



Vol. I, Issue 13

THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

a call to duty

March 27, 2010

Colombian general visits Haiti

by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti- Jan. 12, 2010 will be remembered in history books as the day a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti. It will be known as the worst earthquake to hit the small island. Yet, just 24 hours after this natural disaster struck, Colombian military forces deployed to assist in the relief effort.

Gen. Freddy Padilla de León, commanding general of the Colombian Military Forces, visited Haiti on March 25 to visit the Colombian and American troops and see how the relief effort was progressing.

"The purpose for this visit was to have an opportunity to gain insight to the U.S. military experience in Haiti. Also to thank the U.S. armed forces for their devoted

support and by allowing the Colombians to participate in this [humanitarian] effort," Padilla said.

Padilla took time to tour the Colombian Hospital and visit with Colombian troops operating at the hospital as well as Haitian patients.

After the hospital visit, the group toured the U.N. compound and sat with several organizations to discuss the current situation in regard to relief efforts in Haiti.

"By coming here, we were able to directly see the desolation that occurred in this country and the importance of international cooperation to help solve this crisis," Padilla said.

Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, JTF-Haiti, and Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, deputy commanding general, JTF-Haiti, were two of several



While visiting Haiti on March 25, Gen. Freddy Padilla de León, commanding general of the Colombian Military Forces, visits the Colombian Hospital. Padilla, along with Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, JTF-Haiti, and Brig. Gen. Luis Eduardo Perez Arango, General Department of Military Health, speaks with a Colombian doctor about a local national who underwent a surgery recently. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)

generals traveling with Padilla.

This was not the first time these three generals had worked together.

"General Padilla had served with both General Keen and myself prior to this," Trombitas said. "He wanted to talk with us and see how the operation was going."

Trombitas said he believes Padilla left very satisfied in what he saw.

"I think he was very proud of what the Colombians were able to accomplish here," Trombitas said. "I think his pride in his troops was strengthened by his visit today."

Padilla spent much of the day discussing the relief efforts of Haiti with Keen, Trombitas and other aid organizations involved with Operation

Unified Response.

"We feel an immense desire to collaborate our efforts with the people of Haiti," Padilla said.

Before boarding his plane, Padilla expressed a great amount of gratitude towards the U.S. and the continuing aid Haiti is receiving.

"This is a very formidable experience to have this type of working relationship between our militaries during a difficult time," Padilla said. "Many thanks for the professional manner that General Keen and General Trombitas have shown us and many thanks to what the U.S. is doing for the people of Haiti."

Trombitas felt that Padilla's visit today helped to strengthen

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While touring the Colombian Hospital, Gen. Freddy Padilla de León, commanding general of the Colombian Military Forces, and Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, JTF-Haiti, stop to speak with a patient about his recovery. Padilla toured the hospital and then continued his visit with a tour of the UN compound and a helicopter tour of Port-au-Prince and its outlying areas. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)

"Nou Bouke"

by Col. Richard Gary Moore
JTF-Haiti Chaplain

I like to jot down what I see and what I hear; not just as a future reminder, but to have a first rough cut on what people are living out...now. Taking another mission through the streets of Port-au-Prince, I discovered a phrase that kept coming up on the walls of buildings, "Nou Bouke." It means "...that's enough." After three hurricanes in 2008 and the recent devastating earthquake, I heard my inner voice say, "Yes Lord...enough pain for these people."

We cannot peel back history for Haiti or even for the rough times in our own lives, but we can take responsibility to work out what every day presents to us. Some say prayer helps; so do I. Of all the things that we do and accomplish in life, it comes down to praying; praying especially for others. Faith and prayer just go together like peanut butter and jelly.

But faithing it every day can seem like such a reframe ... such an oxymoron. Trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding? My power is made perfect in weakness?

What do you do when you reach

a personal "Nou Bouke"? Do you close your eyes and charge ahead, compartmentalize the nagging dissonance, get angry and verbally cynical, get introspective and pensive when faced with life's too much?

One of the destroyed churches in Port-au-Prince still has its crucifix intact and standing in the middle of the noise and rubble. It's a visible symbol of the invisible reality that the living God is present with us here. So, faith it and let your cross be "Yes Lord, You will make a way out for those benumbed and disoriented, Yes Lord."

