



Australian High Commission
Solomon Islands

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN NAVY CREW VISIT HELLS POINT

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The crew of HMAS Yarra traded the open ocean for the football field during a visit to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) Hells Point Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) facility in Honiara last month.

Royal Australian Navy sailors and officers spent the day learning how the RSIPF EOD unit identifies and disposes of unexploded ordnance (UXO) before finishing with friendly games of soccer and touch football.

The Solomon Islands has one of the highest concentrations of explosive remnants of war in the Pacific, with RSIPF EOD personnel disposing of hundreds of UXO items each year.

During the visit, the crew observed the RSIPF's procedures for identifying, assessing and disposing of UXO. The demonstration included the use of portable X-ray equipment to assess munitions in the field, as well as a remote EOD cutting tool used to safely cut munitions before disposal.

HMAS Yarra Clearance Diving Officer Lieutenant Alastair Wyatt said the visit highlighted the depth of expertise within the RSIPF EOD unit.

"The Solomon Islands is home to one of the busiest EOD communities in the world," Lieutenant Wyatt said.

"The opportunity to observe them operating in their own environment and learn from their experience was invaluable for me and my team."

RSIPF Director of EOD Inspector Clifford Tunuki welcomed the HMAS Yarra delegation and said he looked forward to strengthening cooperation with Australian EOD personnel.

During the visit, HMAS Yarra Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Andrew Penfold presented Inspector Tunuki with a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion.

Lieutenant Commander Penfold said the opportunity to learn from EOD specialists who deal with unexploded ordnance every day provided valuable professional development for his crew.

"The knowledge and experience shared by the RSIPF team reinforces the importance of strong regional partnerships and helps ensure our people remain ready to support future operations together," he said.

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PHOTOS:

Photo 1:



Caption 1: Chief Petty Officer Matthew Brooke and Royal Solomon Islands Police Force personnel discuss munitions disposal on a tour of Hells Point Explosive Ordnance Disposal facility in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Photo 2:



Caption 2: Able Seaman Jacob Ives, from HMAS Yarra, in a game of soccer with RSIPF Police Constable Jonax Koloni at the Hells Point Explosive Ordnance Disposal facility.

Photo 3:



Caption 3: Commanding Officer HMAS Yarra Lieutenant Commander Andrew Penfold and Royal Solomon Islands Police Force Director of EOD Inspector Clifford Tunuki pose for a photo during HMAS Yarra's visit to the Hells Point Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

Photo 4:



Caption 4: HMAS Yarra crew and personnel from Royal Solomon Islands Police Force after a playing soccer at Hells Point Explosive Ordnance Disposal facility in Honiara, Solomon Islands.