

The pathway to peace and solidarity: Australian service in peace operations

17 September 2024 | Reginald Saunders Theatre,
Adams Auditorium, Australian Defence Force Academy



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Twenty fifth anniversary of
Australian service *in* Timor-Leste



AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS 2024



Cover images left to right:

Royal Australian Navy Landing Craft Heavy (LCH) HMAS *Betano*. (Dept of Defence 20101105adf8208246_002; photographer Leading Aircraftman Leigh Cameron)

Royal Australian Air Force military working dogs with their handlers operating with the 3rd Battalion Group. (Dept of Defence JPAU11JUN02COO07; photographer Sergeant J Coombe)

An unidentified member of 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. (Dept of Defence V9902005; photographer Warrant Officer Class 2 Al Green)

Ray Johnson, Australian Federal Police member, deployed to the United Nations Administration in East Timor as part of the 1st Contingent of Australian Civilian Police alongside an unidentified UN staff member. (AFPM11275 – Courtesy of the Australian Federal Police)

Internal images:

Page 7: Australian Federal Police Sergeant Brett Simpson and an unidentified police officer from the United States of America stand in front of a United Nations Super Puma helicopter. (AFPM12546 – Courtesy of the Australian Federal Police; photographer Superintendent Rod Walker)

Page 8: Australian Federal Police member Alan Castle with a United Nations Land Rover outside the consulate in Dili. (AFPM11105 – Courtesy of the Australian Federal Police Museum)

Page 12: A section of the artwork '*Dili Wharf*' by Rick Amor. (1999, watercolour, pencil on paper, 28.2 cm x 57.2 cm, AWM ART91054)



PALAU

Sandakan

SABAH

Celebes Sea

Manado

MALUKU

Molucca Sea

Sorong

Manokwari

SULAWESI

Ceram Sea

SERAM

Nabire

Macassar Strait

Makassar

Banda Sea

INDONESIA

Flores Sea

WETAR ISLAND

OMBOK

Dili

TIMOR LESTE

SUMBA ISLAND

Sawu Sea

TIMOR

Arafura Sea

TIWI ISLANDS

Timor Sea

Darwin

Kununurra

AUSTRALIA

Derby

Broome

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Port Hedland

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Karratha

South

Seminar program

Hosted by Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM, Repatriation Commissioner

The pathway to peace and solidarity: Australian service in Peace Operations

17 September 2024

Session One

10:15 – 10:20am	Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM	Repatriation Commissioner
10:20 – 11:00am	Lieutenant General Peter Leahy AC (Retd)	Former Chief of Army 2002–2008
11:00 – 11:45am	Dr Tom Richardson	Lecturer UNSW Canberra
11:45am–12:15pm	Mr Michael Maley PSM	Former Director, Australian Electoral Commission’s Research and International Services Section
12:15 – 12:45pm	Mr David Savage AM	President, Australian Federal Police Veterans Association
12:45 – 1:15pm	Major General Paul Symon AO (Retd)	Appointed as Australia’s senior military officer to the United Nations (UN) Special Representative in Timor-Leste

Lunch break: 1:15 – 1:50pm

Session Two

1:50 – 2:00pm	Major General Cheryl Pearce AM CSC	Acting Military Adviser, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN
2:00 – 2:30pm	Warrant Officer Class One Trudy Casey OAM	Regimental Sergeant Major, 2nd (Australian) Division
2:30 – 3:00pm	Colonel Luke Foster AM CSC CSM (Retd)	Commander International Stabilisation Force (ISF) 2011–2012
3:00 – 3:45pm	In conversation:	
	The Honourable John Howard OM AC	Former Prime Minister of Australia
	General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC (Mil) CVO MC (Retd)	Commander International Force East Timor (INTERFET)
3:45 – 4:25pm	Q&A/Discussion panel:	
	Chief Petty Officer Electronics Technician Michael Mackenzie	Royal Australian Navy
	Warrant Officer Class Two Jason Thackeray	Australian Army
	Warrant Officer Chris Watkins CSC	Royal Australian Air Force
	Mr David Savage AM	Australian Federal Police
	Mr Adérito de Jesus Soares	Timor-Leste representative
4:25 – 4:45pm	Q&A/Discussion panel:	
	Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Mutu	Military Adviser to the New Zealand High Commission
	Brigadier Nigel Best OBE	Defence and Military Adviser to the British High Commission
4:45 – 5:00pm	Ms Alison Frame	Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

