



Vol. I, Issue 18

THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

a call to duty
April 14, 2010



Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joseph Biden, visited Haiti with the first lady on April 13. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Catherine Talento/11th PAD)



First lady Michelle Obama visits with U.S. Embassy and U.S. military personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on April 13. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Catherine Talento/11th PAD)

First Lady says thanks

by Sgt. Catherine Talento
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Almost three months to the day after the earthquake ripped apart Haiti, first lady Michelle Obama led the nearly packed cafeteria of the US Embassy in Port-au-Prince in a moment of silence for those killed.

The first lady, along with Dr. Jill Biden, the wife of Vice President Joseph Biden, made the unannounced day long visit to the earthquake ravaged country April 13 while in route to an official visit in Mexico. The visit also

marked the first official solo overseas trip taken by the first lady.

Speaking to the assembled mass of U.S. Embassy staff, State Department employees, aid organization workers, and U.S. military service members, Obama praised the efforts of those who came together in the minutes, hours, and days after the quake.

“Many of you lost homes. Some of you lost family or friends. All of you know someone who lost loved ones but you are here working everyday because you have a love for this country and its people.”

To the embassy staff, Obama

praised the dedication of gate guards who stayed at their posts even while not knowing if their own families were okay.

The embassy employees, Obama said, worked around the clock, transforming the compound into an aid center for those wounded while also coordinating the largest evacuation in State Department history.

To the U.S. military, Obama was especially grateful.

“You received your orders and you came down here not knowing what to expect,” said Obama, “But you provided the water and food to those in need and gave the medication to the

father that helped save his life so he could go back to work to provide for his family.”

Obama also noted many of those deployed to Haiti had just weeks and months earlier returned from combat tours overseas.

The road ahead, Obama noted, will be long and hard but she assured the assembled group, both Haitian and American, that the U.S. stands behind Haiti.

“This truly is a global effort. The world stands with Haiti and the U.S. will stand with its Haitian ally as together we rebuild a better, stronger Haiti,” said Obama.

As of April 14, the Responder will no longer be a biweekly newsletter. It will be published once a week beginning April 19. The newsletter will continue to follow the missions of Operation Unified Response.



Three Haitian children stand outside tents in the newly developed internally displaced persons camp, Corail Cesselesse. The new resettlement area could potentially provide better shelter to approximately 17,700 Haitians from high risk areas if needed. The urge to move people grows each day as the rainy season gets underway. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Cody Barber/11th PAD)

New resettlement brings new hope

by Pvt. Cody Barber
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti-MINUSTAH and the International Organization for Migration, IOM, have identified several camps throughout Port-au-Prince that are in dire need of immediate movement of some residents from dangerous living conditions such as falling debris, landslides and flash floods.

MINUSTAH has developed a movement plan for the selected sites and Joint Task Force-Haiti will assist in support of the plan.

Corail Cesselesse is a new location where thousands of internally displaced persons will relocate.

This area is located about nine miles north of Port-au-Prince.

U.S. Navy Capt. Jim Wink, engineering division, JTF-Haiti, helped to work on the new resettlement camp. His crew surveyed the site about three weeks ago and the government of Haiti declared the land available for international forces to create the site.

“Over the last couple of weeks, UN forces and [U.S.] Navy Seabees have been preparing the site for people to move into,” said Wink.

A handful of families moved Saturday and about 5,000 people are scheduled to be relocated within 10 days because of the at-risk living conditions at Golf Delmas.

Heavy equipment was used to dig trenches around the camp and lay gravel on the ground to prevent dust storms and flooding.

“The rocks came from the

government of Haiti,” said Wink. “They brought in river rock from a nearby quarry.”

This new resettlement location site is not the only one being made in preparations for the upcoming rainy season. Tabarre Issa is another relocation site.

“This is only the first of four sub-sites [within Corail] we are developing,” said Wink. “When the four sub-sites are developed we will be able to move [more than] 17,000 people out there.”



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The Responder is an electronic newsletter published every Wednesday and Saturday for the Soldiers, Sailors, Coast Guardsmen, Airmen and Marines of JTF-Haiti.

Signed paper means new beginning

by Pvt. Cody Barber
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti- Many streets and sidewalks are littered with chunks of rocks and concrete from fallen buildings after the devastating earthquake three months ago but service members are pressing forward in efforts to remove this ocean of rubble that floods the streets of Port-au-Prince.

Engineers from Naval Facilities Engineering Command, NAVFAC, have been working to clear roads, move debris and clear canals in an ongoing project. Lt. Cmdr. John Jeffrey, operations officer, engineering division, JTF-Haiti, visited with government officials and a representative for the mayor of Delmas to coordinate and gain approval which will allow them to enter the area to help remove rubble and debris.

