



Vol. I, Issue 4

THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

a call to duty
February 24, 2010

Navy teaches Haitians critical medical skills



Petty Officer 3rd Class Brittany Saulsberry, a hospital corpsman, comforts a young boy before he receives medical treatment Feb. 20 aboard the hospital ship USNS Comfort. The boy was brought aboard for treatment of a cancerous infection in his eye and a variety of other life-threatening conditions. Comfort is currently in Haiti supporting Operation Unified Response as a sea-based hospital with the mission of preventing loss of life, limb or eyesight. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Matthew Jackson)

By MC2 Chelsea Kennedy
USNS Comfort

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Sailors embarked on the hospital ship USNS Comfort provided physical therapy assistance and subject-matter expert advice to medical staff members at St. Damien Hospital here Feb. 19.

Comfort also visited the hospital to assess the medical needs of the facility and to assist recovering victims suffering from injuries resulting from last month's earthquake.

"We started sending people ashore when the need [for physical therapy] on board the ship decreased," said Cmdr. Deborah Carr, the physical therapy division officer aboard Comfort.

She went on to say that if those who have received treatment

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Military compensates Haitians for claims during operation

By Senior Airman Andria J. Allmond
U.S. Southern Command

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- The U.S. military forces in Haiti are compensating individuals for valid accidents or incidents sustained by inhabitants or their property caused by the U.S. military or Department of Defense civilians and contractors during Operation Unified Response, which began Jan. 13.

"We recognized a long time ago that when we're on foreign soil, we sometimes break things," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jack Ohlweiler, Joint Task Force-Haiti deputy staff judge advocate. "It's important that when we do leave this theater, we help to leave the people whole."

Passed in 1942 when the U.S. was preparing to enter World War II, the Foreign Claims Act, was created to do just that

— leave a country's people and their belongings intact upon the U.S. military's departure. Its goal is to maintain friendly relations through the prompt settlement of meritorious claims. The FCA is only valid on foreign ground and has a combat exclusion. This means, it is only applicable to inhabitants of a foreign country and is not applied to incidents or accidents occurring from combat operations.

"Being that Operation Unified Response in Haiti is a humanitarian effort, there's little chance of combat exclusion," said U.S. Army Capt. Fred Ingram, JTF-H operational law attorney, comprising the one-man Foreign Claims Commission at the U.S. embassy, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and charged with investigating each claim.

"From day one, of us arriving in theater, if

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U.S. Army Capt. Fred Ingram, Joint Task Force-Haiti operational law attorney and Foreign Claims Commission at the U.S. embassy, oversees the settlement paid to a Haitian mother for her 16-year old son, Feb. 14. Payment must be overseen by a parent or guardian if the recipient is under 21 years old, the legal age of adulthood in Haiti. (U.S. Army photo by Senior Airman Andria J. Allmond / SOUTHCOM)

Italians, Brazilians join forces to provide humanitarian relief



Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, Joint Task Force-Haiti, and Marine Sgt. Maj. Louis M. Espinal, command senior enlisted advisor, Joint Task Force - Haiti, receive a brief from an Italian diver about the hyperbaric chamber used to treat acute and chronic dive injuries. (U.S. Army photo by Col. Billy J. Buckner XVIII Airborne Corps)

By Col. Billy J. Buckner
XVIII Airborne Corps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Although less publicized, nearly 1,000 Sailors and Soldiers from the Italian aircraft carrier, ITS Cavour, arrived here Jan. 31 joining 30 other nations in providing humanitarian relief to the Haitian people.

The more than 35 doctors and nurses, to including medical professionals from the Brazilian military and the volunteers that man the ships hospital, have treated approximately 350 patients and performed more than 35 surgeries since their arrival.

Currently the hospital has 15 patients on board, mostly children, who are receiving orthopedic and pediatrics care.

The Cavour is the first carrier of its class in the Italian navy and was designed with state-of-the-art equipment and command and control systems. The ship even comes equipped with a hyperbaric chamber used to treat acute and chronic conditions.

"We are happy to be involved in this mission," said Master Chief Petucco Dario, the ships radio chief. "For what we are doing, it is great."

About 250 Soldiers assigned to the ship are working from a forward operating base on shore where they are assisting with

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JTF-Haiti awaits final World Food Program requirements

By Spc. A. M. LaVey
XVIII Airborne Corps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The World Food Program has ended the interim stage of its food distribution program here Feb. 20.

"Over 19 million pounds of bulk food rations have been given out to about 2 million Haitians thus far," said Col. Gregory Kane, director of operations, JTF-H. "These are 14-day rations to families so that they don't have to worry about food day-to-day. It has been a very successful program."