JTF- Haiti Worship Services

LSA/FOB	WEEKDAY	SERVICE	TIME	LOCATION
LSA DRAGON (JTF HQ)	Sunday	Protestant	0800	Embassy Flag Pole
	Sunday	Catholic Mass	0900	Embassy Flag Pole
LSA HOPE	Sunday	Contemporary Protestant	1100	Hope Chapel
	Sunday	Gospel Protestant	1900	Hope Chapel
	Wednesday	Bible Study	1800	Hope Chapel
	Wednesday	Catholic Mass	1930	Hope Chapel
	Friday	Gospel Choir Rehearsal	1900	Hope Chapel
APOD (West)	Saturday	Catholic Mass	1300	USAF Chapel
	Sunday	LDS	1230	USAF Chapel
APOD (East)	Saturday	Catholic Mass	1500	377th chapel tent
	Sunday	Protestant	1030	377th chapel tent
	Sunday	Catholic Mass	1130	377th chapel tent
FOB WARRIOR	Sunday	English Mass	1900	209 MP
	Sunday	Spanish Mass	2000	Colombians
FOB WHITE FALCON	Monday	Catholic Mass	1630	FOB Chapel
SPOD RED BEACH	Monday	Catholic Mass	1830	Trailer Office



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A CALL TO ACTION

Commander JTF-Haiti
Command Senior Enlisted Advisor JTF-Haiti
JTF-Haiti Public Affairs Officer
JTF-Haiti Public Affairs Senior Enlisted Advisor

Lt. Gen. P. K. (Ken) Keen
Sgt. Maj. Louis M. Espinal
Col. David Johnson
Sgt. Maj. Rick Black

Responder Staff:
Editor
Layout/Design

Sgt. 1st. Class Debra Thompson
Pvt. Samantha Hall

The editor can be reached at The Responder office located in the LSA Dragon sustainment tent, by DSN phone: 413-254-8007 or by email: JTFHFAOCI@CORE1.DJC2.MIL

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JTF-Bravo conducts first mission in Haiti

by Staff Sgt. Bryan Franks
Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti - An aircrew from 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, conducted their first rotary-wing airlift mission March 24 here in support of JTF-Haiti.

The 1/228th along with other members from JTF-Bravo deployed from Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras March 21.

"We are excited about getting in the air and doing our part," said Lt. Col. Salome Herrera, commander, 1/228th. "We've been working non-stop from building a landing zone, setting up a maintenance area and standing up a command and control element... it's nice to finally see it pay off."

The unit traveled nearly 3 hours via a C-17 Globemaster III along with three of their aircraft. Once on the ground, everyone pitched in to unfold the UH-60 Blackhawk so they could begin flight testing them.

"The only time we fold or unfold blades on a UH-60 is when we deploy...and for a lot

of our guys this is their first deployment with an aviation unit," said Herrera. "So it is a great opportunity for our people to perform these tasks in a real world environment."

While maintainers were still making the final adjustment to their Blackhawks, support elements began establishing a base of operation, setting up communication equipment, computers and weather observation equipment.

Meanwhile, JTF-Bravo pilots and aircrews were being briefed by their Navy counterparts who will transition out as JTF-Bravo takes over as the primary rotary-wing lift capability for JTF-Haiti.

"This has been a total force effort on the part of our service members," said Lt. Col. Michael Manion, officer in-charge, Task Force Talon. "Everyone has pitched in... they have a group focus and we want to continue that attitude through our time here."



A 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment UH-60 Blackhawk takes off for its first airlift mission in support of Joint Task Force-Haiti March 24. The 1/228th along with other members of Joint Task Force-Bravo deployed from Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras to support JTF-Haiti, the U.S. military support unit for Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Bryan Franks/*Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs*)

On the second full day, pilots and aircrew conducted familiarization flights to learn the lay of the land and to review the landing zones spread out across Haiti.

Every day new improvements are made to what was once just a grassy knoll at Toussaint Louverture International Airport.

"We still have improvement to make to our facilities but

we've worked hard to get it this far," said Manion. "We have an area where our maintainers can work in the shade, our pilots and aircrew have a briefing room and our people are now looking ahead at how we can execute our mission better each time."

