

Seattle Chronicle

U.S. Marines Deliver Critical Aid To Earthquake Victims in Nicaragua

SAN CARLOS, Nicaragua (AP) — The USS Makin Island (LHD 8) docked today in San Carlos, carrying 1800 Marines. The troops were dispatched by Special Operations Command (SOCOM) within days of the earthquake that devastated the Central American country.

The quake had a magnitude of 5.8, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, and was the strongest to hit Nicaragua since Dec. 23, 1972. It caused widespread damage, especially in the city of Managua, killing approximately 4,000, injuring nearly 15,000, and leaving more than 200,000 homeless. Two-thirds of the population is still without water and electricity.

According to the Ambassador from the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Marines will be distributing food, water, medical supplies, and heavy construction equipment throughout the region. They will help restore water and electrical power and clear away rubble caused by the collapse of hundreds upon hundreds of poorly constructed homes and commercial buildings. Search and rescue missions are not out of the question.

The Makin Island is a 40,500-ton amphibious assault ship, built by Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Gulf Coast for use as an integral part of joint, interagency, and multinational maritime forces. Its purpose here is purely humanitarian. It will provide emergency



USS Makin Island (LHD 8)

power to San Carlos and serve as both a command center and emergency surgical center, since the city's electrical power plant and two of the city's four hospitals are unserviceable.

The service men and women delivering the aid are happy to help. "We feel really good about what we're doing," commented one Marine. "It's rewarding to be able to help so many people in such desperate need, like the Marines on the USS Bataan (LHD 5) did in the Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina."

Managua lies on the southern shore of Lake Managua near Nicaragua's western coast. It has a long history of volcanic and seismic activity. In a statement issued immediately following the quake, U. S. President Obama said, "On behalf of the people and government of the United States, I offer my deepest sympathy to those affected by the earthquake and the families of the victims. We will do everything we can to provide relief during this critical time."

The Miami Times

Timely Arrival of USS William P. Lawrence In Persian Gulf Prevents Armed Conflict

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon reported today that the USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110) took up its position in the Persian Gulf, 15 miles off the coast of Iran. The Navy took the action to deter a potential armed conflict between Iran and Iraq.

Hostility between the two countries has increased over the past several weeks. It appeared to be coming to a head last week when a diplomatic mission led by the United States and its allies fell apart. Fearing that any fighting between Iraq and Iran would quickly escalate into all-out war, President Obama authorized the Navy to reposition the ship.

The DDG 110, built by Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding at its Gulf Coast facility, is a guided missile destroyer, equipped for conducting anti-air, anti-submarine, anti-surface, and strike operations. When asked to comment, the ship's captain said, "The men and

women on board are proud to serve their country and to help safeguard peace in the region."

Secretary of State Clinton will travel to the region to meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. There is also the possibility that she will meet with Iran's new head of state, now that the U.S. relationship with that country has improved.

Ties between Iran and Iraq had warmed considerably after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Iran's involvement in Iraq's reconstruction following the withdrawal of U.S. troops helped to strengthen those ties. But recent Iraqi concerns that Iran was meddling in Iraq's internal affairs—and Iran's insistent denial—threatened to disturb the fragile relationship and further destabilize the Middle East.

The Boston Gazette

Coast Guard Foils High-Seas Pirates Off Haiti's Coast

MIAMI (AP) — The U.S. Coast Guard stopped pirates from attacking a U.S. merchant vessel in international waters, 80 miles off the northern coast of Haiti early this morning. The National Security Cutter (NSC 2) USCGC Waesche (WMSL 751) received a distress signal at 5:25 a.m. from the vessel, which was headed for Port au Prince with a shipment of petroleum products.

When the Waesche arrived at the scene, they found a skiff with seven suspected pirates, armed with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and several assault rifles. The pirates fled into international waters at the sight of the NSC, one of the premier ships designed and built by Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Gulf Coast. It is equipped to carry out the Coast Guard's missions of maritime security and safety, the protection of natural resources, maritime mobility, and national defense.

