



ADF 2020
(Australian Defence
Force)

Peacekeepers

ADF peacekeepers have been serving our country since 1947. Not only do they care for us in our times of need, they also care for other countries when disaster strikes. Whether it is in bloody and life long battles or providing supplies to countries affected by natural disasters. Australian Defence Forces are sure to be doing their part, no matter where the incident is located.

The question that we should be asking ourselves today is: Are Australian peacekeepers Responsible Citizens?

No matter what community peacekeepers go to, they all have their duties and standards to up hold as they are representing the United Nations Forces. Before entering a foreign country ADF peacekeepers are educated/briefed on the countries background, culture and habits to ensure their being there will not have a negative effect on the locals by what they're doing. This may include:

- What language they use (no cursing/swearing)
- How they act
- How they look and treat the native women
- To be acknowledged of where the boundaries lie

As well as many more. They do this to ensure their presence won't turn the locals against them, as they need the locals to assist in the positive development of the mission.

There are three main areas in which these magnificent people work in and these categories are;

- Navy
- Army and
- Aviation/Air force

These different areas in the forces may have different guide lines and training practices but they all have one indefinite purpose, to help areas devastated by a disaster no matter how difficult or simple the task may be. You can always count on them to achieve the best of their capabilities.



Two ADF peacekeepers were questioned on their roles, achievements and practices.

Lieutenant Commander Paul Ruhl answers the following questions (Navy):

How do you go about protecting our waters?

Whilst out on patrol we are conducting mainly surveillance and deterrence. The primary role is generally fisheries, but as an aside to that we also try and combat illegal immigration. We have an environmental role in helping sustain some of our environmental assets out there, including fisheries, wild life and all those sorts of things. And, we also work in conjunction with the Air Force and the Army on coastal areas as well to ensure that our actual land assets are also protected.

Does the RAN act as a good global citizen?

The Australian Navy does take its role as a global citizen very seriously. Out on a single day on patrol it can be obvious that there will be pollutants and even animals caught in foreign countries ghost nets and the Navy actively seeks, one, to free these animals and report any sort of pollutants in those sorts of areas. In conjunction with the aircraft spotting these sorts of things the Navy responds and actively seeks to sort of rectify those issues.

Is it important to practice diplomacy in your work?

Look, in terms of representing Australia, any ship flying the Australian white ensign is very cognitive of the fact that they are representing Australia in all that we do. Diplomatically any action that we take is fully recognised at both international and local level. Much of what we do is captured by the local media and we're very, very conscious of our role as diplomats.

Warrant Officer Tony Charles answers the following questions (Army):

How important is the skill level in the Defence Force?

There's several different types of Aircraft Technician from the Private through to the Warrant Officer class one, the Major, whatever. But every single job that they do is important because it keep the aircraft in the air. We have aircraft technicians that actually sit on a helicopter, some helicopters, to ensure that it does fly correctly. The most important thing for us with their training is that their trained above the standards required, whether it be in a civilian street or within our own training regime, when it comes to safety, defence is 100 percent. And if you don't get 100 percent then you will not pass your course and then we will have to find him another job, but it's paramount, they have to know their job inside out, they have to be the professional and I know for a fact out there now that there's people headhunting, scalping defence trained personnel in certain jobs, i.e. technicians, they'll take them in because their skill level is seen to be another fifty to eighty percent higher to what's trained outside. So it's fairly in depth now, as a Defence Force we've aligned ourselves right up now with the civil accreditation schemes, the universities throughout Australia, we take their curriculum, we give it the Army spin, and another ten percent on top, and then we'll train to that. So when you do leave after technical courses, you are actually doing a civilian university degree at the same time.



Tell us about your deployment.

I've done two trips to East Timor, first in 1999 as a Platoon Sergeant, that was '99 through 2000, and I've just recently come back from East Timor again, it was great to see the transition from '99 when we were first there to currently last year 2008 and how the country itself has evolved, how the people have moved forward... probably still a bit of a way to go with East Timor, but the government itself is getting onboard, is doing a very good job, our troops are doing an outstanding job in line with the New Zealanders over there with us which is... we work hand in hand and it's brilliant. My main job, my primary job over there as the Task Force Sergeant Major was with the Commander, the Brigadier over there, we would oversee the battle group, oversee the Kiwis, visit the government daily, and integrate our plan that we had for the stabilization of the country and fit it in to what the government's plan was for the future progression of their country. So, it was trying, but good fun.

As previously stated enormous amounts of training, time and effort is spent to prepare ADF troops for not only what is expected of them in the public's eye, but also how they are meant to act in different circumstances that may come before them. There have been many terribly disturbing and confronting situations which these people have had to go through, things even we couldn't even imagine possible. An example is, as follows;

Quite a few years back there was a civil war amongst people about political stances where ADF forces were required. The ADF was sent to protect the doctors and nurses that were also from Australia. The medical team was only to attend to wounded American soldiers and the ADF forces were only to attack if the medical aid or they themselves were seen to be in harm's way but for no other purposes whatsoever. Brutal killings were done right in front of their faces but did nothing due to their orders. One night a parade of citizens marched around the medical centre in protest that the ADF soldiers were not doing anything about these slaughters. After the mission many of the ADF soldiers took their own lives, those that didn't could no longer be able to serve their country, due to the ordeals that occurred.

It maybe so, that laws have been changed, to ensure that soldiers are not put in such difficult situations again; however, soldiers are still fighting a variety of battles across the globe. Throughout these battles many lives have been taken, the life of a family member, a friend, a loved one. They also carry the scars of those they have saved and the ones that they'd battled beside and those that they have fought for. These scars aren't just those that are visible to the human eye and that may fade given time, they are also the ones that will remain within ones memory for eternity, making them favour what they have achieved and saddened by what lay out of their grasp.

These people risk their lives every day in the line of duty, just to have the honour of serving our country. If you don't believe that peacekeepers are Responsible Citizens of Australia, now then you, yourself, don't deserve them representing you; after all they risk their lives to thanklessly help others.



Sources of Information

Defence2020 Program

Defence2020 program that encourages the youth to become more highly educated within the ADF peacekeepers areas of involvement within the wide spread communities. This program was a great source of information when it comes to the background information, and knowledge that seems to be forgotten when it comes to the media.

Defence2020 Website & Profiles Page

- <http://www.defence2020.info/profiles.php>

Words used in Italics were copied from the website above as ADF peacekeepers were not located within the Mareeba community.