally employed Bougainvillians in his position running a mechanic workshop. Kerschat and the workshop were there to look after the contingent’s mechanical needs, a vital contribution of its own accord, yet because he worked alongside LECs he also took the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with his colleagues. His team had some Bougainvillians help out with a range of things around the base but he recalls specifically working with chiefs and elders from a nearby village. Together, they talked about what was going on in the village, and the peacekeepers would chat about what was happening with the peace process. He described a few memorable characters that he really enjoyed working alongside, one of whom was a man named Titus. Kerschat affectionately remembered that he would always ‘be asleep under a truck somewhere because that’s just what Titus did’. 87

Peacekeepers understood and evaluated local cultures in varying ways and with varying depth depending upon their experiences and roles during the peace operation. Yet, interestingly there was a shared view that Bougainvillians, despite all they had been through and continued to suffer, were happy and in some ways lucky people. Captain Angela Devlin served in all three operations, but said of Bougainville, ‘I’ve never seen a happier bunch of kids in my life playing in the ocean, climbing in trees. They don’t have PlayStations or bicycles and they’re happy and that’s what we don’t have and that’s what we’re missing’. 88

ADF member Sebastian Davidson said,

86 Hannah, interview; see also Phillip Garrett, interview with author, 30 November 2012, ROI1051.
87 Kerschat, interview.
88 Angela Devlin, interview with author, 16 June 2013, ROI1053.
I did come away from Bougainville with the firm conclusion [...] that they ought to be just left alone without any Western influence, tourism, mining which kicked off the whole conflict. Just leave them alone to their own devices. They’re quite happy. [...] One of the things that hit it home for me, this Western influence, is I was walking across a bridge [...] and there was a creek flowing out into the ocean and with any waste what they do is chuck it into the water [...] I just poked my head over the side of the bridge [...] and I saw a rusting shopping trolley, a refrigerator and lots of rusting cans from canned food and coconut shells. [...] It’s a real tangible sign [...] that they really didn’t need it. They probably didn’t want it.  

AFP officer Don Barnby who served in Timor and Bougainville said,

They’ve got nothing these people they live in a grass hut basically [...] the kids are always just as happy as Larry just running around and beautiful white teeth. And no Gameboys, computers all the crap that kids these days in Australia have. They would have nothing to amuse themselves. [...] I just loved being with these people [...] it’s an observation I made particularly after Bougainville and Timor that we’ve really got it wrong in the Western world, seriously we’ve got everything we could possibly want and we want more and we’re not happy. A lot of people aren’t happy in modern society. These people have got nothing and they’re happy as Larry.

Sergeant Deta Kerschat who served in Bougainville said:

they just like the simple life, pretty much how we were 100-150 years ago. They themselves are very childlike in their thoughts and processes. You would explain things in their simplest forms [...] and sometimes it’s good to get that reality-check that that’s how we should be talking anyway.

These sorts of views were not unique to Bougainvilleans. Australians also had them of the Timorese and Solomon Islanders. This suggests that something beyond peacekeepers’ direct experiences in one place or

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89 Davidson, interview.
90 Barnby, interview ROI10059(a). For more see Andrew Merrifield and Alan Erson, ‘Dave’s New Beat’, Policing the Pacific, (SBS 2006); Group Captain Cameron Stewart, interview with Wing Commander Ken Llewelyn, 27 October 2000, AWMSO2208; Hulands, interview.
91 Kerschat, interview.
another was encouraging them to think in a connected way across the three operations. These views and what they might mean about Australian ideas of the region will be peeled back and examined over the course of the following chapters. For now what is clear is that the everyday life of peacekeepers in Bougainville was simultaneously shaped by the needs of the operation overall, the specific job peacekeepers’ had as well as the local cultures and circumstances.

Their experiences show just how complex the idea of ‘peacekeeping’ is. In Bougainville, peace was largely grown from relationships; relationships that took broad philosophical ideas of peace and embodied them in the mundane stuff of everyday life – conversation, friendship, church and ceremonies, shared meals and in trying to manage violence or petty crime in peaceful ways. That peace was so reliant on this medley of human interaction is an indicator of how fundamental our understanding of everyday peacekeeping lives is to a fuller grasp of its history. All the formal policies, goals, and plans guiding the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups ‘to monitor’ and ‘to facilitate’ peace came to life in the way they were lived.

**Australians Working with Each Other**

Clearly, peacekeeping work in Bougainville, for the majority of people, was bound up with direct interaction with local communities. Precisely because peace operations are sent to assist and bring peace to these communities much of our attention is rightly drawn to what happens in that space. Yet peacekeepers did not work alone or only alongside Bougainvilleans. They worked in mixed nationality teams and were part of a broader coalition of Australians. This section explores those relationships between Australians and how they also helped to shape everyday peacekeeping life. In so doing it draws out the ways Australians carried all kinds of cultural and organisational baggage to Bougainville. And in a broader sense begins to illustrate a key theme in this thesis; that what Australians experienced, did and understood in the Pacific was always the outcome of what they brought with them and what they found once deployed. Peacekeepers’ relationships with their international
colleagues are explored in Chapter Five because, as was mentioned in the Introduction, the international elements of the three peacekeeping operations raise their own distinct set of questions that are better explored together.

Because of the team set-up in Bougainville organisations that had not been used to working together were thrown into a challenging situation on its own terms, but was made more so because people had to adapt to unfamiliar cultures and ways of doing things. One of the most common challenges that peacekeepers spoke about was the difficulty in communicating with people outside their own organisations.\(^\text{92}\) An issue that came up frequently in peacekeepers’ stories was the challenge of adapting to, or at least trying to understand, the different conceptions of time each group had. This was especially the case between the public servants and military personnel. Some APS personnel found it frustrating that the military was so focused on security and efficiency which often meant they wanted to do things quickly. This was reasonable given not only the culture of the ADF but that providing and ensuring security was their specific responsibility. However, for most public servants, whose job was about engaging and building relationships with the locals and within the team itself, this conception of time or patrolling was not hugely conducive to their work. Sarah Storey, a DFAT officer said,

> we knew we needed to patrol and spread the word about the truce and that was where civvies could really add value and we proved that over time. I was struck by how the military assessed the success of these patrols. It was purely in military terms: did we have enough supplies? Was the map correct? Was everyone safe?\(^\text{93}\)

Patrick Foley, who served with the Department of Defence, described organising a picnic lunchbreak during one patrol to help make the day more enjoyable and to bond the team. He said that initially the military members of the team were quite resistant to it because it was not a necessity and ‘wasted’ time. Foley noted that as the team developed shared routines and grew relationships the military personnel warmed to

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\(^{92}\) See for instance Kerschat, interview; McGowan, interview.

\(^{93}\) Storey, interview – quotation from participant’s written summary.
the idea and eventually organised a few picnic lunches during their patrols.94

This speaks to the importance of the small team environment in not only making cross-organisational issues more prominent in daily life, but precisely because of the small teams, peacekeepers had no choice but to adapt and cooperate. Their work, safety and general wellbeing relied on functioning working relationships. Further, team-site living did not allow peacekeepers to retreat to their own organisations either at work or at the end of the day at base. They had no option but to figure out how to work harmoniously or risk a very long, unhappy deployment.

This is not to say it was an easy or necessarily equal process of adaptation. Because the mission in Bougainville was ADF led, organised and dominated by military personnel – not just Australian – the onus for adjusting largely fell to non-military peacekeepers. This created particular challenges that were more difficult for some members than others. It is not true to say that military peacekeepers had no challenges. They certainly had to acclimatise to and learn from other organisations, but it was non-military personnel who had to undergo military style training – an experience which was itself a challenge for many civilians – and had to work with its command structures and operating procedures. It was not an easy process for many civilian peacekeepers.95 Army Major Bruce Tarrier said he thought some DFAT personnel had trouble making the adjustment and that you ‘could tell the difference’ between DFAT and military people.96 Some particularly struggled with a sense that the skills and qualities that they, as civilians, could bring were not valued as much as they could have been by military colleagues.97

This challenge was most acutely felt by the women peacekeepers. They remarked that both before and during their deployments they felt that they did not fit the mould because they were civilians and women in an environment dominated by military men. DFAT officer, Sarah Storey recalled feeling as though she had disrupted a ‘boys’ own adventure’ when

94 Foley, interview; see also Knollmayer, ‘‘A Share House Magnified’’, 228.
95 Gardener, interview.
96 Tarrier, interview.
97 Knollmayer, ‘‘A Share House Magnified’’, 225.
she arrived at her team site. She, like other civilian women, spoke of just wanting to work very hard to persuade people that civilians and women had something to offer the operation. She said, ‘for me the biggest initial cultural shock was not working with the Bougainvilleans but learning to work with the military’. Public servant, Kate Binton said she really pitched in at the team site and was accepted but thought that if ‘you would have taken the princess approach it would have been a whole different ballgame’.

Female military peacekeepers also had difficulties. They too spoke of having to work a bit harder and of the military being unsure quite how to handle and manage women. These issues have to be seen in light of the fact that this was the first mission of its kind and all the agencies involved in the operation were new at working together in this way. This was especially so in regards to having women, particularly civilian ones, in the field. However, it is also clear that certain gender tropes were at play. The role of gender in peacekeeping in the Pacific and more broadly was complex and manifested in various ways in all three operations. These issues will be examined together in coming chapters.

While the three organisations clearly had different cultures and ways of working, individual agencies also had to get used to working in more cohesive ways. This was particularly so for ADF personnel. The ADF has never been a homogenous organisation, but one made up of many subcultures all having a taste for rivalry with each other. Bringing people from the three services together was always going to create challenges. While this was not a major or particularly prickly problem, some peacekeepers did recall finding it difficult and at times frustrating having to work with people from other services. It is worth mentioning here that an important gap in this research is the experience of reservists. There are not enough reservist participants – and they are only from Army – to make any substantive conclusions here. Yet they did mention that there

98 Storey, interview.
99 Ibid – quotation from participant’s written summary
100 Binton, interview; for more on experiences of women civilians see also Gardner, interview; Hudson, interview.
101 Fernandez, interview; Devlin, interview.
was some friction between them and regular personnel and a sense that reservists were inferior to regular personnel.\footnote{102}{See for example, Leigh McMahon, interview with author, 31 August 2012 ROI1021; Tarrier, interview; Perry Ryman, interview with author, 29 November 2012, ROI1049; Devlin, interview; David Lague, ‘Part-time Soldiers on Timor Front Line’, \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 28 March 200.}

Amongst the regular services, the most common theme raised was resentment and irritation from Air Force and Navy personnel that Army personnel dominated the missions and that they were inflexible in not acknowledging other ways of doing things. RAAF and RAN personnel spoke of feeling that ‘everything was controlled to the extreme’.\footnote{103}{de Haan, interview.} RAN officer Melinda Fernandez said, ‘I find the Army incredibly blinkered. They’re just unable to think outside the box and they can’t make decisions independently without looking at policy’. She went on to illustrate her view with this story:

one of our very few leisure activities was to be able to take a canoe out on the bay. […] Before I was allowed to do that I had to take an Army swim test wearing Army boots and all the gear. Now I’d passed the Navy swimming test, which is tougher, I’d passed the Air Force swimming test and I’d actually passed an Army swim test before I’d even left for Bougainville. I said I’m not going to swim in my boots because they’re the only boots I have [Fernandez’s trunk with spare gear had been misplaced on the passage to Bougainville] and they’ll get wet [and they said] ‘oh well you can’t do it then’. You know completely inflexible because the book says ‘you’ve got to do it’ […] I find them incredibly difficult to deal with.\footnote{104}{Fernandez, interview.}

This is not to say there were no frictions between Navy and Air Force personnel. Sacha Bergman, an officer in the Navy, said, ‘Air Force guys are usually on a base somewhere not doing a great deal and the Army is doing it their way so it’s the Navy who fits in’.\footnote{105}{Bergman, interview.} Army and Navy peacekeepers also took umbrage at some Air Force personnel, especially higher-ranking members, who appeared to come for just enough time to earn the Active Service Medal and then leave. Able Seaman Anthony
Hilton spoke of this but also said that ‘Raafies who were based there were annoyed at that too’.106

These issues might seem minor trifles compared to the real business of carrying out operational mandates and the interaction between Australians and Bougainvilleans that that required. Yet, the frictions, joys and challenges of working with Australians from a range of organisations was another layer of the peacekeeping experience. Peacekeepers’ ability to work together directly affects the success of a mission – materially but also in terms of being a presence of peace. Peacekeeping teams full of acrimony and infighting could barely have done the job required of them in Bougainville. Giving space to the small, mundane and the seemingly inconsequential elements of peacekeepers’ stories shows how they can bring into view broader observations.

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Peacekeeping in Bougainville was a multi-layered multi-textured enterprise. Much of the work of a peacekeeper was bound directly to engaging with local people in the process of facilitating and monitoring peace agreements. This, combined with the living arrangements of peacekeepers meant that they were able to be involved in community life in both formal and informal ways. For a conflict and peace process that was so reliant upon relationships this was an ideal approach. That peacekeepers were unarmed and that the majority of Bougainvilleans were beyond ready for lasting peace only strengthened the community-focused work of the peacekeepers.

Yet this was but one dimension of peacekeepers’ lives. Any peacekeeping operation is reliant upon people to take care of duties that often do not directly involve the local community. Necessities such as logistics, administration, transport and security provision were the bread and butter of some peacekeepers’ days. Though often not seen as adventurous as the work of their colleagues in team-sites, this work made that community building approach work. It kept peacekeepers fed, moving around, secure, in good health and organised.

106 Hilton, interview; see also Perryman, interview.
Similarly, the experiences peacekeepers had working with Australians from other organisations might at first seem a tangential element of peacekeeping work. But it is not irrelevant. In Bougainville, peacekeepers’ abilities to work coherently, effectively and in a way that maximised the use of everyone’s gifts meant that they had to be able to manage their relationships with each other. An inability to overcome some of the challenges they faced would have made them a poor face for the peace message as well as making the delivery of that message more difficult than it already was.

In all, peacekeepers’ managed all of these elements of their daily lives well, resulting in a mission that has largely been seen as a success by the international community. Putting aside the sticky issue of evaluating what success really means in a peacekeeping operation, that peacekeepers, on the whole, have recalled their relationships with each other and Bougainvilleans alike as ones filled with meaning and respect suggests that they traversed their peacekeeping landscape with adeptness and a commitment to peace. More than this though, peacekeepers’ recollections of their relationships, their descriptions of people and place, and their understanding of the reasons for the operation all add up to tell and connect to a bigger story. Their stories speak to complex ideas about what keeping the peace meant, what it meant to be Australian, and what it meant in to be an Australian serving in the Pacific region at this time. With that in mind the following chapter explores how just over a year after the Bougainville operation started, peacekeepers in East Timor were beginning to live lives that would also connect and speak to this bigger story of nation, peace and region.
2

East Timor

1999-2006

Historical Background

Lying about 700 kilometres northwest of Darwin, Timor is a mountainous island of about 30 000 square kilometres. Though its landmass is small, like other Pacific islands it is not one place but many. Its history is rich with migratory movement so the island has been and
continues to be home to a diverse mix of people with varied cultural and linguistic histories. Once filled with dozens of kingdoms and associated rulers, Timor has a long political history and as James Fox has noted one of its most enduring features has been the resistance of outside interference. Timor, he shows, has long been filled by people with a clear and incredibly resilient sense of independence.¹

And yet Timor does have a long history of colonial occupation. Though Javanese and Chinese traders may have been visiting the island for its sandalwood as early as the seventh century, it was not until 1511 that the Portuguese, the first Europeans, arrived. The Dutch followed in 1568 with the Dutch East India Company establishing a port in Kupang, in contemporary West Timor. The two colonial powers fought over their borders until 1859 when they agreed to the Treaty of Lisbon which divided the island in two. The Dutch controlled West Timor and it became part of the Netherlands East Indies. Portugal took the eastern half of the island and the Oecussi enclave which is a small pocket in West Timor.² James Fox has described this East-West division as a potent simplification of the extraordinary cultural and historical diversity of the island’s peoples.³

Despite the colonial presence, the Timorese had a long history of resistance and the control Europeans managed to exert was never as deep as in other colonies of the region. In many ways, it was the Chinese traders who had more influence on the local people.⁴ While Portuguese colonialism might have been comparatively benign, it still included a substantial slave trade and use of forced labour up until 1974. Portuguese Dominican friars also introduced Catholicism to the province and the

² Fox, ‘Tracing the Past’ in Fox and Soares (eds.) Out of the Ashes, 1-16; Dunn, East Timor, Chs. 1-2; Braithwaite, Charlesworth and Soares, Networked Governance of Freedom, 9-10; Londhey, Other People’s Warr, 231.
⁴ Ibid, 13-19; Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, Networked Governance of Freedom, 9.
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Church would come to play a central role in Timorese political life and culture.\(^5\) East Timor also suffered greatly during World War II with severe fighting between Australian and Japanese soldiers, thousands of whom were on the island during the war. By the end of the conflict somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000 East Timorese had died. Many of them had been assisting Australians.\(^6\) As will be discussed in following chapters this war experience had a profound effect on the way many Australian peacekeepers saw their service in East Timor.

More change was in store for East Timor when in 1974 a revolution in Portugal began. The successful so-called ‘Carnation Revolution’ – called this because Portuguese people placed carnations in the guns of soldiers during a demonstration against the ruling dictatorship – brought with it a period of decolonisation. East Timorese people grabbed the opportunity and new political parties flourished. The União Democrática Timorense (UDT) agitated for autonomy with a right to self-determination under Portugal. Later, it aligned with the revolutionary independence party, Frente Revolucionário de Timor Leste Independente (Fretelin)\(^7\) when it realised that this was the popular position. There was also a smaller party Associação Popular Democrática (Apodeti) which wanted integration with Indonesia. Indonesia, for its part, had Cold War worries about communist elements in Fretelin and the potential for East Timor to become a communist satellite or Soviet naval base. So, it sought to splinter the independence parties, namely the UDT and Fretelin, in an effort to cause a civil war which could justify Indonesian intervention.\(^8\) It worked.

On 11 August 1975 UDT broke its alliance with Fretelin and tried to forcefully take control of the territory. However, less than 10 days later Fretelin had successfully pushed them into West Timor. By November that year Fretelin had declared unilateral independence. The conflict was

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\(^6\) Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, _Networked Governance of Freedom_, 10.

\(^7\) This was initially called: Associação Social-Democrata Timorense (ASDT).

\(^8\) Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, _Networked Governance of Freedom_, 13.
effectively over but Indonesian Special Forces pretended to be Apodeti and UDT fighters in a successful attempt to make it look like the fighting had not stopped. This provided the pretext for intervention.9

On 7 December 1975 Indonesia invaded East Timor. More than 20,000 troops landed that month and total numbers would later increase at various points to 60,000. Indonesia had believed the invasion would be swift and decisive, but its troops were met with tough resistance from Fretilin forces. Indonesian forces suffered great losses but also engaged in wanton slaughter of Timorese. Falantil – the military wing of Fretilin – strongly resisted for the next two years. Between 1976 and 1977 Fretilin, supported by Falantil, controlled most of the country and about 80 per cent of the population resided in their protected areas. By 1979 though, Indonesia and the pro-Indonesia Timorese militias had largely pacified the resistance.10

However, by 1980, under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, Fretilin had begun to rebuild its decimated force. Gusmão also transformed the party politically. He created an umbrella organisation, Conselho Revolucionário da Resistência (CRRN) that moved away from the Communist tenets of early Fretilin and unified all factions that supported independence. In 1988 the separation went even further with Gusmão’s resignation from Fretilin and the formation of the Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere (CNRM) which replaced the CRRN. Finally, in 1988 the CNRM underwent one final change becoming Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense (CNRT).11 Under Gusmão’s leadership Falantil fighters were distributed all over the country to make hit and run attacks on Indonesian bases.12 Gusmão also cleverly involved the supportive and popular Catholic Church. It was a cover for much of the clandestine activity and advocacy that kept the resistance movement alive for over two decades. As in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, Christianity, especially Catholicism, were central to the peace process. In Timor, the

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11 For more detail on political parties see Fox, ‘Tracing the Past’, 53-73.
Catholic Church was a key player in responding to the conflict and then in the peace process so much so that being Catholic was, at times, synonymous with supporting the resistance to Indonesia.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite all the resistance in this period Indonesia had also been busy co-opting more Timorese into militias to fight against Falantil.\textsuperscript{14} In late 1992, Gusmão was captured and gaoled in Jakarta. The military war was ostensibly won, but Timorese people did not stop making efforts towards independence.\textsuperscript{15}

Internationally, the annexation of Timor was not recognised by the United Nations. The Security Council had repeatedly called for Indonesia to withdraw from Timor.\textsuperscript{16} Australia, however, did recognise the annexation for economic and security reasons.\textsuperscript{17} Prime Minister Gough Whitlam believed integration with Indonesia would be best in order to avoid ‘weak’ states so close to the continent. So, even though it had intelligence, like the United States, of the imminent brutal invasion and the faked civil war, the Australian government tacitly accepted Indonesia’s actions. Whitlam’s position, however, did not reflect that of the Australian public, nor his own party, which passionately preferred self-determination for the Timorese.\textsuperscript{18} Nonetheless, politicians from both sides of the house thereafter and right up until the peacekeeping mission in 1999 accepted the annexation and made the cultivation of a ‘special relationship’ with Indonesia a priority of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{13} For details on the role of the Roman Catholic Church including the Indonesian and Australian national Churches see, Smythe, \textit{The Heaviest Blow}.

\textsuperscript{14} Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, \textit{Networked Governance of Freedom}, 55; for a deeper discussion of the clandestine movement see also 61-78.

\textsuperscript{15} For a personal account of Gusmão’s imprisonment and the efforts to keep the cause alive during his incarceration see, Kirsty Sword Gusmão, \textit{A Woman of Independence: A Story of Love and the Birth of a New Nation}, (Sydney: Pan Macmillian, 2003).

\textsuperscript{16} Londey, \textit{Other People’s Wars}, 233; Lloyd, ‘The Diplomacy on East Timor’, 77-78.

\textsuperscript{17} Londey, \textit{Other People’s Wars}, 235; Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, \textit{Networked Governance of Freedom}, 247-249.

\textsuperscript{18} For more detail on Australia’s role and response to the 1975 invasion see Wendy Way, Damien Browne and Vivianne Johnson (eds.), \textit{Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1975}, Documents on Australian Foreign Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2000); Final Report of the Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee (SFADTRC), \textit{East Timor}, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, (December 2000), 111-150; Desmond Ball and Hamish McDonald, \textit{Death in Balibo, Lies in Canberra}, (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000).

\textsuperscript{19} Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, \textit{Networked Governance of Freedom}, 1-8, 17-28; for an overview of Australian policy approaches after Whitlam to Howard see SFADTRC, \textit{East Timor}, 151-194.
Although there was much done inside and outside of Timor between 1975 and 1999 for independence, Timor’s fortunes really began to shift in the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{20} The first key event was the October 1991 Santa Cruz massacre during which members of the clandestine movement were murdered while demonstrating in the Santa Cruz cemetery.\textsuperscript{21} About 3000 people were taking part in the march when Indonesian troops opened fire and slaughtered for about fifteen minutes before they were given orders to cease. There is also evidence to suggest a second massacre took place when injured people were taken to a military hospital and killed. Some of the footage taken by journalists survived and the massacre received widespread international coverage and condemnation. Santa Cruz exposed the brutality of Indonesian methods and made clear to the world that, after nearly 25 years of rule, Timorese resistance was as strong as ever.\textsuperscript{22}

The second, and probably more important, event was the 1998 fall of the Suharto regime in Indonesia. A victim of the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, the Suharto regime’s end opened the way for new approaches towards East Timor. Amongst increasing demand for democratic reform within Indonesia itself and persistent international condemnation of the ‘Timor issue’, the new President, B. J. Habibie found himself in a very different position to his predecessor.\textsuperscript{23} With much encouragement and energy from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, tripartite discussions with Portugal and the UN were re-initiated in March 1998. These moves, along with significant pressure on Habibie from Australia, produced a proposal for special autonomy, which was agreed to on 6 June 1998. Habibie would allow Timorese an immediate say in their future.\textsuperscript{24}

Australian Prime Minister John Howard while pressing Habibie to move on this issue had actually wished for a long period of autonomy


\textsuperscript{22} Dunn, \textit{East Timor}, 333-338; Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, \textit{Networked Governance of Freedom}, 79-83.

\textsuperscript{23} Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, \textit{Networked Governance of Freedom}, 108.

\textsuperscript{24} For more on Habibie’s decision making process see Lloyd, ‘The Diplomacy on East Timor’, 80-85.
prior to any popular consultation on independence. Nonetheless, his advocacy for the process in any shape at all was a startling shift from not only his own policy, but one shared by every Australian government since Whitlam. Amidst the changes in Indonesia internally, Howard sensed that the Australian public had passed any limits of tolerance on the issue of Timor’s independence. There was no more political capital to spend.  

The Peace Operation

On 5 May 1999 agreements between Indonesia and Portugal were signed to allow for immediate popular consultation. By the following month the UN had mandated the United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to organise and run the electoral process. It was put together in an extraordinarily short timeframe and was faced with the formidable task of registering hundreds of thousands of people. It consisted mostly of civilians, as well as police, and 50 military liaison officers. In all, UNAMET included about 1000 international staff at its peak and approximately 4000 local staff. The head of the mission was Ian Martin, a Briton with much experience in the UN and Amnesty International. Australia contributed 50 Australian Federal Police as well as six military officers. It also made logistic contributions and the largest financial donation.

While all the planning for UNAMET was underway, Indonesian military personnel and Timorese militias continued a rampage which had been ongoing since January 1999. It was painfully clear that having a peacekeeping force in place to provide a secure environment before and after the ballot would be critical. Prime Minister Howard has said that he asked President Habibie at a meeting in Bali in April to allow for an international force but that his proposal was resoundingly rejected. It was not just the violence leading up to the vote that had the international

27 Londey, Other People’s Wars, 237-238.
28 Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, Networked Governance of Freedom, 88; Annan, Interventions, 103-104.
community worried, it was also the vast amount of intelligence indicating that there would be a ‘scorched earth’ reprisal if the vote for autonomy was rejected – that is, if a vote for independence was successful. 29 Kofi Annan, by now all too aware of what was to come, asked Prime Minister Howard to be ready. Howard subsequently moved 2000 troops to Darwin in preparation. 30 Despite the growing violence and intimidation of UNAMET staff – who were unarmed – the popular consultation took place on 30 August 1999. It was an astounding success. 446 666 people had been registered and 98.6 per cent of them turned out to vote. Ultimately, 78.5 per cent of those registered voted against autonomy, and by default for independence. 31

Almost as soon as the result was announced ‘Operation Clean Sweep’ began. Over the coming days Indonesian-backed militias set Dili alight. They brutalised and slaughtered Timorese people. They also began targeting UN personnel and the local UN workers. Lusitania Lopes, a participant in this project who worked for the UN at the time described militiamen threatening her and her colleagues with death. She, along with many UN staff spent time barricaded in UN headquarters in Dili as they awaited uncertain evacuation. She described how some people were jumping the walls of the compound to try to run away into the surrounding hills. She said, ‘we heard so many people die just behind the walls. It was desperate, just so desperate’. 32 She, like so many others, then endured days of not knowing whether they would be evacuated along with the internationals, many of whom, to their great credit, refused to leave without local colleagues. By mid-September most were evacuated by the Australian Defence Force to Darwin. 33 Despite the ferocious violence and destruction, Indonesia still resolutely refused to allow an international peacekeeping intervention. It took some careful diplomatic manoeuvres

30 Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, Networked Governance of Freedom, 99.
32 Lusitania Lopes interview with author, 14 November 2012, ROI1043; Dunn, East Timor, 353-359.
by Prime Minister Howard, Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer, US President Clinton, and General Secretary Kofi Annan before President Habibie changed his mind. 34

On 12 September Habibie finally called Annan to request UN assistance. 35 Just three days later the International Force East Timor (Interfet) was authorised by the Security Council. It was a peace enforcement mission led by Australia and commanded by an Australian, Major General Peter Cosgrove. The second in command was a Thai, Major General Songkitti Jaggabatara. It would be the largest deployment of Australian troops since the war in Vietnam. The force peaked at 11,500, with Australian personnel making up about half of it. 36 The rest were made up of troops from 22 other nations. It was significant that some Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations participated as they had long had a policy of not interfering in the domestic politics of regional nations. Although it was not always an easy relationship between the ASEAN nations and Australia their participation was vital to the success of the mission as it helped quell a sense of a singularly Australian imposition. 37 The whole operation had significant logistic support from the US, as well as an assurance from President Clinton that if the Indonesians resisted, US troops would be sent to assist. 38

The first Interfet forces arrived on 20 September 1999. Despite being faced with evidence of massacres and much destruction, as well as hostile Indonesian and militia forces, Interfet troops decisively and effectively secured Dili. Over the coming weeks – though many locals wished this had been sooner – they moved out into the countryside and to the Oecussi enclave in West Timor. 39 Interfet was highly successful and by 27 October the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor

34 Londy, Other People’s Wars, 244; Dunn, East Timor, 358-360, for UNAMET see 347-353.
35 Annan, Interventions, 112.
38 Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, Networked Governance of Freedom, 102.
39 Londy, Other People’s Wars, 245-253; Breen, Mission Accomplished, 21-157.
(UNTAET) was able to begin to take over. It took full command in February 2000.

Headed by accomplished peace-maker, Sergio Vieira de Mello, UNTAET was much more than a security force; it was effectively the government. It continued to include a sizeable peacekeeping force of roughly 9000 personnel, about 2000 of whom were Australian. The rest of the 3000 or so people included police and local and international staff that made up the governance and administration pillar of the mission.40

UNTAET’s job, unlike Interfet’s, included creating a functioning government to prepare Timor for independence, as well as to provide humanitarian assistance to thousands of displaced refugees.41 It was a hugely difficult mission and though it was not without flaws or significant mistakes, especially in regard to involving the Timorese in the transitional administration, East Timor became an independent nation on 20 May 2002. At that time UNTAET came to a close.42 Various other UN peacekeeping operations followed for the next decade or so, though numbers were much smaller than in Interfet or UNTAET. Australian troop contribution also remained low after UNTAET until 2006 when it rose again after riots broke out in Dili and the International Stabilisation Force was deployed. It ceased operations in November 2012, while UN operations effectively wound up in December of that year.43

40 Londey, Other People’s Wars, 256; Dunn, East Timor, 368.
For Australia, the mission in Timor appeared to indicate a new kind of approach to the region. After the operation some suggested a ‘Howard doctrine’ had emerged. The doctrine, which is rather too grand a word for what it was, continued to affirm Howard’s preference for a deepening reliance on the ANZUS treaty and traditional bilateralism. More significantly, and now infamously, it appeared to reorient Australia’s position in the region to one of ‘deputy sheriff’ to the US. Though Howard would later, in the face of much disgust from Asian neighbours, say that Australia would not play that role, the suggestion of a more regionally active, even bullying, Australia had been made. However, in reality, the Timor experience did not create a government with a new unabashed enthusiasm for regional peacekeeping interventions. As Howard would later come to explain, Timor was an exception not the new rule. So, though the Defence White Paper that came in 2000 demonstrated a more central and ongoing role for peacekeeping in the ADF and defence policy, Howard’s pragmatism remained and his government continued to cautiously assess each situation on its own merits.

Enter the Peacekeepers

The training and selection processes to go to East Timor had some similarities to those for Bougainville, but also had many distinctive and quite different approaches. As has been common for APS personnel the road to Timor began with a competitive application and selection process, while for AFP and ADF personnel it was a more eclectic mix of application, invitation and ordered. As for the mission in Bougainville peacekeepers’ experiences of training and selection tell us much about the ways in which organisations were responding to and managing the demands of peacekeeping generally as well as the particular needs of the


46 Department of Defence, Our Future Defence Force - Defence White Paper, (Department of Defence: Canberra, 2000); Braithwaite, Charlesworth, and Soares, Networked Governance of Freedom, 102; for more detail on Howard-era policy regarding Timor and Indonesia policy see SFADTRC, East Timor, 174-194.
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Timor mission. Those particular needs were not insignificant. It would be the largest deployment of ADF personnel since the war in Vietnam, in the beginning the situation on the ground was volatile, violent and unpredictable and Australia was navigating tense largely unchartered diplomatic territory with Indonesia. This dynamism was reflected in peacekeepers’ pre-deployment experiences and ideas.

APS officer Michael Shaw who served in 2007-2008 in a headquarters position, said there

was bugger all [departmental] training. I did the pre-deployment training at Randwick in Sydney. Some of which was relevant some of which was not. I don’t need to know about sucking chest wounds and Army health but some of it was useful. In [department] there was no training it was like you’re going there, you’ll be there next week’.

He said getting to talk with his predecessor was the most valuable preparation.47 Samantha Isaac went through an application process after positions were advertised internally in her department. She applied because she had done research in the country many years prior and felt a deep connection to the people and a need to go back to assist after all the suffering.48

AFP personnel also generally applied to become peacekeepers though some were asked to go. Agent Rob Whittington said he expressed his interest to deploy as soon as he heard the mission might be a possibility. He then applied when the AFP advertised for five positions for two rotations to UNTAET in 2000. He said there were about 100 applications for the positions. Training involved two weeks in Canberra which covered a whole range of issues such as health hazards, local customs and protocols, as well as history and language lessons. He said that two weeks was sufficient as much of the job was regular policing duties for which he was already trained. This was especially so since the United Nations’ required police to have at least five years’ experience before peacekeeping duties.49 Agent Alan Whitcombe was also enthusiastic for peacekeeping

47 Michael Shaw, interview with author, 15 October 2013, ROI1062.
48 Samantha Isaac, interview with author, 18 June 2012, ROI1035.
49 Robert Whittington, electronic interview with author, 2 February 2013, ROI1054(e).
service. He applied as soon as positions opened up in 1999. The process was very competitive though and he was not selected until his third application for the third rotation in February 2000.\textsuperscript{50}

For Agent Geoff Hazel the process was different. He was asked to go by the Commissioner as he had specific skills and much experience serving overseas in a whole array of capacities. That meant that he did not have to go through the interview and selection processes. Like Agent Whittington, Hazel got some specific Timor training such as language and cultural briefings, but, again, his police training and experience was deemed sufficient for what was being asked for as a peacekeeper in Timor.\textsuperscript{51}

In the ADF too people could come to be in Timor in all kinds of ways. Some volunteered when positions became available, others were specifically asked to go because of their skillset whilst others were simply ordered to go. In the latter case this mostly happened when people deployed as part of a formed unit or battalion. Warrant Officer II Paul Furness said he was asked by his boss to go to Timor. After he said yes he received a month of training related to his job working in the payroll/cash office. Then there was week in Darwin to learn the rules of engagement and some cultural and historical background. He recalled that because he was off the normal battalion posting cycle he did not receive the language training that they had received.\textsuperscript{52} Peacekeeping-specific training was also limited for some members of 3RAR who deployed at the beginning of the mission.\textsuperscript{53} Similarly, Reservist Leigh McMahon said he was nominated to go and accepted the invitation immediately, ‘there was no way I wouldn’t that’s kind of like the objective of any soldier to serve overseas, to deploy’. He had three months of general Army deployment training in Townsville prior to departing.\textsuperscript{54}

Private Michael Toms who deployed in April 2001 as part of 6\textsuperscript{th} Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) had a very different

\textsuperscript{50} Alan Whitcombe, interview with author, 27 September 2012, ROI1029.
\textsuperscript{51} Geoff Hazel, interview with author, 11 June 2012, ROI1011.
\textsuperscript{52} Paul Furness, interview with author, 10 January 2013, ROI1052.
\textsuperscript{53} Mark Ludlow, ‘Troops Have Sights Trained on a Peacekeeping Role’, \textit{The Courier Mail}, 8 September 1999.
\textsuperscript{54} Leigh McMahon, interview with author, 31 August 2012, ROI1021.
experience. He said that they knew 6RAR would be going about six months prior to deploying. They also did pre-deployment training – sharpens the core military skills soldiers would already possess – for that six months as well some Timor-specific training, especially towards the end. There was some special police and crowd-control style training as well because riot control was a skill thought to be necessary in Timor. He said there was little cultural training, ‘they gave us print outs of Tetum and Portuguese but as far as cultural training it was probably about an hour […] we got the impression that even though the guys were over there at the time not much of that information was getting back’.  

The experience was different again for Catherine Simmons who served with the ADF in 1999. The service she was with was looking for someone with her skills and she agreed to go. Her work involved doing the ‘Darwin Dili run’ which meant that she sailed back and forth between the cities providing supplies and personnel. She recalls that

I wasn’t watching the news so was not aware of what was going on in Timor at all. So I got on to the ship and as we sailed out through the heads the captain came on and said ‘as you may be aware something has happened in Timor […] we are now heading straight for Timor’ and I went ‘what the?’ I had no idea where Timor was, what it was or what we were doing!  

There is a sense in these experiences that it was not always clear what kind of training or to what degree and depth was necessary. And indeed there were moments, especially early on, when there simply was not yet the intelligence about the local context to inform training. This both reflects the particular demands and unpredictability of the mission in Timor in the early stages, as well as a reflection of an ADF, especially Army, adjusting to the needs of a very large unprecedented peacekeeping mission. Ben Williams, who served in a command position, reflected on this issue in a discussion about his experience of training for formed units. He said knowing whether training is sufficient is a

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55 Michael Toms, interview with author, 28 November 2012, ROI1048; for more discussion of type of training formed units undergo see Jeremy Dyson, interview with author 18 May 2012, ROI1004.

