



# NAVY MEDICINE

World Class Care...Anytime, Anywhere

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **USNS COMFORT RETURNS TO BALTIMORE FRIDAY MORNING FROM HUMANITARIAN MISSION TO HAITI**

BALTIMORE, Md. – The hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) is expected to arrive at Canton Pier, Baltimore, at 10 a.m. March 19, after completing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations off the coast of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as part of the international mission, Operation Unified Response.

Comfort left Baltimore Jan. 16 and began supporting humanitarian relief efforts three days later as earthquake victims were flown to the ship via helicopters once it neared Haiti. Comfort anchored off the coast of Port-au-Prince on Jan. 20 and immediately began receiving injured patients from the local hospitals and international medical facilities

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 Donahue, 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 this initial phase of its mission, the Navy hospital ship ran 10 operating rooms at full capacity to care for injured Haitian, American, and other foreign national earthquake victims requiring surgical care. This deployment marked the first time the ship reached full operational capacity, utilizing all operating rooms and beds, since it was delivered to the Navy in 1987.

At its height of relief operations, Navy Medicine deployed approximately 1,500 medical and non-medical personnel – many from the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in

Bethesda, Md. - to both afloat and ashore units throughout the region in support of the relief mission in Haiti.

Volunteer experts from John Hopkins Emergency Medicine, Project Hope, Operation Smile, the Orthopaedic Trauma Association, National Nurses United, and other non-governmental organizations augmented the ship's medical team with orthopedic trauma, surgical, nursing and anesthesia support.

During the ship's mission, Comfort worked closely with Haiti's Ministry of Health and health care professionals from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), international relief organizations and NGOs to secure follow-on care for patients in recovery.

"I am incredibly proud of the professionals who came together on short notice to make the deployment happen," said Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Adam M. Robinson, Jr. "Our medical team onboard the Comfort - and on other ships providing support - 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."

U.S. Southern Command released Comfort from this mission Mar. 9 after determining that the need for Comfort's capabilities declined significantly during the final weeks of its mission. The ship made a brief stop in Norfolk, Va. March 13 to offload 500 members of the medical team and equipment. Two hundred members of the team remain onboard and will return with the ship to Baltimore.

Comfort is crewed by about 70 federally employed civilian mariners who operate and navigate the ship while military and civilian medical personnel operate the shipboard hospital. When not deployed, Comfort is kept pierside in Baltimore where a small crew of mariners and Navy medical personnel maintain the ship and hospital in a high state of readiness. When needed, Comfort can be ready to deploy in five days.

Media are invited to cover the arrival Friday and may arrive at Canton Pier, Baltimore (directions and parking instructions below) beginning at 5:30 a.m. for access to the pier prior to the ship's arrival at 10 a.m.

Please contact the National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs office at 301-295-5727 if you plan to cover. **RSVP required by 6:00 p.m. March 18 to ensure pier access and parking.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON USNS COMFORT:

<http://www.msc.navy.mil/inventory/ships.asp?ship=74>**DIRECTIONS/PARKING:**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON U.S. NAVY MEDICINE:

<http://www.med.navy.mil>

DIRECTIONS TO USNS COMFORT:

**From the North:** Follow I-95 South to the Keith Avenue exit (#56). This is the last exit before the Fort McHenry toll booth. Follow the exit to the traffic light and turn left onto Keith Avenue. On Keith Avenue, continue straight to the second stop light. Turn right onto New Vail. At the bottom of the ramp, New Vail becomes Newgate. You will go through a preliminary security gate (they are expecting media). Follow Newgate three blocks. Turn left onto the pier parking area (Pier 11) and park wherever it is most convenient. News vans will have spaces reserved near the gated pier entrance and the far end of the parking area.

**From the South:** Follow I-95 North to the Fort McHenry tunnel, stay to the extreme right where you should enter and emerge from the tunnel. Use the farthest right-hand toll booth available. Take the first exit, Keith Avenue (#56), which is approximately 75 yards past the toll plaza. Follow the exit to the traffic light and turn left onto Keith Avenue. Continue straight to the next traffic light and turn right onto New Vail. At the bottom of the ramp, New Vail becomes Newgate. You will go through a preliminary security gate (they are expecting media). Follow Newgate for about three blocks. Turn left onto the pier parking area (Pier 11) and park wherever it is most convenient. News vans will have spaces reserved near the gated pier entrance and the far end of the parking area.

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