Conclusion: 5:00pm

Australian service in a peace operation setting

Australian peacekeepers have always deployed as part of a multinational force. Many on United Nations (UN) operations, but also on regionally constituted missions and at times with Commonwealth countries. Military personnel and police have formed the mainstay of Australian peacekeeping operations, but some have also involved civilian public servants. On seven occasions, beginning in 1950 and most recently in 2021, Australians have commanded international peacekeeping forces. Over the first four decades of Australian peacekeeping, there were limited commitments, often involving small numbers of personnel. As one example, in 1960, Australia sent just three medical personnel to a large UN peacekeeping operation in the Congo. The commitment to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992, more than four decades after the 1947 deployment to the Netherlands East Indies, was the first to involve more than 500 Australians.

During the early years, the term peacekeeping was largely unknown. Captain Douglas Aspinall deployed for service with the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in 1957. More than forty years later he said, 'It wasn't called peacekeeping then, really ... it was just you had a job with the UN. I didn't hear the peacekeeping name really till later.' Though the term is thought to have emerged in the mid-1950s, if Aspinall's experience is any guide, it had yet to attract widespread usage in Australia.

Those who later became known as Australia's first peacekeepers deployed to the Netherlands East Indies (present day Indonesia) in September 1947, where they also became the first peacekeepers from any country to go into the field*. Conducted by the UN, involving the three armed services, lasting several years, involving ceasefire monitoring, and carrying a degree of risk, the operation in the

Netherlands East Indies foreshadowed many that have followed. But while there are elements common to most peacekeeping operations, none could be considered 'typical'.

During the 1990s, with the Cold War over and Australia's last engagement in combat operations two decades in the past, peacekeeping became one of the Australian Defence Force's primary functions and therefore the main type of overseas operational experience for many service personnel. This was the decade of the mission in Rwanda, and of the large, complex and high-profile deployments to Cambodia and Somalia, which was at the time the largest Australian overseas deployment since Vietnam. By the end of the 1990s, Australians had been committed to peacekeeping operations in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, and East Timor, each of which continued into the twenty-first century.

** UN operations termed 'peacekeeping' fall under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Less common are 'peacemaking' operations which fall under Chapter VII. In this essay, the terms 'peacekeeping' and 'peacekeepers' apply in the general sense to both kinds of operation. This reflects both common usage and the difference between formal legal definitions and circumstances peacekeepers or peacemakers might encounter on the ground.*



By its very nature, peacekeeping has taken Australians to some of the world's most dangerous conflict zones, exposing many peacekeepers to sights and experiences that would be familiar to combatants in wartime. Rwanda is perhaps the most well-known example, but it is not the only deployment on which peacekeepers have faced mortal danger and been exposed to confronting sights and experiences.

An army officer who served on the Iranian side of the Iran/Iraq border during the late 1980s wrote of the risks, 'you can line them up ... being accidentally shot, rather than deliberately ... vehicle accident, mines and disease.' He could have been speaking of many other places and times in which Australians have served.

Landmines, sown in their millions in war ravaged countries the world over, have been a particular threat. They have killed two Australian peacekeepers, and endangered many others. Lieutenant Colonel Kerry Gallagher, who commanded the first contingent to Iran in the late 1980s, regarded the mine threat on the Iran/Iraq border as more severe than in Vietnam, where he had served in the early 1970s. A police officer who served with the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) 'heard of people killed or injured in mine explosions' every day. 'With the locals', said one peacekeeper of her time in Cambodia, 'there were a lot of mine victims...and amputees everywhere.'



In Afghanistan, one of the most heavily mined countries on earth, Australians and New Zealanders trained Afghans in mine recognition and defusing, and ran courses in mine awareness between 1989 and 1993. In Western Sahara, mines moved about in sandstorms and peacekeepers drove with armour underneath their vehicles to protect against this shifting, unpredictable hazard.

Before taking up his posting to Cambodia, one man was told by friends already on deployment about the hazards he would face there. Along with 'the high incidence of mines injuring people', they warned of road accidents. Their concerns proved prescient when months later a serious car accident ended his time in the country.

