

Marines rush to aid Haitian hurricane victims

Approximately 60 East Coast Marines from the 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Force Service Support Group and 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing left Sunday and Monday for Haiti where they will conduct emergency relief operations for victims of Hurricane Allen.

The operations will consist primarily of water purification and delivery efforts.

Participating in the relief operations from Camp Lejeune are three helicopter support teams from 2nd Landing Support Battalion, 2nd Force Service Support Group and a communications team from Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Marine Division.

Helicopter support is being provided by Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 167 from Marine Corps

Air Station, New River. Major Chuck Duff from New River is commanding the helicopter support element, which consists of five UH-1N Hueys.

Other 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing units in the support element are a Helicopter Expeditionary Refueling System Unit from the Wing Engineer Squadron at Cherry Point and a communication element from Marine Wing Communication Squadron 2, also at Cherry Point.

Most of the men and equipment were transported to Ile Da Vache on the southern end of Haiti in an Air Force C-5A Galaxy aircraft.

A Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic spokesman said the Marines and equipment will remain in Haiti as long as they are needed.



ON TIME — Marines from North Carolina bases arrive in Port Au Prince, Haiti Aug. 11. Camp Lejeune Marines were among those providing disaster relief from Hurricane Allen.

N.C. Leathernecks provide disaster relief in Haiti

Story and photos
by
LCpl Steve Balkin

PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI — When Mother Nature took a turn for the worse in August, Hurricane Allen left a trail of death and destruction in the Caribbean.

One of the islands hardest hit was Haiti. When the Haitian government requested aid from the United States it received prompt action.

On Aug. 11, a relief team of U.S. Marines from Camp Lejeune and 2nd MAW bases, designated the Helicopter Support Element arrived here to begin the operation of providing disaster relief.

The Marines included a communications team from Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Marine Division and three Helicopter Support Teams from the 2nd Force Service Support Group. Marine Light

Helicopter Squadron 167 from New River Air Station provided support with five UH-1N "Huey" helicopters and crews. A helicopter expeditionary refueling system and a communications element were also sent from Cherry Point, N.C.

They brought with them a variety of equipment to fulfill their mission, which was to remain in Haiti until Ile Da Vache's water supply had been decontaminated, sup-

plies were no longer needed and the people had become self sufficient again.

A small island, Ile Da Vache, belonging to and lying less than a mile off the coast of Haiti, was almost completely wiped out. An aerial view of Ile Da Vache showed a coastline completely leveled by the winds and waves of the hurricane.

The island's food supplies was ruined and drinking water was contaminated. People living in villages on Ile Da Vache were dying from a combination of the hurricane effects and a lack of food and water.

After arriving, the Marines established a forward base in the small town of Las Cayenes. A barren soccer field was used as a landing zone and resupply point.

While food and medical supplies were provided by the International Red Cross, water purification was the responsibility of Wing Engineering Squadron-27, Cherry Point, which had to

draw water from a river 435 feet away. Natives of Las Cayenes use this river for bathing, cooking and washing clothes. However they will not drink its water.

Gunnery Sgt. Roy Newsome, NCOIC, 1WES-27, explained, "With the purification units we brought here, we have the capability of purifying 36,000 gallons of water a day. The more we purify, the more we can get out to the villages. In all our squadron field exercises we never had to produce so much, so fast. Our training really got put to the test on this operation."

Loading supplies, internally and externally, was accomplished by the Helicopter Support Teams from Camp Lejeune. Private PFC Richard Charboneau, HST, 2d FSSG, commented, "It was a lot of work but at the end of the day our whole team had a good feeling because of the nature of the work we were doing."

Editor's note: The Marines returned from Haiti Aug. 21.



WATER SYSTEM — Marines refill water cans from a water purification system set up by North Carolina Marines. Marines returned from the Haitian Disaster Relief Operation, Aug. 21.