

Chapter 9

Australian Defence Force

9.1 The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has been involved in overseas peacekeeping operations for 60 years. Since 1947, the ADF has participated in 39 UN peacekeeping operations and 16 non-UN operations.¹ ADF troops have operated close to home in East Timor and Solomon Islands and further afield in places like Somalia and the Middle East.²

9.2 The changing nature of peacekeeping has affected the ADF's role. It is increasingly involved in activities such as policing and civil–military tasks, mediation between disputants, negotiation, training and education of other forces and delivery of humanitarian assistance.³

9.3 In this chapter, the committee examines the capacity of the ADF, in terms of personnel and equipment, to meet the growing demands of peacekeeping operations. It discusses the current standard and adequacy of training for the ADF, including whether there is a need for additional peacekeeping training or a permanent peacekeeping force. The committee then looks at the health and safety preparation of ADF personnel for service in a peacekeeping mission.

Capacity

9.4 Today's complex peacekeeping operations place significant demands on Defence capacity and equipment. Defence acknowledged that it must have a force prepared and resourced to meet the challenges of overseas deployment. For example, the *2006–2016 Defence Capability Plan* states:

The emphasis will be on a professional, well-trained, well-equipped force that is available for operations at short notice, and one that can be sustained on deployment over extended periods. This type of force will provide the flexibility to deal with operations other than conventional war, and contribute to coalition operations.⁴

9.5 The committee looks first at ADF personnel before discussing equipment and logistics.

1 *Submission 30*, p. 1. See also *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 2.

2 *Submission 30*, p. 2.

3 John Hutcheson, *Australian Army Journal*, vol. IV, no. 2, p. 98.

4 Commonwealth of Australia, *Defence 2000—Our Future Defence Force*, Defence White Paper, pp. xiii–xiv.

Personnel

9.6 The number of peacekeeping operations has surged since the end of the Cold War, and more troops are required to meet this demand. Australia has responded to the call. Currently, the ADF is actively engaged in eight peacekeeping operations, five of which are UN-led, one supports the multinational force of observers in the Sinai and two are Australian-led operations: Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and International Stabilisation Force (ISF) in East Timor.⁵ In July 2007, approximately 1,200 personnel were deployed in support of peacekeeping operations: 33 with UN operations, 25 in the Sinai, 140 in Solomon Islands and 990 in Timor-Leste.⁶

9.7 Australia also has troops posted to overseas operations that are not classified as peacekeeping operations. At January 2008, there were 1,575 ADF personnel deployed in Iraq (Operation Catalyst) and 970 personnel committed to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, which reached over 1,000 by mid-2008.⁷

9.8 In August 2006, in response to the growing need for an increased force, the Australian Government announced plans to raise two additional army battalions that would strengthen the numbers of ADF personnel available for overseas deployment, including peacekeeping operations.⁸ Defence informed the committee that these two battalions, 7 RAR (7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment) and 8/9 RAR, would be raised in two stages, the second stage depending on 'a demonstrated growth in Stage One'. The committee notes that the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement, Greg Combet, announced in May 2008 that the government has committed \$650m in 2008–09 to the Enhanced Land Force initiative.⁹

5 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 3.

6 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 3; Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2006–07*, p. 56. Over time, the number of personnel has fluctuated in East Timor, starting at over 5,000 during INTERFET decreasing to 780 before increasing again to 'just under a thousand' in February 2008. Department of Defence, Operation Astute, <http://www.defence.gov.au/opastute/default.htm> (accessed 19 February 2008); Prime Minister Rudd and Chief of Defence Force Angus Houston, Transcript, Press Conference, 11 February 2007, http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Interview/2008/interview_0066.cfm (accessed 19 February 2008).

7 Department of Defence, <http://www.defence.gov.au/opcatalyst/default.htm> (accessed 28 February 2008) and <http://www.defence.gov.au/opslipper/default.htm> (accessed 25 July 2008).

8 DFAT, *Submission 15*, p. 7.

9 Department of Defence, answer to written question on notice W2, 24 July 2007; and the Hon Greg Combet MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement, Speech, 15 May 2008.

