

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH COLONEL JOHN ROMERO, CHIEF OF AIR MOBILITY DIVISION FOR THE 612TH AIR OPERATIONS CENTER AT DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA; LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRAD GRAFF, 601ST AIR OPERATIONS CENTER, TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA; MAJOR DAVE SMITH, U.S. AIR FORCE; VIA TELECONFERENCE SUBJECT: UPDATE ON AIR FORCES SOUTHERN COMMAND'S ONGOING SUPPORT OF HAITI RELIEF EFFORTS TIME: 2:00 P.M. EST DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2010

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LIEUTENANT JENNIFER CRAGG, (Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): So I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense's Bloggers Roundtable for Thursday, January, 21st, 2010. My name is Lieutenant Jennifer Cragg with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating this call today.

A note to the bloggers and online journalists on the call today, please clearly state the name and the organization you're with prior to asking your question. Good afternoon. Who just joined us, please? Can I get your name?

Q Yeah, this is Frank Guest of the Federal News Service.

LT. CRAGG: Hey, thank you so much. We've already started. We'll send you the audio file when we done, okay?

Q Okay, thanks.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, Fed News.

With that note to the bloggers, as I said, please clearly state your name and organization you're with. Today our guests -- we actually have three folks on the line. U.S. Air Force Colonel John Romero. He's the chief of Air Mobility Division for the 612th Air Operations Center at Davis-Monahan -- Monthan, if I said that right, Air Force Base, Arizona.; Lieutenant Colonel Brad Graff who is participating on behalf of the 601st Air Operations Center at Tyndall Air Force Base; and also Major Dave Smith as well.

The gentlemen will be discussing and providing an update on the Air Force's Southern Command ongoing support to the Haitian government

and relief efforts. So without further ado, I want to turn it first over to Colonel Romero, if I may. The floor is yours. Start with the topic statement and we'll go right into questions.

COL. ROMERO: And if I can, just a couple of things, first. If I can clarify, I have a Major Dave Smith here, who actually is assigned and works for Lieutenant Colonel Brad Graff at Tyndall, but when the operation kicked off, it was important that we had a liaison here from Brad's team there in Florida. So everyone knows, I have a 601st Air Operations Center LNO Dave Smith here with me.

The second thing, ma'am, if I could, I'd like to kind of pass the initial background to Lieutenant Colonel Brad Graff there at Tyndall because he can kind of set the bar of how this whole thing came to conceptual -- how it all started with them. And they will kind of explain some further maybe dialogue that we have.

LT. CRAGG: Why don't you do that. Go ahead.

COL. ROMERO: Brad, are you there?

LT. CRAGG: Lieutenant Colonel Graff?

MAJ. SMITH: It looks like he may have dropped off the line. Ma'am, this is Major David Smith. Until he comes back up, I can certainly talk to this. I think it is important, as Colonel Romero discussed.

A -- (inaudible) -- Operations Center came from an already-established organization within the 601st Air Operations Center known as the Regional Air Movement Control Center. That organization was a lesson-learned, believe it or not, from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita back in 2005. It was a long process to get that organization up and running, but really the major lesson learned that came from that was that New Orleans International Airport, there was nearly 52 aircraft on the ground and the offload capability of that airfield was only two at a time.

So we really, we found that there was a huge logistics backlog, essentially. We couldn't get the supplies to the people that needed it. That's where this came from over the course of three years and working within really they call it the U.S. NORTHCOM AOR, essentially the United States to get that organization up and running.

And just over this last couple of years with Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, we were able to practice or actually implement the Regional Air Movement Control Center and facilitate flow during that event as well. And during this whole time, we've been able to develop and build this skill set within the U.S. NORTHCOM AOR, the 601st Air Operations Center.

And that led in obviously to this event, how this happened, transpired, and how the 612th Air Operations Center was kind of able to reach back to this capability that isn't necessarily in their area of operations but we know it was a DOD capability, and again, Colonel Graff is leading that team there back at the -- what's known as the Regional

Air Movement Control Center, now known as the Haiti Flight Operation Center.

