



Vol. I, Issue 5

THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

a call to duty
February 27, 2010



A boat crew pulls alongside the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Oak as crewmembers aboard prepare to lift the boat into its cradle. The Oak arrived in Port-au-Prince from Charleston, S.C., to assist with relief efforts for Haiti. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandyn Hill / USCG District 7)

Coast Guard helps to rebuild Haiti's ports



The buoy chain splashes into the water as the crewmembers aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Oak set the second buoy in Port-Au-Prince harbor. The buoy was set to mark safe water as ships approach the main terminal pier. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandyn Hill / USCG District 7)

by PA1 David Mosley
U.S. Coast Guard District Seven

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – An international port is a crossroads of culture, languages and international exchange. It is a nation's lifeline to the world through its imports and exports.

On Jan. 11, the international port of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was just this, Haiti's lifeline to the world with 95 percent of the ports activity consisting of imports to the country.

The Port-au-Prince seaport was forever changed on Jan. 12, when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocked the

nation's capitol and the port. Within moments, the harbor facilities had crumbled to the earthquake onslaught. Piers crashed into the harbor, strewn shipping containers across the water and sinking the port's cargo cranes and their vital link to the world. "Infrastructure is made up of nodes linking the economic system," said Lt. Cmdr. Mark Shepard, a Coast Guard Maritime Transportation System Recovery Unit team member. "The earthquake destroyed these nodes and brought the system to its knees."

Airmen volunteer while here

by Capt. Nathan D. Broshear
12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern)

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Airmen from Air Forces Southern and Air National Guard units from Kansas, Tennessee and Connecticut are working around the clock to bring much-needed food, water, aid supplies and sustenance to military forces in Haiti while extending their duty day to reach out to the local community.

In addition to their day-to-day duties, Airmen are working with search and recovery teams, assisting with new road construction, volunteering at the University of Miami hospital near the airport and distributing donated items to injured children. "Airmen weren't content to 'just do their job,'" said Col. Dan Courtois, commanding officer, 24th Air Expeditionary Group. "Our services team organized activities for people to volunteer their time ... and the response has been overwhelming." Some 24th AEG members are volunteering at the University of Miami hospital set up just outside the airfield. While there, Airmen distribute food and beverages, comfort patients and assist in maintaining the facility.

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Haiti: This is why I serve

by Capt. Nathan D. Broshear
12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern)

I'm often asked why I choose to be in the Air Force. Some people ask to start up conversation, others to be polite, and some genuinely wonder what compels Airmen to swear to support and defend the Constitution, put themselves in harm's way and deploy far from home.

Most people who ask are looking for a one-word answer. They expect you'll simply say: adventure or flying, travel, education or some other military benefit.

Usually, after about 20 seconds of explanation their eyes turn glossy as you struggle to capture the essence of what you do and why you do it -- all without using military jargon.

I've been in Haiti since January and I know that when I return, people will ask me, "What did you see there? Are we really helping?" The answer to these questions is really the same answer to the question, "Why are you in the Air Force?"

I've learned service has rewards greater than any paycheck, trip abroad or educational degree. In it exist opportunities to be where others cannot, to stand where others will not, and to do what people would do if only they could be where you are.

The rewards of serving aren't one-word answers; they're the tiny snapshots of humanity, dignity and kindness playing over and over in the minds of Airmen who've 'been there'.

These scenes of hope replay in my mind each night as I lie down to sleep in my tent:

Airmen download thousands of pounds of life-saving food and water from aircraft that don't even shut off their engines. They're done in minutes and begin working on the next aircraft - 24 hours



A Coast Guardsman from Port Security Unit 307 spends time with a Haitian girl during a humanitarian visit to an orphanage in Port-Au-Prince. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by PA2 Eric J. Chandler / USCG District 7) a day -- so far, more than 3,000 times.

I hug a Haitian man as he tells me, "Without you, I would be dead ... thank you, America." I see the man again a few days later and he greets me like we've known each other for years. All he asks is for me to take a picture with him - not for him to keep, but so I can take the picture home with me and tell others his story.

An Air Force nurse cries with a patient recovering in a clinic, not from pain, but because they would soon part. Later, the whole ward -- every patient with life-threatening injuries--sings together while nurses dance for them.

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Comfort delivers relief supplies

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Chelsea Kennedy
USNS Comfort

USNS COMFORT, At Anchor -- \$2.5 million in relief supplies were offloaded Feb. 25 for distribution throughout Haiti to help the local government with earthquake recovery efforts.

