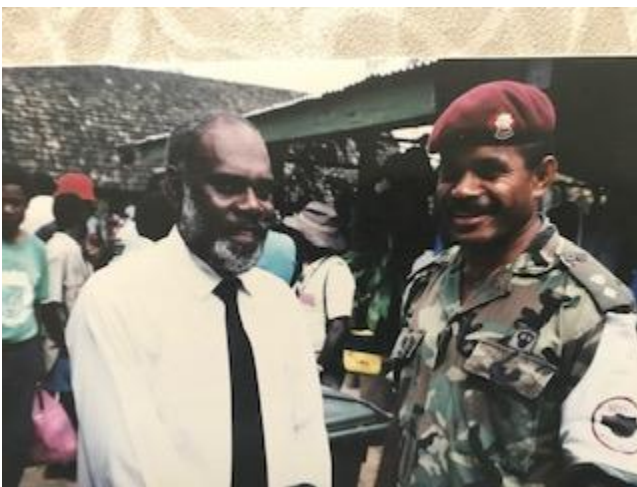


## A Brief Account – Lesi Korovavala

Lesi Korovavala attended OCS Portsea from June 1980 and graduated in the Class of June 1981. He was a member of 6 Platoon, B Company. Four months after graduation he departed for his first tour of duty with the Fijian Battalion in Lebanon under the United Nations Interim Forces In Lebanon (UNIFIL). Among other tasks and incidents, he was the platoon commander of Checkpoint NR1-2 on the Red Line along the main Mediterranean coastal road when their platoon position was overrun by the Israeli Defence Force southern axis during its invasion of Lebanon (“Operation Peace for Galilea”) on 6 June 1982. He was a Second/Company Commander with the Fijian Battalion under the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Sinai in 1984-85. Other tours of duties followed and in one such tour he was the Senior Plans Officer (Operations) at the UNIFIL HQ and Fiji Contingent Commander in 1993. In 1994 he was the Liaison Officer for the South Pacific Peacekeeping Force in Bougainville who was deployed in advance of the Main



Body to conduct ground coordination of the peace conference with the local groups including the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, Resistance Group and local communities. He did his rounds in a number of operational and staff appointments at the Fiji Military headquarters in Fiji. He held stints as Military Advisor based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Military Liaison Officer at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Suva. In the intervening years he attended a number of specialized and promotion courses at the New Zealand Army Officer Training School in Waiouru and did his Staff College training at the

Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College in Kuala Lumpur in 1991-92.

During 1995-99 he took leave to study at Lancaster University in England and graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Defence and Security Analysis and Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science. Both of his studies were sponsored by the British Government’s Chevening Scholarship. Between the two studies he undertook a special project for the Fijian Contingent (UNIFIL) in Lebanon (1997).

Between 2000-03 he was appointed by the Fiji Government into two commercial board of directors as Chair and Director.

After 23 years of service, Dr Korovavala resigned from the RFMF at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to join the Fiji public service as Deputy then Secretary for Home Affairs and Immigration in 2003. He left the public service as a result of the military coup d’etat in 2006 and later appointed by the Pacific Islands Forum at its first Representative to Solomon Islands in support of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Islands (RAMSI) deployment.



Following his stint in Solomon Islands, Dr Korovavala joined the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Office in Canberra as the

Protection Advisor for the Pacific Region (2008-10). From there he joined the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as the Head of its Office in Vanuatu (2011-2018) before joining the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process based in Bangkok, Thailand as a Programme Coordinator.

Throughout the years he continued his self-development including trainings in international refugee law, laws of armed conflict, advance security studies and others. He co-directed courses and had speaking engagements at tertiary and specialized institutions, regional and national events in the Pacific and Asia.

Apart from rugby, his other hobbies include bush walking, kayaking and choral singing.