



Vol. 1 Issue 2

# THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

*a call to duty*  
February 17, 2010

## Airmen continue to fly Predator missions over Haiti



By Airman 1st Class Sondra Escutia  
49th Fighter Wing

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. (AFNS) -- Members of the 849th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron continue to maintain RQ-1 Predators from here and Creech Air Force Base, Nev., to provide reconnaissance to troops helping with Haiti relief efforts in support of Operation Unified Response.

This is the first real-world mission for 849th AMXS Airmen since the squadron stood up only four months ago.

“The 849th only stood up in October, and we’ve already been tasked with a real-world contingency operation,” said Master Sgt. Marlin Tatom, the 49th AMXS production superintendent and

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## Marines stand vigilant at U.S. embassy in Haiti



By Sgt. Richard Andrade  
XVIII Airborne Corps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – U.S. Marines train to protect American embassies around the world, and when the 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti Jan. 12, the 1st Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team was called in to assist their fellow Marines already guarding the U.S. embassy here.

The Marines have to endure the heat

and humidity to assist the Haitian police forces making sure the crowds outside the embassy do not get unruly.

“I make sure they are hydrating while they are on their guard shift, maintaining accountability of their equipment and make sure their morale is high,” said Gunnery Sgt. Fernando Elallanos, platoon sergeant for Alert Contingency Platoon 6, 1st FAST, Norfolk, Va.

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## Haitians find inspiration aboard hospital ship



By MC2 Shannon Warner  
USNS Comfort

USNS COMFORT, At Anchor - The crew of the military sealift command hospital ship USNS Comfort gathered on the mess deck Feb. 12 to hold a service of remembrance and hope honoring those affected by the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that devastated the country one month ago.

What started as a solemn service to remember the nearly 200,000 people who lost their lives and 300,000 injured in the earthquake turned to inspirational singing led by Haitian patients and their escorts.

“It really motivated and inspired me,” said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Rasheda Anderson, a surgical technician in the operating room here.

“It really gave me hope and made me believe in the mission even more. It really touched me inside and seemed to bring up everyone’s morale and spirits.

The chaplains, Red Cross workers and patients felt a service that conveyed a feeling of hope that today is better than yesterday

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Red Cross workers Simpson St. Fort and Rev. Noster Montas lead Haitian patients and Navy personnel in song during a service of remembrance and hope held on the mess decks aboard USNS Comfort. Comfort is in Haiti supporting Operation Unified Response, providing medical care and humanitarian aid to those affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Shannon Warner)



# TOP RESPONSE

## Deputy commander discusses role of U.S. forces in Haiti



By Sgt. Richard Andrade  
XVIII Airborne Corps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, deputy commanding general, Joint Task Force - Haiti and XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, N.C., , talked about the U.S. military's role in Haiti at the American embassy here Feb. 1.

"The primary role of the U.S. military," said Allyn, "is to deliver lifesaving, life-sustaining aid to the victims of the earthquake, and to assist in establishing the conditions for essential services to be restored, to focus on delivering critical medical assistance to pre-earthquake levels and to ensure that there is a distribution system in place to bring shelter food and water to the people of Haiti in a way that sustains their needs while we are here and after we are gone with systems that are sufficient to the task." he said.

"In order for us to get to that point, we are partnering with non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and the Government of Haiti to ensure that the capabilities that are need are in place to continue to deliver the needs to the people," Allyn said.

"We are principally here to provide humanitarian assistance," he said. "Security is an inherent need in delivery of humanitarian assistance, the United Nations is very capably the lead force security here," he said. "They've done a superb job, they respond aggressively and agilely when reaction forces are needed to groups of citizens that maybe come unruly at different points in time."

"I think overall that we all feel that we are making progress in Haiti," said Allyn, "Each day is better than the day before."

"We can't go fast enough," he said, "while we recognize that  
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Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, deputy commanding general, Joint Task Force - Haiti and XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, N.C., spoke with media at the American embassy in Port-au-Prince about the role of the U.S. military here. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Andrade XVIII Airborne Corps)

## JTF-H warriors make history

Sgt. Maj. Louis M. Espinal

JTF-Haiti /SOUTHCOM Cmd Sr Enlisted Advisor

Friday marked the 30th day when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck the Nation of Haiti -- pummeling its infrastructure and devastating its people.