Task Group 41.8, which is leading Comfort's humanitarian endeavors, coordinated the offload of the 120 pallets, consisting of general pharmaceuticals, health kits, dressings for wounds, and other medical supplies. These treatment items will initially be cataloged at a storage facility and then sent on to help land-based medical treatment centers sustain follow-on care.

"We are working hard to make sure that

the material is getting to the right places ashore, so the material will be best used and distributed where its needed most," said Cmdr. Alan Reyes, logistics officer with Task Group 41.8. "In working with the joint task force leadership, we have located a warehouse that is approved by USAID called the PROMESS warehouse which is sponsored by the government of Haiti."

After the supplies reach the storage area, they will be sorted and redistributed to those in need - many of whom were patients treated aboard Comfort.

"The warehouse is near the airport and is centrally located so medical facilities within the Port-au-Prince area, where most of the damage has occurred,

can easily receive supplies," Reyes said.

The majority of the supplies were donated by non-governmental organizations, such as Project Hope, committed to helping the people of Haiti, and Comfort's medical staff wanted to ensure that those supplies were going where they were most needed.

"Our medical staff has made site visits to ensure that patient care is being provided at those sites and that they are provided the material that they need as well," Reyes said. "We have also been able, on a limited basis, to be able to provide some of these supplies to medical facilities that are on the outer reaches of the island."

In addition to NGOs, Comfort is working closely with other services in Operation Unified Response, creating a flexible team

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THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

A CALL TO DUTY

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An Army Special Forces medic treats patients at an improvised clinic in Cap-Haitien, Haiti Feb. 22. The clinic operates out of the community gymnasium and is run by the local hospital with the help of many volunteers and Army medics from the Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command. It is mainly used as an urgent care overflow for the local hospital. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC Robert J. Fluege)

Special Operations teams leverage diversity, creativity to complete mission

By Sgt. Tony Hawkins
*Joint Forces Special Operations
 Component Command*

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti –U.S. Special Operations servicemembers are utilizing their diverse backgrounds and skill sets to help a non-governmental organization deliver and set up nearly 100 tents for Haitian citizens living in a camp here.

The distribution was a joint operation between the 82nd Airborne Division, a U.S. Army Special Operations Command civil affairs team, and an NGO named Shelter Box, who provided tents, which can house 3-6 people. Also included with the tents were blankets, a wood-burning stove, food, and a basic water purification system.

“Shelter Box and our team were able to dis-

tribute tents to most of the families that live here,” said Capt. Mike [last name withheld], an Army civil affairs team leader. “We’re making sure the ones we do have go to the neediest families first.” Mike explained that this means families with small children, the elderly and any other families that didn’t have some kind of waterproofing, such as a large plastic tarp or tin roof.

An operation such as this, involving several dozen Soldiers and more than 100 Haitian citizens, was enhanced by the special skills and talents exhibited by U.S. Special Operations service members. Sgt. Nimchie, a member of the civil affairs information support team, is a native Creole speaker.

“Every time I speak

to someone I hear, ‘I knew you were one of us!’ or ‘Look, she even smiles like a Haitian,” Nimchie said.

The ability to speak the language and understand the local culture are invaluable skills, skills that she gets plenty of opportunities to use during her current mission in Haiti, she said.

“I’m able to speak to people to provide them with information and instructions during the distributions,” she said. “People see me and recognize me as a Haitian, so it gets their attention. They feel comfortable talking to me, so I can find out their needs and relay them to the commander.”

Although she did provide some information to the members of the

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JTF-Haiti monitors outlying towns’ growth

by Spc. A.M. LaVey
XVIII Airborne Corps

JEREMIE, Haiti – The deputy commanding general, Joint Task Force-Haiti, met with local non-governmental organizations and a U.S. Army civil affairs team during a visit to discuss the needs of the recently-expanded community here Feb. 23.

“One of the secondary effects of the earthquake is that people who lived in the large cities, like Port-au-Prince, are moving in with their families who live in the outlying communities,” said Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, deputy commanding general, JTF-H.

The coastal city of Jeremie, in contrast to the urban life of Port-au-Prince, is alive and bathed in sunny pastel colors, deep greens, and that special blend of azur that seems only to appear in the Caribbean Sea. School chil-

dren, walking home during the afternoon lunch break, are dressed in an assortment of brightly-colored school uniforms and there are noisy parrots squawking in the forests of palm trees.