56 Catherine Simmons, interview with author, 27 November 2012, ROI1046.
how long is a piece of string? [...] I think four months was probably enough, the reality was and often is that we often over-train. When you train for the worst case you get to East Timor or the Solomon Islands or Timor and it’s not the worst case you’ve invested a lot of time and effort for the worst case because you have to but you’ve actually found you’ve done more than you needed. So, you know with 20/20 hindsight we could have spent all our time doing language and culture training [...] at the expense of doing basic soldier skills and we may have come up with the same outcome or a different outcome or better or worse outcome you just never know. So I guess to answer that question I’d say I think it was right’.57

Whatever their experience of training, peacekeepers had a range of views about East Timor before they deployed to the island. Unlike for Bougainville, however, a great many peacekeepers knew not only where Timor was but had a much clearer sense of some aspects of its history as well as Australia’s relationships to it. AFP Agent Rob Whittington said, ‘I knew little of East Timor other than stories from WWII and the Balibo incident’.58 AFP officer and Vietnam veteran Alan Whitcombe believed Australia should have gone to Timor ‘for the way we treated them in 1975 [we] just rolled over and said to Indonesia “yeah take ‘em they’re yours”’.59 ADF member Kalan Lennon said ‘I didn’t really know much [but] we all knew about 1975, of course’.60 Balthazar Goldman who served with the ADF said,

we should’ve done something in 1975. We were a war weary country at the time [...] but we could’ve at least [tried] to tell them [Indonesians] they’re doing the wrong thing in a more militaristic way. [...] No one likes to see the little brother beaten up [...] and that’s what we were doing, that’s what it felt like.61

Warrant Officer II John Fletcher said,

I was in boarding school in 1973 and the guy in the next bed was Timorese and I remember him telling me about Timor. Then the invasion happened and I

57 Ben Williams, interview with author, 3 May 2012, ROI1002.
58 Whittington, interview.
59 Whitcombe, interview.
60 Kalan Lennon, interview with author, 29 August 2012, ROI1019.
61 Balthazar Goldman, interview with author, 5 September 2013, ROI1025.
remembered him and thought ‘oh my God’. I thought in 1999 when we finally got there it felt a bit like a repayment to him. So, that’s what it meant to me, finally taking responsibility.62

In the references to 1975 – a metonym for the Indonesian invasion of Timor that year – peacekeepers are raising the spectre of an Australian historical debt that needed to be repaid. That story was one of guilt and at times deep shame about the way in which peacekeepers’ believed Australia had let Indonesia invade Timor in 1975. The historical details of the invasion were discussed earlier, but for many peacekeepers that event was also caught up in the ‘Balibo 5’ incident. ‘Balibo 5’ refers to the October 1975 killing of five Australian journalists by Indonesian forces in the lead up to the invasion. This controversial incident was deeply troubling to Australians and heightened the sense of connection to and public outrage towards the invasion overall, and particularly Australia’s complicity in it.63

This was not some vaguely felt sense of putting right past wrongs, but a deeply and very personally felt motivator for peacekeepers’ personal service as well as a justification for the operation itself. In this peacekeepers were reflecting a national narrative of intense guilt and outrage. It is not possible here to properly capture the depth of disgrace and national guilt that Australians held for decades after 1975, but the severity and widespread nature of it was neatly captured in 2000. That year, government documents detailing Australia’s knowledge and tacit approval of the forthcoming invasion were revealed by the Howard Government. Most significantly, the release of these rather damning files

62 John Fletcher, interview with author, 5 October 2012, ROI1033.
came five years earlier than the mandated 30 year closure period. At the time of the launch of the documents, ABC reporter Graeme Dobell captured the decades old Australian sentiment of hurt at the Federal Government’s choices when he said, ‘here is the detailed official script of how Australia marched into a foreign policy trauma’.

Added to specific 1975 narratives was a sense of debt for Timorese participation in WWII. Chapter Four discusses in detail the participation of Timorese, Bougainvilleans and Solomon Islanders in this war, here what is important is that peacekeepers not only had knowledge of Timor’s role in the war, but that it was one of the reasons peacekeepers gave for the existence and value of the peacekeeping operation. AFP Senior Sergeant Alan Whitcombe said he volunteered, in part, for Timor because he ‘thought we owed the Timorese big time for what they had done to help us in WWII’. Army Corporal Anthony de Fraine Murphy said, ‘Timor for us was paying it back, they looked after us in WWII and we let them down’. Some peacekeepers rebuilt a pool in Dare near Fatunaba village in the north of the East Timor to thank the people who helped soldiers during WWII. And in a telling sign of the ongoing importance of WWII and Anzac narratives in giving meaning to peacekeepers’

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64 The documents are collated in Way, Browne and Johnson (eds.), Australia and the Indonesian Incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1975.
66 Whitcombe, interview with author; see also Anthony de Fraine Murphy, interview with author, 2 November 2012, ROI1038.
67 de Fraine Murphy, interview.
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experiences and memories in Timor, they inaugurated the pool on Anzac Day, April 25.68

Peacekeepers’ sense of debt-repayment for both 1975 and WWII were ones they shared with the Australian public more broadly. Returned Services League Victorian President, Bruce Ruxton said, ‘Australians have a very special debt of honour to the people of East Timor’.69 Newspapers also commented on this issue. Timor scholar and diplomat James Dunn, for instance, wrote an article titled ‘Righting Our Past Wrongs’ in the Sydney Morning Herald in which he outlines how Australia was complicit in Timor’s annexation and that Australia’s shifting policy direction would go some way to ‘righting’ that.70 Prime Minister Howard himself said he knew WWII ex-serviceman personally and believed Australians were indebted to the Timorese for their wartime sacrifices.71 Members of the public also vented outrage at Australia’s apathy towards responding to the unfolding 1999 crisis in Timor in similar terms. In a Letter-to-the-Editor a Victorian resident, Vic O’Callaghan wrote, ‘our diggers were saved by the Timorese people in World War II. The Timorese gave their lives for our troops. Now we kowtow to thugs. What kind of mates are we?72 World War II veteran, Paddy Keneally said, ‘we seem to be continually deserting them. They did the dying and we got the glory’.73

Though peacekeepers may have known more about Timor before they deployed than they did Bougainville, both groups drew much knowledge from past experiences of WWII. In Timor added to this were narratives of the 1975 Indonesian invasion and Australia’s acceptance of it. Together, they not only gave peacekeepers a sense of where they were

68 ‘Dare Pool Site Refurbished, Timorese Back in Swim’, Tais Timor, 27 March 2000 Vol. 1. No. 4, p. 2, NLA NX1584; For a greater sense of peacekeepers’ views on WWII see de Fraine Murphy, interview; Pearl Hudson, interview with author, 21 August 2013, ROI1057; Christopher McLeod, interview with author, 3 October 2012, ROI1030; Greg Swinden, interview with author, 4 May 2012, ROI1012; Betty Pearson, interview with author, ROI1013; Vergelius, interview.
69 ‘RSL Recalls A Debt of Honour’, The Courier Mail, 9 September 1999.
73 Allison Jackson, ‘We Seem to be Continually Deserting Them’, Sydney Morning Herald, 13 September 1999.
going, but largely formed their reasons for believing the mission was the right decision and a chance to repair long festering wounds. Though they might have been different in content and emphases that peacekeepers from both the Timor and Bougainville operations drew on military pasts to understand and explain their operations is a sign that larger national narratives about war, the Pacific and what it meant to be Australian were at work.

While these specific historical narratives were key ways peacekeepers understood Timor and the need for a peace operation they also understood the place and operation in more generic strategic regional terms. Like in Bougainville, creating peace in Timor was seen to be a stabilising force in the region and a particular responsibility Australia had to bear due to its size and power in the region. Army Sergeant Chris McLeod said he thought the reason for the operation ‘would’ve been to extend a non-threatening-zone around Australia where the country next to us was peaceful and democratic and as a result of us helping them to be so, our friend’. In a similar way Michael Shaw, a peacekeeper with the APS who was stationed in a military headquarters said, ‘we have a reasonably good reputation in the region. We’re not seen as big pushy Americans […] there’s no one that has […] a particularly strong or deep historical beef with us. Timor was probably one of the more delicate occasions’. AFP agent and Army Corporal Anthony de Fraine Murphy said, ‘you’re the neighbour with a big stick so you protect the underdog’. These views were imbued with shared ideas about Australian responsibility in a region largely defined as unstable – another sign that broader and deeper historical narratives were influencing the shape of peacekeepers’ stories. These issues will be deeply explored in Chapter Four after their influence on peacekeepers who served in Solomon Islands are explored in the next chapter.

74 McLeod, interview.
75 Shaw, interview.
76 de Fraine Murphy, interview.
Working for Peace – Local People and Places

As in Bougainville, peacekeepers’ first impressions varied considerably. ADF member Paddy Rackley had a vivid recollection of his first impression of Dili when he landed there in the first week of Interfet. He said,

It was fairly windy […] I think there was an incident broke out and we heard 50 cal [calibre] guns going off and a few of the guys eyes lit up and you know what have we got ourselves in for. […] so it was on the back of a truck, flak jacket on, helmet on, weapons at action […] so pretty heightened sense of what was about to happen […] there were a lot of burnt out buildings still smouldering, a lot of fires, and the tough one that I knew was gonna come, a lot of dead bodies on the side of the road as well … I think even though it’s what we are up to 12-13 years almost you think you’re over it ‘til you start talking to people about it that’s when it comes back, I actually thought it was going to be easy to talk to you about it, that I was past it. It is quite confronting and I think the one thing I still sort of think about especially when you talk about it is the sense of it the smell and even though its 12 years just the smell of the burning and dead bodies […] it’s something that really stays with you.77

Early in the mission the sight of bodies washing up on beaches or in shallow graves as well as recovery of corpses from mass grave sites was incredibly common and one of the enduring memories of the opening months of the mission.78

If not for quite the same reason, almost seven years later, Corporal Leigh McMahon who served with the Army was also shocked upon his arrival. He said, ‘I guess it was a complete contrast to [go from a] Western society to an impoverished Southeast Asian nation’.79 Ben Williams who served in the early 2000s with the ADF said,

I didn’t see a lot of Dili. I remember going through the airport and it looked like an airport […] it looked like a typical crappy third world country airport except there

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77 Paddy Rackley, interview with author, 9 June 2012, ROI1010.
79 McMahon, interview.
were a whole bunch of soldiers there. [When we got to our location] I actually though this is pretty good […] they’d built a prefabricated compound for us.  

Rory Paul an ADF member said it was an ‘extremely poor nation, very frightened nation and that became very obvious to us during our early days’. Army Warrant Officer II Paul Furness said,  

it was stinking hot the sun was beating down […] people were really friendly that’s the first thing I noticed […] they were smiling. I often wondered you know I’m armed to teeth […] are you nervous smiling or are you happy we’re here? But I genuinely think there was a strong sense of celebration by the people that they had been liberated […] that was my perception […] that they were happy we were there for that.  

Private Jeremy Dyson who served in 2001 with the Army said his first impression was a  

really unique smell it’s not a bad smell or anything like that it’s just Timor smells like that […] must be the cigarettes and the wood they burn like a sandalwood smell. It stains your clothes nearly […] there was a lot of devastation everywhere […] when we get to camp everyone’s in shorts and t-shirts cruising around […] kind of like Vietnam but different it was really really exciting.  

Peacekeepers’ first impressions were different depending upon when they arrived and where they arrived. Peace in Timor was nowhere near as far along as it was in Bougainville when peacekeepers arrived. The situation was still incredibly volatile, there was local opposition in parts of the country, there were armed militias and government infrastructure was in need of repair and also in need of being built from scratch. This meant that peacekeepers shared the same mission but could have vastly different experiences as they worked in roles from government-building positions in Dili, policing work in small towns, to combat-style work on the dangerous border with West Timor.  

80 Williams, interview.  
81 Rory Paul, interview with author, 7 October 2012, ROI1003.  
82 Furness, interview.  
83 Dyson, interview.
For infantry personnel a large part of their job was to be out on patrols. Some of these could be covert but many were not and instead involved getting out into villages and talking with locals in an effort to obtain information about militia or any other problems.\textsuperscript{84} Dylan Bond served with the infantry and did patrols like this, but he was also involved in manning a fixed surveillance post near a village and because of that was able to get to know the people in that area. He said,

playing footy with the kids was heaps of fun […] the families would sometimes cook food for us if they had some leftover […] whatever we had leftover we’d give them […] we really got to know the locals and grew quite fond of them. It was good to be able to learn about their culture and see them at work. They were always willing to help. I remember this one guy. When we were clearing the perimeter around our position there was this brambly-like stuff and it was vicious it was covered in thorns and it was really hard to get rid of […] I remember this old guy who used to get up at sunrise and go and work in the fields down by the river and then came and just helped us clear this stuff and it was a really tough job […] and he was old too and there he was just helping us out all day in the sun. No one asked him to he just volunteered.\textsuperscript{85}

Army Corporal Anthony de Fraine Murphy also served with infantry and he said, ‘you got out on patrol you’re providing security for the area […] [the liaison guys] would go and do liaison with locals. […] While we were there we had 2-3 militia incursions […] but it was one of the most peaceful trips the battalion had.’\textsuperscript{86} Private Kirk Scott served with Army and his artillery unit provided security to the headquarters building which involved a lot of piquet duty. He said of the monotonous job, ‘it’d make every day feel like groundhog day’. However, the work actually lent itself to interaction with local people as they would walk by and stop for a chat all the time. He said, ‘when you’re walking to and from your piquet point walking past people you don’t just ignore them we weren’t there to ignore them, you saw them you said hello kind of thing. You’d try to say it in their language you’d get it wrong they’d laugh at you.’ He recalled

\textsuperscript{84} Williams, interview.
\textsuperscript{85} Dylan Bond, interview with author, 6 October 2012, ROI1034; see also Isaac, interview.
\textsuperscript{86} de Fraine Murphy, interview.
that these good natured exchanges changed over the course of his mission. He put it down to a bit of culture-clash after having peacekeepers around for so long.87

Perhaps the group of peacekeepers who had the closest, if not always easy or pleasant, working relationships with local communities was the police. This was because community policing required them to get to know their neighbourhoods and the people that filled them. Police in Timor effectively walked the beat with much the same powers and responsibilities as they would have had in Australia. Yet they were not on Australian streets. The conflict and its aftermath shaped their everyday work duties in specific ways. Police peacekeepers had to investigate contemporary murders and assaults as well as past killings and atrocities from the war. Investigating old murders often involved carrying out exhumations and body-identifications. Figure six shows this process underway.

Don Barnby, an AFP agent who served during UNAMET, had a different kind of experience with local people. It made clear to him what

87 Kirk Scott, interview with author, 17 November 2012, ROI1044.
he was there for. He served at a polling station on the day of the independence vote and shared this experience:

I think I had the alarm clock set for about 3 AM in the morning so we got up and had our normal breakfast of one boiled egg, cob of corn and [mug] of coffee. So all the police, electoral officers and local staff all started trooping in [...] it was a very cold morning because we were up in the mountains [...] it was very misty and very foggy [...] it was a very slow torturous trip up [the roads leading up the mountain to the school where the polling station was set up were very dangerous] I just remember crawling up into the village of Amira with all this mist and fog [...] and we went over this little stone bridge and as our headlights cut through the fog [...] we saw all these people [...] and then they saw the UN sign on the truck and … oh a big cheer… it was really quite emotional [...] they came up and shook our hands and hugged us and everything*.88

While the specific role of peacekeepers was fundamental to the ways they interacted and worked with local people, several other factors were also significant. Some peacekeepers got to know a few local people if they happened to be at a base or workplace where locally employed civilians (LECs) worked. Balthazar Goldman who worked as a cook with the ADF, for example, had very little to do with the Timorese community because his job required long hours in the field kitchen. Figure seven (overleaf), though not the kitchen Goldman worked in, gives a sense of what is meant by a field kitchen and the working conditions.

Yet Goldman did get to know some Timorese because a few locally employed women worked with him in the kitchen. Though he could only speak with one as none of the others spoke English and his Tetum was limited, he described how initially they helped with the more menial tasks like cleaning, but that, despite it being against regulation, over time he had them assist with food preparation. They ended up being a huge help in running the kitchen efficiently. At the end of his time there, he had some bangles sent from home to give as ‘thank you’ presents to them. On the

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* Don Barnby, interview with author, 21 May 2012, ROI1005.
day his team left the women also came in to give them scarves they had made.  

Some peacekeepers went beyond their specific duties to try to bring peace in everyday ways. Derek Salt, who served with the ADF recalled that at Christmas seven people from the Australian contingent where he was based went to a local hospital. They came with plates of fairy bread and sausages to help the patients, especially the children, have a more enjoyable and festive day. He said, ‘if the opportunity presents itself, yes, I think it’s important to get in there and to interact with the people’. John Perryman who served with the Navy described how he was involved with delivering thousands of toys, clothes and other items that came in from Australia and elsewhere for the Timorese, particularly the children. He and his team fell into a pattern of delivering the goods daily. He recalled that it ended up being something of a ‘Mr Whippy’ event as the children got to recognise the white van. Though not delivered by Perryman, figure eight (overleaf) does show a Timorese boy with some gifts from peacekeepers.

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89 Goldman, interview.
90 Derek Salt, interview with author, 4 September 2012, ROI1024.
91 John Perryman, interview with author, 31 May 2012, ROI1007.
Chapter Three

Like in Bougainville, some peacekeepers made the effort to connect with local culture to create relationships of respect. Rory Paul an ADF peacekeeper recalled going to Mass at the local Catholic Church in Suai as a way to get to know the locals and integrate into the deeply Catholic community. He described it as a ‘pretty amazing’ experience because as Mass was winding up they started to head outside and ‘as the priest was doing the final prayer people were just drifting towards us and for a time there we didn’t know what the heck was going on but they just wanted to line up and […] kiss our hands and say “thank you”’.  

![Figure 8: Timorese boy with gifts of new marbles, 2001. Photo courtesy of Private Luke Grogan.](image)

While some people got to interact a lot with local people through their work or in their ability to interact outside of official duties, the operation, as in Bougainville, also required peacekeepers to do work that did not involve much direct engagement with local people. Army Warrant Officer II Wally Meurant, for example, operated in a logistics role and spent most of his time on the Dili dock toiling for very long days. This was especially

92 Rory Paul, interview with author, 7 October 2012, ROI1003; for similar experience see de Fraine Murphy, interview.
so because Meurant served at the beginning of Interfet in 1999 so the workload for getting such a large operation logistically supported often required 20 hour days in that first month. ADF member, Ben Daley, worked with the Military Police and as such his work was almost exclusively focused on the peacekeeping contingent. Further, because he served early in that mission when the security situation was uncertain, there was no option to go off base unless there was a specific job that had to be done. Therefore even incidental interaction, such as chatting to people while visiting a market or while out on a run for physical training, was essentially non-existent. Warrant Officer II Paul Furness said his job in the payroll/cash office kept him away from local people most of the time as he was required in the office, though he did develop a friendly relationship with the office cleaner, a local Timorese man named Jose. He described his typical day and general activities while on tour,

up about 5:30 […] then id wander over for breakfast about 6:30ish […] take that back with a cup of coffee to my office […] work through ’til about 12:30 then go grab a bite to eat […] and then back to the office again dinner time and then back to the office dinner and about 10 o’clock finish up and off to bed. […] sometimes the group would watch a movie together on base. We built a swimming pool out of a disused water tank […] not many people used it but most of the entertainers who came over did. […] A game of volleyball on the weekend […] other than that get yourself a good book.

APS peacekeepers also tended to be in positions that kept them in office-based positions working with the peacekeeping contingent rather than locals. APS officer Michael Shaw, for instance, worked in a headquarters role and spent much of his time in the office coordinating the key organisations helping to ensure the mission ran smoothly. However, for some APS officers, like Samantha Isaac, their role could require close working relationships with Timorese counterparts and communities. At one point during her deployment Isaac worked in one of

93 Wally Meurant, interview with author, 4 October 2012 ROI1032.
95 Furness, interview.
96 Shaw, interview.
the districts outside Dili and did much work with the community to assist with the transition from lives shaped by combat and conflict to ones of resettlement and everyday peace.\(^{97}\)

Clearly, the timing of a peacekeeper’s service affected the nature of their work and relationships with locals and the nature of some peacekeeper’s work. Time worked in other ways though too. As UNTAET (and the missions that followed it) moved into its second year and beyond peacekeepers spoke of how they noticed a simmering dislike for the operation. This was largely due to the continued largesse of the mission which was offensive to the ongoing local struggle with poverty and high unemployment.\(^{98}\) Leigh McMahon who served with the Army in Timor in 2007 was aware of the high unemployment in Dili and said there was animosity towards peacekeepers especially from gangs and the young men. He understood that feeling and said, ‘unless we could make demonstrable improvements to create new opportunities for employment or to improve the wellbeing of the populace, really why else are we there, you know, from their perspective’.\(^{99}\) Kalan Lennon, an ADF member, also spoke to this issue when he described how initially the Interfet mission was welcomed but that towards the end of his time with UNTAET in 2002 people would abuse soldiers in the street or drive past his workplace yelling names. Like other peacekeepers who themselves had high hopes for what the mission could achieve, he shared in this local frustration saying,

\[\text{one thing that annoyed me in Dili was that there was a demountable with three or four nurses [...] they were working for the government with people we couldn’t look after [...] and they were struggling [...] but you’d walk from the main parade ground in Dili [...] down this laneway where the demountable was set up and you’d walk past a building and there were rows and rows [...] of typists [...] this was one of the UN organisations, so you couldn’t get a bigger dichotomy of literally you could look at that and see this waste and}\]

\(^{97}\) Isaac, interview.

\(^{98}\) Dyson, interview; Perryman, interview.

\(^{99}\) McMahon, interview.
then look down there at a demountable […] with three nurses working their can off.\textsuperscript{100}

He went on to explain that part of the problem with peacekeeper/local relationships was related to symbolism. He discussed that since most interaction was on a professional or formal level, even if very friendly and warm, it can be difficult to get beyond what you represent.\textsuperscript{101} One of the outcomes of this symbolic presence was that many peacekeepers became, for locals, a sign of hopeful change; a sign that peace was on its way, but it could also mean they bore the brunt of local annoyance and anger when the mission was not achieving local expectations and dreams.

The ups and downs of local reaction and desire for the mission had other effects on peacekeepers work. As was discussed earlier, pro-Indonesian militia resisted the peacekeeping mission and tried in various ways to sabotage the peace process. As such, violent encounters with the militia were not uncommon and as this was a peace enforcement mission direct engagement with them was a key part of some peacekeepers’ work. To that end, there were two groups of peacekeepers significantly affected by militia activity: first, those who served in UNAMET – the operation that deployed to assist and safeguard the popular consultation vote in August 1999 – and second, by military peacekeepers from the combat corps who served in especially volatile regions of the country.

Federal Agent Don Barnby served with UNAMET and described having an angry confrontation with a militia leader at a polling station on voting day. He told a story about how militia had been terrorising and intimidating voters in the lead-up to the vote and around polling stations on Election Day. He said of one militiaman,

> he was a really bad looking guy […] his eyes were bloodshot. He had an M16 […] he raised the gun up and it was like there [DB points to his nose] probably for about fifteen minutes […] eventually after a lot of

\textsuperscript{100} Kalan Lennon, interview with Author, 29 August 2012, ROI1019; Perryman, interview.

\textsuperscript{101} Lennon, interview; see also Lusitania Lopes, interview with author, 14 November 2012, ROI1043 – quotation is a mix of audio transcript and participant’s written summary.
negotiating and browbeating with the POLRI [Indonesian police] sergeant this guy backed off.  

AFP Agent Geoff Hazel who served in Timor at the same time as Agent Barnby also described the violent encounters with militia in the lead-up to the vote and in the spiralling chaos afterwards. He said,

I’m glad we didn’t take weapons. Yes, there would’ve been a lot of dead militia, but there would’ve been a lot of dead police too [...] let’s be honest, every one of us had become involved. This was almost our ballot for freedom. That’s the only way to describe it.

The second group noticeably affected by violence, or the threat of it at least, were those peacekeepers who served in combat roles along the 175km long border with West Timor in INTERFET and UNTAET from September 1999 through to early 2000. There was still quite a lot of militia activity in these months and they used the refugee camps in West Timor near the border as bases for crossing east. About 1500 mostly Australian but also international peacekeepers were responsible for the border. As this was a peace enforcement mission they had the job of patrolling to prevent militia coming into East Timor and, if necessary, they had to capture, and in some cases were permitted to use force against the militia.

Rory Paul, an ADF officer who served in Suai, a town near the border in the southwest of the country, described the way the militia threat was constantly present and always fluctuating during his tour in 2000. In this period in Suai there were violent contacts with militia which resulted in the death of New Zealand soldier, Private Leonard Manning on 24 July 2000. His body was later found mutilated. His death was followed by that of a Nepalese soldier, Private Devi Ram Jaishi, who was killed by

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102 Barnby, interview.
103 Hazel, interview; for comprehensive personal accounts of UNAMET and the situation in Timor surrounding the vote see David Savage, Dancing with the Devil: A Personal Account of Policing the East Timor Vote for Independence (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 2002); Tim Fischer, Seven Days in East Timor: Ballots and Bullets, (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000).
104 Paul, interview.
militia on 10 August 2000.\textsuperscript{106} During July and August there were also other violent encounters between militia and peacekeepers. On 2 and 6 August, for example, Australian peacekeepers were involved in gunfights with militia up and down the border.\textsuperscript{107} These months were unusual in the frequency and intensity of contact with militia. This was for a whole range of reasons but particularly the approaching first anniversary of the Timorese independence vote as well as local politics and feuds.\textsuperscript{108}

In one incident, Australians were alleged to have shown unlawful violence towards Timorese. There were serious allegations of torture and brutality towards militia by Australian soldiers from the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) and the Intelligence Corps. Neither detailed lists of the allegations or investigative reports have been publicly released, but a total of 19 allegations were under investigation for three years. These included claims of the mistreatment of a corpse and brutality towards militia detainees during interrogation.

Part of this story is connected to a firefight between SAS soldiers and militia on 6 October 1999, which resulted in the deaths of two militiamen as well as some wounded Australians.\textsuperscript{109} There were claims that one of the militia had been killed unlawfully and that one of the corpses was kicked or otherwise violently treated after the fight. Additionally, there were suggestions that ‘trophy’ photos had been taken with the bodies. However, it was normal practice to take photos and other evidence of bodies for later identification.\textsuperscript{110} General Peter Cosgrove, who led the mission in Timor and who became Chief of Army in 2000 and then Chief of the Defence Force in 2002, launched an investigation at the time, but

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item For details of the contact see David Horner with Neil James, \textit{In Action with the SAS}, (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2009), 323-325.
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\end{footnotesize}
the allegations were found to be groundless. However, a year later, the case, due to renewed rumours of misconduct, was re-opened.\footnote{Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee (FADTRC), Senate Inquiry, \textit{The Effectiveness of Australia's Military Justice System}, (Canberra: The Senate, June 2005), 35.} This resulted in a new investigation which was led by a 12 person team from the three ADF services, the Federal Police and the UN. It conducted an investigation that included over 220 interviews with people from Australia, New Zealand, East Timor and the United Kingdom. The bodies of militiamen were also exhumed for forensic examination.\footnote{Ibid, 35-36; Robert Garran, ‘Army Enlists Navy in Torture Inquiry’, \textit{The Australian}, 2 November 2000; Rory Callinan, ‘Torture Under Interrogation’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 4 November 2000; Callinan, ‘NZ Called For Probe into Army “Torture”’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 18 November 2000; Tanya Targett and Callinan, ‘SAS Hit by Timor Torture Claims’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 5 October 2002; Callinan and Anthony Marx, ‘Battle For Truth’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 5 October 2002; ‘Allegations Must be Investigated’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 4 October 2002.}

Also related to this issue were assertions that militia detainees captured in the same area on the same day as the fighting had been tortured by Australians. Some Military Police claimed they had seen wounded militia being dragged from hospital and beaten. Also, there were assertions that the mistreatment of militia detainees occurred not just that day but at various interrogation sessions. It was alleged that militia were being mistreated in a number of ways, such as being deprived of food for extended periods, physically beaten, and that they were shown photographs of dead comrades.\footnote{Callinan and David Murray, ‘Fresh Torture Claims Put Diggers Under Fire’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 13 November 2000; Bob Howarth, ‘UN Probe on Tortures Urged’, \textit{The Courier-Mail}, 13 January 2001; Robert Garran, ‘Army Enlists Navy’, \textit{The Australian}, 2 November 2000.} One participant in this project also discussed seeing militia detainees clearly beaten upon their return from interrogation sessions with Australian personnel.\footnote{Anonymous, interview with author.}

Ultimately, the official investigation into the alleged 19 counts of misconduct found only the charge of corpse-kicking had any grounds for further action. On 16 April 2003 Chief of Army, Lieutenant-General Peter Leahy said parts of allegations relating to the mistreatment of militia detainees ‘were found to be substantiated, but no offences had been committed’ because the actions did not contravene Australian obligations.
under international law. The investigation found that the case regarding the kicking of the militia corpse was to be answered by one SAS soldier. However, after significant procedural and mishandling problems of the case by the ADF justice system, the matter was dropped and the soldier was cleared of any wrongdoing. He later received an unreserved apology from the ADF for its mismanagement of the proceedings. A Senate inquiry into the Australian military justice system later found that the whole process, especially the investigatory work into the 19 allegations, and not just the specific handling of the SAS soldier’s case, was filled with significant inadequacies that reflected deeper systemic ineffectiveness.

With this in mind, along with the evidence presented by the participant in this project, it cannot be said with complete certainty exactly what happened when or by whom but there does seem enough evidence to suggest that there was, at least, some arguably unlawful violent behaviour by Australians.

At times, Australians also behaved in sexually inappropriate or harassing ways towards Timorese people. Over two nights in November and December 1999 up to six male Australian soldiers were accused of entering a Timorese home in Dili and harassing the family of six sisters with demands for sex and shouting that they ‘wanted a lady’. The soldiers were said to be drunk and shirtless. The women were distressed and frightened by the incidents but not physically hurt. They were issued a full apology from Interfet. An investigation resulted in two soldiers being sent back to Australia to face an inquiry.

On Melbourne Cup day in 2001 two privates from 2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment paid a

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Timorese boy about two dollars to ride a water buffalo while encouraging him to simulate obscene acts with it. One of the soldiers videotaped the incident. They were both punished by an Army disciplinary tribunal and received four days’ restrictions of privileges.\(^\text{119}\)

There is also some evidence that the peace mission in Timor brought about an increase in local prostitution.\(^\text{120}\) There is not, however, any concrete evidence about the role, if any, Australians played in this growth. While none of the peacekeepers in the project spoke too specifically about it there was some general discussion on prostitution and Australians. The peacekeepers’ identities are withheld, but it should be noted that all of the material came from peacekeepers who served in the Army, and almost all from the combat corps.\(^\text{121}\) One peacekeeper who served in Bougainville and Timor said that while he was not sure he should comment on such things, he did not hear of any prostitution or sexual incidents in Bougainville, but he did hear of it in Timor. He believed it was true because he thought some of the men would have found it too hard to be away from home that long.\(^\text{122}\) Another said that from his experience across the combat corps he would not have been surprised to see some men engaging in prostitution, because it would be tough for them out in the field patrolling and living rough. This made it likely that they would then seek relief when they were able to come back into town. Neither participant said they ever personally saw any prostitution in Timor.\(^\text{123}\)

Other participants suggested that any involvement in prostitution was more likely to be related to the time in which Australians served. One peacekeeper said that he did not see any growth of prostitution in Timor during Interfet. He thought it was because it was too early in the mission and Timorese society was still too shattered. Also, the unstable security situation meant peacekeepers’ physical movements were strictly


\(^{121}\) Namely the Armoured Corps, Infantry Corps and Artillery Corps.

\(^{122}\) Anonymous, interview with author.

\(^{123}\) Anonymous, interview with author.
controlled thus limiting their contact with local people outside of work
duties. Also, as peacekeepers who served early with Interfet said, there
were simply not many local people around in the early stages of the
mission. Another peacekeeper who served in Interfet in this early period
also agreed, saying the conditions of that mission were not conducive to
any kind of sexual contact with local people because most peacekeepers
were working in teams and constantly together. Therefore there was just
no physical space or freedom to be able to have sexual interactions.\textsuperscript{124}

However, as things relaxed a little and people started to feel safe
enough to return to Dili this same peacekeeper said he did witness the
growth of a sex-work industry. He described seeing a brothel being set up
and run by an Australian expat who brought in girls from outside Timor;
he did not speak specifically of any Australian peacekeepers frequenting
the brothel.\textsuperscript{125} Timor expert, Jill Jolliffe also described an Australian bar –
rung by an Australian civilian unattached to the peacekeeping operation –
called ‘Tom’s Place’ in Dili in front of which she saw Timorese girls
soliciting.\textsuperscript{126} While there is no evidence in these discussions of Australian
peacekeepers participating in the sex industry, that the participants
seemed certain it was probable and altogether unsurprising suggests that
Australian participation should not be entirely ruled out.

Thankfully, though it appears as though incidents of Australians
mistreating Timorese are few and relatively minor, particularly in
comparison to some of the well-publicised atrocities of murder, torture
and human trafficking in Somalia and Bosnia in the early 1990s. The
reasons for this are complex. Similar instances of exploitation arose in the
mission in Solomon Islands so deeper analysis of these issues will follow
that chapter.

What is quite clear from peacekeepers’ stories about their work and
everyday lives is that despite not being in team-sites and specifically
tasked with building relationships with local communities, working
alongside and assisting Timorese remained a defining feature of many
peacekeepers’ service. The nature of peacekeepers’ work to a great degree

\textsuperscript{124} Anonymous, interview with author.
\textsuperscript{125} Anonymous, interview with author.
\textsuperscript{126} Jolliffe, ‘AIDS Spectre Looms Over Dili’. 
shaped their engagement with local people. But to a significant degree local people and their reactions to and ideas about the operation also shaped peacekeepers work and community relationships. These varying experiences led peacekeepers to develop a multifaceted range of views about the Timorese people and culture overall.

Air Force Group Captain Cameron Stewart said of the Timorese, ‘I mean they are incredibly resilient, but by gee they’ve got a dark side to them’. Lieutenant Commander Greg Swinden recalled that most Australians he worked with were happy to be there and tried to get amongst the local community in lots of different ways but that there were some people who just did not really want to be there. Overall though he said,

[the] relationship between the East Timor people and the Australian Defence people was very good. You could talk to them, you could do things with them they were happy for us to be there. [...] You just didn’t mind giving them help or buying stuff off them. It was a good feeling. There were some tense times on occasion because [One of the people I worked with said] “you’ve just got to watch the East Timorese they can go from 0-100 miles an hour in the space of a second”, which indicates they can go from being very very nice to a riot very quickly.

Warrant Officer First Class Brian Hulands who served in Solomon Islands and East Timor said,

Solomons is a lot more civilised than East Timor [...] The people are used to the Western influence. They are Westernised, even though they are simple folk. First thing is you don’t upset them because they get very emotional so they’re liable to cut your head off, literally.

ADF member Dylan Bond said he was surprised most by the people, ‘just how friendly and happy they were when they had nothing and a lot of them had been through such traumatic experiences. A lot knew people who’d been killed, homes wrecked, crops burned but they just made the

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127 Group Captain Cameron Stewart, interview with Wing Commander Ken Llewelyn, 27 October 2000, AWMSO2208.
128 Swinden, interview.
129 Brian Hulands, interview with author, 12 November 2012, ROI1041.
best of the situation. Seeing that resilience was inspiring'. AFP Agent Alan Whitcombe said, ‘they were bloody honest. We’d leave our house unlocked with everything in it and there was never a problem. They were generous’. Lieutenant Commander Greg Swinden said that they are ‘people who are poor, who don’t have a good life but they’re really hard working and nice people. [...] I think that’s probably an Australian sentiment that we look after, that we like the underdog but not the lazy underdog’.

These views are, as one would expect given the generally short length of peacekeepers’ tours, quite generalist. Grasping the nuances and intricacies of a culture is not the outcome of just a few months. Further, the views, especially about the volatility of Timorese seem to reflect not having grasped that that behaviour might not simply be a cultural product but the outcome of decades of war, violence and oppression. Some of these views are not all that dissimilar to peacekeepers’ views of Bougainvilleans and as we will see will also find some resonance in Australians' views of Solomon Islanders. Again, in that connection it is possible to see at work the influence of broader historical narratives about Australia, the Pacific and their respective peoples. These particular issues will be drawn out in the comparative analysis in Chapter Four.

Australians Working with Each Other

As in Bougainville there were certain challenges and tensions between Australians of different organisational backgrounds. In Timor, however these were different in nature and considerably less frequent because Australians were not placed together in the small mixed team environments typical of Bougainville. It was much more common for distinctive organisations to be working in different spheres so that infantry personnel might rarely have to work alongside anyone other than infantrymen. Similarly, public servants at work in Dili might never work closely with police out on investigative or community policing work. This is not to say that peacekeepers form different organisations did not

130 Bond, interview.
131 Whitcombe, interview.
132 Swinden, interview.
encounter or spend time with each other, but that the kind of daily and close relationships like that in Bougainville were not the norm in East Timor. Largely, daily interaction was reserved for high-ranking and managerial peacekeepers.

Even though the extent and nature of this interaction was quite limited in Timor those that did experience it spoke of having similar issues with communication and different expectations as their colleagues in Bougainville. RAAF member Lisa Showell recalled tensions, often good natured, working alongside other ADF services from the moment they were stationed together in Darwin awaiting transport to Timor. She said her time in Darwin really showed

the differences between the three services […] this is what we did, you’d bag out the services, that’s how it was! The Army used to get really upset because they didn’t think the Navy and the Air Force would do things properly […] they didn’t like the way that when we went on exercise […] [our approach was] let’s not too be silly about these things you’d get the tent up and get the urn on and get some coffee […] we did what we were meant to do but coffee and tea were a high priority for us. And Army were just “you can’t do that you’re not doing it properly you’re not suffering out in the bush”.  

APS peacekeeper Michael Shaw who worked in a headquarters liaising role with the ADF and APS said,

it’s sometimes just about […] building relationships with people and spending time with them [ADF personnel] explaining to them what you’re about and what you do and other times it’s about putting your foot down and insisting on certain things […] it’s an exercise in cross cultural communication.

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Like their counterparts in Bougainville, peacekeepers who served in East Timor worked in a range of capacities that involved varying kinds of relationships with Timorese. There were peacekeepers’ who worked closely with Timorese colleagues, there were some who went outside their

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133 Lisa Showell, interview with author, 30 May 2012, ROI1006.
134 Shaw, interview.
specific work duties to form social or humanitarian connections and there were some whose work and period of service kept them from having too much to do with locals at all. As in Bougainville each particular role added a piece to the necessities of a functioning peace operation. Yet, unlike in Bougainville the mission in Timor was deployed in much more fraught circumstances. The security situation was volatile and unknown when the mission first deployed and resistance by militia to the peacekeeping operation continued to varying degrees for years. Further, the mission in Timor required extensive state-building to prepare the new country for self-government. Getting involved in the political economy of a foreign country and especially one with such a recent militarised and brutalised history was never going to be an easy or straightforward task for peacekeepers.

Peacekeepers’ stories show very clearly the intricate connections between the prerogatives of a peace operation and the needs and desires of local context in shaping peacekeepers’ experiences. Life on operation was enmeshed in the realities of Timorese politics, culture, history and ordinary lives as well as the many highly demanding needs of the peace operation and the international community it represented. In the first seven years of peacekeeping in Timor the two worked in a constant feedback loop always carving and defining what was expected of and experienced by peacekeepers and local communities. It was the complexity of these two factors that, for example, saw some military peacekeepers engaging in violent encounters with some local militia on the one day while kicking around a soccer ball with locals on another. The sheer scale of violence experienced by Timorese meant police peacekeepers often had to enter into deeply felt wounds and fractures in local communities as they sought to investigate murders and other atrocities. For a few peacekeepers the chaos and vulnerability of Timorese life offered a chance to disregard the call to bring peace and instead take advantage of that vulnerability to harass and harm people. Shattered or non-existent governance structures meant some peacekeepers were often knee-deep in the local political economy working to find ways to bring peace to the complex business of building government. The content and
emphases of all this work, and the relationships underpinning it, were subject to continual change because the needs of the Timorese and the operation shifted over time.