On behalf of General Fraser, commander, U.S. Southern Command, and Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, JTF-Haiti, I would like to thank each one of you for your exemplary performance thus far in support of the Haitian people during their hour of need.

Regardless of your service component or occupational specialty, you are all warriors in your own right. That said, there are only two places for warriors to be in the world...and you're in one of them -- remember that.

All of you collectively will make history here in Haiti -- remember that also.

Regardless of where you stand (afloat or on the ground), you are making a difference with the Haitian people during their hour of need -- remember that too.

Remember all those things when you are feeling tired and hungry, missing your loved ones, or question our purpose and resolve here in Haiti. Those things I just spoke about will be your external fuel when your tank has run dry. 'Haiti' will be part of your storytelling book for a lifetime.

I ask two things of you as your command sergeant major: that you do your job -- your job is not only important to us, but also to the Haitian people and that you take care of one another.



**Espinal**



## THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

*A CALL TO ACTION*

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# International community rallies for Haiti relief

By Sgt. Richard Andrade  
*XVIII Airborne Corps*

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – Nearly one month after the catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti Jan. 12, the recovery effort has become an international, inter-agency event.

“This is truly an international effort,” said Ambassador Louis Lucke, special coordinator for relief and reconstruction for Haiti. “We have effective participation from many friends of Haiti and from around the world, like the United Nations and from a number of other non-governmental organizations in carrying out this program of assistance.”

Lucke credits the U.S. military for much of the progress. “We have achieved and benefited greatly from the cooperation of the U.S. military forces. Their capabilities and level of cooperation are really incredible,” he said.

“The U.S. military was called on to support the U.S. Agency for International Development, the lead agency for our government, in these relief efforts,” said Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commanding general, Joint Task Force - Haiti and deputy commanding general, U.S. Southern Command.

“We responded immediately with several key tasks,” said Keen, “to immediately save lives and provide emergency assistance to those that were struggling to meet the needs of the Haitian people.”

Immediately after the earthquake, humanitarian aid delivery and search and



Lt. Gen. P. K. Ken Keen, deputy commanding general, U.S. Southern Command, and commander, Joint Task Force-Haiti and Ambassador Louis Lucke, special coordinator for relief and reconstruction for Haiti answer questions from the international and Haitian press outside of the American Embassy Feb. 10. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Andrade)

rescue from the international community became a priority.

“The first day after the earthquake was rescue, Lucke said. “We brought in teams from all over the United States. Many other countries did the same, and we focused on immediate relief efforts including food, water, and medical attention.”

Lucke said the involvement of the Haitian government in the relief efforts has been tremendous.

“There has been a great deal of very visible and effective Haitian leadership,” Lucke said, “The participation and leadership of the government of Haiti is essential

from here on into the future.”

International relief efforts will continue as Haiti rebuilds.

“This is truly an international effort,” said Keen, “with the focus on unity of effort and providing much needed relief assistance to the people of Haiti.

The multi-nation, non-governmental agencies and the U.S. forces have accomplished much, but still have a long way to go.

Lucke said, “This Haiti mission is a huge undertaking and it is going to take time. There will be pockets of need, but we will identify the needs and address them.”



SpC. Joshua Graff, a healthcare specialist with the 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, supports a 14-year old boy while the boy's injuries are being cleaned and redressed. (U.S. Army photo by SpC. A.M. LaVey, XVIII Airborne Corps)

## Medics gain valuable training, experience during Haiti relief

By SpC. A.M. LaVey  
*XVIII Airborne Corps*

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – For the Fort Bragg, N.C.-based enlisted medical personnel assigned to the Joint Task Force –Haiti, Operation Unified Response has been a tremendous learning experience and training opportunity.

“Our medics have been working with nongovernmental organizations, seeing 100 - 300 patients per day,” said Command Sgt. Maj. James Westover, senior enlisted advisor, 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

When the squadron first arrived, they

assisted with the disaster relief, but “the injuries that we are seeing now are not earthquake related injuries but normal routine care,” said Westover.

“Our medics have been performing amazingly, they are getting the training and experience with the NGO doctors – the experience and the lessons that they are learning, you could not pay for back in the States,” said Westover. “It has been amazing; it would take years for someone to learn all that they have learned here in this small amount of time.”

