Navy Nurse Corps celebrate 103 years of dedicated service

Story and photo by MC3 Matthew R. Cole, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

United States Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka celebrated 103 years of Navy Nurse Corps history May 13.

"The Nurse Corps wouldn't be here if it weren't for the people who continue to serve our country, and it's our job to serve them. We are the first ones to take care of them," said Lt.j.g Kristin Stoniecki of the Labor and Delivery Department. "I joined to serve others, and what's better than serving our soldiers and Sailors?"

President Theodore Roosevelt established the Nurse Corps by signing the Naval Appropriations bill May 13, 1908, which recognized the Corps as its own entity in the Navy Staff Corps.

"From the deck plate to the battlefield our Nurse Corps has delivered quality care for generations," said Capt. Joel Parker, senior nurse and director of Nursing Services.

"I am very proud of my nurses and all they accomplish. They are extremely resilient especially with how they handled themselves [during] Operation Tomadachi," Parker added.

Parker said the nursing staff of USNH Yokosuka is an essential part of delivering health care to the patients as they work closely with doctors and corpsmen to ensure the best service to military personnel and their families.

"I've learned so much being a nurse and have so much I want to give back," said Stoniecki.

The Navy Nurse Corps birthday directly follows National Nurses week which is celebrated May 6 – 12 annually.

"This is something you have to have a passion for. It's not just taking care of people when they are sick but teaching people how to take care of themselves throughout life. Preventative medicine is vital," said Parker.

Capt. Stephen Pachuta, commanding officer of USNH Yokosuka gives his opening remarks during the Nurse Corps 103rd birthday celebration May 13. The Nurse Corps was established May 13, 1908 after the signing of the Naval Appropriations bill by President Theodore Roosevelt.

FISC support to humanitarian efforts aid earthquake-stricken area

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Yokosuka Office of Corporate Communication

While news of U.S. military sea and shore-based units rushing aid to the earthquake stricken and tsunami-swept lowlands in northeastern Japan made international news, U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka quietly worked behind the scenes day and night to ensure that water, food and fuel were made available to victims.

Japan suffered multiple disasters when an unprecedented earthquake struck off the coast of the Tohoku region March 11, rocking the country and spawning a tsunami that swept the northeast coast of the main island of Honshu shortly thereafter. When the coastal Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was inundated, it suffered a cascading series of explosions that caused the evacuation of nearby residents already traumatized by unprecedented natural disaster.

During the ensuing weeks, tens of thousands were left homeless as valiant efforts continued in attempts to stabilize the power plant, clear debris and help those most hurt by the disasters.

FISC Yokosuka was there, if figuratively, helping in the efforts. After two months, FISC leadership has tabulated the efforts of its employees recognized recently by Commander Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers Rear Adm. Mark Heinrich.

"Nineteen ships, 140 aircraft, and more than 18,000 personnel were dispatched in supporting humanitarian operations in and around Japan, including the stellar team of professionals at FISC Yokosuka," Heinrich said. "On any given day, FISC Yokosuka was coordinating the acquisition, storage and distribution of water, food, medical, and comfort supplies, and fuel to the Japanese and to the ships, squadrons and other joint forces supporting the humanitarian efforts."

In a matter of a few hours following the two back-to-back earthquakes that shook its headquarters, FISC Yokosuka stood up a Logistics Operations Center (LOC), initiated a 24-hour logistics watch section and leveraged the relationships it had built in the previous months with core Commander U.S. Pacific Command and Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet commands and its logistics provider partners – without even knowing the magnitude of the earthquake or the existence of a tsunami or of problems at the Fukashima power plant.

FISC Yokosuka dispatched 10 logistics support representatives to Sasebo to support the increased operational tempo of the Combat Logistics Force; a four-person Logistics Response Team to Misawa to support the USS Essex (LHD 2) amphibious ready group and its aviation assets; and three to Okinawa to establish a secondary LOC in case an alternate LOC needed to be established outside of the Kanto Plain area.

LSSN Salvador Guzman, from Montebello, Calif., assigned to FISC Yokosuka, inspects outbound cargo at Naval Air Facility Misawa (NAFM) prior to tranfer to the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship *USS Essex* (LHD 2). FISC Yokosuka provided personnel to NAFM in support of Operation Tomodachi.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Devon Dow

From hour one, day one, FISC Yokosuka created "Operation Tomodachi Update" narratives and a daily battle rhythm that utilized multiple communications media to ensure that COMFISCS, and eventually a larger Navy community was provided complete and clear information regarding Operation Tomodachi.

"FISC focus on ensuring clarity of information as well as the quick and well orchestrated execution of its logistics mission is a manifestation of the recognition of our role as a logistics provider, a logistics services integrator and an information fusion center," said FISC Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Matt Feely.

In fact, during the two months following the calamitous earthquake and tsunamis, FISC documented the delivery on scene of more than 1.7 million gallons of water, 183 tons of food and 61 tons of comfort supplies.

"FISC reaction was exactly what I want to happen when an unexpected event occurs. FISC didn't have to network; they didn't have to exchange business cards when the events transpired; they had already done those things. They just executed," Heinrich said.