

PART 3: PEACE, WAR AND PEACEKEEPING: 1945-2009

Post-War 1945-1951

Even after the tremendous efforts of World War II, Army activity continued at a high level for several years. Following agreement reached within the British Commonwealth and with the United States, a British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), comprising Australian, British, Indian and New Zealand formations, was raised and deployed to participate in the occupation of the defeated Japan. Its main tasks were demilitarisation and demobilisation, as well as enforcing military government regulations. Because of the Australian commitment in the Pacific theatre of the war, the appointment of GOC BCOF was filled by Australian Army officers. The Australian Army's contribution was the 34th Infantry Brigade (three battalions - 65th, 66th and 67th). This formation was raised at Morotai, and drawn from infantry units spread across the South West Pacific Area at the cessation of hostilities. An armoured car squadron and a general hospital, along with other smaller units, were also contributed.¹

Two years later the bulk of the Commonwealth's Forces had been withdrawn, but Australia still maintained her presence in Japan. The three battalions of 34th Infantry Brigade were the nucleus of the post-war Regular Army and were designated 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Australian Regiment in 1948, and the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) in the following year. Of the original three battalions, only the 3rd Battalion (3RAR) remained in Japan.² A 4th Battalion, (4RAR), was raised in Australia as a depot battalion in 1952 but disbanded at the end of the decade.³ The occupation of Japan ended with the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco in September 1951.⁴

To augment the Regular Army of 19,000, the field force component of which was a regular brigade group plus an armoured element, the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) were re-raised in 1948. The CMF was to comprise two infantry divisions and other units, to a strength of 50,000. However by 1949-50 the CMF strength was only some 23,000.⁵

Meanwhile, in 1947, the Australian Army's involvement in multinational peacekeeping had commenced, with the contribution of military observers to what was (initially) titled the United Nations Good Offices Commission (GOC). The Commission was tasked with delineating and supervising the ceasefire between the Netherlands forces trying to re-establish Dutch rule in the East Indies and Indonesian forces fighting for the independence of their new republic. The GOC was later retitled the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI). Its task ended in 1951. The Australian Army also contributed observers to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) from 1950 until 1985, and one observer to the UN Commission on Korea (UNCOK) in 1950, although this commitment ceased with the outbreak of the war in Korea in the same year.⁶

In mid-1949, the New South Wales and Queensland coal strike, inspired by militants within the miners' union, saw the federal government move troops into the mines to maintain production. The strike came to an end in August because the railways unions decided to move the coal mined by the Army, leaving the mining union isolated within the trade union movement.⁷

In December 1949 a new government was elected, based broadly on a policy aimed at reducing communist influence at home and its further spread through South East Asia. To achieve this aim it appeared necessary to maintain the confidence of nations in the area against external pressure, to encourage regional security and develop local regional, as well as Australia's, defence capacity. The Government, believing that the army structure was inadequate for this task, introduced the National Service Act in 1951. The Act provided for the compulsory call-up of all 18 year old males, with an obligation to serve 176 days, 98 of which were to be full-time. As a result, by 1956, the CMF strength had reached over 87,000.⁸

The War in Korea 1950-53

On 25 June 1950, the (North) Korean People's Army invaded the Republic of (South) Korea. The invasion was seen as a challenge to the western democracies, a consequence of the growing Cold War tensions between the East and West. The United Nations Security Council invited UN member states to send forces to restore the situation; under the auspices of United Nations Command - Korea (UNC-K).

In late September 3RAR joined the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade. 3RAR took part in the long advance into North Korea and in October was in action less than 100 kilometres from the Yalu River, which formed the Chinese border. With the entry of Chinese forces into the conflict in November, a long withdrawal was undertaken back behind the 38th Parallel.⁹

In April 1951 another Chinese offensive saw 3RAR and 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2PPCLI) committed to a hard-fought defensive battle at Kapyong to stop a Chinese division. For this action these battalions and one other unit were awarded the US Presidential Unit Citation.¹⁰ Succumbing to US pressure, Australia agreed in October to send a second Battalion to Korea. Several other members of the Commonwealth increased their contribution, to the extent that a British Commonwealth Division could be formed, with an Australian commanding one of the Brigades.¹¹

A UN offensive in October 1951 saw the newly formed 1st Commonwealth Division involved in Operation Commando when UN forces extended their positions along the Jamestown Line. During this operation, 3RAR took the strongly defended Chinese positions on Maryang San.¹² In November 1951 the Korean War entered its static phase which lasted until a ceasefire was agreed on 27 July 1953.