“They work hard, running day and night. It is a busy operation, but they are sticking through it. They feel a great level of ac-

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## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Ch. (Lt. Col.) Matthew Pawlikowski  
*JTF-H Catholic chaplain*

“When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you slaked my thirst. Homeless, you sheltered me. Naked, you clothed me. Ill, and you cared for me.”

~Matthew 25:31-46

“She has done a good thing . . . in preparing my body for burial.”

~Matthew 26:6-13

Right from the start, chaplains on USNS Comfort were working with the injured, as the medics who were tending to peoples' bodily wounds.

With blood still dripping, they prayed for the injured and gave final commendation to the dead.

Chaplains on the ground were immediately involved in their units' distribution points, where food, water, medicine and shelter were being supplied.

In working with the population they met with local priests and pastors, to learn their needs, and got useful information and assistance to help coordinating JTF-H efforts.

A rhythm developed in the JTF-H where regular religious services and studies are being put in place to strengthen the spirits of those who exhaust themselves in service to our needy brothers and sisters in this damaged island country.

It is a sacred honor and indeed, duty for chaplains to assist the Haitians in their time of need.

# Nations unite to provide medical assistance to Haiti



Medical volunteers from Germany, the Netherlands, as well as groups from the United States, are working together to provide aid to Haitian citizens at the Community Hospital in Port au Prince, Haiti. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Roach XVIII Airborne Corps)

By Staff Sgt. Stephen Roach  
*XVIII Airborne Corps*

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Medical volunteers from a number of countries are working together to provide aid to Haitian citizens at the Community Hospital here.

The majority of the medical professionals and supplies are from the U.S. Virgin Islands. There are a number of volunteers from Germany, the Netherlands, and the U.S.

Bethaney Pichierri, a pharmacist from Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, said, the aid workers have gone through more than eight tons of supplies in just three weeks.

When asked where the funding comes from she said, “We are private citizens. All of us from the U.S. Virgin Islands. We asked our neighbors to give and Cape Air donated the plane that comes in with supplies and doctors.”

“We don't have an organization, we're just people,” she said.

The types of supplies needed are changing as the priorities for medical care change.

“The first week we focused on amputations, but now we are using a lot of casting supplies,” she said.

Pichierri and her husband were asked to volunteer for the mission when they went to drop off supplies for Haiti because there were no pharmacists at the site and someone was needed to go through the pharmaceutical supplies.

When the volunteers started arriving at the small hospital, acute injuries were being treated. The 70-bed hospital had more than 400 people inside needing treatment. The staff conducted a number of major surgeries ranging from treating bi-lateral fractures to amputations.

David Roderick, a paramedic from Philadelphia, said, “You would take them out of the OR and put them in the hall on a mat, because you didn't have any space. There were beds everywhere and mattresses everywhere, but literally all we could do was put the rest on mats.”

Roderick said the number of procedures peaked early on. “At one point we were doing 90 surgeries a day,” he said. “We had six operating rooms going simultaneously.”

The hospital treated more subacute injuries in the weeks after the quake, like strokes and infections.

The volunteer medical staff is also trying to prepare the hospital to become a better health care provider overall. Roderick

# Servicemembers remember fallen Airman

By Spc. A. M. LaVey  
XVIII Airborne Corps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Exactly thirty days after the devastating earthquake that rocked this country, both the Republic of Haiti and the United States of America paused today to remember those who had perished in the disaster.

At Logistic Support Area Dragon, next to the American embassy, servicemembers from six of the uniformed services, along with officers from allied nations and Department of Defense civilian personnel, joined together to remember one of their own.

Air Force Lt. Col. Ken Bourland, 37, of Birmingham, Ala., was the Caribbean desk officer for the U.S. Southern Command, visiting Haiti Jan. 12 for an official meeting with Haitian defense and security counterparts.

Bourland was in his room at the Hotel Montana when the earthquake struck at 4:52 p.m. Jan. 12. His remains were found at the Hotel Montana here Feb. 7 after more than three weeks of search and rescue efforts.

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, deputy commander of SOUTHCOM and commanding general of the Joint Task Force – Haiti, led a group of his peers and comrades in a memorial service, paying tribute to the fallen airman.

