



### Peacekeepers Health Study

- Aim: To examine the long-term effects on mental health status, health service use and quality of life of peacekeeping or peacemaking deployments among Australian veterans.
- \$550,000
- Over 1,000 study participants from seven United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions between 1989 and 2002, who had transitioned out of full-time service in the Australian Defence Force.

#### Key findings

- Most peacekeepers (65%) reported that they were in good, very good, or excellent health.
- Reported health service usage was high with 68% having recently seen a GP.
- 20% of participants are showing moderate levels of mental ill health and vulnerability;
- A further 10% are reporting more severe problems

### Rwanda Deployment Health Study

- Aim: To examine the longitudinal health and compensation outcomes of veterans of two operational deployments of Operation TAMAR.
- \$197,000
- Data for 680 veterans.

#### Key findings

- About half the cohort has an accepted compensation claim, with 31% having a claim or treatment for PTSD.
- Claims were mainly lodged around the time of discharge not at incident; the majority accepted 11-15 years after the deployment.

# Peacekeepers and Rwanda Studies

### Peacekeepers Health Study

The research aims were to investigate the health of Australian veterans of deployments on United Nations (UN) sanctioned peacekeeping missions to Rwanda, Somalia, Cambodia, Namibia, Western Sahara and East Timor, over the period 1989-2002.

The study examined the long-term effect of peacekeeping on the mental and physical health status, health service use and quality of life of veterans who had transitioned out of full-time service. Participants completed a self-report questionnaire and a psychological health interview.

The study found that 65% of peacekeepers reported they were in good, very good, or excellent health. However, 30% of peacekeepers had at least one diagnosable mental health condition.

Reported health service use by the peacekeeper sample was high, with 68% having seen a GP in the previous three months, 35% a medical specialist, and 37% an allied health provider. Those with diagnosed mental health conditions were particularly likely to have used health services – over 80% had consulted a GP, 32% a psychiatrist, and 20% a psychologist. Only 17% of peacekeepers with a mental health condition had not seen any clinician or therapist in the previous three months. 41% were not satisfied with their health care.

The research provides a better understanding of the long-term pathways to care and usage of health care services for peacekeepers.

### Rwanda Deployment Health Study

The study aimed to examine the health and compensation data of Rwanda veterans and investigate whether there were differences in outcomes between the different groups deployed. The study undertook a data match and analysis process using personnel, compensation, health and mortality data.

The most common category of accepted claims was for mental health conditions (32.6% of the cohort), followed by musculoskeletal conditions (31.3%).

The health of the Rwanda cohort is characterised by a high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that is expressed in two compensation peaks five and 11 years after the deployment.

The study notes that medical personnel had fewer claims than the other Rwanda veterans and suggests that this may be because their older age at deployment, experiences of medical trauma and psychological training might have had a protective effect.

### Support

DVA may be able to pay for mental health treatment for diagnosed PTSD, depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance use disorders. This is whether or not the condition is caused by military service. ADF personnel who served in these peacekeeping missions are eligible for these arrangements.

For veterans and their families, help is also available through the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS). VVCS provides free and confidential, nation-wide counselling and support for war and service-related mental health and wellbeing conditions. For help, to learn more or to check eligibility call 1800 011 046 (24/7) or visit [www.vvcs.gov.au](http://www.vvcs.gov.au).

Peacekeeper veterans who are unsure of what DVA services or support they can access are encouraged to contact DVA. DVA General Enquiries telephone number: 133 254 (metro) or FreeCall 1800 555 254 (regional callers). You can also send an email to DVA at: [GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au) or visit [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au).

Further support tools and information is also available at <http://at-ease.dva.gov.au>.

*The final reports for these studies are available on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au/health\\_and\\_wellbeing/research/Pages/health%20studies.aspx](http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/research/Pages/health%20studies.aspx). If you have any enquiries call the DVA Health Study Information Line on 1800 502 302.*