In April 1952 3RAR was joined by 1RAR, the brigade having been redesignated a year previously as 28 Commonwealth Brigade. Command of this brigade, with two RAR battalions, was from July 1952 vested in Australian brigadiers. 1RAR was relieved by 2RAR in March 1953 with 3RAR, with its system of individual rather than unit replacement, remained committed until the end.¹³

The static phase of the war saw the RAR battalions involved in extensive patrolling and trench raids, as well as the major actions of Hill 355 and the Hook. 1RAR relieved 2RAR in April 1954 and 3RAR returned to Australia in November 1954 leaving 1RAR as a component of a reduced Commonwealth commitment to the UN force in Korea.¹⁴

Australian Army casualties totalled 276 killed in action or died of wounds, 1210 wounded in action and 23 prisoners of war.¹⁵

Regional Security 1951-55

Meanwhile Australia had been seeking a 'more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific area'. To a degree this was met by the Australian, New Zealand and United States Treaty (ANZUS), which was signed in September 1951.¹⁶ A further step towards regional security was the signing of the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty by the United States, Australia, New Zealand, France, Britain, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines in September 1954. This treaty resulted in the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). Any attack on a member state, or on protocol states (South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) was designated a matter of common danger inviting a common response, although the United States specified that the treaty could only be invoked in relation to a communist attack.¹⁷

A more localised security arrangement for Australian, New Zealand and British interests was ANZAM (Britain being the governing power of what was then the Federation of Malaya). In 1955, the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) was formed in Malaya. The Australian Army component was mainly a battalion group, based on an RAR battalion, forming part of 28 Commonwealth Brigade Group.

The primary role of the BCFESR was 'to provide a deterrent to, and be available at short notice to assist in countering, further communist aggression in South East Asia'. Its secondary and related role was to assist in the maintenance of the security of Malaya by participating in operations against Communist Terrorists (CT). A communist insurrection to seize control of Malaya had commenced in 1948 and became the Malayan Emergency.¹⁸

Malayan Emergency 1955-60

At the peak of the Emergency, several years before the BCFESR commitment, there were some 8,000 CT and an estimated 50,000 sympathisers within the Malayan population. The CT movement was primarily Chinese-based. The Security Forces (SF) at the same period included 23 infantry battalions, over 60,000 police and 250,000 home guards.¹⁹

2RAR, with its supporting artillery battery, deployed to Malaya in October 1955. It was relieved by 3RAR and its battery in October 1957, which in turn was relieved by 1RAR and battery in October 1959. The battalions were used almost continually on patrolling, ambushing, food denial and cordon-and-search operations in northern Malaya, except for short periods of leave and retraining. Australian Army losses in the Emergency, from approximately 7,000 who served in theatre, were 13 killed in action (KIA) and 24 wounded (WIA), with 21 non-operational deaths and 111 cases of non-operational other casualties. The Emergency was declared officially ended on 31 July 1960.²⁰

The Pentropic Organisation 1960-65

With the end of the National Service scheme in November 1959, came the desire to modernise the Army and restructure it to enable better integration in operations with the forces of Australia's main ally, the United States. As a result, the Army was reorganised on a new divisional structure, called the Pentropic Division. The US Army had experimented with a Pentomic divisional structure, based on five battle groups. The core element of each was a significantly enlarged infantry battalion, to which was added elements of supporting arms. This organisation, which was the blue print for the Pentropic arrangement, eliminated the intermediate-level brigade headquarters. Implementation of the Pentropic divisional structure commenced in 1960.²¹

