

**Joint Task Force California
Press Accounts of the California State
Military Forces' Response to Hurricanes
Katrina and Rita
31 August-11 November 2005**



California Center for Military History
California State Military Department
1 December 2005

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION
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Compiled by the
California Center for Military History



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HEADQUARTERS, CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY
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Introduction

Never in the history of the United States has the nation seen such a hurricane season as that of 2005. As this report is being finalized, for the first time, the normal annual list of male and female names has been expanded and the system of using the Greek alphabet (currently tropical storm Gamma is forming in the Atlantic)

No only was there an unprecedented number of storms, but also a ferocity that that made planners and responders realize that the “worst case scenario” was about to happen.

When Hurricane Katrina, a category five storm, slammed into the Gulf coast the resulting flooding, high winds and torrential rains resulted major flooding in the region’s largest metropolitan area, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The flooding stressed the region’s emergency services to the breaking point and beyond. Law enforcement, fire and emergency medical service, disaster relief organizations were almost immediately overwhelmed. After initial hesitation by state and local officials, the Federal government stepped in. Within hours, units of California’s State Military Forces along with officers of the California Highway Patrol were enroute to the “Big Easy”.

Just as recovery operations were showing results, another strong hurricane, Rita, was forecasted to follow Katrina’s path. Fortunately, the storm weakened and moved to the west to a better prepared Houston, Texas region.

This unprecedented response by the nation’s Armed Forces not only was the largest domestic military relief operation, it was also the first major operation for the newly formed U.S. Northern Command, the combatant command responsible for the defense of the homeland.

It is expected that operations will be reviewed by planners and historians for the next several years as we prepare for the next “worst case scenario”.

Daniel M. Sebby
Command Sergeant Major (CA)
Project Manager

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Bay Area Rescue Wing Ships Out

Television Station KGO, Channel 7, San Francisco

Aug. 30 - Members of the Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing took off from the Bay Area and are on their way to danger zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The unit specializes in going to spots where troops are in trouble.

The Air National Guard members shared some time with their families at Moffett Field. Saying goodbye is never easy. But they all know it is a job they need to do.

Staff Sgt. Mark Reichard, 129th Rescue Wing: "Now we are doing something that's important to the rest of the world, and the rest of the Air Force. Now it's just a matter of doing the job I'm supposed to do."

The mission of the 129th Rescue Wing is supposed to last from three- to six-months, but it could go longer if the insurgency in Iraq continues.

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Press Release: Governor Schwarzenegger Sends National Guard to Assist States Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Office of the Governor

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today ordered the California National Guard to activate any personnel or resources necessary to respond to the national emergency caused by Hurricane Katrina.

"The State of California will do everything in its power to assist our fellow citizens suffering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "This is a disaster of almost unimaginable proportions and it is our duty to reach out to those states that need our help, just as they would aid us in our own time of need. Therefore, I am ordering the California National Guard to provide whatever personnel or resources necessary to support disaster relief efforts. I also call on all Californians to do whatever they can to help the disaster relief efforts."

The Governor today signed General Order 2005-01, ordering the Adjutant General of the California National Guard "...to call into Active State Service such forces of the active militia that are needed to respond to this emergency."

The California National Guard is deploying more than 500 troops along with their equipment to support relief efforts underway in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. At the direction of Governor Schwarzenegger, the Guard began mobilization and deployment operations to aid in area security, communications, cargo airlift and humanitarian aid. The first elements of the response package began deploying today with follow-on units expected within the next 48 hours.

The California National Guard has formed the "Joint Task Force California" to execute this support operation. It is composed of a Command & Control Element with a mobile Incident Commanders Command & Control Communications Unit, a security force that includes over 100 members of the 870th Military Police Company, a multi-purpose security force of over 400 personnel drawn from both the 2/185 Armored Battalion and the Air National Guard and a Special Forces A-Team from the 5/19 Special Forces Group. This 500+ person force represents an initial response effort. California is anticipating additional requests for support personnel as the situation continues to develop.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has already deployed Urban Search and Rescue and Swift Water Rescue personnel to assist in the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. In addition, three of the State's Disaster Medical Assistance Teams have been called up. To date, OES has deployed more than 900 personnel from California.

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GOVERNOR'S GENERAL ORDER NUMBER 2005-01

TO: The Adjutant General, State of California

In light of the national emergency that exists by reason of Hurricane Katrina and to ensure the safety of citizens in the United States, I am issuing the following General Order:

Pursuant to Section 146 of the California Military and Veterans Code, I am ordering you to call into Active State Service such as forces of the active militia that are needed to respond to this emergency.

