

EULOGY FOR LATE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT VINCENT U'UPWE

23rd January 2019

WIFE JUDITH U'UPWE,

**CHILDREN; WENDY LORETTA, STANDFORD GRAHAM, IAN JAY &
VINCENT TERRY U'UPWE, and their families**

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE LATE POLICE
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT VINCENT U'UPWE**

**RECTOR OF SAINT ALBAN'S CHURCH, ELDERS, & CHURCH MEMBERS OF ST
ALBAN PARISH**

**COLLEAGUE MEMBERS OF THE RSIPF, COLLEAGUES IN POLICING FROM
AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND**

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This afternoon, As Commissioner of Police I am humbled to stand here on behalf of the Ranks and files of the RSIPF throughout Solomon Islands, to acknowledge the life and service of our colleague, friend and brother, the late Chief Superintendent Vincent U'Upwe.

Today we come together to honour and remember the fine man, excellent police officer and distinguished leader that he was.

Today the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force mourns the loss of our great friend and colleague. We cannot describe the sadness that all of us have experienced over the past few days since the passing away of one of our most senior and respected officers.

However, our sadness as a police force and as his colleagues lies far behind the grief and sadness that is most profoundly felt by Vincent's loved ones – his wife Judith, his children and grandchildren and all his family and relatives.

Madam Judith, on behalf of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, I extend my sincere and humble condolences to you and your family for the sad and untimely loss of your beloved Vincent.

In recognition of his service to Solomon Islands, it is our humble duty today to bid him farewell with full police honours. Today, we pause to humbly remember his service and leadership and thank God for the gift of his friendship and for knowing and working alongside him for so long.

The late Chief Superintendent Vincent U'Upwe served in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) for 33 and a half years.

Vincent was born on 16 October 1962 at the Central Hospital, Honiara. As a very energetic and honourable young man, he saw the importance service to his nation and aspired to join the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. He was enlisted as a Police Recruit on 1st July 1985.

Upon joining the RSIPF Vincent was first posted to the Kukum Police Station on two years' probation where he worked as General Duties officer from 1986-1988 and then was confirmed as a permanent constable of the police force. From 1989 -1991 he worked at the prosecutions department as a police prosecutor, dealing skillfully with serious cases and working compassionately with victims of crime to ensure they received justice.

He was a talented and diligent officer and rose steadily through the ranks.

On 1st April 1992 Vincent was promoted to the rank of sergeant and transferred to Police Human Resources Office as a supervisor, where he worked until 1994. In 1995 he was posted to Central Police station and worked as general duties sergeant till 1st June 1997 when he was again promoted to Staff Sergeant.

In 1998 he returned to the Police Human Resource Department where his skills and expertise were valued until 2001.

On 1st June 2001 Vincent was promoted to Inspector and worked in the important role of staff officer to the Assistant Commissioner of Territorial Operations. His experience and knowledge was greatly valued in providing support to the senior executive of the RSIPF over the subsequent years.

In 2008 Vincent was posted as manager of provincial operations, supporting police management of frontline operations right around the country.

In October 2014 Vincent was again promoted to superintendent and took up the critical leadership role of Support Manager at Honiara City Police Station. Later, in December 2015 he assumed the very senior position of PPC for Honiara City. On 7th December 2016, in recognition of his skills and expertise he was promoted to Chief Superintendent and was appointed as the Director of the National Intelligence Department, where he served until his untimely passing.

During this period of time he also supervised various executive positions in the RSIPF. This included Assistant Commissioner roles in Operations, Provincial and Crime & Intelligence.

Aside from his postings and promotions to various roles, Vincent continued his education and professional development over the years, completing a very large number of training courses and programs, both here in Solomon Islands and internationally. He also represented the RSIPF and Solomon Islands on the international stage, in regional and international meetings and dialogues.

