

Foreword

This book reflects the stories of the men and women who served with the 4th Battalion Group during Operation TANAGER, Rotation Four, from 16 April to 26 October 2001. While it is not an official history and contains none of the sensitive security material normally associated with modern operations, it nevertheless provides adequate record for those whom which it is primarily intended - the soldiers that deployed as part of the Battalion Group, their families and friends.

By any measure you have all served with distinction in a defining moment for the new nation of East Timor and its people.

Our sacrifice and subsequent success allows peace where once there was conflict, security where once there was fear, normalcy instead of uncertainty and the rekindling of hope for a better future.

Think of the lives you have touched; the children which made you smile and the uncommon mate-ship which underpins all we stand for.

As Australians you have reshaped the beliefs of a generation. Your disruptive pattern uniforms represent much more than a different pattern to those who were here before us. It represents professionalism, impartiality, compassion, dedication, trust and friendship.

In a world where war and misery proliferate, the work you have done and will continue to do on future operations, makes a big difference. Operation TANAGER as part of the UNTAET was an unusual success in the history of UN operations. A success you played a significant part in delivering.

To the families and friends who stayed behind, the sacrifices were no less and your role, just as important. We know and appreciate this so very much.

So the mission is done, and done well. We achieved all we set out to do and continued the good work. But I wonder what will be left behind when we go, what will be 'our' enduring legacy?

Perhaps it's the positive meaning you have given to the image of Australian soldiers in the eyes of the East Timorese people.

When they see us they smile. When we drive by, they wave and despite our rifles, the children run to be near us when we enter their villages. It's this sincere and heartfelt trust in who you are, what you have done and ultimately represented which draws them so willingly in friendship. This book is a record of that special journey and your significant part in it.

Thank you

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Commanding Officer