Three Australian peacekeepers have lost their lives in road accidents, many more have been injured. It is hardly surprising that in some of the poorest or most war damaged countries on earth, the roads, as a police officer said of conditions in Haiti, 'are probably some of the worst hazards that you can come across'. On some operations, 'driving along there, by yourself, over those roads, which aren't the best of course ... potholed and so forth, you didn't know what was going to happen', said a sergeant major of his time in Uganda where the danger lay not only in the condition of local roads but in the possibility of ambush from the jungle fringing the roads on which he had to travel. In the Himalayas, the peril was very different. The roads there, remembered one veteran, were 'one of the biggest risks ... We were in these tiny jeeps, the roads had all been carved out of the sides of the (mountains), very unstable and landslides were quite regular occurrences.' In contrast a civilian Australian Electoral Commission officer serving with the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia later spoke of 'driving through dry African savannah on a very good road.'

Some peacekeepers are veterans of war and have experienced conflict both as active participants and as impartial witnesses. Sometimes the distinction must seem difficult to draw. A Vietnam veteran remembered hearing far more gunfire when he was a Commonwealth peacekeeper in Kampala, Uganda, during the early 1980s than he had at the Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat at the height of the Vietnam War.

In Mogadishu a decade later another Vietnam veteran, now a senior army officer, told Royal Australian Air Force personnel of his concern at the danger they were in, comparing it with his wartime experience. In 2004, an Australian police officer was killed in an ambush while serving with the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

Even where the risk of injury by landmine or gunfire is less, peacekeepers must often contend with conditions in places that, in the words of one police officer are 'profoundly poor' and made still more squalid by the impacts of fighting. An Army media officer described the scene in East Timor's Oecussi Enclave where, 'all the roofing from every house, every building had been taken, 'there was just nothing left.'

'I saw families washing in pot holes in the side of the road', said one peacekeeper. A sailor, veteran of the UNITAF (Unified Task Force) peacemaking operation in Somalia, remembered the smell of a mass grave in Mogadishu, pungent from 'literally a mile off' and finding that it was next to a refugee camp 'with this overpowering stench of decaying people.' 'It was dirty,' remembered the police officer who had commented on the state of Haiti's roads. She had seen 'people ... starving ... dying because the water they've got has got bugs in it and they can't even get essentials like rice, things 'had been allowed to deteriorate, the water supply wasn't very good, the electricity was intermittent. The hospital was in decay ... lots of young kids would not reach the age of 5'.

Children appear with some frequency in recollections of peacekeeping operations. Occasionally, peacekeepers bring them into the world. A medical officer remembered her 'scariest night of duty ... I had to deliver a baby which I'd never done before.' Sometimes, they pose a threat. In Iran children as young as twelve carried guns. More often they are suffering. Uganda in the early 1980s was likewise a place where children seemed to have little hope of a future: 'You saw poverty and filth and just heaps of women and children, runny noses and sick.'

The peacekeeper who had spoken of the many amputees in Cambodia worked closely with children during her deployment: 'I received the Conspicuous Service Medal,' she said, 'for my services there working with street children.'

The effects of conflict on children are vividly apparent to peacekeepers performing medical roles. They often treat children who are ill, or wounded by the ordnance that litters scenes of conflict everywhere. A wardmaster in Rwanda said 'young kids ... see a big piece of metal ... and start playing with it ... and the next minute we've got these kids in hospital. We saw a lot of those'. Another veteran said of Rwanda's children: 'They were all orphaned. They have no living relatives at all ... they're the only ones that are left in the family.' Australians in Cambodia, also struck by the number of orphans, often tried to help or at least bring them some moments of happiness: 'We'd clean up the little kids and we'd feed them ... usually it was bags of bread, or parts of rations, stuff like that.' One peacekeeper saw the value of his work in 'just looking at the kids and knowing that you're trying to secure the future for them.

Peacekeeping has always been about securing a peaceful future for those fated to live in theatres of war and conflict. In seeking to bring this about, Australian peacekeepers have deployed to some of the most dangerous, inhospitable places on earth. Their stories are rich in examples of selflessness, endurance and courage. They have risked their own lives and health to improve lives and bring hope where, before their arrival, there may have been none. Sixteen Australians have lost their lives on peacekeeping operations, many more have suffered physical or mental injury as a result of their service. We honour all who have served.

Operations in Timor–Leste

- **United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET)**
June – October 1999
- **International Force East Timor (INTERFET)**
September 1999 – February 2000
- **United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)**
October 1999 – May 2002
- **United Nation Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET)**
May 2002 – May 2005
- **United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL)**
May 2005 – May 2006
- **International Stabilisation Force (ISF)**
May 2006 – March 2013
- **United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)**
August 2006 – December 2012

Speaker biographies



Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM

Mr Fegan was appointed as Australia's Repatriation Commissioner on 15 September 2023. The Repatriation Commissioner is independent of DVA.

