

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH U.S. NAVY CAPTAIN BRUCE H. LINDSEY, COMMANDING OFFICER, USS CARL VINSON VIA TELECONFERENCE FROM THE BAY OF HAITI SUBJECT: ROLE OF THE USS CARL VINSON IN OPERATION UNIFIED RESPONSE (HAITI) MODERATOR: PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM SELBY TIME: 2:00 P.M. EST DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2010

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LT. CMDR. JIM KROHNE: Hi, this is Lieutenant Commander Jim Krohne, calling for Captain Bruce Lindsey.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Hello, sir. This is Petty Officer William Selby, and I'm the moderator today for the call.

And we're all set. All the bloggers have joined us and are ready to go, if Captain Lindsey is also.

LT. CMDR. KROHNE: Yes, and we apologize for the delay. We're still conducting operations here, and as we speak we'll have helos landing and taking off. And we had a medevac earlier this morning, so -- and of course you can hear I'm out of breath, so -- Anyway, so I apologize; not meaning to keep people waiting. Captain Lindsey will give everybody the full time.

(Exchange regarding procedure.)

LT. CMDR. KROHNE: Okay, let me hand him the phone in just a second.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Captain Lindsey.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: How are you doing today, sir? This is Petty Officer William Selby.

We'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense's Bloggers Roundtable for Saturday, January 23rd, 2010. I am with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and I will be moderating the call today.

A note to the bloggers on the line, please remember to clearly state your name and blog or organization in advance of your question. Please respect our guest's time in keeping questions succinct and to the point, and please keep your phone on mute if you are not asking a question.

Today our guest is U.S. Navy Captain Bruce H. Lindsey, commanding officer of USS Carl Vinson.

And sir, if you have an opening statement, you can go ahead with that right now.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Okay. I'm looking at the Port-au-Prince harbor. I'm approximately five nautical miles off, heading towards the harbor, conducting a vert-rep with the USNS Comfort.

I have two helicopters on deck getting ready to launch, and we have two C-2s getting ready to come aboard in about 30 minutes.

So we are doing a lot of operations out here, and it's pretty typical of the days we've had so far.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you very much, sir.

And we'll go ahead and get to our first blogger, who is Jim Dolbow. Jim, if you want to go ahead and go with your question right now, that'd be great.

Q Captain, Jim Dolbow, with the U.S. Naval Institute blog.  
(Inaudible.)

CAPT. LINDSEY: Yes, Jim, how are you today? Q Pretty good.

Wearing my naval history hat, can you tell us where the ship was when the earthquake hit and what would you like the historians to write about the Vinson's role?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Okay, if I understood, the first question was where we were when this began, is that correct?

Q Yeah. And how would you like historians to write about the ship's role in the Haiti relief operations to date?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Okay.

We had just gotten under way for our first deployment after a little over four years in the shipyard, on a complex refueling/overhaul. Got under way on 12 January.

And within 12 hours, we got the order to head south towards Mayport and onload helicopters, maintenance personnel, and as much supply as possible, and get under way eight hours later -- not pulling into Mayport, but continuing on to get down here as fast as possible.

As you are well aware, a nuclear aircraft carrier has speed as its advantage. And we used that advantage, going over 30 knots the

entire time, to arrive off of Haiti on Friday in the early morning, and started conducting flight operations immediately.

So I think that that is one thing I think is important, to see that the speed and then the flexibility of how we tailored the flight deck to this mission.

Q Thank you so much.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And on to Andrew Lubin.

Q Captain, good afternoon. Andrew Lubin from Leatherneck Magazine. Thanks for taking the time, sir.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Thank you, Andrew.

Q Good.

Capitan, can you talk to us about the medical missions? You've got helicopters and, I guess, fixed-wing coming on board and then leaving.

Are you triaging on your flight deck? Or, can you talk to us about how these operations are being run?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Yes. At first, before the Comfort arrived, we were triaging on the flight deck as they arrived.