Recruitment and retention

9.9 The ADF has for many years experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining personnel. On 20 March 2008, when announcing the new Defence senior leadership team, the Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, stated that 'the single biggest challenge facing the Australian Defence Force in the future is our people and skills shortage'. He recognised, as had his predecessors, the need for the ADF to find effective ways to recruit and retain personnel.¹⁰ The difficulties associated with recruitment and retention have been discussed in several reports and estimates hearings over the last two decades.¹¹ The *Defence Update 2007* stated:

As the ADF's commitments on operations grow, Defence needs to grow to about 57,000 full-time military personnel over the coming decade. A total of \$3.1 billion is being invested in recruitment and retention initiatives...¹²

9.10 Despite the need to improve Defence recruitment and retention, Lt Gen Gillespie stated categorically that the government had 'never decided not to be involved in an operation because we did not have the forces'.¹³ This position, however, was not universally shared. DFAT noted in relation to sending a force to Darfur that Australia is unable to contribute more because of 'the ADF's current operational commitments across a range of peacekeeping and other operations'.¹⁴

Equipment

9.11 As well as having sufficient personnel, Defence needs to have equipment appropriate for peacekeeping operations. Although evidence suggested that this matter was not of significant concern to submitters, including Defence, the committee looks briefly at the suitability of the ADF equipment for the rising number of complex peacekeeping operations.

9.12 Lt Gen Gillespie stated clearly that 'equipment procured for Defence of Australia will continue to suit peace operations'.¹⁵ In his view, the ADF, so far, had

10 The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP, Minister for Defence, 'Transcript of Defence service chiefs appointments', Media release, 20 March 2008.

11 For further information, including a summary of reports, see Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Recruitment and Retention of ADF Personnel*, October 2001.

12 Department of Defence, *Australia's National Security, A Defence Update 2007*, Chapter 6—Update on People and Resources, http://www.defence.gov.au/ans/2007/chapter_6.htm (accessed 29 October 2007).

13 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 11.

14 *Committee Hansard*, 13 September 2007, p. 3.

15 Lieutenant General Kenneth Gillespie, 'The ADF and Peacekeeping', speech at the conference 'Force for Good? Sixty Years of Australian Peacekeeping', Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 13 September 2007, MSPA 70913/07, <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/SpeechTpl.cfm?CurrentId=7061> (accessed 14 November 2007).

been able to respond to overseas missions without having 'had to radically restructure our force' but not without adjustments to the capabilities:

We found in Afghanistan and Iraq that the Bushmaster [infantry mobility vehicle] had some threat against it, so we increased its protection. We have put some weapons on it that we had not envisaged doing before...The point I am trying to make here is that, if we needed vehicles for Timor or Iraq and all those other places, we did not have to invent them. We had them by taking our force structure posture. If we have to increase force protection and put weapons on them, then that is mission specific.¹⁶

9.13 He continued:

[I]t is one of the benefits of the way that we force structure for the defence and warfighting defence of our nation...that we can pick up the other tasks along the road by leveraging back to the delivery of military force but using the hardware and the people and their skills to get the peace outcomes that we want.¹⁷

9.14 Major General (Retired) Michael Smith, Austcare, submitted, however, that the ADF might 'need some additional assets' for peacekeeping.¹⁸ Mr Rob Wesley-Smith, Australians for a Free East Timor, also expressed concern that the ADF's heavy equipment might not always suit operations other than war. It seemed to him that:

...since 1999 that the ADF has only 'big' or 'heavy' equipment, suitable for fighting a full-on war, but not suitable for dealing with civilian unrest and gang skirmishes...So it needs to have more versatile equipment and outfitting.¹⁹

9.15 In his submission, he referred to the outbreak of violence in Timor-Leste in 2006 suggesting that the large weapons used by foot patrols at that time were 'inappropriate'.²⁰

Committee view

9.16 The committee accepts that Australia's contributions to peacekeeping operations will be constrained in large measure by the practical considerations of available resources, including personnel and equipment. Clearly, the ADF is looking to increase the number of its personnel and has received increased funding for this purpose. The committee accepts that recruiting and retaining people suitable for service in the ADF has been a major challenge for many years and supports current efforts to address this problem. The committee notes the Minister for Defence's

16 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 10.

17 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 8.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 35.

19 *Submission 20*, p. 5.