Adding another layer to the landscape was the particular cultural, political and historical inheritances Australians brought with them. As in Bougainville, peacekeepers carried baggage filled with historical and national narratives about what it was to be Australian, what kind of place Timor was and the type of relationship that existed between the two countries. Some of that was particular to Timor, but much of it was connected to broader conceptions about Australia’s place and role in the Pacific region. These two factors, the interaction between the local context and the operational context and their being undergirded by Australian narratives about place and identity, link the Timor operation to the one in Bougainville. And though it will again be different in content and emphasis they also connect to the operation in Solomon Islands.
Historical Background

About 1000 islands and atolls form a double chain stretched across 1400 kilometres of the Pacific Ocean just southeast of Papua New Guinea. They make up the nation of Solomon Islands which is home to
approximately 550,000 people. Originally geologically attached to Bougainville island, Solomon Islands has been a land shaped by continual Austronesian, Melanesia and Polynesian migrations. ‘Nation’ must be used in the loosest way to describe Solomon Islands for it is a place of extraordinary diversity with a limited and tenuous attachment to any sense of national identity or cohesion. Instead it is bound to local kin-groups and their attendant histories and identities. It was a period of European colonisation that linked these disparate islands and their many villages and kin groups into the nation we now call Solomon Islands. As in Timor and Bougainville, colonial authorities drew boundaries with no regard for these local cultures or sense of place.

In 1568 Spanish explorer Álvaro de Mendana arrived at Solomons Islands. He was followed in the early 1800s by whalers from Europe as well as America. They continued to visit and take prized whale products until about the 1860s. From the 1840s they were also joined by Australian, New Zealander and American traders. Until the 1860s when it had all been cut down, sandalwood was a highly popular trading product. Following sandalwood’s demise, copra, turtle shell, mother of pearl and ivory nuts from the sago palm were some of the other highly prized goods extracted from Solomon Islands. Colonial interference was a disintegrative force, though it is important to remember that European contact with Solomon Islands was not uniform as the islands and their people were not one unified homogenous people.

Nonetheless, one of the most disruptive periods of European contact was between 1870 and 1919 when 30,000 people were indentured into a labour trade to go to Queensland and Fiji to work on plantations. As

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1 Braithwaite and Charlesworth, Pillars and Shadows: Statebuilding as Peacebuilding in Solomon Islands, (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010), 13-15; for more on Solomon Islands histories, cultures and customs see Geoffrey White, Identity through History: Living Stories in a Solomon Islands Society, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); for more on the extraordinary linguistic diversity of Solomon Islanders see, Darrell Tryon and Brian Hackman, Solomon Island Languages: An Internal Classification, (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1983).


4 See White, Identity through History.
Solomon Islands

mentioned in the chapter on Bougainville, this was a process known as ‘blackbirding’ and occurred across the Pacific, not just Solomon Islands. Like elsewhere it deeply affected men, women, families and communities in both home and host countries.  

Formal colonial annexation, however, did not begin until 1893 when Britain declared Solomon Islands a British Protectorate. For its part, Australia had encouraged the annexation because of fears about a German presence in the region, but the Solomons’ rich copra deposits and a growing market for that commodity also interested Britain. The exploitation of copra was just another step in what had been, and would be, a long history of natural resource exploitation by foreigners as well as different local ethnic groups. Later, these issues would come to play a key role in the conflict preceding the peace operation.  

Britain situated its Solomons possessions relatively low on its list of imperial priorities. So even though it centralised government – originally in Tulagi in the Central Province and then relocated to Honiara in the north of Guadalcanal island – this had less of an effect on people than interaction with traders, missionaries or through work on plantations. There was often fierce resistance to colonial authority throughout the islands. But again, because of the localised culture of Solomon Islanders, it was never a unified struggle for independence. When independence did come in 1978 it was more from Britain’s desire to shed the financial burden of an overseas territory than local agitation. The lack of a cohesive indigenous independence movement meant there was little shared

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7 Dinnen, ‘State-Building in a Post-Colonial Society’, 54.

political vision or integrative economy to unify the nation when Britain cut ties.\textsuperscript{9}

Before independence, Solomon Islands, like Timor and Bougainville, was affected by intense fighting between allied and Japanese soldiers during World War II. Plantation economies were destroyed and communities, especially those on Guadalcanal where the fighting largely took place, were displaced. The most important impact of the war was that the new capital, Honiara, now offered economic opportunity unparalleled anywhere else in Solomons. Consequently, many people from the nearby and most heavily populated island, Malaita, began moving to Guadalcanal. This continued for decades thereafter. It would be tension between Guale (the name given to those from Guadalcanal) and Malaitans about the use and ownership of land on Guadalcanal that triggered conflict or ‘the tensions’ as they were known locally.\textsuperscript{10}

To outsiders, it may seem as though movement by Solomon Islanders from one part of their country to another should not cause conflict. But it must be seen in the context of Solomon Islanders having deep connection to family or wantoks (those who speak the same language, and share social ties and responsibilities) and not to the nation.\textsuperscript{11} The resettling of Malaitans on Guadalcanal is better understood as something more akin to foreign migration. There were significant differences between Guale and Malaitans, but for our purposes the most significant was the dissimilarity in the way they related to land and its inheritance.

Guale had a matrilineal system whilst Malaitans had a mostly patrilineal system. When marriage between the groups occurred, as it did often, all kinds of complications around land ownership or custodianship arose. This was compounded over time as land was bought and sold by Guale and Malaitans in ways neither group understood or recognised. Guale came to see Malaitans as disrespectful and aggressive, while Malaitans saw


\textsuperscript{11}Moore, Happy Isles, 27, 96.
Guale as lazy. These grievances were made worse by unstable governance, which was itself another colonial legacy.¹²

Figure 10: Guadalcanal island detail, Solomon Islands. Courtesy of CartoGIS, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU

When the British granted Solomon Islands independence in 1978 they left in their wake an underdeveloped state; a government apparatus that was weak, at its best; and a population largely without the experience or education to run a Westminster style of government that in the first instance they felt little allegiance to, and in the second made little cultural sense in a place where the local trumped the national. This poor preparation ushered in a period of government in which politicians served themselves and those to whom they had familial or wantok based obligations and not the collective needs of the state. Political parties and leaders were often made up of ‘big-men’ – traditionally chiefs of villages and kin groups – for whom part of their identity and role involved providing economic benefits to wantoks. In a Westminster style of government this produced unstable and corrupt governance and prevented the emergence of long-term steady political parties with

identifiable policy platforms. This volatility meant that governments were consistently unable to deal with the problems between Guale and Malaitans.\(^{13}\)

Conflict, or ‘the tensions’, finally erupted in 1999. From late 1998 groups of young male Guale militants, initially known as the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army, and later the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), began a campaign of violence to drive Malaitans off Guale land. Guale, since independence in 1978, had pursued various democratic avenues to get government to address their concerns, but to no avail. It is estimated that the IFM was successful in driving about 30 000-35 000 people from their homes on Guadalcanal.\(^{14}\) Here, again, it is important to note that the IFM was not strongly unified, with many members having different specific grievances, and some simply indulging in criminal behaviour.\(^{15}\) In response to the government’s inability and failed early efforts at peacemaking, Malaitan militants formed the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) to rebuff the IFM.\(^{16}\) The MEF joined forces with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), which was dominated by Malaitans, and as Solomon Islands had no army, was also the most heavily armed body in the country. Together, they staged a coup on 5 June 2000. They forced the resignation of Prime Minister Ulufa’alu and in the following weeks compelled parliament to elect a new prime minister, Manasseh Sogavare. Violence between the two groups intensified following that election, especially in Honiara.\(^{17}\) At this point, Australia and New Zealand evacuated internationals. This only added to the woes of Solomon Islanders, as economies collapsed and a sense of abandonment set in.\(^{18}\)

In April, prior to the coup, Prime Minister Ulufa’alu wrote to Prime Minister Howard asking for Australian intervention to prevent further descent into violence. Howard refused. He would do so again in 2001


\(^{15}\) Braithwaite and Charlesworth, *Pillars and Shadows*, 24.

\(^{16}\) For more on earlier efforts at peace see *ibid.*, 25-27.


when Prime Minister Sogavare again appealed for help. The Australian government saw it as an internal issue best sorted out by local communities, and not by a powerful outsider whose intervention could be seen as neo-colonial.19

 Nonetheless, Australia did assist with peace efforts in other ways. In August 2000 it provided a Navy ship, HMAS Tobruk, for ceasefire discussions, which resulted in a short-lived peace agreement. New Zealand made similar efforts. In October 2000, Australia hosted further talks in Townsville which led to the more substantive Townsville Peace Agreement being signed. That agreement resulted in the deployment of the International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) in November.20

 The IPMT was to oversee weapons collection alongside a local Peace Monitoring Council. The Team was made up of 14 New Zealanders, 35 Australians and smaller numbers from Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Tonga. Some were unarmed police, others were civil servants and some were from the military. The mission was headed by Australian diplomat, David Hegarty. Aside from collecting surrendered weapons, the IPMT was also responsible for monitoring the ceasefire, assisting with the peace process via education and community meetings, as well as training local police.21 Still, some people, particularly Harold Keke who had been part of the IFM but had formed a splinter group and was increasingly violent and mentally unstable, were not ready to move on. So, in the end, the IPMT having collected over 1000 weapons was withdrawn in June 2002.22

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19 Londey, Other People’s Wars, 227; Dinnen, Lending a Fist? Australia’s New Interventionism in the Southwest Pacific, State Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper (Canberra: Australian National University, 2005), 1; Elsina Wainwright and Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands (Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2003), 9-10.
20 For more on peace talks and the TPA see Londey, Other People’s Wars, 226; Braithwaite and Charlesworth, Pillars and Shadows, 37-39; Dinnen, ‘Winners and Losers’, 290-294.
22 For more on Keke and IPMT see Braithwaite and Charlesworth, Pillars and Shadows, 39-41.
Solomon Islanders themselves were making great efforts at restoring peace during this period. Church and women’s groups, and the National Peace Council – the successor of the Peace Monitoring Council – did much vital work.²³ As in Bougainville, the role of women and Christianity were crucial parts of the peacebuilding process. Alice Pollard, a leader in the group ‘Women for Peace’, describes the importance of Christianity in animating women’s efforts at peace. She wrote, ‘the roles that women have played in the present conflict can be traced back to their hands-on-skills and traditional knowledge, to biblical doctrines regarding responses to conflict, and to their love for their nation’.²⁴ As in Bougainville, women derived a lot of power from their roles as mothers and wives in their various cultural and kin groups. Pollard describes how in some Solomon Islands’ cultures a woman can use words referring to her body to challenge fighters to stop warring because to continue to fight when a woman has said it will hurt her body would be forbidden.²⁵

Though local efforts were many and had their own features specific to local cultural norms and traditions there were also many broad and organised initiatives for peace by women. The Women for Peace movement, for example, was a voluntary group of women from across the provinces who resided in Honiara and they worked collaboratively with militant, government and non-government groups to foster peace negotiations. Established in August 2000, the group had members from various Christian churches, lay organisations and general community members. They focused on grassroots community building and organising amongst women to create sustainable capacity development that improved women’s and so also family lives. The group also provided

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²³ For detail on women and church groups and the NPC see _ibid._, 31-33, 41-45.
²⁵ Pollard, ‘Resolving Conflict in Solomon Islands’, 44.
support and prayerful fellowship to women as they worked for peace in their communities.\(^26\)

Despite these important local efforts at peace, the Solomon Islands government requested outside assistance for a third time and in 2003 Australian Prime Minister Howard once again did a policy back flip and agreed to lead an international intervention. The reasons for the change were many and complex. In short, it was a consequence of the perceived change in the security and strategic environment post 9/11, as was discussed earlier. For Australia, ever concerned about the security of the stretch of space arcing across its north, this translated into anxiety about that space being filled with so-called failed or weak states as these could become havens for terrorists. The very influential report, *Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands* from the newly formed (2000) think-tank, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, set out these issues as reasons for intervention in Solomons. The report was also published serially in Solomon Islands daily newspaper, *Solomon Star* from 11 June 2000.\(^27\) It is also fair to say that this policy shift was closely related to the US alliance and the Bush doctrine of pre-emption that emerged post 9/11 and Howard’s inclination to support that approach in his own ‘patch’. Military efforts in the region also alleviated some of the US pressure to send Australian troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.\(^28\) So, even though in reality the Australian Government knew the likelihood of Solomons becoming a terrorist haven was low – and Howard himself downplayed the influence of the ‘war on terror’ on his decision – these security concerns still played into the decision to intervene.\(^29\) Therefore in 2003


\(^{27}\) Wainwright, *Our Failing Neighbour*.


\(^{29}\) Braithwaite and Charlesworth, *Pillars and Shadows*, 50.
when Solomon Islands’ Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza appealed for assistance, Howard responded in the affirmative. He sent the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

The Peace Operation

RAMSI, or *Helpem Fren* (‘helping friend’ in Tok Pisin), was deployed on 24 July 2003. Both Howard and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer had insisted the intervention be regional. As such, it was supported by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) – a regional body for cooperation – and was specifically enabled under the *Biketawa Declaration* which was an agreement by PIF members to respond to the needs of other members when in crisis.\(^{30}\) The intervention was also legislated for in the Solomon Islands’ parliament. The mission was sanctioned by the UN but it played a more minor role than it normally would in such situations because Solomon Islands recognised Taiwan and any UN involvement would have been vetoed by China.\(^ {31}\)

RAMSI was made up of five nations: Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, PNG and Tonga, though of the total 2225 personnel approximately 1700 were Australian. This composition did undermine the regional nature of the mission, and would later be a cause for regional criticism. Of the 1700 or so Australians about 1400 were from the ADF, with the rest from the Australian Federal Police (both sworn and unsworn members)\(^ {32}\) or Australian Protective Services. This latter group is a part of the AFP but its officers – Protective Service Officers or PSOs – undergo special training to take on high-level armed security functions for the Federal Government both in Australia and internationally. By early 2004 there were also about 80 peacekeepers from the Australian Public Service working in governance and administration positions.\(^ {33}\)

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\(^{32}\) An unsworn AFP member is a civilian employed by the organisation with no policing role whilst a sworn member refers to employees who are Federal Agents with the full range of policing powers.

\(^{33}\) Londley, *Other People’s Wars*, 227.
The peacekeepers were mainly based just outside of Honiara at what used to be the Guadalcanal Beach Resort. Over time outposts with contingents of police and military personnel were also set up around the country. Because the main problems had been identified, most notably in the ASPI report, as law and order, and secondarily governance, RAMSI was led by DFAT and the AFP rather than the ADF. The mission’s special coordinator was Australian diplomat, Nick Warner. AFP Agent Ben McDevitt headed up the policing side. The ADF and other national military units assisted by providing security and logistics and also helped to create a deterring presence. Though it did not have the executive powers of UNTAET in Timor, RAMSI was still an extensive state-building mission charged with restoring security, law and justice, economic governance and the basic machinery of government.

One key aspect of that mandate was to reform the deeply distrusted Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. This meant police peacekeepers mentored and trained local counterparts, as well as having regular community policing duties themselves. On the civil service side peacekeepers were to take up ‘in-line’ positions throughout the public service. They too would also mentor and eventually hand over the positions to Solomon Islanders. Again, much like the situation in East Timor, this process was not to be without difficulty or criticism from Solomon Islanders. Initially though, RAMSI was very successful in


35 For extensive nature of RAMSI see Braithwaite and Charlesworth, *Pillars and Shadows*, 49-93.

arresting corrupt officials, capturing Harold Keke (though they had a considerable head start thanks to efforts by local peacemakers), as well as collecting weapons and just generally returning some peace and sense of stability, especially in Honiara.\textsuperscript{37} The ADF personnel were vital to this early success. They restored security quickly and by late 2003 the force was reduced to about 500 personnel.\textsuperscript{38}

The task given to RAMSI was formidable and fraught with endless difficulties. RAMSI had a complicated relationship to Solomon Islanders. It reached a violent low in 2006 when riots erupted due to an election that was widely seen as rigged. The riots destroyed most of Chinatown in Honiara – many believed Chinese businesses had funded the corrupt election – and injured 36 Australian police. The riots were also successful in ousting the new government.\textsuperscript{39} RAMSI troop numbers were increased at this point, but then reduced again shortly afterwards. The military component of RAMSI ended its service at the end of 2013, while a small policing element remained in an advisory role. It will likely stay until about 2017.\textsuperscript{40}

Enter the Peacekeepers

Training and selection process for Solomon Islands bore some similarities to the missions in East Timor and Bougainville, but also had its own distinctive approaches shaped by the specific needs of the mission. This was an AFP and APS led operation – a first at the time – and a mission that required a decided focus on restoring law and order as well as rebuilding governance infrastructure. The training and selection

\textsuperscript{37} For more on Keke capture see Braithwaite and Charlesworth, \textit{Pillars and Shadows}, 53-55.

\textsuperscript{38} Londey, \textit{Other People’s Wars}, 229.


\textsuperscript{40} For more detailed information on the 2013 withdrawal of military personnel and the current role of policing officials see www.ramsi.org (Accessed 11 July 2014).
processes then, as elsewhere, reflected this variety of needs as well organisations grappling with how best to meet them.

ADF member Ben Daley was sent to Solomon Islands with a very specific job to do and as such he had no special peacekeeping training, as his skills readied him well enough for the job. He found out on a Thursday night that he was to deploy the next the next day, though he did end up getting six days’ notice.\(^41\) ADF member Sacha Bergman got a little more notice, but only a few weeks. Again, he was deploying in a particular capacity for which he already had the skills so he received no special training, but he did have to have his wisdom teeth out as part of the health preparation.\(^42\)

For Army Captain Carney Elias the whole process was a bit more routine. She belonged to a unit that was put on a rotation cycle so she got about a month’s notice that she would deploy and they did some basic training and preparation in that time. She recalled that other deployments, like those to the Middle East had longer lead times. She thought it was probably because the processes were not in place then. She said,

> there’s been a lot of development of those processes over the past ten years, probably eight years or so and I’ve seen quite a bit of that being here where we do a lot of logistics training and we provide input to training of units before they go so I think it was just the time more than anything else.\(^43\)

Army Private Cameron Smith also served with a formed unit, his company from 2\(^{nd}\) Royal Australian Regiment. He was given two weeks’ notice and in that time he said there was special training beyond the normal infantry exercises and preparation.\(^44\)

The experience for APS employee Samantha Isaac was quite different. She had been working in outside of the APS and was approached for a specific two-year job in Solomon Islands due to her skills and experience in peacekeeping contexts.\(^45\) Betty Pearson an unsworn AFP employee was also asked if she wanted to go and she said yes to the nearly two-year long

\(^41\) Ben Daley, interview with author, 19 November 2012, ROI1045.
\(^42\) Sacha Bergman, interview with author, 31 October 2012, ROI1036.
\(^43\) Carney Elias, interview with author, 3 October 2012, ROI1031.
\(^44\) Cameron Smith, interview with author, 3 September 2012, ROI1022.
\(^45\) Samantha Isaac, interview with author, 18 June 2012, ROI1035.
deployment. However, unlike the APS, AFP deployments were not served continuously but rather in 16-week blocks with a month off for the length of an employee’s contract – usually 100 weeks. Pearson deployed with the International Deployment Group (IDG), a specific sub-group of the AFP set up in 2004. It was dedicated solely to international deployments and organised specific and extensive training for its members. The mission-specific training prior to deployment that Betty Pearson undertook was typical of the IDG approach. She said,

we did two weeks […] it was all in the bush we had to camp. We had to put up our own tent take down our own tent put up our own tent take down our own tent several times! We had to cook our own meals […] we had to go and find the ingredients which they hid […] we had to do four wheel driving we had to do GPS-ing we had to pack march with 30kg, just an array of things […] they gave us scenarios which could happen in a country if a riot happened or some coup happened so it would give you some mindset. We also went out into the bush where they stopped us with guns and we had to figure out our way to get out of that.46

Whatever the different training peacekeepers received, most noted that they knew little about Solomon Islands before their deployments. In a now very familiar story, what they did know generally related to the country’s assistance and participation in WWII. Midshipman Philip Garrett said that when he found out he was going to Solomon Islands he did not really know anything about it except ‘that there was a place called Guadalcanal […] and that years and years ago the Japs caused quite a lot of trouble up there’.47 Betty Pearson said, ‘it was a place [GBR] where during the war the Japanese came through that way […] its steeped in history that end of town was. Solomon Islands is steeped in history as you know during the Second World War’.48 Army Private Cameron Smith said,

we did a lot of battlefield tours which was really cool […] there’s a big American memorial over there it’s

46 Betty Pearson, interview with author, 13 June 2012, ROI1013.
47 Phillip Garrett, interview with author, 30 November 2012, ROI1051
48 Pearson, interview.
beautiful [...] there’s a few Japanese memorials there, they’re only little and no one really paid much attention to them funnily enough [...] a lot of WWII stuff we got to see [...] for me it was just fantastic, my Grandfather was in WWII in New Guinea.49

In another striking similarity to peacekeepers’ from the Timor and Bougainville operations, Solomon Islands’ peacekeepers understood the mission to be necessary for the good of the region and an obligation Australia owed to it. A sentiment that once more Prime Minister John Howard also shared as he announced troops would be sent to Solomon Islands. He said, ‘the rest of the world expects Australia to shoulder a lot of the burden because this is our part of the world, this is our patch’.50 Leading Seaman Graeme Wall who served in all three operations said,

I’ve sent most of my career in the Pacific rim I’d move there and live there [...] I think what we did was good for the other countries I would rather have served in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Timor than the Afghani war or Iraq war or Vietnam or any of them.51

Army Corporal and AFP Agent, Anthony de Fraine Murphy who served in Solomon Islands and Timor said,

the old Australian adage of ‘she’ll be right’ you can’t rely on that when it comes to our own region. You’ve gotta look after the people there [...] we’re their neighbours, we’re their friends we should be looking after them.52

Navy Midshipman Phillip Garrett also thought Australia needed to look after the region and he believed that the country’s middle-power status gave it a neutral and positive role in the region. He said,

it’s why particularly through the South Pacific in the last, I’d say, 15 to almost 20 years [...] America has let Australia lead a number of operations [...] we are in a better position to do it.53

49 Smith, interview.
51 Graeme Wall, interview with author, 7 September 2012, ROI1027.
52 Anthony de Fraine Murphy, interview with author, 2 November 2012, ROI1038.
53 Garrett, interview.
Despite this unfamiliarity with the histories, cultures and politics of Solomon Islands many peacekeepers still saw a key rationale of the operation as relating to the needs of the region. As peacekeepers from Timor and Bougainville operations, those in Solomon Islands understood the stability of that state as necessary for the safety and prosperity of the Pacific region and so also Australia. More pointedly, Australia was again seen as having an obligation to midwifing that security and prosperity. It is clear that strategic and historical narratives about the Pacific region and Australia’s relationship to it informed peacekeepers’ own conceptions of the region, peacekeeping and Solomon Islands. That these narratives were so similar across all three operations further attests to the significant influence they had on peacekeepers and the way the three missions were bound together, historically, geographically, culturally and strategically, in Australian minds.

Working for Peace – Local People and Places

Though peacekeepers had a rather clear and coherent sense of why the mission was important regionally, most had never been to Solomon Islands before so those first few hours and days left a raft of impressions. Private Cameron Smith described a Solomon Islands village as ‘just paradise, it was lush green grass, all nice and cool’. APS employee Samantha Isaac served in Solomon Islands as well Timor and she said she had several first impressions.

The differences in Timor were quite pronounced in the sense of I guess in Timor people felt much more crushed for a long time. In the Sols they’re really feisty people yeah they’d been through some bad times but they were really in control. And it was a very different mission as well in that regard. I guess it was about confidence and not the sense of devastation that we got in Timor.

Navy Lieutenant Commander David Hannah served in Solomon Islands and Bougainville and when comparing the two he said, ‘They’re very close together you can say they probably should’ve been the same

54 Smith, interview.
55 Isaac, interview.
country their culture is so similar. I didn’t find Solomons quite as beautiful […] but it was just nice to be back up there.  

AFP Agent Geoff Hazel said,

I was flown over to Malaita […] little local sixteen seater it wasn’t the greatest plan under the sun pouring rain the whole way and anyhow we landed and I could actually feel the plane moving sideways on the runway and I looked out and I could see grass and I’m thinking ‘get this plane back on the runway’ anyhow we stopped get out and I look and it was on the runway! The airstrip on Malaita was built in WWII by the American engineers and it was crushed coral. It was still a very serviceable airstrip.  

Navy Midshipman Phillip Garret said,

I didn’t like the main island of Honiara but the more remote places we went to I actually really did like the idyllic little paradise type things full of their own distinct tribal groups you could sort of going around as an initial explorer and going ‘wow these places are all quite different’.

First impressions of people and places did not have long to settle in as peacekeepers got to work immediately. The types of work peacekeepers were given share similarities with those in Bougainville and Timor. As a state-building mission there was governance work in rebuilding departments and mentoring civil servants. As a mission with a major focus on law and order there was also much community policing work as well as mentoring and training work with new and old Solomon Islands police officers. Though it was less prominent than in East Timor, security work was also necessary so patrolling and intelligence gathering were further duties peacekeepers’ had. As the other two missions have shown, the variety of this work meant that peacekeepers had varying levels and types of engagements with local communities.

For many, work responsibilities meant daily interaction with Solomon Islanders. Angela Devlin, an Army nurse who also served in Timor and Bougainville met many local people as patients when they sought

56 David Hannah, interview with author, 4 June 2012, ROI1009.
57 Geoff Hazel, interview with author, 11 June 2012, ROI1011.
58 Garret, interview.
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treatment. She also got to meet people because she had specific health outreach and education roles that took her into communities. The image below depicts an Australian soldier and Solomon Islander nurse working together.

![Image of soldier and nurse preparing treatment](image)

Figure 11: Private Christopher Arlow and a local nurse prepare to treat a young boy for a tropical ulcer, Solomon Islands, 2009. Courtesy of AWM P08837.668.

Peacekeepers also often engaged with local communities via patrolling and policing work. AFP and ADF personnel often did this together with the ADF providing security for the AFP while they did their community-based work. Private Cameron Smith, for example, accompanied AFP officers on patrols and recalled spending time in a village after a long trek,

where we were there was a big a mountain next to us and to get to the village you had to go over the mountain. So you had to go over a mountain just to start your day! [on one of these patrols we had to go up this big hill] and it turned out to be brilliant because we walked up this hill to this village and it was just a paradise. It was lush green grass all shaded, nice and cool and [...] the locals were amazing. We rocked up and we were wrecked, just hot as shit carrying Army crap and the locals were brilliant they were just really,

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59 Angela Devlin, interview with author, 16 January 2013, ROI1053.
really, really hospitable. They came up with fresh oranges and really looked after us, everywhere we went they gave us coconuts and sweet potatoes. The locals were just awesome.60

For police, the experiences could be a little different as they were involved in regular community policing work, which as in Australia, covered a whole range of issues from drunkenness, crowd control, investigative work and general relationship-building with Solomon Islanders. The images overleaf give a sense of the typical patrolling and community policing work. Perry Ryman, an AFP peacekeeper recalled a story walking out of a shop and seeing his car surrounded by men holding machetes. He said,

we’d gone down to the service station [...] to top up the car, I walked inside to pay and I thought we’d grab some cold cans of drink to take back for the diggers [Australian colloquialism referring to ADF personnel] [...] I walk out and the car is absolutely surrounded by Solomon Islanders, males and they’ve got machetes and they’ve got all sorts of things and I’m sitting there going ‘oh my God’ what’ve we done? [...] I’m thinking this is not good [...] you just didn’t know what to expect [...] then all of a sudden you hear this great big [cheer] ‘hey RAMSI you go arrest our police, you go arrest our police!’ and I’ve just gone phew!61

AFP Agent Anthony de Fraine Murphy said responding to domestic violence and disturbance was one of the jobs that kept police busiest during his tour in 2007. He recalled one night when driving on patrol with his partner they saw a part of the sky aglow and a woman came running out of the nearby scrub yelling that her husband was in the burning house. He said ‘it was a case of the husband’s come home drunk accused her of misdeed and decided to set fire to the house and she ran off into the bushes’. He also recalled another situation in which

a woman escaped out of the house [...] and she’d just gone down this steep embankment and she turned up at the police station covered in mud, we sort of turned up and it’s like there’s no one else here and she’s worried because her husband’s violent has a machete

60 Smith, interview.
61 Perry Ryman, interview with author, 29 November 2012, ROI1049.
and all this sort of stuff but her kids are still, she only just sort of got out of there, [...] at the house, the husband had been drinking the local brew and had fully passed out, so we just picked the kids up.\textsuperscript{62}

\textbf{Figure 12}: RAMSI peacekeepers talking with villagers from Rufoki village in northern Malaita, Nov. 2003. Courtesy AWM P04225.272

\textbf{Figure 13}: Australian and New Zealand peacekeepers talking with locals in village of Anakelo in northern Malaita, Nov. 2003. Courtesy of AWM P04223.664

In a role very similar to his colleagues in Timor, Paul Chambers, an AFP forensic officer, spent some of his time investigating murders that

\textsuperscript{62} de Fraine Murphy, interview.
occurred during the conflict. On one particular investigation he was taken
to a remote island to exhume the body of ‘Cedric’. He did this with the
family nearby and he had trouble disengaging from their grief. With the
help of Australian forensic pathologists, Chambers was able to solve this
murder and accompany Cedric’s body back to his family for a proper
funeral. This was an incredibly meaningful and satisfying part of the job
for Chambers. In Solomon Islands especially, this type of work was
essential in helping reconciliation efforts. It was also vital in restoring
some trust in the police. Faith in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force
(RSIPF) had been decimated by that organisation’s role in the conflict and
its long history of corruption.

Since RAMSI was a state-building mission many peacekeepers also
worked alongside Solomon Islanders as advisers in the public service and
the police force and so would get to know local people in that context.
For some, working in these government related positions could be very
frustrating. This was both towards each other and towards locals as
everyone struggled to adapt their experiences of an Australian work ethic
and values to the local context. Unsworn AFP member Betty Pearson
said,

"I think sometimes they didn’t know how to do it [the
jobs being mentored in] they didn’t want to look fools. I
think also that some of them were just dead lazy, they
didn’t want to get up and do anything and they just
wanted to get paid for nothing […] it wasn’t sort of like
our mentality that we go to work every day to work to
do something to get that money. I don’t think they’d
actually been shown that. [It was hard in that rotation]
because you were there to mentor them and if they
didn’t turn up to work you well couldn’t mentor them.
What were they going to learn?"

Samantha Isaac, a highly experienced public servant with a lot of
Pacific expertise, recalled watching some colleagues get really frustrated

63 Alan Erson and Andrew Merrifield, ‘Dead Man’s Tale’, Policing the Pacific (SBS, 2006).
64 Ibid; for more policing experiences of this kind see, Don Barnby, interview with
author, 21 May 2012, RO11005; Craig Skehan, ‘Big Brother’s Brother’, Sydney Morning
Herald (SMH), 24 July 2004; ‘Police Recover Victims’ Bodies’, Solomon Star, 13 October
2003; Staff Sergeant Andrew Holt, interview with Peter Londey, 30 April 2000,
AWMS02643.
65 Pearson, interview.
during her work in the Solomon Islands government because they could not see things from the locals’ perspective. She thought that it had a lot to do with many peacekeepers having not had any other previous experiences of this kind. That meant that they were working from the view that the Australian way of doing things was better and easily transferrable. She described how she often wanted to shout that ‘this isn’t Canberra…forget Canberra!’\footnote{Isaac, interview; see also Pearson, interview.}

Though some APS and unsworn-AFP employees got to know locals through their work, for some these relationships were not a part of their work. Kate Binton and APS employee who served for two years described her work in RAMSI Headquarters. She said that every few months she would do some outreach work on islands facilitating the peace message but that mostly ‘I was dealing with the local bureaucracy but also the RAMSI officers who were in in-line positions’. Despite the lack of contact in her everyday work she also said she ‘hung around with our receptionist quite a bit and she was a local lady […] and she was just amazing and knew everyone’.\footnote{Kate Binton, interview with author, 20 September 2012, ROI1028}

Similarly, Army Captain Carney Elias worked as a watch-keeper, a role that had little to do with local engagement. Her work involved doing a range of tasks in the office such as writing reports and providing updates to the relevant staff.\footnote{Elias, interview.} Navy Lieutenant Commander Fraser Vergelius also worked in Headquarters in Honiara as Navy Liaison Officer or RANLO. He described his job as very similar to

planning a wedding […] it’s about coordinating with different people about different jobs […] so basically we moved all stuff through the islands buildings, long houses stuff like that […] a lot of the jobs were just simple goo old fashioned presence ops where the boats were just literally to be seen curing around the islands.\footnote{Fraser Vergelius, interview with author, 27 November 2012, ROI1047.}

As was the case in Bougainville, Navy personnel serving in Solomon Islands were also often restricted in their engagement with local
communities by the nature of their work. Midshipman Phillip Garrett who served in 2003 described his typical day:

my day would revolve around my tow watches so they would go for four hours and then you’d have time for personal admin, paperwork, sleep etc. and then go back on. So I did 8am–12 noon and then 8pm to midnight. We’d stay in Honiara where we weren’t sailing around visiting villages but we were mostly at sea. We weren’t allowed to go ashore unless we were in Army cans and we only had six pairs!

Like his counterparts in Bougainville he did briefly meet some locals when they would come out in their canoes and try to trade with us. When that first happened it was a bit worrying because we didn’t know what to expect and the mine hunting community [Garrett served aboard a mine hunter] hadn’t had much to do with the South West Pacific and usually people who come alongside in canoes are trying to stick mines on the ship, but you quickly learn!  

In another similarity with the peacekeepers in Timor and Bougainville some in Solomon Islands also made an effort to help build peace by connecting with locals outside of work. Captain Carney Elias, who, as mentioned above, was restricted in her interaction at work in a headquarters position, used to go to a local church service once a week and would enjoy speaking with Solomon Islanders there. For Kate Binton, her living arrangements and length of service made connections with locals possible. Though most peacekeepers were bunked at the old Guadalcanal Beach Resort outside of Honiara some APS employees, like Binton, lived in private housing in the community. She said, ‘my neighbours sort of took me under their wing too. [Their] little granddaughter who was about three at the time would wander over to my place all the time and watch Nemo with me’. Through them she got to know a lot of people in the community, ‘which was great’.  

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70 Garrett, interview.
71 Elias, interview.
72 Binton, interview.
Sport was one other way Australians tried to add to the peace outside of their normal work duties. There were also big special events, such as weapon disposal ceremonies, that were important too. Some of these were attended by large crowds who would watch as ADF engineers literally carved up weapons. Another special event was the ‘Clean-up Honiara’ day in October 2003. Over 150 Australian soldiers attended to work alongside Solomon Islanders and international peacekeepers in tidying up the town by picking up and clearing away rubbish and rubble. Figure 14 shows part of the 15,000 strong crowd gathered for a concert at Lawson Tama Stadium to celebrate RAMSI’s first hundred days. Figure 15 (overleaf) shows the Australian Royal Military College Band playing at the same concert.

Figure 14: Part of the 15,000 strong crowd of Solomon Islanders at Lawson Tama Stadium Concert Oct. 2003. Courtesy of AWM P04223.266.

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Other peacekeepers’ chose to do some humanitarian works as a way to connect and contribute to local communities. Lieutenant Commander Fraser Vergelius helped organise a supply run of food to an outer island that had been hit by a cyclone in Solomon Islands.\textsuperscript{76} AFP agent Geoff Hazel went to great lengths during his time with the International Peace Monitoring Team to financially assist a local initiative. The community wanted to put on a musical concert and together they raised enough money and made it into a great success. Hazel and his team also used leftover money from their own individual food allowances to build and stock a library for the community.\textsuperscript{77}

As much as relationships between Solomon Islanders and Australians were shaped by the work or extra efforts of peacekeepers they were also shaped by local perceptions and attitude towards RAMSI at large. At various points throughout the operation RAMSI was seen to be failing to do certain things, and this meant there were some difficult relationships between peacekeepers and locals. Though the following issues were not insignificant it is important to note that overall, RAMSI was popular and largely desired throughout its duration.\textsuperscript{78} Nonetheless, one of the most contentious issues was the belief that RAMSI was not arresting enough significant criminals – or ‘big fish’ as they were known. This was an issue

\textsuperscript{76}Vergelius, interview.
\textsuperscript{77}Hazel, interview.
from almost the very start of RAMSI despite much success, not the least of which was the arrest of militant leader Harold Keke. There was further resentment amongst some sections of the local community because RAMSI was taking too long to hand over in-line government positions.\(^79\)

This was also compounded in certain ways by the circumstances of the conflict in Solomons. Malaitans, as discussed earlier, were fighting with Guale over land use and various other issues on Guadalcanal Island, and they sometimes expressed a dislike for RAMSI and what they perceived as its anti-Malaitan sentiment. The mission’s weapons collection and disposal mandate as well as it having powers of arrest particularly fuelled this feeling.\(^80\) In addition to this issue, in his work on local responses to RAMSI, Gordon Leua Nanau suggests that perceptions and evaluations of the operation varied across rural and urban locales so that it is not accurate to think in terms of a singular local response or attitude.\(^81\)

There were also some issues around the AFP’s operating style. AFP officers were sometimes perceived as being overly arrogant, too aggressive, aloof and culturally insensitive.\(^82\) There is some evidence that suggests Australian police were heavy-handed in some of their operations to arrest people. Matthew Allen in his work based on interviews with Solomon Islanders describes one incident in which the police raided a suspect’s home while only his children were present and that they did so in an anti-terrorist style with eleven car-loads of heavily armed police and


\(^81\) Oxfam Australia and Oxfam New Zealand, Bridging the Gap between State and Society: New Directions for the Solomon Islands, 2006, esp. 6-14.

