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THE RESPONDER

Telling the Joint Task Force-Haiti story

a call to duty
April 7, 2010

Army Reserve Chief visits Soldiers in Haiti

by Capt. Jose R. Emperador
377th TSC Public Affairs

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - The Chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, visited the Joint Logistics Command-Haiti April 5, during a one-day tour to the earthquake-ravaged country. The JLC-H mission was taken over in February by the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, a U.S. Army Reserve unit from Belle Chasse, La. commanded by Maj. Gen. Luis R. Visot.

Stultz's visit to the JLC-H's forward operating base near Toussaint L'Ouverture Airport in Port-au-Prince included a mission outline and status briefing from Visot. During the Reserve Chief's visit, Visot pointed out how proud he is of his Reserve unit, which deployed 170 sustainment team members, who are highly motivated and performing at an optimal level. He also highlighted the stellar performance of all JLC-H service members despite their short-notice deployment and being met with harsh living conditions upon arrival at the forward operating base.

"It's a tremendous honor for me...the value of what we are doing is directly related to the quality Soldiers and service members that we have," Visot said highlighting the troops' performance during the humanitarian operation.

Visot also emphasized to Stultz the 377th TSC is fully capable of performing in a joint services environment. He commented that the Reserve unit was

effectively synchronized with strategic partners within the Army, as well as other U.S. military services.

"Not only has our team worked well with the Army Materiel Command, the Defense Logistics Agency, and the Transportation Command but also with the Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps," Visot said of his troops' interaction with multiple Department of Defense agencies.

After the briefing, Stultz showed his appreciation to the service members present. "Thanks for what you are doing and for being flexible and fluid," Stultz said, referring to the quick mobilization of the New Orleans-area unit. Several Soldiers were recognized by the Army Reserve Chief, for their outstanding performance of duties. Stultz presented coins to many of the 377th TSC/JLC-H stellar performers.

After a walking tour of the JLC-H forward operating base, Stultz stopped in a dining tent to talk with Soldiers and discuss the expanding mission of the Army Reserve, which he says includes a role as a contingency force in addition to being an operational force.

"The deployment of the 377th as a contingency force here in Haiti is a testament about the future role of the Reserve components," Stultz said. "The fact that you have these wonderful capabilities... all the Soldiers that we have that deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places... the experience, the maturity, the



Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, Chief of the Army Reserve, receives a mission status brief from the Commanding General of the Joint Logistics Command-Haiti and the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, Maj. Gen. Luis R. Visot, April 5, at a joint operations center tent near Toussaint L'Ouverture Airport. The 377th TSC of Belle Chasse, La. is the largest command in the U.S. Army Reserve. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Jose R. Emperador/377th TSC Public Affairs)

capabilities, the civilian skills that they have...that fact that when they are needed, they're available. That's what the 377th has really proven. That you can go to an Army Reserve unit and say we need you on the ground in less than 30 days and we're there."

In addition to the Soldier, Stultz also highlighted the importance of two other key players in the success of the Army Reserve: families and civilian employers.

"There's three major portions to the Reserve. There's the Soldier, there's the family and there's the employer," Stultz

said. "And if you don't have all three of those pulling together, we can't sustain the operational tempo of the demands we've been asked to do. We have to have a strong family support system and we have to have the support of our employers back home."

Stultz went on to say families and employers both sacrifice as much as the Soldiers do.

"The Soldiers we have here today are sacrificing. It's hot and it's pretty austere conditions living in these tents," Stultz said, motioning

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to the canvas of the un-air-conditioned tent he was standing in. "But our families are sacrificing because they are taking care of things back home, without that spouse, without that son or daughter, without that mother and father...taking care of things that they need. And they are sacrificing but they are supporting and they're telling us go do your job and we'll take care of everything back home. And we have to thank our families for their sacrifice and for what they are doing."

Stultz made similar comments about Reservists' civilian employers and the partnership that is being forged between them, the office of the chief of the Army Reserve and the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. The ESGR is the Department of Defense organization created to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers.

"The employers are asking us for a couple of things: one, as much as you can, give us predictability...tell us when you plan to use our Soldiers. We understand there's always emergencies but give us some predictability on the standard rotation," he said, describing the types of requests he's heard from organizations who have Reserve Soldiers as employees.

"They're saying it would be nice to have some tax incentive, it would be nice to get some compensation, because when I give you that employee to be a Soldier, I have to cover for them. I have to get someone to take his place to do the work he's doing," Stultz explained. "So we're working on that with Congress and others to say, how can we help share the burden that employers are feeling?"