20 *Submission 20*, p. 5.

observation that the ADF must find effective ways to recruit and retain personnel. With regard to equipment, the committee notes observations about the need for 'more versatile equipment' or 'additional assets', but considers that the ADF has the ability to build on its current capabilities to meet the demands of peacekeeping.

Training for peacekeeping operations

9.17 Lt Gen Gillespie stated that the ADF is structured for war fighting and has always had a deployment culture. When asked about Defence doctrine and training and how it applies to a low-level threat environment, he acknowledged the importance of adapting to the changing nature of peacekeeping.²¹ Even so, he underlined his view that the ADF focuses on what 'Defence needs to do for the country: that is, be prepared to defend Australia and its interests, and we force structure along those lines'. He stated:

We have found that we can adapt that force structure and our preparedness model to help in all sorts of environments...sometimes that adaptation is a war-fighting adaptation. Sometimes it is going to Aceh and doing it unarmed and just using military brute manpower to bring about an outcome.²²

9.18 Addressing a conference at the Australian War Memorial in September 2007, Lt Gen Gillespie stated that the ADF's force structure 'continues to provide forces that are adaptable to peace operations'. Even so, he recognised that the 'demanding nature of contemporary peace operations may involve adjustments to our individual and collective training regimens'. He stated that the ADF was reviewing its existing training regime for peace operations and indicated that preparing for a peacekeeping operation would take a 'more prominent place in our defence planning than it has in the past'. He explained that the ADF was preparing its personnel for peacekeeping because such 'training makes good sense, and can potentially be a force multiplier'. Nonetheless, he pointed out that this training would be 'supplementary to our primary war fighting roles and combat related training'.²³

9.19 Recognising that training is an integral part of ADF culture, Lt Gen Gillespie maintained that ADF members are not deployed on operation until the training has been done and understood.²⁴ Brigadier Andrew Sims, Director-General, Support, Headquarters Joint Operations Command, spoke of generating a culture whereby:

21 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 8.

22 *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 45.

23 Lieutenant General Kenneth Gillespie, 'The ADF and Peacekeeping', speech at the conference 'Force for Good? Sixty Years of Australian Peacekeeping', Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 13 September 2007, MSPA 70913/07, <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/SpeechTpl.cfm?CurrentId=7061> (accessed 14 November 2007).

24 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 14.

...if the environment is such or the threat is so great you train these guys so they are instinctive. That occurs not just before you leave Australia but also when you are in theatre. This training is continual; it is ongoing...from my time in Bosnia and East Timor, I certainly know that we were doing it once a fortnight. They would sit there and we would go over it again and again. That sounds tedious, but the guys understood that they did not have the time to stop and think; they could lose someone. That training is reinforced all the way through.²⁵

9.20 Defence noted that the ADF has developed a good reputation for its training and professionalism:

Australia's contributions to peace operations are highly regarded and often sought, not least because our military personnel have developed a reputation for professionalism, reliability and resourcefulness. In the case of peace operations beyond our region, Defence places priority on adding value predominantly through the contribution of expertise, rather than pure numbers of military personnel.²⁶

9.21 The Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) was one of the many submitters who supported this view:

...the ADF has arguably the best trained service personnel in the world. The training has significantly provided successful contributions toward PKO [peacekeeping operations] and has provided international accolades for the professionalism of these people.²⁷

9.22 While the ADF may be well trained, their remit has expanded to include a range of activities involved in peacekeeping such as mediation, negotiation, education, training and humanitarian tasks. The committee now considers how this is incorporated into the ADF's pre-deployment training.

Pre-deployment training

9.23 Lt Gen Gillespie informed the committee that specific peacekeeping training is routinely conducted as part of the ADF's pre-deployment training.²⁸ Training covers mission mandate and skills training, liaison and negotiation skills, cultural awareness and civil-military cooperation (CIMIC).²⁹ It is delivered by the 39th Personnel Support

25 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 15.

26 *Submission 30*, p. 3.

27 *Submission 16*, p. 6; see also *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 14.

28 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 2. See also Major General Ford, who stated that all ADF personnel receive some peace operations training during the basic military training. *Submission 4*, p. 2.