The restructuring of the Army, particularly the CMF infantry battalions, to form the new battle groups, involved the disbanding of many old units with historical links going back to the Sudan, South Africa and the two World Wars, as well as severing traditional ties with their local communities. The new organisation presented a complex command and staff organisation as well as a number of difficulties at lower levels. The US Army abandoned its experiment in 1961, however the Australian Army persevered with the Pentropic structure until November 1964.²²

One significant complication was the requirement to maintain an RAR battalion with the BCFESR in Malaya (Malaysia after 1963) on the standard British Commonwealth battalion structure, whilst all other battalions were on the enlarged Pentropic structure. This resulted in battalions having to be reorganised for service in BCFESR. Reversion to the previous Tropical Warfare divisional - and battalion - structure was effected in 1965, with some restoration of the old identities of the original CMF battalions.²³

Indonesian Confrontation 1964-65

In 1964, Indonesia launched a campaign of confrontation against the newly-created Federation of Malaysia, seeking to de-stabilise and ultimately to destroy it. Most incursions were into Sarawak and Sabah, with a few into mainland (Western) Malaysia. By the end of that year, there were 21 British, Gurkha and Malaysian battalions, with supporting arms, deployed in Borneo. The Malaysian Government requested the commitment of Australian troops to Borneo in January 1965, resulting in 3RAR and 102 Field Battery (then with the BCFESR), 1SAS Squadron and a number of field and construction squadrons being deployed to Borneo. Further, 111 Light Anti Aircraft Battery, relieved later by 110 Battery, was deployed to the Butterworth Air Base in Western Malaysia in case of Indonesian air attack.²⁴

In the meantime, several brigades of Indonesian regular troops had been moved from Java to Kalimantan, opposite Sarawak and Sabah. Ultimately 22,000 regular Indonesian troops including 12 infantry battalions, 4,000 irregulars and 2,000 Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO) operatives with some 24,000 Chinese sympathisers, were involved. The Indonesian incursions into Sarawak and Sabah were in relatively small groups, often less than platoon-level.²⁵

The Commonwealth security forces were deployed primarily in company bases within mutually supporting gun range, patrols being mounted to secure intelligence, set ambushes and to force the Indonesians to remain behind their own border. 3RAR served on operations from March to July 1965, and 4RAR April to August 1966. 1SAS Squadron served from April to August 1965 and 2SAS Squadron from March to July 1966.²⁶

As well as operations on Borneo and the mainland of Malaysia, Australian troops, mainly from the Pacific Islands Regiment, were engaged in intensive patrolling along the only land border between Indonesia and Australian territory – in Papua New Guinea. While there was only one shooting incident, the demands of patrolling in such difficult terrain imposed a considerable drain on the available pool of Australian officers and NCOs.

Confrontation formally ended in August 1966. Australian Army casualties were seven KIA, six WIA, with 10 non-operational deaths and 14 non-operational other casualties.²⁷

National Service 1965-1972

A National Service scheme was reintroduced in 1965. The cause was both Government concerns with Australia's capacity to deal effectively with direct security concerns in the region. The Government doubted the Army's capability to deal with, in the worst case, any commitment to Vietnam, the Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia, or any conflict in Papua-New Guinea on the common border with Indonesia.²⁸

This period of national service involved, for most of the period, two years full-time duty. Selection was not universal but based on a selective system employing a ballot. The National Service Act provided for conscripts to be liable for overseas service.²⁹ Some conscripts did see service in Malaysia and Singapore, as well as Vietnam.

Vietnam War 1962-1973

Following the defeat of the French Army at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 in the First Indo-China War, Vietnam was partitioned at the 17th Parallel. The communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) (DRV) took control in the northern half of the country and the non-communist Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in the south. From the late 1950s, a civil war developed in South Vietnam between the communist supported National Liberation Front (NLF) with its military arm the Viet Cong (VC) and the US backed Government of Ngo Dinh Diem.³⁰ The war intensified in 1963, following the assassination of Diem and his replacement by a series of unstable 'revolving door' governments.

