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U. S. Coast Guard & Disaster Relief in Indonesia After the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami



Former MCPOCG Vince Patton forwarded an email along with this photograph from FS1 David Kohn, who was a crewman aboard *Munro*. Petty Officer Kohn wrote:

"Here is a picture of us (the *Munro*) off-loading some supplies to send over to the island. If you look at our flight deck it's pretty full. We loaded about 90 tons of supplies and sent most of it to Indonesia. Helicopter after helo ran the pallets off our deck. We were sitting off the coast just ferrying over supplies. It's a feel good thing. I hope we all appreciate a little more what we truly have and give to those who have not. Seeing bodies float on by so far out to sea and knowing that they are lost forever can really



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make a person feel [that] Mother nature is amazing and powerful with lots of ups and downs.

The photo, an official US Navy photo, is dated 15 January 2005. Click on the above image for a 300 dpi version.

COAST GUARD ISLAND, ALAMEDA, Calif. - (Fri / 7 Jan 2005 / 1530 PST) -- A Coast Guard tsunami relief team of two C-130 aircraft and 42 people began the final leg of their flight to Utapao, Thailand, from Kadena Air Force Base, Japan, today.

The team from across the U.S. rendezvoused in Honolulu and began their trip across the Pacific Ocean Wednesday, making two overnight stops in Guam and Japan.

The Coast Guard C-130's are used for maritime patrol, search and rescue, and logistical support. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point, Hawaii, and Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento, Calif., each provided one aircraft to the relief effort.

The tsunami relief team includes 28 flight-crew members, made up of seven-crewmembers from air stations: Barbers Point, Hawaii; Sacramento, Calif.; Elizabeth City, N.C., and Clearwater, Fla. There are 11 members from the Coast Guard's Pacific Area Strike Team from Novato, Calif., in addition to a surgeon, a public affairs specialist and a liaison officer.

The aircraft will transport emergency supplies and strike team members will address hazardous material spills in the communities devastated by the tsunami.

The Coast Guard forces will be assigned to U.S. Joint Task Force 536 that is conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in South Asia.

The 378-foot Coast Guard Cutter Munro, homeported in Alameda, Calif., departed Singapore today to rejoin the US Navy's Abraham Lincoln Battle Group that is on scene providing humanitarian assistance to areas affect by the Asian tsunami. Munro was enroute to the Persian Gulf as part of the battle group that was diverted for disaster relief.

COAST GUARD ISLAND, ALAMEDA, Calif. - (Mon/ 10 Jan 2005 / 1158 PST) -- A Coast Guard tsunami relief team of two C-130 aircraft and 42 people are in place today and beginning relief and hazard assessment efforts throughout Southeast Asia.



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The team from across the U.S. rendezvoused in Honolulu and began their trip across the Pacific Ocean Wednesday, making two overnight stops in Guam and Japan.

The C-130s, operating from Paya Lumpar, Singapore, are providing logistical support. Weather conditions prohibited flights today, but the Coast Guard is working with local relief agencies and coordinators on the ground to distribute emergency supplies throughout the area.

The Coast Guard Pacific Area Strike Team has 11-members that arrived in Utapao and is addressing hazardous material spills in the communities devastated by the tsunami.

Over the next 48-hours, Coast Guard personnel will travel to Colombo, Sri Lanka to bring aid to the affected communities there.

In addition to the Pacific Area Strike Team, the tsunami relief team includes 28 flight-crew members, made up of seven-crewmembers from air stations: Barbers Point, Hawaii; Sacramento, Calif.; Elizabeth City, N.C., and Clearwater, Fla.; a surgeon, a public affairs specialist and a liaison officer. The Coast Guard forces are assigned to U.S. Joint Task Force 536, which is conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in South Asia.

The 378-foot Coast Guard Cutter *Munro*, homeported in Alameda, Calif., is traveling as part of the U.S. Navy's Expeditionary Strike Group 5 with the USS *Bonhomme Richard*, is departed on scene providing humanitarian assistance to areas affect by the Asian tsunami. *Munro* was enroute to the Persian Gulf before being diverted for disaster relief.



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ABOARD USCGC MUNRO - Lt. Dan Van Buskirk, (left) operations officer aboard Munro, and Seaman Darrell Lindman, (right) oversee the transfer of tsunami relief supplies to the USS Tippecanoe while transiting off the coast of Sri Lanka Jan. 18. (USCG photo by OS3 Shaun Willits)

Coast Guard Cutter Carries Relief to Tsunami Survivors

By CTM2 Paula Ludwick, ESG5 Public Affairs

Press Release dated 19 January 2005; posted on the USCG PACAREA Public Affairs webpage.

The Coast Guard cutter USCGC Munro (WHEC 724) shuttled more than 80 tons of humanitarian relief supplies from Singapore to the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) last week for distribution to tsunami victims in northern Indonesia.

"As the Coast Guard, we're known for our ability to assist people in need. Carrying relief supplies isn't a common task we perform, but we're a multi-mission, multi-tasking service, and we're always ready," said Munro Commanding Officer Capt. Bret McGough.