The international community and non-governmental organizations, working with JTF-H, are fairly practiced by now and they completed the most recent stage of the program, mostly without any issues - logistical or otherwise.

"There were some glitches but the U.N., World Food Program and the NGO's have been very adaptive and quick to find them and provide solutions to overcome," said

Kane. "We anticipate that when they kick off this next phase of a structured feeding program Mar. 1, that there will be very little required from the JTF-H."

The JTF-H, currently with about 12,800 American servicemembers in Haiti, has been sharing the responsibility for the security of the food distribution points with the U.N. security forces.

"They have always been in the lead but we have been augmenting them," said Kane. "Though humanitarian assistance and disaster relief is not what the U.N. forces are here for, they have been stepping up their support for these kinds of missions."

All but one of the distribution points were jointly manned with security elements from both the U.N. and the JTF-H.

"We have been helping by secure certain distribution points that are outside the U.N.'s ability or those which have exceeded their capacity," said Kane.

With civilian agencies, NGO's, and the government of Haiti picking up more of the

responsibility of distribution and forward-looking planning elements, the need for military assistance has been progressively declining.

"We are waiting to find out the final requirements from the World Food Program, but initial planning states that the specific need from the JTF-H are significantly less than what we had provided in the first and interim phases," said Kane.

In the initial phase of the food distribution program the JTF-H assisted with the security of all the sites. In the second portion of this phase, the JTF-H provided security at four points. In the next stage, further reductions are expected.

The JTF-H has also been working with the U.N., through the International Organization for Migration, to assist the people of Haiti, who have been displaced from their homes, with their need for shelter, especially as the rainy season approaches.

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THE RESPONDER
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A CALL TO DUTY

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

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

“Congress shall make no law establishing a religion nor restricting the free exercise thereof”
~1st Amendment to The Constitution

It sometimes seems strange to other countries how Americans use our chaplains. But we Americans recognize that those who serve in defense, support, and advancement of our freedoms should not be required to give up practice of their own religious traditions in order to defend America's basic principles. In other words, if our country sends us away from home to serve, then our country has an obligation to provide the same opportunities that service members had at home to exercise their form of worship. To that end:

- The Joint Task Force - Haiti made a point of bringing an army Catholic chaplain to Haiti for the needs of over 25 percent of the force. He roves the entire JTF-H area of operations saying Mass fifteen times per week, hearing confessions, and providing counsel. He offered Ash Wednesday services for eight days to ensure Catholics and other christians could observe the beginning of Lent, the season in preparation for the paschal season .

- The JTF-H chaplain, a non-denominational Christian, arranged for Friday Jewish Shabbat services in the Embassy compound. Several other Christian chaplains spent more than two days tracking down the JTF-H's cache of kosher MREs for a Jewish serviceman wanting to observe his ordinances.
- One of our Muslim servicemen wanted to join in Friday afternoon juma prayers. The Catholic chaplain, as a matter of course, drove him to the Jordanian compound and picked him up after they shared a communal meal.

The legal basis for the Chaplaincy derives directly from our founding documents and the very ideas of freedom cherished by Americans. And whether one personally believes in God or not – religious freedom and worship is fundamental to being American, no matter where we serve on earth.

Haiti, UN, Joint Task Force discuss issues relating to debris removal



Brig. Gen. Nicolas E. Matern, deputy commanding general - humanitarian assistance, Joint Task Force-Haiti, addresses members of the debris management task force. Members of the Government of Haiti met with members of the U.S. and Canadian armies and non-governmental agencies to discuss the future of rubble removal Feb. 21. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Andrade / XVIII Airborne Corps)

By Sgt. Richard Andrade
XVIII Airborne Corps

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – Members of the Government of Haiti met with members of the U.S. and Canadian armies and non-governmental agencies to discuss the future of rubble removal Feb.21.

Brig. Gen. Nicolas E. Matern, deputy commanding general-humanitarian assistance, Joint Task Force-Haiti, said he was unaware how complex this debris management task force was going to be, but remained optimistic.

“It requires a lot of coordination, it requires a lot of understanding,” said Matern of the mission ahead.

The task ahead Matern said, “is going to get harder, he said of the undertaking ahead of them, “it is important to remain focused.”

“The international community is realizing that the military has certain things that it can bring to the table, namely resources, planning capabilities,” said Matern.

“The Government of Haiti is a critical component,” Matern said of Haitian government's participation, “they are most helpful, vectoring us in the locations where we will have the most impact.”

The cooperation between the agencies, armies and the Government of Haiti has not been seen and is thought of as historic by Canadian army Capt. Jose Fernandez.