On 3 August 1962, following negotiations with the United States and at the request of the RVN, 30 Australian Army training advisers arrived in South Vietnam to join US Army advisers in what later became Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). Their tasks primarily were to assist in training RVN ground forces in jungle warfare, village defence and related activities. The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) strength peaked at 202 in December 1970.³¹

Due to a deteriorating military situation in South Vietnam in late 1964 and early 1965, the United States proposed the introduction of sizeable ground forces. Following RVN agreement, in May 1965, 1RAR was deployed to Bien Hoa, north-east of Saigon. It joined the US 173 Airborne Brigade as the third battalion of the Brigade. Australian and New Zealand artillery batteries, as well as other supporting arms and services units, later joined. In addition to its responsibilities for the security of the Bien Hoa air base, 173 Airborne Brigade conducted a significant range of operations against VC forces throughout III Corps Tactical Zone (IIICTZ). The tactical zone included the RVN capital city, Saigon, lying between the IICTZ of the Central Highlands and the IVCTZ incorporating the Mekong Delta.³²

In May 1966, a major increase in the size of the Army's combat element occurred following the relief of 1RAR, after one year's service, by 1 Australian Task Force (1ATF). This force was a brigade sized formation comprising a headquarters, two infantry battalions (5RAR, 6RAR) and elements from all supporting arms and services. It was based at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province located on the coast, east of Saigon, within IIICTZ.³³

1ATF was given tactical responsibility for the security of the province, excluding the populated areas, working in close coordination with RVN forces. 1 Australian Logistic Support Group (1ALSG), located at Vung Tau, a coastal town and port immediately south of Phuoc Tuy, provided logistic support for 1ATF. While both 1ATF and 1ALSG (as well as AATTV, RAN and RAAF units) were under national command of Headquarters Australian Force Vietnam (HQAfV) located in Saigon, 1ATF was under operational control of the equivalent of a US Army corps headquarters - Headquarters II Field Force Vietnam (HQIIFFV) - located at Long Binh, east of Saigon. No 9 Squadron RAAF, equipped with Iroquois (UH-1) helicopters, and based at Vung Tau, supported 1ATF operations, as did, to a much lesser degree, Caribou equipped No 35 Squadron RAAF.³⁴

Infantry battalions, artillery batteries and SAS squadrons were relieved on a yearly basis, with the remainder of the force being on individual replacement. Additional battalions were raised to give the RAR a strength of nine battalions, while additional supporting arms and services units were raised. At its peak strength in 1969, the Australian Army in Vietnam totalled more than 7,000 personnel. Over the ten years of the war, more than 50,000 Army, Air Force and Navy personnel served in Vietnam.³⁵

Initially 1ATF met little serious opposition, but on 18 August 1966, D Coy 6RAR, on a fighting patrol to clear suspected recoilless rifle and mortar sites, encountered a large enemy force in the Long Tan rubber plantation east of Nui Dat. In a number of attempts to over-run D Company, a large force of VC and North Vietnamese suffered heavy casualties from artillery fire, the small arms fire of the company and the machine guns of the armoured relief force.³⁶ The United States Presidential Unit Citation was awarded to D Coy 6RAR for this action.

Over the next 18 months, 1ATF extended its control over Phuoc Tuy Province with a range of task force and battalion operations. Some were undertaken in cooperation with US and RVN forces, and covered a full range of mission types from jungle patrolling to cordon and search operations of various towns and villages. A civil affairs unit was added to 1ATF in March 1967 to carry out and coordinate a vast range of construction, resettlement, medical and dental, education and welfare activities for the civil population of Phuoc Tuy. New Zealand Army infantry companies were integrated into an RAR battalion, resulting in the RAR battalion being designated 'ANZAC'. In December 1967, 1ATF was augmented by a third RAR battalion and a squadron of Centurion tanks.³⁷

Three major operations to secure the major bases of Long Binh, Bien Hoa and the capital Saigon from VC and NVA offensives involved 1ATF operating as a formation (less one battalion and other elements securing its base) outside Phuoc Tuy Province. These were Operation Coburg in January/February 1968, Thoan Thang I in May 1968 and Federal in February 1969. The first two operations involved significant clashes with large enemy forces.³⁸ May 1968 also saw large scale enemy attacks on Australian positions in the battle of Fire Bases Coral and Balmoral and at the village of Binh Ba.