You shall coordinate with the Adjutant General of the impacted states to determine when such personnel and other resources are needed to provide personnel and equipment within the impacted states. Personnel and equipment shall be deployed to the impacted states in accordance with a signed compact between California and the impacted states. You will select only those units that the Department of Defense has not designated for federalization in support of military operations within the United States or abroad.

You will provide a daily Situation Report that will include recommended activation, the number and types of units deployed, as well as the number of personnel available for additional activations. Notify me if additional resources or directions are required.

This order remains in effect until 30 June 2006, unless earlier rescinded or further extended.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Commander-in-Chief

Press Release: California National Guard Supports Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

The California National Guard is deploying more than 500 troops along with their equipment to support relief efforts underway in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

At the direction of Governor Schwarzenegger, the California National Guard began mobilization and deployment operations to aid in area security, communications, cargo airlift and humanitarian aid. The first elements of the response package have already departed for Louisiana, with follow on units deploying over the next 12 to 24 hours.

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Brigadier General William H. Wade II, newly appointed commander of the Guard, has focused his organization on responding to the emergency.

"The California National Guard is answering the call to assist in this critical humanitarian mission. We remain ready to support Californians here at home, but will do whatever else it takes to help those in need in the affected States."

The California National Guard is responding as part of a national effort to restore essential services and security to the people affected by this devastating natural disaster. This 500 person force represents an initial response effort. California is anticipating additional requests for support personnel as the situation continues to develop.

Fifty Air Guard Troops at March to Lend a Hand

By Jessica Zisko, *The Press-Enterprise*, Riverside

Fifty members of the Air National Guard at March Air Reserve Base will leave as early as this morning to join thousands of other troops to help hurricane victims in the battered Gulf States, officials said Thursday.

The volunteer squad will be among 500 troops statewide called up by the governor's office to support relief and security efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. They will work in security, communications, cargo airlift and humanitarian aid.

Members of March's 163rd Air Refueling Wing will support the Federal Emergency Management Agency, unit spokeswoman Brenda Hendricksen said. She did not know Thursday evening where the troops were flying or how soon they would get clearance to leave.

About 21,000 troops nationwide now have been deployed to the region. Army officials said Thursday that one-third of them would help keep order. "Once I started seeing how bad it had really gotten, I figured that we, along with a lot of other states, would be doing that," said Col. Bruce Stewart, the unit's vice commander.

He said troops began calling the base to volunteer even before the governor sent word that the National Guard was needed.

Chief Bill Nicoletti, 58, is one of the members going. In the late 1960s, he spent four years at the now-closed England Air Force Base in Alexandria, La., and helped with relief efforts after Hurricane Camille in 1969.

Nicoletti, who works as the wing photographer, will also take pictures in the ravaged region.

"It's why we're in the Guard," the Moreno Valley resident said about his decision to leave. "This is what we train for."

The volunteers from March have up-to-date shots to protect them from epidemic diseases, Stewart said.

About 860 Air National Guard troops are stationed at March Air Reserve Base.

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CA Sends National Guard to Gulf States

Television Station KRON, Channel 4, San Francisco, www.kron4.com

SACRAMENTO (KRON) -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed an order Thursday ordering the California National Guard to deploy to states affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The Governor signed General Order 2005-01, ordering the Adjutant General of the California National Guard "...to call into Active State Service such forces of the active militia that are needed to respond to this emergency."

The California National Guard is deploying more than 500 troops along with their equipment to support relief efforts already underway. Troops will help provide security, communications, cargo airlift and humanitarian aid.

"The State of California will do everything in its power to assist our fellow citizens suffering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina," Schwarzenegger said. "This is a disaster of almost unimaginable proportions and it is our duty to reach out to those states that need our help, just as they would aid us in our own time of need."

The deployment is composed of a security force that includes over 100 members of the 870th Military Police Company, a multi-purpose security force of over 400 personnel drawn from both the 2/185 Armored Battalion and the Air National Guard and a Special Forces A-Team from the 5/19 Special Forces Group.

Officials anticipate additional requests for support personnel as the disaster relief effort continues.

2 September 2005

National Guard Troops Head to New Orleans

Television Station KXTV, Channel 10, Sacramento, www.news10.net



Figure 1. Military Police boarding transport at Travis AFB.

Members of California's National Guard are leaving Travis Air Force Base this morning to help establish order in flood-ravaged New Orleans.