“I have never been involved in a humanitarian mission that included the U.N. and NGO's, something this complex, this multi-dimensional, I don't think that there have been many examples in history,” said Fernandez.

“It's historic because it's one of the first time where you have various types of non-governmental organizations, military, civilian, local officials,” said Fernandez.

“The purpose of this meeting is to address the safety of certain camps that are critical for the regional areas, for cleaning the sewage canal before the rainy season that begins in April,” said Fernandez.

“Identifying sites where the debris is going to be put and recycle the pieces that can be recycled, processed and put to good use at a later date.”

“The debris management task force started a week ago to define objectives, to create independent sub-groups that are working on various aspects of the problems I've mentioned,” he said.

“It makes it a bit difficult at times because we don't all speak the same language but given the urgency and given the great need, we will try to make things move nonetheless.”

“What we are trying to do here is to take advantage of the momentum of aid and help that Haiti is getting, to try to get some of these problems that we can address on the short term to be solved,” said Fernandez.

US , Haitian coast guards share unique partnership

By Lt. Gene Maestas
U.S. Coast Guard District Seven

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- The people in Port-au-Prince could see the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Forward on the horizon at dawn the morning after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the infrastructure of Port Au Prince and killed thousands after the earth shook violently late Tuesday afternoon on January 12, 2010.

The Forward was the first Coast Guard asset to arrive on scene and was soon followed by a Coast Guard C-130 airplane from Clearwater, Fla., to help provide assessments of the damage. The Coast Guard Cutters Mohawk and Tahoma arrived the next day.

The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Oak anxiously awaited orders to deploy to Haiti to assist their friends and colleagues at the Coast Guard base in Killick.

"We developed a trusting, working relationship with the Haitian coast guard," said Cmdr. Michael W. Glander, commanding officer, CGC Oak. The crew of the Oak has made several trips to Haiti to train with them since 2007.

"It's a professional exchange that includes engineering and medical training," added Glander. The Haitian coast guard exchange



A small boat crew from the Coast Guard Cutter Legare and a Haitian coast guard patrol boat crew conduct a joint maritime security patrol of Port-Au-Prince Jan. 26, 2010. Ensign Brian Field and Seaman Tim Fox were embarked on the Haitian coast guard patrol boat to support their efforts. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Brian Dykens)

program also offers an opportunity for Haitian coast guard members to receive additional training at the Coast Guard Training Center in Yorktown, Va. and the Leadership School at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

Lambert Jean Rosemond, the chief of operations at the Haitian

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Safety

By Mr. Jesse Martin
JTF-H Safety

We have had four confirmed cases of malaria!

Before you read this article, have you taken your Doxy? Applied insect repellent to your skin and clothes? Is your area clean, organized and free of standing water? Have you also ensured your battle-buddy/wingman/shipmate has also?

There are two main types of vector-borne diseases we should be concerned with in Haiti -- malaria and dengue fever. Malaria is a serious, sometimes fatal, disease caused by a parasite. Haiti has the highest malaria case rate among the West Indies. Night flying mosquitoes carry malaria. Once infected, symptoms begin 10 days to four weeks after infection, although a person may feel ill as early as eight days or up to one year later.

Humans get malaria from the bite of a

malaria-infected mosquito. When a mosquito bites an infected person, it ingests microscopic malaria parasites found in the person's blood. The malaria parasite must grow in the mosquito for a week or more before infection can be passed to another person.

If, after a week, the mosquito then bites another person, the parasites go from the mosquito's mouth into the person's blood.

The parasites then travel to the person's liver, enter the liver's cells, grow and multiply. During this time when the parasites are in the liver, the person has not yet felt sick.

The parasites leave the liver and enter red blood cells in as little as eight days or up to several months. Once inside the red blood cells, the parasites grow and multiply. The red blood cells burst, freeing the parasites to attack other red blood cells.

Toxins from the parasite are then released into the blood, making the person feel sick.

Dengue fever transmission is usually seasonal, during and shortly after the rainy season and the risk of infection is highest near urban centers. Day-flying mosquitoes transmit dengue fever.

Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, nausea/vomiting, and rash. The rash may appear three to four after the onset of fever. Infection is diagnosed by a blood test that detects the presence of the virus or antibodies. The illness may last up to ten days, but complete recovery can take two to four weeks.

Preventive counter measures include: keeping exposed skin covered, wearing insect repellent, using a product that contains 20 to 50 percent DEET and sleeping under a Permethrin-treated bed net.

These will greatly reduce your chances of becoming infected with malaria or dengue fever. In addition to the above preventive measures, taking your daily antibiotics will greatly reduce your chances of contacting malaria.