“Ken Bourland was an airman, a pilot, and a professional in every way,” said Keen. “On the day of 12 January he was fulfilling his duties as a foreign area officer, doing something that he loved.”

Bourland’s wife Peggy visited the site of the Hotel Montana, met with Keen and asked him to not return home without her



Marine Sgt. Maj. Louis M. Espinal, command senior enlisted advisor for the Joint Task Force – Haiti and the U.S. Southern Command, kneels before a shrine of a fallen warrior at the memorial service held for Air Force Lt. Col. Kenneth Bourland at Logistic Support Area Dragon here Feb. 12. (U.S. Army photo by Senior Airman Andria Allmond / SOUTHCOM Public Affairs)

husband, Keen said.

“We have fulfilled that promise,” said Keen. “She also asked in the same breath, that we dedicate everyday to helping the people of Haiti and complete this mission that he was here on - and that is what we do every day.”

“We look at the children here and we see their smiles, even though they have no

food, no water, and no roof over their head, but somehow they find it within themselves to smile at us and say ‘thank you,’” said Keen.

He continued, “we see it in the women who come through the distribution lines, as our paratroopers, Marines and airmen lift, what to some would be the weight of the world, 100 pounds of rice on their shoulders, they smile and say ‘thank you’ - they don’t ask a lot.”

“I ask every single one of us to dedicate ourselves as we go about our duties here, in the embassy, or out there in the cities delivering aid,” said Keen, “and remember those who have served and keep in mind the price that some have paid.”

Our nation asks a lot of our servicemembers and even more of their families, said Keen.

Before the shrine of a fallen warrior: the tags that identify the fallen, the combat boots which signify the final march of the final battle, along with the inverted rifle and bayonet both symbolizing a time to cease the battle and pause to remember a comrade, Marine Sgt. Maj. Louis M. Espinal, the command senior enlisted advisor for JTF-H and SOUTHCOM, stood before the formation, called them to attention and sounded role call.

When Espinal got to Bourland’s name there was no answer.

Again, his name was called.

And the third time, Bourland still did not respond.

The hot, dusty air was filled with the sound of a bugle playing taps and like Bourland would have wished, the mission continued.

Funeral services in the U.S. were Tuesday.

# CONTINUATION

## Allyn

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progress is being made, we are reaching more people, we are feeding families for two weeks at a time now, rather than just surviving a day at a time”

Allyn said the military is identifying the longer term needs of the people and the Government of Haiti

“Over 16 buildings that belonged to the Government of Haiti were destroyed by the earthquake,” Allyn said. “We have been trying to identify alternate facilities that the Government of Haiti can use to restore its governmental capacity.”

When asked about the military’s goals in the long run, Allyn said, “We’ve been going around to critical infrastructure sites like hospitals, telecommunications, power substations and providing expertise necessary to assess both the immediate damage and the long term improvement that needs to be done to restore the essential capacity of the government to govern for the people.”

“We intend to ensure that there is a solid plan that the government is comfortable with,” he said, “and then we will assist in helping to identify the right capability to meet the needs for the people and the Government of Haiti.”

“The desire to get supplies immediately to the people in need which is the overall purpose that we are trying to achieve is something that is shared by everybody involved here,” Allyn said. “There is no confusion about why we are here and what we are trying to do.”

When asked about supply and demand issues, Allyn replied, “You are going to have friction as you have a high priority need to be met, but we work through that very effectively and I think the people of Haiti feel the effects that are being delivered by the united front of the non-governmental organizations, United Nations, United States Agency for International Development, and the Department of Defense as a supporting and enabling arm for this effort.

“I was at a food distribution point yesterday and there certainly was no disappointment in the NGO that was supporting it. USAID and certainly the people of Haiti were appreciative of what was being delivered on their behalf,” he said.

“We are in the production business,” Allyn said. “We’ve been producing capabil-

ity on behalf of the people of Haiti since we arrived and we will continue to do so as long as that need is there and as long as we can help to deliver the capability that is needed.

“The desire to help the people of Haiti, to deliver emergency supplies and capability, is something we know we can do, he said. “We know we have the logistics infrastructure, we have the reach, and we deliver that in support of the U.S. government agencies and the U.N. agencies here very effectively for the people of Haiti.”