Now that the Comfort's here -- we have also Bataan and Nassau - - so you have medical facilities there, and us, and then you have the Comfort. So you have essentially four medical facilities afloat. And we also have -- the Joint Task Force commander has set up his fleet -- his

surgeon ashore. And so they're getting the requests in there, they're prioritizing the requests, and then they send them out to the various helicopters to go pick them up.

We want to get most of the folks to the USNS Comfort, because she has the most capability afloat right now. However, she can only take two helicopters at a time. And so if there's a patient that is critically injured and needs to get to a doctor fast, the other ships are here.

And in fact, today that's what happened. We had a Coast Guard helicopter bring in -- I believe it's four patients. We had another, a Navy helicopter, bring in three. And so between the four ships, we're maintaining full capability to help mitigate the suffering of the Haitian people.

Q Great. Thank you very much.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And on to Marc Herman.

Q Hello. Thanks for taking my call. This is Marc Herman, with Global Voices Online.

Haiti has a long history and a troubled history, including foreign military being present there. And there've been some reports of concerns and people reacting in a mixed way to that.

How do you -- or do you -- minimize the impression of an armed force being there and maximize the impression of helping?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Well, first, we are here to help. That is what President Obama stated, and that is our mission statement, to mitigate suffering of the Haitian people from this devastating earthquake.

Right now, the Marines from Bataan are down along the -- I call it the western coast. We have the Nassau Marines amphibious group on the northern coast, and the aircraft carrier is here in the center, supporting Port-au-Prince. So we are spread out, trying to help as many people as possible throughout the country. And in fact, USS Bunker Hill and helicopters from this ship went over -- or, maybe not this ship, but helicopters from the group went over to the island and helped out over there to -- because nobody else was going there.

So we are working as part of an international team in support of the Haitian government and the United Nations.

Q Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Roger. And Richard Lowry.

Q Hello, this is Richard Lowry, from OpFor.com.

I wonder if you can tell me, you've had a large influx of casualties coming out to all the ships. Are you starting to see that number taper off?

CAPT. LINDSEY: No, we have not seen that number taper off.

And that is the sad part about this crisis, is that there was just a huge devastation, with thousands of people injured. The people that are coming on here right now have broken bones, broken arms and legs, head wounds.

And it's just -- you just can't imagine, unless you're here looking at it, the number of people that have been injured.

Q How much longer do you expect this to continue, the evacuation of wounded people?

CAPT. LINDSEY: We will stay here as long as it takes. So as long as there are injured people needing our care, I am told that I will stay here as long as it takes. And that's what we want to do.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And Chuck Simmins.

Q Yeah, can you hear me?

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: You're good to go, Chuck.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Yes, we can.

Q Chuck Simmins, from America's North Shore Journal. Thank you, Captain.

I wanted to ask about your onboard air group and also about flight ops. Do you have your normal complement of (flight teams ?) on board and Vikings and whatever? And can you give me some idea of what the pace of air ops is right now? CAPT. LINDSEY: Okay, for the first part of the question, no, we do not have our normal air wing complements. We do not have the F-18s on board.

And that is because when we got under way on the 12th January, we did a couple of precision anchorages for training, and then the next day we are supposed to start our carrier qualifications for the air wing. However, we got our orders before that time, and never brought the F-18s aboard.

We then passed by Mayport, as I said before, and brought on 19 helicopters. We had five from Aegis -- (inaudible) -- already, so we added another 14 there.

Now, we do have -- our E-2s are flying out of Guantánamo Bay, providing command-and-control and airspace awareness. In addition to the C-2s, we have (Cons ?) that are based right now flying out of Guantánamo Bay and also Jacksonville, Florida.

Q All right, so you do have overhead radar coverage then?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Yes, we do.

Q Okay. Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And Dale, from Military Avenue.