A civil affairs team from the 98th Civil Affairs Battalion, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, has been in Jeremie assessing the support network, determining whether or not it is adequate to meet the needs of the growing community.

The move from Port-au-Prince “has benefitted the people in the short term, but in the long term you have to make sure that there are support networks in place, so that the increased population in communities like Jeremie will be taken care of,” said Allyn. “Our team here is working with NGOs and with the United Na-

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Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn receives a kiss from a girl at a Jeremie maternity home. Allyn was visiting Jeremie to make sure the community can handle those displaced by the Jan. 12 earthquake that rocked the city of Port-au-Prince. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. A.M. LaVey)

Naval civil affairs teams bring Haitians together

by Cpl. Bobbie Curtis
22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit

CARREFOUR, Haiti – Since the beginning of Operation Unified Response, one of the primary missions of the Navy and Marine Corps civil affairs teams, attached to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, is to unite the people and governments of earthquake menaced Haiti together with non-governmental organizations and international aid workers.

Using a facility called a civil military operations center, Marines from 4th Civil Affairs Group, attached to the 22nd MEU and sailors from Maritime Civil Affairs Team 207, worked

diligently to bring all these factors together to help organize a combined local and international effort to stabilize the Caribbean nation.

“The mission of the CMOC was to act as a bridge between the people and the local government,” said Staff Sgt. Jerrick D. Croston, a civil affairs team chief with 4th CAG and the 22nd MEU.

The CMOC is located in the town of Carrefour, just outside the nation’s capital city of Port-au-Prince, on Landing Zone Argonaut, a small encampment operated by the Marines and sailors of Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 22nd MEU.



Chief Petty Officer Charlotte Reijo, a team leader with Maritime Civil Affairs Team 207, meets with children from Carrefour, Haiti, Jan. 18. Navy and Marine civil affairs specialists are conducting operations in Carrefour. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Bobbie Curtis)



Children from Carrefour, Haiti, gather as local leaders conduct a humanitarian aid distribution in the city, Feb. 18. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Bobbie Curtis)

At the facility, civil affairs personnel met with town leaders and NGO officials to plan distributions and combined operations for the people of the local area.

“As local Haitians and organizations had needs, they brought them up to the CMOC,” Croston, a Philadelphia native, continued. “The major achievement of the CMOC was getting the mayors [of Carrefour] and the local government to work with the community leaders of Carrefour.”

Croston explained that

many of the one million strong population of Carrefour have strong loyalty to a few key leaders in the community, who are mostly pastors from local religious organizations.

“After the earthquake people looked to them,” he added. “So we brought the local leaders and the local government together.”

Bringing the local leaders and their followers together with the Haitian government and several NGOs, the Marines and sailors of the CMOC streamlined the aid process for the people of

Carrefour, transferring the primary role of providing humanitarian aid, from the U.S. Military to the Haitian local and national governments. The civil affairs personnel conducted the operation in multiple-steps, beginning with an assessment phase where the Marines and sailors found out what problems were occurring in the area. Once problems were identified, the personnel worked with Haitian leaders and NGOs to solve the issues.

“At this point we

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Italians take lead in rubble removal

by Pfc. Kissta Feldner
2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI – Buildings lean dangerously, looming over Soldiers in the street below attempting to remove mounds of debris, the remains of structures that have already crumbled. As a tractor fills its bucket

with a new load of fragmented concrete, it snags a downed power line, causing loose bricks to fall from the structure above. This scene is evidence of why the engineering mission here is so important.

When the road is cleared, it will become a safe route for international aid

organizations to access areas of Port-au-Prince in need of assistance, as well as increase traffic flow, open the streets for vendors, and generally enhance functionality of the city.

Soldiers from the Italian Task Force have teamed up with Paratroopers with 2nd Brigade Special

Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, in addition to their continued work with the Center of National Equipment, to clear the streets of the city.

The Paratroopers are using their loaders and Bobcat utility work machines to remove the massive amount of rubble left by the Jan. 12 earthquake. But, their

mission would be much more time consuming if it weren’t for the addition of the Italians’ large machinery. Each day the Italians will be introducing more equipment as the mission progresses.

“[The Italians] have better assets,” said Sgt. Robert Medders, an Ackerman, Miss., native

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Redeployers make safety number 1

Mr. Jesse Martin
JTF-H Safety

One of the most dangerous times during deployment is when you are about to leave and go home. Redeployment is the preparation for and movement of forces and materials from one area to another. Our goal is to maintain unit readiness while safely move personnel, equipment, and supplies back to home station.

