

# Peacekeepers on parade

**A**FP members who have served in Mozambique, and those police from Victoria, Queensland and the AFP who have recently returned from the multi-national peacekeeping force in Haiti were officially welcomed home at a parade held at the Weston Police Services Complex on April 12, 1995.

Many other members who have served the United Nations on other peacekeeping missions were invited to take part in the parade so that their achievements could be celebrated also.

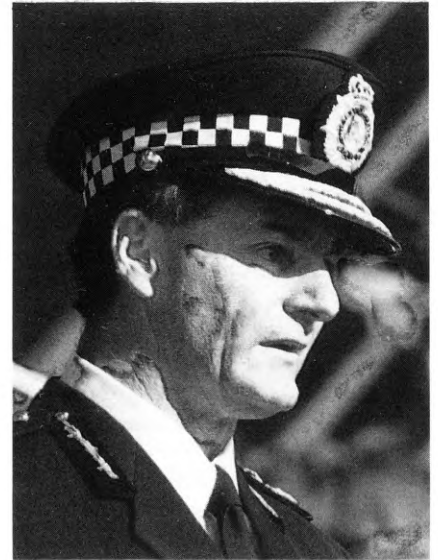
Among the official guests were Assistant Commissioner Greg Early representing Queensland Police Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan, and Assistant Commissioner Gavin Brown representing Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Neil Comrie.

*At the parade Commissioner Mick Palmer outlined to assembled guests, families and friends the achievements of the officers who had served on peacekeeping missions.*

What Australian police have achieved in both United Nations and other theatres of peacekeeping is exceptional. This is true, not only from our own knowledge, but from the words of praise received from so many eminent people, both within Australia and from overseas. So many people have been highly impressed with the commitment and achievements of Australian police serving overseas.

It all started in 1964, more than 30 years ago, with the first combined Australian police contingent to the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus. An AFP contingent is still there today.

For a long time, Cyprus was our only police contribution to UN peacekeeping, but the last five years has seen an enormous expansion. In 1989 an AFP fingerprint expert went to Namibia to assist in the UN conducted elections in that country. The Namibian peacekeeping mission was the first where a



*Commissioner Palmer addresses the parade.*

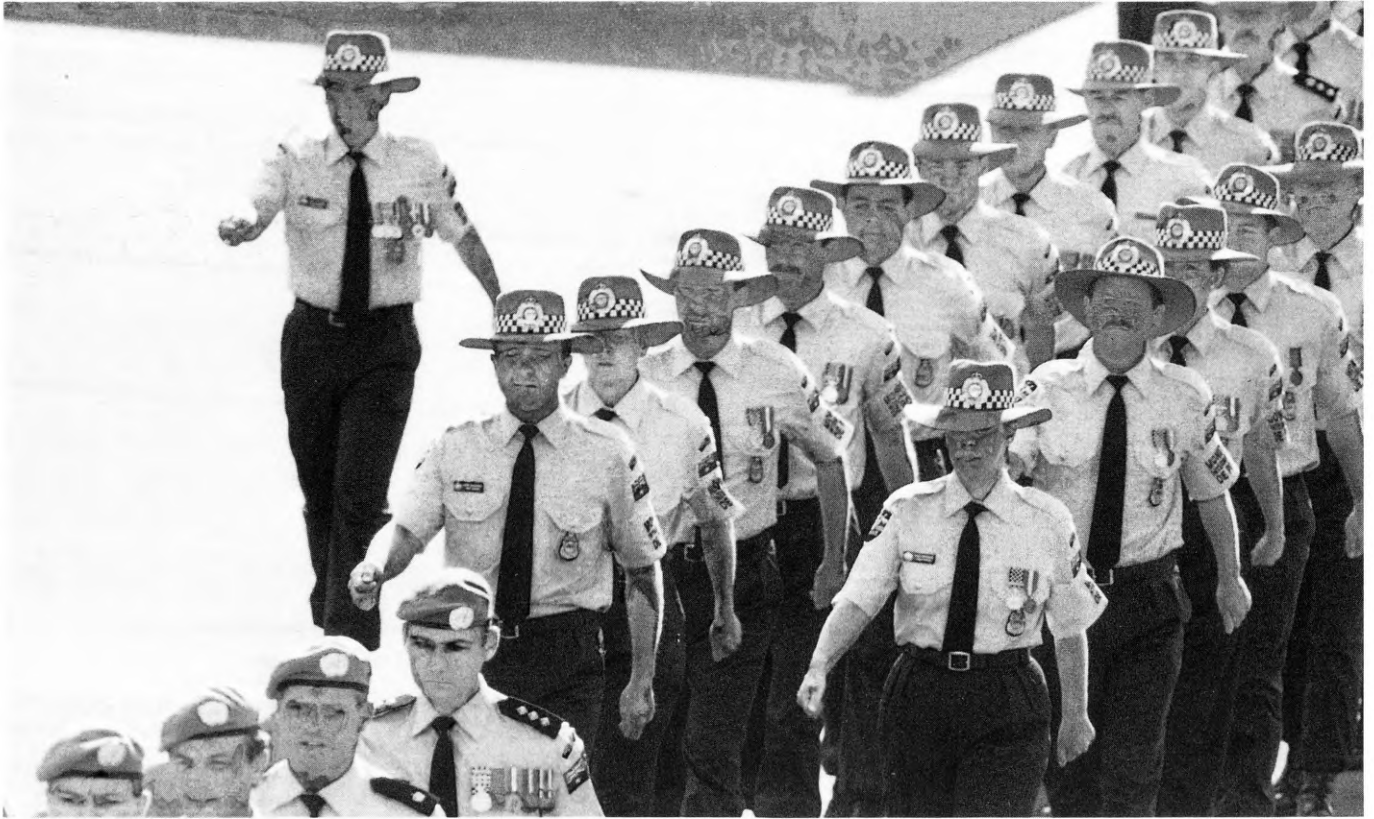
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significant civilian police component worked independently of the military component. It was a model that the UN now uses extensively in peacekeeping, and acknowledges the different, yet complementary roles of civilian police and military peacekeepers.