And I think he may have piped -- got on the line there. I just heard someone dial in. Colonel Graff, are you in?

COL. GRAFF: I'm back up, Dave. I just came up.

MAJ. SMITH: Hey, sir, I just gave a quick background, again, from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as Colonel Romero was going to ask you to do, and just kind of how that came about, and how this event here really made us actually reach -- the whole operation had us reach back to that capability, the 601st. Is there anything you want to add there, sir?

COL. GRAFF: I'm sure you did just fine, Dave.

COL. ROMERO: Yeah, he did great. And for all of the folks on the line here, the thing that the Regional Air Movement Center had is a working relationship, interagency relationship with the Federal Aviation Administration and of course members of the U.S. Air Force. And Brad, I don't want to tell all of the folks that are there on your team.

The one thing that I would like to note for everyone that's listening in, I do have someone from the 601st Air Operations Center. I also have a member of the Federal Aviation Administration here in our agency, again, to make sure that we're doing things safely and in the right way to support the Haitian folks.

LT. CRAGG: Okay, thank you, gentlemen, everyone for beginning with the topic statement. We're going to go right into questions, if that's okay. Jim, you were first on the line. Please go ahead.

Q Good afternoon. Jim Dolbow with the U.S. Naval Institute Blog.

Do you have a claims people in spare parts you need to maintain this op tempo? And do you know if there's any plans to activate the civilian reserve air fleet?

COL. ROMERO: Okay, sir, let me see if I got this right, as far as your question. Do we have the resources needed to continue this operation? And then I think the second question is do you plan to activate the craft?

Q Yeah, I know the second question is above your pay grade.

COL. ROMERO: Okay, good. That's my answer to the second question. For the first question, sir, I know from my perspective right here in Davis-Monthan, we are a 24/7 operation that's going and has been going for over a week now. We have all of the resources we need. As a matter of fact, I can kind of give you the history of how we've grown.

On a normal day-to-day period, before the earthquake in Haiti, I roughly had 20 folks in my division to kind of handle about three missions a day in the Southern Commands, South America, Central Caribbean region. From that point, I have much room to 51 individuals in my organization now handling almost 140 missions a day. So from my perspective, everyone is helping me and giving me what I need to make sure that we're doing our job here to support the Haiti people.

COL. GRAFF: And same here in the 601st, we're sort of designed in a contingency response to plus up. We're not standing at full ops all the time. So kind of -- we're very similar to the 612th in that way. We sit with roughly 13 people on full-time staff here, and then during contingency, we plus up. In this case here, we have -- we've doubled in size to accommodate this, but we certainly have the resources to keep going and we're looking at adding more resources to keep going indefinitely.

COL. ROMERO: Again, the individuals, the senior DOD Air Force officials are asking us what do you need, and they are giving that to us.
COL. GRAFF: Yeah, the support has been outstanding.

Q Thanks so much.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Jim.

Andrew, please go ahead. You're next.

Q Yes, gentlemen. Andrew Lubin here from Leatherneck Magazine. I appreciate you taking the time today.

Could you go back a little bit and tell us actually what the 612th is -- what you're doing down there in Tucson for Haiti -- (inaudible). What actually -- day to day, what are you working on?

COL. ROMERO: Absolutely. The Air Mobility Division is just one of five divisions that is here at Davis-Monthan Air Force. And I don't want to sit there and try to talk to you about the organizational structure. I just want it known that I'm just a single piece of a much larger piece here at Davis-Monthan.

But we're trying to do is ensure the flow of supplies, the relief effort, the whole international relief effort is getting the right things at the right time into the airport there in Haiti to support the Haitian government and the people of Haiti. So from a big snapshot look, that is kind of what we are doing here at the air operations center.

Q But you're scheduling flights, you're scheduling maintenance? What are you --

COL. ROMERO: Okay.

Q That's what I'm getting at.