Q Yes, sir. This is Dale Kissinger, from MilitaryAvenue.com

I'm a retired Air Force pilot and flew H-60s. I'm curious what kind of helicopters you do have on board, besides the 60s.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Besides the 60s, we have the 53s here. But your H-60s are doing very, very well, and it's a good mix of helicopters.

With the H-53s, as you're well aware, that's heavy-lift and we can carry a lot of cargo, medical supplies, and personnel. The smaller H-60s are very good for the medevac roles and for getting into little bit tighter spaces where the landing zone is not as generous. And of course also, we have the C-2s bringing cargo and personnel.

So it's a very good mix, and that was what we wanted to bring as soon as possible, was the vertical lift. Because we needed that

because the infrastructure was so damaged -- the roads, the port, the buildings.

Q Do you have a breakdown of how many sorties and medevacs you've actually accomplished since your arrival?

CAPT. LINDSEY: I have not broken down -- we have that information. I don't have it at the tip of my tongue right now. But I do know that yesterday we flew 61 sorties from the ship. The day before, we flew 60. We're probably on track to fly about the same today.

The first day, we only flew 21, as we ramped up and understood how to make this work.

So we've done very, very well maximizing our capabilities here of flying.

Now, that's sorties from the ship. Once the helicopter goes into Haiti, it is probably doing anywhere from three to six other landings, taking people from a landing zone to a makeshift hospital or transferring people to another part of the island here, in support of relief aid.

So they're doing about probably 180 to 240 landings a day, just off of this ship.

Q Oh, that's great. Thank you. Tell the guys that are maintaining them that they're doing a great job. Thank you.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Well, you bring up a very good point there, the maintenance. These helicopters have held up very nicely, including the H-53s.

So you're 100 percent right. The sailors down on the flight deck and in the maintenance departments are the real ones doing the hard work, day in and day out, making sure that the helicopters and the air crew can get into country and help the Haitian people.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Yes, sir.

And James Bosworth.

Q Yes. This is James Bosworth with Bloggings by Boz, among other things. Thank you for taking the time to do this.

I thought I'd ask about other ships in the area, other navies. I know that Italy's talked about aircraft carriers; Spain's out there, Brazil may be sending some ships.

Who else is out there right now, and how do you envision cooperation once other ships get there?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Well, right now, by the last count that I have here, there are probably 43 different countries supporting this operation. It is truly an international relief effort.

And the way we're working that, as we have historically done for coordination, is with liaison officers. We have a Canadian liaison officer on board right now; we have a United States Coast Guard liaison officer on board.

And as the ships come in, we see them and they talk to the U.S. Coast Guard, if they're going to go into the harbor. And that's how we try to make sure that we are coordinated with them.

We have different sea-space echelons that we've developed. And we are providing all that information to them so that they are aware of our movements, and they are doing the same, letting us know what their movements are.

So we are acting in a very coordinated fashion.

Q All right, thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Phil?

Q Yes, sir. Phil Ewing, with the Scoop Deck in Washington. Thanks also for taking the time.

And I wanted to ask about the air picture that you were mentioning earlier.

Nassau specifically has V-22 Ospreys as part of the equipment that came aboard, or they were supposed to. And I wondered if they're going to start flying, that you know of, and if you'll be taking patients by V-22 on your ship or if the other ships will be doing that?

CAPT. LINDSEY: You're correct that the Nassau Amphibious Group did bring their complement of V-22 aircraft. And no, I am not aware of that, because I was unable to go to the morning brief this morning because of the heavy flight operations on my ship.

So that's a good question, perhaps for tomorrow, to find out if indeed -- I know of no reason why they would not use them, because they need to scout out their area to make sure there are landing zones that they can go to, to see the damage up to the north and ensure that we get the relief aid to the places that need it the most.

As for my ship, the Carl Vinson, we have 19 helicopters, as I said, and we'd like to keep most of them, if not all of them, on the flight deck. So if we brought the V-22 on, that would be having to kick off some of the other helicopters.