He also received numerous commendations for his excellent performance throughout his career. This included receiving Commonwealth Disciplined Forces Medal and the Solomon Islands Medal commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Through all of these achievements and activities, he became a role model for other officers, including his peers and junior officers, and demonstrated that being a professional police officer and leader meant more than just doing your job – he taught others that it meant being committed to always improving yourself and striving to learn and grow.

But perhaps it is his personal legacy that he will be most remembered for.

Vincent was a true leader and highly respected by all staff under his command. He was a very conscientious leader, always willing to work through other people's problems. Even whilst being very sick and unable to

come to work he always enquired about his staff, their problems, and how the office was performing. He took great pride in the work of NID. His door was always open for staff when they had personal or professional problems and his counsel was highly regarded.

He was a committed Police Officer and took great pride in his career, and in the development of the RISPF over the years. He often spoke about the new generation of RSIPF officers, and how he hoped they would continue with the evolution of the RSIPF.

He was very proud of his heritage and his village. His face would light up when talking about home, his village and how beautiful it was. He was looking forward to retirement and was progressing plans for his retirement with Judith and his family.

Vincent was a man of faith and an active member of his church community. I think his faith and Christian values were pivotal and core features of his life, work and family commitment. He rarely had a bad word to say about people, and respected differing views and opinions of others.

Vincent was a committed family man and often spoke highly of his wife and children. He was an excellent people person, always had a smile and took genuine interest in those around him.

But we must remember that none of us are perfect! I checked his personnel file and Vincent did have a couple of little indiscretions relating to not wearing his official Police Beret whilst driving a Police vehicle, and selling “cakes” on Police property from his early days.

In my time as Commissioner, I learned a few things about the type of person Vincent was. My clear memory of him is his big broad smile, his cheeky and mischievous sense of humour, and a laugh that we will never forget. But when work demanded tough decisions, he knew his business and was serious and calm when pressure.

As Commissioner of Police, I learned a few other things about the type of man Vincent was.

I know that he was a man of honour, duty, and pride. He swore an oath to serve the people of Solomon Islands as a police officer. And to be a police officer for more than 33 years, shows us all that he was a man of great diligence and loyalty. He served the RSIPF and his community through the tension periods and stayed loyal to his oath.

He served the community and his officers, day and night, responding to calls for his help, when indeed his family also needed him. He put his service above himself and made sacrifices that many others would not. This is the duty of a police officer but it does not come easily to any of us.

For these reasons, I know he is a man of service, who understood the national value which appears on our Solomon Islands Coat of Arms and RSIPF uniform.

It says – “To lead is to serve.”

Vincent lived a life of service to his nation and his community. He was a man and officer we are proud of. Today, the RSIPF salute him and we will always remember the legacy he has left behind, the lessons he taught us and the sense of service he instilled in us.

His sudden passing denied us all a chance to say a final thank you to Vincent, like we are doing here today. So instead, we do our best today to honour him and to honour you, his family, relatives and friends.

As part of RSIPF tradition, we have common values and experiences in policing which bind us together as a police family – both here in the Solomon Islands and regionally. This means the death of a police officer in service anywhere is felt deeply by all of us.

So it is no surprise that I have received messages of condolence from many international police officers who have known Vincent and served with him over the years, including many former RAMSI colleagues and the former Commissioner of Police Frank Prendergast. The police family is a large one and Vincent was a highly regarded member.

We, the RSIPF, are blessed and grateful for every day he served with us.

To the Family, relatives, friends and village community of Vincent, on behalf of a grateful nation, we thank you for his service and we thank you for allowing him to serve with us in the RSIPF.

We thank you and honour you for supporting Vincent through the many challenges and tough times when he, and you, made sacrifices so that he could do his duty.

As Commissioner of Police, on behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands, I salute him for his service.

So long and farewell colleague, brother and friend – Chief Superintendent
Vincent U'Upwe.

Rest easy – your watch is finished.

May he rest in peace with the Lord.

Matthew Varley

Commissioner of Police

Royal Solomon Islands Police Force