Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Navy units support damaged areas in Japan

From U.S. PACFLT Public Affairs

U.S. Pacific Fleet ships in the Western Pacific were converging on Japan to be in the best position to help those in areas damaged by the massive 8.9 earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

They include the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), which departed Southern California waters on March 5 for a regularly scheduled deployment to the Western Pacific and U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. *Reagan* is the flagship of the *Ronald Reagan* Carrier Strike Group, which includes *USS Chancellorsville* (CG 62) and *USS Preble* (DDG 88). All three ships were headed to Honshu's east coast. It was too early to say what they will be tasked with once they arrive at the time of this report.

USS Essex (LHD 2), forward-deployed to Sasebo, had just arrived in Malaysia, but returned to Japan to rendezvous with *USS Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49) and *USS Germantown* (LSD 42) off Tokyo to prepare for any humanitarian assistance/disaster relief duties.

USS Tortuga (LSD 46), a dock landing ship that carries helicopters and landing craft to support amphibious operations, left its forward-deployed port of Sasebo in Southern Japan to embark MH-53 heavy lift helicopters.

Marines assigned to Combat Logistic Regiment 37, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, load food onto a cargo platform at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma March 11, to support earthquake and tsunami relief operations.
U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Dengrier M. Baez

USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) had arrived in Singapore for a port visit, but immediately changed its focus to loading humanitarian assistance/disaster relief equipment and to returned to Japan to provide support as directed.

"We obviously have huge sympathy for the people of Japan, and we are prepared to help them in any way we possibly can," Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in a statement. "It's obviously a very sophisticated country, but this is a huge disaster and we will do all, anything we are asked to do to help out."

USS Blue Ridge readies to provide aid to Japan

***USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) Sailors move pallets of humanitarian relief supplies across the ship's flight deck during an underway replenishment with fleet replenishment oiler *USNS Rappahannock* (T-AO 204) March 12.**
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Fidel C. Hart

By MC3(SW) Brian A. Stone, *USS Blue Ridge* Public Affairs

U.S. 7th Fleet command flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) Sailors and embarked 7th Fleet staff members prepared for humanitarian aid and disaster relief support operations while sailing toward the eastern coast of mainland Japan March 13.

Blue Ridge Sailors loaded a humanitarian aid/disaster relief (HADR) kit while moored in Singapore March 11 and set sail the following morning. Shortly after departing Singapore, the ship completed replenishment-at-sea operations with *USNS Rappahannock* (T-AO 204), receiving fuel and additional supplies.

"I'm amazed at the things we've achieved in such a short time," said Master Chief Information Systems Technician Lonnie Gillilan, who led the recent on-load preparations aboard *Blue Ridge*. "We've all been pulling together, no complaining. I'm very impressed."

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Jonathan Howton, a leading petty officer aboard *Blue Ridge*, has experience conducting HADR support operations in conditions similar to those location in Japan affected by the recent tsunami.

"I was aboard *USS Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) when we provided aid to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina," said Howton. "In a disaster situation you have to prepare for the unknown. You never know what's going to happen.

USS Blue Ridge is uniquely equipped and able to perform amphibious command and control operations and is ready to support assigned HADR relief efforts.

FISC provides fuel to city

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Yokosuka Public Affairs

U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka dispensed emergency diesel fuel to sustain emergency city generators through dawn March 12, hours after the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Japanese history knocked out power to the city of Yokosuka.

The previous evening's devastating earthquake had sparked a fire at a refinery near Tokyo, creating power outages throughout the Kanto Plain, including Tokyo, Yokohama and dozens of other municipalities.

When power outages occurred, emergency generators flipped on to maintain local sewage treatment facilities.

Due to the anticipated length of the power outage and the unprecedented fire and damage at the refinery, it was estimated that the generators did not have the fuel capacity to remain running while alternative sources of diesel fuel were located elsewhere in Japan; local roads and toll-ways were too crowded, damaged or shut down.

Operating at about a seven-hour fuel capacity, it was estimated that one Yokosuka treatment plant generator would have run out of fuel at about 2 a.m., causing raw sewage to flow directly into Tokyo Bay.

Yokosuka city officials made a request for assistance via the Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Regional Operations Center, of which FISC Yokosuka is a part.

FISC fuels teams sprang into action and, by midnight, commercial diesel trucks were taking on the necessary fuel to be transported to the fuel-diminished sewage plant diesel generators.

With one of the generators threatening to run out of fuel within the hour, diesel trucks made their way carefully but quickly to the generator station. The station was replenished with minutes to spare.

"This was a successful case of our emergency contingency plans coming into play smoothly and effectively," said FISC Yokosuka Fuels Director Lt Cmdr. Mike Lorrain. "And, it is very gratifying that we were able to come to the aid of our host community right here in Yokosuka. That gives all of us a tremendous feeling of pride."

INSIDE

Commander Naval Air Forces visits *George Washington*

CNAF Vice Adm. Allen G. Myers visited *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) to meet with ship leadership and crew members, and observe routine maintenance.

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Improved cell phone service coming soon to Yokosuka base

Next month signals the completion of a project 10 years in the making, the installation of cell phone antennas that will improve cell phone reception on board Yokosuka base.

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