29 Department of Defence, *Submission 30*, p. 5.

Battalion (39 PSB), based in Randwick, Sydney.³⁰ While mainly an ADF training facility, the 39 PSB has also trained representatives from the AFP, DFAT, Customs, the Quarantine Service and Immigration.³¹

9.24 Defence stated that, in addition, the ADF may organise a specific mission rehearsal exercise (MRE) to 'practise and refine the ADF contingent's ability to deal with potential mission scenarios'.³² The APPVA considered MREs as 'some of the finest preparations for operations in the world'.³³ These exercises also included personnel from other government and non-government agencies and are referred to in Chapter 13.

ADF Peacekeeping Centre and International Peace Operations Seminar

9.25 Mainly a 'repository for peace operations expertise and experience', the ADF Peacekeeping Centre (ADFPKC) at Williamtown also has a role in educating and training ADF for peacekeeping operations. According to Defence, the centre also monitors international peace operations, assists ADF units and individuals train for peace operations, and develops doctrine, procedures and tactics for peace operations.³⁴

9.26 Lt Gen Gillespie explained the difference between ADFPKC training and mission-specific training:

The peacekeeping centre is more about the policy, doctrine and engagement type things that some of the leadership would be doing or how to be a military observer. The pre-deployment training we give prepares people to live in the environment and understand the culture, and to gain some of the new techniques in things that they might do.³⁵

9.27 Austcare submitted that the ADFPKC had contributed little to the development of peace operations, as 'it has been starved of resources for many years, staffed by only 2–4 middle-ranking officers, and having little clout within the ADF'.³⁶ The committee notes that the centre is indeed staffed by only a few officers—a Director at Lieutenant Colonel level and three staff officers, one from each service,

30 Australian Defence Force Peacekeeping Centre, <http://www.defence.gov.au/adfwc/peacekeeping/> (accessed 2 July 2007).

31 Department of Defence, *Submission 30*, p. 5. For more information on this battalion, see *Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2008, p. 70.

32 *Submission 30*, p. 5.

33 *Submission 16*, p. 6.

34 Department of Defence, <http://www.defence.gov.au/adfwc/peacekeeping/about.htm> (accessed 8 April 2008).

35 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 20.

36 *Submission 11*, p. 15.

responsible for analysis and development, doctrine and training.³⁷ Defence informed the committee that the 'authorised establishment of full-time staff at the ADF Peacekeeping Centre is currently two [which] is supplemented by Reserve personnel and staff from the ADF Warfare Centre when required'.³⁸

9.28 Defence acknowledged that the centre is small but suggested that it continues 'to meet all its tasking by utilising outside resources and the resources of the ADF Warfare Centre, of which it is an integral part'. It informed the committee further that the Peacekeeping Centre is 'to maintain all its responsibilities with two full-time staff supported by a contractor pool and Reservists'.³⁹

9.29 This centre also provides training to higher ranks (from Major to Lieutenant Colonel equivalent) through the annual two-week International Peace Operations Seminar (IPOS). The seminar focuses on policy and doctrine and involves 40 to 50 participants from Australia and overseas, including the ADF, government and non-government agencies and civilians.⁴⁰

9.30 While the content changes according to circumstances and the needs of the ADF, common topics include: conflict prevention; the UN; ADF/Australian government policy and planning; civil–military cooperation (CIMIC); humanitarian issues; gender; culture; and dealing with the media.⁴¹ The Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law (APCML) conducts a two-day module on legal issues for the IPOS seminar.⁴²

9.31 According to Defence, over the last three years (prior to July 2007), 251 personnel had attended training activities conducted by the ADF Peacekeeping Centre. It should be noted that these figures also included overseas participants.⁴³

9.32 Referring mainly to IPOS, Red Cross argued that, while acknowledging the large number of people and time constraints involved, IPOS-type training should be provided to all those deploying to overseas peace operations:

37 Department of Defence, <http://www.defence.gov.au/adfwc/peacekeeping/about.htm> (accessed 8 May 2008).

38 Department of Defence, answer to question on notice 1, 24 July 2007.

39 Department of Defence, answer to written question on notice W20, 24 July 2007.

40 ADF Peacekeeping Centre, International Peace Operations Seminar, www.defence.gov.au/adfwc/peacekeeping (accessed 20 June 2007).

