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# Archipelagos of Peace: Australian Peacekeeping in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands, 1997–2006

Wednesday 23 July 2014 4:15-5:30pm

School of History Seminar Series

**Speaker: Kimberley Doyle**, PhD Candidate, School of History, ANU

McDonald Room, Menzies Library, ANU



Australia has sent thousands of women and men across the world to serve as peacekeepers since 1947. They have worked in places such as Somalia, Cambodia, Cyprus, Mozambique and the Middle East. Yet few historians have so far asked what doing this most impossible job has meant to peacekeepers themselves. Using an Australia-wide oral history project with peacekeepers who served in operations in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands between 1997 and 2006, this paper explores the lived experiences of peacekeeping. It examines how

peacekeepers from the Australian Defence Force, Australian Federal Police and the Commonwealth Public Service negotiated and gave meaning to their daily lives while deployed to the Pacific. What emerges from peacekeepers' memories of their service is an experience marked by immense diversity. Their everyday lives while on operation were shaped by a range of factors such as place, the influence of home organisations, the mandate of each operation and the specific jobs people had. However, peacekeepers' stories also suggest that, irrespective of where they actually served, there was a shared, if often ambiguous, understanding of what it meant to be an Australian in the Pacific region in this decade.

In this PhD pre-submission seminar I will discuss how these major themes are explored throughout the thesis and how an approach based on peacekeepers' oral histories both deepens and broadens our historical knowledge of Australian peacekeeping in the Pacific.

**Kimberley Doyle** is a PhD candidate in the School of History at the ANU. She received an Australian Army History Unit research grant to conduct oral history research into peacekeeping. She recently won a Darrell Tryon Scholarship to the University of New Caledonia to explore further her research interests in connections between Australia and the wider Pacific.

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