

## Unit History

The name and titles of the units in which we proudly serve become part of our lives. On the 1st November 2000 three of the proud Units of the Defence Health Service, including 2nd Field Hospital, underwent a change of name to better symbolise their roles and perspective in the contemporary Australian Order of Battle.

Health Support Battalions will provide sophisticated, specialised "Level 3" care of the sick and injured both on operations and during peacetime training -just as they have done, as variously named Units, for more than eight decades. The new 2nd Health Support Battalion brings under the one command not only sophisticated specialty services to treat illness and disease; but reaches out to broaden the concept of operational health support in a more integrated, pro-active manner.

As a Hospital, 2nd Field Hospital has not deployed on operational service since 1945; whereas as a skilled and sophisticated Health Support Unit, but under other names, it has provided human resources for operational service since its members first left to serve in the Vietnam Campaign in 1968; since 1980, it has contributed both personnel and equipment to United Nations Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and humanitarian deployments.

The newly-named 2nd Health Support Battalion has, in its Regimental family tree, four grandparental lines; a medical Field Hospital, dating from its service at Gallipoli; a stationary Hospital, dating from the foundation of the 2nd Australian Women's Hospital (later 1 Military Hospital); Dental Units dating from the (Citizens Military Forces) units of 1 and 33 Dental Units; and preventive medicine units, dating from the (CMF) 4 Preventive Medicine Company based in Water Street, Fortitude Valley in Brisbane from 1956.

There is a manifest necessity to "mix and match" these health services for the operational demands of United Nations Service -dating from the last 3 decades of the twentieth century and now extending into the first decade of the twenty- first. Every UN deployment is different; and the balance of operational medical and dental support, hospital clinical services (medical and nursing, dental, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and pharmacy) and preventive and public health is best provided from an integrated unit, a Health Support Battalion, which has such specialty skills in a bonded, integrated unit whose members train together and who also provide clinical service in peacetime.

On 1 st November 2000, the proud 2nd Field Hospital becomes the core of the 2nd Health Support Battalion.

This is its sixth name change in its eight-five year history. Each sequential name has reflected the operational realities of its service, appropriate for its time. These changes were:

- "The Australian Stationary Hospital" -a name proposed prior to the Unit's establishment in 1914, at the AAMC HQ in Melbourne.

- The "First Australian Casualty Clearing Hospital" -its formal title on the nominal roll of the Australian Imperial Force, when the Unit was first raised in Hobart in October 1914.
- The "First Australian Casualty Clearing Station" -a name change which occurred from 10 a.m. on the 25th April 1915, on the beach at Anzac Cove in the Gallipoli Campaign.
- "2nd Field Hospital" -a name change that was made in 1976- "Whilst its staff are to remain essentially the same, its sophistication in terms of diagnostic and treatment facilities have evolved spectacularly from the days of the Vietnam Campaign (1965 - 1973)"

There have been in fact three First Casualty Clearing Stations in the Regimental family tree of this Unit.

- The first 1st Casualty Clearing Station served in Egypt, Gallipoli and in France, at each site with great distinction.
- The (second) 1 CCS served in the Second World War, particularly with distinction at Benghazi, Egypt, Tripoli and in Palestine in the Middle East; and later in Borneo in the South- West Pacific Campaigns.
- The (third) 1 CCS was raised in Brisbane at the old Water Street Depot in Fortitude Valley as a Citizens Military Forces (CMF) Unit in 1956. In the two years in which our Unit bore that name, it (proportionately) provided more specialists for operational service than any other militia unit in Australia. Six of its sequential Commanding Officers were to serve in the Vietnam Campaign, as did many of its other specialists.

In parallel with this parental line of the Regimental family tree, the 2nd Australian Women's Hospital (2 A WH) was established in January 1943, during the Second World War. It was initially established under canvas at Redbank; and moved to the beautiful heritage home, Rhyndarra, on the banks of the Brisbane River at Yeronga.

Its name subsequently was to change to the 1st Military Hospital. In 1996, the (Army Reserve) 2nd Field Hospital joined with the (Regular) 1st Military Hospital to form the 2nd Field Hospital. That new integrated unit moved to its current magnificent site, landscaped in Eucalyptus bushland at Gallipoli Barracks in Enoggera, in 1996.

The prevention of dental ill-health has always been of great importance in the preservation of the fighting power and operational strength of servicemen and women. The forebears of the new 2 HSB go back to the Citizen Military Forces 5 units, 1 and 33 Dental Units, and to the dental section of 3/1st Casualty Clearing Station, co-located in Second World War wooden Army huts in Water Street in Brisbane.

At that site also was based the (independent) CMF 4 Preventive Medicine Company, traditionally staffed in its senior technical positions by senior Preventive Health Officers who served in civilian preventive health posts in the Brisbane City Council.

In 1999, further changes occurred with the integration of 4 Preventive Medicine

Company, which was brought under the direct operational command of 2nd Field Hospital. 4 Preventive Medicine Company, now as part of 2 HSB, retains its own proud lineage history with its past service in many parts of Australia, and training service in Papua New Guinea.

With the opening of the splendid new Gallipoli Barracks Dental Centre -on Major Jock Clarke Drive at Enoggera in Brisbane -the major clinical dental units in South-East Queensland (the Dental Section of the Health Company of 7 Combat Service Support Battalion) and the Divisional Combat Support Office (Brisbane ) Dental Unit, were housed in that state-of-the-art new facility.

On 1st November 2000, staff and personnel of the Dental Unit within the Divisional Combat Support Office in Brisbane (DCSO-B) and those of 4 Preventive Medicine Company, became part of 2 HSB. It was the formation of this newly integrated unit, with its new name, that was celebrated on 1st November 2000.

The 2nd Health Support Battalion is now a Battalion "stand alone" Unit. Its operational, training and peacetime support role is now, and for more than a decade has been much more than a Hospital. It provides integrated health care in all its forms not only on this site, but throughout a broad geographic, command and operational area. Its preventive medicine assets, for example, reachout from this Hospital and potentially, like all sophisticated medical and nursing components, will in the unknowable future operate potentially anywhere in the world.

The emphasis on the word "health" and on "health support" reflects the twenty- first century terms of reference that a unit such as this is not solely reactive to injury and illness; but does muchmore. Preventive health has always been a keystone of doctrine of Australian military medicine. The three decades of post-Vietnam experience (since 1972) has shown that loss of fighting power due to preventive illness and injury (and this latter's ratio to operational wounding) has never been higher.

Such reflects the nature of the Nation's current major operational deployments, humanitarian commitments, and the everchanging pattern of zoonoses to which Australian servicemen and women will remain subject in the future. The new Unit, whose birth was celebrated on the 1st November 2000, the 2nd Health Support Battalion, is there to promote health in peace and war, both in the preventive and treatment sense.

The Unit integrates, under one functional line-of-command Unit, the (former) 2nd Field Hospital, the Dental Unit of the Defence Corporate Support Office (Brisbane) and 4 Preventive Medicine Company.

## The 2nd General Health Battalion

### **The 2nd General Health Battalion**

#### Image Description

The insignia of the Australian Army, the RAAMC and of the RAANC

surmount the colour patch of the (former) 2 Field Hospital, and that in turn of 1 Casualty Clearing Station, this latter Unit raised in 1914.

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## **Written By:**

Major General John Pearn AM, RFD (Retired)  
Former Training Officer, 1 Casualty Clearing Station.  
Former Commanding Officer, 2 Field Hospital.  
Former Surgeon General ADF