41 ADF Peacekeeping Centre, International Peace Operations Seminar, www.defence.gov.au/adfwc/peacekeeping (accessed 20 June 2007).

42 *Committee Hansard*, 21 August 2007, p. 61. It also conducts one- or two-day training at the Joint Services Staff College at Weston Creek, ACT, for all three services. A higher level training course for 12 months is organised at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies at Weston Creek.

43 Department of Defence, answers to written questions on notice W20 and 21, 24 July 2007.

...with the exception of the AFP's IDG course, which all deploying AFP personnel must attend, other training programs target only a limited number of Defence and other government personnel who may be deployed. The vast majority of a peacekeeping contingent is therefore unlikely to have a clear understanding of the humanitarian organisations and their legitimate roles in the area of operation. This raises squarely the need for more uniform training of *all* Australian personnel deploying on peace operations.⁴⁴

9.33 The committee is of the view that while the role expected of the ADFPKC is ambitious and to be applauded, the centre does not have the resources necessary to fulfil its objectives. It is clear that the centre has limited capacity to include any significant number of ADF personnel in its seminars and courses or to conduct research of substance, particularly in the important area of analysis and development.

Scope for improvement

9.34 Despite the training that ADF members undergo before deployment to a peacekeeping operation, some witnesses were of the view that the ADF could do more. They particularly wanted to highlight the challenges facing those trained for warfare but deployed on a peacekeeping operation. The United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) and the UN Youth Association of Australia (UNYAA) observed:

We think a concerted effort should be made to train personnel for the diverse challenges of peace operations, particularly focusing on familiarising the ADF with the different rules of engagement within peace operations and also their requirements under international humanitarian law and the different requirements in those situations.⁴⁵

9.35 Major General (Retired) Tim Ford noted that while there is a requirement for the Australian military to be competent in their own discipline, it also needs to understand the complex nature of peacekeeping operations:

The ADF has already appreciated that those deploying on peace operations must be well trained in 'war fighting' capabilities, and the 'use of force' to be credible, but they must also appreciate the principles of minimum use of force, consent and impartiality, and the complex nature of peacekeeping operations to be fully effective.⁴⁶

9.36 Major General Smith, Austcare, agreed. He drew attention to the 2006 deployment of the ADF to Timor-Leste stating that his heart went out to these 'Australian diggers' who 'were not really equipped and prepared for the task that we were asking them to do'. In his view:

44 Australian Red Cross, *Submission 22*, p. 4.

45 *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 24. See also Nicholas Stuart, 'Forces face new challenges', *Defence Review*, *Canberra Times*, 29 October 2007, p. 8.

46 *Submission 4*, p. 2. Major General Ford was Previous Head of Mission UNTSO and Military Adviser, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN Headquarters.

[We] cannot anymore say that you are a war fighter or you are a peacekeeper; you are a soldier. The same people who might be doing the traditional peacekeeping thing of monitoring for one part of their assignment might be doing almost war fighting for another and then in the middle they might have to do some crowd control as well. So we have a responsibility to prepare our young men and women for that...⁴⁷

ADF personnel serving as peacekeepers



OPERATION TOWER in Timor-Leste (image courtesy Department of Defence).

47 *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 34. Major General Mike Smith gained personal experience in peacekeeping operations in Kashmir, Cambodia and East Timor. He was the first deputy force commander of the UNTAET peacekeeping force that replaced the Australian-led INTERFET multinational force.



Engineers from the 3 Combat Engineer Regiment, as part of Timor-Leste Battle Group 3, build a playground for the children of the Hope Orphanage in Gleno (image courtesy Department of Defence).



West Australian Army Reserve soldiers during perimeter patrol around the palm oil plantation at Mbalisuna (image courtesy Department of Defence).



A Malaysian policeman and an Australian Timor-Leste Battle Group soldier conduct a vehicle check in the mountain area south of Dili in the district of Dare (image courtesy Department of Defence).