And therefore, we'd probably not like to do that, because I think it would lead to an inefficiency. We're pretty much very efficient here. And the Nassau Amphibious Group knows how to operate their V-22s from their deck, and I think we would lose efficiency if you needed to move them around like that.

Q Yes, sir. Understood, thank you. Two other quick questions about the air situation.

One, you have a lot of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft overhead down there, all at the same time. And I'm wondering who owns and who controls the airspace, if it's land controllers or your ship or one of the Aegis ships.

And the second question on that score is can you strike the right balance between sending helos ashore and also taking your C-2s aboard, or do you have to move the ship back and forth to get out to enough open water to get up to speed to do those fixed-wing flight ops?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Two very good questions. I'll start with the second one first, because that's what we're about ready to do right now.

If you look at a chart, you'll see that we're operating in the Bay of Haiti. It's probably about 20 miles by 20 miles, most. And the winds come from the southeast; makes it a little bit difficult when you're trying to recover a C-2, which will need the winds over the deck higher, much higher.

So therefore, what we do is we work throughout the day tracking the winds, and we set ourselves up in this 20 by 20 box in the Bay of Haiti, such that we can then accelerate and catch the C-2.

We've also written the air plan to facilitate that, and it works very nicely because there are different times throughout the day where the helicopters come back and refuel. And then I'll have six to seven of them on the deck, maybe even eight of them.

And it happens that when the C-2 comes in, it is in between those big refueling times, so we have the time to catch them. So we've worked that out.

As for the airspace, your first question, we have to honor the airport's airspace, and that's under the control of the controllers over

there. And we have the air corridor marked off, and we also do have the DDGs and the cruisers that support us that way.

And we have been working -- because this is such a big operation now, with the Bataan Amphibious Group, the Nassau Amphibious Group, the USS Carl Vinson. Of course, the international airport there, we're working with the air control to make sure that everybody is working together and we're safe here. Very good question, though.

Q Yes, sir. Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And the DIFNET blogger? (No audible response.

) Okay, we'll go on then.

Maggie, you can go ahead next.

Q Good afternoon, Captain. This is Maggie of Bostonmaggie blogspot, and I just wanted to --

CAPT. LINDSEY: Yes, Maggie. Good afternoon.

Q My questions have pretty much been asked and answered, so I'll just say if you could pass along to whoever on the ship is running your Twitter account, tell them Bostonmaggie says (BZ ?).

CAPT. LINDSEY: Well, very well. I will tell my public affairs officer, because he's the one that runs the Twitter account for us. So thank you very much for those kind words.

Q You're all welcome. Good job.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And was there anybody else that joined that hasn't asked a question yet?

Q You missed me, I think. FBL, with -- (inaudible) -- dot com.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: FBL, sorry. Yeah, I apologize. You can go ahead with your question.

Q No problem.

Captain, you've talked a lot about the helicopters moving the people back and forth, and I'm wondering if you could tell us a bit about the extent of your capacity to bring things ashore and what kind of relief efforts you've been doing in that direction.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Yes. We have been providing -- water, primarily, is one of the big things, and medical supplies. In fact, since about five days ago, we have passed almost 20,000 gallons to the Haitian people.

What we have done, we have five-gallon jugs, collapsible jugs and also hard container jugs. And we fill that up. We created what I call a water tree.

The sailors on board figured this out. They took some piping, made -- hitched it up so that I could put a whole bunch of stick-its to it, on the flight deck. And then we take our water on board here, which we can make a lot of it, and fill up these jugs by hand.

So I have sailors who have volunteered to do that, and then I have sailors who have volunteered to lug that onto each helicopter. Every helicopter goes in with approximately 32 of these five-gallon jugs, and they drop it off at the LZ, the landing zone that they go to.

