

Operation United Response: HELPING HAITI

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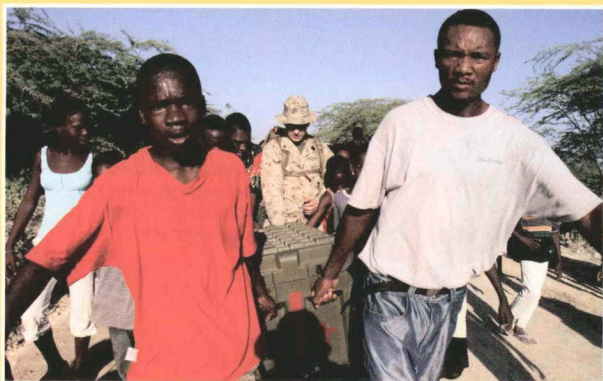


Leathernecks of the 22d MEU unload bottled water from their CH-53E Super Stallion while keeping Haitians at a safe distance and establishing an orderly path to receive the precious liquid. (Photo by P03 Ryan Steinhour, USN)

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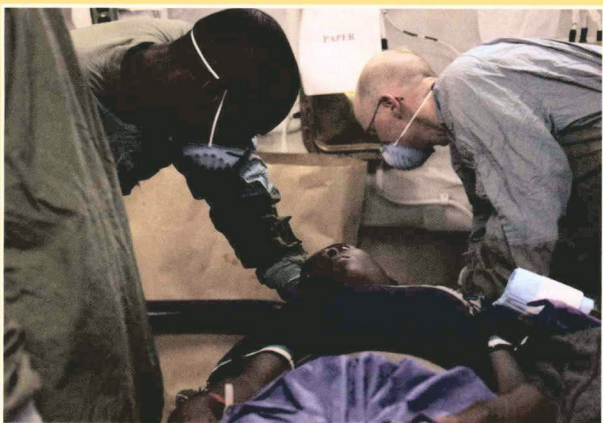
Marines Go to the Aid of Earthquake Victims



Sgt Alex C. Sanchez

Above: Navy HM3 Justin M. Wyszynski, 24th MEU, *Nassau* ARG, gets helping Haitian hands carrying medical supplies at La Gonave, where CLB-24 and BLT 1/9 delivered MREs and offered medical treatment after the earthquake.

Below: A Marine Corps French/Creole linguist comforts a Haitian earthquake victim, who is receiving treatment in the medical facilities in USS *Bataan*.



Cpl. Debbie A. Curtis

By R. R. Keene

A devastating earthquake of 7.0 magnitude struck directly below the town of Leogane 16 miles west of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, Jan. 12, 2010, followed by 52 aftershocks of 4.5 or greater. The tremors leveled nearly everything in a 32-mile radius. Officials have estimated that at least 150,000 are dead under the rubble.

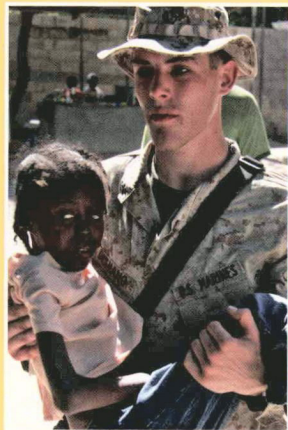
The United States immediately called on the military, including U.S. Marines, to respond with aid. Port-au-Prince's harbor was wrecked, and its major airport was damaged. Relief in Haiti was provided by

the unique "from the sea" capabilities of the Navy-Marine team.

While leathernecks and sailors were pulled from Stateside posts and stations, it was Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and MCAS New River, N.C., that provided more than 2,000 leathernecks from the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The 22d MEU, composed of 3d Battalion, Second Marine Regiment; Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461 (Reinforced); and Combat Logistics Bn 22, embarked Jan. 16 aboard ships of the USS *Bataan* (LHD-5) Amphibious Ready Group. Additionally, 130 Marines and

Below: It was a familiar scene: A Marine brings an injured Haitian to the medical facilities of the ships in the *Nassau* and *Bataan* ARGs.



LTC David J. Beall

sailors of the Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force originally scheduled for deployment to West Africa quickly changed their destination.

The initial Navy-Marine commitment was followed Jan. 21, by the amphibious assault ship USS *Nassau* (LHA-4) Amphibious Ready Group with another 2,000 leathernecks of the 24th MEU, composed of 1/9, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 162 and CLB-24.

The ships have the capacity to provide electrical power ashore, fresh water, and medical facilities ashore and on board ship to treat the injured.

Marines went ashore with surgeons, corpsmen, translators, portable water bladders and an initial supply of 914,000 meals, ready to eat, humanitarian rations from Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Ga. To get from the ships to the devastated areas, the rescuers navigated treacherous waters strewn with quake-created obstacles via amphibious assault vehicles and landing craft, air cushioned. They went ashore at Grand-Goave, west of Port-au-Prince.

Relief supplies that had to be carried farther inland were airlifted by the CH-53E heavy hauler Super Stallions and CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters. Also, the V-22 Osprey flew its first humanitarian mission, delivering 10,000 MREs to the town of Anse-a-Galets on Jan. 25. The Ospreys also used their long-range capabilities to pick up rice and lentils from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and deliver supplies from ships.

