

Health Service profile

United Nations Military Hospital, East Timor



The United Nations (UN) Military Hospital in Dili, East Timor, has been operational since 23 February 2000, replacing the Australian level 3 health facility that supported the International Force East Timor (INTERFET). The UN Hospital's mission is to provide UN level 3 health support to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).

The initial Australian Service Contingent to the UN Hospital (ASC2) was mainly provided from the RAAF 3rd Combat Support Hospital, Richmond, under the command of Wing Commander Peter Clarke. On 21 August 2000 ASC 2 handed over to ASC 3, a group based on the Army 2nd Health Service Battalion in Brisbane, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel David Scott. ASC 4, based on 3 Health Support Battalion, South Australia, and commanded by Colonel Viki Andersons, took over on 23 February 2001.

The Defence Health Service has adopted a tri-service approach to planning support for the UN Hospital. Each ASC has included personnel from all three ADF Services.

Within its operations to 31 January 2001, the UN Military hospital has treated 6111 outpatients, admitted over 1000 inpatients, conducted 200 surgical procedures, and managed 71 patients requiring intensive care. The main illnesses of concern in East Timor are malaria and dengue, both particularly prevalent during the wet season months of November through to March. In the period to 31 January 2001, 80 inpatients with malaria and 110 with dengue fever have been treated.

The cultural diversity of the hospital's staff provides interesting communications challenges, but does not alter the basic principles of patient care. Coordination training is ongoing for resuscitation drills that involve each national contingent. Other UN Hospital activities include clinical training to promote best practice medicine. Cultural evenings/social functions also encourage each nationality within the UN Hospital to promote culture, lifestyle and interests specific to their country. The common theme promoted within the UN Hospital is teamwork, which is exemplified when all personnel, irrespective of country of origin, combine for the UN Medal parade. □

The hospital

- ◆ Has 143 personnel contributed by Australia, Singapore and Egypt, under Australian command.
- ◆ Serves about 8000 soldiers in the UNTAET Peace Keeping Force and 4000 UN civilians.
- ◆ Supports two operating tables with general and orthopaedic surgical teams, a two-bed intensive care unit, two 25-bed wards, four resuscitation bays with support staff, full laboratory services, a basic radiological service, pharmacy, outpatients, physiotherapy, a dental surgery and internal logistic support including catering and laundry.
- ◆ Provides trauma and emergency care to East Timorese, who are otherwise cared for by the International Red Cross Hospital in Dili.