In 1969, growing disenchantment with the war, as well as US attempts to reduce casualties and prepare for disengagement, led to the emphasis in operations changing to 'pacification' - the enhancement of the security of the populated areas of the RVN, combined with the upgrading of the effectiveness of RVN forces. Notwithstanding this commitment, 1ATF offensive operations in Phuoc Tuy ensured that by 1971 there were few incursions by VC and NVA major units.³⁹

Commencing in 1968, public opinion in both Australia and the United States began to turn against the war. Exacerbated by the propaganda disaster of the communists' 1968 'Tet' Offensive, the combination of the unpopularity of conscription and the rising casualty rates, public opposition in both the US and Australia forced the political leaderships to announce the withdrawal of allied forces. In November 1970, 8RAR was withdrawn and not replaced. 1ATF withdrew from Phuoc Tuy in November 1971, followed shortly after by 1ALSG. AATTV, having been gradually reduced in strength, concentrated in Phuoc Tuy Province with the departure of 1ATF, and continued training RVN forces until the Governor General the Right Honourable Sir Paul Meernaa Caedwalla Hasluck, KG, GCMG, GCVO proclaimed the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam by Australian Forces on 11 January 1973. However, the last troops (the Australian Embassy Guard Platoon drawn from the Australian Army Assistance Group Vietnam) were not withdrawn until 1 July 1973.⁴⁰

For the Australian Army, the withdrawal from Vietnam represented the end of 33 years of continuous operational duties, which had commenced with World War II, continued through the occupation of Japan, the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation to the Second Indo-China War in Vietnam. Army casualties in Vietnam were 413 KIA/DoW, two MIA, 2026 WIA, 64 non-battle deaths and 999 other casualties.⁴¹

Changing Commitments 1971-77

In 1967, the United Kingdom had announced that half of its forces in Malaysia and Singapore would be withdrawn by 1971 and the remainder within five years. In 1971 a new defence agreement, the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FDPA), was negotiated to provide for consultation regarding a response to any threats or external attacks on Malaysia and Singapore. This involved the formation of an ANZUK force, the ANZUK Brigade Group which was based in Singapore. This force included an RAR battalion with a supporting field battery (originally, in 1955, components of the BCFESR 28 Commonwealth Brigade) and other elements. The ANZUK force was disbanded in 1975 when first the Australian and then the British Governments decided to withdraw their ground forces.⁴²

With the election in December 1972 of a new Labor government under Gough Whitlam, the completion of the withdrawal from Vietnam and the ending of the National Service scheme were immediately effected. The new Australian defence and military policy was based on a withdrawal from the previous policy of 'forward defence' and the lack of a credible short-term threat to Australia's security.⁴³ A further significant change in defence commitments occurred in 1976 when the last SEATO exercise was held and the organisation formally disbanded in June 1977.⁴⁴

In 1972, following a major review, the Government agreed to a complete reorganisation of the Army on functional lines. This involved disbanding the geographical commands and creating Field Force, Logistic and Training Commands, leaving smaller geographically-based military districts with primarily supporting administrative roles.⁴⁵

In anticipation of Papua New Guinea independence, the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) was established in 1973, based largely on the battalions of the Pacific Islands Regiment. With independence, an Australian Defence Advisory Group (ADAG), primarily manned by the Australian Army, was located at Port Moresby to assist in the development of the PNGDF.⁴⁶

In 1974, the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Citizen Military Forces (The Millar Report) was published. In the years following the re-formation of the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) in 1948, it had suffered a number of setbacks through the impact on volunteers of the two National Service schemes and the Pentropic Reorganisation. The Millar Committee had been commissioned in 1973 as a result of perceptions of lack of role, poor morale and organisational problems. A change in title to 'Army Reserve', major reorganisation affecting the status of the two infantry divisions, amalgamation of understrength units, improved conditions of service and adoption of the 'One Army' concept were among many changes recommended and implemented.⁴⁷