Mr Fegan is the son of a Vietnam War Veteran and his mother is a war widow supported by DVA. He enjoys spending time with his extended family on a large cattle property in the Hunter Valley.

Mr Fegan followed his father into the Australian Army and served for almost 34 years leading and managing people, and supporting families. His last appointment was a three year tenure as the Commander of the 3rd Combat Brigade in Townsville.

Mr Fegan's Australian Honours include the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for his command and leadership in warlike operations in Afghanistan in 2012; a Commendation for Distinguished Service for his command of a combat team security detachment in Iraq in 2004; and a second one for his time as Director of the Divisional Coalition Plans team, also in Iraq. In 2023, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for exceptional service in the Australian Army.

Mr Fegan is married to Ilona and they have a young son, Elijah, as well as two wonderful daughters, Caitlin and Lauren, from a previous marriage.



Lieutenant General Peter Leahy AC (Retd)

General Leahy retired from the Australian Army, after a 37-year career, in July 2008 as a Lieutenant General in the position of Chief of Army, a position he held for 6 years. Prior to this appointment, he was the Deputy Chief of Army.

Among his qualifications he holds a Bachelor of Arts (Military Studies) and a Master of Military Arts and Science.

He is a graduate of both the Australian and the United States Army Staff Colleges, a Fellow of the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies, and a graduate of the British Higher Command and Staff Course.

General Leahy is currently a Professor at the University of Canberra. His main passion at the University is teaching undergraduates on matters relating to national security and the challenge of modern terrorism. He also writes and provides media commentary on defence and security issues.

In work related to charities, he is the Chairman of Soldier On and the Red Shield Advisory Committee in the ACT. He was Chairman of the Australian International Military Games, which brought the Invictus Games to Sydney in 2018.

In work related to government and defence, General Leahy was a member of the First Principles Review of the Department of Defence, completed a major review into the International Deployment Group of the Australian Federal Police, and has advised both the South Australian and Queensland Governments on matters related to strategy, defence and industry issues.

Since leaving the Army, he has been a director of several publicly listed companies including Codan Pty Ltd, Citadel Group Limited (Chair) and Electro Optic Systems (Chair).



Dr Tom Richardson

Dr Richardson is a historian at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. After completing his doctorate in 2014, he worked as a researcher on the *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping* (2015) and on the *Official History of Australian Operations in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan* (2016–2018). His first book, *Destroy and Build: Pacification in Phuoc Tuy, 1966–1972* was published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) in 2017; his second, *Soldiers and Bushmen: The Australian Army in South Africa 1899-1902*, will be published (also by CUP) in 2025.



Mr Michael Maley PSM

Mr Maley spent more than 30 years as an election administrator with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and its predecessor, the Australian Electoral Office, retiring in November 2012 as Special Adviser, Electoral Reform and International Services.

He managed the AEC's overseas programmes for the better part of 20 years and served in a number of UN missions: in 1989 as an expert in the Electoral Division of the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia; in 1992-93 as Senior Deputy Chief Electoral Officer (Operations and Computerisation) in the Electoral Component of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia; in 1994 as Deputy Director of the Electoral Division of the UN Observer Mission in South Africa; in 2001 as a Commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission established under the auspices of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor; and in 2007 as a member of the Electoral Certification Team appointed by the UN Secretary-General for the 2007 elections in Timor-Leste.

Mr Maley has also taken part in UN survey missions in Western Sahara, Eastern Slavonia and Lesotho; and has been a consultant to the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

He currently serves as one of the convenors for the Australian Capital Territory of the Electoral Regulation Research Network hosted by the University of Melbourne Law School, and is also a member of the Editorial Board of the Election Law Journal.

For his work in the electoral field, he was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2001, and IFES' Joe C. Baxter Award in 2015.



Mr David Savage AM

Mr Savage joined the Australian Federal Police at 18 years of age, serving for almost 20 years including as a Detective in the Major Crime Branch, Witness Security, Close Personal Protection and on peacekeeping operations, including in Mozambique, Bougainville and East Timor, before joining the UN as a Human Rights and War Crimes investigator.

He served in East Timor during the 1999 United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), before returning in 2000 to be the Chief Investigator in the UN Serious Crimes Unit in East Timor for 4 years. He has worked investigating war crimes and human rights violations in Cambodia,

Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, for the International Crisis Group, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and other human rights organisations.