Munro picked up the 121 pallets of rice, water, and other supplies during a port visit in



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Singapore. The cutter headed straight for the coast of Banda Ache where its crew staged supplies to be slung in nets under helicopters and whisked across a few hundred feet of ocean to the large deck of the Bonhomme Richard.

Once the supplies reached Bonhomme Richard, Sailors and Marines there reloaded pallets aboard helicopters and landing craft for delivery ashore.

Even though Coastguardsmen rarely act as cargo stewards, the entire crew worked together to ensure a load of supplies was ready every time a helicopter arrived.

"Keeping the deck loaded and ready for the Navy helicopters was quite a task and made for a long day for the crew, some of it in the hot sun, but it is very rewarding for them knowing they're playing an important part in the relief of survivors of such a horrific, historic disaster," said Munro Executive Officer Cmdr. Tom Combs. "Everyone onboard wants to do their part to help anyway they can to assist the survivors."

With a crew of less than 200, Munro's evolutions always involve all hands. This one was no exception. The only difference was this time everyone wanted to help.

"This is a good role for the Coast Guard. We are a lifesaving service, be it at home or abroad," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew King. "This is what we're trained for."

Munro is deployed as part of Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 5, which also includes the amphibious ships USS Bonhomme Richard, USS Duluth (LPD 6), and USS Rushmore (LSD 47); the guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52); the guided-missile destroyer USS Milius (DDG 69); and the guided-missile frigate USS Thatch (FFG 43). Munro is home ported in Alameda, Calif. The other ESG ships are from San Diego. ESG5 is scheduled to return to California this summer.

Undated USCG PACAREA Press Release

LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA - In a continued effort to provide relief to the tsunami affected regions of Southeast Asia, the U.S. Coast Guard delivered over 40,000 pounds of food, January 21, in the form of emergency high energy biscuits, to Medan, Indonesia and over 21,000 pounds of medical supplies, and temporary shelters to Utaphao, Thailand.

Two Coast Guard C130 airplanes and four aircrews from Barbers Point, HI., Clearwater, Fla., Elizabeth City, N.C., and Sacramento, Calif. have made almost daily flights to deliver cargo to tsunami affected cities in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand since January 14;



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including the delivery of a U.S. Navy medical team and equipment to supplement field hospitals in the northern city of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, and the delivery of water purification equipment and an assesment team to China Bay, Sri Lanka.

Now with the Barbers Point, Clearwater, and Sacramento crews staging their relief efforts out of Malaysia, the C130 aircrews and planes continue to support the relief effort in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, with 29,000 pounds of food delivered on January, 19, and daily cargo runs being made to staging points such as Jakarta, and Medan, Indonesia.

"We are committed to this mission as long as there's a need," said Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Brad Sultzer, of Airstation Barbers Point, HI. "The Coast Guard C130 provides a capable platform for airlift to remote locations." There is a large, broad need here, unlike anything I've seen, said Sultzer, "I've never seen this many people affected before, and we feel privileged to be here helping.

The Coast Guard C130 Hercules airplane is a highly versatile asset designed to land on short runways, and unimproved or even dirt airfields.

COAST GUARD CREW RETURNS FROM TSUNAMI RELIEF OPERATIONS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento's C-130 and its crew of seven return home here Tuesday, Feb. 1, at 4:00 p.m., from a month long mission supporting Tsunami Relief Operations in Southeast Asia.

The Sacramento based plane and crew delivered over 400,000 pounds of food, medical supplies, water purification equipment, assessment teams, and even toys to the tsunami-stricken countries of Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

A pair of Coast Guard C-130 long range aircraft, one from Barbers Point, Hawaii and one from Sacramento, in addition to four air crews, one each from, Barbers Point, Clearwater, Fla., Elizabeth City, N.C., and Sacramento, staged out of the island of Langkawi, Malaysia during relief operations.

Flights lasting up to 12 hours were routinely flown from Langkawi International Airport to Jakarta, Indonesia, to Banda Aceh, Indonesia, then back to Langkawi delivering and ferrying necessary supplies and people in support of relief operations. One of the C-130 airplane's biggest advantage is that it has the ability to land on dirt runways or runways in disrepair.



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"For me, the biggest challenge is keeping these two aircraft operational," said Petty Officer Ken Norris Jr., a flight engineer from Clearwater, Fla. "I think it's outstanding we're using the C-130 for the job it's made for. You give us a load and 4,000 feet of dirt anywhere in the world and we'll deliver."

The crews that fly the planes are also responsible for maintenance, which is completely unique to the Coast Guard.

"Having multiple aircrews gives this operation the ability to operate on a 24-hour schedule." Last night we flew for nine hours straight, then did maintenance for three hours, it's challenging but that's what it takes." said Norris.

The returning crew will be met by family members and Coastguardsmen at the Coast Guard Air Station. An awards ceremony is also scheduled.
