

OP PAKISTAN ASSIST 2005-2006

An Australian Defence Force medical team deployed to Pakistan to provide vital health care assistance to those affected by the earthquake of October 2005.

The ADF medical team consisted of around 140 personnel who deployed to provide vital health care assistance to those affected by the earthquake in October last year.

The immediate aim of the relief effort was to provide medical assistance to the people in the Dhanni area, about 20km north east of Muzaffarabad on the Pakistan side of the Kashmir Line of Control.

This deployment built on the successful work by ADF personnel providing humanitarian assistance to countries affected by natural disasters.

Under the command of Colonel Andy Sims, the ADF Primary Health Care Teams provided a critical medical capability in a time of extreme need.

They performed more than 9500 medical treatments and at least 4000 immunisations, enabling surviving residents to begin the long process of restoring their lives. A particular highlight for the ADF personnel was the delivery of five babies during this time.

An Australian Army Black Hawk helicopter detachment from Army's 5th Aviation Regiment based in Townsville enabled medical assistance to remote regional villages in rugged terrain with limited road access. These helicopters performed 74 life-saving aero-medical evacuations. Much of their work was done in trying conditions, often subject to sub-zero temperatures.

The majority of the health and support personnel were drawn from the Army's logistic support force based at Randwick Barracks, in Sydney. An Air Force Primary Health Care Team based at Richmond, New South Wales supplemented the medical team, whose personnel were drawn from a range of units across Australia including some Reserve personnel.

The primary health care facility at Dhanni was gifted to the Government of Pakistan along with some ADF military equipment and supplies. This gift will result in a significant improvement in the community's ability to rebuild.

All ADF personnel have returned from Operation Pakistan Assist.

10 May 2006.