It is well-known that piracy on the high seas has been on the rise. Most attacks up until now, however, have occurred in the Gulf of Aden and along the coast of Somalia, where waters are now patrolled by warships from countries including Britain, France, Germany, Iran, and the United States. Warships from China, India, Japan, Russia, and South Korea are also involved in the international effort to combat piracy.



USCGC Waesche (WMSL 751) came to the rescue of a merchant ship bound for Port au Prince.

"Finding pirates so close to home is disconcerting," admitted the Coast Guard commander. "We were lucky to be patrolling the area and have such a capable ship with extensive command and control, onboard helos and ribs (helicopters and rigid inflatable boats), as well as weapons systems."

A spokesperson for the merchant vessel told reporters, "It was a modern version of the swashbuckling days of the mid-18th century, and a bit surreal. We're thankful that the Coast Guard got here quickly enough to thwart the pirates before anything disastrous occurred. Keeping the oceans safe for free-flowing trade is an important part of keeping the world safe."

Pirates in recent years have taken tens of millions of dollars in ransom and seized dozens of ships carrying everything from oil to chemicals to tanks. The U.N. Security Council has authorized countries to use "all necessary means" to stop piracy and armed robbery at sea.

The New York Bugle

THE CITY'S CLARION CALL FOR FREEDOM & JUSTICE

SHIP FORGED FROM WORLD TRADE CENTER RETURNS "HOME" FOR FLEET WEEK

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The USS New York (LPD 21) arrived in New York today, from its home port of Norfolk, Va., to serve as the command ship for Fleet Week, August 29 through Sept. 5. The annual event provides the citizens of New York City and the surrounding Tri-State area with an opportunity to meet sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, as well as witness firsthand the latest capabilities of today's military, through ship tours and Blue Angel air shows. This year it will also give people, particularly the families of those who died in the WTC Twin Towers, the chance to see firsthand one of the ways in which 9/11 heroes and victims have been honored.

Christened on March 1, 2008, the USS New York is a LPD-17 class amphibious transport ship. It was named to pay tribute to those whose lives were lost on 9/11, as well as to honor the courage and compassion shown by countless New Yorkers during and after the terrorist attacks. Its bow stem, the foremost portion of the ship where it cuts through the water and provides hull integrity, was formed using steel from the World Trade Center.

"The hull represents the strength and resiliency of the citizens of New York," said one high-ranking Navy official. "It sends the message that the United States is stronger now because of 9/11. We've come together as a nation and can move powerfully ahead through whatever turbulent waters we encounter."



Some Northrup Grumman workers delayed retirement to help complete the USS New York. Others stayed on even after their homes were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.



Steel salvaged from Ground Zero being smelted in Amite, La.

Twenty-four tons of steel salvaged from Ground Zero was treated and smelted in Amite, La. The 25,000 ton ship was built in Avondale, La., by Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding Gulf Coast.

Shipyard workers reportedly treated it with reverence, gently touching it as they walked by. Some delayed retirement to be part of the project while others stayed on

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Steel from Ground Zero Returns to New York As Hull of Marine Ship

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even after their homes were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. "It makes you feel patriotic and spiritual at the same time," said one deck plate worker.

The crew of 360 sailors and 800 combat-ready Marines talk openly about what it's like to serve on the New York. One sailor summed it up this way: "We will always feel closely tied to those who died on September 11 and to the people of New York. And we're reminded every day, just by being on this ship, of our responsibility to keep our country safe."

Designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists, the LPD 21 is well equipped to defend freedom around the world. It is the first ship fully designed to support all of the Marines' primary mobility capabilities, carrying Expeditionary Fighting Vehicles (EFV), Landing Craft, Landing Craft Air Cushioned vehicles, and the MV-22 Osprey.

The ship's captain is confident in the capabilities of the New York. "The command and control capabilities of this ship are outstanding. It's passed every performance test with flying colors and provides more military options than any ship in its class—a perfect vessel for ensuring homeland security."

The USS New York evokes emotional memories, patriotism, and pride in everyone who sees her. The ship's official motto—"Strength Forged through Sacrifice: Never Forget"—is a constant reminder of the price of freedom. It is with this in mind that crew members from the New York will take part in this year's commemorative ceremony at Ground Zero in New York City next month. The program will start at 8:46 am on Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2012.