"Getting the paper signed means we are working with the Haitian government, we're helping to support them and coordinate with them," said Jeffrey. "It means we have their permission for us to go in the area and remove their debris."

Clearing the mounds of wreckage will help bring Haiti back to normal, said Jeffrey. "There won't be piles of debris laying in the streets anymore, blocking roads, blocking access, preventing them from setting up their markets," he added.

They learned from previous locations that clearing out just what was on the streets wasn't the right idea. After removing all the rubble located on the streets, Haitians would bring what's left from their lots back onto the streets so engineers would have to go back through and pick up debris again.

"... so it would take us three, four or five times of going through and sweeping the streets before we got rid of all the rubble," said Jeffrey.

This time it won't be left to just the engineers to complete. Haitians will have to help the process of cleaning up the area with a little bit of work.

"In Delmas we are advertising to people to bring out their debris into the roads and we will come and pick it up," said Jeffrey.

They identified the area of Golf Delmas as a critical area where a lot of the Haitians relocated. Clearing rubble will help get people out of there and allow the camp to be decompressed, said Jeffrey.

"We will go into Delmas and help clear debris to help facilitate the IDP's living in that camp so they can move back into their homes," said Jeffrey.

They have cleared about 13,000 thousand cubic meters of debris in locations throughout Haiti. In Delmas, they estimate about 28,000 thousand cubic meters of debris will be removed over a two week period.



Lt. Cmdr. John Jeffrey, operations officer, engineering division, JTF-Haiti, talks with the mayor representative of Delmas about removing rubble while at the internally displaced persons camp Golf Delmas on April 9. They discussed various subjects such as how long they will work there and what will be done in the IDP camp. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Cody Barber/11th PAD)

Army sergeant turns negative into positive

by Spc. William Begley
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti- Being in the Army can be a tough prospect for anyone who has had challenges. One Soldier has made the most out of the challenges in his life.

Sgt. Nicholas A. Albers, a medic with Headquarters Service Company, Special Troops Battalion, U.S. Army South from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, didn't come into the Army hoping to become a medic; he originally wanted to be a military policeman (MP).

"I sort of ran out of options because I'm color blind," said Albers.

Albers doesn't consider being color blind a hindrance. It does not hamper his ability to do his job in any way. Despite being color blind, Albers is making the most of his opportunity.

"Like any job, you have your good days and bad days," said Albers.

You might think Albers was disappointed

not getting his first choice for a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), but that is just not Albers style. When the recruiter came to Albers with the prospect of being a medic, he took the job because it sounded like a job that would be worthwhile. Albers tries to be the best medic he can be.

"I will bust my hump to make sure that people are taken care of," said Albers. "If you don't have a good medic in your unit, the unit is going to suffer."

On Albers' first deployment he had one of the most difficult moments of his life. He was in Samarra, Iraq and lost a patient. The medical unit he was in did not receive a warning call that a patient was coming in. The Soldiers' wounds were beyond anything that they could repair and the Soldier died later on after being in a coma for a while. Albers saw the look in the eyes of Soldiers from the victim's unit after he died.

"It was like they were asking 'how come you couldn't save him?'" said Albers.



Sgt. Nicholas A. Albers, Special Troops Battalion, U.S. Army South checks a Soldier's blood pressure during sick call. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Jake Marlin/11th PAD)

"Even though the doctors said that there was nothing I could do, it was hard."

"On my second deployment I was just happy to have all my people come home," Albers said. Albers was attached to two different companies in northeast Baghdad and neither company lost a single Soldier or had anyone hurt the whole deployment.

Though Albers didn't get to be an MP, he got a job he loves.

"I don't think I would trade my job for anything else," Albers said.

POSTCARDS FROM HAITI



At the new internally displaced persons camp, Corail Cesselesse, Haitian volunteers work to set up more tents. Each day, more local nationals are moved from high risk IDP camps. The push behind the move is the ever approaching rainy season. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)



Volunteers work to set up more latrines and showers at the internally displaced persons camp, Corail Cesselesse. The new resettlement site continues to improve each day. People living at IDP camps that have been determined as "high risk" are being encouraged to move to the new camp, which is a "low risk" zone. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)



Off the shoreline of LSA White Falcon sits a lizard basking in the Haitian sun near a crack that was caused during the devastating earthquake of Jan. 12. (U.S. Photo by Pvt. Cody Barber/11th PAD)



At an internally displaced persons camp, a sign hangs in a local meeting area expressing thanks to non-governmental organizations and the U.S. for their help in bettering the camp. The camp is one of nine camps that are at high risk with the upcoming rainy season. People living in the camps are being encouraged to move to the new resettlement camp, Corail Cesselesse. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)