Because of a history of confusion and duplication of effort in the provision of defence force aid to the civil community in time of major disasters, in 1974 the Whitlam Government created the Natural Disasters Organisation (NDO) within the Department of Defence. The NDO was to coordinate defence efforts in supporting the civil defence organisations of the states and territories. The first major Army commitment under the new organisation was to the relief of Darwin following the devastation of Cyclone 'Tracy' in December 1974. Other major commitments have included the 'Ash Wednesday' bushfires of 1983 and the Newcastle earthquake in 1989. Less spectacular assistance is usually provided for 'normal' disasters such as flood relief, locust plagues, and bushfires, together with the provision of emergency shelter, evacuation of medical emergency cases and making dangerous ordnance safe.⁴⁸

In 1975 the Defence Force Reorganisation Act was passed. It abolished the three service boards, designating the three service chiefs of staff as the professional heads of their services with full powers of command under higher defence direction. The position of Chief of the Defence Force Staff (CDFS) became the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) in 1986 and was created to command the Defence Force and act as the principal military adviser to the Government. Meanwhile the reorganisation of the Defence group of departments (Defence, Navy, Army, Air Force and Supply), combining all five within an enlarged Department of Defence, was completed.⁴⁹

Peacekeeping 1979-1996

While Australian Army commitments to peacekeeping were initiated in 1947 - 51 with UNCOC/UNCI, UNCOK, UNMOGIP and UNC-K, as mentioned previously, other involvements prior to 1979, all generally of a token size, were as follows: ⁵⁰

UNCMAC (Korea - Truce Supervision) 1953-*

UNTSO (Middle East - Truce Supervision) 1956-*

ONUC (Congo - Medical Assistance) 1960-61.

UNTEA (West New Guinea - Helicopter Support) 1962.

UNYOM (Yemen - Truce Supervision) 1963.

UNIPOM (India/Pakistan - Truce Supervision) 1965-66.

UNDOF (Syria - Disengagement Observers) 1974-*

UNEF II (Sinai - Truce Supervision, Staff) 1976-80.

UNIFIL (Lebanon - Truce supervision) 1978.

From 1979, the scale of Australian Army commitments generally increased significantly, in several cases to major unit level:

Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) (Rhodesia - Observers) 1979-80.

Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) Sinai - Aviation, Staff) 1982-86, 1993-*

UNIIMOG (Iran - Truce Supervision) 1988-90.

UNTAG (Namibia - Engineer Assistance) 1989-90.

UNMCTT (Afghanistan/Pakistan - Mine Clearance Training) 1989-93.

MIF I (Gulf - Air Defence Detachment for RAN ship) 1990-91.

MNF (I-K) (Iraq/Kuwait - miscellaneous detachments) 1990-91- see Gulf War 1990-91.

UNSCOM (Iraq - Inspection of weapons capabilities) 1991-1999.

MINURSO (Western Sahara - Communications) 1991-94.

UNAMIC (Cambodia - Communications) 1991-92.

UNTAC (Cambodia - Unit Communications, etc) 1992-93.

UNPROFOR (Former Yugoslav states – Observers) 1992-93.

UNOSOM (Somalia - Movement control) 1992; 1993-95.

UNITAF (Somalia - Protection of Humanitarian Aid) 1992-93.

UNAMIR (Rwanda - Medical Support and Protection) 1994-95.

UNOMOZ (Mozambique - Military observers) 1994.

SPPKF , TMG/PMG (Bougainville) 1994, 1997-2003.

UNMIH (Haiti - Attached to US Forces) 1994-1995.

MINUGUA (Guatemala —Military observers) 1997.

SFOR, KFOR (Yugoslavia and Kosovo - Peacekeeping) 1997-*

RAMSI (Solomon Islands – security) 2000-Present-*

UNMEE (Ethiopia/Eritrea - Training) 2000-2005.

IMATT (Sierra Leone - Advice and Training) 2000-2003.