Also in 1989, two AFP members began work with a UN border relief operation, working with more than 300,000 displaced Cambodian people held in refugee camps in Thailand.

One of those members is with us today. He is one of the most, if not our most distinguished members to have worked with the UN, Superintendent Bill Kirk. Bill commenced his association with the UN in those Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand and continued it into the Cambodian peacekeeping process and then on into Somalia.

From the refugee border camps in Thailand our next commitment was to the UN transitional authority in



*The parade was held to welcome home the Australian police men and women who had served with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Mozambique and the multinational force in Haiti.*

Cambodia. This peacekeeping mission contained the largest independent civilian police component ever used by the UN.

Two contingents of 10 AFP officers served in Cambodia, working in an isolated rural area of that country near the border with Thailand. They developed an enviable reputation for innovation and getting the job done in the most friendly and positive way, including extensively involving indigenous Cambodians in the peace process. Their very Australianism and high level of success has left an indelible mark in Cambodia of which they can be very proud.

During the course of the supervised elections in Cambodia, seven Australian fingerprint experts assisted. They came from the NSW, Victoria and Queensland police services and contributed enormously to the real success story of the Cambodian mission—the conduct of free and fair elections. Most of those

members are with us today and I give you welcome and thank you for your vital assistance.

In 1993, Superintendent Bill Kirk accepted an appointment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia. He was replaced last year by AFP Superintendent Barry Carpenter, who has only recently completed his attachment now that the UN mission in Somalia has concluded. The Somalia mission was one of the most difficult ever undertaken by the UN, and our members have been deeply effected by the tragedy of that country.

In 1994, two contingents of 16 AFP officers served with the UN peacekeeping mission in Mozambique. Our members serving in Mozambique experienced peculiar difficulties. It was the first time since the early Cyprus days that Australian civilian police were broken up and deployed into small units of two, working the whole length and breadth of that country.

These members worked in extremely difficult conditions with little or no communication among their fellow Australians during their tour of duty. Nevertheless, in the most difficult mission they continued the established high traditions of Australian civilian police.

Members of the Mozambique contingent are here in large numbers today with their families. On behalf of all members of the AFP, I welcome you home and applaud you all for a job very well done.

Also in 1994, two AFP members served with the Commonwealth supervision force during the elections in South Africa. They developed strong links with the South African police. This was also an extremely difficult mission in what was then a violent environment.

I might add here that not only do Australian police serve officially in UN peacekeeping missions, but



T. Browne

Family and friends were especially invited to take part in formally welcoming home the contingent members.



T. Browne

Following the parade, members of the Haiti contingent were presented with certificates commemorating their service.

others volunteer their own time in a private capacity. Today AFP Constable Denis Kroezen is with us. Last year he took long-service leave to drive trucks in war-torn Bosnia. Welcome home and well done Denis.

Our next contingent of civilian police peacekeepers did not actually serve under the banner for the UN. While the mission was sanctioned by the UN, it was a multi-national force to Haiti, under the leadership of the USA. Australian civilian police were deployed there last year, returning only last month.

The aim of the mission was the restoration of democracy in Haiti. Thirty Australian police men and women, from Victoria, Queensland and the AFP served in Haiti. They were posted to Jeremie. Jeremie is a small, hot isolated and neglected town with a difficult health environment that included dengue fever, anthrax and malaria. Their principal task was the training and supervision of a newly formed Haitian police.

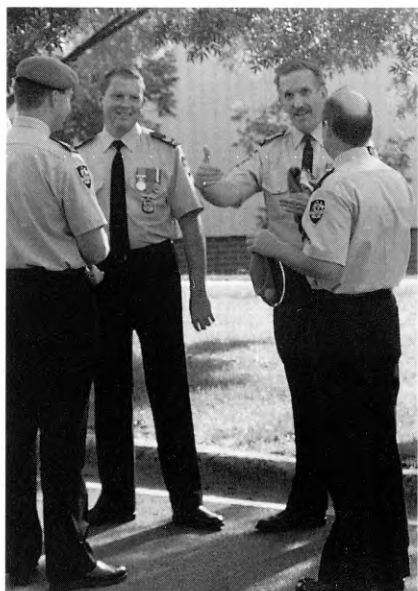
Despite the hardships, I am assured that most of them are fitter and thinner than when they left. I will leave your family and friends to judge that, but what I can do is, on behalf of all your fellow members,

family and friends, welcome you home and tell you how grateful we all are for your outstanding work in Haiti.

I should mention that no group of police go overseas without continuing support from Australia. In the case of our Haiti contingent we appointed a former AFP member, Graham Shinnick to assist the members in Haiti and their families back home in Australia. I know members of the Haiti contingent would want me to thank you for your efforts during this time Graham.

As you can see, the past five years have seen an enormous growth in Australian police involvement with international peacekeeping and I haven't mentioned the considerable number of missions to which we were invited, but for a variety of reasons could not accept.

Australian police involvement in international peacekeeping is an increasing feature of our police profession. It is increasing because not only is it needed, but because we, as Australian police have proven to the world at large we are damn good at doing it! To all of you who have contributed to this fine and enviable record, I congratulate you and thank you.



T. Browne

Afterwards, in the shade, there was a chance to catch up with peacekeeping comrades.