9.37 Writing in the *Australian Army Journal*, Colonel John Hutcheson also noted that Australian soldiers had a good understanding of the application of lethal force but 'developing other techniques (and non lethal weapons) to subdue an adversary will increase the number of options available' to them. He indicated that more work could be done in developing soldiers' thinking and decision-making, suggesting that the 'army must continue to work at placing soldiers in a variety of scenarios to support their decision-making skills at home and in-theatre'.⁴⁸

Australian Training Support Team East Timor (ATST-EM)

9.38 Apart from the general support for ADF to improve their training regime so that it gives greater attention to peacekeeping-type activities, as distinct from warfare, there was no evidence of significant problems with ADF's training programs. One particular deployment, however, did raise concerns that related directly to the requirement for ADF peacekeepers to be trained for non-military type tasks. Two members of ATST-EM were highly critical of their preparation for this mission. As noted in Chapter 7, ATST-EM was deployed to East Timor during 1999–2003 with the primary mission to establish, train and develop the East Timor Defence Force to be a conventional army.⁴⁹ Captain Wayne McInnes argued that there was 'no fundamental linkage between the normal, run-of-the-mill soldiering skills and those

48 John Hutcheson, *Australian Army Journal*, vol. IV, no. 2, p. 103.

49 *Submission 7*, p. 1

skills that are required by soldiers to operate in an environment when it is defence cooperation'. He stated:

There is no real training package available that gives you any sort of foundation to be able to operate within international law and to understand the politics of the day. There is not a great understanding of the functioning of UNTAET, as well. So you are under a cloud of uncertainty, right from the word go.⁵⁰

9.39 The committee has already suggested in Chapter 7 that the experiences of ATST-EM should be used as a case study to ensure that the lessons to be learnt from this deployment are captured. It would also provide an opportunity to look carefully at whether ADF personnel would benefit from additional training that focuses on the challenges of serving in an operation unarmed, as members of ATST-EM were, or in situations and operations where war-fighting skills are not applicable.

Committee view

9.40 The committee acknowledges that the ADF is widely recognised and respected for its high standards, professionalism and effectiveness. The committee notes, however, that peacekeeping entails a range of activities not necessarily associated with warfare. The committee notes that the skills and capabilities required to deal with peacekeeping operations are not new. Armies during conflict have always been required to give thought to how to engage with the civilian authorities and populace. It is just as important to have these skills and capacities to deal with conventional conflict situations as the war in Iraq has demonstrated.

9.41 Even so, the committee has drawn attention to the suggestions by some submitters, particularly former ADF members who served in command positions in peacekeeping operations, about the need to have training over and above that required for warfare. As outlined above, the ADF has incorporated into its training regime programs specifically designed for peacekeeping deployments. In this regard, the committee notes the limited capacity of the ADF Peacekeeping Centre, especially at a time when the nature of peacekeeping is changing and presenting new challenges for the ADF.

9.42 The committee also notes the comments by Lt Gen Gillespie indicating that training for peacekeeping operations is going to take a 'more prominent place' in ADF training. The committee supports this initiative and suggests that the ADF report regularly to the committee on the progress made in this area of training.

Recommendation 8

9.43 The committee recommends that the ADF place a high priority on its undertaking to give training for peacekeeping operations a 'more prominent

50 *Committee Hansard*, 21 August 2007, p. 54.

place' in its training regime. This training should extend to reservists as well as regular members of the ADF.

9.44 One major concern about the ADF's training for peacekeeping operations related to the integrated nature of modern operations, and the need to cooperate and coordinate activities with other government agencies and non-government organisations. This aspect of ADF's training is considered further in Chapter 11—ADF–AFP interoperability; Chapter 13—Coordinating Australia's contribution; and Chapter 14—Non-government organisations.

Permanent peacekeeping capability

9.45 Some submitters wanted to go further than introducing additional training elements for ADF personnel: they argued that a special peacekeeping capability should be established within the ADF. For example, the UNAA and the UNYAA supported this view, explaining:

...once you train down people whose primary responsibilities are conflict to do peacekeeping operations, their effectiveness at doing those peacekeeping operations will never be as good as those of a group who have been trained specifically for [peacekeeping].⁵¹

9.46 Yet many submitters were of the opposite opinion and, like the RSL, strongly opposed a designated peacekeeping capability:

The ADF trains and prepares for war...In the past suggestions have been made that the ADF should primarily train for peace keeping operations. It is fortunate that these suggestions have been ignored...training for war ensures that...[a]dapting these core combatant skills to the individual circumstances of each peace keeping or peace enforcing operation is...comparatively simple and has proven to be successful in a number of varied locations and situations. Any armed force trained specifically for peace keeping would find it impossible at short notice to step-up to higher levels of operations, which is a further reason for maintaining the current training regime.⁵²

9.47 Major General Ford concurred:

I do not ever see a peacekeeping force sitting around Australia waiting to go somewhere; I see us preparing for an operation based on the forces that we have got training in our different organisations. The [AFP], the ADF and other departments have a capacity; and when we start to think about going into a mission...where we need to bring those together...we will.⁵³

51 *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 29.

