

Pacific Partnership 2026 concludes third mission stop in Dili, Timor-Leste



DILI, Timor-Leste – Pacific Partnership 2026 (PP26) concluded its third mission stop in Dili, Aug. 26, following a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the newly renovated Escola Básica Filial (EBF) Kasnafar, Aug. 24.

A multinational force of 149 personnel came together in Dili to support the U.S. Navy's largest annual humanitarian and disaster preparedness mission in the Indo-Pacific. The PP26 team, composed of 128 U.S. service members, 13 Canadian Armed Forces members, four New Zealand Defence Force members, and four German Armed Forces members worked hand-in-hand with Timorese partners across engineering, disaster management, host nation outreach, and medical initiatives.

“Nearly two decades ago, Pacific Partnership and our Timorese

partners began a journey of friendship and cooperation focused on strengthening disaster preparedness across the region,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Robert Reyes, mission commander of Pacific Partnership 2026. “Since then, Pacific Partnership has continued to grow alongside Timor-Leste through construction projects, disaster management projects, community outreach engagements, and medical exchanges, and, most importantly, the enduring relationships forged between our communities. Pacific Partnership 2026 carries that legacy forward.”

While in Timor-Leste, the engineering team, consisting of 22 members from Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) 1 and six members of the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-FDTL), executed critical infrastructure upgrades at the EBF Kasnafar Schoolhouse. The team replaced the roof of the 6-by-12-meter building, installed a new water tank, repaired a hand-washing trough, and painted the interior and exterior surfaces. The project enhances classroom safety and provides an increased quality of life for students and staff.

“Everything we’ve done here in Timor Leste will improve the learning environment of students for decades to come,” said U.S. Navy Chief Steelworker Kenneth Hauser, PP26 engineering line of effort sail-in-echelon officer in charge assigned to ACB-1. “It’s been a good experience working alongside our Timorese counterparts. Learning from their wealth of experience and their relations with the local community has enhanced our interoperability for future joint exercises.”

Concurrently, PP26’s disaster management team held an interagency simulation exercise on natural disaster response planning, facilitated discussions on national and strategic-level tabletop scenarios, engaged with key leaders for disaster preparedness, and assessed sustainment and distribution capabilities with the Red Cross.

“Throughout this mission stop, my team worked shoulder-to-shoulder with international partners, allies, the Civil

Protection Authority, local first responders, and key stakeholders to strengthen collective emergency response capabilities,” said U.S. Army Capt. Noppamas Suttinun, the PP26 disaster management line of effort lead. “Crucially, this year’s disaster preparedness efforts extended directly into the heart of the population by actively engaging local religious and community leaders, who are often marginalized during conventional disaster planning. By incorporating these trusted grassroots figures into emergency response networks, the mission left an enduring mark on the region—expanding inclusive crisis protocols, empowering vulnerable populations, and building a foundation of lasting community resilience that will protect lives for years to come.”

The mission stop featured numerous host nation outreach events focused on community and cultural engagement. The Pacific Partnership Band performed at seven locations for more than 2,000 Timorese and PP26 personnel, boosting morale and building friendships with 750 students, faculty, and local musicians. Additionally, the team held 13 religious engagements with seven different faith groups, impacting more than 1,000 people and strengthening cross-cultural relationships. Six training events were also conducted for over 1,000 students and professionals, deepening specialized knowledge in education, religion, medicine, and social work.

“Host nation outreach events have a profound impact on both the local population and our own people,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jon Craig, PP26 chaplain and host nation outreach line of effort officer in charge. “These events are designed to connect with the hearts and souls of the people by building bonds, developing friendships, sharing important experiences, and learning from one another. The relationships built during our visit will continue to have a profound impact on this generation and on generations to come because what we have built is not merely a superficial connection, but a connection to the soul.”

The medical team conducted a total of 102 engagements, consisting of 18 community health engagements, 24 direct care engagements alongside Timorese counterparts, and 60 subject matter expert exchanges and side-by-sides. These engagements covered a myriad of topics to include biomedical maintenance, nursing, midwifery, surgery, veterinary, dental, audiology, optometry, and general medical practices.

“We extend our sincere gratitude to the healthcare professionals, educators, students, and community partners across Timor-Leste for their exceptional hospitality and partnership during Pacific Partnership 2026,” said Lt. Cmdr. Donald Skelton, PP26 Timor-Leste medical line of effort lead. “Together, our teams delivered essential direct care for audiology, dental, optometry, and physical therapy services, and side-by-side and subject matter exchanges in a wide array of other medical specialties; strengthening local healthcare capacity and capability, and enhanced collective disaster preparedness and regional resilience.”

Following the successful conclusion of Pacific Partnership activities in Dili, the PP26 team will depart Timor-Leste for its next mission stop in Malaysia. The collaborative efforts and shared experiences gained over the past two weeks will leave a lasting impact on both the local communities and the multinational team, further cementing the strong, enduring partnership between the United States and Timor-Leste.

Now in its 22nd iteration, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster management preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Pacific Partnership works collaboratively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase security and stability in the region, and foster new and enduring friendships.

For updates and multimedia from Pacific Partnership 2026,

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From Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific, Aug. 27, 2026
