

1st Health Support Company OP ANODE

Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands



The 1st Health Support Company (1 HSC) replaced 2 HSC on Australia Day 2004, and provided health support for the multinational Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) until a civilian contractor, Aspen Medical, assumed responsibilities on 23 June 2004.

RAMSI is a multinational group and peaked at more than 2000 people in 2003, mainly service personnel from the five troop-contributing nations (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga), as well as police from these countries and five other Pacific Island nations. Soon after 1 HSC's departure, the size of the group had fallen to less than 500.

Because of the presence of diplomatic staff and their families, there were also some children, pregnant women and older people to care for.

The HSC facilities, based in the Guadalcanal Beach Resort, consisted of two insulated tropical shed accommodation (ITSA) prefabricated buildings. One housed the HQ, two resuscitation bays, primary health and dental care; the other was a 10-bed medium- to low-dependency ward. Between the two ITSAs were five Brunswick shelters providing an operating theatre, a central sterilising and supply department (CSSD), a two-bed intensive care/high dependency unit, pathology, and imaging.

Nearby, a pharmacy/medical store and the environmental health section were housed in tents.

In addition to the services provided at the main facility, 1 HSC provided 24-hour evacuation responses, including six-wheel-drive ambulance and a rotary-wing aeromedical evacuation team, which was complemented by the Joint Medical Facility's fixed-wing aeromedical evacuation team and ambulance. The HSC also manned each of the response force's patrol bases with a medical assistant and provided healthcare staff to support other operations as required.

One of the highlights for health personnel was the ability to provide some support to the local Solomon Islanders. This was principally through visits to Honiara National Referral Hospital (HNRH) by theatre, pathology, imaging, ward and dental staff. The dental team also conducted visits to local primary schools, and many of the aeromedical evacuation missions were to transfer critically ill locals to HNRH.

Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Brennan

Officer Commanding, 1st Health Support Company