In 2001, Mr Savage was awarded the Group Bravery Citation as a member of the AFP contingent serving with the UNAMET mission in the Maliana region of East Timor.

During 2011–2012, while working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, he served as a Stabilisation Advisor with the Coalition’s Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. Mr Savage became Australia’s first civilian casualty in Afghanistan when he was critically wounded when his patrol was attacked by a child suicide bomber.

In 2015, he was an ACT finalist in the Australian of the Year awards, and in 2020 received the ACT Chief Minister’s Peace Prize. He is a founding member of the AFP Veterans Association, which assists retired and non-serving members of the AFP suffering as a result of their service.

Mr Savage’s book, *Dancing with the Devil. A Personal Account of Policing the East Timor Vote for Independence*, subsequently formed the basis for the ABC mini-series *Answered by Fire*. Now retired, he is co-authoring a book, *Without Fear or Favour*, on the involvement of the Australian Federal Police in East Timor.



Major General Paul Symon AO (Retd)

General Symon served as the 12th Director-General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) from 2017 to 2022.

General Symon’s military career began in 1982 at the Royal Military College Duntroon, where he received the Sword of Honour. He departed the military 35 years later as a Major General. He distinguished himself in appointments such as Deputy Chief of the Australian Army (2009–2011) and Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation (2011–2014). He served overseas in the United Kingdom, Israel, Lebanon, Solomon Islands, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. At ASIS, he became responsible for the collection of foreign human intelligence and oversaw a very high tempo of sensitive and high-risk intelligence operations.

General Symon's service in East Timor covered the period from when the UN (under the UNAMET mandate) successfully negotiated the inclusion of 50 military observers to liaise with the Indonesian military, militia leaders and Falantil in May 1999, until the deployment and consolidation of INTERFET under the leadership of Sir Peter Cosgrove in November 1999.

General Symon was honoured as an Officer in the Military Division of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service. He holds two Master's degrees, is married, and has two adult children and two grandsons.



Major General Cheryl Pearce AM CSC

General Pearce graduated from the Officer Cadet School Portsea in December 1985 and commissioned into the Royal Australian Corps of Military Police.

General Pearce has extensive experience both in and out of Defence. She has been employed in a range of regimental command positions within the domestic and operational environments, as well as various staff appointments at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of Defence.

General Pearce commanded the Defence Police Training Centre and 1st Military Police Battalion over the period 2003 to 2006 and in recognition of her exceptional service during her four-year command tenure, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

Following numerous staff positions across Headquarters 1st Division, Army Headquarters, Australian Defence College, Joint Capabilities and Special Operations, in 2017, she was appointed as the Commandant of the Australian Defence Force Academy.

General Pearce's operational experience includes deploying as part of the UN in East Timor in 2002 where she was awarded a Chief of Defence Force Commendation for Bravery, and in 2016 as the Commander Task Group Afghanistan where she received a Commendation for Distinguished Service. More recently, from 2019–2021, General Pearce was assigned as the Force Commander, UN Forces in Cyprus. Here, she received a Conspicuous Service Cross for her outstanding achievements.

Upon returning from Cyprus, General Pearce served as the Deputy Commissioner Australian Border Force with the Department of Home Affairs from 2022–2023. General Pearce attended the Australian Command and Staff College in 2001 and Higher Defence College in 2013. Her post-graduate qualifications include a Graduate Diploma of Management in Defence Studies from the University of Canberra, Masters of Intelligence, Policing and Counter Terrorism from Macquarie University and a Masters of Arts (Defence Studies) from Deakin University.

General Pearce was appointed Deputy Chief of Army from June 2023 until January 2024 before assuming her appointment as Deputy Military Advisor in the Office of Military Affairs from 11 March 2024. General Pearce was appointed as Acting Military Advisor on 23 April 2024.



Warrant Officer Class One Trudy Casey OAM

Warrant Officer Casey commenced her appointment as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 2nd (Australian) Division on 15 January 2024. She enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in September 1990 and was initially allocated to the Royal Australian Corps of Transport as an Operator Movements.

In 2001, Warrant Officer Casey deployed in support of Operation Tanager, East Timor, as the Postal Manager. In 2003, she deployed as the Movements Warrant Officer in support of Operation Citadel, East Timor. In 2007, she deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations as the Operations Warrant Officer with the Force Level Logistic Asset. In January 2008, Trudy was promoted to Warrant Officer Class One. In 2009, she deployed as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Force Communications Unit in support of Operation Slipper and Operation Catalyst.

