

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE
TO BE AWARDED THE MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATION
AUSTRALIA DAY 2014

Force Communication Unit
United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
15 March 1992 to 7 October 1993

For sustained outstanding service in warlike operations in the provision of communications support to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia from 15 March 1992 to 7 October 1993.

The Force Communications Unit deployed to Cambodia as Australia's main contribution to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. The Unit comprised members of the Australian Defence Force and New Zealand Defence Force and was initially tasked to provide communications between components of the Authority, the Cambodian Supreme National Council and the military headquarters of the four political factions.

The initial task expanded to include the installation of a technically sophisticated and geographically extensive communications network linking 21 provinces of Cambodia to the seat of the government in Phnom Penh. The installation of the network was achieved as a result of the outstanding dedication and commitment of Unit members working under exceptionally difficult and hazardous circumstances. The security environment was hostile as a result of the inter-factional conflict and much of the installation occurred during the wet season creating additional hazards. Despite the difficulties, and the lack of existing communications systems, the Unit completed their task within the tight timeframe allocated.

Members of the Unit were deployed to 50 locations throughout Cambodia to operate the network. They worked for long periods without relief and were constantly under threat of violence from the warring parties. The hostilities, particularly prior to the election, specifically targeted United Nations personnel and the communications network. On many occasions communication facilities were operated while under threat from artillery, mortars and small arms fire. The Unit's efforts and achievements allowed the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia Headquarters to communicate with its components as they undertook preparations for what would be a successfully conducted election.

By their success, Force Communications Unit personnel affirmed and demonstrated their commitment to Cambodia and to the principles of the United Nations organisation. Their dedication and contribution to the peace process under the most difficult of conditions has been exemplary and in the finest traditions of the Australian Defence Force.