In extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances you are acquitting yourselves magnificently and have brought credit to the Australian Federal Police . . . the whole Australian community is proud of you.

52 AFP officers, in nine different locations, were awarded a Group Bravery Citation (gazetted March 12, 2001). Following UNAMET, and the active military operations by the International Force East Timor (INTERFET), AFP members returned to East Timor under the banner of the UN Transitional Authority East Timor (UNTAET), to assist with the transition to independence in 2002. They remained throughout the early days of self-governance under the UN Mission to East Timor (UNMISET), alongside ADF members and participants from other countries.

After May 20, 2005, which was the final day of UNMISET, the POSM was awarded with the clasp TIMOR LESTE, reflecting East Timor’s official name after independence. To date 685 EAST TIMOR clasps have been awarded; some further late clasps may also be awarded.

Sergeant Timothy Ian Britten, CV of the Western Australia Police Service (Figure 15), served with the UN Mission in East Timor. Tim Britten joined the Western Australia Police Service in 1994 after service in the Australian Army from 1988-1991. He was in the Army Reserves from 1991 to 1997. Britten was awarded the Cross of Valour (Australia’s highest award for bravery not in the face of the enemy – equivalent to the George Cross) for his extraordinary courage in the aftermath of the Bali bombings on October 12, 2002 (gazetted October 17, 2003) (Figure 16). Following the massive blast that destroyed the Sari Club, Britten ran to the scene from a place of safety. Wearing light clothes and with flames and exploding gas cylinders around him, and expecting a secondary attack, he repeatedly entered the burning club over an extended period to rescue an injured woman and...
to search for survivors. A Senior Constable at the time, Britten was on leave from the UN Mission in East Timor.

SOLOMON ISLANDS


After several years of civil unrest and communal violence, the causes of which were complex and very long-standing, a significant escalation in violence in 2000 culminated in the overthrow of the government of the Solomon Islands. Under a peace agreement signed in Australia on October 15, 2000, the IPMT was formed by Australia and New Zealand, later also involving some Pacific Island states, to “monitor, observe and report on breaches of the peace agreement, receive and safeguard weapons surrendered and report on the progress of the agreement’s implementation.”

In addition to ADF and other personnel, the unarmed IPMT included a significant Australian police component, drawn mostly from the AFP. As well as providing security to the Solomon’s community, the police were active in collecting thousands of weapons and thousands of kilograms of explosives. Notwithstanding the efforts of the IPMT, the root causes of the conflict in the Solomon Islands were not addressed and the team was withdrawn in June 2002, following an assessment that it had “done all it could.”

In addition to being awarded to police officers, the SOLOMON ISLANDS clasp to the POSM was also awarded to a number of civilian employees of the AFP, the first time non-sworn personnel had become eligible for the clasp. Only 83 clasps were awarded, far fewer than the RAMSI clasp that followed.

RAMSI


Just over a year after the departure of the IPMT (see above), RAMSI was established in response to an urgent request for assistance from the Solomon Islands. Under Australian leadership and with the strong involvement of New Zealand and a number of Pacific island states, more than 2000 military and police personnel were deployed with a mandate to restore law and order. After about six months the military component was wound back and the focus turned to rebuilding and finding solutions to long-standing community problems.

The RAMSI mission has been a major exercise for the AFP and it has not been easy. On December 22, 2004 Australian Protective Service Officer Adam Dunning was ambushed and killed while on routine patrol in Honiara. Within 24 hours an Australian Army rifle company was on the ground to provide increased security. Adam Dunning’s posthumous POSM was subsequently presented to his family by the AFP Commissioner.

In April 2006, following a general election, widespread rioting and looting in Honiara, and the burning of much of the capital’s business district, saw more Australian and New Zealand soldiers and police deployed. The Australian police played a major role in easing tensions and again restoring law and order.

RAMSI continues to provide assistance to the Solomon Islands, and includes police and civilian members from 13 Pacific Island states, as well as Australia and New Zealand. To date, approximately 1900 RAMSI clasps have been awarded.

Chief Superintendent Thomas Jeffery Milburn, AFSM,
Fire & Rescue, New South Wales (Figure 17), was one of the approximately 1900 recipients of the RAMSI clasp. From May 2005 to May 2007 he was seconded to the position of Chief Fire Officer in the Solomon Islands as part of Australia’s contribution to that country. He made major reforms in training and significantly improved equipment and facilities for local fire fighters. He was also responsible for managing and directing all firefighting efforts during civil unrest in 2006 that saw the capital, Honiara’s, business district in flames. Milburn was awarded the AFSM on January 26, 2008 and an AFP Group Citation for Conspicuous Conduct for his actions in 2006. The POSM was awarded to him, as a non-police officer, as one of the “certain other persons” deemed to be eligible (Figure 18). Chief Superintendent Milburn retired in March 2013.

TIMOR LESTE

Declared on September 3, 2008 and published in Commonwealth Gazette S184 of September 11, 2008. For 30 days “peacekeeping service with the Australian Federal Police Detachment to Timor-Leste from May 20, 2005.”

See notes above in relation to the EAST TIMOR clasp. The TIMOR LESTE clasp is awarded for post-UNMISET service, including bilateral police capacity-building activities, and service under the UN Mission to East Timor (UNMIT) which was established following a serious outbreak of violence and political unrest in 2006 and remained until 2012. To date, approximately 585 clasps have been awarded. In addition to the relevant UN medals, members who served for 90 days or more (dates and conditions depending) have also been presented with the Timor-Leste Solidarity Medal.

SUDAN

Declared on September 3, 2008 and published in Commonwealth Gazette S185 of September 11, 2008. For 30 days “peacekeeping service with the Australian Federal Police Detachment to Sudan from March 9, 2006.”

Following the long civil war in Sudan, and ongoing tensions between supporters of the government in Khartoum and supporters of a new state in southern Sudan, the UN Security Council authorised the establishment of a mission (UNMIS) from March 24, 2005. The ADF contributed 15 members to UNMIS, and the AFP 10, with the AFP members performing their well-established task of establishing law and order, protecting civilians and assisting with capacity-building of the local police.

The mandate of UNMIS ended on July 9, 2011, being replaced by a mission in the new state of South Sudan (UNMISS). The Australian Service Medal, awarded to ADF members, is now being awarded with the clasp SOUTH SUDAN, however a parallel clasp to the POSM has not yet been authorised. It is understood that the SUDAN clasp continues to be awarded for services with UNMISS – although at least one POSM has been seen with what can only be a copy SOUTH SUDAN clasp. It is understood that new and revised determinations are currently in process to address this anomaly. Approximately 80 SUDAN clasps have been awarded to date.

TPNG

Declared on February 7, 2013 and published on the Governor-General’s website. Awarded for 30 days ‘capacity-building service undertaken by Australian police on duty in the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG), or other persons engaged with the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) as patrol officers, from July 1, 1949 to November 30, 1973.

The background to this clasp, and the change that was needed to the POSM Regulations in order for it to be...