JTF-Haiti is the U.S. military's task force assisting in disaster relief efforts in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake as part of Operation Unified Response.



Aircrew members from the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, wait for an American Airline jet at Toussaint Louverture International Airport to pass before they can lift off for a mission in support of Joint Task Force-Haiti. Joint Task Force-Bravo deployed more than 45 members in support of JTF-Haiti, the U.S. military's task force assisting in disaster relief efforts in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake as part of Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Bryan Franks/*Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs*)



Aircrew from 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, prepare to take off for a night flight orientation of Haiti March 24. The 1/228th along with other members of Joint Task Force-Bravo deployed March 21 to support Joint Task Force-Haiti, the U.S. military's task force assisting in disaster relief efforts in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake as part of Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Bryan Franks/*Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs*)

Commander discusses brigade's role in Haiti

by Christen McCluney
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON - Hundreds of Army paratroopers continue to provide humanitarian aid to earthquake survivors in Haiti, even as they prepare to return home.

"We represent one small piece of [the Defense Department's] contribution to the operation here," Army Col. Tim McAteer, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade, said during a "DoDLive" bloggers roundtable yesterday.

The brigade deployed to Haiti in mid-January. McAteer said the team was prepared for deployment within five hours of the initial call. McAteer became the brigade's commander, Feb. 9.

"When I arrived, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of calm throughout the city," he said.

The brigade's soldiers have been working in phased operations with Joint Task Force Haiti, initially

providing immediate assistance and disaster relief, along with security and humanitarian aid. They transitioned to helping the World Food Program's surge, providing security and assistance to nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations as they provided food and water to displaced Haitians.

"This had a huge effect on the population," McAteer said.

Immediately after the Jan. 12 earthquake, he explained, the government and security in Haiti experienced major setbacks. "We were able to fill that void and serve as a supporting element," the colonel said.

McAteer added that the brigade's paratroopers broke down many barriers and changed misconceptions about the U.S. military as they quickly ascertained the needs of the Haitian people.

For example, he said, a university hospital in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince was inundated with patients, and help from the brigade's soldiers allowed the hospital staff to turn things around.

The airport and naval ports now are operating at pre-earthquake capacity, McAteer said, and the security environment is vastly improved.

"When you look at the trends in security, it has been very calm throughout our stay here," he said. "There have been no acts of violence against American soldiers."

The brigade continues to provide relief while preparing to redeploy.

"We have about 900 paratroopers left," the colonel said. But if conditions warrant, he added, the paratroopers always will be prepared to return.

"I think you can be justifiably proud of the work done," he said. "We had a game-changing impact in the opening stages and things were heading on a dangerous path, but we were able to turn the tide."

"It was a very successful operation," he continued. "There is still a ton of work to be done down here, and I do believe the conditions are right to have long-term success."

Members of Congress visit Haiti

by Spc. William R. Begley
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti- New York Congressman Joseph Crowley (D) and California Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D) visited Port-au-Prince March 26 to see the progress being made in the efforts to clean up Haiti after the damage created by the earthquake on Jan. 12.

Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, deputy commanding general, Joint Task Force-Haiti, escorted Lee and Crowley around Port-au-Prince to various rubble removal sites. They witnessed firsthand Haitians participating in the cleanup efforts. There is an estimated 30 million cubic tons of debris created from the disaster on Jan. 12.

After viewing the rubble removal sites, Lee and Crowley toured Champs-De-Mar, an internally displaced persons camp. They also went to the National Cathedral and the Presidential Palace as well as other damaged sites around the city.

With a clear picture of the problems facing the people of Haiti, the tour culminated with a meeting with the President of Haiti, Rene Preval. Concerns about how to move forward were discussed as well as ideas on how to improve Haiti.

There is still a long road ahead for the Haitian people but the recovery process is happening one step at a time.



New York congressman Joseph Crowley talks with Haitian locals during his visit. Crowley visited several rubble removal sites to assess firsthand the progress that is being made. (Photo by Spc. William R. Begley/11th PAD)

LSA Dragon aid station keeps Soldiers healthy

by Spc. William Begley
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti- Whether you have a sprained ankle, skin infection or an upset stomach, the staff at the LSA Dragon aid station is there to help you get back on the road to wellness.