The JTF had a negligent discharge and a vehicle accident in the same day by the same unit, two days prior to redeployment.

Leaders must recognize that human nature and enthusiasm for going home may cause some personnel to become somewhat careless, while working on short term missions and objectives. Some become careless with everything from personal equipment to military weapons.

Keeping personnel informed about stages of redeployment and probable changes will enhance confidence. Your personnel must understand that changes to the scheduled events can occur at a moments notice. Be patient, safe redeployment of all personnel and equipment is a large part of overall mission success.

Accident trends have shown a spike in incidents during the first and last 30 days of deployments. To mitigate the risk of a

careless accident during redeployment the following recommendations should be enforced: Appropriate supervision and leadership for all missions. Personnel may become lackadaisical when it comes to equipment accountability, vehicle safety (speeding, seatbelts, ground guides) and weapon safety. Enforcing the standards and proper supervision will reduce this hazard. Remember the mission is not complete until we are all back home safe and sound.

Coast Guard

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The economic system that brings supplies into the country of Haiti directly revolves around the port and its link to the world. This is where the U.S. Coast Guard has stepped in to help rebuild the broken node that is the port and help the system come back online.

An integral part of the recovery of the port is the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Oak.

Working with a native port pilot and his knowledge of the harbor, the crew of the Oak placed four new buoys and repositioned one to better prepare the port for ship arrivals.

“The crew has done an excellent job,” said Cmdr. Mike Glander, commanding officer of the Cutter Oak. “Many members of my crew have told me that this is one of the most rewarding things that they have personally done.”

As more and more shipping started to arrive with supplies to help the people, it quickly became clear that there was a need for a coordination of ship movement in the harbor.

Working together with the MTSRU, which is a team uniquely designed for coordinating the rebuild of a maritime transportation infrastructure, the Oak became a floating traffic control center, orchestrating the movements of the many ships that were arriving from countries like

Mexico, Columbia, France, Cuba and the United States.

With all the vessels arriving to bring much needed supplies to help the people of Haiti, the port, which is an essential system node, was still all but destroyed. Because of the destruction and limited usability of the port, there quickly became a bottleneck in the system.

While there was a continued focus on the port here through military and civilian joint operations, recovery assist teams made up of Coast Guard men and women from across the U.S., started surveying smaller port facilities throughout Haiti in an effort to reduce the bottleneck in Port-au-Prince.

“Overall the port infrastructure is a lot better than expected,” said Chief Petty Officer [name withheld] Brown, Atlantic Area Strike Team and MTSRU member. “Although that doesn’t mean there are not challenges to overcome.”

The port operations at the only surviving pier in the main point of entry to Port-au-Prince came to a screeching halt Jan. 26. Divers found that support legs of the pier had disappeared during the earthquake’s aftershocks, making the pier unstable and dangerous to use.

Further challenges have presented themselves by the fact that crews are working in a foreign country.

“With this being a foreign port, it is hard to know local logis-

tics,” said Brown. “We don’t even know if all of the port managers are alive, and those who are, are trying to take care of their families while working each day towards putting their country back together.”

Working together with the people of Haiti, the crew of the Oak, combined with the expertise of the MTSRU, the ports of Haiti are steadily coming back online.

Volunteers

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In addition to erecting tents, stringing lights and building plumbing fixtures for Airmen at the Air Force encampment, civil engineers are constructing new roadways to redirect traffic flow in front of the international airport. The site of the new roads were little more than dirt pathways until civil engineers took on the task to make these routes usable to vehicles.

“These valuable new roads will help to keep traffic moving in the congested area directly in front of the terminal,” Courtois said.

Other Airmen are volunteering for more somber tasks, assisting mortuary services teams in the recovery of human remains and personal articles.

Teams have assisted in more than 40 recoveries, helping with the dignified transfer of remains to families and loved ones.

At the 24th Expeditionary Medical Squadron, Airmen are distributing items donated by Air Force families in the United States. Teddy bears, coloring

and activity books and other children’s items were given to patients in an EMEDS facility.

The Airmen don’t know how much longer they’ll be in Haiti supporting the task force, but as long as there is an Air Force presence, the commander intends to provide opportunities for Airmen in the community.

“Despite the workload here in Haiti, Airmen always seem to find time to ‘give a little more,’” Courtois said.