In fact, I think if you watched CNN last night, Anderson Cooper "360", you might have seen about 2,200 -- he's doing his little part there -- there were two Haitian people walking behind him, and in each hand they carried a cardboard container that contained the plastic five-gallon jug of fresh water from the USS Carl Vinson. So we continue to do that.

We've supported, of course, MREs and relief food. I know that the Bataan Marines have done a great job with the World Food Program, and supporting them in getting their food out.

Because we're operating to support these agencies, and that's what we're doing.

So we're getting a lot of water and food and medical supplies. That's a lot -- we get the medical supplies request, we find the supplies within the -- (electronic tone) -- we batch them together and we send it on then to the place that it's needed.

Q Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And sir, did you have time for some more questions as well.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Sure. We're in a turn and I have my navigator doing his job on the deck, so that's okay.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Roger that. Okay. And we'll go ahead. And if you don't have a question you can go ahead and pass to the next person.

Jim, if you have another question, go ahead with that now.

Q Captain, Jim Bolbow, with the Naval Institute Blog again.

What advice would you give (if ?) your carrier captains find themselves responding to a natural disaster like you have responded to?  
CAPT. LINDSEY: That's a good question. And I think what you have to say is each one of these natural disasters is different. Although you can say that there is a humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and that is a

core competency of the United States Navy, each one of these is slightly different.

In my mind, I've been thinking about that, and it seems to break down into two types. One would be the hurricane-type of relief that you'd have in Katrina. The other would be this earthquake relief that we're doing down in Haiti.

So there's a little bit of difference there. The infrastructure is broken in both of them, is damaged very heavily. But the injuries are so severe in an earthquake, whereas I think in the hurricanes you don't have as many injuries in that regard -- the damage done to the bones and the head trauma.

So there is a little bit of difference, and so I'd say to them that you need to think about that. But really, what we do is we rely on the ingenuity of the United States sailor.

Like I said, they created this water tree, and that came from the Lincoln carrier, when they were doing Banda Ache. They had created this, and so our sailors went online, found the lessons learned, and created another one, improved it, tweaked it a little bit so, as I said, we can put out a lot of water.

So I would say that you have to be flexible. You have to have -- believe in your sailors, because they're the ones that will have the solutions to the problems that you face immediately upon arrival.

Q Thank you so much.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Andrew, you can go ahead with a follow-up.

Q Yeah, Captain, Andrew Lubin, Leatherneck Magazine.

Sir, if your PAO has any pictures he can send up, we'd appreciate that. Especially, apparently there's a little boy name of Vinson who was born on board your ship. And we've read about it; we'd like to see a picture or two of him, if possible.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Okay. We do have a picture, I know, of the water tree, so I'll pass that along to the PAO and I'll see if we have any pictures of the baby Vinson.

Q Great, thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thanks. And on -- Marc if you have a follow-up, you can go with that.

Q I do, yeah. This is Marc Herman, with Global Voices Online again. How are you determining where you're sending the helicopters? Where's the -- how do you triage the information and where's the information coming from, given the infrastructural problems in Port-au-Prince still?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Well, we have established a joint operations center there ashore at the embassy and at the airfield. And they are the ones that direct our helicopters. We have what we call on board a carrier current operations cell. That's what we normally run when we're doing missions. So we get the taskers coming from the shore, from the joint operational center, to the ship. The ship then figures out the assets that they have available, which missions they can fill, which missions they cannot, and we do that.

And, of course, you have that across the force here. And Rear Admiral Branch is CTF-41, and he is coordinating all our efforts out here in support of the required missions that are being sent to us.

Q Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Okay, and Richard?

Q Yes, Captain. I have a statistics question for you.

Do you know many U.S. Navy ships are currently involved in the operation and how many U.S. and Marine Corps aircraft are involved?

CAPT. LINDSEY: You know, I don't have the exact numbers. What I'll do is I will have the public affairs officer go ahead and get the exact numbers for you so that we don't misquote anything there.