\(^82\) Moore, ‘Helpem Fren’, 141-164.
soldiers coming in through the windows and doors. Allen discusses similar stories and a growing resentment on Malaita because of it.\textsuperscript{83} Nanau identified similar sentiments in his work, as well a view that the mission was overly dominated by Australia and that its approaches were therefore sometimes culturally inappropriate and misinformed.\textsuperscript{84}

It is also necessary to note here that there were riots in Solomon Islands in 2006. Though these, and the effects they had on RAMSI, lay outside the period under study here they are worth mentioning. This is because though they were the result of a whole range of political and economic tensions and factors, they were also related to a sense of disillusionment towards and dislike for RAMSI. Some RAMSI peacekeepers and their vehicles were targeted and a few were injured in the riots.\textsuperscript{85}

As we saw in Timor, the peacekeeping environment also saw its share of Australians behaving towards local people in ways antithetical to ideas of peace. Though there were no accusations of unlawful violence towards Solomon Islanders, there were incidents of sexual harassment and assault. One peacekeeper whose job gave him access to this information, described a male soldier, a corporal, who had been going around soliciting sexual favours from locals. He was subject to a sexual assault investigation of which he was found guilty and subsequently discharged from the ADF.\textsuperscript{86} An AFP officer was charged in 2004 with child sex offences while


\textsuperscript{84} Nanau, ‘Intervention and Nation-Building’, 149-162.


\textsuperscript{86} Anonymous, interview with author.
serving with RAMSI. Beyond these two specific events the discussions on this issue became vaguer and, at times, just speculative.

One participant spoke about believing accounts he had heard of some AFP officers engaging in sexual acts with local people. While he did not expand upon the content of those claims, he did say that he thought that it would have been a minority of people because in his view most AFP peacekeepers had a sense that it was generally exploitative, irrespective of consent. It is also worth noting that while in 2006 there were public claims made by Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare that RAMSI was fuelling a local sex industry and doing things such as sneaking prostitutes onto the base, these allegations were consistently found to be groundless. They were likely just an indication of the souring relations between the Australian and Solomon Islands Governments at this time. These claims were probably an attempt to embarrass RAMSI and Australia.

This is not to suggest that therefore there was no prostitution or development of sex industries due to the peacekeeping operation. Gordon Leua Nanau has suggested that it did, but his work does not make it clear if Australians were involved. Peacekeepers themselves did not talk about this issue during the oral histories in anything other than vague or speculative terms. As was the case for these discussions with peacekeepers who served in Timor, there were likely a variety of reasons peacekeepers did not discuss the issue. It may be that they simply did not witness or have experience of them. It may have been a decision not to discuss it due to the illegality of sexual encounters between locals and

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88 Anonymous, interview with author.


Solomon Islands

Many peacekeepers were still working in their respective organisations and this may have further inhibited any willingness to discuss these issues, if indeed a peacekeeper had any knowledge of or involvement in them. This would have been compounded by the knowledge that eventually the oral histories would become public, as would my work based on them. Outside of the professional or legal trouble that may follow open discussion of involvement in prostitution, peacekeepers may have not wanted this information to be known for personal reasons or may have not thought it appropriate to share with me for any number of reasons. Not the least of these is that it is not a common practice for two strangers in a professional-like setting to talk about intimate (and generally illegal) sexual experiences or knowledge of these. These are issues that could perhaps be better explored with the passing of more time and access to different kinds of historical data from both peacekeeper and local community perspectives.

Though inappropriate or abusive behaviour by peacekeepers deserves attention and analysis, with the evidence currently available it appears as though this kind of behaviour by Australians was very limited in Solomon Islands. Aside from the way an oral history approach as well as the contemporaneity of the operation might limit peacekeepers’ discussion of this issue, the local context and broader changes in peacekeeping and defence culture also likely limited this type of behaviour. As mentioned in the previous discussion of sex in Timor, these two issues will be more deeply discussed in the following chapter. There, the effects of local contexts as well as broader concerns about organisational cultures, legal frameworks and the changing nature of international peacekeeping in shaping and apparently limiting this behaviour in comparison to earlier 1990s mission will be examined.

Overall, the work in Solomon Islands for Australians had its share of joys and highlights but it also had challenges due to the nature of peacekeeping work itself but also because of a local populace that was not always impressed by RAMSI. That is the unsurprising result of an intervention that itself was imperfect but that then met a complex political, historical and emotionally charged local context. The consequent
variety and quality of interactions between local people and Australians meant that peacekeepers were left with varying impressions of local people. Navy Lieutenant Commander Fraser Vergelius said of Solomon Islanders,

> The thing that struck me about them was that they had pretty much had nothing but they were very very happy. They had this simple sort of life. They were basically a fundamentally happy people who lived very simply.

He also said,

> the worst thing we probably did to them was bring the twentieth century to them. I mean that’s another story in itself. Before World War Two they’d literally been living in the Stone Age but then they’d suddenly had this war thrust upon them.”

### Australians Working with Each Other

Though peacekeepers working in Solomon Islands did not live in small teams like peacekeepers in Bougainville, they did live together at Guadalcanal Beach Resort or GBR. Some peacekeepers, especially those from the APS did live in houses around Honiara or elsewhere, the great majority were based at GBR. As such there were pronounced tensions between the ADF and AFP peacekeepers housed there.

ADF personnel recalled being annoyed and frustrated at both the behaviour and expectations of AFP members on two issues. First, ADF personnel did not think the AFP was very good at forward planning and so relied on the ADF, yet they had unreasonable expectations about what could and should be provided in certain timeframes. Second, there was a significant amount of friction because of different accommodation and living standards, particularly in the early stages of the mission.

That the AFP was not a self-reliant organisation in the same way as the ADF and did not have the same kind of experience at planning peace operations created some challenges for the two organisations. Lieutenant-Colonel John Hutcheson who commanded a military rotation in 2004 has

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91 Vergelius, interview; see also Brian Hulands, interview with author, 12 November 2012, ROI1041.
said that the problem stemmed from the fact that a military organisation has a culture, and need, for forward or proactive planning whereas a police organisation, also by necessity, tends to have a more reactive style. In RAMSI, this led to the AFP making short-notice support requests of the ADF. Further, the AFP had a tendency to overlook security planning, especially in terms of not taking what the ADF deemed suitable security on patrols.\(^2\) Perry Ryman who served with the Army and then the AFP in Solomon Islands agreed. He said, ‘The AFP are very good at thinking strategically, the big picture […] but at the lower end of the scale, how they’re going to achieve it becomes a bit of an issue’.\(^3\) Michael Shaw who served with a government department in East Timor summed it up saying, ‘the military would think the police are a bit too kind of blasé and cowboyish and the police would think the military are just too sort of process driven rather than results driven’.\(^4\) While this was an issue, and one that affected people at all levels of RAMSI, the challenge that peacekeepers constantly spoke about was a more personal one.

Life on peace operations is usually far from glamorous and RAMSI was no exception. Everyday life at the Guadalcanal Beach Resort (GBR) was, at least in the beginning, one largely lived in shared tents or other rudimentary accommodation along with basic ablutions. Figure 16 (overleaf) gives a sense of the GBR accommodation.

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\(^3\) Perry Ryman, interview with author, 29 November 2012, ROI1049.

\(^4\) Shaw, interview; see also Hannah, interview.
ADF peacekeepers recalled how some police officers struggled with this situation and did things that appeared odd to those in the ADF. Captain Carney Elias told a story about the shower blocks being built with curtains across the front but that except for one there were not curtains in between the stalls. She said, ‘when you’ve been in the Army for a while and you’ve had plenty of experiences of going out bush and you don’t get a shower for three weeks you just kind of have to get on with it!’ But she said that it was common to see three or four AFP women lined up outside the stall with the curtain while half the block was empty. At some point she found some material and rigged up curtains along all the stalls just to make it more efficient.  

While most ADF peacekeepers were patient and understood that their particular training and background made them well suited to basic and non-private living conditions, many did express frustration with what they saw as the selfishness of the AFP members. ADF personnel recalled that as logistics improved so did the accommodation for the AFP. While still basic it now included demountable buildings with good ablution facilities. Yet they were very unwilling to share those facilities with the military. ADF Officer Angela Devlin remarked that despite the AFP women

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95 Elias, interview.
having rooms with ensuites they were not willing to share. They had an attitude of ‘you’re Army girls, you’re dirty’.  

This tension was further compounded by the different rules that applied to the two organisations’ members. ADF personnel were not permitted to leave the base when off duty. This meant they were not able to go for a meal – a hugely enjoyable treat after a stint on the universally loathed military ration packs – or to socialise in Honiara. They were also not permitted to drink alcohol except on a limited and regulated basis in some circumstances. These were fairly normal operating procedures for a military deployment and comparable to those in Timor and Bougainville, but they were made more difficult to bear because AFP personnel were not bound by similar regulations. AFP officers were not under a constant command structure so once they had finished their shift or workday they were free to leave the base and head into town to eat, socialise and drink if they wished to do so. This difference between the two caused considerable tension and much annoyance from ADF members because they routinely saw AFP officers coming back from trips into town clearly having had an enjoyable time or returning with food. Perry Ryman, an AFP agent said,

> a lot of the AFP used to flaunt it in front of them […]
> guys were going out and getting maggotted [Australian colloquialism for intoxicated] and they were coming back and absolutely [showing it off] and they [ADF personnel] were absolutely livid […] It’s poor form it really is and it caused a lot, a lot of friction.

This situation was not helped by some AFP officers still complaining about the conditions to, or in the presence of, military personnel. Carney Elias, for instance, said, ‘they had different rules about being able to go out and stuff [they weren’t used to having those types of rules] so they’d have more freedom than us and still whinge about it. So that just meant that generally the groups didn’t mix a lot’. Some AFP officers, like Ryman, who had previous ADF service tried to ease this tension by

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96 Devlin, interview; Hutcheson, ‘Helping a Friend’, 52.
97 Hutcheson, ‘Helping a Friend’, 50, 52.
98 Ryman, interview.
99 Elias, interview.
buying ADF personnel cold soft drinks and pizzas.\textsuperscript{100} There was also more formal organisation of joint activities like sports afternoons that went some way to easing tensions.\textsuperscript{101} However, this issue remained a simmering one.

Although it is important to keep these frictions in perspective in that they rarely affected peacekeepers in any major or debilitating way, they do draw out another layer of complexity in the peacekeeping experience. The living circumstances and the need for close interoperability for the two organisations in RAMSI created a dynamic environment that peacekeepers had to negotiate. In this way, it is clear that organisational cultures were not static influences on peacekeepers’ relationships with each other but were moulded by and expressed in relation to the realities of peacekeeping life in Solomon Islands.

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The experience of peacekeepers working in Solomon Islands was, as we have seen in regards to Bougainville and East Timor, largely shaped by two influences. First, peacekeepers’ experiences were the outcome of the push-and-pull between the needs and goals of the operation and the local context in which it was operating. Second, the organisational, political, cultural and historical inheritance of Australian peacekeepers influenced how they engaged, understood and acted with each other, with local communities and with the operation itself. Together, these factors produced a variety of peacekeeping experiences.

For some peacekeepers the mission in Solomon Islands was one that bound them to locals because of their daily work. Police officers and mentors in government positions, for example, were always working with, and in relationship to local people and communities, if in different capacities. Yet, as we have seen elsewhere in the Pacific, this mission also required some peacekeepers to do work that kept them in headquarters-type roles which meant that they had little to do with local people. For some, their work produced a hybrid of these two. Some ADF members for instance, had much to do with Solomon Islanders if they were involved in security detail and patrol work with AFP officers. Yet this

\textsuperscript{100} Ryman, interview.
\textsuperscript{101} Hutcheson, ‘Helping a Friend’, 52.
work was not as reliant upon relationships and familiarity with local communities to the degree that government mentoring or community policing generally was.

The quality and nature of this interaction and the subsequent success of the work and goals associated with it were, as in Timor, often tempered and made complex by the political situation in Solomon Islands. Like in Timor, RAMSI was a state-building mission deployed into an incredibly volatile environment. Though not as threatening as the early stages of Interfet in Timor, the tension between Guale and Malaitans, their deep suspicion of each other and their complex participation in the political system meant peacekeepers were going to have to walk a very fine line to maintain neutrality. They were not always successful at this. Sometimes the tense relationships between Solomon Islanders and Australians were the outcome of actual harassing or cruel behaviour by peacekeepers. Disappointment and anger on behalf of local communities in that context is understandable. Yet often difficult relationships had nothing to do with peacekeepers’ actual behaviour or the overall achievements of RAMSI itself, but with local perceptions shaped by political, historical and cultural allegiances.

This points to the incredibly important link between the aim and conduct of an operation and the desires local communities have for their peace. Peace is contingent on how local communities define it; it is not a value-neutral objective state that can be imposed from without. Trying to meet these incredibly complicated and often entirely unachievable desires is largely impossible. Yet this is exactly what peacekeepers become symbolically, if not actually, tasked with. That RAMSI peacekeepers fell short or went about it in the ‘wrong’ way in the eyes of local communities was foreseeable.

The other factor at play in shaping the lives of Australian peacekeepers in Solomon Islands was the cultural, organisational and political inheritances they carried. Like their compatriots in Bougainville and East Timor peacekeepers in Solomon Islands explored, examined and engaged with the local environment and its people in relationship to larger ideas about what it meant to be an Australian keeping the peace in this place, in
these ways at this time. Much has been made of this wider context in the last two chapters. They have together suggested that these historical narratives about identity and place have been a kind of undertow pulling Australian peacekeepers in particular ways. These three chapters have hinted at the nature of that current, but have not delved into the depths of it. This has been because it connected all three operations; something about being Australian and being in the Pacific at this time influenced peacekeepers in similar ways. The following chapter brings these threads together.
A Peace that Binds

This chapter plait together the threads of the previous three chapters. It brings together the previously discussed specifics of each operation’s context and binds them to broader historical landscapes. The preceding three chapters continually intimated that a range of national, regional and historical narratives about the Pacific and its people, Australia and what peace and being a peacekeeper meant all came to bear on peacekeepers’ views and behaviours. They suggested that much of peacekeepers’ behaviour was based on their perceptions of the places and people they served, of themselves as peacekeepers and of themselves as Australians and as members of three very different organisations. Those narratives, constituted in various ways, travelled with peacekeepers from Australia to Solomon Islands, Timor and Bougainville. More than this, these narratives travelled across time bearing, as they did, marks of various narratives of the past. Peacekeepers’ stories show clearly that they cannot be securely anchored within the confines of individual operations and local contexts; they also belong to a much larger network of ideas about place, peace, identity and history.

Enter the Peacekeepers

There were two major but interconnected themes to emerge in peacekeepers’ experience and knowledge of their place of service prior to deployment. First, peacekeepers believed a major rationale for all three
operations was to secure the unstable ‘Pacific region’ – a concept that if not always expressed in exactly this format was shared by the vast majority of peacekeepers. Peacekeepers also believed that the obligation to bring peace was necessarily Australia’s since it had these historical debts to repay, but also because it was a powerful country in the region. Second, that the majority of peacekeepers knew very little of the places they were headed outside of specific military pasts, namely WWII but also the 1975 Indonesian invasion in the case of Timor. Both of these themes suggest that particular historical narratives were influencing peacekeepers’ stories. But some have been more influential than others. Though Australia has had a long, complex relationship with the region, and its own place within it, and this absolutely shaped peacekeepers views on the need and obligation to deploy peace operations, by far peacekeepers connected most personally to wartime stories. These overshadowed, and in many ways simplified, the many other facets of Australian histories with the Pacific.

Peacekeepers’ thinking in regional terms, and thinking of the ‘Pacific region’ as not just a region but also as a place of instability in need of outside assistance was not simply a reflection of contemporary political and strategic discourses. Rather, it grew out of longer Western and Australian histories that have continuously shaped, named and conceived of the region in certain ways. Pacific scholar, Arif Dirlik has argued convincingly that in asking ‘what is the Pacific?’ our real question is ‘whose Pacific and when?’ The Pacific has been actively conceived of in various ways, and often by outsiders, as way to exercise power and to serve and represent certain interests, relationships, values and ideals across time. Most of the exercise of that power has been a European

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enterprise. As a side note, some scholars prefer the term Euro-American since the Pacific has been so intimately connected to and represented by the United States. However, simply to avoid cumbersome language the terms European or Western are used with the view that they include the US.

Pacific scholar, Oskar Spate has shown that the vast ocean known as the Pacific has been so named since 1520 due largely to the Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand Magellan’s voyages. However, Spate argues that it was not widely known by this name until the seventeenth century and was instead commonly called ‘the South Seas’. By 1850, however, that term had largely given way to ‘the Pacific’ in political circles. Spate demonstrates that the use of ‘the Pacific’ became commonplace because of the expansive exploration in the seventeenth century and the changing commercial interests and possibilities it allowed. However, the South Seas did continue to be used into the twentieth century. It had a certain cultural cachet with Western audiences as it conjured up colonial tropes of romantic, sexual, and conquerable Pacific places and people. While the term ‘the Pacific’ grew in popularity and remained widely used into the twenty-first century, the term Oceania was also common. In the nineteenth century French geographers used the term Océanie to describe the vast area stretching from the Malay peninsula through to New Zealand (or Aotearoa). Its English equivalent, Oceania, remains in use in the twenty-first century.


1 For example see Connery, ‘Pacific Rim Discourse’, 30-56.
However, throughout the centuries none of these terms or their meanings remained stable. For example, in the twentieth century, for many both in and outside of the Pacific, Oceania came to mean what is commonly known as the ‘Pacific Islands’ (namely all the island landmasses of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia), and occasionally also Australia and New Zealand. However, for Pacific Islanders, Oceania was an expansive term that stressed connection and movement across the ocean and between islands. This vision has been most famously conceptualised by Tongan scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa. He shows that those who have been excluded from and represented by Western conceptions have contested and appropriated the ideas, borders and names given to them.

European visions of the Pacific, though dominant since the sixteenth century, were not innocuous but became, as Margaret Jolly has evocatively described, ‘sedimented in Pacific places and in the minds and bodies of its people’.

These European conceptions of the Pacific sedimented in Australia too. Yet Australia’s unique history and geographical placement gave it its own particular vision of the region. Like other European societies, Australia has used the name ‘the Pacific’ to represent a large and malleable region. However, Australia has generally favoured the moniker ‘Asia-Pacific’. That term was well-used in political discourse by the twentieth century and though it was not an exclusive or uniquely Australian title it became entrenched in that country. The linking of Asia and the Pacific into one term has been an opaque and confusing pairing which has often necessitated cordonning off smaller parts of the region with their own names like the ‘South Pacific’, ‘Southeast Asia’, or ‘Southwest Pacific’.

Australian peacekeepers were simply reflecting this diversity when they employed varied names for the region. As we have seen, peacekeepers from all three missions used the whole gamut of names from ‘South

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7 Hau‘ofa, ‘Our Sea of Islands’, 147-161.
Pacific’, ‘Southeast Asia’, ‘Melanesia’, ‘Asia-Pacific’ and ‘the Pacific’. There was slippage and muddiness in the way the terms were applied and they were often used interchangeably. Yet what was common to most peacekeepers was a sense that ‘the Pacific’ was a sufficient and commonly understood way to encapsulate the region as a whole. As was discussed in the Introduction, it was for that reason that the term ‘the Pacific’ has been used throughout this thesis.12 During the oral histories there was never any correction of my own use of the term to describe all three missions, nor were there any corrections or clarifications about the use of the term being appropriate to all three places. No one voiced any concerns or objections about its use either. By being so comfortable and flexible in shifting between various titles, yet using them as if they were all somehow meaningfully connected, peacekeepers were carrying on the long-held Australian and European visions of an elastic and enigmatic region.

And yet in that nebulous naming, renaming and reconceptualising there is a detectable underlying uncertainty about the region and Australia’s place in it. It reveals the uneasy and constantly shifting ideas about what and who belongs where. This is especially so in terms of linking Asia and the Pacific together. Ideas about what parts and people were ‘Asian’ and what parts and people ‘Pacific’ has been an especially fraught concept in Australia. In the context of this study, for example, this has been particularly the case for East Timor which has straddled an equivocal divide of being both Pacific and Asian. This was especially so in the wake of the peacekeeping operation and the persistent use of the security term ‘arc of instability’ that connected Timor to other Pacific places and apparent crises. As we have seen, peacekeepers comfortably called it part of Southeast Asia, while also placing it in the Pacific.

Certainly, a part of the reason for this unsettled and imprecise language has been because the region has provoked fear in Australia, while also reflecting Australia’s own ambivalence about belonging to this part of the

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12 For specific examples of the variety of definitions used by peacekeepers see Chapters 1-3 or for individual interviews see Kerschat, interview; John Fletcher, interview with author, 5 October 2012, ROI1033; Graeme Wall, interview with author, 7 September 2012, ROI1027; Christopher McLeod, interview with author, 3 October 2012, ROI1030; Carney Elias, interview with author, 3 October 2012, ROI1031; Bond, interview; Anthony Hilton, interview with author, 1 June 2012, ROI1008.
world. Out of that fear there has grown a desire to control, dominate, and, at times, colonise – a desire often couched in a language of security. In Australia, there have been slightly different approaches to those parts it considered more Asian or more Pacific but the underlying fearful motivations have been the same. To put it in a crudely simplistic way, those parts of the region considered Asian have more often been places to fear, while the more Pacific parts have been places to act upon that fear so as to shore up the area to Australia’s immediate north.

A persistent Australian perception of the Pacific parts of the region has been that they ought to be controlled or protected by Australia, or a sympathetic Western ally. They were seen as places to which Australia had an obligation. At Federation so normal was the belief that some Pacific Islands were basically Australian territories that the newly formed Federal government was given specific constitutional powers to govern relations with the ‘islands of the Pacific’.¹³ The area in question is now most commonly known as the South Pacific – a term that was largely popularised in Australian political circles in 1947 at a conference in Canberra attended by representatives from Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, France, Britain and the United States. The territory they were describing generally stretched from Dutch New Guinea (West Papua) to Tahiti.¹⁴ Historian, Roger Thompson has suggested that even prior to Federation Australia had fears of hostile ships landing in the arc across its north and threatening the continent. There was also some concern that convicts imprisoned on various islands, such as French New Caledonia, could be a hazard to Australia. These worries, along with growing anxieties about rival colonial or large Asian powers gaining territory in the region, helped to drive Australian campaigns for establishing Australian or British rule or annexation of Pacific Islands. This was especially so for Melanesian ones since they were the closest to the mainland.¹⁵ However, it was not only out of worry or trading interests

¹⁵ For detail on these early Australian relations with the South Pacific see Roger Thompson, Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era 1820-1920 (Carlton:
that Australia sought more control of its island neighbours, but also out of a paternalistic belief in Australian responsibility and superiority due to the coincidence of its geography and Western heritage.

Australia’s assuredness about the islands being places upon which it had a right and duty to act was evident in many of its actions.\(^{16}\) However, it was arguably most pronounced in Australia’s administration of British New Guinea (later named Papua). Britain had originally annexed the territory in 1883 and granted some administrative powers to Australia in 1905-06. After WWI, Australia also took on responsibility for German New Guinea though it was a League of Nations Mandate and not an Australian or British possession. After WWII the two parts were unified forming what is now known as Papua New Guinea (PNG) and was under Australian trusteeship until 1972 when self-government was granted.\(^{17}\) Full independence was granted in September 1975, but there continued to be much that was complicated and arguably neo-colonial in Australia’s relationship with PNG – some of which was discussed in Chapter One in regards to Bougainville. One of the defining features of this post-independence relationship was that Australia continued to see itself as having a special connection with and responsibility to PNG.\(^{18}\)

It is easy to see in these discourses and relationships that fear about Australia’s security in the region was a key motivator for its actions and shaped its worldview. A similar underlying nervousness and insecurity

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\(^{16}\) Christopher Waters, ‘Against the Tide: Australian Government Attitudes to Decolonisation in the South Pacific 1962-1972’, Journal of Pacific History 48, no. 2 (2013): 195-196 - for a thorough overview of Australian approaches to colonisation and decolonisation in the region see the entire article; for a specific discussion of the 1950s see David Goldsworthy, ‘British Territories and Australian Mini-Imperialism in the 1950s’, Australian Journal of International Affairs, 41 (1995), 356-372; another key example of these relations was the forced Pacific Islander labour trade in Queensland. See discussion of and references to this issue in Chapters 1 and 3.

\(^{17}\) For introductory discussion of Australian rule and process of independence see, Denoon, A Trial Separation, 2-10; Waters, ‘Against the Tide’, 194-208; Denoon, ‘Re-Membering Australasia’, 297-302.

drew Australian attitudes towards those parts of the region it deemed more Asian, yet the form of that took a slightly different shape. From at least the middle 1800s those parcels of the region that were considered more ‘Asian’ (primarily China, Japan, Indonesia, and island Southeast Asia) were seen as huge, amorphous unknowable places to fear. Unlike their smaller more seemingly isolated island counterparts they were filled with people to be afraid of, particularly in terms of their apparent desire to invade and colonise Australia.19

From about the 1850s Australian fears of Asia and its so-called ‘Asiatics’ grew as Asia was perceived to be awakening from hibernation. This was especially the case in regards to China, though often individual nations were collapsed into a generic ‘Asia’. This view collided with a period during which Australia was forming as a nation and was experiencing an influx of Chinese workers chasing gold. As historian David Walker has suggested, much of the masculine and racial elements of Australian nationalism were a reaction to this perceived Asian threat.20 This image of Asia also played on a whole range of internal Australian anxieties, such as the suitability of European bodies to the hot climate, and the validity and security of Europeans’ claim on the land. This latter fear was also a reflection of the tensions and worries underpinning relations between indigenous and settler Australians. A conquering Asia could mean the aboriginalising of white Australians.21

In 1901, Australian fears of Asian and indeed all non-Anglo immigration was formalised with the enactment of the White Australia Policy. With it Australia made clear that the new nation would be staunchly white, British and aggressively masculine. This stance was also something of a rejection of Aboriginal Australia. Australia and its indigenous people, at various times, had been included in conceptions of the Pacific, as part of Melanesia, Oceania and the South Seas. By so

21 Walker, Anxious Nation, 9, Ch. 11.
decidedly rejecting the notion that Australia was a part of the region in favour of the view that it was a defiantly British outpost perched on the edge, Australia could more comfortably exclude itself from a region – and its own indigenous population – that it largely envisioned as essentially different and often inferior.

And yet, despite this forceful stance, this had not always been Australia’s approach. Pacific scholar Donald Denoon has shown that for much of the nineteenth century Australia was not so exclusionary nor necessarily so fearful. It had, for a while at least, actually considered itself part of a region called ‘Australasia’; a space he describes as stretching from Dili, East Timor to Dunedin, New Zealand. He shows that Australian colonists in the nineteenth century often used the term ‘Australasian’ to refer to themselves, and ‘Australians’ to refer to indigenous inhabitants. With Federation, the Australasian grouping and style of naming fell into obscurity in favour of the more defined and singular idea of a British Australia.

However, while the nation may have chosen a white, masculine, British profile, it continued to oscillate and grapple with what that really meant in an Asian-Pacific region right up to and throughout the twentieth century. For example, throughout the 1980s and 1990s under Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, Labor governments sought to shift the focus of foreign policy back to the region and embraced the idea, and reality, of a multicultural Australia. This was especially so for the Keating period. In the landscape of the booming economies of the so-called ‘Asian-Tigers’ and the recession in Australia, Keating sought to open the Australian economy to take advantage of the boom. To that end he expanded the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum (APEC) which had been established by his predecessor. Importantly, Keating’s Asian outlook was also about his ideal Australia – one decidedly Asian and freed from ties to Britain.

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23 Ibid, 290-304.
24 ‘The ‘Asian-Tigers’ were Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.
25 For more Keating/Hawke context see Graham Maddox, The Hawke Government and Labor Tradition, (Ringwood: Penguin, 1989); David Lee and Christopher Waters, Evatt to Evans: The Labor Tradition in Australian Foreign Policy, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997), esp. 11-22, Chs.10-14; Meg Gurry, ‘Identifying Australia’s “Region”: From Evatt to
Chapter Four

Under Prime Minister Howard the country moved away from the Keating outlook back to a more Euro-American one. Australia’s Britishness and its belonging, past and present, to the Western world were emphatically emphasised. Howard’s view was that Australia was in but not of the region. This was epitomised in September 1999 – the day after peacekeeping troops began deploying to Timor – when the Prime Minister gave a speech to Parliament. He said,

in occupying what I have called a unique intersection – a Western nation next to Asia with strong links to the United States and Europe – Australia deploys unique assets in our relationship with the Asian region. These links in our history are not an embarrassment to be lived down – quite the contrary. We have stopped worrying about whether we are Asian, in Asia, enmeshed in Asia or part of a mythical East-Asian hemisphere. We have got on with the job of being ourselves in the region.26

A cogent example of peacekeepers’ sharing a similar view is a quote from Army Captain Gerry McGowan. He served in Bougainville and said,

I don’t think there is a sense of superiority or racism involved in it, but I don’t think that there is as close an affinity with the Melanesian or the Asian population at all as there is with European and you know all the studies suggest the same thing. All the political ideas about the engagement with Asia […] but that’s commercially based that’s not an affinity based on the cultures. Whilst yes we sit geographically down here, in all of our commercial TV channels how many are in

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Asian languages or Melanesian or anything other than English? [...] Our closest affinity is with the Kiwis but it is with the white Kiwis who are exactly the same as we are [...] now I’m not saying that this is a positive thing I’m not saying it’s a healthy relationship to have within the South Pacific demographic I’m just saying that that’s what I see.27

Australia has had a complex often contradictory relationship with the Pacific region. It has named, divided and related to it in ever shifting ways. Yet always these relationships, ideas, and policy decisions have been driven by a deeper desire to cement or change Australian ideas of itself as a nation and a people in a region it finds unsettling and confusing. Australia has never really been able to decide definitively if it was, or wanted to be, in but not of the region or in and of the region. These changing, often conflicting ideas about Australia and its place in the Pacific continued into the late 1990s and 2000s shaping peacekeepers’ own views and language.

Interestingly, no matter the specific orientation of the nation at any given moment there has always been a belief that Australia had an obligation to act in the region. Australia was obligated because it was ‘their backyard’, because it was a powerful nation in the region, but also because of an inherited sense of cultural superiority. Ironically, this longstanding history of intervention in and paternalistic desires for the region meant that Australians were somewhat reticent to intervene for peacekeeping. As we have seen, Australia did not exactly jump willing into the fray, especially in Timor and Solomon Islands. In the case of the latter there was a flat-out refusal for months. For the former, immediate political concerns about the Australia-Indonesian relationship surely played a part in this reluctance. However, part of the explanation also lay in Australia’s involvement in histories of colonialism and imperialism in the region. Australians may have felt an obligation and responsibility to intervene in the ‘arc of instability’ but making it clear that this was no longer for colonial or imperial aims was of paramount importance.

27 Gerry McGowan, interview with author, 8 March 2013, ROI1055.
While the peacekeeping operations were not attempts at formal colonisation, for many Australians they did have a colonial ring about them. Indeed, they created questions, discussions and sometimes concerns in Australia prior to and throughout the three peacekeeping missions. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, for example, ran an article that said,

bitter memories of the colonial era in the Pacific and South-East Asia mean Australia is, appropriately, reluctant to embrace any policy which may suggest neo-colonial goals. However, intervention with strong backing from the Solomon Islands is the lesser of two evils.  

A 1997 *Sydney Morning Herald* article said about Bougainville, ‘As the former colonial power and the country most involved in post-colonial economic development, and because of the natural obligation of a close neighbour to help, Australia must do all it possibly can’.  

Paul Kelly, Editor-at-Large of *The Australian* said in the wake of the mission to Solomon that ‘Australia is about to embark on a path of re-intervention as a metropolitan, not a neo-colonial’. Countries across the region did not always agree, especially and very vocally after the article that claimed Prime Minister Howard had called Australia the US deputy sheriff in the region.

Following that claim, Indonesian political analyst Salim Said said, ‘Howard is like a 19th-century European standing on a beach and thinking he will have to watch out for the little brown uncivilised neighbours that lie to the north’. A 1999 *Courier Mail* also described Malaysia’s outrage. It quotes a Malaysian newspaper article:

the anger which it provoked in Asia, including some anti-Australian hysteria in Indonesia, is understandable for it loudly echoes the arrogant and archaic belief of the Conradian colonial master who deemed it the

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August role of the white man to bring enlightenment to lesser mortals.\footnote{Asian Media Hits Howard’s “Colonial” Role, *The Courier Mail*, 29 September 1999; for more on Australian concerns of neo-colonialism as well as regional claims of same see, Sheridan, ‘PM’s Doctrine Under Siege’.}

And yet despite all this there is a glaring absence of discussions about Australian colonialism in peacekeepers stories. The previous three chapters have said very little on this issue because peacekeepers, in the majority, only discussed colonialism or imperialism in a broad sense of knowing they belonged to the West and that peacekeeping at a macro level might be in some sort of imperial grey area. That issue will be explored in the following chapter. What is important here is that despite this political reluctance to intervene and awareness of colonial pasts, peacekeepers continued to feel a sense of obligation to the region because it was ‘our patch’, and neighbours were supposed to look out for each other. There was no sense that Australia’s colonial or imperial involvement obligated the nation to intervention. A generic sense of neighbourly obligation, especially because Australia was strong, wealthy and capable remained the dominate narrative. History did affect peacekeepers personally in other ways. For many the most valid explanation for Australia’s duty to intervene was because the country had certain historical wartime debts to repay.

That peacekeepers’ were so connected to these quite limited historical episodes and quite unconnected to the long and varied histories of Australia’s real and desired colonial rule and intervention in the Pacific is a fascinating position for them to have held. Why Australians drew so little a sense of obligation from its imperial and colonial behaviour which in many ways contributed to the very conflicts peacekeepers were sent to address is not entirely clear. However, there are a few tentative suggestions that can be made. Patty O’Brien has argued that Australian historians have largely focused on inward colonial histories of the continent rather than its outward colonialism. She argues this has been especially so in regards to violent frontier encounters, particularly in
PNG. In focusing on histories of the experiences of British colonisation for indigenous and European Australians, stories of Australian expansion into and colonial relations with the Pacific have been made less visible. Consequently, over time they have figured far less prominently in Australians’ general historical knowledge.

Chris Waters has also shown how between the 1940s-70s, Australians lacked general knowledge of the region and were, for the most part, largely uninterested. Perhaps this general lack of curiosity also contributed to a longer-term deficiency of knowledge and awareness, particularly in terms of including these histories in Australian educational systems. In this way, it is possible to see that peacekeepers’ lack of connection to these issues was because, like other Australians, they were not familiar with these histories either at all or in any meaningful detail. Peacekeepers have not shied away from making connections between their service and other historical narratives of relations with the region, so in many ways it would seem that these strands of the past have simply remained hidden to most peacekeepers.

It is also likely that these stories were just largely overshadowed by wartime narratives. For peacekeepers across all three operations it was World War II stories that most vividly and personally framed a sense of Australian connection to the Pacific. Thousands of Australian soldiers deployed to New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor throughout WWII to defend them – all still being European imperial possessions of some kind – from Japanese occupation and rule. And peacekeepers drew on a sense of debt to the local people who helped soldiers during this war in various campaigns.

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34 Waters, ‘Stemming the Tide’, 207.

Local people, oftentimes trained and partially amalgamated or employed by Australian forces, were assisting Australians survive and sometimes win their objective. Though there are examples of vital assistance by Timorese and Solomon Islanders during battles there, the role of local communities has been most famously captured in Australian narratives of the ‘Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel’.

That is a colloquial name used by Australians to describe the approximately 50,000 Papuans, New Guineans and other Pacific Islanders who aided Australians in New Guinea. In Australia, they are most popularly associated with the Kokoda campaign. This was a series of battles between Allied (though mostly Australian) and Japanese forces that occurred in 1942. They took place on a rugged, treacherous track across mountain ridges in the south of Papua. Because of the terrain, war-conditions and inclement weather on the track, injured and ill soldiers were many. Local people acted as stretcher-bearers and carriers of supplies to assist the soldiers. They saved many lives in the process. Many more worked on major bases across the Pacific as well. 36

Peacekeepers were deeply connected to these stories, particularly military personnel who felt a double debt as Australians and as heirs of WWII soldiers’ legacies. It was not uncommon for instance to find Australian, and also New Zealand, troops serving in Bougainville holding spontaneous services at WWII memorials, and troops from both sides of the Tasman made efforts to clean up and restore memorials. 37


37 Rosemary Baird, ‘Anzac Peacekeepers: The Relationship between Australians and New Zealanders in the Truce Monitoring Group, Bougainville’, History Australia, 9, no. 3 (2012): 216; see also her ANZAC Peacekeeping: Trans-Tasman Responses to the Bougainville
This sense of debt and the need to repay it was common prior to and during peacekeepers’ deployments. The Australian press often emphasised this past in a language of ‘honour’ or ‘dishonour’ to justify the peacekeeping operations.\textsuperscript{38} The depth of feeling, and certainly press coverage of this kind, was most pronounced in relation to East Timor. As discussed earlier, narratives of the 1975 invasion and Australia’s acquiescence to it, coupled with WWII stories to produce a deep sense of Australian connection and debt to the Timorese people. These, combined with what many Australians perceived as the Government’s slow and inadequate response to the unfolding violence in 1999 meant this language of debt, of personal honour or dishonour was impassioned for this mission in a way incomparable to those in Solomon Islands or Bougainville.

Nonetheless, that peacekeepers across all three missions especially drew on narratives of personal debt and historical connections to the Pacific is not surprising given the way WWII more generally, and particularly Kokoda and the so-called ‘Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel’ narratives, have grown in prominence in Australian collective memory since the 1980s and especially the early 1990s. The reasons for this are many but relate to Prime Minister Keating’s ‘turn to Asia’, as well as the growth of and change in national war-memorialising that began about this time also. As well, they were imitating the increasingly personalised process of remembering war that emerged during this period. This was especially so for military peacekeepers. Their sense of connection was even more intimate because of the way military memory worked in the ADF. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, ADF members were encouraged to see themselves as personal and institutional heirs and protectors of the legacy of those who went before them – particularly those soldiers who served in the two world wars. Timorese Leader Xanana Gusmão played on this in the February 2000 handover ceremony to UNTAET when he read an excerpt from a letter written by a WWII Australian soldier remarking


upon the insurmountable debt Australians owed the Timorese. He followed this by saying to Interfet Commander, Major-General Peter Cosgrove, ‘General, you have now paid the debt and the East Timorese people honour you for that. We thank you personally and we thank all Interfet from our hearts’.  

It does seem that this kind of remembering was less prevalent for public servants, than police or military personnel. Pearl Hudson, a civil servant who served in Bougainville, remarked that she thought the WWII connection was stronger for military personnel and that she herself had never heard of major events such as the battle of Guadalcanal. While the importance of previous wars for ADF personnel support that view, that some AFP and public servants did talk about this issue indicates the significance of these collective war-memories for Australians at large.