COL. ROMERO: We are working in concert with the 601st Air Operations Center who really has the role of the Haiti Flight Operations Control Center. They are really the individual entity that is controlling the slot times into Port-au-Prince Airport. Now, they are getting a lot of direction -- I'll let Brad touch on that. That's the HFOCC piece of getting slot times into Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

We on the other hand here at the 612th Air Operations Center are working in concert with the 601st to control DOD aircraft, Department of Defense, mainly Air Force, since we are an Air Force entity here, to flow our forces into Port-au-Prince, which is being done in concert with the 601st. Again, let me give it, if I can, in a conceptual piece. If for some reason the HFOCC has a hundred landing slots on a giving day and the Department of Defense gets 20 and the Air Force of that piece gets 10, and my folks here get two, my folks are controlling and scheduling and making sure that he supply that are on those two planes get in at the right time to Port-au-Prince. Does that kind of help put it in perspective.

Q Yes, very much so. Well, how do you -- let me follow up, guys. Then you coordinate I guess hourly with the people that are homestead.

COL. ROMERO: Homestead is not the only location that we are bringing supplies from the U.S. We are bringing humanitarian relief supplies, equipment, all of those kinds of things, from the U.S. -- that's a given, but it's coming from all over the world.

Q Okay, great. That helps. Thank you.

COL. GRAFF: Yeah, from our standpoint, I just want to make sure we get one thing. HFOCC stands from Haiti Flight Operations Coordination Center. And the difference between coordination and control is important. So it's coordination center.

COL. ROMERO: Thanks, Brad.

COL. GRAFF: And, yeah, from our standpoint, our focus is on one thing and one thing only. While the 612th A and B is operating in, you know, controlling specific airplanes, specific missions, controlling ASO, we have one thing that we're doing, and that's controlling and coordinating the slots into the contingency ramps at Port-au-Prince. And that's what we're -- as we do that, every aircraft that is landing at that airfield right now needs to have a flight time allocated by us.

We've received -- you know, we are trying to properly apportion between all of the interested parties. You can imagine how many different parties there are involved now in this international effort, which is a somewhat different experience for us. We've never operated in this broad of a scope.

So trying to balance all of those wants and needs, and of course there's some political implications with the actual means of the Haitian people on the ground, making sure that they're getting what they need to

facilitate this relief effort is what is happening here. And we get guidance -- a lot of our guidance comes from the 612th and AFSOUTH and SOUTHCOM.

Q Okay, great. Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Andrew.

Jeff, please go ahead.

Q Oh, hi. This is Jeff Schogol with Stars and Stripes.

Can you talk about briefly what is it -- what capabilities does the Air Force bring to this relief effort that civilian aid groups simply don't have. COL. ROMERO: Jeff, this is Colonel Romero. Honestly, I think everyone has unique capabilities that they can bring to this humanitarian relief effort. And I think if we look at it that way, there are certain capabilities that DOD, Department of Defense, may have, but I don't want to lessen the fact that there's doctors from all over the world that want to get into Haiti to help the Haitian people and the Haitian government.

I think we bring a unique skill set that we always train to do these kind of operations. So as we prepare for these kind of things, we can kind of hit the ground running, and we bring to bear a lot of capability.

We have a lot of individuals. We have aircraft that can bring a lot of equipment. We have folks that -- the contingency response group is there on the ground offloading these aircraft. They are always postured. We have folks on alert status that on a given national disaster or world disaster, they can be anywhere fairly soon with all of the resources to start recovering aid.

I'll give a couple of examples. Whether it was Hurricane Katrina, we had these contingency response groups that were on the ground fairly quickly. Also when we had the earthquakes in Pakistan, the same type of thing. These folks are postured to go anywhere in the world to start the flow of relief efforts.

Q Okay, thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Jeff. Chuck, please go ahead.

Q Well, I'm completely lost. Is there anyone on this call representing the Air Force unit that is actually acting as air traffic control at the Port-au-Prince Airport?

COL. GRAFF: Yes, sir. Probably -- you've got to be careful how use the term "air traffic control."

Q Yeah, I know. The Haitian have the longer range, and we have people doing the landing controls. I wanted to ask about things

like radar. How are you getting -- how are you getting your landing vector, your approach vector? Is the radar at the airport functioning? And I also wanted to ask about the other airports that are being opened. Will your group be going over there too.