Q Thank you, because I know that this has turned into quite a large operation, and I'd like to impress that upon my readers.

CAPT. LINDSEY: You are correct. I've been in the Pacific and the Middle East and the Mediterranean. But we have, like we said, we have the Bataan Amphibious Group, you have the Nassau Amphibious Group, you have us.

But we have our CG, Bunker Hill, here, but you have Normandy, another CG. Have Underwood, an FFG. You have Higgins, who was first-on-arrival DDG. And then you have motor vessel Loomis (ph); you have USNS Comfort out there, USNS Grasp.

So there's a whole host of ships out here, and they continue to flow in, to support. So it is a very, very large undertaking.

I don't know my history correctly, to say that this is the largest this or that. But I'm pretty well impressed by the number of ships that are down here right now and continue to flow in -- and not only from the U.S. Navy, but from all the navies around the globe.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And Chuck?

Q Yes, sir. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal.

Do you have any sailors ashore performing relief operations, other than the helicopter folks?

CAPT. LINDSEY: We sure do. When we started coming down here, we got an initial cadre of 120 sailors in groups of 10. And they went through training; they made sure that the medical records were reviewed and that they were ready to go.

And these sailors go in and they help move the water and supplies and medical supplies from the helicopter to another helicopter - we've done that. They're doing all the heavy lifting in there. And also, they're going out with the other helicopters to the landing zones to deliver the supplies there.

And so we are expanding that number, because there's so much need for sailors -- or, personnel to help clear rubble, to help the infrastructure get better.

So we're responding to the requests for that. And my sailors on board, every one of them wants to go ashore to help them. I have to tell them I would love for them to all go there, but I do need a few of them to stay back on the ship to continue the operations here.

But it's great to see such an outpouring of volunteerism from today's sailor. You would be -- America should be very proud of the sailors that they have. They're great human beings.

Q We are proud, sir. Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Dale, if you have a follow-up, you can go.

Q Yes, sir. Do you have any particular stories that would reach the hearts of Americans about what your sailors have done?

CAPT. LINDSEY: There's a couple of them.

The first one, we received a e-mail into our system from some folks in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They had some kind of relationship with a man named Father Roosevelt, who was on Gonave Island. And what happened is everybody focused, of course, of Port-au-Prince. And we go back and forth by this island every day when we come in and out. So we had this e-mail, and we passed it on to the admiral. The admiral tasked Bunker Hill and another helicopter from another ship to go there, investigate. They did, and they found a landing zone that they could go in there and they brought water and food and medical supplies and medivacked, I think, three personnel from there.

And we got a thank you note back from them. And it just amazes me the interaction between technology and the military. So much -- kind of like what we're doing right now. We're talking, and you're going to put it into a blog. This kind of technology was used for good.

And so I think that's an interesting, unique story, and I think you'll see a lot more of these types of stories coming out of Haiti, the neat way that our sailors adapt to a situation and find a good result for the people of Haiti.

Q That's great. I'm actually 20 miles from Grand Rapids. I don't know those people, but that's great.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And James, if you have a follow-up?

Q Yeah. Actually, I kind of want to follow up on the last question about the interaction of technology and the Navy.

A couple stories in Wired over the past few days have mentioned the APEN network and the ability for NGOs and academics to get on and collaborate with people at SOUTHCOM and people down-range.

I was wondering, first, how useful has that been for you on your ship and for the Navy down-range, and also, just more generally, how's collaboration been with NGOs?

CAPT. LINDSEY: You bring up a very important part.

NGOs are very critical to the success of any humanitarian assistance/disaster relief. In fact, there are many NGOs that were in-country here already. They know the lay of the land, they know the people, they know the needs.

I think it was -- is it "Three Cups of Tea"? -- is a great book that shows the same type of dynamic, that you have to work with the people. They know what they need.