Their significance meant that the long, complex histories of Australian intervention, annexation, fear and imperial desires were largely overshadowed by these military pasts. And yet, it is perhaps not just that. It is likely that these narratives of war, debt, friendship and sacrifice were less problematic than the many conflicting, complex narratives about Australia’s imperial perceptions of and engagement with the region. For a nation that has been so often uncomfortable and almost always equivocal about the nature of this region and its own place in it, it is hardly surprising that it should shy away from that past and turn towards a more concrete and discrete historical period. This is especially so given Australia was a nation that had become so thoroughly enthralled with wartime stories as the wellspring of its identity.

**Working for Peace – Local People and Places**

A major factor shaping peacekeepers’ work with and for local people in all three operations was the specifics of each context. The mission’s mandate, the particular job of a peacekeeper, the timing and location of service as well the many political, cultural and historical features of the

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40 Pearl Hudson, interview with author, 21 August 2013, ROI1057.
local situation all worked to define the experience of peacekeepers. This explains why peacekeepers could have such varied experiences within an operation and certainly across all three. However, there were experiences, views and behaviours that peacekeepers shared across all three operations which suggests they reflected or were connected to some broader ideas or issues beyond the specific operation. Three prominent themes to emerge from peacekeepers’ stories about working for peace were a shared language of beauty and especially ‘paradise’ to describe landscapes; a sense of local people as being both childlike, happier than Westerners and yet inexplicably dangerous; and a common belief that the true value of peacekeeping work was to be found in interacting with and providing material benefit to local people. This section will explore these themes and explain why they were common across the three operations. Finally, although peacekeepers acting in unlawfully violent or sexually exploitative ways towards local people were only issues, and fairly minor, in Timor and Solomon Islands, the final part in this section will discuss this behaviour and why it did, and did not, occur.

One of the interesting commonalities across peacekeepers’ stories of their impressions of their places of service, especially those who served in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, was that they were seen as ‘paradises’. Despite the destruction that many peacekeepers saw during their tours, lush and abundant landscapes are what stood out in their memories. This notion of paradise, and especially its common attribution to Solomon Islands and Bougainville was not a new way to describe these places. Indeed that these landscapes should be considered the epitome of paradise stems from a longer Western vision of the Pacific and its peoples. In this way the landscapes were, as Tracey Banivanua Mar has suggested, ‘historical texts’; they were spaces on which historical metanarratives could be reaffirmed.41

In 1832 the French navigator and naturalist, Jules-Sebastien-Cesar Dumont D’Urville, drawing on the work of other French geographers, divided the Pacific into the entities of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia that we know today. D’Urville originally carved the ocean into

four provinces with Malaya rounding out his vision. Malaya has essentially disappeared from modern conceptions of the Pacific, while the tripartite division has become entrenched.\textsuperscript{42} Significantly, the D’Urville partitioning essentialised the people of the Pacific into racial and sexual categories. For example, his Melanesia, which included Australia, was deemed home to the most brutish, ugly, blackest, undesirable and least developed people of the region – this was especially so for Aboriginal Australians. Contrarily, Polynesia and Micronesia, particularly Hawai’i and Tahiti, were considered paradises. Their people, primarily the women, were viewed as especially sexually desirable and civilised. The islands themselves were also seen as incredibly beautiful, lush, clean and fertile spaces, though the unrestrained sexuality of their people often meant there was also a dark, dangerous and foreboding side.\textsuperscript{43}

This idea of the ‘island paradise’ has been vital in European conceptions of the Pacific. The islands were seen as the living embodiment of a Christian Eden before the Fall. They were places where bliss was natural and ubiquitous, and where an abundance of every variety of pleasure was possible.\textsuperscript{44} This perception was also connected to broader Western ideas about the island landmass itself. Islands have long occupied a special position in the Western imagination as places of escape, of unique insularity and as possibilities for utopian or dystopian fantasies to be enacted.\textsuperscript{45} That peacekeepers saw Bougainville and Solomon Islands as paradises is not surprising given they have belonged to that canon for hundreds of years.


\textsuperscript{44} Baudet, \textit{Paradise on Earth}, esp. 1-36; Smith, \textit{European Vision}, esp. 42.

The long-standing Western enmeshment of some islands with notions of sexual abundance and freedom also seems to have had some influence on peacekeepers. They did not speak of the people or places in sexualised ways. In this, they may have been reflecting longer historical narratives of Melanesia not being a place of sexual entitlement, attractiveness and abundance in comparison to Polynesia and Micronesia. The use of oral history may also have influenced the shape of this discussion. Given the earlier discussion about my own reticence to ask questions of a sexual nature and that many participants were also still working in professional careers may have made them reticent to discuss these issues publicly if they had wanted to.

One other important element of peacekeepers’ conceptions of the Pacific as paradise is that they did not include East Timor. These types of descriptions and conceptions were limited to Bougainville and Solomon Islands. This highlights the equivocal nature of Timor as part of the Pacific region. As has already been discussed, Australia has long had a tension between what is rightly considered Asian and what is rightly considered Pacific. It has often just elided the two into the moniker ‘Asia-Pacific’. Timor is emblematic of this ambiguity because it is a part of the Indonesian archipelago, its surrounding ocean is Indian rather than Pacific and it has been comfortably included as part of Asia. And yet, as this chapter has shown, Timor has frequently, without much contestation, also been considered part of the Pacific.

Its more Asian construction is perhaps what excluded it from being considered a Pacific paradise like its more definite Pacific neighbours, Bougainville and Solomon Islands. It is precisely this ambiguity of Timor as sometimes Asian sometimes Pacific or some hybrid of the both that makes it a prescient inclusion in this thesis. This is because the fluctuating positioning of Timor in peacekeepers’ conceptions of the Pacific constantly draws us back to the notion that the Pacific, as an idea and as a physical space, has been and continues to be incredibly fluid and changes often at the hands of outsiders. And that process says much about their values and priorities.
Ideas of paradise were not the only shared features of peacekeepers’ stories that were influenced by European conceptions of the region. One of the themes across all three operations was that the local people were childlike yet dangerous and also happier than Westerners because of that simplicity. These views were linked to European historical narratives about Pacific peoples which themselves were intimately connected, mutually constitutive even, with stories about paradisiacal island landscapes.

By the eighteenth century religiously based Renaissance ideas explaining the differences between indigenous inhabitants of the new worlds and Europeans were being challenged by rational scientific ideas of indigenous people as distinct racial others that could be placed on hierarchical scales rating their inferiority or superiority. Consequently, the inhabitants of the Pacific were seen in comparison to each other and were also measured against other non-white races that imperial Europe was encountering in Africa and America. Determining where people fitted on this imperial scale of ‘White’, ‘Yellow’, ‘Brown’ and ‘Black’ was closely bound to the geographical slicing up of the Pacific and also with colonial and national politics.

This meant that the Pacific and its peoples could be places of contending ideas; they could be both utopias and dystopias filled with noble or ignoble savages depending upon European self-perception, needs, anxieties and desires. Ignoble savages were characters in a narrative that moralised on the superiority and enlightenment of Europe,

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whilst noble savages were the heroes in a story about the degradations and brutishness of a modern civilised West. Epeli Hau’ofa captured the duality concisely,

in the earliest stage of our interaction with the outside world, we were the South Sea paradise of noble savages living in harmony with a bountiful nature; we were simultaneously the lost and degraded souls to be pacified, Christianised, colonised and civilised.\(^{49}\)

Ideas of noble and ignoble savages were not new or unique to the Pacific. They had also played a role in conceptions of North America, for example. Yet they did play a profoundly significant role in determining how the Pacific.\(^{50}\) The noble savage idea dominated stories of the Pacific early in the eighteenth century and perhaps its most famous thinker was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. His ideas related to American Indians but gained a lot of traction and validation in the Pacific. He suggested that the noble savage was closer to what he saw as an innately human and natural instinct that was not in need of being overcome with civilising pursuits like education and reason. These things, he argued, were in fact fatal to humankind’s natural state of being. The noble savage was irrevocably bound to the landscape since he was a personification of nature, which itself was noble, instinctual, simple, and if properly understood could reveal God.\(^{51}\)

If noble savages represented the best state of humanity they were also vulnerable to being ruined by Western influence. This was especially so for those who lived on islands. This was because Europeans understood islands, unlike continents, to be insular spaces, both morally and geographically, that housed purer and highly vulnerable inhabitants. Fear of corruption or what has often been called the ‘fatal impact’ of Europeans was common. It was, however, less about the Pacific and its people and more a reflection of European anxiety and fear about the


effects of a seemingly ever-changing and industrialising modern civilisation on European society itself.\textsuperscript{52}

By the 1820s violent indigenous resistance to European colonisation was more widely known in the West. And as Christian evangelism expanded, the Pacific was increasingly cast as a space full of ignoble savages in rather desperate need of redemption and salvation. The rescuers of these unredeemed places were often traders and Christian missionaries who emphasised the need for the development of a European and Christian approach to work and commerce. They also advocated for the cessation of what were now seen as repulsive island practices, such as cannibalism and unrestrained sexuality. This was a ‘hard primitivism’ tethered to paternalistic Christian ideas about the perfectibility of humankind and the superiority of civilisations grown in Christian faith.\textsuperscript{53}

One image did not simply replace another. The two visions were mutually constitutive and co-existent, but the dominance and pertinence of each shifted at various times.\textsuperscript{54} Indeed, it is precisely the co-existence and flexibility of these ideas that has made them so enduring and entrenched in Western minds and cultures. Unsurprisingly then, these metanarratives about Pacific peoples and places still had traction and meaning in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as peacekeepers began deploying.

Though peacekeepers never discussed racial hierarchies or talked about skin colour in pejorative terms or in ways that exactly mirrored their cultural forebears, their visions and perceptions of the Pacific were undoubtedly legacies of Western ways of seeing and understanding. Peacekeepers in all three operations shared stories about the childlike happiness and simplicity of local people. They saw that despite the material poverty and even the violence people had experienced, this simplicity and the island way of life made local communities much

\textsuperscript{52} Smith, European Vision, 42-84; Lansdown, Strangers in the South Seas, 67-72; Sturma, South Sea Maidens, 156-57.

\textsuperscript{53} Smith, European Vision, 145-151.

\textsuperscript{54} Edmond, Representing the South Pacific, 9-20, 226-242; Jolly, “Ill-Natured” Comparisons, 334-35; Lansdown, Strangers in the South Seas, 110-149; Smith, European Vision, 141-177; Baudet, The Great Map, 291-293.
happier than Western peoples. From this view grew a fear that the West had ruined, or was going to ruin these places by bringing technology, money and all the other trappings of the West.

In these views peacekeepers clearly reflected various European historical narratives about the Pacific and its people. It is striking, for instance, to see in Glyndwr Williams’s work on Captain James Cook the similarities between the captain’s views of indigenous Australians and peacekeepers’ views of local people. Cook wrote,

> the Natives of New Holland they may appear to some to be the most wretched people upon the Earth, but in reality they are far more happier than we Europeans; being wholly unacquainted not only with the superfluous but the necessary Conveniences so much sought after in Europe, they are happy in not knowing the use of them.\(^{55}\)

Part of this narrative about the undesirability of Western influence on the Pacific was bound up with the idea that it would not just ruin these places, but would also eliminate them as places of escape for Westerners. Since Australians saw the local people and places they served as happy in a natural, simple and childlike way, they could continue to be an escape from a Western culture they largely saw as destructive, exorbitant and not bringing much happiness to its people. Consequently, there was a view, fear perhaps, that without the vagaries of Western intervention these islands and their people could remain idyllic innocent places that offered the possibility of escape from the difficulties of the modern Western world.

As they did historically, such paternalistic and imperial narratives of European progress and the simple unchanging childlike nature of those it ruled, functioned in many ways in peacekeepers’ stories. While they might have highlighted the lacking and flawed nature of the West, they also made it possible, paradoxically, to justify the need for domination or intervention by the more mature West. Envisioning them as childlike not only set them apart from an adult, albeit unhappy, European society, but

also made it possible to see them as in essential need of teaching and leading. This was why alongside conceptions of local people being simple and childlike they were also volatile and dangerous. Like children they were unpredictable and without control over their emotions. This is why peacekeepers could, on the one hand, tell stories about how corrupting the West had been, and how the Pacific would be better off without it, and yet still see the region and people as childishly violent, incapable and in profound need of stabilising intervention.

This was a double vision that was just at home in missionary and travel accounts of earlier centuries as it was in publicity materials for a 2007 Pacific documentary that claimed, ‘white sandy beaches fringed by coconut palms belie the violence and hatred that for many years wracked the tropical paradise that is Solomon Islands’. 56 It was also a view espoused in the Australian press at the time of the three operations. Not a few newspaper articles featured headlines and images of paradise gone wrong. 57

None of this is to suggest that peacekeepers shared these views with a sense of harshness or cruel racism, but rather to demonstrate the ways in which Australian peacekeepers, knowingly or not, drew upon and reflected inherited ways of understanding, describing and engaging with the Pacific and its peoples. They were calling upon a way of seeing that cast the Pacific as an idyll full of happy innocent people perfect for escaping Western life and simultaneously as a place home to a childlike people in need of some redemption and rescue from themselves.

Significant though this view was, the local people figured in peacekeepers’ stories in other important and different ways, namely that improving their material life was the very centre of what it meant to keep the peace. Across all three operations peacekeepers spoke about the importance of making connections with local people as a way to give meaning to their service. The significance of these relationships was


57 See for example, Claire Harvey, 'This Side of Paradise', The Australian, 4 January 2003; Ian McPhedran, 'Trouble in Paradise', The Advertiser, 10 June 2000; Simon Pristel, 'Refugees Tell of Lost Paradise', The Australian, 28 October 1999.
evident in the way so many peacekeepers went outside of their specific work duties to assist local people to re-establish their lives. This was often in the form of material humanitarian assistance such as rebuilding homes, gardens and providing food and water. But it was also often more ephemeral efforts to make life more tolerable and more joyous such as throwing parties at Christmas for sick children, or playing sports or music with local communities. So often it was in these moments that peacekeepers found real value and an explanation for peacekeeping itself. These kinds of interactions point to how peacekeepers valued peacekeeping as something which could, even should, normalise societies again and as an act of generosity.

That so many peacekeepers enjoyed and often went to great effort to be involved in improving the daily quality of life for local people speaks to the ways in which the notion of peacekeeping was entangled with humanitarian ideals. Irrespective of particular political aims of a mission many peacekeepers clearly viewed peacekeeping in a broad altruistic way and relished being part of that vision. This view reveals what many Australians saw as the core of peacekeeping; to Australians a good peacekeeper was one who, whenever able, would help lift up and support local communities. The next two chapters will explore some other reasons for this moral conception of peacekeeping, but what is already clear is that bringing real benefits to local people was a fundamental and hugely motivating factor in shaping everyday Australian behaviour in the Pacific. It was perhaps the most important way in which Australians understood what it meant to build peace.

Given this, it is hard to understand why some peacekeepers in Solomon Islands and East Timor might have acted inappropriately towards local people. Conversely, perhaps that there were very few incidents of this kind indicate how widely spread amongst Australians was the belief that peacekeeping was a morally good activity that needed appropriately moral behaviour. That there was so little unlawfully violent or sexually exploitative behaviour from Australians might suggest it needs little analysis, yet the lack of it is itself important. As has been mentioned, serious peacekeeper misconduct was present in earlier missions such as
Bosnia, Cambodia and Somalia in the early 1990s, and there have long been widespread issues, particularly with prostitution and sexual misconduct, in many other peace missions.\textsuperscript{58} Though Australians were not always involved or implicated in this behaviour it is significant that only a few years after these missions there were no comparable scenarios in the Pacific.

Before moving into this discussion it is necessary to outline what is meant by violent or sexually exploitative acts. Violence is the very business of the armed forces and there are many circumstances in which it has been used in peacekeeping operations. In this context it is not the use of violence itself that is the focus, but rather the use of it beyond what is lawfully prescribed in any specific mission or situation. The level and use of violence in any peacekeeping operation is governed by many legal instruments at an international and national level and is usually summed up in a mission’s ‘rules of engagement’ (ROE), or similar instrument. Therefore, what is at issue here, especially in regards to the military, are those acts that fall outside of these parameters.

The UN definition of what amounts to sexual exploitation is the abuse, or attempted abuse, of power over vulnerable people for sexual purposes including, but not limited to, profiting financially, socially or politically from such acts. While it does not rule out all kinds of sex between peacekeepers and local people, its broadness does lead many scholars and practitioners to include consensual sex as innate exploitative due to the power differential usually present between a

peacekeeper and local person.\textsuperscript{59} These definitions are not without their
difficulties, but here sexual exploitation is understood in this broad sense.
It is also important to note that though these two types of actions have
been defined separately it is understood here that in many instances of
sexual exploitation, violence, both physical and emotional, is often an
inherent part of the experience. So, while the two cannot be entirely
confounded it is worth noting that there are connections between them.

Perhaps on this topic, more than any other, getting a clear reliable
picture of these interactions is exceptionally hard. This is largely due to
the contemporary nature of the operations as it means there is relatively
little source material available in terms of peacekeepers’ diaries or letters,
and governmental records that might be helpful are still closed. Similarly,
the contemporaneity of the missions meant that many interview
participants were in the midst of careers which may have made it
problematic for them to discuss these issues, if they knew of them. Other
interpersonal issues during interviews, as discussed in the methodological
section at the top of this thesis, also likely played a role in shaping or
silencing these discussions. This is not to suggest that there is some
‘smoking gun’ waiting to be found with a greater passage of time and
access to records, but to make clear some of the methodological
limitations of the oral histories on this topic. Nonetheless on the evidence
we do have there are a few observations to be made.\textsuperscript{60}

Peacekeeping culture has changed quite a bit since the early 1990s.
International UN peacekeeping has long had a reputation for a culture of
aggressive masculinity as it largely grew out of a bureaucratic culture at
the United Nations – an organisation that has been predominantly staffed

\textsuperscript{59} For more on this issue see Kate Grady, ‘Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN
Sarah E. Mendelson, \textit{Barracks and Brothels: Peacekeepers and Human Trafficking in the Balkans},
CSIS Report (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February
2005); Machiko Kanetake, ‘Whose Zero Tolerance Counts? Reassessing a Zero
Tolerance Policy Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Peacekeepers’,

\textsuperscript{60} Please note that on this topic a few peacekeepers asked not to be identified in any way
at all. Therefore in many instances a reference to an oral history interview will simply be
‘Anonymous, interview with author’ and no contextual knowledge about the
peacekeeper (except for place of service) will be given in the text. Where possible I have
provided references to newspaper reports or other publicly available evidence that details
either the specific events discussed by the peacekeeper or to events similar in nature.
by men and itself cultivated a masculine culture. This produced an attitude towards sexual exploitation and violence as being something of a natural by-product of having a lot of men in one place doing a difficult job. In a UN context it was most famously espoused by the head of the early 1990s Cambodia peace operation, Yashushi Akashi, who, in his response to claims of peacekeeper sexual misconduct, said 'boys will be boys'.

This attitude has been supported by a longstanding culture of impunity in peacekeeping operations. This is especially so for non-military peacekeepers who fall outside clear lines of national command and instead have been subject to the complex and varied legal frameworks that operate peace missions. Such frameworks have consistently made it near impossible to identify, prosecute or seriously reprimand peacekeepers who act inappropriately. Though this legal tangle still exists in various ways, the kinds of attitudes about peacekeeping being a playground for men to act as they wished had significantly changed by the late 1990s. This was due in no small part to the failures of those early missions which led to the very nature of peacekeeping operations changing. Most significantly, they were no longer led by the UN in comparable ways. Regional coalitions and lead nations were much more common at the end of the decade. This meant much more national control and clearer messages about appropriate behaviour. UN leadership also shifted and the time for saying something like Akashi had was long past by the late 1990s. Sergio Vieira de Mello, head of UNTAET, for example, strongly emphasised human rights, local ownership and fair treatment, as well notions of justice and equality.

Beyond peacekeeping culture broadly, scholarship on gender, peacekeeping and the military, which largely grew out of the early post-Cold War missions, also helps to explain why some peacekeepers acted

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62 Ibid, 9-10; for more on this element of UN culture see Martin, Must Boys Be Boys?
63 For discussion of legal context see Zeid Al-Hussein, Zeid Report; Simm, Sex in Peace Operations, 54-87.
Chapter Four

inappropriately and why others did not. As was discussed at the beginning of this thesis, scholars working on military masculinity and peacekeeping have suggested that militaries prize and socialise a belligerent, sexualised and misogynistic masculinity and that this explains unlawful violence and sexual exploitation. Others, however, have suggested that though this may be the case, there are a whole range of hierarchical masculinities at play in a military at any given time.\(^{65}\) This means that misconduct could be the product of a military masculinity, but so too could peaceful behaviour. In the context of the ADF at the time of the peace operations both explanations prove valid.

A series of reviews into the treatment of women in the ADF, commissioned in the late 2000s and headed by Human Rights Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, identified an overriding sense of a militarised masculine culture across the organisation. This was something also found in a 1998 review – the ‘Grey Review’ – into how cases of sexual harassment and abuse were being handled at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).\(^{66}\) Both inquiries identified that physical athleticism and prowess, virulent male heterosexuality, and a privileging of the group above the individual were powerful features of this culture. They also identified that an historical lack of racial diversity in the military made these values synonymous with whiteness. Significantly, these kinds of qualities were most likely to be associated with and represent those in combat corps and especially those in specialist or elite units.\(^{67}\) That is, this


\(^{66}\) A tri-service institution that provides military and tertiary academic instruction to junior officers, generally in the 18-25 age range.

was a dominant masculinity at the ‘pointy end’ of the ADF. But it was not the only one.

Broderick showed how this culture was neither homogenous nor static but filled with subcultures based upon the three services and then also particular units, and occupations. She identifies that the ADF was an organisation that was best understood as being made up of distinct yet connected ‘tribes’.68 There were similar findings for the British Army and American peacekeepers in Somalia.69 Australian peacekeepers also confirmed this plural or tribal gender culture in the ADF. For example, Paddy Rackley who worked in artillery thought there was a generally simplistic view of Army and not everyone was interested in living up to the ‘boys’ club stereotype’.70

Clearly, some of the unlawfully violent and sexually exploitative behaviour by ADF peacekeepers in the Pacific may have had its roots in one kind of military masculinity. And yet because the ADF had many kinds of masculinities at play, including ones that did not prioritise performances of excessive violence or sexual prowess, it is just as likely that the culture of the ADF encouraged the vast majority of appropriate behaviours.

One issue that theories of military masculinity do not ostensibly explain is the behaviour of non-military peacekeepers. AFP members were also identified as behaving inappropriately. Here, perhaps the similarities in culture between the AFP and ADF make military

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70 Paddy Rackley, interview with author, 9 June 2012, ROI1010; see also Ben Williams, interview with author, 3 May 2012, ROI1002; Ben Daley, interview with author, 19 November 2012, ROI1045.
masculinity fairly applicable. There were certainly overlaps in terms of gender norms between the ADF and Australian police forces (both Federal and State). While the organisational *raison d'être* of police and military forces are not the same, both were primarily male-dominated, bureaucratic and hierarchical organisations, and if for different purposes, both were trained in the use of violence. The police, like the military, also tended to see itself as separate from broader society calling non-members ‘civilians’. Some peacekeepers in this project had been in the military prior to joining the police force, and commented that they were attracted to policing because of the shared cultures of teamwork, discipline and public service. Further, there has been a similar privileging of masculine qualities such as physicality, maleness, aggressive heterosexuality and toughness which may have produced a dominant gender norm not too different from that in the ADF. Some policewomen also suffered similar kinds of sexism as military women. Though this is somewhat anecdotal evidence, these commonalities do suggest that similar kinds of gender norms were at play in both the police and the military during this decade and they might explain why some police members acted in similarly inappropriate ways to military personnel.

Though there is no evidence in this project of Australian civilians acting exploitatively in the Pacific, it is important not to take this to mean there was a simple causal link between military masculinities, or their cousins in the AFP, and inappropriate behaviour. Research across many peacekeeping contexts has shown misconduct by civilians from a range of countries has been common. It has been incredibly difficult identifying, let alone prosecuting, people in this group. A Refugees International

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72 See for example, Perry Ryman, interview with author, 29 November 2012, ROI1049.
report into sexual exploitation in operations in Haiti and Liberia identifies that civilian misconduct can be more difficult to study than either military or police behaviour because the personnel are themselves more difficult to identify – and so less likely to be reported – particularly due to the lack of a uniform.\textsuperscript{75} The importance and power of the uniform should not be underestimated. It is not uncommon, as Mathew Allen has shown in regards to RAMSI, for an operation to be entirely conflated with the presence and actions of uniformed personnel.\textsuperscript{76} Knowing that civilian misconduct has occurred in other peacekeeping contexts is important because it highlights the limits of theories of military masculinities in explaining peacekeeper behaviour.

Questions about the nature of individual peacekeeping operations also need to be considered. Certainly, the structural set-up of the missions in Timor and Solomon Islands contributed to peacekeepers behaving inappropriately but it arguably played a more significant role in curtailing misconduct. As Béatrice Pouligny has shown, interaction between local people and peacekeepers is shaped by a wide variety of factors such as location, local politics, the rules and mandates of an operation and the specific jobs of peacekeepers.\textsuperscript{77} We have seen these at play throughout the previous three chapters and these factors are no less important in explaining the presence or lack of sexually exploitative or unlawfully violent behaviour.

In Solomon Islands, for example, the set-up and aim of that mission helps to explain why AFP officers might have had sexual interactions with local people. Police officers, like civilian peacekeepers, had much more freedom to leave base and socialise in Honiara (which they did) than military personnel who were confined to base and constantly under military command. Police also did not have to be in uniform all of the time which would also have made it easier for them to go unidentified.

Another important contextual factor is that the post-conflict state of Timorese and Solomon Islander societies may have made it easier for

\textsuperscript{75} Martin, \textit{Must Boys Be Boys?}, ii-iii, 16-17; see also Zeid Al-Hussein, \textit{Zeid Report}.
\textsuperscript{77} Pouligny, \textit{Peace Operations}.
peacekeepers to act in particular ways. These were fractured communities, suffering in any number of ways from physical and emotional hardship to economic deprivation. Though we need to tread very carefully with these kinds of wide-sweeping claims about the state of local communities, it does suggest that some local people would likely have been more vulnerable to – and less likely or even able to report – exploitation both as victims of attack and abuse, but also as participants in sex-work. That is a vulnerability only heightened by the presence of a peacekeeping operation. As Paul Higate has shown, sexual exploitation by peacekeepers must be tied to the poor economic and social circumstances of host communities and the parallel peacekeeping economies that occur when a large influx of well-paid, powerful, sex-seeking peacekeeping contingents arrive. He further suggests that the historical legal impunity referred to earlier has created a culture in which some peacekeepers can think sex with locals is not actually problematic, wrong or harmful.\(^{78}\)

Peacekeeper misconduct, like so much other peacekeeper and local interaction, was a complex mix of the cultures and histories peacekeepers brought with them and the values, social structures and local politics they found once in the Pacific. This was always the way for Australian peacekeeping in the Pacific. Peacekeepers did not arrive emptied of their histories, or organisational and national cultures and norms, nor did they arrive to societies devoid of these things. Peacekeeping in the Pacific was always a coming together of sorts. In that coming together there was always the opportunity for co-creation, for ideas, values and narratives to be changed or affirmed. Peacekeeping in Solomon Islands, Bougainville and East Timor was always dynamic; a space in which past and present were in constant dialogue. Peacekeepers’ stories are a rich way to hear that dialogue and to understand the factors shaping it.

**Australians Working with Each Other**

For most Australians serving in the Pacific their work and social lives were shared with other Australians from a range of organisational backgrounds. These experiences were a common theme in peacekeepers’

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stories across all three operations. Bringing together people from the ADF, AFP and APS presented a variety of challenges in terms of having to cooperate across various working cultures and procedures. While peacekeepers often spoke of enjoying and making friendships with people from organisations outside their own, many also discussed the difficulties of coping with and adapting to different ways of working, varying professional standards, personalities and problems with communication. The reasons for this were varied and once again are to be found in the broader historical trends in peacekeeping as well as the specific contexts of each operation.

Australian-led deeply combined multi-agency peace operations like those in the Pacific were fairly new ways of doing peacekeeping for Australians. Multi-agency peace operations became much more frequent and larger from the late 1990s and 2000s as the ‘whole of government’ method to peacekeeping and complex emergencies became the norm.  

It was still in its infancy at the time of the Bougainville operation but steadily developed over the course of the decade and beyond. It became increasingly sophisticated and more efficient as Australia participated in operations like those in East Timor and Solomon Islands as well as in deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

A ‘whole of government’ approach is a process of government agencies working across portfolio boundaries in formal and informal ways to achieve a shared goal or an integrated government response to a particular issue, including emergencies and crises. There has been no one singular uniform method to this, rather, the approach is underpinned by the idea that relevant departments, and in many cases also relevant stakeholders from the private and community sectors, can and will come


80 Management Advisory Committee, Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia’s Priority Challenges (Canberra: Australian Public Service Commission, 2004), 1
together when necessary to create the most cohesive and coherent response or advice.\(^81\)

Peacekeeping was not the catalyst for this approach. The Federal Government had been pursuing more integrated governance in a range of ways since at least 1976 with the landmark ‘Coombs Report’, which advocated for a more cohesive public administration.\(^82\) Yet the challenges of peacekeeping in the 1990s and 2000s required governments to call on a variety of agencies not just for advice and planning but increasingly also for varied personnel to serve as peacekeepers. Military and police personnel were asked to serve in greater numbers and in a growing array of functions, and people with public administration skills were more and more needed to help rebuild governance infrastructure. The regional missions in the Pacific were examples of this as they all required, and received, personnel from across the government. The shifting requirements of peacekeeping, and the consequent responses, were perhaps most obvious in Solomon Islands where RAMSI was led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the AFP. Each organisation, and within the APS, each agency or department, developed its own methods and policies towards peacekeeping in relation to this more demanding peacekeeping and public administration landscape.\(^83\)

The APS response to peacekeeping has been characterised by a commitment to remaining flexible and reactive to the needs of specific operations as they arose. Australian public servants from departments as varied as DFAT, Treasury, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), the erstwhile Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

\(^81\) For a comprehensive discussion of the practice and processes of ‘whole of government’ approaches see \textit{ibid}, 1-19; for a sense of the complexities of this approach see SSCFADT \textit{Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations}, 159-165; my understanding of the everyday lived experience of the ‘whole of government’ approach was greatly enriched by conversations with many participants, but see especially, Shaw, interview; Sarah Storey, interview with author, 27 September 2013, ROI1058; Catherine Simmons, interview with author, 27 November 2012, ROI1046; Ben Daley, interview with author, 19 November 2012, ROI1045; Samantha Isaac, interview with author, 18 June 2012, ROI1035.


\(^83\) For an overview of what a whole of government approach to peacekeeping meant in practice for the missions in the Pacific see SSCFADT, \textit{Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations}, 167-179; for an earlier perspective on whole of government and peacekeeping see SSCFADT, \textit{United Nations Peacekeeping and Australia}, 55-60.
and the Department of Defence have all served in a variety of peacekeeping capacities. For example, the AEC, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and DFAT all sent electoral supervisors and advisers to Namibia in 1989. Treasury sent staff to a peacekeeping operation for the first time in 2003 with the deployment of financial advisers to Solomon Islands.\(^\text{84}\) DFAT, and its predecessors, have long played a role in assessing the foreign policy ramifications of peacekeeping. But it was with the rise of complex peacekeeping missions after the end of the Cold War that DFAT shifted its involvement from advice to being a central actor. From the early 1990s the APS would be involved, sometimes in a leading role, in the planning stages of an operation as well as contributing growing numbers of personnel.\(^\text{85}\) This expanding and vital role grew in significance as Australia planned and led the regional missions in the Pacific.

As its role is not to keep the peace via the use or threat of violence like the military or the use of state-sanctioned powers like the police, APS personnel are chosen, often through merit-based application processes, based on their specialist knowledge and skills. In this sense, further training is not required as they are already competent in their fields. Still, some of the agencies most frequently involved in peacekeeping such as DFAT and AusAID developed peacekeeping-specific training designed to equip personnel with the skills necessary to live in a peacekeeping environment.\(^\text{86}\) However, due to the relatively small number of personnel that have been required for peacekeeping duties this has not translated into an overarching structured training programme for all and any APS employees deploying on peacekeeping operations.\(^\text{87}\)

\(^{84}\) SSCFADT, United Nations Peacekeeping and Australia, 96-97; SSCFADT, Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, 159-161; JSCFADT Australia’s Participation in Peacekeeping, (Canberra, 1994), 102-105.

\(^{85}\) For a sense of the more limited role of DFAT see SSCFADT, United Nations Peacekeeping and Australia, 55-60; for a more detailed view of the issues and challenges facing the APS from the early 1990s to the late 2000s see SSCFADT, United Nations Peacekeeping and Australia, 87-108; JSCFADT, Australia’s Participation in Peacekeeping, 102-105; SSCFADT, Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, 159-165.

\(^{86}\) SSCFADT, Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, 161-162.

\(^{87}\) Ibid., 159-165.
As this thesis has made clear, training and selection for peacekeeping operations from within the APS has largely been reactive and highly variable. Yet it is clear that as an organisation it has had to develop new policies and procedures as well as capabilities to respond to complex peacekeeping with more cohesive advice, but also with greater numbers of personnel to act as peacekeepers. In contrast, both because of the demands of peacekeeping and also because of the organisational cultures and structures the ADF and AFP have responded in more cohesive, uniform ways. This has been especially so for the latter.

Though Australian police have served in UN missions since 1964 when 40 officers were sent to Cyprus, the changes to peacekeeping since the early 1990s have had significant implications for the structure of the organisation. Unlike the APS, peacekeeping and other emergency response became a distinct capacity in the AFP. Significantly, it was the missions in the Pacific that played a critical role in making peacekeeping routine to the core business of the AFP.

Australian police have served in a huge array of roles as peacekeepers. Police have worked in buffer zones, such as in Cyprus, and had community policing roles with powers of arrest and investigation in Solomon Islands. In the mission in Namibia in 1989 they, for the first time, took on electoral assistance roles – something they would do with extraordinary success a decade later in East Timor. The role of police, like all other peacekeepers, has become more diverse especially since the early 1990s. In any one mission, it may include community police work, forensic and investigatory work, and patrolling and crowd or riot control duties. As well, their roles have included working in advising and mentoring roles to help build or re-establish the law and justice sectors of


While police peacekeepers have long been considered as having training and experience suitable to these tasks they have also generally been required to participate in mission-specific training. This was expanded and centralised in February 2004 when the International Deployment Group (IDG) was established.

The IDG sits as a distinct sub-component of the AFP dedicated solely to international deployments. By March 2007 it employed about 600 people. Unlike the previous more ad hoc arrangements of recruiting personnel to peace missions, the IDG provided a standing group of police personnel specially trained and ready to deploy on peace operations or other emergency situations. It has also meant the AFP could have experienced operational planners and administrators located in the one area and who can therefore cohesively coordinate deployments as required. Further, the IDG developed specialist pre-deployment training for all its members. By 2007 the training had been expanded to run for 35 days and involved basic skills, such as safe weapons handling, as well as specialised training particular to peacekeeping. There are also mission rehearsal exercises that put personnel through their paces in specially designed streetscapes that mirror small urban townships.

While the ADF has not had to develop a new distinct structure like the IDG, it too has had to alter and grow in certain ways to meet the demands of peacekeeping. Like the APS and AFP, the ADF, especially since the late 1990s, has needed to adapt to an increasing roster of duties that have included security provision, humanitarian assistance, and roles

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92 Ibid., 129.
93 For a sense of some of the pre-IDG planning and recruitment problems faced by the AFP see ibid., 96-98.
in mentoring and training other defence force personnel. This has been not only in peacekeeping but also in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At times, military tasks have also had to veer into areas more traditionally reserved for police, such as mediation and interference in civil disputes.\(^5\) The ADF has had to improve upon and grow accustomed to fulfilling these duties and train its personnel for these roles. As such, training for peacekeeping has been a particular focus, and the locus of much debate within the organisation.

The ADF has not been a force designed for peacekeeping but one designed for the defence of the nation. Many scholars, practitioners, policy and defence experts not just in Australia but across the world have debated whether traditional defence forces make the best peacekeepers. They debate whether peacekeeping might actually be detrimental to the skills and professionalism of traditional defence forces. Similarly, there have been many discussions about whether a standalone United Nations peacekeeping force should be established.\(^6\) With the increase in frequency and requirements of peacekeeping these debates became more urgent. In Australia this resulted in a range of arguments about the way the ADF should be structured and how much peacekeeping should be a part of its role.

One of the major discussions was about whether the ADF should be re-structured more towards peacekeeping. This could either take the form of an additional unit or battalion exclusively for peacekeeping, or could involve a wholesale rearrangement to focus primarily on peacekeeping. This was not the path Australia chose. Instead, the view has been that there is no need for either a special peacekeeping unit or a restructuring of the ADF at large. This is because the skills and training of ADF personnel, being targeted towards high-intensity warfare, have been

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\(^5\) For a sense of the ADF’s perspective on the complexities of peacekeeping and consequences for the ADF see Australian Defence Force Warfare Centre (ADFWC), *Peace Operations*, Australian Defence Doctrine Publication (ADDP) 3.8, (Canberra: ADF, 2004), Ch. 1.

\(^6\) The first major work questioning the suitability of traditional military personnel for peacekeeping roles was Charles Moskos, *Peace Soldiers: The Sociology of a United Nations Military Force*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976); for an introductory overview of the issues regarding the establishment of a UN force see JSCFADT, *Australia’s Role in United Nations Reform* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001), 4.
deemed readily adaptable to lower-intensity peacekeeping duties. This argument has been widely accepted and no additional peacekeeping units or force restructure has occurred in the ADF due to peacekeeping. Further, these debates largely disappeared by 2001 with the September 11 terrorist attacks and the return of ‘hot’ wars in the Middle East. It was primarily for that reason that in August 2006 the Federal Government announced that two new Army battalions would be raised, due to the burden placed on the ADF with conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as ongoing peacekeeping commitments.

The decision not to re-orient the ADF is not to say that it carried on as if ignorant of the demands peacekeeping was placing upon it. As have all other government agencies, the ADF had to become better integrated. It had had to become more thoroughly tri-service, so that the capabilities and assets of each service could be maximised and effectively used across all three. However, peacekeeping was just one factor in this trend. It was also a response to the ever fluctuating resource allocation for defence by the Federal Government as well as reflecting broader international trends in conducting more effective military operations.