52 *Submission 9*, pp. 3–4. See also *Submission 31*, p. 12.

53 *Committee Hansard*, 20 August 2007, p. 27.

9.48 These views align with Defence's contention that it is 'well positioned to contribute effectively to peace operations' and sees no need to establish a permanent peacekeeping force.⁵⁴ Lt Gen Gillespie reinforced this argument and pointed to the problems that have arisen in countries where the defence force has been restructured for peacekeeping operations:

In the military arena, once you move down the line of deciding to restructure...it will take you a decade or more to recover if you [decide] that you need to change back or you need to take a different posture. With the nature of defence acquisition and the capabilities that you have, even if you can build the battleship really quickly, after you have given away battleships it is really hard to re-instil in a crew, commander and team all the professional attributes necessary for that battleship to become a military capability. By and large that can take a decade or more...Others have found it pretty hard to go back...⁵⁵

9.49 Speaking more generally about a dedicated peacekeeping unit, AusAID representatives also agreed that it was not preferable. Mr March considered the more pragmatic approach was to ensure sound understanding and interoperability between agencies, so that they are able to operate together effectively when required:

Are our standby mechanisms and our discussions outside of the crisis robust enough? Perhaps they can be finetuned so that when we need to bring a particular number of police plus a particular number of humanitarian actors and a particular number of military actors, you can bring them together quickly and there is an understood degree of interoperability and you can bring that to bear. To me, that seems infinitely more manageable and resource efficient than having a unit of very high level capability just off to one side, not doing much.⁵⁶

9.50 AusAID was of the view that better understanding between agencies, increased information exchange, joint planning and preparation could continue to enhance Australia's contribution.⁵⁷

9.51 The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in its 2001 report on *Australia's role in United Nations reform* was also of the view that the ADF 'should be trained for war rather than solely for peacekeeping'.⁵⁸

54 *Submission 30*, p. 1.

55 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 9.

56 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 82.

57 See for example comments by Alan March, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 76.

58 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's role in United Nations reform*, June 2001, p. 70.

Committee view

9.52 Considering the evidence about ADF capability and the debate for or against a permanent peacekeeping force, the committee is of the opinion that Australia should not move towards a permanent peacekeeping force within the ADF. Indeed, many submitters roundly rejected the notion of Australia having a dedicated permanent peacekeeping force. As noted earlier, however, the committee recognises the importance of having specific peacekeeping training for ADF members that builds on the ADF's already highly regarded pre-deployment training.

Training in health, safety and wellbeing

9.53 Australian peacekeepers may live and work under conditions that pose significant hazards to their health due to isolation, inadequate sanitation, contaminated water, or the prevalence of endemic diseases such as malaria. Being away from home for long periods of time, in potentially volatile situations, is not easy. Preparation and training in health matters, including mental health, should therefore be an important part of the ADF preparation for deployments. In the following section, the committee looks at this aspect of ADF training.

9.54 According to Defence, health and first aid training is part of the initial employment training for all personnel. This includes education about health and hygiene and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. It also consists of mental health training based on the *ADF Mental Health Strategy*.

9.55 Defence informed the committee that throughout their service careers, ADF members are encouraged to maintain a sense of personal well-being and to develop a healthy and physically fit lifestyle.⁵⁹ Annual awareness training focuses on health education and screening, alcohol, tobacco and drug usage, with refresher training provided throughout the career of an ADF member.⁶⁰

9.56 There is also mandatory pre-deployment training on health and hygiene issues specific to the deployment as well as psychological and mental health preparation both for the deployment and return to Australia.⁶¹ Psychological briefings include topics such as preparing for separation from family, cultural adaptation, identifying and managing operational stressors, and suicide prevention.