From July 2017 until June 2019, she was an international instructor in the Department of Force Management (Logistics) at the United States Army Sergeant Major Academy, for which she was awarded the United States Army Meritorious Service Medal.

Warrant Officer Casey was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2011 for meritorious performance of duty as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 1st Combat Signal Regiment and the inaugural Force Communications Unit. She is a graduate of the United States Army Sergeants Major Course (Class 67). She holds a Bachelor of Organisational Leadership from the University of New England and is a graduate of the Australian Company Directors Course.



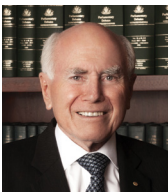
Colonel Luke Foster AM CSC CSM (Retd)

Colonel Foster joined the Australian Regular Army in 1979 and served the majority of his 37-year career as an Infantry Officer.

In the latter part of his career he served as an Adviser to the Vanuatu Mobile Force (1994–1996), Defence Adviser to Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (2002–2005), Defence Adviser to Papua New Guinea (2006–2009) and Defence Attaché to Timor-Leste (2013–2016).

Colonel Foster has also served in Malaysia, Bougainville, East Timor (INTERFET), Timor-Leste (Commander International Stabilisation Force) and commanded the initial Australian Defence Force operation to support the Queensland Government during the 2011 floods.

Colonel Foster is married to Lorraine Morgan, has Master's Degrees in Defence Studies and International Relations, and is a passionate photographer.



The Honourable John Howard OM AC

Mr Howard, born 26 July 1939, served as Australia's 25th Prime Minister between March 1996 and November 2007. He is the nation's second longest serving Prime Minister, was a Member of Parliament for 33 years, and was Treasurer in an earlier government.

Under his leadership, Australia enjoyed continued economic growth averaging 3.6% per annum. His government delivered major economic reform in the areas of taxation, workplace relations, privatisation and welfare. \$96 billion of government debt was repaid during the time in

office of the Howard Government. When it left office in November 2007 the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia had no net debt, and its budget was in surplus. This strong fiscal position was a major reason why Australia suffered relatively few consequences from the Global Financial Crisis.

Shortly after Mr Howard came to power, he responded to the massacre of 35 people by a lone gunman at Port Arthur in Tasmania with the implementation of national gun control laws, which included a general prohibition on the ownership or possession of automatic or semi-automatic weapons.

Mr Howard's government strongly supported the United States and other nations in the fight against terrorism. Australia contributed military forces to operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Australia also led the UN sanctioned INTERFET force following East Timor's vote for independence. The Howard Government strengthened bilateral ties between Australia and many nations in Asia. During Mr Howard's time as Prime Minister, China became Australia's largest export destination.

Mr Howard is a Companion of the Order of Australia and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States, by President George W Bush. In January 2012, Queen Elizabeth II appointed Mr Howard to the Order of Merit. In 2013, he received the Japanese Award, the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun.



General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC (Mil) CVO MC (Retd)

Born into a military family, Sir Peter first began considering a career with Australia's defence forces when he was an Army Cadet at Waverley College, Sydney, in the early sixties. He happily joined the school's more than 400-strong cadet unit, where he went on to win the *Major General Chapman Cane Award for Best Cadet in Unit* in 1964. Years later, that cadet unit has named an award the *General Cosgrove Shield (for the most efficient Speciality in the Cadet Unit)*. It's presented each year to honour the achievements of the most senior ranking officer to graduate.

Sir Peter remembers his time in cadets fondly and attributes many of his leadership qualities to the lessons he learned as a young cadet.

From high school, Sir Peter followed in the footsteps of his father and joined the Australian Army, attending Royal Military College (RMC), Duntroon in 1965. Somewhat of an underachiever through school, he continued in a similar vein at Duntroon, but there were those in higher positions who recognised that there was more to young Staff Cadet Cosgrove than initially met the eye!

Upon graduating from RMC Duntroon, Sir Peter was appointed a probationary second lieutenant in August 1968 while attached to a regular army unit, and was commissioned a lieutenant on 11 December 1968.

Sir Peter was deployed to Malaysia with 1st Battalion RAR and later to Vietnam with 9th Battalion RAR, where he commanded an infantry platoon and was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for his performance and leadership during an assault on enemy positions. He came to greater public prominence around the nation following his appointment as Commander of INTERFET in 1999 overseeing that country's transition to independence. For his leadership in this role he was advanced to the rank of Companion in the military division of the Order of Australia (AC) and was invested by Her Majesty The Queen during her visit to Australia early in 2000.