Also, while ADF personnel might have been seen as having the training necessary to adapt to any conflict environment, over time there has been a growing recognition that peacekeeping-specific training is vitally important. As such, necessary peacekeeping skills like mediation, negotiation, civil-military relations and cultural and historical awareness has been incorporated into the standard pre-deployment training. When necessary or beneficial the ADF will also put personnel through a ‘mission rehearsal exercise’ to test and improve skills particular to the operation in which they will serve. The ADF, particularly the 39th Personnel Support Battalion in Randwick, Sydney, and the Force Preparation Squadron, Darwin, which have primary responsibility for the training, have also played key roles in the preparation not just of ADF

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peacekeepers but also those from the APS and AFP. Further, in January 1993, in response to the changing peacekeeping conditions, a Peace Operations Training Centre was opened at the Air Force base in Williamtown, Newcastle. It has responsibility for developing and analysing peacekeeping doctrine, and also trains certain personnel in these areas or in other specific peacekeeping duties, such as being military observers. This is not to say that there has been a uniform training programme for every ADF peacekeeper deployed, as was evident in peacekeepers’ experiences. Peacekeeping operations have tended to require different skill sets and personnel in ways that make a singular type of training impossible and undesirable.

Given these varied agency backgrounds and the differing demands that peacekeeping, and the more pronounced ‘whole of government’ approaches placed on them, it is unsurprising that peacekeepers in the Pacific did not always find it easy to work together and could be surprised by each other. They were adapting to changes in their own organisations as well as trying to understand the roles and cultures of others. Indeed, a recent publication by the Australian Civil-Military Centre, a government organisation aimed at improving cooperation across the two sectors, suggested that one of the largest sources of confusion in a multi-agency environment has come from misunderstanding the differing roles, responsibilities and structures of each agency. The report describes how each organisation generally has very specific responsibilities in-line with its authority and capability, but that often these are not well understood by members outside, and even sometimes inside, an organisation.

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100 SSCFADT, Australia’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations, 129-134.
101 For an overview some of the difficulties and variables in preparing an ADF contingent in the early 1990s see Colonel Ross Bishop and Lieutenant Colonel John Muir, ‘Mounting a Peacekeeping Operation: The Defence Force Perspective’, in Smith (ed.), Australia and Peacekeeping, 47-60; Colonel Philip McNamara, ‘Operational Issues in Planning Peacekeeping Operations’, in Smith (ed.), International Peacekeeping, 109-114; for a more recent perspective see ADFWC, Peace Operations, ADDP 3.8, Ch. 5; For a thorough overview of the complexities and flexibility of ADF peacekeeping training see ADFWC, Peace Operations, Planning and Procedures, ADDP 3.8.1, Ch. 7.
issue has only been complicated by having to do this work in varied peacekeeping contexts.

As with other peacekeeping interaction it was the coming together of these issues from home and the way they played out once on the ground that more fully explains peacekeepers’ experiences of working together. As the previous three chapters have shown organisational issues were significantly shaped by the particular needs and set-up of organisations. For example, relationships in Solomon Islands and Bougainville were influenced by the fact that the great majority of peacekeepers lived alongside each other for their whole tours. This was in team sites across Bougainville or at Guadalcanal Beach Resort in Solomon Islands. The nature of the mission in Bougainville mixed with the team-site lifestyle meant people worked closely and had to manage their organisational differences to make daily life manageable. In Solomon Islands the mission set-up did not require the same kinds of teamwork yet still had shared living arrangements. There were more fraught relationships between peacekeepers as a consequence.

These factors, combined with the bigger picture of changing organisational roles and cultures in relation to public administration changes and a dynamic peacekeeping landscape explain peacekeepers’ experiences with each other were largely the outcome of the dynamic space that was created when complex cultures, norms, histories and expectations from home organisations were brought to the multifaceted peacekeeping contexts. Though peacekeepers across all three missions emerged from this landscape of governance and peacekeeping change, their lived experiences of that were thoroughly contingent on the specific situations in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor.

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When Australian peacekeepers boarded planes and ships to travel to East Timor, Bougainville and Solomon Islands they carried with them a lot of historical and cultural luggage. They carried stories, norms and hopes derived from their belonging to a Western nation, a British settler colony, and to three quite different organisations. They also bore some
weight from histories of international peacekeeping and values associated with the meaning of peace. When they arrived in their places of service they found societies also carrying their own baggage. Here too past and present narratives of nationalism, culture, identity, peace and war, colonialism and imperialism were at work. They also found people filled with their own expectations about peacekeeping and what it could mean. It was what happened in the space where those two factors met that explains so much of what peacekeepers experienced and described in their oral histories. This chapter has referenced this constantly as a dynamic ‘coming together’. Perhaps a more precise way to conceive of it is as a generative space of meaning.

Generative because it was a place in which peacekeepers created meaning in relationship to others. Peacekeeping stories make little sense if the wider contexts from which they came are not brought to bear on what they found once in the Pacific. For example, that Australians often did not understand each other or always get along only makes sense with the combined knowledge of changing governance in Australia and the specific ways Australians had to live and work in the Pacific. Similarly, peacekeepers’ misconduct, or the lack of it, finds some explanation in long term larger global narratives of peacekeeping and military cultures as well as the very specific circumstances of operating in the Pacific.

Indeed, it was the very fact that Australians carried similar baggage and often perceived and experienced similar local and operational circumstances that peacekeepers’ stories from across the missions bore so much in common. When there were differences these could be explained by variations in what Australians brought with them, such as their organisational cultures, or by differences in the local circumstances. Australian peacekeeping in the Pacific clearly shows that peacekeepers’ experiences and perceptions were fundamentally about movement across and between borders and time. When we use peacekeepers' stories as a way into that movement we learn so much about why they behaved as they did, and why they perceived the Pacific and themselves in the ways that they did. And from that we are given a broader richer story about Australia, peacekeeping and the Pacific in this decade.
THE PACIFIC OCEAN has always been a place of movement. It has carried people, materials and ideas across the world for centuries. Peacekeeping in the Pacific finds its story in that timeless rhythm too. This chapter reorients the focus of the previous four to examine that story from a global perspective. These were multi-national peace operations. And though not led by the UN as earlier peace missions had been they were still part of a larger normative narrative of peace associated with that organisation. Here, questions about the imperial nature of peacekeeping, of the very definition of peace itself influenced peacekeepers. In that ideological space peacekeepers found interesting ways to manage their self-identified belonging to the Western world and its long, deep and troublesome relationship with colonialism and imperialism. Connected to that process was the experience of working alongside non-Australian peacekeepers. Those relationships often brought into relief peacekeepers’ philosophies about peace and peacekeeping in moral and ethical terms. Together, these two elements of the international landscape – the people and global normative discourses – significantly shaped the way Australians made sense of their service and, in turn, their stories reveal much about Australian ideas of peace and what it meant to be Australian and a peacekeeper.
Chapter Five

Australians and international personnel

Figure 17: Australian and Brazilian peacekeepers working in medical roles in East Timor 2001. Photo courtesy of Private Luke Grogan.

Much of the interaction between Australians and international peacekeepers was joyful and many participants recalled learning much from working with international counterparts. A few people spoke of the fun in swapping ration packs, for example. They were grateful to have a break from their own ration food and for getting to see how other militaries ate.¹ Derek Salt, who worked in a UN capacity, looked back with relish at having spent so much time working with people from across the world during his service in Timor. He particularly spoke about enjoying the national themed party nights that groups of peacekeepers in his compound would host.² Paddy Rackley recalled a special night in Timor when the 1999 Rugby World Cup final was between France and Australia and he and some colleagues organised to have the game broadcast in their recreation centre. He spoke about a group of Australians getting settled in to watch the match when they heard a racket from up the street. They went outside and saw some of the French

¹ Bruce Tarrier, interview with author, 13 August 2012, ROI1018; Paddy Rackley, interview with author, 9 June 2012, ROI1010.
² Derek Salt, interview with author, 4 September 2012, ROI1024.
contingent marching down with their band out front playing ‘La Marseillaise’. The two groups squeezed into the recreation room to watch the game together and Rackley recalled the night ‘being great fun’ – particularly for Australians as the Wallabies won.³

While perhaps not on the same scale as the rugby match, there were similar kinds of cross-cultural engagements in Bougainville. The operation there, due to the mixed nature of the team sites, provided the opportunity for daily interaction with peacekeepers from across the Pacific. A few Australians enjoyed a New Zealand ‘Hangi’ – a meal of meat and sometimes vegetables cooked on hot coals underground. And if they did not often actually like the taste many still enjoyed getting to try the famous Pacific drink of kava – a plant based drink that has the appearance of muddy water and is a mild narcotic – courtesy of their Fijian or ni-Vanuatu team mates.⁴

Joan Gardner, a public servant who was in Bougainville, spoke about how the different accents in her team could be tricky when communicating via radio. She particularly recalled that during helicopter training her New Zealand training partner’s accent meant that she kept hearing the word ‘stick’ as ‘stuck’. She said these sorts of moments ended up being a point of comical team bonding.⁵ Similarly, Angela Devlin, a reservist with the Army in Bougainville, also spoke of her delight at attending orders – a military term to describe a meeting where the day’s instructions for personnel are given – and finding the ni-Vanuatu and Tongans singing hymns. The Tongan predilection for singing is captured in the image overleaf. She told of her surprise at finding people in the military singing hymns at all but especially in orders where it’s usually loud and there’s heaps of swearing.⁶ While these cross-cultural ‘curiosities’, as Gardner called them, were often a site for warm and friendly exchanges, working with so many different people could also be frustrating.

³ Rackley, interview.
⁴ Anonymous Personal Papers, Private Collection.
⁵ Joan Gardner, interview with author, 1 May 2012, ROI1001.
⁶ Angela Devlin, interview with author, 16 June 2013, ROI1053.
This was particularly the case in East Timor where there was a wide variety of countries participating for various reasons. Some nations, particularly underdeveloped ones, participate in peacekeeping for financial benefit, which the UN offers. Further, given their economic circumstances they usually do not have the resources to either equip or train a military in a way with which Australians are familiar and expect. This meant that on the ground not all contingents had comparable training backgrounds, professional standards or access to equipment of the same kind or quality as ADF personnel. Lieutenant Commander Greg Swinden, for example, said of the situation during his time in Timor, ‘Bangladeshis were good and very hardworking, but were constrained by
equipment and technology. Fijians were very good soldiers but they did have a tendency to turn up with nothing and then we had to supply them with everything’.7

Exacerbating this issue was the fact that each country, as in all international peace operations, determined how much risk to which it was willing to expose its troops. This could limit the area of an operation in which a national contingent could serve, or the tasks it could carry out. This created some agitation amongst Australians. Rory Paul, who served in a headquarters position in Timor, was well aware of the varying financial motivations at play as well as the limits placed on troops by their home countries. Yet he still conceded that ‘sometimes there was frustration because you could feel like we were doing all the heavy lifting while others were doing less and were not willing to do more’.8 Whether or not this was objectively true is impossible to measure.

While annoyance over the varying capabilities and motivations of international contingents was most frequently discussed by peacekeepers who served with the military in Timor – it was there that many military contingents worked alongside each other – it was not an issue unique to this group or mission. Federal Police Agent Geoff Hazel who served in both Solomon Islands and Timor said, ‘ideas of policing can vary wildly from country to country. So that means you get an array of skills on a peace operation depending on everyone’s backgrounds and cultures’.9 He then described a situation in which a Pakistani officer had told him he was struggling in his position as Hazel’s junior because in Pakistan junior officers were to work much harder than their bosses. However, Hazel worked so hard he was impossible to best. This was because Hazel had come with the opposite philosophy from the AFP that a boss should not ask others to do more or work harder than he himself was willing to do.10

7 Greg Swinden, interview with author, 4 May 2012, ROI1012; see also John Perryman, interview with author, 31 May 2012, ROI1007; Anthony de Fraine Murphy, interview with author, 2 November 2012, ROI1038; Kirk Scott, interview with author, 17 November 2012, ROI1044; Carney Elias, interview with author, 3 October 2012, ROI1031.
8 Rory Paul, interview with author, 7 October 2012, ROI1003.
9 Geoff Hazel, interview with author, 11 June 2012, ROI1011.
10 Ibid.
Samantha Isaac also saw this in her work in the government sectors in Solomon Islands and Timor. She described that you get a mix of motivation and contextual understanding amongst personnel due to the nature of peacekeeping and the array of people it attracts. This mix of people often resulted in different working styles and relationships which could be really rewarding, but also frustrating.11

There were a few peacekeepers who raised issues of racism and sexism in the relationships between Australians and internationals. Lisa Showell who served with the RAAF in Timor described how Pakistani peacekeepers were not impressed by women being in the military and did not like it if only women were doing a certain task, such as guard duty. She said some of the females who had no experience travelling overseas got annoyed by it, but that the rest of them tried to just ‘laugh it off’ and accept that it was the Pakistani’s cultural view.12 Contrarily, two other peacekeepers commented upon Australians being reluctant to really mix in with or even interact with Muslim peacekeepers. Army officer, Kalan Lennon said some Australians were racist towards Egyptians during his time in East Timor. While some of this was put down to the after-effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks he also saw it as an extension of Australians’ dislike for Indonesians, as well as just ‘plain racism’.13

While there were shared frictions across the three operations one big issue that was acutely felt only by those who served in Timor was sheer frustration at working with the United Nations. Unlike the operations in Solomon Islands and Bougainville, the UN took over from Australia after a few months and henceforth ran the operation. Many peacekeepers found the complexity of the bureaucracy cumbersome. Police Officer Alan Whitcombe said it simply, ‘I didn’t have a clue about the UN… it’s a frustrating place to work for’.14 Similarly, Rory Paul, who served with the Army, said, ‘the UN is a body of consensus and in the end you can’t reach absolute consensus and get a perfect plan based on that. It’s a very

11 Samantha Isaac, interview with author, 18 June 2012, ROI1035.
12 Lisa Showell, interview with author, 30 May 2012, ROI1006; see also Devlin, interview.
13 Mark Squires, interview with author, 30 August 2012, ROI1020; Kalan Lennon, interview with author, 29 August 2012, ROI1019.
14 Alan Whitcombe, interview with author, 27 September 2012, ROI1029.
frustrating and difficult organisation to work with. I mean nothing happens in a hurry.\textsuperscript{15} Still, he thought that despite its flaws the UN was the best thing the international community had and though ‘it’s not perfect by a long shot, it’s better than not having it’.\textsuperscript{16}

While peacekeepers might have been able to see the value of the UN many were quite ambivalent about their role in it and scathing of the effects they believed it was having on local people. As was briefly suggested in the previous chapter, some peacekeepers struggled to work for an organisation that appeared to be so slow or inept at helping the local communities deal with poverty, unemployment and lack of services while so demonstrably supplying a large and expensive mission. Alan Whitcombe, for instance, said he ‘felt guilty because we were getting good money working for the UN and these people were living on the smell of an oily rag’. Balthazar Goldman who served with Army said, ‘that would annoy me, you’d see them with $80 000 land cruisers and one person would be driving them. Toothless tiger is the right name for them’.\textsuperscript{17} Private Jeremy Dyson who served in Timor in 2001-2002 and again in 2010 commented, ‘I find it hard to comprehend why power and water aren’t working properly when so much money has been poured into the country’.\textsuperscript{18} Similarly, Leigh McMahon who served with the Army in Timor had a low opinion of UN personnel because he never saw them out amongst the locals very much.\textsuperscript{19} Working for a big, complex and often slow organisation predictably created frustration and bafflement, but what is notable about peacekeepers’ complaints on this issue is that they were so tied to the treatment of local people.

Some peacekeepers expressed this concern in other ways. Army nurse, Angela Devlin also discussed this issue,

\begin{quote}
the ni-Vans and the Tongans and the Samoans and all that, they’re from a similar culture so they know how to crack open a coconut, you know what I mean? Things
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} Paul, interview.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Balthazar Goldman, interview with author, 5 September 2012, ROI1025.
\textsuperscript{18} Jeremy Dyson, interview with author, 18 May 2012, ROI1004.
\textsuperscript{19} Leigh McMahon, interview with author, 31 August 2012, ROI1021.
like that to them are just second nature so they could relate a lot better. It’d be like us going over to the UK.\(^{20}\)

This reflection says a lot about Australians views of themselves and their teammates. Of note is the way many did not see themselves as from the Pacific, and that this limited them in some of their interaction with local people. Joan Gardener, an APS employee in Bougainville, reaffirmed the way Australians did not quite fit in with their Pacific Islander teammates. She said,

> each nationality contributed differently, and that was valuable. The New Zealanders […] were into carrying their guitars and doing the haka at the drop of a hat which was terrific […] we were not so good. We didn’t really have a lot to contribute in terms of singing or dancing or whatever. We joined in but we weren’t leaders or entertainers in the same way the New Zealanders were.\(^{21}\)

Tracy Haines, an indigenous Australian who served with DFAT, reflected on the importance of having Indigenous Australians and Māori as well as Pacific Islanders in the Bougainville mission. She suggested that they could relate to Bougainvillians better than non-Indigenous Australians because they shared similar experiences and struggles.\(^{22}\)

Without detracting from these views or suggesting their opposite, it is interesting to note that pre-conceived perceptions shaped by historical narratives played a part in shaping these views. Rosemary Baird has explored this issue in her work on Australian and New Zealand peacekeepers in Bougainville. While she found similar perceptions of Australians and white New Zealanders being outsiders, she has shown that in many ways it was actually an obscured subjective view based on persistent cultural stereotypes rather than actual experience while on operation. Baird demonstrates that, objectively, Australians were not inherently less understanding of the Pacific, but that many factors influenced how well, or not, all people interacted with and were perceived.

\(^{20}\) Devlin, interview; see also, Billy Packard, interview with author, 13 August 2013, ROI1056; Tim Davies, interview with author, 1 October 2013, ROI1060.

\(^{21}\) Gardner, interview.

by local people. As she points out, some Australians were deeply knowledgeable and experienced in various parts of the Pacific. Some participants in this project also had strong language skills and cultural understanding of the area, and many more made a significant effort to learn and understand these things before and during their missions. And yet peacekeepers’ dominant perception of themselves was not a complex one that reflected this variation. Rather, it was a view largely fixated on ways of seeing that were bound up in those familiar historical narratives about an Australia awkwardly out of place in a Pacific region.

Though this is an issue discussed in the previous chapter it is important to revisit it from this angle here. This is because it not only shows how those narratives came to bear on peacekeepers’ experiences in yet another way, but also because their praise of Pacific Islander or Australian Indigenous people and Māori belied a key value: that peacekeepers from these backgrounds better understood locals meant they were better peacekeepers in Australian eyes. This was not language of professional capacity, training or experience but of culture and connection. These peacekeepers were better because they could relate in more meaningful ways with local people. In other words, for Australians, good peacekeeping lay in good relationships with local people and not just relationships of superficiality or technicality. Local people were the core business for good peacekeeping. A well-equipped, well-trained peacekeeper was not valued highly over a poorly-equipped and trained one if they did not treat local communities well. This returns us to the theme of what Australians thought peacekeeping ought to be – what made it morally good. In fact, as we have seen throughout the previous chapters this belief also underpinned Australians’ own evaluations of themselves, sometimes to the point that the quality of engagement with local people entitled someone to be called a peacekeeper or not.

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It is worth making this point clear again with a peacekeeper's own words. Captain Carney Elias worked in a headquarters position in Timor and did not get to interact with locals much. She said,

I think the guys that were out on patrol [...] getting out amongst the community a lot more and engaging with the community leaders as part of their job [...] I think if I was in that kind of role I might associate more with the idea of being a peacekeeper, rather than sitting in the headquarters not really kind of involved. But then there were other things that we did like when we went out to visit the orphanage or just that community engagement stuff [...] I guess those kinds of things helped me identify with the overall mission, but I don’t … well I find it hard to identify as a peacekeeper.  

The aim of reiterating this idea is to make clear how absolutely fundamental helping and engaging with local people was to Australians’ definitions of being a peacekeeper. This is key because it was from this place that much of their engagement with and evaluation of other peacekeepers and the UN came. It was this factor more than any other that shaped how Australians related to and valued international personnel. APS peacekeeper Michael Shaw, for example, alleged the Pakistani police were ‘on the take’ in Timor, but also observed how peacekeepers who came from cultures that were consensus driven made ‘wonderful peacekeepers’. Rory Paul who served in Timor also spoke about the Pakistanis’ attitude towards the locals. He said, ‘they didn’t want any interaction at all […] they seemed to have an attitude of “they’re only natives” kind of thing’. There was also widespread and vehement dislike of Jordanian peacekeepers who were subject to allegations of sexual assault involving local adults and children in Timor, as well as acts of bestiality.

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24 Elias, interview; see also Sacha Bergman, interview with author, 31 October 2012, ROI1036.
25 Many participants did not wish to be named when speaking directly about foreign peacekeepers’ behaviours towards, therefore they have been identified as ‘Anonymous’ rather than with pseudonyms as they have requested their real names be used elsewhere.
26 Michael Shaw, interview with author, 15 October 2013, ROI1062.
27 Paul, interview.
28 See for overview of these incidents, Don Greenlees, ‘Sex Assault Inquiry into Peace Troops’, The Australian, June 26, 2001; Brian Woodley, ‘UN Troops Accused of Sex Attacks’, The Australian, August 4, 2001; Mark Dodd, ‘Diggers Drew Guns in Sex Abuse
Interestingly, peacekeepers also disliked the way American military personnel worked, yet none of the three missions involved contingents of American peacekeepers. Many participants made personal statements drawing on previous experience with or sometimes second-hand knowledge of Americans in other deployments or contexts. One peacekeeper said,

I know I haven’t been there but you see the American approach to hearts and minds being all [loud] speakers and [they] rock up [and say] ‘here have this, have this’, but then they go, whereas Australians become a part of the community they’re patrolling in.29

Another peacekeeper said that despite having done four deployments with US soldiers he did not like working with them because ‘they tend to be gung-ho and disrespectful to the locals’.30

While these evaluations seem to be based a little on stereotype and other experiences rather than specific involvement with US peacekeepers in the Pacific, what is striking is that they vividly highlight Australians’ core belief about what it is to be a good peacekeeper. Australians clearly most highly valued peacekeepers who had friendly, kind and fair attitudes and behaviours towards local people. Importantly, this belief was tied to the concomitant view that Australians were themselves very good peacekeepers because they had these qualities. More significantly, these qualities were seen as a natural endowment of their being Australian.

Their inability to bond culturally in the region aside, peacekeepers largely thought that were good peacekeepers. Navy Lieutenant Commander Fraser Vergelius said,

Australians are very flexible, we think outside the box […] the concept of a fair go is a big thing for Australia […] You’ll see a common theme wherever Australian troops serve […] this concept of a fair go, that everyone gets a fair shake. That makes us really good for those sorts of roles.31


29 Anonymous, interview with author.

30 Anonymous, interview with author.

31 Fraser Vergelius, interview with author, 27 November 2012, ROI1047.
Ben Daley said, ‘having worked with the ADF for over two decades now the Australian psyche is about getting involved and helping out and I think that suits peacekeeping’. Anthony de Fraine Murphy who served in the ADF and AFP in Timor and Solomon Islands said, 

we are a very friendly country you can throw us overseas in the middle of anyone and we’ll be making friends straight away [...] we are that laid-back happy-go-lucky people and people respect that around the world [...] we don’t look down at people [or treat people] harshly for no reason.

Others combined this sense of Australianness with an attitude of tolerance borne from Australia’s multiculturalism. Peter Foley who served with the Department of Defence in Timor thought that Australians could empathise with and were ‘very tolerant’ of diverse cultures because of coming from a culturally varied country. Captain Gerry McGowan who served in Bougainville said that he thought Australians made very good peacekeepers because,

generally Australians are pretty favourable to giving people a fair go and [...] in lending a helping hand. And regardless of a lot of the rubbish you see on the news and in opinion pieces about failure to integrate in Australia and enclaves of racism and the powder keg of Western Sydney yeah okay there are instances of that but generally Australians are pretty willing to put out a hand [...] we’re also very aware of how good we’ve got it [so when we go as peacekeepers to somewhere less fortunate] Australians’ natural affinity is to reach out a helping hand.

While the great majority of participants ascribed to this view a few did not share it. ADF member Kalan Lennon thought that Australians did not actually integrate well with local populations partly out of racism, but also out of fear and ignorance. Melinda Fernandez who served with the ADF in Bougainville said that Australians were not the best peacekeepers because they ‘want to sometimes rush in and do stuff they shouldn’t

32 Ben Daley, interview with author, 19 November 2012, ROI1045.
33 de Fraine Murphy, interview.
34 Paul Furness, interview with author, 10 January 2013, ROI1052.
35 Gerry McGowan, interview with author, 8 March 2013, ROI1055; see also Rackley, interview.
36 Kalan Lennon, interview by author, 29 August 2012, ROI1019.
rather than sit back and wait. I think we’re people of action’. Clearly, being Australian did not mean the same thing to all peacekeepers and was certainly not a singular determinant of behaviour. However, the notion that being Australian was about having core values of fairness, friendliness, practicality, competence and tolerance was widely shared. And it had a noticeable influence on most peacekeepers’ self-image, and informed their views of their international counterparts and ultimately on what they believed made a good peacekeeper.

Understandably, from that point of view, Australians framed their evaluations of other peacekeepers in relation to their treatment of local people. This reflected the ways peacekeepers themselves had expectations and ideals about peacekeeping being an activity that ought to bring positive benefits to local people; as an activity that was fundamentally just and right. By determining that the goodness of peacekeeping lay in qualities that they saw Australians as possessing by way of their nationality they revealed something of what it meant to them to be Australian. For many, to simply be a typical Australian was to be a good peacekeeper.

This process of defining the successes and failures of peacekeeping in relation to national traits was not unique to Australians. Other nations’ peacekeepers have engaged in similar processes and the notion of what makes a good peacekeeper shifts according to the traits a nation most values about itself. Swedish military peacekeepers, for example, believed that a good peacekeeper was friendly but fair and should behave in a highly ethical and neutral way – all traits incorporated in Swedish national identity. This resulted in specific kinds of behaviours, such as throwing away leftover food rations during missions in Liberia and Kosovo. They did this rather than giving them away to locally employed civilians – as Australians often did – so as not to run even the slightest risk of being seen as partial. This suggests that peacekeeping behaviour and approaches can tell us much about what different nations believed peacekeeping ought to be, but also says much about the qualities and values upon which nations define themselves. That treating local people

37 Melinda Fernandez, interview with author, 21 November 2012, ROI1039.
well, and Australians’ view of themselves as capable in this area, also helps to illuminate their ideas about the very meaning of peace and peacekeeping.

Australians and the meaning of peace

Histories of UN peacekeeping and especially normative narratives about the aims, limits and challenges of it figured into how Australians thought about their own place in a mission but also about the value of the operation overall. It also directly affected how they defined peace. What is also noticeable in Australian attempts to understand their place in this bigger picture is that, again, a shared sense of what it meant to be Australian informed their views. Yet here that notion of being Australian took on a different shade than that which governed their relationships with international colleagues.

One of the most debated and prominent issues to have arisen from UN peacekeeping in the post-Cold War period has been whether or not it has been a new kind of imperialism. This debate arose in the context of post-Cold War peace operations because of their increased complexity and intrusiveness in the form of state-building. As has been discussed, these missions, unlike their predecessors, often eschewed formal consent from host governments (where they existed) and were generally authorised under Chapter VII rather than VI of the UN charter. That allowed for the imposition of peace by forceful means. Further, and most importantly, many post-Cold War missions involved state-building. This meant interference in, or sometimes even administration of, host governance structures. However, it has not been the interference itself but that it has consistently come in the shape of Western liberal democratic policies and institutions that has been the issue. The development of this type of peacekeeping has been explored in a body of scholarship that together forms ‘liberal peace theory’. While the theory is not itself

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unproblematic the questions and concerns it raises were relevant to how Australian peacekeepers spoke about their service and themselves.

Peacekeepers were certainly not unaffected by the difficult questions peacekeeping raises in terms of how much and in what ways a country or province ought to be interfered with in the name of peace. It is important to examine how peacekeepers managed these normative quandaries of peacekeeping because the design and mandate of a peace operation remain a theoretical enterprise until people implement them. Therefore the interplay between how and why a mission is formulated in certain ways and how it is actually lived and experienced is an essential element of the peacekeeping experience.41

As we saw in the previous chapter, Australian peacekeepers had an ambivalent and at times non-existent sense of Australian colonial histories with the Pacific. They did not identify with or see themselves implicated in these pasts but saw themselves as rather neutral peacekeepers well suited to the task unlike major former or current imperial superpowers like the United States or Britain. In contrast, Australians did very much feel they belonged to and also represented general Western histories of imperialism and colonialism. Consequently, they often felt implicated in and uneasy about peacekeeping possibly replicating or at least imitating some of those past experiences.

The development of the liberal peace theory has largely been the purview of political scientists.42 There are variations amongst scholars, but most broadly they have been simply trying to open peacekeeping to ideological critiques – to argue that peacekeeping has not been a value-neutral activity.43 The more specific basic premise of this theory is that as

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peacekeeping has sought to intercede in conflicts in more intrusive ways its aims have grown to include remaking societies to look like Western liberal democracies. In so doing, it has also reinforced power disparities and organising principles that privilege Western states in the international relations system. This has resulted in peace operations being designed around principles and processes that seek to strengthen, or in some cases create, liberal democratic institutions and values in host societies. This happens in a myriad of ways depending upon the specific circumstances of the conflict and community to which a peace mission is sent. It often includes establishing a democratic electoral process, shaping governance pillars around Western ideas of the rule of law, and cultivating separate governance sectors such as judicial, executive and legislative arms, as well as an impartial civil administration. Ultimately, peace itself has been rendered a by-product unique to liberal democracy.

It has not just been the outcome that has been critiqued but also the process. When a peace operation has any kind of state-building function it often does not just seek to show local communities how to set up a liberal democratic state but, for a period of time, will usually have peacekeepers themselves assume a range of governance roles. This occurred in Solomon Islands and Timor, for example. There, foreign personnel, though to varying degrees in each operation, had roles in the civil service across all branches of government. In Solomon Islands, police peacekeepers also took on executive policing roles, that is, they became legally empowered police officers in local communities. This process is generally called ‘capacity building’ and the aim is to have peacekeepers fulfil roles while local people are trained and mentored to eventually take over the positions. As has been discussed throughout this thesis, this process was not without difficulty in Solomon Islands or Timor, and it has not been easier in any other peace mission since the 1990s either. This has been for many reasons, but generally capacity building creates a great

deal of tension between peacekeepers and local communities because it is usually a slow and haphazard process that can make local communities feel excluded and marginalised.\textsuperscript{46}

So, it has been these features of post-Cold War peacekeeping that have led to the arguments about its imperial nature. However, those arguments have been varied. Scholars, like Kimberly Zisk-Marten, for instance, have done much work on intimately comparing features of nineteenth and twentieth century imperialism and peacekeeping. She suggests that peacekeeping, unlike earlier forms of imperialism, does not seek to exploit the resources of the societies for the benefit of a distant metropole.\textsuperscript{47} Also, peacekeeping unequivocally does not aim to visit harm or violence upon people for its own benefit but is rather aimed at assisting the cessation of violence – though this should not be understood to suggest that peacekeeping has been motivated by humanitarianism alone. It, like earlier forms of imperialism, has always been a product of both self-interest and humanitarian imperatives.\textsuperscript{48}

Where Zisk-Marten finds the comparison most compelling is in the use of force with the intention of changing the cultural, political and economic trajectories of a society. This is particularly so when the ultimate goal of that change is to make societies look more like Western states. In those circumstances it is hard to avoid at least an appearance of something imperial happening.\textsuperscript{49} Others, like Anne Orford, find a strong likeness between the global narratives of peacekeeping as a form of rescue


\textsuperscript{47} Kimberly Zisk Marten, Enforcing The Peace: Learning From the Imperial Past (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2004), 63-64; Ottaway and Lacina, ‘International Interventions’, 74-75.


\textsuperscript{49} Zisk Marten, Enforcing The Peace, 6-7; Ottaway and Lacina, ‘International Interventions’, 75-76.
by the West and older colonial narratives of civilised white male heroes rescuing the colonised from themselves.\footnote{Anne Orford, ‘Muscular Humanitarianism: Reading the Narratives of the New Interventionism’, \textit{European Journal of International Law} 10, no. 4 (1 January 1999): 689-706; other scholars have made similar claims see Sandra Whitworth, \textit{Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis} (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 28-43; Razack, \textit{Dark Threats}, 1-14, 156-166.}

Some scholars have rightly identified that perhaps the most important point to make about peacekeeping’s resemblance, or lack of it, to earlier forms of imperialism is that it has decidedly failed to leave behind any long-lasting truly liberal democratic states.\footnote{Zisk Marten, \textit{Enforcing The Peace’}, 13-22.} There is a distinct gap between the ideals of a peace operation and the reality. While it is too early to see if this evaluation, levelled at operations that occurred in the early to mid-1990s, will hold for the more recently concluded missions in the Pacific, it seems logical that much more of this debate should be focused not just on what peace operations intend to achieve but on what they actually manage to do. And perhaps even more importantly, how they have been experienced and understood by all the actors involved in them.\footnote{Liden, ‘Peace, Self-Governance’, 1-10.} Overall, most scholars in this area concede that nineteenth and twentieth century forms of imperialism and peacekeeping are both similar and different. Most importantly, they argue that what is important is that the \textit{likeness} be considered and that peacekeeping not be seen as an activity that is simply intrinsically good and therefore beyond critique.\footnote{Cooper, Turner, and Pugh, ‘The End of History’, 1995-2007.}

Whatever its particularity, the liberal theory of peace has its limits in terms of what it does not fully consider, or cannot really explain. First, as peacekeeping missions have increasingly been staffed by personnel from parts of the world which are not or have not long been liberal democracies the question as to just how liberal peacekeeping actually can be becomes rather pertinent. With these changes there has grown a distinct fissure between the intention of a peace operation and the way it is implemented on the ground. As much as an operation can be designed in order to leave a liberal democratic imprint, if those doing the actual work have no affinity or familiarity with these values then passing them on to others seems an unlikely prospect. And this is even before we...
consider the complex and diverse responses to this process by local communities.\(^{54}\)

Arturo Sotomayor’s research on the long-held idea that participation in peacekeeping helps to instil liberal democratic values in militaries from countries that are newly democratising gives an indication of how murky the process of passing on politico-cultural values is.\(^{55}\) While Sotomayor’s work focuses on peacekeepers it implies that the diffusion of certain values, whether from peacekeeper-to-peacekeeper or peacekeeper-to-local-person is unlikely to ever be a simple, coherent or predictable process.\(^{56}\) This complexity and unevenness can be seen in Australian peacekeepers and their ability or desire to pass on their country’s institutional values. Even as heirs to an entrenched Western liberal democratic tradition, Australians were often deeply ambivalent about how and even if they wanted to be a part of any cultural and political transformation of local societies.

The second problem with liberal peace theory is that not all peace missions have had significant or particularly intrusive state-building functions, such as in Bougainville, for example. Therefore these operations often get left out of analyses. Yet, as will be explored below, the same kinds of ethical questions and dilemmas about what is appropriate to do in another’s society have been faced by Australian peacekeepers from all three operations. This suggests that more of this discussion needs to take place at the peacekeeper and local level and not just at a state and international level. Also, it shows that the conversation could focus on more broadly drawn ethical questions about peacekeeping rather than just its imperial character and liberal urges. There is some work, particularly by scholars examining the missions in the Pacific, which has started to have this more broadly drawn conversation and it helps to

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\(^{56}\) For more on this issue see Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, ‘Trapped between Many Worlds, 377-392’.
provide a more nuanced context to understand Australian peacekeepers’ own views.

This scholarship engages with the normative and ethical questions of peacekeeping without focusing on its imperial likeness, instead it focuses more pointedly on questions of legitimacy. However, this work does build on and are connected to the liberal peace debates and concerns. There has been significant discussion of these issues in relation to the interventions in the Pacific. This is because of their distinctive statebuilding components and because of the leadership Australia, a regional superpower, has had in these interventions. This literature is not concerned with the peacekeeping elements of the interventions but only their statebuilding components. Greg Fry and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, key scholars in this area, studied interventions in the Pacific excluding Timor, and they have suggested that they were ‘an ambitious attempt at regionwide social engineering on a scale akin to the period of decolonisation’. In a simplified sense, concerns about legitimacy are twofold. First, that the efforts and types of statebuilding that occur should produce institutions and hierarchies that enjoy local legitimacy and so become meaningfully entrenched in the local politico-cultural landscape. Second, and clearly related, are to what extent it is legitimate for outside powers to intervene in a statebuilding fashion particularly in terms of defining when, how and to what extent a nation or province needs intervention.

In relation to the Pacific, Fry and Kabutaulaka discuss the notion that the ‘cooperative intervention’ that has occurred especially since RAMSI has largely been seen internationally as a legitimate approach precisely because it has been cooperative. This means not only that regional nations participated but that the interventions attempted to anchor their efforts in local goals and with local participation. However, they argue that there are still legitimacy questions regarding this approach. They highlight, for example, that the discourse of the ‘failed state’ that helped


Many of the issues in this legitimacy discussion have been raised throughout this thesis but what is key here is that it centres normative questions about intervention in broader terms than its comparison to imperialism. However, the two sets of scholarship are still obviously connected and bound to concerns about the ways in which ideas of good governance and peace get conceived by major powers, almost always Western, and are then implemented in largely non-Western communities and political cultures. Together, the comparisons, concerns and questions raised and explored by scholarship of this kind mattered not just at policy levels, but also for peacekeepers. Further, their reflections on these issues draw on and mirror elements from both types of scholarship.

Australians had a range of ways of responding to and thinking about some of the difficult implications of peacekeeping. Very few articulated their concerns in a language of imperialism or liberalism, but they nonetheless wrestled with questions of what peacekeeping ought and
ought not to do. Often, discussions about this issue began with participants saying that their main focus was just actually on their specific jobs and how to do them to the best of their ability. When peacekeepers did think beyond their immediate jobs they really only focused on how what they were doing would benefit local people in practical tangible ways. They were very hesitant to frame their work in relation to or as part of what they saw as the political elements of their missions. Warrant Officer II Wally Meurant who served with the Army in Timor said,

most of us, I would suggest, don’t have that higher level consideration, […] you don’t sort of think three years down the track what effect that might have or whether that was a good or bad thing. You’re just there [you do your job].

Balthazar Goldman an ADF member with Timor service said that as a caterer he saw it as his job to make sure everyone at his base was fed, so that was where all his energies lay. Captain Gerry McGowan who served in Bougainville thought that ‘on each […] mission there’d only be one or two people involved in the politics of it […] everybody else is looking down […] to how do we make this better for the people that are here?’

As has been discussed in this and the previous chapter, local people have figured prominently not just in many peacekeepers daily lives but also in the way they imagined the worth of themselves as peacekeepers and peacekeeping at large. One of the reasons for focusing on the material ways they could help locals seems to have been because it was an easily measurable outcome and for most people an undeniably good thing to do. It was also a way to deal with the bewildering complexity of keeping the peace in the Pacific.

