

in the Solomon Islands

property room, watchhouse, and criminal investigation. Most importantly, I was the advisor to the Operations Manager (Inspector) of Honiara City.

At the end of the first 16-week rotation, I was asked to remain for an additional four weeks to relieve as Coordinator, Honiara. This was at the higher rank of Superintendent, and I jumped at the chance particularly as the position had been amended to include the Coordinator, Provincial, a role held by a New Zealand Inspector who was departing. Effectively I was to relieve in the position previously held by two Inspectors, managing the Participating Police Force (PPF) as capacity builders to the SIPP in all operational policing across the country. Due to staff movements,

I was to remain in that position for the remaining 40 weeks of my deployment.

Being able to work at this level was a fantastic opportunity for a Senior Sergeant. I was responsible for managing 100 advisors from 15 participating nations in 18 police stations across the country, and was Advisor to the Chief Superintendent, Provincial—the Police Commander of Honiara City who supervised 300 officers across the city. I was also in charge of three helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft supporting the PPF across the country. Finally, I was the Forward Commander dealing with any uprisings, which included managing the Immediate Response Team.

These responsibilities meant I was involved in regular meetings with the senior executive of both the PPF and SIPP on issues affecting the entire police force. The exposure and involvement in the decision making process at that level in a hostile political environment was certainly an experience I wished to take away from the deployment.

There were plenty of memorable events during my time in the Solomons. In April 2007 a tsunami followed an earthquake in the region and washed away entire villages. I was advisor to the operations centre during the response to the disaster.

Hostile situations were not uncommon. I managed the extraction and insertion of emergency response, defence

and police officers using helicopters in one of the most remote areas of the country in a hostile situation. I was also the Forward Commander of 300 officers assigned to prevent violence that had been planned during the election of a new prime minister.

I couldn't have asked for a more unique experience and adventure both personally and professionally. The Solomon Islands officers I worked alongside had the utmost respect and appreciation of our assistance. I also came to appreciate how lucky we are with the conditions in the QPS, as their conditions were virtually non-existent by comparison.

*By Senior Sergeant Bruce Kuhn,
Far Northern Region*