When asked about how he feels about helping the Haitian people, he said, “I think I share the sentiments of every American and everyone in the international community, that is, to deliver what is needed to the people of Haiti by the most expeditious means we can.”

Allyn said, “When you see American Soldiers assisting people to provide the supplies that they need to survive and to live and to thrive, you can’t help but to feel good about the compassion with which they are delivering the emergency aid, the commitment they have to do it as fast as humanly possible and the cooperation that is going on between the non-governmental organizations, the U.S. government agencies and the United Nations. This is truly is an international effort with the sole purpose of helping the people of Haiti,” he said.

“We are here to get the job done, and we are here until they tell us our services are no longer needed,” said Allyn.

## Predator

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Holloman team chief, during a telephone interview from his deployed location.

“That’s a big deal for us at the 849th. This is a big deal for the entire Predator community because we’ve practiced going out into the field and setting up on an airfield in a situation exactly like this.”

The Airmen who support and maintain the remotely-piloted aircraft from Holloman AFB teamed up with members of the 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing out of Creech AFB to support 82nd Airborne Soldiers and Marines on the ground in Haiti.

“Our crew chiefs and specialists are integrated at the individual level,” Tatom said. “I call it the ‘Team Predator’ concept. Neither squadron could have supported this deployment by ourselves, but by

combining assets from both the 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing and the 849th AMXS, we are able to get the job done.”

The two squadrons are working hand-in-hand to provide Predator sorties over Haiti daily, giving commanders on the ground a comprehensive view of the area in near-real time.

“They use the capability for security, locating fires and finding survivors,” Tatom said. “They are strictly for reconnaissance work.”

Because the 849th AMXS is a training squadron, the humanitarian deployment has not affected RPA operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but has given Holloman Airmen an opportunity to learn in a situation where the operations tempo is approximately 400 percent greater than home station training, Tatom said.

“We’ve taken a group of individuals that are used to the one-sortie-a-day tempo that we had at Holloman AFB flying training missions,” he said. “We’ve gone from flying one 10-hour sortie at Holloman AFB to flying two 22-hour sorties over Haiti, and these guys have just really pulled through.”

## Comfort

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and tomorrow will be better than today, would be beneficial to everyone on board the ship.

“This service was important for everyone who has been through so much,” said command chaplain David Oravec.

“We wanted to start the service somber and reflective and end on a note of hope.”

The memorial was attended by service members, civilian volunteers, and Haitian patients who were well enough to attend with their escorts. The service included prayers and singing as well as the public reading of a letter of appreciation from a former patient.

“I know if you weren’t here, many of us would be dead,” wrote former patient Leveille Valmir. The note continued on to say, “This is the biggest proof of love the U.S. could offer the Haitian people. You have given us life.”

Prayers were lead by Comfort’s chaplains and Red Cross volunteer Rev. Noster Montas. Singing was lead by The Joyful Noise Choir and Red Cross

# CONTINUATION

translator Simpson St. Fort.

“It was really inspirational. I felt my eyes get watery,” Anderson said.

The ceremony ended with a benediction lead by Comfort chaplain John Franklin. Just as with the small service held on the mess decks portrays, the American people are committed to providing aid to the people of Haiti so they can be self-sufficient once again.

## Marines

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Marines have to maintain their military bearing and be patient with the people that are in the crowded line outside of the embassy eager to get inside.

“Discipline is the biggest thing that you have to maintain with the platoon, and that falls on the platoon sergeant,” said Elallanos.

“The Marines are not only providing security for the embassy but providing security for the Haitian-American citizens who want to fly back to the United States,” said Elallanos.

Cpl. Shane Hulshol, is a squad leader with ACP 6, 1st FAST, Norfolk, Va. Even after many days in the grueling heat, Hulshol said, “My Marines have been out bustin’ their butts for the last three weeks, their morale is high and I’m extremely proud of what we have been doing,” said Hulshol.

Cpl. Justin Schrantz, an infantryman from the ACP 6, 1st FAST, Norfolk, Va., said that the Haitian people are happy

to have the Marines here. “Whether it is one person or twelve people, they shake our hands, or they tell us, ‘We love you,’ ‘Thank you for being here,’” he said.

The Haitian mission was an unpredictable one, and many servicemembers did not know what to expect, but just by the Marine’s presence alone, both Haitians and Americans feel safe walking to and from and working in the embassy.