COL. GRAFF: Romero, do you want that one, or --

COL. ROMERO: I think I can -- I think I can speak -- I'm not real familiar with the air traffic control piece, but I think I do know is that it is a non-radar environment there at Port-au-Prince, the airport there in Port-au-Prince.

Q So there's no IFR capability at all?

COL. GRAFF: Jump in there. It is a huge -- Colonel Romero is correct. It is a non-radar environment, but the Haitian approach is up, and they -- (inaudible) -- and there are instrument approaches operating at the airfield. So it is IFR-capable.

Q Okay, what about the other airfields, Jacmel and the Dominican Republic? Are you folks going over there too, or is someone else handling that piece?

COL. GRAFF: I can talk to you as far as the current status right now. The Canadians are looking to work the Jacmel Airport that you're talking about. They have a concept to operations, and we've been in contact with them as far as what is their goal, how are they going to work it. We'd like to flow airplanes in. But Jacmel is a small strip that can take one airplane. And it's very small. So as far as the capability there, I think any plane that we can get in there to offload supplies we would want to use, and the Canadians are using that.

We are looking at ever possible alternative we can to flow supplies into whether it be Haiti or the Dominican Republic. And I can talk about two that we are currently using as of today. We are looking to use San Isidro Airport just outside Santo Domingo. And I think I'm going to butcher the name here, but I think it is Maria Montez there in Barahona, Dominican Republic.

And the goal there is Port-au-Prince is the center of gravity for the relief effort currently in Haiti. If something happens to that airfield, we are in trouble to get supplies there until the sea pods are open and those kind of things. So we've engaged with the Dominican Republic officials, and they have been more than helpful into opening up other areas that we can now flow relief supplies into.

Q Okay, thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Does that clear things up for you or are you okay? Want me to come back around for you?

Q I'm fine.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. I just want to make sure.

Paul, Paul McLeary, please go ahead.

Q Hi, gentlemen. Thanks for talking to us. It's Paul McLeary from DTI. I just have a two-part question. One is you mentioned, you know, that they trained for this. Have you trained for an international effort as well as a -- have you war-gamed it? And, two, how are you coordinating with, say, civilian relief agencies or -- you know, I know the French are I there, the Canadians are in there. How do you coordinate internationally?

COL. GRAFF: Well, from our -- I guess you're asking about the ramp control effort? Q Yes.

COL. GRAFF: Internationally, in the NORTHCOM AOR, you know, I'll be honest with you, we didn't look at the international scope of things very much. This is happening in a SOUTHCOM AOR which is a much more -- has a much more international flavor to it than ours does. So, no. The fact was this was the first time we had done that.

Having said that, the whole point of the COM (?) ops is to try and collect all interested parties. So it wasn't that big of a leap to coordinate. The key is just getting one point of coordination which is the function we're doing. And so, you know, it's provided a challenge.

I think the biggest additional challenge it provided for us was the volume of requests and trying to get through it, where, you know, the international community -- you know, where our customer went from where what we thought would be certain agencies in the United States that we had pre-coordinated with, maybe a few agencies in Canada or something like that.

We didn't anticipate having to field and sort and prioritize requests coming from the entire international community, which, you know, the response is so great around the world, and greatly appreciated. So that has been a challenge for us. And we know there's been some feedback as far as getting access to our system to receive a flight time, and we're doing our absolute best to upgrade that now as we go forward.

COL. ROMERO: From our perspective -- this s Colonel Romero from Davis-Monthan. I'll take the international flavor of this piece. We routinely in our area of responsibility work with our partner nations on how to do, like, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. As a matter of fact, we were having an exercise -- it's called blue flag, and that was going to be happening around the end of February for about two weeks here.

During that exercise, my division asked to get evaluated and train on noncombatant evacuation operations. So in case something happened, in our area of responsibility, we could try to figure out the best way to try to flow into airfields and try to bring American citizens out of danger or out of humanitarian assistance or something like that. So we do exercises routinely throughout the year, partnering with the nations here in our geographic area on a routine basis.

