



NAVY MEDICINE

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March 9, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navy Surgeon General Commends Crew of COMFORT

WASHINGTON DC – Upon hearing the news that hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) completed its mission in providing needed humanitarian relief in Haiti, Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Adam Robinson, Jr. commended the efforts of the crew for a job well done.

“I am incredibly proud of the professionals who came together on short notice to make the deployment happen,” said Robinson. “Comfort has been a shining beacon of hope since she arrived there and our medical team onboard the hospital ship - and on other ships providing support - have performed admirably in an intense and dynamic situation. Medicine is a common language that all people understand, and it is a way to bridge differences.”

Navy Medicine responded quickly to the short-fused tasking order on Jan. 13 to assemble an initial team of 550 medical personnel within 6 hours assembling a skilled team coming from naval hospitals all across the United States. The medical team was onboard and ready to get underway by 6 p.m. the night before the ship deployed from its homeport of Baltimore on Jan 16.

Comfort arrived in Haiti within 4 days but began receiving patients in transit via airlift prior to anchoring off the coast of Port-au-Prince Jan. 20. At the height of the relief effort, nearly 1,288 medical personnel from the U.S. military and more than 240 nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) were embarked and treating earthquake survivors. Participating NGOs included Red Cross, Operation Smile, UCLA, Johns Hopkins, Project Hope, Orthopaedic Trauma Association, University of Michigan and United Nurses.

Medical personnel aboard Comfort treated 871 patients and performed 843 surgeries during their mission in Haiti. According to the ship's Director of Surgery, Navy Cmdr. Tim Donohue, Comfort received patients every six to nine minutes during its first four days in Haiti and had more than 540 critically-injured patients on board within the first 10 days. During the initial phase of its mission, the ship ran all of its operating rooms at full capacity to care for severely injured earthquake survivors.

At its height, Navy Medicine deployed approximately 1,500 medical and non-medical personnel to both afloat and ashore units throughout the region in support of the relief mission in Haiti and received support from TRICARE, Army and Air Force medicine and Navy reservists to ensure there were minimal impacts on patients and beneficiaries stateside.

“I am equally proud of our team that remained at home and ensured this large response from Navy Medicine did not affect our ability to continue to provide quality care to our beneficiaries at our hospitals and clinics nationwide,” said Robinson. “It was not easy to do this given the amount of people we surged on short notice and our team responded to the challenge with extreme professionalism and pride.”

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