## Medical aid

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said, “Some of the things we have treated are going to require long term solutions.

We have a lot of external fixates. There is a lot of wound care. We’re going to have to treat that. There is a tremendous need for physical therapy bringing in physical therapists and then prosthetics. There is going to be a long term plan that we’ll put in place that will serve those needs.”

The question of how all of these volunteers ended up at this small hospital nestled in the hills hrt has yet to be answered. Roderick acts as the lead coordinator between all of the groups of medical professionals.

He said, “We get people that literally pull up in vans and step off the van and ask how they can help and we try to integrate everybody.” Roddick added that they also ask for specific people. “We put out the call recently for obstetric personnel because we only have one OBGYN doc and we’re delivering a lot of babies.”

When asked what types of doctors were

needed on the ground, he said, “Right now we need more general stuff. Initially it was a lot of orthopedic stuff, but the orthopedic needs have died down. The guys that are doing all of the surgeries this week are plastic surgeons because they are doing a lot of wound debris removal. We need a lot of physical therapists and general practitioners.” One of the most needed specialties is eye care.

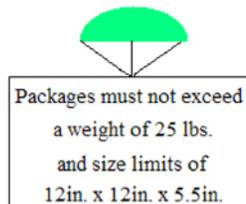
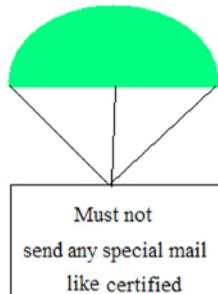
According to Pichierri there have been several eye surgeries including removals and a cornea replacement. Roderick added that they are treating a little girl in desperate need of someone that can do a complicated eye surgery that could save at least part of her vision.

“I’ve got a little girl who’s got a badly infected eye. She’s probably going to lose that eye, I don’t think there is much question of that but if we don’t get that eye out she’ll probably lose the other eye as well.”

That type of surgery would have normally been done outside of Haiti before the quake so now the group has to find someone from overseas to come in for the girl or try to find some way to get the child to the Virgin Islands. There are a number of cases of specialized care patients that need aid and the doctors, nurses and support staffs are working long hours to find a way to facilitate those needs.

As doctors, nurses and specialists continue to arrive by van, the care at the Community Hospital continues to go and saving lives is an international effort.

## JTF-HAITI POSTAL REGULATIONS



Infographic by Spc. A.M. LaVey, XVIII Airborne Corps

# POSTCARD FROM HAITI



CANAPE VERT, Haiti -- An earthquake survivor receives a 50-pound bag of rice from one of 16 locations throughout Haiti Jan. 31, two weeks following the 7.0 earthquake that left thousands of Haitians homeless and without access to food, water and vital medical care. (U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Todd Frantom)



**Jean-Jacques Dessalines monument in Le Cap**

## Haiti's struggle for independence: the Battle of Vertières Nov. 18 1803

Lt. Col. John 'Jay' Boyd  
*20th Military History Det.*

The Battle of Vertieres (in Haitian Creole Batay Vètyè), was the last major battle Haiti's struggle for independence.

It was fought by Haitian rebels led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Francis Capois against French expeditionary forces under the command of Vicomte de Rochambeau on 18 November 1803.

Vertières was a French fort located in the northern part of Haiti near the port of Le Cap. The French defeat crushed their plans to restore slavery and keep Haiti as part of French empire.

For Napoléon Bonaparte, who had come to power in France three years before, this was his first major military defeat. Sending 30,000 troops to Haiti, the combat was relentless, cruel and bloody.

Ultimately, the French were decimated

by fever, casualties and the effects of a British blockade which cut off reinforcement.

As Haitian leaders Dessalines and Capois pressed the French back, the French were forced to defend a series of fortresses (of which Fort Vertieres was one) protecting their port of Le Cap.

The Haitians outnumbered the French and their attrition attacks on the fortresses continued until Rochambeau was outflanked and forced to evacuate fort Vertieres. The success of Dessalines's forces in taking the heights of Charrier, which dominated all of Cap's outer defenses, forced Rochambeau to withdraw all his forces into Cap, and on November 19 he signed a convention that delivered Cap to Dessalines.

This was the last of many bloody battles in Haiti's War of Independence.