Q Great, thanks. And this kind of being funneled through SOUTHCOM then? Or what's the chain of command for sharing information?

COL. ROMERO: Yeah, there is a joint taskforce on the ground right now in Haiti that is working with Haiti officials, the U.N. mission there in Haiti, and they are reporting to the Southern Command, which is General Fraser, and the folks in Miami. And we fall here at Tucson under the air component of Southern Command and that's 12th Air Force -- Air Force to Southern.

Q All right.

COL. ROMERO: And the 601st there at Tyndall is kind of falling in under us at Air Force to Southern as a supporting command because they really are outside our normal chain of command here. I mean, Brad made that kind of clear that they are a northern command -- that that's their focus.

So on normal day-to-day, before the earthquake in Haiti, we would not really work with those guys.

Q Thank you very much.

COL. GRAFF: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Paul.

Dale, please go ahead.

Q Good afternoon. This is Dale from MilitaryAvenue.com.

As a former C-17 guy, I'm kind of curious who's controlling the slot times for like airdrop in that area. And also, how do you coordinate with the TATC?

COL. ROMERO: Okay, good questions. Since you asked about the airdrop, today -- we actually did one today. That is -- we've done two airdrops today. And it has been done by C-17 aircraft, so you should be proud of those folks. They did a fantastic job -- on time, on target, 40 bundles for each aircraft at two different locations dropping humanitarian relief supplies to the people there in Haiti of water and meals ready to eat. So those folks are doing a fantastic job.

Those requests come from the Joint Taskforce there on the ground, and then that is passed through Southern Command to us here, and we would work with Air Mobility Command that has the assets to actually accomplish those airdrops. So I think that would answer the airdrop piece of what happened today.

If I could just follow up on that second question.

COL. GRAFF: Yeah, I could -- do you want to know how we coordinate with the TATC or how the 612th does.

COL. ROMERO: Okay. Perfect. We have a director of mobility forces here, Brigadier General Robert Millman (sp) who Air Mobility Command has sent here as a subject matter expert on airlift within the Air Mobility Command. He works for my boss, Lieutenant General Spears here. He helps coordinate all of the capabilities of the aircraft there at the Air Mobility Command. And then we have the synergy of him being here with us that we can find out what they're doing and then flow them into our operation into Port-au-Prince. Q Oh, super. Thank you for that. And is the general always assigned there or is he down there just for this operation?

COL. ROMERO: Like Brad and I have previously said, we kind of operate on what we need to do, our daily job when a crisis, humanitarian assistance and earthquake like this happens, we bring in the right subject experts to help facilitate to ensure we do our job right and of course support whoever we're trying to help.

Q Okay, thank you.

COL. GRAFF: Our coordination with TATC, we get our prioritization and direction from the -- (inaudible) -- that General Millman and AFSOUTH. And I talk with AMD down there virtually every day. And we -- once the priorities are established -- in this case the government of Haiti had established that security, for example, was a priority, then we know then that one of the primary agencies in accomplishing that is going to be TATC deploying security forces that can accomplish that mission that the government of Haiti is requesting.

So when that happens, we work very closely with TATC. And as far as the slots go, we have to -- you know, in order to accommodate that deployment in timely manner, we ask them what their requirement is, what they're going to need, and then we -- we are reserving slots for them so that they can accomplish that deployment to meet the needs and the priorities of the Haitian government.

COL. ROMERO: Brad had a great response. Just everyone to clarify, the TATC is the Tanker Airlift Control Center. They're at Scott Air Force base that falls under air mobility command. And they really are the command-and-control asset or function that controls all of the Air Mobility Command Aircraft.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Dale.

Bruce, please go ahead.

Q Good afternoon. Just two questions. How many requests are you receiving on a daily basis for flights coming into Haiti? And earlier you talked about plus-ing up for both your units. Are those plus-ups coming from active-duty, reserve folks? And are those folks who are kind of on hand to do this job if needed.

COL. GRAFF: I guess I'll take that one, sir.

COL. ROMERO: You take the first part and I'll be glad to chime in on the second one.