Lt. Col. Roger K. Fincher, a field surgeon who specializes in internal medicine, runs the team at the aid station. He is deployed from the 602nd Area Support Medical Company, Fort Bragg, N.C.

The aid station at LSA Dragon is designated as a level one aid station. This means they are able to provide care for illness, disease and other small injuries not associated with a combat environment.

But that is not all they can do. "We're here to provide life-saving care," said Fincher.

The aid station has personnel on duty 24 hours to handle everything from a standard sick call to a trauma injury.

"My main mission is the ability to take care of a trauma victim," Fincher said. A trauma victim would be stabilized and then transported to a level two or three facility.

If you are the kind of person who likes to be proactive, Fincher recommends some preventative measures.

Prevention, he says, could significantly reduce the amount of service members reporting to sick call.

"Wash your hands, don't eat the local food, take your Doxy, sleep with your bug netting properly installed and use bug spray to prevent bug bites," said Fincher.

Fincher hopes to keep his staff as "unbusy as possible,"



Sgt. Nicholas Albers takes the pulse of a patient at the LSA Dragon aid station. (Photo by Spc. William R. Begley/11th PAD)

he said. That would mean all the preventative measures are working.

"That's the goal. You want your medics to be bored," Fincher said sarcastically.

Sgt. David Woodward, a medic at LSA Dragon, understands the humor.

"You want to do your MOS. You want to sharpen the skills that you've learned, but you don't want to see people hurt," said Woodward.

Originally with the 601st Area

Support Medical Company from Fort Bragg, N.C., Woodward volunteered to deploy with the 602nd ASMC.

"Humanitarian missions don't come around too often," said Woodward. "It's great to be a part of this mission."

With the Soldiers of the LSA Dragon aid station standing ready to treat any illness or injury, troops with JTF-Haiti know they are in good hands if something should happen.

GENERAL continued from p. 1

the relationships between both countries' armed forces.

"I thought he was able to achieve a strengthening of the relationship between the Colombian military and SOUTHCOM in terms of General Padilla's interaction with General Keen," Trombitas said. "And from my perspective, it was a strengthening of the relationship between the Colombian military and Army South."

Col. Pedro A. Segura, Colombian support battalion for humanitarian assistance, was also able to talk with Padilla and visit with him while he toured the area. Segura is one of Padilla's officers who deployed the day after the earthquake.

"For us, it is and continues to be something significantly important, that the commanding general of the armed forces came to observe what the Colombian soldiers are doing on the ground and to see the joint efforts exercised between the Colombian and American armies," Segura said.

Segura said he was grateful that his government, and specifically his commanding general, Padilla, have given him the opportunity to assist those displaced by the earthquake.

"The commanding general got a first-hand look at the hard work, dedication, commitment and professionalism of his soldiers in distant lands where they show their commitment to those in need,"

Segura said. "It is a great opportunity that the national government, along with General Padilla, has given me to contribute to the healing process for those Haitians who are suffering."



Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, deputy commanding general, JTF-Haiti, poses with a group of Colombian soldiers preparing to return home March 25. The Soldiers returned with Gen. Freddy Padilla de León, commanding general of the Colombian Military Forces, and his staff, after a visit to Haiti. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)

POSTCARDS FROM HAITI



An aid worker with USAID looks at the frame of a temporary shelter at the Ancien Airport Militaire internally displaced persons camp on March 25. USAID, along with JTF-Haiti, is working together to fix some of the security problems, such as making sure there is enough light at night in the camp. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debra Thompson/11th PAD)



The USS Bataan left Haiti on March 24. The ship and its crew have been deployed for roughly two months, assisting the World Food Program in delivering more than 3.2 million pounds of bulk foods and conducting more than 1,500 humanitarian relief missions in support of Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)



Members of the USS Bataan pay respect to Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, JTF-Haiti, during a piping ashore ceremony prior to his departure on March 24. Keen visited the Bataan to say farewell to the crew and thank them for their hard work in Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)



Maj. Jon B. Tipton, provost marshal, JTF-Haiti, speaks with residents of Ancien Airport Militaire internally displaced persons camp about their safety concerns on March 25. One issue is lighting at night around the camp. Tipton wants to ensure lights are installed in hopes that crimes such as sexual assault begin to decline. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Debra Thompson/11th PAD)