Sailors work together while treating a young boy in the casualty receiving area of the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort Feb. 20. The boy, who the staff aboard has taken to calling Johnnie D, is believed to be an orphan. He was brought aboard for treatment of a cancerous infection in his eye and a variety of other life-threatening conditions. Comfort is currently in Haiti supporting Operation Unified Response as a sea-based hospital with the mission of preventing loss of life, limb or eyesight. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Matthew Jackson)

Navy

Continued from page 1

don't perform physical therapy "The joints can freeze to the point where a person will not have a functional range of motion in their joints."

In addition to working with the patients at the hospital, Comfort sailors shared their valuable knowledge with the hospital staff and clinic workers.

"The Sailors are doing a little bit of [physical therapy] work with patients," Carr said. "They are also working with some of the civilian facilities to help them learn things that they can do to help."

Many of the doctors, technicians and nurses working at the after care facilities do not have personnel specialized in providing physical therapy.

"We're not going to be able to turn them all into physical therapy technicians," Carr said.

"Using every little tool they have in the tool box to help the patients is a good thing."

Without the knowledge that these Sailors are providing, many of the patients would not understand what is required of them to maintain their mobility for the future.

"We gave handouts for the exercises that they need to maintain or improve their strength, or amputation care for those who have lost limbs," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class James Abbington. "We are teaching patients to help themselves by showing them how to wrap their own amputations and check for infections."

Physical therapy is a key factor in the recovery process for orthopedic and amputation surgeries. It ensures that patients do not get atrophy from sitting or lying down for extended periods of time.

"Most of them just need to start walking again so they can function in everyday life," Abbington said.

With proper physical therapy techniques patients can shorten their recovery time dramatically, have much better muscle function, and livelife with a greater sense of normality.



USNS Comfort Sailor Lt. Toinette Evans embraces a young child in the pediatric ward of St. Damien Hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Sailors embarked aboard Comfort visited the local hospital to assess medical needs of the facility and assist recovering patients with their rehabilitation process. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Chelsea Kennedy)

CONTINUATION

Compensation

Continued from page 1

we caused damaged, we'll compensate the individual appropriately."

Currently, there are approximately 40 claims being tracked with 25 incidents being investigated for settlement.

The process for compensation occurs in three steps.

First, if the FCC is available, he will go to the site and begin the investigation -- taking pictures, talking to people, gathering evidence and taking statements. If the FCC is unable to travel to the location of the alleged accident, the claiming party is given a paper containing contact information, along with the address and date to meet with the FCC.

Second, if the investigation proves the case is invalid, the claim is denied. If the claim proves warranted, the FCC determines a fair amount of compensation. He conducts research, sometimes calling upon local physicians or contractors, to assist in determining the monetary value of the damage based upon local standards.

"We have to assess the value of the damage or injury, which can be difficult since this is not a mature theater," said Ingram. "Proving someone has ownership of a vehicle or house for example, doesn't always mean they have the paperwork to confirm it. Sometimes, it involves going into the neighborhoods and asking the individual's neighbors what belongs to whom. Compensating someone for lost wages due to injury may involve finding the person who treated them, wherever that treatment was rendered, and then contacting civil affairs to determine the value of their daily labor. We end up doing a lot of research, as well as consulting with the locals, to measure how much things are worth."

Lastly, the offer is made to the claimant. "We make them the offer," said Captain Ingram. "We're not trying to do any injustice here; we do what's fair in our own estimation."

The Army captain said thus far, the offers have proven agreeable to the claiming parties.

Paying the affected party is done privately by a four-person squad near U.S. embassy grounds or at the recipient's home. This

method attempts to protect the individual or family receiving the money.

"We don't want to put these people in harms way by having other people see us putting cash into their hands," said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Dan Kazmier, JTF-H staff judge advocate. "We've put together a great team to go out and do this. We even have [U.S. Army Lt. Col. Frantz Vitale] to help us translate and ease any apprehension the Creole-speaking Haitian may have while we are in the process of paying them."

Aside from the ability to speak the native tongue, Vital brings his homestation experience into the process.

"As a litigation attorney, I'm used to mediating and negotiating with opposing sides," said Vital, JTF-H legal assistance chief and originally from Haiti. "Generally, I advocate for the claimant party. Here, I am negotiating for the government. Therefore, in my position, I am familiar with both sides."

Kazmier said Vital facilitates the process significantly with his experience and strengths, making it run smoothly for both sides.

Along with Ingram as the responsible FCC and Vitale as the Creole-translating international affairs agent, the team boasts Ohlweiler, also an FCC, and Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Nelson, JTF-H human resources senior noncommissioned officer in-charge, serving the role as pay agent.