Upon arriving in Port-au-Prince early in the day, Stultz was greeted at the airport by Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, commander, Joint Task Force-Haiti, and Visot. He and the JLC-H commanding general then took a helicopter

tour of Port-au-Prince where he got a bird's-eye view of internally displaced persons camps, with the ride focusing on flood-prone areas or those in danger of a land slides during the rainy season.

Stultz was also flown over Port-au-Prince's main sea port; the site of the destroyed Hotel Montana, where many U.S citizens were killed; and the heavily damaged Haitian presidential palace.

Stultz also made a stop at the headquarters of Joint Task Force-Haiti to meet U.S. Army Reservists and other service members working there. There, he met with Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, deputy commander, Joint Task Force-Haiti and commander of U.S. Army South. Stultz and Visot also spent some time with the crews of two Army Reserve boats, Landing Craft Utility vessels 2031, the *New Orleans*, from Tampa, Fla. and 2026, the *Matamoros*, from Morehead City, N.C. Stultz also met with leaders from the 833rd Transportation Battalion from Seattle, Wash.

The Reserve chief took advantage of the trip to also visit with service members and workers from the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center and the Project Management Coordination Center located near the UN and Uruguay Air Force offices.

With more than 44,000 Soldiers spanning 42 states, the 377th TSC is the largest command in the U.S. Army Reserve. It is an operational headquarters for logistic functions within a given area of operations and is uniquely qualified to plan, control and synchronize at all levels of logistical sustainment.

Visot says many of the 377th TSC Soldiers have first-hand knowledge of what it's like to live through and recover from a natural disaster--a unique qualification for any service member serving in Haiti. He said the majority of the 377th TSC's Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Unified Response are from the New Orleans area and were directly impacted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the storm that crippled the Louisiana city.



The Chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz and Maj. Gen. Luis R. Visot, commander, Joint Logistics Command-Haiti and the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, do a communications check prior to an aerial tour of earthquake-damaged Port-au-Prince April 5. Stultz later visited Joint Task Force-Haiti headquarters to visit with Reserve soldiers and other service members. (U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Jose R. Emperador/377th Public Affairs)

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Soldiers further careers in Haiti

by Pvt. Cody Barber
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Soldiers nervously wait in anticipation and flip through pages of notes. Days of studying have come down to a final 15 minute session of questions and answers.

It's the first time a promotion board is held in Haiti. It is important for Soldiers in a deployed environment to get the same opportunities to attend a board as Soldiers in the garrison do.

Staff Sgt. Jason Tafoya, 209th Military Police Company, 519th MP battalion, is a

sponsor for one of his soldiers going to the board.

"As a sponsor, it's always good to see your Soldiers get promoted," said Tafoya. "It's a good chance for them to further their career in Haiti."

Soldiers throughout Joint Task Force-Haiti came to stand before the board at LSA Dragon. The board panel consisted of Command Sgt. Maj. Luis Gonzales, Special Troops Battalion, Army South; 1st Sgt. Jeannette Schartner, Headquarters Service Company, Special Troops Battalion; and 1st Sgt. Malcom Peoples, 209th Military Police

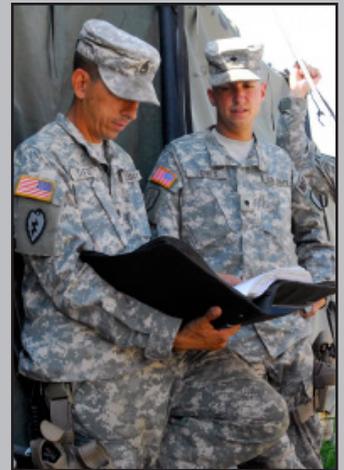
Company, 519th MP battalion.

The board was an opportunity for Soldiers to show off their hard work and dedication while deployed to assist in Operation Unified Response.

"It just shows me that they are multi-tasking and universal," said Schartner. "No matter where they are, they can take care of themselves."

As the day came to an end and each Soldier went through the board, every one of them was motivated, said Schartner.

"Overall the soldiers were outstanding," said Schartner. "They were hard charging and ready to go."



Soldiers from JTF-Haiti stand by, getting one last review in, while waiting to be called into the tent. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Cody Barber/11th PAD)

U.S. Engineers, Haitians Remove Debris in Turgeau

By Chief Mass
Communication Specialist
James G. Pinsky
NAVFAC Public Affairs

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) and the Army Corps of Engineers are helping residents of Turgeau, an inner-city district here, recover from the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake by removing massive amounts of debris from the city streets, businesses and homes.

"The goal here is to clear the right of ways and sidewalks of Turgeau so the people can get back to their homes and start their lives again," said Project Leader Mel Acree, NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic.

