

USNS Mercy Team Concludes Pacific Partnership in Solomon Islands



Pacific Partnership 2022 leadership, Solomon Island leaders and members of the international diplomatic corps in the Solomon Islands pose for a photo during the PP22 Solomon Islands closing ceremony aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Woitzel*

SOLOMON ISLANDS – The Solomon Islands-Pacific Partnership 2022 team wrapped up two weeks of collaboration across several lines of effort during a closing ceremony on board USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), on Sept. 10, Leslie Hull-Ryde of Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific, said in a Sept. 14 release.

Now in its 17th year, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific.

This year, the hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) serves as the PP22 mission platform.

While this year's mission marked Mercy's inaugural visit to Solomon Islands, Pacific Partnership 2022 returned to the Solomon Islands late August, continuing to build on a foundation established during the previous four PP missions here.

"It's great to bring Pacific Partnership back to Solomon Islands and continue to deepen these friendships and partnerships we hold so dear," said Capt. Hank Kim, Pacific Partnership 2022 mission commander.

Pacific Partnership is a unifying mission that fosters enduring friendship and cooperation among many nations. This year's mission in the Solomon Islands includes participants from the host nation, the United States, Japan and Australia.

"This collaborative effort amongst our partners and hosts is what this mission is all about," Kim said. "As we learn from each other and grow as professionals, we enhance our collective ability to respond to any disaster we may face. As the Pacific Partnership moto goes, 'we are preparing in calm to respond in crisis'."

PP22 events are coordinated with the host nation and are planned based on the requirements and requests of the Solomon Islands. Engagements in Honiara and beyond included medical care and exchanges, engineering projects, discussions on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and community outreach events, including band concerts and sporting events.

During the mission stop, the PP22 team conducted more than 5,800 medical engagements, including more than 4,500 dental procedures, distributing more than 1,000 eyeglasses, and performing more than 50 surgeries; more than 80 consultations

with local pet owners; a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief workshop that included the Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office and other first responders; 16 band concerts; and four engineering projects. In addition to events in Honiara and Guadalcanal Province, Pacific Partnership activities, to include medical knowledge exchanges, took place in Gizo and Malaita.

In addition to Solomon Islands, this year's Pacific Partnership mission included stops in Vietnam, Palau, the Philippines and engineering engagements in Fiji and Papua New Guinea.