Even the most simple of peacekeeping operations have been extraordinarily complex experiences, given that they have taken place in the full breadth and plurality of human societies – and generally fractured ones at that – and have been in the pursuit of an enigmatic goal. In that context it was much easier to understand what a peacekeeping presence

59 Wally Meurant, interview with author, 4 October 2012, ROI1032.
60 Goldman, interview.
61 McGowan, interview.
was achieving when witnessing people rebuilding their homes, replanting their gardens and beginning to return to school or work. In contrast, it was inordinately difficult for most peacekeepers in the field to measure if, let alone how, a society’s governance structures were becoming more stable, more liberal or more democratic – beyond, of course, witnessing a free election. In this way, focusing on the local people’s quality of life was perhaps just a reaction to and way to manage the sheer complexity and overwhelming nature of working in the peace missions.

It is interesting to note that this approach was particularly common amongst ADF personnel. For example, Timor veteran, Private Luke Grogan said, ‘some just don’t know how to present it or explain it so they just resort to “I was just doing my job”.’

Sebastian Davidson an ADF member who served in Bougainville explained this approach:

what you’re getting there is the military response […] you don’t want people questioning or thinking too much […] serving in the military and especially in a deployed capacity is about [a systematic, methodical approach to reaching a goal] and that’s the main thing you just do your job.”

It is not easy to tell if this approach was because of something unique to the ADF or was a symptom of fewer participants from other organisations. Some military participants did talk about it being common in the ADF to not think too much or engage too often with political aims or motivations of an operation while serving in it. This is unsurprising given that the ADF as an organisation is meant to be apolitical. That the ADF is supposed to be apolitical also might have meant that participants simply did not want to share, or think it appropriate to share, their opinions in the context of a recorded oral history interview. Part of this kind of attitude to operations was also because whether a member of the ADF agreed with the mission or not they would still find themselves serving there. Having to manage day to day stressors and challenges would only become harder if constantly engaging with bigger issues that were beyond individual control. This is not at all to suggest that ADF

63 Sebastian Davidson, interview with author, 10 August 2012, ROI1017; See also Lennon, interview.
members were unthinking or unquestioning, but rather that focusing on specific responsibilities and goals seems to have been at least in part a type of coping strategy.

While on the face of it this way of managing peacekeeping seems to suggest that military peacekeepers did not look beyond everyday work and improvement in local lives, their conversations did actually betray particular views about the normative impetus of peacekeeping. When asked directly to clarify if they thought peacekeeping was mostly about helping people many peacekeepers agreed. They very much did not see peacekeeping as about creating, changing or building certain types of political cultures or institutions. Warrant Officer II Paul Furness said, ‘I think what you’re doing is freeing up that country letting it go about its business or build itself. You’re ensuring that the locals feel comfortable [...] at the end of the day their choice of government is their choice’.  

Anthony de Fraine Murphy who served in Timor and Solomon Islands with the ADF and AFP thought it was about focusing on the small sphere of influence you had as peacekeeper and not at a political level. In that space he said the aim of peacekeeping was actually going in and creating a safe environment [...] and progress [as they choose]. Warrant Officer II John Fletcher said of Timor and their future, ‘I wouldn’t give a red rat’s freckle [about their government choice] as long as they’re free to follow the path they want to follow then it doesn’t matter to me’.

Some peacekeepers, while not disagreeing at all with the notion that peacekeeping operations should be about helping local people, did wrestle with whether and how that might include moving beyond tangible everyday benefits to include more abstract and more intrusive goals towards political, economic or cultural change. It is worth noting here that, again, had the oral history project contained a greater number of participants from the AFP and APS, this kind of discussion might have been more common or had different nuances. Personnel from those organisations were more often involved in working as mentors and trainers during ‘capacity building’ or working directly in host institutions.

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64 Furness, interview.
65 de Fraine Murphy, interview.
66 John Fletcher, interview with author, 5 October 2012, ROI1033.
Those positions would have meant more time working with locals and being confronted daily with how much and what kind of intervention was appropriate. Also, particularly for APS peacekeepers, governance and civil administration was their area of expertise so it is much more likely that these issues would have been familiar and very much a part of their everyday peacekeeping life. In that sense these peacekeepers might have been better placed to recognise and witness changes in governance institutions and have that form a greater part of their personal experience and ideas about the appropriate normative limits of peacekeeping.67

Nonetheless, there were still peacekeepers across all three organisations who really grappled with the ethical and moral difficulties of bringing about and maintaining peace. Ben Daley who served with the Army in RAMSI said,

it would be easy to argue that if we were so right and so perfect why is that we don’t have utopia in our own civilisation? […] I think […] the more we tend to go and chase this concept of peace perhaps the less likely we are to ever see it. […] when we say it’s the right thing to do is it really because it is the right thing to do or is it because it gives us a sense of ‘I’m doing the right thing?’68

Samantha Isaac, a public servant, said of her time in Solomon Islands and Timor, that

working within the context and understanding the local political economy is critical […] you have to understand those local drivers. It has to be a bottom up approach. You can’t impose successfully – you need to incrementally improve what is on the ground.69

Carney Elias, an Army Captain who served in Solomon Islands explained that while the nature of RAMSI and her specific role generally meant that a lot of the governance issues were removed from her everyday experiences she still struggled with that part of peacekeeping. She said,

67 Kate Binton, interview with Author, 20 September 2012, ROI1028.
68 Daley, interview.
69 Isaac, interview - this excerpt is based both on audio file and revisions the participant made to written summary.
the thing I remember thinking at the time and [...] in subsequent years [is that] it seems a little futile. [...] culturally they’re so different to us and are we just going in there trying to enforce our culture on them? I find that aspect very challenging.\(^{70}\)

There was an element of uneasiness in these types conversations as people wrestled with what peacekeeping ought to mean but also how that meaning might be contentious when largely decided upon and executed by people from powerful Western nations. Australians identified themselves as Westerners and they recognised the Pacific as a place with histories of oppression under white Western rule and so saw themselves implicated in that more general historical sense. Kalan Lennon thought that many people he worked with in Timor did think Australian ideas of democracy were the best. He thought that there was ‘a real sense of white Anglo-Saxon superiority’ about it.\(^{71}\) Lieutenant Commander Greg Swinden said, ‘I think that’s why when we go into peacekeeping forces we try to be part of a coalition […] so that it’s just not a white face being there poking someone in the chest telling them what to do’.\(^{72}\) Ben Daley also pondered on this issue in our discussion of the aim of peacekeeping. He said,

what we think is better is not necessarily better by them. So it would be restoring things back to the way they were before we arrived. To me, I think that’s a better thing so if a building was there and it was built a certain way and we restored it to its original condition because it had been damaged […] if we restored the roads back to the way they were. But if as a result of the intervention we changed the way that they fundamentally lived and they didn’t agree with that then we haven’t left it a better place. What we’ve done is imposed our view on that culture which, if you look back through history, hasn’t always been great.\(^{73}\)

Clearly Australians’ connection to broad notions of belonging to a white Western nation added a layer of complexity to the way they thought about the ethics of keeping peace and what role they themselves ought to

\(^{70}\) Elias, interview.  
\(^{71}\) Lennon, interview.  
\(^{72}\) Swinden, interview.  
\(^{73}\) Daley, interview.
have in it. For many, that role was not an entirely comfortable one. There was certainly not a wholehearted, coherent or unquestioning effort or desire to pass on liberal democratic values. Many peacekeepers were apprehensive about being part of any grand transformative goals and thought peacekeeping should mostly be about assisting people to return to a functional state after a conflict. Others grappled with the idea that perhaps that was too simple, and that peace must involve some sort of deeper societal change if it was to have any lasting presence. Yet they had no clear sense of how to do that without veering into a zone of disrespect, oppression or arrogance – a space that had echoes of Western imperialism.

Some of this doubt and uneasiness clearly came from viewing themselves as members of a nation deeply connected to the Western world. It is interesting to note that the specificity of their Australianness, so on show in their interactions with international personnel, was here muted and largely replaced by a general sense of belonging to the West. Here, the knowledge that they belonged to a world with histories steeped in colonialism and imperialism along with their attendant narratives of race and gender worked to make peacekeepers particularly uncertain about their own roles and behaviours. It made them keenly aware of the difficult line they walked of wanting to help but also not wanting to recreate painful histories to which they connected themselves and understood themselves as representing.

Peacekeepers, much like scholars, found no way to comfortably answer or manage the questions and anxieties at the very root of what it means to keep or build peace in other people’s homes. They are not easily answered. Perhaps they are unanswerable. Yet they nonetheless formed a part of peacekeepers’ experiences, and indeed continue to do so, as peacekeepers make and remake their memories. Whether they kept these issues at bay during their work so as to cope with the overwhelmingly complex situations in which they were in, or whether they attended to them more directly, the question of what peacekeeping should be hummed, and for some, drummed, in the background of their work. Understanding more about what peacekeepers thought about but also
how they managed a job whose meaning was at best ambiguous suggests that even if we could come to a firm agreement about peacekeeping’s liberal democratic imperial-like ambitions we must also contend with the fact that the human implementation of such an agenda is likely to be complicated, haphazard and equivocal. It is also likely to vary hugely according to the countries, regions and histories from which peacekeepers come as well the countries, regions and histories in which they serve.

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This chapter has been about connecting peacekeepers’ experiences to the global international spaces and ideas in which they found themselves. The operations in Bougainville, Timor and Solomon Islands required peacekeepers to engage with a range of people from all over the world. And this had to be juggled in a space filled with an uncertain and contentious discourse about what it ought to mean to keep, make and build peace. The way Australians approached their circumstances revealed much about what Australians thought of peacekeeping at large, and also of what they thought it meant to be an Australian peacekeeper. When interacting with international colleagues Australians reflected a deeply held sense of shared Australianness that informed the very meaning of what it was to be a good peacekeeper. They related to others through this sense of shared nationality which was largely defined by values such as friendliness, egalitarianism and a ‘fair go’ for all. At another level, when peacekeepers attempted to understand or struggle with some of the challenging normative issues of peacekeeping their being Australian receded. Instead they more strongly identified with being Western and so belonging to histories of global colonialism and imperialism.

Peacekeepers flexibly oscillated between these ideas of who they were and what they represented as they managed their peacekeeping spaces. Yet again, it is clear that what peacekeepers brought with them presently, historically, personally and collectively enmeshed with what local communities offered presently, historically, personally and collectively. From an international perspective it is also clear that both of these were also filtered through global narratives of peace, both past and present.
That consistent relationship between past and present in shaping peacekeepers’ experiences and views would also follow them home where peacekeeping and what it meant to be an Australian peacekeeper would find different meanings yet again.
Peace at Home?

In the decades since peacekeepers started coming home the meaning of their service has not remained static. Instead it has been made and remade by national narratives of the Anzac legend as well as by the waging of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Together, those stories have meant that the warlike elements of peacekeeping, the dangerous and violent elements, have been emphasised and the more peaceful work less valued. The influence of Anzac is probably not surprising given the enormous role that narrative has come to play in Australian cultural memory and national identity. But the wars in the Middle East which ran alongside peacekeeping in the Pacific almost from the start added new contours to that story. The meaning of what it meant to be an Australian peacekeeper in the Pacific was profoundly shaped by those desert wars.

They made it more difficult for peacekeeping to find a space in national narratives of Anzac and being Australian. They rendered the already ambiguous place of peacekeeping in this national pantheon of meaning even more obscure, even more contested and confused. What resulted was an incredibly paradoxical narrative of peacekeeping’s meaning. That is, peacekeeping was only seen as significant and important when it looked more like war. And yet, to deepen the complexity, peacekeeping was at the same time seen as a morally good activity compared to these Middle Eastern wars.
This complex narrative, though most influential for ADF peacekeepers, also permeated the way APS and AFP peacekeeping was given meaning. It overshadowed those two groups of peacekeepers in certain ways. In the case of the AFP created something of a struggle for recognition, while for the APS it reaffirmed their place of relative invisibility. So, much like when they were in the Pacific once peacekeepers came home they found, and continued to find for years afterwards, that their experiences were not isolated, but connected to wider constantly shifting historical narratives about what it meant to be Australian and a peacekeeper. Finding meaning in that space has not been a peaceful process, but one of contest and negotiation.

Peacekeepers at Home – ADF

The ADF, like the wider Australian society it represented, was adept at telling and retelling stories rooted in the myth of national birth with the deaths and heroism of thousands of soldiers at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli in 1915. The growth, decline and resurgence from the 1980s of Anzac to the point of it being described by historian Ken Inglis as something of an Australian ‘civil religion’ is territory well covered by historians. Here, suffice it to say that the growing fervour and sacredness of Anzac and its attendant qualities of mateship, heroism, egalitarianism and free-spiritedness has only encouraged the ADF in its own telling of this story. Within the ADF, Anzac narratives had a particular kind of immediacy and intimacy as personnel were encouraged through ritualised retelling and symbolic connections to find personal – though also necessarily political – meaning. Simply put, they were cast as the torch-bearers and direct heirs to Anzac.


The effectiveness of the way the ADF, aided by Australian society and politics more broadly, has cultivated a sense of seamless connection between an Anzac past and present is evidenced by the way personnel themselves have taken it to heart and participated in its continuation. In her work on the significance of Anzac for Australian and New Zealand troops serving on the peace mission in Bougainville, Rosemary Baird has shown how Anzac was very much a part of soldiers’ lives and performances during that mission. She especially notes the many shared Anzac Day ceremonies and war memorial visitations and clean-ups. Figure 19 below shows one of the many Anzac Day ceremonies in East Timor.

Peacekeepers in this project were also deeply connected to Australia’s wartime histories. Geoff Smith, an ADF member, wrote in his Timor field diary: ‘this is something I have to do. This is my 1914, my 1939’. While Anthony de Fraine Murphy Anthony recalling his ADF experience said,

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3 Ibid., 134.
I grew up on Gallipoli and all the war stories as I was coming through. And it’s like a baton relay and you just had the torch passed on to you. They’ve created this reputation and standard throughout 100 years and it’s sort of like here it is, ‘let’s see what you can do with it’. And it’s a big deal and you don’t want to tarnish, rather, you don’t want to disappoint them. You do want to get out there and prove you are as good as the guys gone before you.\(^6\)

When considering the question of what it meant to be a peacekeeper Army Sergeant Chris McLeod said,

[Peacekeeping meant] specifically nothing, but oh to have gone on operational service – everything. That’s what I joined the Army to do. As a kid […] people who’d come back from World War Two were regarded differently in society, as a returned man. So now I am. So that’s a lifelong ambition fulfilled.\(^7\)

Dylan Bond explained in detail the active remembering and ritualising of tradition that happened when he was in the ADF.

**DOYLE:** That’s one thing I’m getting, lots of people join up and have this sense of duty […]

**BOND:** Yeah I think for me personally that was something that really appealed to me is serving my country being able to do some good and if necessary defend my country. And I think if you spoke to most people that definitely plays a part and […] you feel that, particularly when you do a lot [and] you learn a lot about the history. Even if you didn’t know much before you joined but once you’re in there’s a huge amount of emphasis put on the tradition that’s been carried down all the way from for us\(^8\) the First World War […] it’s seen as a duty and tradition to serve your country. There’s certainly a lot of respect for the soldiers that have gone particularly in the First and Second World Wars and we see our role as continuing that tradition.

**DOYLE:** That’s a really active part of growing up in the Army?

**BOND:** Yeah definitely. There’s a lot of emphasis put on traditions. A lot of stuff is carried on down through the years through the decades from either the First or Second World War. The Army is an environment

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\(^6\) Anthony de Fraine Murphy, interview with author, 2 November 2012, ROI1038.

\(^7\) Christopher McLeod, interview by author, 3 October 2012, ROI1030.

\(^8\) ‘Us’ is a reference to Bond’s unit.
where there’s a huge amount of ceremony and tradition involved and that’s something that there is a lot of pride involved […]  

DOYLE: So there is that sense of connection to all the people who’ve gone before?  

BOND: Oh yeah. Yeah definitely. And we want to be seen as continuing the good work that they’ve done.  

Despite this living presence and personally felt embodiment of Anzac, that narrative has not had an uncomplicated place in the ADF, or Australia more broadly. Instead, it has been marked by continual transformation and some fracturing. Not every kind of war service or experience has found a comfortable home in Anzac. Christina Twomey’s histories of Australian prisoners of war, for example, have shown prisoners’ experiences did not initially fit the legend. The images that emerged of these men post-WWII portrayed victimised and feminised soldiers – two features decidedly un-Anzac at that time. And yet Anzac has proved to be a remarkably elastic concept able to be stretched in new ways in response to changing political and social needs about war and what it means to be an Australian. That prisoners of war now not only find a welcome place in Anzac but have come to be held as sacred authentic parts of it is testament to this. Still, however elastic Anzac might be, the stretching has never been easy or guaranteed.

The status of peacekeeping in relation to the Anzac tradition became more of an issue in the wake of the changes to peacekeeping post-Cold War. The changing nature of operations in this period meant that not only were more ADF personnel involved in peacekeeping than ever before but the conditions in which they were working started to look less like ‘peace’ and more like ‘war’. Peacekeeping was no longer the buffer zone work typical of pre-Cold War operations, but it was not all-out combat with an enemy either. And yet it was, especially once Interfet deployed, the most action the ADF had seen since Vietnam. For a while it was as many peacekeepers in the project implied ‘the only show in town’.

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9 Dylan Bond, interview by author, 6 October 2012, ROI1034.  
But this all changed with the advent of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively.

However, the effect these wars would have could be seen even earlier. In 1998 Australia sent troops to assist in peacekeeping duties in Kuwait as part of the mission, Multinational Force in Iraq-Kuwait, or ‘Operation Pollard’ in Australia. Special Air Services (SAS) soldiers were sent as part of the nearly 200 personnel contingent and the danger element, even to the point of calling it war, was common in the press. In the days after the decision to send the contingent Don Greenlees wrote in *The Australian*, ‘It was to be the first time since Vietnam that ground troops would be committed to a foreign battlefield, a far cry from the peacekeeping and peacemaking operations that have often taken Australian soldiers overseas in the past decade’.11

It could hardly be surprising that when the Iraq and Afghanistan wars came along they would also be decidedly ‘proper’ wars. They involved combat, a real enemy and were dangerous. They required more typical soldiering skills rather than the tempering of them as in peacekeeping. Though, as the comments about the Iraq-Kuwait mission suggested, less warlike peacekeeping might always have found it hard to find significant meaning in Australia, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were changed the landscape entirely. It is impossible to understand how peacekeeping has been remembered by peacekeepers and Australia more broadly without these two wars.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan affected peacekeepers’ memories in a couple of contradictory ways. For one, they were ‘proper’ wars that could be much more easily fitted into the genealogy of Australian military history. Therefore, when peacekeepers compared their experiences to these wars they usually found peacekeeping wanting. And yet at the very same time these two wars reinforced the worth and need for peacekeeping. These Middle Eastern wars though they undermined the recognition and prestige of peacekeeping they essentially provided a moral compass by which peacekeepers evaluated and gave meaning to their

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11 Don Greenlees, ‘PM’s Decision One for the Pragmatists, Too/Iraq Crisis – The Call to Arms’, *The Australian*, 11 February 1998; see also Greenlees, “’It’s About Killing (so) It’s an Onerous Task to Send People into War’”, *The Australian*, 18 February 1998.
serve. In this case they found peacekeeping to be a morally superior activity and one in which they felt happy, even proud, to have been a part of.

The influence of these two wars, especially Afghanistan, was heightened for peacekeepers in this project by a coincidental circumstance. Many of the interviews done for this project took place in August and September 2012 in Queensland. There are a number of large military bases across that state. On 5 September 2012 the bodies of three Australians killed in Afghanistan were returned to Amberley RAAF Base in Ipswich, a suburb about an hour outside of Brisbane. They were three of five soldiers killed in the closing week of August that year. Three of the five soldiers were killed in the one day and national coverage was intense. Prime Minister Julia Gillard in one of many statements noted that it was Australia’s the worst day in the war and “the most losses in combat since the days of the Vietnam War”. 12

The three Queensland soldiers were based at Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera, a suburb just outside Brisbane.13 Most of the Queensland interviews were with personnel based at either Amberley or Enoggera and almost all of the interviewees discussed this event and the conflict in Afghanistan more broadly. To a lesser degree, discussion of Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq, featured across the majority of the interviews, especially the ADF ones. These conflicts were not just fleetingly mentioned but were being stitched in complicated and messy ways into participants’ own experiences of peacekeeping; at the same time they were being stitched into broader national narratives of war, peace and being Australian.

To begin, the seeds of peacekeeping’s equivocal place in the Anzac tradition were sown long before the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. It lived in the shadow of those two great World Wars for many years and then ultimately also in the shadow of Vietnam. In that darkened place the

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The centrality of warfighting has made peacekeeping a largely suspicious kind of military activity. That has been, at least in part, the reason historians have been, until quite recently, reticent to let peacekeeping into the nation’s military histories.\(^{14}\)

Significantly, the ambiguity of peacekeeping has been reflected in and aided by the complicated ways in which operational service has been classified by successive Federal Governments. Since a 1993 Cabinet decision, all overseas operations get certain classifications of ‘warlike’ or ‘non-warlike’. This is in order to manage Veterans’ Affairs benefits as well to determine salaries, tax status and special allowances to be paid to personnel while deployed. A designation of warlike or non-warlike is given after various assessments about the threats and hazards in an operation are made by various ADF stakeholders. These recommendations are then forwarded to the Chief of Defence who makes a recommendation to the Defence Minister. In consultation with the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister will then make a written declaration about the status of the operation which will then be promulgated and made legal.\(^{15}\)

In 1997 the two terms and their definitions were inserted into the \textit{Veteran’s Entitlement Act (1986)}, one of the then main pieces of legislation determining eligibility for veteran benefits. Warlike service is defined as ‘those military activities where the application of force is authorised to pursue specific military objectives and there is an expectation of causalities’. Non warlike service ‘covers those activities short of warlike operations where there is a risk associated with the assigned tasks and where the application of force is limited to self-defence. Causalities could occur but are not expected’.\(^{16}\) The Government has also maintained a legal distinction between peacekeeping and peace enforcement; warlike

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\(^{15}\) Department of Defence, \textit{Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN)}, 17.1.9, July 2012.

\(^{16}\) \textit{Veteran’s Entitlement Act (1986)}, s.5C(1); for more detail on the definitions see Department of Veterans’ Affairs, \textit{Report of the Review of ‘Veteran’s Entitlement Act (1986)’ (Clarke Review)}, Vol. 2. Chapter 10, 10.9-10.10.
Peace operations are designated peace-enforcing and all others as peacekeeping.\textsuperscript{17}

The designation of warlike or non-warlike may, and often does, change numerous times throughout the life of a mission as conditions change. Further, they apply geographically, so that there will be an eligible ‘area of operations’ and not necessarily just a blanket designation for a mission. The mission in Bougainville, including the early efforts in 1994, was designated non-warlike. The mission in Solomon Islands was non-warlike, and again that included the early attempts of the International Peace Monitoring Team. In East Timor, designations fluctuated across the life of the mission. The later period of UNAMET, Interfet, UNTAET and UNMISET until 17 August 2003 were all designated warlike. All other periods were non-warlike.\textsuperscript{18}

The classifications of operational service were important for peacekeepers in two interconnected ways. First, they had real-world outcomes in terms of entitlements and pensions and also for the type of recognition a peacekeeper would get in terms of medals. Second, it reinforced the propensity for ranking peacekeeping against notions of war. This meant more prestige was assigned to some operations in comparison to others, which in turn affected how peacekeepers and Australians more broadly made sense of and remember their service once home.

Since 2004 there have been three pieces of legislation in force that govern veterans’ entitlements.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, determining a veteran’s claims can be a complex and quite personalised process. With that qualification, there are still some general distinctions to make between entitlements and allowances for warlike or non-warlike service. First, every entitlement and allowance is affected by the length of service. Anything less than six months will usually mean a person will not get the full range of benefits, while service of six months or greater will entitle them to this. Warlike service will largely make a person eligible for a range of service pensions,

\textsuperscript{17} Clarke Review, 10.9 and 10.10.
\textsuperscript{18} PACMAN, Annex 17.1.B, s. 17.1.14.
\textsuperscript{19} These are: Veterans’ Entitlement’s Act (1986); Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (1988); Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (2004).
including the ‘Gold Card’ which has the most generous benefits scheme offering free comprehensive healthcare from age 70. Non-warlike service will not make someone eligible for either of these.\(^\text{20}\) Both types of service do offer the same protection and entitlements in terms of disability pensions for injuries and illnesses sustained in or because of operational duties.\(^\text{21}\)

Further to the benefits rendered post-deployment the two classifications will affect how much money personnel get in terms of daily allowances while on operation. ADF members can be paid any number of special allowances meant to compensate them for things such as danger, hard living conditions, having to move house because of operational duty and so forth. Daily allowances for being exposed to threat, or so-called ‘danger money’, will generally be higher for warlike operations.\(^\text{22}\) Those who served in Timor until 15 November 2003 were also entitled to a special ‘East Timor peace enforcement allowance’ of about $125AUD per day.\(^\text{23}\) A mission’s classification will also usually have an effect on a person’s tax-status. Typically, income from operational service will be either totally or partially tax-exempt and may attract other benefits. Greater tax breaks and benefits are generally given for warlike service.

It is important to note that the designations, though most applicable to the ADF also had implications for AFP and APS members. Peacekeepers from those organisations would have a complex range of employment conditions, allowances and entitlements set by their own departments, and applicable contracts and job descriptions. As well, if they served with the United Nations’ they would have entitlements and allowances determined by that organisation. Still, their deployment conditions could be affected by Defence classifications and subsequent ‘conditions of

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\(^{21}\) For more detail on entitlements see, PACMAN, Chapter 17, Parts 5-10.

\(^{22}\) For more on allowances and how they are calculated under both classifications see, PACMAN, Ch. 17, Part 9.

\(^{23}\) PACMAN, Ch. 17, Part 9, Division 2; see also ‘Questions on Notice, Question 1752 East Timor – Military Personnel Allowances’, The Australian Senate, 8 December 1999.
Peace at Home?

service’ policies. For example, APS employees who serve in support of ADF operations can have some of their conditions of service covered by Defence, such as allowances and other deployment entitlements. Both the APS and AFP will also be covered with disability pensions for their service in the same way as their ADF colleagues through the Department of Veteran’s Affairs.

Lastly, warlike or non-warlike designations have determined what kind of professional recognition an ADF member will get from the Department of Defence. Up until 2004 non-warlike service entitled someone to receive the ‘Australian Service Medal‘ (ASM), while warlike service led to the more prestigious ‘Australian Active Service Medal‘ (AASM). The AASM was more coveted because it indicated service that was more arduous and more threatening. In 2004 a new medal was introduced to replace both the ASM and AASM. This was in response to the ever-increasing complexity of operations the ADF was attending but also at least in part due to some resentment of the two-tier system created by the previous two medals. The ‘Australian Operational Service Medal’ covers any operational service that ‘the Chief of the Defence Force deems to be worthy of recognition’. Outside of these medals peacekeepers who served in Interfet were given a special medal, the ‘International Force East Timor’ medal. To be eligible, the ADF member had to serve for at least 30 days between 16 September 1999 and 10 April 1999. The medal recognised the significance of the operation both in terms of Australian leadership but also the danger and size of the mission. Other special medals continued to be offered for specific missions such as Afghanistan.

25 PACMAN, Ch. 17, Part 10.
26 Clarke Review, Ch. 10.
28 Ibid.
Deciding whether a conflict is warlike or non-warlike is a complex affair with a lot of grey area between the definitions – and with a lot at stake for those giving service. Unsurprisingly, the decisions that have been made have not always been well received. A poignant example occurred in 1993 when peacekeepers who had served in the operation in Somalia were awarded infantry combat badges. There was public outrage at this as these were awards that had historically been given to soldiers who had served overseas in combat. Somalia was not seen as a ‘real war’ in this sense so the awarding of badges apparently denigrated the ‘real’ diggers’ legacy. Technically, though, a badge of this kind is not awarded for actual fighting but for service with the infantry in warlike conditions for a period of at least 90 days. Somalia clearly fitted this definition. But peacekeeping there was marked by some as something distinctly less.

Another example was reclassification of peacekeeping in Rwanda in 1994 to 1995. It was initially designated non-warlike and in a ten year battle the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans’ Association (APPVA), a peak Ex-Services Organisation that provides welfare, entitlement assistance and other support to veterans’, assisted in lobbying (successfully) to have the designation retroactively changed to warlike. Those pushing for the change continually emphasised the danger of that mission. That change was also the result of a wider Government review into anomalies in veteran’s entitlements. ‘The Clarke Review’ was undertaken by the Howard Government from 2002 and did see many previous conflicts’ classifications re-assessed and some changed. But the issue did not go away.

In 2009 the APPVA was again lobbying for the classification of peacekeepers’ service (both ADF and AFP) in Timor during operation

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Astute (for the period May 2006 – May 2008) should be reclassified to warlike service. In a 2009 Ministerial Submission the Association laid out the case for a level of danger that ought to have made the operation consistent with the warlike definition. They claimed that the reclassification was important both for entitlements and also medallic recognition.  

There was some public outrage at the classification of Astute at the time of deployment too. One soldier serving in Dili was quoted as asking if the classification would change ‘with the death of one of us?’ That article continued to compare earlier periods of service in Timor with 2006 as well as quoting both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister’s discussion of how dangerous the mission would be. Liam Bartlett, the journalist continues, ‘when the definition of “war” can be as subjective as a category ruling in Canberra that appeases the budgetary dreams of a mean-spirited government, we should hoist the white flag and change our name to Switzerland’.  

The issue was still simmering away as late as 2013. For example, the ADF agreed to the names of peacekeepers killed while on duty being put on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in 1989. However, it was not until March 2012 that the Memorial conceded to considerable pressure to put these names up on the Roll of Honour exhibit itself as opposed to the book in which they had been recorded and displayed. The February 2013 Canberra Times headline, ‘Peacekeeper’s Death not “Warlike” Enough’, indicates some of the emotion and tension that still exists around this issue.  

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31 APPVA, ‘Ministerial Submission’.  
34 Ross Peake, ‘Peacekeeper’s Death Not “Warlike” Enough’, Canberra Times, 5 March 2013,
In the context of the Pacific, peacekeepers also pondered what the classifications meant for them and shared some of the frustrations associated with them. Navy Petty Officer Graeme Wall discussed how he could not understand why his service in Timor was not classified as ‘warlike’ when he had to carry a weapon and be in full kit. That, he felt, meant what he did was therefore clearly more than peacekeeping. Some peacekeepers were also at pains to correct my use of the term ‘peacekeeping’ to describe what they did. This was especially so for those who served in the mission in East Timor. Sergeant Chris McLeod said, ‘I should probably make a clarification here. I wasn’t on peacekeeping I was on peace enforcing’. RAAF Officer Lisa Showell who served in Timor said that ‘it was warlike, people say “oh it was just East Timor, just peacekeeping” but it wasn’t peacekeeping then, it was warlike and the odds were you could have been shot’.

Army Sergeant Wally Meurant who served in Bougainville and Timor puzzled over the definitions. He said,

DOYLE: What does it mean to you the idea to ‘keep the peace’?
MEURANT: Yeah see I never really thought we were keeping the peace the whole time. […] But Bougainville I was never, it was never a day when I was in a position where I had to stop anything so I didn’t make a difference in that regard. The presence of the force probably did […] but yeah peacekeeping I never actually did anything physically.

DOYLE: So in that sense do you mean peacekeeping is sort of only when you stop violence, is that what you mean by that?
MEURANT: Well that’s my interpretation of peacekeeping but I also understand that just by the sheer presence of being there and providing support you’re doing that sort of thing as well. See I didn’t class, I didn’t think East Timor was peacekeeping I don’t know what I thought that was. Bougainville definitely ‘cos we didn’t have a weapon so to me that was you were there as presence to keep the peace but we weren’t involved in any shooting or anything. Whereas East Timor you

35 Graeme Wall, interview with author, 7 September 2012, ROI1027.
36 Meleod, interview.
37 Lisa Showell, interview with author, 30 May 2012, ROI1006.
might of had to. Different rules of engagement, as I say, East Timor you had a weapon and ammunition, Bougainville you didn’t.\textsuperscript{38}

Clearly, warlike and non-warlike designations matter a great deal in very practical terms. Yet as the awarding of medals and the above discussions suggest they also matter in terms of image. The more dangerous and potentially violent a mission is it deemed to deserve more recognition, and not just monetary. To be clear, the argument here is not that the greater threat of loss of life or significant injury should attract less compensation or post-deployment entitlements. Rather, it is that entitlements are not the whole picture when dissecting views of warlike and non-warlike service. There are incredibly meaningful symbolism and beliefs caught up in these classifications. In privileging warlike conditions, in even making the decision to use terms like ‘warlike’ and ‘non-warlike’ the immense significance of war rather than peace as the core value and highest achievement for the ADF is made clear. Underlying that image is an implicit understanding that peace is something less than, something not to be quite so proud of, something not quite as important. That says a lot about the ADF but it says more about the Australia that organisation belonged to.

This struggle to give meaning and acknowledgement to peacekeeping says something about the gendered nature of war, peace and Anzac in Australia. These efforts to clarify, defend even justify peacekeeping speak to an attempt to secure a valid and stable place for peacekeeping in a society that has given more value to essentialised masculine pursuits of war and warriors, than the also essentialised feminine ones of peace and peacemakers.\textsuperscript{39} Arguably, the history of failures, stagnation and ineptness

\textsuperscript{38} Wally Meurant, interview with author, 4 October 2012, ROI1032; see also Kalan Lennon, interview by author, 29 August 2012, ROI1019.

of early peacekeeping, especially because of UN leadership also added to these insecurities and defensiveness. That is, it was not just that peacekeeping was not war, but that peacekeeping itself had very little respect because of its very public failures and inabilities. But as the image below by Australian cartoonist Geoff Pryor suggests, even those failures were tainted by notions of masculine failure and inability. That is, peacekeeping had failed because it had not been allowed to be more like war, more forceful and less restrained.

![Cartoon by Geoff Pryor](image.jpg)

**Figure 20:** Geoff Pryor, 'So When Did You First Notice You Were Impotent?' *Canberra Times*, 12 January 1992, Courtesy of Geoff Pryor, National Library of Australia 3253003.

It is clear that, like a few of the Great War veterans in Alistair Thomson’s work on memory and the Anzac tradition, peacekeepers have not always found it easy, or possible, to find a space for themselves in Anzac. 40 However, unlike Great War veterans this negotiation has been slightly different because peacekeepers were not so much dealing with the way personal experiences from a ‘legitimate’ war did or did not fit the legend. Rather, their concern was how to make personal experience from a contested ‘non-war’ fit within that legend. The experience of Timor veterans and the way the meaning of that mission has been negotiated in

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Australia provides a telling example of the difficult process of meaning-making for peacekeepers and peacekeeping at large.

That mission was the largest (including in terms of participants in this project), most publicised and, at least at the start, the most threatening of the three operations in the Pacific. Further, it was also a mission in which the Australian public had a huge emotional, historical and political investment. The dangerous element of the mission was something the Australian press and political leaders emphasised at the start of the operation in late 1999. Robert Garran wrote in *The Australian*,

> The East Timor peace force, now certain to be led by Australia, will have orders to shoot to kill in what has become a considerably more dangerous mission than the Government expected. Instead of the peacekeeping operation badged with the Blue Berets of UN peacekeepers, the force will be a peace-enforcement operation with orders to disarm and pacify hostile elements.\(^41\)

Prime Minister John Howard shared a similar message, ‘there will be a danger, there could be casualties, and the Australian public must understand that. It is a serious, dangerous operation’.\(^42\) Other commentators like Hamish McDonald further emphasised the risk and drama. He wrote,

> so it has come to this: the first Australian-led campaign since the final battles of World War II in New Guinea and Borneo. Peace enforcement, in the jargon of international diplomacy, rather than peacekeeping. A risk-filled deployment into a land that has seen uncounted thousands die in the past 25 years, and been spared no kind of atrocity.\(^43\)

The awarding of a special medal for Interfet forces further indicates the significance of this mission. East Timor was clearly a pinnacle in peacekeeping, and in its early days it was the most significant ADF

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\(^42\) *Ibid.*

\(^43\) Hamish McDonald, ‘Clear and Present Danger’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 September 1999; see also Peter Cole-Adams, ‘If We Go In, We Will Have to Pay A Price’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 September 1999; McDonald, ‘How We Brought this Catastrophe on Ourselves’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 May 2006; Craig Skehan, ‘Jakarta Tells Peacekeepers: Heed Danger Warnings’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 September 1999.
deployment in over twenty years. Prior to Timor the ADF had what many in the military called ‘the long peace’ after Vietnam. With its largesse and robust rules of engagement Timor was a highly sought after deployment. It was precisely because Timor was more like war that veterans thought it was of more value than other peacekeeping operations. Yet this status was easily shaken.

Army Captain Gerry McGowan described this ranking process when he said ‘Timor was a shooting war… then Iraq came up and everything else was crap, and then Afghanistan came up and Iraq was nothing. It’s always going to be like that’.

Army Major Bruce Tarrier who served in Timor and Bougainville as well as Afghanistan said ‘everyone wants to go to war’. He described peacekeepers serving in Bougainville trying to get to Timor when that operation started because it was warlike. He also described how there would be some people in the Army who had served in Iraq or Afghanistan who would see peacekeeping in the Pacific as though, ‘that’s nothing, you’ve just been on holiday to the Pacific Islands or something like that’.

There is an inherent paradox here. In trying to make peacekeeping more valued, the warlike elements have been emphasised. Timor was special because it was warlike, but in the face of proper wars some of its specialness lost its shine. Whether it was Timor or Iraq or Afghanistan this ranking process reinforced the idea that peacekeeping that is more peaceful is intrinsically inadequate. The special emphasis on Timor and the danger in the mission there, along with the press coverage and particular medal meant that this kind of ranking was already prevalent just amongst the peace operations, but with the advent of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that hierarchy shifted again.

Some peacekeepers had personally done tours or spent some time in Afghanistan and/or Iraq, and for them that comparison was a personal one. A few of the participants had also seen action in Vietnam and for them the most pressing comparison was to that conflict. Federal Agent Don Barnby, for example, served in Bougainville and said the conditions

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44 Gerry McGowan, interview with author, 8 March 2013, ROI1055.
45 Bruce Tarrier, interview with author, 13 August 2012, ROI1018.
there were more atrocious than anything he faced in Vietnam as a young soldier. He was in the opening stages of the Bougainville mission before any infrastructure was in place – a period in which it is typical for mission-conditions to be very challenging. He also served as a police officer in East Timor and had to leave the country in the wake of the violence that broke out after the election in 1999. Again, he compared this to Vietnam, saying he had a sense of *déjà vu* as he was leaving behind the local people he had worked with knowing they would have to endure what would be horrific violence. For Federal Agent Alan Whitcombe something about Timor also remined him of Vietnam and in fact brought back much of the trauma from that war.