Since March 18, the joint-service team together with the contracted services of Contingency Response Services, a joint-venture company comprised of Dynacorp and Parsons, have accounted for more than 11,000 cubic yards of debris removal and employed 100 Haitians in a cash-for-work program designed to



empower the local labor base. The use of local Haitians through the cash-for-work program has provided more than just income to the local Haitians, it has served as a learning experience as well. "The Haitian (employee)

aspect is something new (to the contracting process)," said

Civil Engineer Corps officer, Lt. j.g. Bryan Beyer, NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic. "Their safety culture isn't quite like ours. There's a lot of training and walking them through the

process to get them to understand why we have certain rules and why we try to keep them safe." The foreign relief workers have been well received by the Turgeau community and are empowering local leaders like Romelus Pierre Ronal, the president of the local assembly of Turgeau, who immediately volunteered to help the engineers clean up his community. "I'm working here with my people to help them have a better life," Ronal said. The engineers said they have felt welcomed from the day they arrived in Turgeau. "When we come to the job site the Haitians say a lot more than thank you, Acree said, "they call us family." Being in Haiti to witness the destruction of the January earthquake has left an impression on many of the Department of Defense workers. "I've seen a lot here," said Chad Adamson, Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis. "There's really nothing that can compare. I've seen things here that I could have never imagined. The people here definitely have a hard life."



Sgt. William Valentine, generator mechanic, U.S. Army South, works with Victor Lopez, Department of Defense civilian contractor, on a new generator. The generator was having problems so they took off the frame to get a good look inside. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Cody Barber/11th PAD)

Shouldering the power for JTF-H

by Pvt. Cody Barber
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - When you turn on your laptop to do work or turn on your fan inside your tent to keep you cool at night, did you ever wonder where the power comes from and who keeps the power going?

Sgt. William Valentine, generator mechanic, U.S. Army South, is from a little town called Sparks, Ga. He joined the Army 10 years ago and was assigned to U.S. Army South in Sept. 2008, stationed in San Antonio, Texas.

Valentine is currently a generator mechanic deployed with Joint Task Force-Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response. He is responsible for a range of tasks such as making sure the generators have fuel, repairing and maintaining air conditioners, wiring and rigging up equipment.

"Each day varies so much from what I do," said Valentine.

Every day he gets multiple calls on his radio to fix problems. Without him here to

fix these problems, LSA Dragon would be powerless and left in the dark.

"Without the generators, 98 percent of the work that we are supposed to do here could not get done," said Valentine.

The problems he faces day-to-day varies. He could be working on anything from air conditioners freezing over, bad fuel to no fuel, or changing the oil filter in generators.

"There is no set thing that's goes wrong," said Valentine.

Valentine isn't alone in his mission. Victor Lopez, infrastructure subject matter expert, DoD civilian contractor, from U.S. Southern Command, works with Valentine when the job requires two mechanics.

"When he arrived here, he came and talked to me. We help each other out and work well together," said Lopez.

Their job is essential, said Lopez. If they didn't do their job here, the people who go out and help the Haitians wouldn't be able to complete their mission.

"...by making sure our equipment is 100 percent, we allow others to help (the

Haitians)," said Lopez. "I feel like we do our part to help the people of this country."

The weather here takes a toll on the equipment, from the scorching sun, to the dust in the air. The equipment takes a beating day in and day out.

"The heat does a lot to every piece of equipment," said Valentine. "Now that the generators have a lot more electronics in them than they should, dust becomes a big factor because you have to constantly clean the circuit boards off."

Many things around LSA Dragon use generators to power them and most of them are essential to the service members here to have a livable environment, said Valentine.

"The generators are used for anything when it comes to power," said Valentine. "They are used for the showers, laptops and the air conditioning."

Knowing that he keeps everything flowing smoothly, he gets great satisfaction from his work.

"I enjoy my job," said Valentine. "It's kind of nice when everybody has to come to you for power."

Ranger realizes dream at 35

by Spc. William R. Begley
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, - Many people have had a dream that went unfulfilled. If they could turn back the hands of time and change something, each would have a different response. Some people go their whole lives living with the regret of what could have been.

2nd Lt. Michael Howard, platoon leader, 3rd platoon, 209th Military Police Company, Fort Polk, La., knows that feeling all too well. Howard is currently an MP deployed with Joint Task Force Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response.

Before joining the Army, Howard watched one of his best friends join the Army, become a Ranger, and then be selected into Special Forces. It was difficult for Howard to watch someone else live his lifelong dream.

"Joining the Army was a dream that I had always had," said Howard. "I always regretted not joining right out of high school." Instead, Howard decided to go to college. He majored in physical education and social studies at the University of Central Missouri.

After graduating from college, he taught school for a year. However, after being a student for almost 20 years, he decided that he wanted to do something different.

"I wanted to experience life outside the education system and I liked working with my hands," said Howard. So, Howard decided to try the construction life, working mainly as a ceramic tile roofer. He continued roofing for 11

years. But the dream of being in the Army was never far from Howard's mind.