Committee view

9.57 In this chapter, the committee noted the ADF's pre-deployment health training and its efforts to raise health awareness amongst its personnel. During the inquiry, the mental health of ADF peacekeepers was raised as a matter of concern. The committee

59 Department of Defence, answer to written question on notice W25, 24 July 2007.

60 Department of Defence, answer to written question on notice W17, 24 July 2007.

61 Department of Defence, answer to written question on notice W17, 24 July 2007.

takes this matter seriously and continues its consideration of the mental health of ADF peacekeepers in Chapter 21 which focuses on post-deployment care.

Families

9.58 In relation to preparing ADF members and their families for separation, the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council (AVADSC) suggested that members' families should attend a pre-deployment briefing. In its view, families should be aware of matters such as approximate date of departure and length of service overseas, how to contact their loved ones and where to obtain assistance if required.⁶²

9.59 The committee heard of the services available to deploying members and their families. It noted the Defence Community Organisation's (DCO) role in arranging debriefings, emergency finance, counselling services, information on local support groups, and other assistance.⁶³ However, the committee understands that while DCO services are available on request, they are not part of the briefing process.

Committee view

9.60 The committee notes the call for the involvement of ADF families in the briefing process and draws the ADF's attention to these concerns.

ADF's duty of care

9.61 ADF personnel on peacekeeping deployments are generally armed and operate in an unfamiliar and sometimes volatile environment. Under these conditions, safety in the use of weapons and equipment is extremely important. During this inquiry, concerns about the adequacy of training with regard to safety were raised only in relation to ATST-EM. However, the committee is aware of a number of previous reports and inquiries that are relevant. In 2002, the Auditor-General noted that during deployments to East Timor, there were 117 unauthorised discharges of weapons by Australian troops, mainly as a result of incorrect drills. The audit report suggested that Defence 'should continue to seek to minimise the incidence of such discharges and examine the feasibility of issuing blank ammunition to enhance the realism of pre-deployment training'.⁶⁴

9.62 Also, the committee's 2005 report on the effectiveness of Australia's military justice system identified what it regarded as lapses in the ADF's duty of care, noting:

62 *Submission 10*, p. 3.

63 Department of Defence, answer to written question on notice W25, 24 July 2007; Defence Community Organisation, <http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/timeapart.htm> (accessed 15 November 2007).

64 The Auditor-General, *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor*, Audit Report No. 38 2001–02, Performance Audit, paragraph 5.103.

One factor that became increasingly obvious as this inquiry progressed was the apparent lack of awareness by those in middle management of inappropriate or risky behaviour. Their unawareness or inaction meant that unsafe work practices continued unchecked until an incident requiring investigation shed light on such practices. Unfortunately, in some cases, the incident sparking the investigation involved the death of an ADF member.⁶⁵

9.63 The committee also cites recent inquiries such as the Boards of Inquiry into the death of Private Jacob Kovco, the Nias Island Sea King Accident and the coroner's inquest into the death of Trooper Angus Lawrence. All point to serious breaches in safety procedures. For example, the Board of Inquiry into the Sea King accident stated bluntly that the 'Navy's stated commitment to safety was not matched in practice'.⁶⁶

9.64 Although these incidents were isolated and did not occur during a peacekeeping operation, they are nonetheless potent reminders to the ADF of the need to ensure that all ADF members are properly trained and comply with health and safety guidelines and procedures, including the maintenance of equipment.

Conclusion

9.65 The ADF has a long and proud history of involvement in peacekeeping operations. The evidence presented to this inquiry demonstrated that the ADF is continuing its fine tradition through its highly professional and well-trained personnel. The committee, however, raised a number of matters that it believes the ADF should review. These include the need for ADF personnel to receive additional training over and above that required for warfare and the adequacy of the preparation of ADF personnel with regard to mental health.

9.66 In the next chapter, the committee turns its focus on the other major Australian contributor to peacekeeping operations, the AFP.

65 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *The effectiveness of Australia's military justice system*, June 2005, paragraph 15.26.

66 Commonwealth of Australia, *Royal Australian Navy Nias Island Sea King Accident Board of Inquiry Report*, 2007, Executive Summary, paragraph 15.