Comfort

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that can best support USAID’s coordinated relief activities with the Haitian government.

“The supply department is moving cargo on to a landing craft alongside Comfort, and they will be taken ashore where the Army will take over and put pallets onto flat bed trucks and transport them to the PROMESS warehouse, where the NGOs managing that warehouse can store and inventory the material,” Reyes said.

The management of the movement of supplies, added Reyes, is like working a symphony to ensure all the pieces play the right part.

“It’s a great example of the coordinated efforts of all the different military units here in Haiti,” Reyes said. units from the U.S. Army. We are working in close affiliation with USAID and the UN to make sure that everything is being coordinated.”

Serve

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People come together for the greater good. Airmen unload airplanes from Venezuela, China, Qatar, France, Brazil, Chile, Australia, Colombia, Nicaragua, and dozens more. They salute every aircrew as they depart, no matter what flag is on the jet's tail.

I stare in wonder at owls flying across a full flight line at 1 a.m. A private jet pulls in, full of volunteers. They ask, "Where's the nearest hotel?" I point to a few tents and cots in the grass next to the tarmac. They sleep outside and don't mind a bit.

I hold a baby born just after the earthquake on board a Navy hospital ship. The mother lost one leg and sustained multiple other injuries after debris fell on her, yet the baby is healthy...and all mom wants to talk about is how happy she is to be home again.

A family huddles under a tarp held up by sticks on a median between traffic lanes. They're cooking rice and beans from a huge sack marked "A gift from the people of the United States of America." They look up, smile and give us a big "thumbs-up" as we drive by.

I hear my family on the phone saying, "I'm proud of you...."

I give an MRE to someone who's never had one, and likely hasn't eaten all day.

When the first commercial flight arrives in Port-au-Prince, Haitian families reunite a month after the earthquake. Tears of joy stream down their faces as they embrace.

A nurse tells me about a Haitian baby boy born on board the U.S.S. Carl Vinson...the mother names him "Vincent."

A woman stands atop the mountain of rubble that was once her home. She points out where she and her son were when the earthquake hit, then explains how a fallen door

miraculously protected them from harm.

When I return home and I'm asked why I serve, I'll struggle to communicate the sights and sounds of hope that come with the privilege of being an Airman. My storytelling will fall short of putting a person where I've been.

I won't be able to conjure up the sensory signals of mutual respect, trust and compassion that come from being there when you're most needed.

Why do I serve? The one-word answer: Haiti.

Special Operations

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camp, most of the instructions were given to local citizens by a familiar face, the camp's chief, with Nimchie in the background assisting him. By receiving directions from someone the people already know and trust, the distribution of the tents went orderly and without incident.

During the distribution, medical personnel from a Latin American NGO arrived to provide treatment to the camp's citizens. Staff Sgt. Hansel, the civil affairs team sergeant and a native of the Dominican Republic, used his Spanish language skills to coordinate operations between the NGOs and his team.

Growing up so close to Haiti, Hansel came back to Hispaniola with a working knowl-

edge of the countries and cultures of the island nations.

"This is my island," he said. "I know its history and understand the culture."

By providing better shelter to the families in the camp, the civil affairs team helped shift some basic priorities for people in the camps, so that residents can receive other aid by NGOs in the future. Doctors currently have a longer term plan for the camp, which includes providing daily visits to treat any illnesses or injuries, while other NGOs regularly supply the camp with food and clean water.

As the tents were passed out, and after a quick lesson by a few U.S. soldiers, Haitians began setting up the shelters on their own.

The delivery of improved shelters allows for a smooth transition of aid distribution for people living in this Port-au-Prince camp, which is now very close to being turned over to NGOs for continued humanitarian assistance.

Jeremie

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tions security forces to ensure that networks are connected."

The civil affairs team is speaking with the local leaders and the local security forces - both the Haitian National Police and the U.N. forces. The team is also working with the NGOs that have been tak-

ing care of the population and then they will determine whether or not the systems are sustainable in the long term.

We try to identify and potential issues down the road," said Allyn. "That assessment process is underway and we will make sure that we bring this information back to Port-au-Prince, to ensure that there is a sustainable system here."

Jeremie, on the inside of the southwestern coast of Haiti derives most of its income from fishing and shipping. The economy here appears to not have been directly effected by the earthquake and most of the systems in the village appear to be functioning close to normal.

"My sensing is, from talking with the local NGO's, is that while Jeremie does have a bloated population - they are not facing an imminent crisis," said Allyn. "It is important to note though, that the people are drawing upon their food reserves and if we don't reinforce their network, they will have a problem in the future."