UNMIS (Sudan - Air movement and logistics) 2005-*

UNAMID (Darfur - Logistics and operations) 2007-*

(* indicating 'continuing as at April 2009')

The most significant of these operations was UNTAC, in which the Australian Army provided both the commander of the UN Force, Lieutenant General John Sanderson, whose task was to oversee the disarming of 250,000 Cambodians, and the Force Communications Unit of 500 personnel. The second most significant operation was UNITAF, for which 1RAR with supporting arms elements provided protection to humanitarian aid in south-western Somalia. Next in significance was UNAMIR, in which a medical unit of 100 with a rifle company from 2RAR and supporting troops provided medical support primarily for the UN force but also assisted local people.

The Gulf War 1990-91

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait began on 2 August 1990, initiating the Second Gulf War. The UN-sanctioned operation to liberate Kuwait commenced on 17 January 1991, with the land offensive following on 24 February. A ceasefire was declared on 28 February, with a formal end to hostilities on 12 April 1991.

The Royal Australian Navy provided the main Australian contribution, in the form of RAN Task Group 627.4 of two frigates and an underway replenishment ship. Because the latter ship had no air-defence capability, a missile-launcher detachment was provided from the Army's 16 Air Defence Regiment. Army medical personnel were provided for two Australian surgical support teams on US Navy hospital ships in the area while other Army personnel served with one joint intelligence detachment and on individual exchanges with other allied armies.

After the ceasefire, an unsuccessful revolt of Kurdish dissidents occurred in Iraq. Operation 'Habitat' was launched to assist Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq, with over 70 Army personnel being provided to give engineering, medical, dental and logistic support. The Army also provided engineer officers to assist UNSCOM in the inspection of Iraqi chemical, biological and nuclear weapons capabilities.⁵¹

East Timor

In September 1999, Australian troops were deployed to East Timor as part of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET), under the command of Major General Peter Cosgrove. The intervention of an international force was requested by the East Timorese following the outbreak of violence after a poll decision that pushed for East Timorese independence from Indonesia. Militia opposing the poll result and arguably supported by elements of the TNI, were quickly suppressed as order was restored by the INTERFET forces. In addition, the INTERFET forces were tasked with providing humanitarian assistance to the beleaguered East Timorese citizens.

The Australian contribution to INTERFET included personnel from all three branches of the ADF including:

- B Squadron, the 3rd/4th Cavalry Regiment
- 2RAR
- 3RAR
- 5/7RAR
- SASR

In February 2000, governance of military operations was passed from INTERFET to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) with Australia continuing to make a sizeable contribution.

Australian support to UNTAET continued until East Timorese independence in May 2002, when the UN mission became the United Nations Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET).

Australia provided elements of the UN brigade level HQ called Sector West and a battalion group on rotation (AUSBATT 1 to AUSBATT 9) until June 2004. From June 2004 the Australian contribution was an administration company with engineer and logistic elements to May 2005.

Further outbreaks of violence in 2006 saw Australia commit a larger number of troops through Operation Astute to quell the disorder and ensure a return to peace. This operation remains on-going.

Iraq

In 2003, following a tense stand-off between Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his refusal to allow international weapons inspectors into the country, Australia joined a multinational combat force to Iraq as part of Operation Falconer.

Australia contributed a force consisting of three Royal Australian Navy ships, an Orion P-3 maritime patrol aircraft, a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, and No. 75 Squadron RAAF (which included 14 F/A-18 Hornet fighters). The Army's contribution was 500 Special Forces soldiers whom were involved in heavy action. With the defeat of Hussein's Baathist regime the second phase of the deployment, Operation Catalyst, was initiated. This phase of the operation was given responsibility for aiding the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq. There was a pause following the completion of Operation Falconer before the, the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG) was created. The AMTG's responsibilities included security provision for Japanese engineers within the province and the training of a new Iraqi army. The AMTG was eventually relocated to Tallil Airbase in Dhi Qar Governate and was renamed Overwatch Battle Group (West). By mid-2008, the ADF had assisted in training over 33,000 Iraqi troops and in June, handed over responsibility for the province to local authorities. A contingent of 200 ADF personnel remain in Iraq.