COL. GRAFF: As far as how many requests we're getting, all I can tell you is that our phones are ringing off the hook continuously 24/7. The ramp is being fully utilized 24/7. So the demand for the ramp is continuous and insatiable. So trying to -- when you ask how many requests we've gotten, we know that there are some requesters that may not have gotten through or that are -- and we just keep trying to get through. So, yeah, we are -- we -- (inaudible) -- as maximum capability right now.

LT. CRAGG: Okay.

COL. ROMERO: I'll tie into Brad's -- don't let me speak for you too much there, Brad. But I can say that all of the folks that have gotten through, we've gotten their requests, we've given them a slot time because of the priority of all of those individuals that I think we were well in --

COL. GRAFF: A hundred and forty per day.

COL. ROMERO: Yeah, roughly 140 per day we've been averaging. Up until yesterday, all of those folks who had slot time and got to Port-au-Prince got into Port-au-Prince. Now, I will say there was one exception yesterday because we had two C-17s that broke on the ground there. And that caused a little bottleneck because now you have an airplane on the ground that can't get off because they are not working.

And what we did was we had to divert two aircraft. We couldn't get them in. But we made a conscious decision, looked at the priorities, and the aircraft we chose to divert were two DOD aircraft, two C-17s.

COL. GRAFF: And that happened on -- Colonel Romero is right on. That happened here in the HFOCC. I was on the execution floor. And that is where the prioritization of the flight and acting as a facilitator is critical. You know, we have to take everything into account on which airplane -- and when that situation happens in execution, which airplane need to get on the ground first. There's a lot that goes into it. What organization can maybe recover from that diversion better, you know, more effectively? How quickly can we re-accommodate it?

And we are -- we have a very interagency environment here where we're talking to the FAA, we're talking to TATC. We're talking to the Haitian air traffic controllers all at the same time. So when I'm standing there trying to make those decisions real time, watching it on our displays, we try and assemble as much data as we possibly can to make an educated decision on what the best course -- what is the best decision there to make.

In the end, somebody's, you know, not going to be happy about that, but we've got to get -- you know, if we had enough slots for everybody, the field could be wide open. You wouldn't need us at all. So we know that in the end those decisions are going to have to be made, and

then we do the best to accommodate it and make sure the priorities are being met for the people on the ground. COL. ROMERO: I'd like to -- this is Colonel Romero again. I'd like to add, as of yesterday, we've had 808 slots into Port-au-Prince.

Q Okay, thank you. I was going to -- if you could address just when you plussed-up there at Davis-Monthan, if that was kind of done from your own team or if you had to reactive your reserves back up.

COL. ROMERO: You bet. What happened initially after the earthquake, we tried to assess what was happening, what we thought the commitment would be, and we immediately sent out requests for forces. I am being augmented here at Davis-Monthan with Guard, Reserve, and active-duty individuals.

I will tell you also, I did not have an FAA rep, a Federation Aviation official with me. But we thought it was very important that we had that kind of person here. So we asked the FAA for a liaison to come work with us, so, again, as we're flowing stuff into Haiti to make sure that we're doing it safely. They immediately filled it with no questions asked. And the guy is here in our organization working right now day to day, 12 hours, like the military individuals.

Q Thank you.

COL. ROMERO: You bet.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, Bruce.

The last person on the list is Paul. Please go ahead. This is Paul Bove.

Q Yeah, hi. This is Paul Bove from Air Force Public Service Agency.

I understand the concept of the slots and the list of priorities that have been laid out by the Haitian government. You know, they said, number one, they want water, relief supply, et cetera. So what was causing the confusion when organizations like Doctors Without Borders were putting out press releases saying they've been diverted from landing. Are they simply trying to show up without following protocol, or was there some confusion? Or was it because of the list of priorities? COL. ROMERO: I can take that, and Brad, I'll let you take it a little bit also. I'll kind of give you a little scenario.