These personal comparisons were understandable, but what was more striking was that this comparative remembering was common for people who had never seen service in the conflicts to which they related their own. In this way, the constant discussions of Afghanistan or Iraq indicated insecurity, though they also reflected the extensive press coverage Afghanistan was getting during a significant portion of the interviews. The Middle Eastern conflicts were often described as the ‘real deal’ in comparison to peacekeeping. Navy Warrant Officer John Perryman said,

> I think generally Australians are proud of the peacekeepers. Having said that I think that peacekeeping, peacemaking operations in light of recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and places like that are seen as the second […] I don’t think you can really directly compare the two […] winning the peace is always going to be the hardest thing […] whether its peacemaking or war fighting.

The frustration of peacekeeping and the appeal of Afghanistan and Iraq could be more acute for certain members of the ADF. Kalan Lennon recalled seeing some infantrymen get frustrated in Timor at not being able to shoot and do the job they were trained to do, whereas they were keen

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46 Don Barnby, interview with Peter Londey, 19 April 2001, Canberra, AWMS02283.
47 Alan Whitcombe, interview with author, 27 September 2012, ROI1029.
48 Bond, interview.
49 John Perryman, interview with author, 31 May 2012, ROI1007; see also Balthazar Goldman, interview with author 5 September 2012, ROI1025.
for Afghanistan because it was war.\textsuperscript{50} That Lennon suggests that these insecurities were perhaps felt more keenly by men in combat roles than by those in support roles like him, returns us to the arguments about military masculinity discussed in the Chapter Four and the ways certain overly aggressive, excessively violent ones might be frustrated by the non-war of peacekeeping. It also, again, speaks to the way in which peacekeeping was seen as being feminine as not needing the masculine traits of war making. A 2004 newspaper article hit on this arbitrary and rather unhelpful binary when the author asked, ‘how do we achieve the right balance between the trained warrior and caring aid worker?’\textsuperscript{51}

While wars in Iraq and Afghanistan added another layer of insecurity, and certainly bumped Timor down in the hierarchy, they also proved in other ways to be significant. Ironically, though the wars in the Middle East offered more prestige as so-called real wars, they occupied an ambiguous moral place in peacekeepers’ stories. Both on and off the record peacekeepers spoke of their uncertainties about the rightness of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many compared their service to these two wars and did not find theirs wanting. Indeed, it was the very notion that peacekeeping was not war, but something constructive for local communities, that determined its worth.

Some peacekeepers said that they had no problems going to Bougainville, Solomon Islands or Timor as they thought it was right to go. Army Captain Carney Elias was much surer of the worth of her service in Solomon Islands than of her service in Iraq. She said, ‘I think for me the biggest difference was the moral difficulty, it’s much easier to justify our involvement in the Solomons […] we’re not there … we’re not offensively engaged we’re just there peacekeeping’.\textsuperscript{52} Kalan Lennon expressed similar sentiments when he said, ‘I had the chance to go to Afghanistan two years ago for a six week deployment […] no. One, it would have caused a rift at home, two, I couldn’t justify it […] it’s very

\textsuperscript{50} Lennon, interview.
\textsuperscript{52} Carney Elias, interview with author, 3 October 2012, ROI1031.
Peace at Home?

different from peacekeeping’. Army member Ben Williams summed up the ways in which people have begun thinking about the morality of their peacekeeping service in reference to these more distant wars.

DOYLE: Do you still think that peacekeeping is a worthwhile activity?
WILLIAMS: Look, I do and I say that since going to Afghanistan in 2010 you know you ask yourself the same question – is it worth all the blood and treasure? And you know can you value an Australian, American or British life as much as you can an East Timorese or Iraqi or Afghan life? And I think if peacekeeping gives people a little bit of hope then that’s a good thing […] It’s probably an awful waste of money because very rarely do you get a good outcome but there’s no price on hope and if you can give a little bit of hope then you know you’ve got a good outcome for the people on the receiving end.

Iraq and Afghanistan have proved to be concrete examples against which peacekeepers have defined what they value in peacekeeping. As we saw in previous chapters, that value lies in the constructive, life-affirming elements of peacekeeping; that is those elements that bring something materially worthwhile to local communities. Yet, fascinatingly, this belief that peacekeeping has been inherently morally good lies alongside memories that suggest a deep insecurity and ambivalence about how, if it all, peacekeeping can and ought to fit within collective narratives of Anzac. Peacekeeping it would seem has been deemed deeply valuable for those it serves, but rather unvalued for those doing the service. This has meant that peacekeepers paradoxically played up the warlike elements of peacekeeping in an attempt to find a way into meaningful national and ADF stories, while at the same time deeply valuing the peaceful elements and outcomes of peacekeeping service. Given that the wars (and their legacies) in Afghanistan and Iraq will loom large for years to come, and create their own narratives and positions within Anzac it is too soon to see how peacekeeping will or will not eventually find a settled place in Anzac narratives. For a while yet it seems as though peacekeepers and

53 Lennon, interview.
54 Ben Williams, interview with author, 3 May 2012, ROI1002.
Australians’ efforts to settle on the meaning of their own service will continue to wander through this wider landscape.

One of the significant ways that it will continue to do that will be in the treatment and discussion of peacekeepers who experienced psychological injury because of their service. Trauma has become a central story of the Anzac narrative and though it is too early to tell precisely, peacekeeping trauma looks as though it will be a contested space that will tell us much about the value it has for Australia and Australians.

For a long time trauma was decidedly outside the Anzac narrative – it was shameful and not something a hero warrior admitted to having. This changed during the 1980s with the growth of the study of war trauma and the so-called ‘memory boom’. One of the most significant outcomes of this decade was the defining of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in 1980 as a valid medical condition, though, of course, it did have precursors from earlier wars with the condition of ‘Shell Shock’. These events changed the way veterans could find a place for themselves in the Anzac tradition. Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman have examined this global transformation of psychological trauma and those who speak of it from the realm of suspicion to the realm of truth. Christina Twomey has explored the shift in an Australian context. She has shown that Australian veterans stopped being shamed for their being physically and emotionally broken men and instead the traumatised warrior became a noble victim of war. The endurance of war’s brutalities and subsequent trauma could now evoke qualities of courage and heroism typical of the original Anzacs rather than the effeminacy and weakness that they had previously evoked. In many ways, the victim soldier has come to stand for the authentic soldier; the person whose voice and stories reveal a realm of truth in a way denied to others. To speak in a language of trauma rather than

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bravery and prowess became the norm in Australia from the 1980s onwards.

The evidence in this project was too limited to be able to draw a detailed picture of trauma and peacekeeping in the Pacific. It is too soon to have any sense of the total numbers of peacekeeping veterans who have experienced PTSD or other psychological stress let alone have a good overall picture of how they have been characterised within the ADF and Australian society more broadly. It is likely to take some time yet before such a picture emerges. There has been recognition that some peacekeeping service experiences might have triggered traumatic responses, like the removal of corpses in Timor for example. Yet, that has been coupled with an improvement in ADF psychological support. Certainly, from Interfet onwards the ADF developed better and more routinised psychological screening and support that involved counselling, often mandatory, before and after deployment. Nonetheless, a 2002 Defence Subcommittee reported that there were ‘some cases of PTSD from Timor’. Though they did not have specific numbers the overall incident rate was relatively low at just two per cent. No disaggregated data about any difference between psychological stress in warlike or non-warlike operations was available. And it is important to note that self-reporting rates for psychological help remain lower in the ADF community than the general population, so getting a reliable picture is incredibly difficult.

In this project, seven participants explicitly mentioned having been formally diagnosed with PTSD or having suffered other psychological injuries leading to a whole range of issues such as alcoholism, chronic memory loss, family breakdowns and job loss. It is not easy get a clear sense of the landscape even from this small sample. This was especially so because the majority of this seven had seen tours in multiple conflicts from Vietnam to Afghanistan. Often their peacekeeping service was complicated by trauma and injury sustained elsewhere. It was neither

58 Ibid, 15.
possible nor appropriate in this study to untangle these memories and stories during the interviews.

There was nevertheless a hint in the oral histories that trauma, like other elements of peacekeeping remembering, will be a complexly contested arena. Further, it seems as though it will be a space in which the paradox of peacekeeping – that its value lay in its violence and danger and not in its peace – will continue. One peacekeeper thought that because of the awkward place peacekeeping has in the ADF, trauma has actually become a way to try and further validate its warlike features. He thought mental health issues resulting from peacekeeping were the outcome of what he called ‘relevancy deficiency’. While he conceded it was impossible to quantify and it was a view he had formed only anecdotally, he explained that he thought some peacekeepers subconsciously developed mental health issues to prove that the peace missions were tough places to be. How peacekeeper trauma and the broader ADF and Australian community, respond to it, how they validate it or not will be a key indicator of the place and value of peacekeeping in Australian memory.

Peacekeepers at Home – APS and AFP

The ways in which ADF peacekeepers have made sense of their peacekeeping service once back home has been a complex comingling of ADF culture and Australian narratives of Anzac. The two were largely mutually reinforcing. Internally, the ADF cultivated an incredibly strong sense of connection to the wars of the past and the Australians that fought in them. External to the organisation, Australia also cultivated those narratives in ways that elevated them to the sacred, and it also reaffirmed that the ADF was the heir to and current embodiment of that Anzac heritage. The centrality of Anzac and the ADF’s role as its torchbearer meant that much of the focus of peacekeeping, however contested it has been, lay with the ADF. The AFP, and to a greater extent the APS, have been lost in that shadow somewhat.

That the AFP and APS have not been as visible as the ADF is the result of some internal organisational cultures, but more so because the

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60 Anonymous, interview with author.
ADF was not only larger and more visible, but because its members were the ones deemed to carry the most risk. They were the ones publicly seen as having to potentially harm others and be harmed themselves. We do not see, for instance, any comparable press coverage, indeed any significant press coverage, of APS peacekeepers working in governance or mentoring positions. Again, the value of peacekeeping and peacekeepers was to be found in the danger, the violence and the more warlike experiences. As a consequence we have seen some peacekeepers argue vocally to be recognised, especially police peacekeepers. One poignant example has been the effort by police and their advocates for proper recognition of the AFP experience in UNAMET in East Timor.

As discussed in Chapter Two, police who served with UNAMET were in Timor to organise and supervise the independence ballot and were caught up in the chaos and violence that ensued during and immediately after the vote. About a year after the ballot there were a series of speeches and questions in Federal Parliament that criticised the lack of public and financial recognition that the peacekeepers had received. This was in response to a group of AFP peacekeepers approaching about fifty Members of Parliament about these issues. In June 2000 during Question Time Senator Vicki Bourne asked Senator Amanda Vanstone, ‘are there any plans to recognise the outstanding service in extremely hostile and difficult conditions, of the members of the AFP in East Timor by way of a community reception or other mark of recognition?’ She also asked why the peacekeepers did not enjoy the same tax status or other allowances such as home-loan assistance and free postage like their ADF colleagues, especially since this had happened in Cambodia. There was also some delay with UN entitlements being paid and she asked about this as well. Senator Vanstone responded that allowances were different because the two organisations had differing deployment conditions; that herself and Foreign Minister Downer were following up the delay at the UN and that the AFP had already been given public recognition. She said they had
been praised by the Prime Minister, received a reception at Parliament House and were given the Police Overseas medal.61

And yet the question of recognition was still being asked later that year. In August, MP Duncan Kerr gave a speech in the House of Representatives strongly criticising the Government for the financial situation, and lack of public recognition for AFP peacekeepers. He said, ‘they were continually sidelined and forgotten in regard to public acknowledgement and praise’.62 Later that month these questions were put to Senator Vanstone once again. She gave similar responses as in June but also spent some time outlining the achievements of the AFP peacekeepers and in a telling use of language she said, ‘I am sure no one in the military will mind me pointing out that the AFP were there first and are still there’.63

What is significant for our purposes about this debate and discussion is not the details about recognition or the financial allowances, but that they were centred around the experience of danger. On the one hand, there is something utterly reasonable and fair about this. Questions and debates about compensation for people exposed to very real risk are appropriate. Yet, as said earlier, financial compensation for risk of life and injury is one issue, recognition of peacekeeping service is another. The more subtle message of these discussions is in that more recognition was needed because these peacekeepers were exposed to danger and risk. Once again, this position belies a deep set of national beliefs that value war over peace. The dangerous, risky warlike parts of peacekeeping again could not compare to the more benign peaceful parts. The question not asked in these debates but one that needs to be considered is why Australians believe the service of peacekeeping is deserving of special recognition, or any recognition, only when it endangers life or is otherwise risky? Why does it deserve attention when it looks more like war?

Another issue that Senator Vanstone’s comment about the AFP being there before the ADF highlights is the nuanced hierarchy that was at play. It was an attempt to show that AFP peacekeepers were exposed to threat and violence and that they might have had to inflict violence and in doing so were not unlike soldiers. That is, they were being expected to behave and endure conditions very much like soldiers in the ADF would be expected to. And that is why they deserved recognition. There is a process of elevation, of raising the AFP up to the level of the ADF. That AFP peacekeepers had to ‘step up’ and deal with a situation more typical of ADF peacekeepers meant their service was now more significant, more important. Again, the question is ostensibly about recognising the difficulty peacekeepers’ faced, but the underlying assumption is that the AFP needed to be seen in relation to the ADF – their meaning as peacekeepers was to be found in that comparison. Apparently, AFP peacekeepers deserved more attention and recognition because the work they were performing started to look a lot more like the work of soldiers, of war. The mundane, non-dangerous but so utterly essential elements of peacekeeping service were implicitly belittled in these discussions.

The privileging of danger in peacekeeping press coverage and subsequent issues of public recognition, were a feature of ADF peacekeeping as we saw in the previous section. East Timor was the pinnacle, the most prestigious mission for that reason. Clearly though, this was a broader discourse that affected other organisations and revealed the set of values that informed Australians ideas about peacekeeping. Those values were ones that claimed experience and circumstances of war were more important than experience and circumstances of peace. It is, at least in part, for that reason that so much press coverage focused on these elements and not discussions of vital peacekeeping work like police and governance mentoring or peacekeepers working in in-line public service positions.

In Solomon Islands for instance, a mission with significant numbers of peacekeepers working in exactly that space, press coverage was incomparable to that of Timor and only increased noticeably in the wake of peacekeeper Adam Dunning’s murder. In one way the death, and
especially murder, of an Australian peacekeeper would be expected, rightfully, to gain a good deal of coverage. However, the stories did not just cover the murder but played up the newly found danger of peacekeeping in Solomons. That danger was played up again after Army Private Jamie Clark died after falling down a mineshaft. One article covering Private Clark’s death commented that it was reminder of the dangers ADF men and women were in everyday, while Prime Minister Howard commented that ‘it reminds us all that these people are doing our work for us, it’s dangerous and they therefore deserve a special level of understanding and a special level of support from all the Australian community’.  

Another article covering Officer Dunning’s murder claimed,

Mr Dunning’s murder is a reminder of the terrible dangers faced by our soldiers and police involved in peacekeeping operations around the world, and by the ancillary personnel who support them. It is a reminder too of the dangers faced by the hundreds of Australian personnel still serving in Iraq this Christmas as the country prepares for its election. As the rest of us sit down this weekend to bask in the security and warmth of our families, let’s remember those who, like Adam Dunning, make it all possible by voluntarily placing themselves between us and danger. 

Interestingly, this is one of the few newspaper articles in major Australian publications that made mention of ‘ancillary personnel’. Though it is not clear to which organisation these personnel might belong, it does at least suggest that some peacekeepers were not police or ADF. Usually it was ADF, and at a second AFP peacekeepers that received the most public attention. For as much as the AFP was often overshadowed by the ADF, the APS was largely made invisible next to those two organisations. At least in part this was because peacekeepers from that organisation were not in roles, or at least perceived to not be in roles, that put them in danger. They were not on the ‘frontline’ like AFP

or ADF. Perhaps also the relative newness of their roles as well as their small number compared to ADF and AFP peacekeepers also contributed to their invisibility. Certainly the lack of drama of working in public service roles compared to ADF or frontline policing ones also made their stories less appealing to the Australian press. Overall, APS personnel have only been seen as peacekeepers in a tangential way at best. The APPVA for instance, does not include a discussion of them in their ‘About us’ section on their website, but does discuss ADF and police participation and it is those two organisation the Association largely represents.  

APS peacekeepers themselves could be quite ambivalent towards even identifying as peacekeepers at all. They, like other Australians, more easily connected the active uniformed work of their police and military counterparts to ‘real’ peacekeeping. Though this was certainly about the issue of danger and risk, it might also have reflected the relative newness of peacekeeping duties for the APS. Though civilians have long been involved in elements of peacekeeping it was really with the missions in the Pacific that they started to play integral and numerically larger roles on operations. Many participants who served in Bougainville, a mission with unprecedented civil-military integration, recalled how new it was to have a civilian peacekeeping role and how neither they nor their military or police counterparts quite knew what to make of it all. DFAT Officer Sarah Storey recalled that one of her main challenges was trying to persuade her military colleagues that ‘civvies had something to add’.  

That reflected both the newness of civilian peacekeepers, but it also belied the longstanding connection between peacekeeping and military and police work. They were the proper peacekeepers, doing the real work of peacekeeping.

APS peacekeepers, like Australians more broadly, have largely seemed fine with this characterisation. Unlike the issue for UNAMET AFP peacekeepers outlined above, for example, there have been no major APS concerns about its place in public peacekeeping memory. Certainly, part

66 See the Association’s site at http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/
67 Sarah Storey, interview with author, 27 September 2013, ROI1058 – quotation from written summary.
of that comes from simply not believing they have a ‘right’ to be in that story. They did not belong to the two organisations doing the proper work. Perhaps though, the place of peacekeeping within APS culture also helps to explain this response.

Unlike for the ADF overseas operational service was not the reason for the APS to exist. It was not its core business. Even for DFAT whose staff was on the diplomatic posting cycle peacekeeping was something quite different to the normal postings to embassies. Peacekeeping was largely something of an ‘added extra’ to APS work. Whether or not a public servant went on peacekeeping duties they were still able to fully and completely experience and practice their profession. In many ways, peacekeeping service was a unique pinnacle in an APS career, it was itself a huge reward.

Peacekeepers themselves spoke of how going on a mission was a ‘great opportunity’ and often the highlight of a career. DFAT Officer Michael Shaw, for instance, said he applied for the operation in Timor because ‘it wasn’t your average diplomatic job and that’s why I sought it out’. Many described the missions as special or unique and a chance to do something different. Defence employee Patrick Foley, for example, said he applied for Bougainville because ‘office work is office work’. Some participants said they applied or agreed to go on an operation both for the chance to do something extraordinary and also for the promotional and financial rewards. In that regard perhaps seeking further recognition once home was not necessary because the deployment itself was the reward, a special experience not had by many.

From this perspective of organisational culture perhaps the AFP’s response to not always being recognised as they would like might also be further explained. While certainly peacekeeping was something of an ‘added extra’ like for the APS, it was closer to the AFPs core business. This was especially so after the International Deployment Group was established and in light of the long visible history of police participation in

68 Michael Shaw, interview with author, 15 October 2013, ROI1062.
69 Patrick Foley, interview with author, 27 September 2013, ROI1059.
70 For a sense of these discussions see Shaw, interview; Joan Gardner, interview with author, 1 May 2012, ROI1001; Tim Davies, interview with author, 1 October 2013, ROI1060; Samantha Isaac, interview with author, 18 June 2012, ROI1035.
peacekeeping across the world. Yet unlike the ADF, peacekeeping was not a poor cousin to war. The ADF trains for war and deploying in that context is generally the peak of ADF careers. Yet that was not the case for AFP, instead peacekeeping could be the pinnacle. More precisely, in the AFP peacekeeping has been something of a way to play up to and dominate a culture of machismo common to the organisation.

This is because peacekeeping has been seen as tougher than regular policing in an Australian locale. In part, this is why Federal Agent Geoff Hazel who served in Timor and Solomon Islands but was also involved in the recruitment of peacekeepers said, ‘you’ll always get the macho types apply for these things’. Peacekeeping was seen as something so special and so outside the regular everyday duties of most personnel that it could become a point of personal pride and even of professional superiority. Unlike in the ADF peacekeeping in the AFP was very comfortably at the top of the ladder rather than ambiguously hanging around the lower rungs. Therefore, peacekeeping could be unequivocally masculine work that turned it into a prized and prestigious job. When the difficulty of doing that job was not recognised and commemorated publicly as some thought happened in the case of UNAMET, it is easy to see why there would be frustration and anger.

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Some of the way APS, ADF and AFP peacekeepers made meaning of their service was connected to the cultures and histories of peacekeeping within their organisations. However, those were significantly mediated through broader national narratives of Anzac and the value of war. And that was a narrative to which the ADF was so central. This meant that both the APS and AFP were overshadowed to a degree by that narrative and the ADF. And yet that story has not been all that welcoming to ADF peacekeepers either.

The complex role that war has played in Australian national identity meant peacekeeping was probably always going to have a difficult time finding a place in that dominant identity. In trying to do so peacekeepers,

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71 Geoff Hazel, interview with author, 11 June 2012, ROI1011.
and Australians more broadly, have clung to and emphasised the warlike elements of peacekeeping to give it meaning. And yet the moral worth, the moral good of bringing peace and not war, were also cherished ideals. These values reveal confusing and paradoxical national beliefs. They have been an exclusive set of beliefs that have not made it easy or simple for peacekeepers from any of the three organisations to settle on what it has meant to be a peacekeeper and an Australian. Those meanings will continue to be made and remade nationally. And peacekeepers will continue to negotiate with those shifting stories. What deserves to be remembered and recognised will likely continue to be contested ground. What is clear from peacekeepers experiences since returning from the Pacific is that, at home, peacekeeping has not found its most welcome or valued meaning in its peace, but in its war.
Conclusion

DAVIES: There was Bonnie Doon. Have you heard of Bonnie Doon?
DOYLE: I know it from *The Castle*.
DAVIES: Yeah well that’s what it was named after. There was a beach across the bay from Loloho [which the Army had secured] so it was an R’n’R spot on the weekends. So you could get on a boat, there’d be a few boats to take you from Loloho to this little beach and it was just a nice place to chill out, play some volleyball or just read a book. They Army [were the ones who] called it Bonnie Doon […] so yeah that was a good little getaway. Occasionally we’d overnight there too.¹

**Bonnie Doon** is a vacation spot made famous in the 1997 landmark Australian movie, *The Castle*, which celebrates many cherished stereotypical Australian ideals, narratives and sense of cultural identity. The recreation of Bonnie Doon in Bougainville by Australian peacekeepers symbolises the many questions this thesis has explored. When Tim Davies, a DFAT peacekeeper, shared this story he indicated the unique interlacing of what Australians brought with them and what they found once on peacekeeping duties. This was not the Bonnie Doon

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¹ Tim Davies, interview with author, 1 October 2013, ROI1060.
of home, but one moored in the Pacific, safe and unsafe, familiar and unfamiliar all at once. Something nebulous and thoroughly complex occurred in that short passage between Loloho and the little beach of this new Bonnie Doon. This thesis has attempted to travel that passage with peacekeepers and examine what occurred on the journey. It has sketched a picture of what it was like to be an Australian peacekeeper doing this enigmatic job of ‘keeping the peace’ in places with which Australia has had multifarious and contradictory relationships.

The central aim of this thesis has been to bring peacekeepers’ own ideas, descriptions, stories, thoughts and questions to the centre of a scholarly conversation about peacekeeping. This is not because they add some extra splashes of colour or a few interesting flourishes to existing scholarship, but because the lived experience of peacekeeping is a foundational piece of the story. Peacekeeping outcomes and legacies depend heavily upon peacekeepers’ behaviours, thoughts, actions and how they understand what they are doing. These matter inordinately to the local response to a mission, and therefore its legitimacy and long-term success. In this way, delving into peacekeepers own accounts of peacekeeping is a necessary part of understanding peacekeeping more wholly.

This thesis, then, is the beginning of this important conversation. It explores one chorus of peacekeepers’ voices and anchors them in certain times and places in the Pacific. The missions in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor are valuable case studies because they are relevant to each other historically and so invite rich comparative analysis. All three operations overlapped in roughly the same decade and they all occurred under the leadership of Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer. They were all also connected to a changing post-9/11 Australian and international political landscape that increasingly saw the Pacific region as a space for intervention, particularly under Australian leadership. Because of this, the missions, at various points, were elided together in Australian strategic and political discourse. Further, each place, though not without some tension, was seen by Australia as belonging to an elastic region called ‘the Pacific’; a region
about which Australia had certain ideas and a region with which it has had complicated relationships.

Further nuanced comparative analysis was made possible by examining only government organisations, namely the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Public Service and the Australian Federal Police. That has meant the thesis has been able to examine how ideas of nationality influenced peacekeepers’ thoughts and experiences of serving as Australians and for Australia in the Pacific. Therefore, the three operations and peacekeeping organisations are not just interesting options to begin to explore what peacekeeping has meant for peacekeepers themselves but their interconnections offer the opportunity to explore broader questions of Australian ideas about and approaches towards concepts of region, nationality and peacekeeping.

There is no overarching narrative or simple picture that emerges from pursuing peacekeeping from this perspective. Rather, what this work has shown is that there were many pieces, often contradictory and at times disconnected, that made up Australian experiences of peacekeeping in the Pacific. Any number of factors affected peacekeepers’ service in the Pacific. Individual chapters have sought to weave a story and give insight into these many factors and anchored them in wider national, regional and international contexts. By taking an expansive yet intimate approach at every step some key things have been shown.

One of these is that peacekeepers’ sense of belonging to a specific organisation had an effect on how they experienced, but more importantly, how they have remembered, and so valued, their service. Being an ADF peacekeeper placed a lot of pressure on peacekeepers to find meaning within Anzac narratives and in so doing they have paradoxically played up the warlike elements of their service to try to find acceptance in that national narrative. It has not proved to be an overly welcoming space, especially as it had to be shared with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though the pressure may have been less, these narratives of Anzac and the value of war in Australia also shaped the way APS and AFP peacekeepers’ service has been valued.
A similarly private, yet also national, and even international, set of influences shaped peacekeepers' experiences of place. Peacekeepers saw Pacific places as landscapes enmeshed with historical metanarratives about the Pacific. It was a place to be protected, feared, idealised, possessed, enjoyed and rejected. They saw these places this way because they carried with them Western narratives of the Pacific as paradise, filled with noble and ignoble savages who needed both redeeming and preserving. Alongside these global narratives were more uniquely Australian ones. These were stories built on anxieties and fears about who and what rightfully belonged in the region. These deeply historical stories were also bound to narrower more recent histories of wars and conflicts. World War II and the 1975 Indonesian invasion of Timor tightly bonded peacekeepers to the people they served as they saw their work as an act of redemption. Ultimately, Australian peacekeepers’ memories of peacekeeping in the Pacific reflected the endless colliding of various specific historical narratives.

Both ways of seeing the Pacific – as Westerners and as Australians – also came to bear on peacekeepers’ service in other ways. This was especially so in the case of how they interacted with Bougainvilleans, Solomon Islanders and Timorese. Yet these ways of seeing were also deeply shaped, and sometimes challenged, by what peacekeepers encountered once deployed. The time in which a peacekeeper deployed, the capacity and job each had, the local political, cultural and historical situation as well as the precise location of a peacekeepers’ service all mattered greatly to how, when and if they were able to interact with local communities. What was clear from those interactions, however they manifested, is that Australians saw the kind and fair treatment of local people as the very heart of what it meant to be a good peacekeeper. Consequently, the great majority of peacekeepers thought Australians were well-suited to peacekeeping because they behaved this way towards local communities. Though this says much about Australian peacekeepers and Australian ideas about national identity in this decade, what is also important is that it is clear that only when we survey the breadth and variety of peacekeeping interactions can we see how deeply anchored
they were in time and place. Though Australians bought with them historical baggage as Australians and as Westerners it found particular shape and colour because they lived at certain times and in certain places across the Pacific.

This link between what peacekeepers’ brought with them and what they found was also important because it came to bear on the ways Australians interacted with each other and international personnel as well as how they engaged with broader normative discourses about peacekeeping. As Australians working together but from a variety of organisations they emphasised their professional differences. Yet when working alongside international personnel more cohesive national narratives about Australians as a fair, professional, hardworking and locally-sensitive kind of people took precedence. Subsequently they evaluated international colleagues from this collective sense of being Australian. However, when peacekeepers wrestled, as they did, with what was right, legitimate or just in terms of intervening in another’s home in the name of peace they seemed to identify much more as Westerners. They were uncomfortable and uncertain about how and if peacekeeping might be neo-imperial. They were acutely aware that they walked on shaky ground as historical heirs and representatives of a long complex history of European imperialism and colonialism.

Therefore, it is clear to see that peacekeeping experiences were always the outcome of an interlacing between what peacekeepers brought with them and what they faced once in the Pacific. Australians used what they brought with them as a kind of tool kit. They used whatever they needed in the varied situations they found themselves in to make sense of them, to navigate them and later to understand what it was they had done. When we centre our analyses in this messy and tangled nexus we can hear the personal stories of what it was like to be an Australian peacekeeper in the Pacific, yet we can also hear a broader conversation that says something about Australia and its sense of its place in the Pacific region.

One of the key themes from this broader conversation is that Australia’s long unsteadiness in its relationship to its history as a European settler colony perched on the edge of a non-European Pacific
region created a pool of narratives, policies and beliefs that breathed life into peacekeepers’ ways of seeing their work, themselves and the people they were sent to assist. What is clear from their stories is that an enduring feature of Australia’s relationship to the Pacific has remained rather unchanged over the last two centuries. That is, the Australian view of the Pacific and its people continued to be one obstinately contingent upon Australian ideas about itself as a nation. As these ideas shifted in content or emphasis, so too did the gaze through which Australians saw themselves and so also the Pacific and its people.

While this is hardly a startlingly conclusion for anyone loosely acquainted with Australia’s history with the Pacific, what is significant about this observation is how those ideas shaped real lives and material experiences. This thesis has tethered these often abstract ideas to peacekeeping in such a way as to reveal how and why individual lives and specific experiences in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and East Timor were shaped in certain ways and not others. In this way, though this thesis speaks to Australia’s relationship to peacekeeping and to the Pacific at the turn of the twenty-first century, its other contribution is that it has shown what richness can come from making peacekeepers’ voices the centre of our histories.

It has been a central argument of this work that peacekeeping, to be understood in its fullness, must include the voices of those working for it. Their stories, told by them, are a necessity if our scholarship is to deeply grasp both the connections between lived everyday peacekeeping experience and the broader political, historical and geographical dimensions of peacekeeping. In this way, though this study has been anchored in Australian peacekeepers’ experiences in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands the approach it has taken suggests new ways forward for peacekeeping scholarship at large.

First, and perhaps most obviously, this thesis has shown the way our understanding of peacekeeping can be both broadened and deepened by using oral history as a central methodology. It offers a middle way between the two current major approaches to peacekeeping. The operational, political, historical and legal stories of peacekeeping so well
explored in literature by Australian military historians and in large peacekeeping projects like the *Peacebuilding Compared* work led by Hilary Charlesworth and John Braithwaite are extended and deepened in new ways by oral histories of peacekeeping. Peacekeepers’ own stories provide a way to examine how those wider peacekeeping inquiries and issues inform or are a challenged by peacekeepers’ experiences. Oral history makes intimate some of our wider theoretical and general understanding of peacekeeping in the Pacific.

Similarly, an approach like that taken in this thesis also complements yet complicates the peacekeeping scholarship that has been more peacekeeper focused. As has been explored, international relations theorists, legal scholars, anthropologists and sociologists have studied various elements of peacekeeping in a range of international settings. The critical engagement of this work has opened peacekeeping up to various discussions related to peacekeepers themselves. Yet it has been rather narrow in focusing on a single issue or small group of correlated issues, such as the role of gender, militarism and imperialism. For example, analyses like those provided by Paul Higate and Sandra Whitworth and their work on notions of military masculinity and ideas of neo-imperialism have anchored their work around peacekeepers themselves. Rich as this work is, this thesis takes some of the more general focus of this type of scholarship and examines what happens to these ideas when they are deeply moored in the specificity of the time and place of certain operations and peacekeepers. By doing so it suggests that our analyses need to be more expansive and connect these issues to the array of other factors at work in any peacekeeping context. However, it also calls for more particularity and indicates that much nuance can be lost when we generalise across either operations or groups of peacekeepers. This thesis argues that we must first get to know specific peacekeepers on their own terms before we can begin to make meaningfully broad connections, particularly in the international landscape.

In this way, this thesis takes elements of the two bodies of extant literature – historical specificity and critical analyses of the normative elements of peacekeeping – and weaves them together to create an
historically rich yet critical account of Australian peacekeeping in the Pacific. In doing so it adds to the current scholarship yet also shows that when peacekeepers’ voices are the centre of our focus some of the more generalist claims about peacekeeping and some of the ideas about the importance of policy and political dimensions of peacekeeping are challenged and made more complex. In short, it shows how peacekeeping scholarship must look both up and down. Broad policy and historical analyses must reach down to the lived experiences of peacekeepers to make complete sense and to be comprehensively understood. And peacekeepers’ lived experiences must reach up and connect to the political and historical landscapes if the reasons for why peacekeeping lives were lived in certain ways are to be more fully grasped. It is only by knitting together these elements that the flesh and bone of peacekeeping stories can come together to form something more whole.

Beyond enriching the current scholarship this thesis also shows how an oral history approach to peacekeeping opens up new questions that can push our scholarship into new areas. Oral history combined with a comparative approach makes it possible to draw fresh kinds of connections and disconnections between various groups of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations. There are two major considerations here. The first is how this approach could be used in an Australian context, and the second, though connected, is the way it might be used in other national or international contexts.

In an Australian context, this thesis suggests that if similar approaches were used to study other operations a much more complex Australian peacekeeping picture would emerge. Exploring how Australian peacekeepers have spoken about their service across a range of operations would give a deeper understanding of the effects of historical specificity. That is, this work has sketched certain connections between peacekeepers’ experiences in the Pacific and their Australian citizenship. Further, it has contended that the fact that peacekeepers were Australian mattered because it shaped particular ideas and experiences in the Pacific based upon complex histories between Australia and the region. Without negating the veracity of those claims, how much might they be challenged
Conclusion

or enriched by other studies of Australian peacekeepers in other places, operations and times? Might there be commonalities between Australian peacekeepers who served in the Pacific and those that have served in the Middle East or Cambodia, for instance? Such studies might speak to some uniquely Australian experiences or stories irrespective of the mission and time. In other ways, they might bring into relief the importance of time and place. Though it is likely to be a mix of the two, the point is that a comparative approach to peacekeeping based upon peacekeepers’ experiences and stories opens up a whole range of important questions and possibilities about peacekeeping, Australia and its relations with the world. It also shows the way peacekeepers’ own stories create a special opportunity to simultaneously create evocative, intimate and expansive histories.

In other ways, the kind of approach used in this thesis might be used to fill the current scholarly gaps in our knowledge of various peacekeeping groups. As this thesis has shown, much of the work on peacekeeping has been ADF focused and there is much scope for more work on the AFP but especially the APS. Oral histories with peacekeepers from each group across a range of missions, or studies more specifically focused on just one of these groups, would be invaluable in growing our understanding of organisational histories and cultures and the effect they have on peacekeepers. Similarly, this could be done for those people more tenuously considered peacekeepers, such as non-governmental organisation employees and also UN civilian staff. This would be beneficial not just in sketching a picture of these organisations and their peacekeepers, but would also provide more insight and explanation into why and how Australian peacekeepers interact with each group in certain ways and not others.

Expanding beyond Australian contexts, a peacekeeper-centred approach also has great potential in the international peacekeeping arena. In much the same way that it has the capacity to both deepen and broaden Australian studies it can do the same for international studies. For example, an approach like the one in this thesis could be applied to another national group who served in the Pacific. Though that would
clearly be valuable for the national group in question it would also serve as an invaluable interlocutor for this thesis and Australian studies like it. That is, if a study like this thesis was done from a New Zealand or Tongan perspective, for instance, how might that highlight universal peacekeeping experiences across nationalities or further highlight the particular influence of nationality in shaping peacekeeping lives? Such a conversation would not only fill gaps in scholarship but might also serve a more practical purpose by giving a sense of national strengths and weaknesses in various international settings so that peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations might be more fruitfully matched.

Studies centred on peacekeepers’ own stories from a range of international perspectives could also explore questions about the significance of the international peacekeeping machinery, especially the UN. This would be an insightful and useful discussion as it would help to closely connect national inquiries to the international landscapes in which peacekeepers worked. As well, such studies would create an overarching picture of the changes and continuities of peacekeeping as an international phenomenon. Again, that would also enrich more nationally focused studies such as this one.

Lastly, though this thesis has not examined local perspectives it remains that an oral history of local communities’ experiences of peacekeeping would also provide the kind of intimate yet expansive stories produced in this thesis. Local voices would inevitably bring fresh and fundamental insights to the kinds of questions and ideas already being explored in peacekeeping literature as well as create new ones. There is incredible scope for more fully understanding peacekeeping by exploring it from the many perspectives of varied groups of local people. If, as this thesis has contended, our histories are only partially told until we include peacekeepers’ voices, then they will inarguably remain so without local voices.

A peacekeeper centred approach offers a rich and unique way to make connections across the entire international and national landscapes of peacekeeping over the last half century. Yet it is also a pathway into all the complexities and contradictions of everyday peacekeeping life. It is
Conclusion

precisely because peacekeepers’ stories offer a mix of the individual and collective that they offer the possibility for creating scholarship that constructs meaningful connections across people, time and place.

Therefore, though it may have seemed quaint to start this Conclusion with an entertaining story about Australian peacekeepers making themselves their own Bonnie Doon on a small island off the coast of Bougainville, that story symbolises the central conclusions of this thesis. That Bougainvillian Bonnie Doon indicates that peacekeepers’ experiences in the Pacific were always shaped by a heady mix of what they brought with them and what they found in the Pacific. But it also encapsulates the crucial argument that peacekeepers’ own stories are a door through which important questions and evocative stories about peacekeeping, Australia and the Pacific can be invited.
Appendix
Participant Information

Total Participants: 61¹

Participants by place of service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bougainville</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
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Participants by organisation

<table>
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<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
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<tr>
<td>APS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>2²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Individual breakdown totals differ from total participant number of 61 because many people served with more than one organisation or in more than one place and have been counted in each category.

² 1 East Timorese Worker; 1 Australian UN employee
### ADF Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
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### APS Breakdown

<table>
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<td>DFAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>PM&amp;C</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Participants by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Participants by Age

<table>
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<td>19-29</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
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