"I still felt like there was something missing," said Howard. "I just always regretted not serving my country."

In an effort to fill that void, he decided at 35 years old that he needed another career change. He wanted something stable; something long-term that could provide him with a retirement.

Following his lifelong dream, Howard took a chance and talked to a recruiter. To his surprise, he found that he could get an age waiver.

"I thought I was too old," said Howard. "It was a dream that I thought had already passed me by. I was humbled that after all the time that had passed, I could still serve my country."

At basic training, he found out that he was not alone as being an older recruit. One of the drill instructors gave him the name "Pops". The other younger Soldiers quickly grabbed on to the moniker.

"They called me Pops until I started smoking them at PT [physical training]," said Howard. "After that, they laid off."

Howard has been in the Army now for a little over a year and is what many would consider a physical training phenom. At the age of 36, Howard scored 345 points on the extended scale of his last PT test. He did 98 push-ups, 98 sit-ups, and completed the 2-mile run in 12 minutes, 10 seconds.

Howard's PT prowess has helped him to fulfill his lifelong dream in other areas of his military career as he completed Ranger training in his first year of service. In Ranger school, just being fit is not enough. A Ranger has to remain in focus while facing the challenge of organizing Soldiers



2nd Lt. Michael Howard is escorted through an internally displaced persons camp in Port-au-Prince. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. William R. Begley/11th PAD)

who are also tired and hungry. Howard said it rained a lot during his cycle, so they were cold and wet regularly.

"It's always challenging in Ranger School, there's not a lot of food and you don't get much sleep," said Howard. "But the payoff is that you find out just how far you can push yourself. You find out just how much you can do."

Ranger School was also a semi-religious experience for Howard.

"I prayed a lot that I wouldn't get recycled," he said.

With a lot of hard work and a little bit of prayer, Howard is making the most of this opportunity to serve, while being able to fulfill his dream without the regret of what could have been.

209th MP Company-- Mission Capable

By Pfc. Jasmine Slaton
11th PAD

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - With four Humvees filled with water and meals-ready-to-eat for the long journey and their weapons and flak vests at arms reach, 3rd platoon, 209th Military Police Company, from Fort Polk, La, were ready for their mission.

"We are conducting a route recon today, gentlemen," said Staff Sgt. Jason Tefoya, 3rd platoon, 209th Military Police Company, during the pre-mission brief. "The risk assessment is low, but we will proceed with caution."

The platoon's mission was to perform a reconnaissance. They were looking for two internally displaced person camps as

well as finding the safest route for aid to get to them.

In addition, the 209th is supporting Haiti's "Safer Shelter" strategy by assisting in relocating at-risk families. Before the onset of the rainy season, between 9,000 and 37,000 people from nine different at-risk camps need to relocate to safer areas. The 209th is responsible for Golf Delmas, where some of the camp will be a part of the relocation process. Joint Logistics Command-Haiti and 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment will share the responsibilities of the other eight at-risk camps.

"Being MPs, we like to get around," said 2nd Lt. Michael Howard, 3rd platoon leader, 209th Military Police Company. "For a while, we were just pulling regular security,

but getting out and about on these recon missions has been worth waking up for."

The unit arrived in Haiti on Feb 7 and originally was tasked with convoy security for the World Food Program.

"We watched over the convoys while they brought in rice and other foods to LSA Sustainer for distribution," said Howard.

The deployment with Joint Task Force-Haiti is his first time working in a joint environment with other countries and branches all working together to achieve one goal.

"At LSA Sustainer, we got to work with the Seabees...we've worked with MINUSTAH and a lot of others... this experience has been eye opening," Howard said. "We've made a lot of friends, here in Haiti. It's been rewarding to be able to provide support for them."

POSTCARDS FROM HAITI



Col. Gary Moore, command chaplain, Joint Task Force-Haiti, delivers an Easter morning message to the service men and women of LSA Dragon during a service held April 4. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Cody Barber/11th PAD)



A young boy shows off his bunny ring he received as an Easter gift during a recent visit to an orphanage in Port-au-Prince. Service members handed out Easter rings that were donated by families and friends of troops who are deployed in support of Operation Unified Response. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall)



Soldiers with the 209th Military Police Company speak with Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, deputy commanding general, JTF-Haiti, at the intermediate after-care facility. Trombitas took a moment to see how the Soldiers were doing, ask them about their home towns and what they were working on. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Samantha D. Hall/11th PAD)



JTF-Haiti's senior enlisted advisor, Sgt. Maj. Louis Espinal, USMC, shows off his pull-up skills. Espinal spent the day visiting with troops at the airfield. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jasmine Slaton/11th PAD)