You have JFK Airport that has kind of landing times. What we try to do is enforce that same type of landing times with slots. What we were having was everyone wanted to get in and they couldn't, but they came anyway. So imagine at JFK International, you have twice as many people coming in there that weren't supposed to. Everyone thought they had a priority, however, they never called and got a landing time for JFK or in this case a slot time to go into Haiti. But it didn't deter them. They showed up anyway.

I understand everyone thinks they have the number-one priority, but not everyone truly does have the highest priority. And you have to rack and stack those, and that's why we depend on the Haitian government there to work with the Joint Taskforce and the U.N. Mission so that we make sure we get the right prioritized cargo and we can schedule those folks with the right slot times at the right times to get into Port-au-Prince.

COL. GRAFF: Yeah, and I'll follow up with that, sir. Prior to this program being instituted on the field, you know, Miami center, everybody -- there were ground stops of aircraft going in. It was really a -- the situation was such at the airfield, airflow literally came to a complete stop at some point.

So we're not trying to bar people or limit the field. Far from it. You know, I think the data is still being accumulated, but I know Port-au-Prince prior to this had serviced, you know, on a routine basis 50 sorties or less -- was sort of what it was designed to handle. And we're now. I think they said around 140 a day. And on some days, we've had as many as I think 163 was our maximum.

So we've tripled the flow through that field. So your chances of getting in are better now than ever. You just do need to follow the procedures that are in place. We don't like to think of ourselves as limiting that airfield; we like to think of ourselves as facilitator that are allowing things, the proper agencies, allowing people to get in there in a more timely manner.

Q Great, thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you. And I have one request from Andrew who was the second person on the call. He was wondering if there was any photos that you call could send. (Inaudible) -- could send them to me and I could send them out to all of the bloggers on the line, or a link to any of the photos, a link to any of the airdrop picks or planes lined up, ready to go, so they could post on their various blogs, websites, et cetera.

COL. ROMERO: Ma'am, this is Colonel Romero. I think we have some photos and file footages of the airdrops. I think we probably have some pictures and stuff from some of the offloading that's occurring downrange. I'm going to defer to my 12th Air Force public affairs folks to get that stuff. I think we have some websites, but, again, I'm not the smartest guy on that. I'm going to defer to them.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Whenever. If they send them after the call later on today, I'll make sure all of the bloggers on the line receive it.

With that, I know Colonel Romero, I know you were going to get off the phone call earlier today. I appreciate you staying on and answering all of these questions. I'm going to turn it back over to you, or to Lieutenant Colonel Graff or to Major Smith, whoever would like to

end with a closing statement. We'll wrap up today's call. The floor is yours.

COL. ROMERO: Okay. I'll go first. I want to thank you first of all for taking the time to write this story. This is very important. The number one goal of the Department of Defense -- and honestly I think it's the whole world here -- is to support the Haitian folks, the Haitian people that badly need the supplies. It is a tragedy what happened there.

We are doing the best we can, working with the individuals on the ground, to make sure that the right priorities are identified and that we can flow those priorities based on what we know as far as what capabilities, countries, NGO organizations, the U.S. has and get them in there as quick as we can. But I want to -- I want everyone to know, we want to do that safely.

So I think that's very important. I think we're doing a good job. I'd like to say what we're doing here right now is we've doubled -- on a given day in Haiti, we are flying more stuff in Haiti than we do right here at my home airport, Tucson International. As a matter of fact, we do twice as much. So I think we're doing a good job.

It's a coordinated effort across DOD, the Haitian individuals on the ground, the government officials. And again, we've gone across boundaries utilizing that there's different capabilities within the U.S. the 601st is one example, and the FAA is another one to ensure, again, that we're doing it safely.

Thanks to you for writing this story. I appreciate that. And I'm going to kind of sign off.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. And I'm going to go ahead and close out today's roundtable. I wanted to thank all three gentlemen for participating today and for the bloggers calling today. A note to everybody, you'll be able to grab a transcript and the audio file if you visit www.dodlive.mil/bloggersroundtable. You'll more information about this call.

You've been listening to U.S. Air Force Colonel John Romero, Lieutenant Colonel Brad Graff and Major Dave Smith. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you for everyone. This concludes today's event. END.