And so the NGOs fulfill that bridging role between the military that has the resources and the capabilities to bring water and medical supplies and doctors and that kind of thing, with the need, where is it, so that we can efficiently and effectively get the relief to the people where they need it, instead of where we think they need it.

And I think that's the most important role.

You asked also how it's going. It's going better each and every day, and that's a good sign.

Q Okay. Thank you, sir.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Phil, do you have a follow-up?

Q Yes, sir. Very quickly, this is Phil Ewing with Scoop Deck, again, in Washington. I just wanted to ask if you can get enough stuff in terms of supplies via your (COD ?) flights from Jackson-Gitmo to then send via your helicopters, or if you're going to need to do an un-rep at some point with an MSC ship to take aboard more food and medical supplies and that sort of thing?

CAPT. LINDSEY: Good question. The nice thing about an aircraft carrier is when you load it out, it can go for a long time. And that's what it was designed to do.

We were fully loaded out for food and our normal supplies, because we were going on a normal deployment to get around to San Diego. So we have plenty of food. We were down a little bit in our fuel and everything, but that was because we had not had our first under-way replenishment.

But even with being low on fuel, I still have more fuel for helos than the entire force here combined. And so that is not an issue.

We will be going out to get replenished, both vertical replenishment and getting some fuel. However, we will be simultaneously flying relief missions at the same time. Another key characteristic of an aircraft carrier is that you can get fuel, you can do vert-rep, and you can do this flying that we're doing, all at the same time.

So we're going to do that in the future, and so we will not really go off-station. We will continue to supply support to the Haitian people.

Q Yes, sir. Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And FBL, do you have a follow-up?

Q Yes.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Before that follow-up, could I just add?

One other thing is right now I'm doing vert-rep for the USNS Comfort. So I receive supplies in our C-2s and from Guantánamo Bay from our H-53s, and the C-2s from there too. And then we went ahead and further transferred it throughout the group here.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Yes, sir. Thank you.

And FBL?

Q Yes, sir. You mentioned some of the great stories about what your soldiers have done and the water tree that they created. Do you have another example of where they or anyone associated with the strike group had had to do the unplanned or the improvised that wasn't necessarily part of the standard operating procedure for missions like this?

CAPT. LINDSEY: I'm thinking. But what comes to mind real quickly that I haven't touched on is that we have a lot of sailors -- a few, and each ship does -- sailors of Haitian descent. And they speak French or Creole or Patois.

And so as soon as we found out we were heading this way, we found out which speakers we had on board, and they have been enormously helpful when we get medevacs.

Because think if you were in a foreign country, when you got medevacked -- and that's essentially what the aircraft carrier is to a person from Haiti -- you would love to hear somebody speaking in your own language.

And so that has been critical, I think, to our success for our medevacs and for our patients. There is somebody there that can talk to them, that can explain what's going on, and that assures them.

I think that's a key component, and that comes, again, straight from our sailors.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Well, thank you, sir. And with that, we are about out of time on our end. And sir, if you have any closing comments, I'd ask you to go ahead with that now.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Well, I want to say that I've been in the Navy for probably 27 years now. And I would say that this is a pretty good model -- it's not perfect -- of cooperation between military units, governmental organizations, and the non-governmental organizations, working as part of an international team with a unity of effort, which is to mitigate the suffering that the people of Haiti are going through right now.

And our metric of success is to continue to do more and more every day for them. And -- we just have to. That's what we have to do.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, Captain Lindsey, and thank you to all the bloggers for all your questions and comments today. Today's program will be online at the -- on DODlive.mil, where you'll be able to access a story based on today's call, along with the source documents such as the audio file and print transcripts.

Again, thank you to everybody on the line, and thank you very much, Captain Lindsey, for your time. This ends today's call.

CAPT. LINDSEY: (Electronic tones) -- thank you all, and I appreciate the time to be able to talk to you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Yes, sir. Thank you.

CAPT. LINDSEY: Bye bye.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Bye bye.

END.