"Before we even got boots-on-ground, we knew that this was something we'd have to confront right away," said Ingram.

"Our military not only wants to help the Haitians rebuild their country from the devastation caused by the earthquake, we also want to help maintain what these resilient people still have. If members of the JTF-H damage something, it's our responsibility to make things right."

Italians

Continued from page 2

rubble removal, cleaning streets, repairing churches and schools and working with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division Soldiers and non-governmental agencies in the area.

Prior to arriving in Haiti, the Cavour

picked up about 70 Brazilian civilian doctors and nurses and military health professionals who were integrated into the task force's mission. In addition, two Brazilian helicopters were loaded on to the carrier.

Besides performing their normal duties, many of the crew members volunteer to go into the towns to help repair and fix items for residents.

"Everyone wants to help," said Dario. This morning we went into town to help make repairs to the museum."

Capt. Gianluigi Reversi, the commanding officer of the Cavour, commented that servicemembers of the task force are providing assistance to all people who have serious problems and require special treatment.

The Cavour set sail for Haiti Jan 19 from La Spezia, Italy. This is the first mission for the carrier and its crew.

Asked when they will depart Haiti, Reversi said, they would remain on station as long as directed by the Government of Italy. "We are here to help restart the regular lives of the Haitian people. It is an international cooperation," said Reversi.

Food Program

Continued from page 2

"The IOM is going through and assessing what the equipments are and if they need assistance of the JTF-H distributing tents or shelters they will make that request," said Kane. "We have assisted them by handing out tarps and transporting shelters."

Because of the U.S. military's inimitable abilities, "we were able to respond quickly, assisting with manpower, medical assistance, and rotary wing aircraft," said Kane.

"Over the ensuing 41 days we have seen an increased capacity of NGO distributing their own goods, we've seen the port come back and the airport arise from chaos to reopen."

"We still have some unique capabilities that we provide, that the international community doesn't, so we will provide those as required," said Kane. "We will remain here as long as the Haitian government needs us and wants us to be here, and as long as there is a mission here to be performed," said Kane.

POSTCARD FROM HAITI



Helpful hand

CARREFOUR, Haiti -- A young man receives a bag of rice from a distribution point set up by the United Nations and is guarded by both U.N. and U.S. forces, both of whom are providing humanitarian relief to the Haitian people affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake. Various (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Richard Andrade / XVIII Airborne Corps)

Coast Guard Continued from page 4

coast guard base in Killick, has attended several training missions in the United States and has the plaques and certificates lining the wall in his office that this. One of his most significant achievements was completing Officer Candidate School in 1999.

Lambert said, "The United States government has provided a lot of support to the Haitian coast guard."

To this date, 80 Haitian coast guard members have studied in the United States. The Haitian coast guardsmen also train with the crew of the Oak as least twice a year and were making preparations for their next training opportunity.

Two Oak crewmen were already in Haiti making assessments to determine areas of focus for their next professional exchange when the earthquake hit.

The crewmen were found in good condi-

tion by the Coast Guard liaison officer in Haiti, Cmdr. Evan Grant. Lambert said Grant was at the Killick base around 5 p.m. the afternoon the earthquake hit and worked until 7 a.m. the next morning. According to Lambert, Grant began providing medical treatment to the crowds of injured who came to the base looking for help.

The next day, the Tahoma embarked a team to the Killick base and also provided medical assistance to the injured who were seeking help. Lambert indicated there were hundreds of people who came to the base looking for help. He told his crew to take care of their families first - and then to come back to work.

On the evening of the earthquake, the crew of the Oak began making preparations to deploy to Haiti. The next day they left their homeport of Charleston, S.C., and headed to Jacksonville, Fla. to load equipment for aids-to-navigation work and relief supplies provided by the Department of

Defense program Project Hand Clasp.

The following day the Oak headed to Miami to take on medical supplies provided by the Coast Guard clinic and 12,800 bottles of water donated by Pepsi. Two Coast Guard Creole speaking interpreters also joined the crew in Miami.

The following day the crew of the Oak arrived in Haiti and caught up with the crew of the Tahoma to provide medical assistance for the injured at the Haitian coast guard base in Killick.

"The crew said this is the most rewarding thing they have ever done," said Glander. The crew of Tahoma also helped to establish a landing field so helicopters could evacuate the seriously injured to the USNS Comfort and other locations for treatment. The assistance to the Haitian coast guard is greatly appreciated by the Haitian coast guard crew.

"It is a pleasure to work with the US Coast Guard and we will continue, we are family," Lambert added.