Sir Peter was the Chief of the Army from 2000 to 2002 and Chief of the Defence Force from 2002 to 2005. He then retired from active duty and went on to serve on several corporate boards before becoming the Governor-General of Australia in 2014. He was sworn in on 28 March 2014 and made a Knight of the Order of Australia (AK) on the same date. Following his retirement in 2019, Sir Peter was further honoured as a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) by Her Majesty The Queen.

In retirement, Sir Peter continues to be involved with Defence, having recently been appointed as the Patron of the Australian Defence Force Cadets. He is also actively engaged with health and charitable organisations. Sir Peter married Lynne Payne in 1976, and together they have three sons and four young grandchildren. He is an avid sports fan with a particular interest in rugby and cricket.



Chief Petty Officer Electronics Technician Michael Mackenzie

Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Michael Mackenzie joined the Royal Australian Navy as a General Duties sailor in October 1990. Following initial training at HMAS *Nirimba* he was posted to the Landing Ship HMAS *Tobruk*.

In 1993 he trained as an Electronics Technician at HMAS *Cerberus*, posting to HMAS *Kuttabul* and then joining HMAS *Sydney* in 1995 as a Radar Maintainer.

During his time onboard *Sydney*, CPO Mackenzie was promoted to Leading Seaman and conducted numerous exercises and port visits, upholding relationships with our Australia's international partners. In December 1999, he deployed to East Timor onboard *Sydney* as part of the INTERFET contingent.

In 2002, CPO Mackenzie posted to HMAS *Newcastle* and deployed to the Persian Gulf (2002–2003) as part of Operations Slipper and Catalyst. Further postings included time as an instructor at *Cerberus* on promotion to Petty Officer, followed by a sea posting to HMAS *Kanimbla* in 2008.

On promotion to Chief Petty Officer, he returned to *Sydney* (2012–2014) and *Newcastle* (2018–2019) where he decommissioned the ship and subsequently handed it over to the Chilean Armada. A major career highlight, was training the Chilean crew members in Australia and then again in Chile in 2021.

Recently, he has served at Navy Training Systems Centre (NTSC) Randwick as the Course Implementation Officer for Landing Helicopter Dock technical training and has now taken on the role of the Electronics Technician Strategic Career Manager in Canberra. CPO Mackenzie is married to Nicole and has three children – Innasya, Sasha and Zar.



Warrant Officer Class Two Jason Thackeray

Warrant Officer Thackeray was born on 15 September 1972 in Darlinghurst, New South Wales. He enlisted into the Australian Regular Army on 5 July 2005 as an Operator Communications Specialist with the Royal Australian Corps of Signals.

His posting experience over these 18 years included 3rd Combat Signal Regiment, Centre Squadron, North West Mobile Force, 152 Signal Squadron, Special Air Service Regiment, Defence Force School of Signals, 109 Signal Squadron, 8 Signal Regiment, 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion and he is currently posted to Career Management – Army.

Operationally, Warrant Officer Thackeray has deployed with the First Royal Australian Regiment on Operation Astute, the Force Support Unit on Operation Slipper and on Operation Resolute. His honours and awards include the Australian Active Service Medal with clasp ICAT, Afghanistan Medal, Australian Service Medal with clasp CT/SR and TIMOR-LESTE, Defence Long Service Medal, Australian Defence Medal, Timor-Leste Solidarity Medal and NATO Medal with clasp ISAF.

His interests and hobbies include playing satisfactory golf, lawn care, watching sport and enjoying family time exploring this great country.

Warrant Officer Thackeray is married to Kylie and has three children, Harvey, aged 14, Matilda, aged 11 and Wilbur, aged 8.



Warrant Officer Chris Watkins CSC

Warrant Officer Watkins grew up in Guildford, New South Wales, enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as a Supplier in January 2004. He has since held a variety of mustering specific, operational and instructional roles and appointments within Air Force and Joint environments.

After completing recruit and initial employment training, Warrant Officer Watkins was posted to 386 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron, which culminated with his initial deployment to the Middle East in 2005.

In 2006, he was posted to No.1 Air Terminal Squadron at RAAF Richmond, where he completed the Air Terminal Operations course and subsequently deployed to East Timor as part of Operation Astute. In 2007, he deployed first to the Solomon Islands and then again to the Middle East for a second time. He deployed to the Middle East for a third time in 2009, and then as part of Operation Pakistan Assist II in 2010, before posting to the Air Movements Standards Cell within 1 Airfield Operations Support Squadron in 2011.

