

## Major General Paul Symon, AO



In January 1998, the then Lieutenant Colonel Paul Symon was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the First Field Regiment, RAA. During his tenure, the Regiment was an integrated regular/reserve unit based in Enoggera Barracks, Brisbane as the direct support regiment to the Sixth Brigade of the First Australian Division.

Born in Melbourne in 1960, he graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1982 as recipient of the Sword of Honour and its senior cadet. He was allotted to the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery and enjoyed many postings with the gunners, culminating in unit command in 1998-1999.

His career in the most senior ranks have included postings as the 47th Deputy Chief of the Army from December 2008 to September 2011, and as Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation from September 2011 until the present (June 2014).

Major General Symon served on operations four times. His most important joint command was in late 2005 until mid 2006 when appointed Commander Middle East. This appointment gave him national command responsibility for all soldiers, sailors and airmen/women in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He advised the United Nations Special Representative in East Timor in the four months prior to the deployment of INTERFET. This entailed close liaison with the Indonesian military, Falantil and militia leaders prior to, during, and after the vote for independence in 1999. For his leadership in East Timor and in command, he was named a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2000 Queen's Birthday honours list.

In 1997 he served with the United Nations in South Lebanon and the Golan Heights in a period of significant tension between Hezbollah and the Israeli Defence Force. And in 2003, he was appointed as the senior military adviser for the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. It was in this period that a significant number of militia leaders were jailed and a very successful gun amnesty organised.

Major General Symon has taught at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, in the UK, has served as Army's Director General of Personnel, its Director General of Preparedness and Plans and as Director General Pacific in International Policy Division. He has also served as the Chief of Staff of Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Division in Brisbane.

Academically, Major General Symon has two Master's degrees: from Deakin University and from the University of New South Wales. He is a graduate of Army's staff college and of the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies in Canberra.

He was promoted to Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the 2007 Australia Day honours list in recognition of his operational service in the Middle East.