Afghanistan

Operation Slipper is Australia's ongoing commitment to the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists. Australia's involvement in the conflict can be broken into three phases. The first phase Operation Anaconda involved the SASR plus two RAAF Boeing 707 air to air refuelling aircraft from No.33 Squadron. These initial operations were tasked with defeating the Taliban and concluded in December 2002.

With an escalation of insurgent violence in 2005, an Australian Special Forces Task Group was reinserted into Afghanistan. This Task Group consisted of elements from a range of ADF groups including SASR, 4RAR (Cdo) as well as logistical and support personnel. In addition, an Incident Response Regiment was raised to strengthen Australia's counter-terrorism forces. Elements of this team were deployed to Afghanistan to provide a swift expert response in the event of chemical, biological or radiological emergency.

The third phase of *Operation Slipper* has seen Australian forces concentrated in the Oruzgan province as part of a Dutch led Provincial Reconstruction Taskforce. The Australian contribution comprises both engineers and protective elements. The Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force 1 (MRTF1) remains engaged in construction works while the Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT) work with the Afghan National Army to improve training and develop capabilities. Operations remain on-going.

References

General Note:

The absence of a footnote indicates that the sources necessary to validate the original text (for 'The Australian Army - A Brief History' written by Brigadier M.Austin (Rtd) and published by Army Public Affairs) were not identifiable or readily available.

Main References:

'GREY' identifies 'A Military History of Australia' by Jeffrey Grey (Cambridge University Press, 1990); 'OXFORD' identifies "The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History' (Oxford University Press, 1995).

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2. OXFORD p.520.
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5. GREY p 196, OXFORD p 149.
6. ADF Journal No 104 Jan/Feb 1994 (Peacekeeping Edition).
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10. OXFORD p 336, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 462.
11. GREY p 204.
12. OXFORD P 336, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 86.
13. OXFORD P 336, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 89.
14. 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 87-93.
15. GREY p 207.
16. GREY p 208.
17. OXFORD p 560.
18. Annex A to RAR Theatre Honours Submission (Pers Div 1996).
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20. GREY p 218-9, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 95-124.

21. OXFORD p 463.
22. OXFORD p 463.
23. OXFORD p 463, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 132 -47.
24. OXFORD p 171, GREY p 224-5, 'Emergency and Confrontation' (Official History) p 300-314.
25. Annex B to RAR Theatre Honours Submission (Pers Div 1996), GREY p 225.
26. OXFORD p 171-73, GREY p 224-8, 'Emergency and Confrontation' (Official History) p 300-314, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 158-77.
27. 'The Team' (AATTV History) by Ian McNeill.
28. 'To Long Tan' (Official History) p 78-174.
29. 'To Long Tan' (Official History) p 177-193.
30. OXFORD p 171-73, GREY p 224-8, 'Emergency and Confrontation' (Official History) p 300-314, 'Duty First' (RAR History) p 158-77.
31. 'The Team' (AATTV History) by Ian McNeill
32. 'To Long Tan' (Official History) p 78-174.
33. 'To Long Tan' (Official History) p 177-193.
34. 'To Long Tan' (Official History) p 193-235
35. 'A Province for a Battlefield' (Official History, in draft 1999).
36. 'To Long Tan' (Official History) p 305-357.
37. 'A Province for a Battlefield' (Official History, in draft 1999).
38. 'A Province for a Battlefield' (Official History, in draft 1999).
39. 'A Province for a Battlefield' (Official History, in draft 1999).
40. 'A Province for a Battlefield' (Official History, in draft 1999).
41. GREY p 238.
42. GREY p 249, OXFORD p 237-39.
43. GREY p 247.
44. OXFORD p 560.
45. OXFORD p. 169-70, 395-6.
46. GREY p 250.
47. GREY p 2251, OXFORD p 150, 401-2.
48. OXFORD p 151-2.
49. GREY p 248-9, OXFORD 206-7.
50. OXFORD p 457-61, ADF Journal No 104 Jan/Feb 94.
51. OXFORD p. 279-80.