Warrant Officer Watkins was promoted to Sergeant in 2012 and after completing the RAAF Military Skills Instructor course in late 2014, was posted to the Australian Defence Force Academy. From this posting, he was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross in the 2018 Australia Day Honours List.

In January 2018, Warrant Officer Watkins was promoted to Flight Sergeant and deployed to the Middle East for a fourth time in 2020.

He assumed his current duties in October 2022, whereby he posted to the Directorate of Logistics – Air Force, as the Mustering Capability Advisor for the Movements and Motor Transport Driver musterings.

Outside of work, Warrant Officer Watkins enjoys exploring both on and off road via motorcycle, as well as reading, various industrial arts and generally tinkering away in his shed.



Mr Adérito de Jesus Soares

Mr Soares was a member of Timor-Leste's Constituent Assembly (2001–2002) and was the Inaugural Commissioner of Timor-Leste's Anti-Corruption Commission (2010–2014). Prior to the 1999 UN Referendum, he worked as human rights lawyer in Jakarta and was also a clandestine student/youth leader. He was instrumental in campaigning for independence with the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction in Timor-Leste from May 1999 to the announcement of the Referendum result on September 4, 1999.

Mr Soares has delivered consultancies with various international development agencies. He holds an LLB from Satya Wacana Christian University in, Indonesia, an LLM from the New York University School of Law, USA (2003) and a PhD on 'Regulation and Governance' from the Australian National University, Canberra. He has published on Timor-Leste internationally, including 'A Social Movement as Antidote to Corruption', in *A New Era? Timor-Leste after the UN* (ANU E-Press, 2015); 'Combating Corruption: Avoiding Institutional Ritualism', in *The Politics of Timor-Leste* (NY, Cornell Uni. Press, 2013); 'The Parallel and Paradox of Timor-Leste and Western Sahara', in *Autonomy and Armed Separatist Movement in Southeast Asia* (Singapore, ISEAS, 2012).

Mr Soares has also been invited as speaker in many universities. His areas of expertise/research include public policy, governance, anti-corruption, constitutional-making processes/post-conflict society, human rights and social justice. Apart from conducting his own independent research, currently he works as the Deputy Chief of Party for the 'Accountability and Integrity Mechanism Activity' (USAID/AIM) in Dili. He is editing a book with Professor James J. Fox on 25 Years of Referendum in Timor-Leste.



Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Mutu

Military Adviser to the New Zealand High Commission



Brigadier Nigel Best OBE

Brigadier Best has served for 30 years in the British Army. During his career he has deployed many times on operations, including Cyprus, Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and South Sudan.

Educated at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst,

Brigadier Best served with The Black Watch, which included the handover of Hong Kong in 1997, and with the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles as part of the International Force East Timor in 1999. He commanded a squadron (2007–2009) and then his regiment (2011–2013) – both included operational deployments in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. He has worked extensively with the UN with his last deployment as the Force Chief of Staff in UNMISS (South Sudan).

Brigadier Best has been the Military Assistant to the Commander Field Army, a Deputy Chief of Staff J5 in PJHQ, the Head of Plans in the Army's Ground Manoeuvre Capability Branch, and the deputy leader of a team to review the UK's acquisition process. He has attended the United Kingdom's Advanced Command and Staff the Project Leadership Programme, the Royal College of Defence Studies, and the Defence and Strategic Studies Course in Australia. He has an Masters in Defence

Technology, a Masters in International Relations, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Security and Strategy for Global Leaders.

Brigadier Best was awarded a Task Force Commander's Commendation in 2008, made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2013, and awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in 2017. All were awarded for operational service. He is married to Penny and they have two children, Max and Isabella. He remains a keen sportsman, although his body is now less interested. He is the Chairman of Royal Armoured Corps Football and Army Cresta. His vice is wasting money on old cars and motorbikes.



Ms Alison Frame

Ms Frame commenced as Secretary of DVA in January 2023.

Prior to that, Ms Frame was Deputy Secretary, Social Policy in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet from August 2020.

Ms Frame has led social policy initiatives and reform across both the Commonwealth and New South Wales (NSW) Governments as a senior executive for over 14 years.

During her time in NSW Government senior leadership roles – including as Deputy Secretary in both the Department of Planning and Environment and Department of Premier and Cabinet – she led policy and program work in housing and property, child protection, family and domestic violence as the head of the Office for Women in NSW, and Indigenous policy.



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