"We will continue to work to ensure that there is a collaborative approach to taking care of the sudden influx of population," said Allyn. "We will finish our assessment and make sure that the community has a self-sustaining network in place, that will be kept going after we are gone."



PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- A herd of cows meanders through the streets here. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen B. Roach / XVIII Airborne Corps)

Rubble

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and engineer with 2 BSTB, while working with the Italian soldiers, Feb. 17. "Their equipment has come in handy," Medders said.

Additional soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2 BCT, have been securing the site, roping off streets and stopping curious locals from entering the hazardous area. In the few days they have partnered with the Italians, the troopers are impressed with their work. "They're good at what they do," said Sgt. 1st Class Ernest Rodriguez, a Camden, N.J., native and platoon sergeant of 2nd platoon, D Co., 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2 BCT. "They're pretty much doing it all on their own," he said.

A 2nd BCT trooper stands with a group of Italian soldiers, taking a break from their work as the dust settles. They share a cigarette and swap unit patches – a custom that has become common among soldiers while working with their foreign

Team

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have transitioned the role of the CMOC to the Haitian government and are back in the assessment phase," Croston explained. "We are making sure the needs are being taken care of."

Capt. Rebecca A. Popleiski, a civil affairs team leader with 4th CAG and the 22nd MEU, said the group of civil affairs specialists have come a long way in the month they have worked in Haiti.

The Marines began their operations in the towns of Petite Goave, Grand Goave and Leogone before moving to Carrefour. Those three areas had less involvement with community leaders and worked more specifically with NGOs, whereas the Carrefour area of operations had a lot more grass-roots involvement, she explained.

"When we pull out of here, all the cities are going to be able to stand on their own," Popleiski, the Washington, D.C., native explained. "Whether that's local government or national government ... they have stepped up and taken charge."

With the aid of the Navy - Marine Corps civil affairs teams from the 22nd MEU and Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, the government of Haiti has taken primary responsibility for humanitarian aid distributions in the Carrefour area. The Marines and sailors from the 22nd MEU have become a supplementary force as the Haitian Coast Guard and international NGOs take over.

counterparts – but, they exchange few words. This is not due to hard feelings or lack of interest in one another, but because neither speaks the others' language.

Italian army 1st Cpl. Giuseppe Colletto, an engineer, said at times it is difficult communicating with the American soldiers due to the language barrier and lack of interpreters, but they have had no problems completing their mission. Colletto said he is used to overcoming this obstacle after working with U.S. troops in Afghanistan, but for some of the 2nd BCT Paratroopers this partnership is a completely new experience. "It's cool working with another country," said Medders. "Everyone works a bit different."

The Paratroopers are showing the Italians how to coordinate with CNE, the United Nations and local police so they can pull

their own security, without U.S. assistance. The Italians have everything they need to do this job on their own, Rodriguez said. "These guys are outstanding," Medders said. "They have a good understanding of what's going on here and they'll get the job done."

But as an airborne infantry unit, the capabilities of the 2BCT engineers are limited "Our light engineers are incredibly skilled," said Lt. Col. Tim Kehoe, deputy commanding officer, 2 BCT, "but their light equipment is not designed for this type of mission."

The introduction of Italian soldiers and equipment has made the difference in the rubble removal and street clearing mission, but there is still much work to be done. "We are filling the gap in support of CNE until the right elements arrive to complete this mission," says Kehoe.



A heavy equipment operator removes rubble from the streets of Port-au-Prince. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen B. Roach / XVIII Airborne Corps)

POSTCARDS FROM HAITI



USNS COMFORT, At Anchor--Aircrewmembers from the Helicopter Combat Squadron 'Dragon Whales' perform an early morning, pre-flight inspection on an MH-60S Sea hawk helicopter on the flight deck here. Comfort is anchored off the coast of Port-au-Prince, Haiti providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in support of Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matthew Jackson)



PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- Sgt. Maj. Louis Espinal, senior enlisted advisor, Joint Task Force-Haiti, congratulates a young Paratrooper from the 82nd Airborne Division here Feb. 26. 30 82nd Paratroopers raised their hands in a mass re-enlistment presided over by Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. A.M. LaVey / XVIII Airborne Corps)



PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- A child, standing outside a camp near the airport, smiles for the camera here Feb. 25. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen B. Roach / XVIII Airborne Corps)