About 112 members of the 270th Military Police, which is headquartered in Sacramento, and the 870th Military Police, from the Contra Costa County community of Pittsburg, are flying to a base near New Orleans. When they get there, they will augment local law enforcement efforts and give a break to police officers who have been working since before the hurricane hit last weekend.

Many of MPs who have been activated are police officers in their civilian lives, and many have already served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The soldiers who talked to News10 said it will be different heading into a chaotic area in their own country, and they were disturbed by the lawlessness they have seen in news reports this week from New Orleans.

The first group left Travis AFB just before 6 a.m. The rest will leave later this morning and pick up troops at other bases on the way to New Orleans.

MPs Board Gulf Coast Flight at Travis

By Jason Massad, *The Reporter*, Vacaville; Vallejo Times Herald

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - The last of a contingent of National Guard military police spent early Friday afternoon in a Travis terminal, napping with olive-green rucksacks as pillows, M-16s laying nearby, waiting for a C-130 transport plane to carry them to New Orleans.

The group was to join more than 100 guardsmen from the 870th Military Police Company based in Pittsburg. Its members had rallied from all over California - San Luis Obispo, San Diego, Sacramento and the East Bay - to help on the Gulf Coast.

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The presence of National Guard troops is increasing in New Orleans to help quell lawlessness. Looting and other crimes have been reported all over the city, as has gunfire. The Guard will also be on hand to pass out relief supplies.

Despite the harsh conditions, the all-volunteer contingent flying out of Travis was ready for anything, said National Guard Lt. Col. Steve Goff.

"Seventy-five percent are Iraq veterans, and they have a lot of common sense," Goff said. "They know how to handle themselves."

More than 500 California National Guard troops will be heading to the Gulf Coast states, bringing to about 1,500 the number of emergency workers from the state sent to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Besides the 100 leaving Travis, about 300 troops were set to leave Friday and early today from Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego. Also, 100 members of an Air National Guard refueling wing left Friday from March Air Force Base in Riverside County.

California also sent 900 emergency workers, including eight swift-water rescue teams, eight urban search and rescue teams and more than 100 civilian doctors, nurses and paramedics to the disaster area.

Vacaville resident Bob Macaulay, a member of the Menlo Park-based National Urban Search and Rescue Team, called in to The Reporter recently to say he was on a bus in Winslow, Ariz., headed for Mississippi, with many hours of travel ahead.

"We've all been watching what's going on in the news," he said. "We're ready to get there so we can help."

Meanwhile, Travis Air Force Base set up one of the main staging areas to deliver supplies to the Gulf Coast earlier this week by testing air strips at Kessler Air Force Base near Gulfport, Miss. Arriving Tuesday, a C-5 Galaxy carrying members of the newly formed 615th Contingency Response Wing was the first aircraft to land on the airstrip since the hurricane.

"We spend our time at Travis getting ready for times like this," Tech Sgt. Ernest Howell said. "We know that when things happen, it is time for us to go."

California's National Guard is expected to provide some immediate stability to the flood-ravaged area.

The Travis contingent was bound for England Air Force Base near Alexandria, La. There, specific mission assignments were to be handed out. Guard units have been assigned to law enforcement and general security mostly, Goff said.

The troops are traveling with all their own supplies. Water, food rations, sleeping bags and cots were loaded at Travis onto a National Guard C-130 medivac plane that was diverted to pick up the local troops.

Pentagon officials predicted there would soon be 20,000 National Guard troops in the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Local Guard Activated

By Chris Durant, *The Times-Standard*, Eureka

Twelve Eureka-based soldiers with the 1st Detachment of the 870th Military Police Co. of the California National Guard left from Travis Air Force Base Friday to assist in the response to the flooding in New Orleans.

Sgt. 1st Class Ted Hales said the soldiers joined other soldiers from other detachments at its headquarters in Pittsburg.

"They'll be there until the job's done," Hale said.

The detachment has been activated a number of times since 2001.

Just after Sept. 11, they were stationed in Fort Lewis, Wash., covering for active duty military police who were shipped to other parts of the country.

The detachment also served a tour in Iraq where they worked in Iraqi prisons, including the infamous Abu Ghraib prison.

Calif. National Guard Departs Miramar for Hurricane Relief

Public Affairs Office, MCAS Miramar

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, San Diego, Calif., - More than 100 Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armored Regiment, Joint Task Force California National Guard will depart here Saturday, Sept. 3, in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Louisiana.

Media representatives will have the opportunity to interview, photograph and film Soldiers as they prepare to depart. We will not be able to support live trucks for this event.

If media is interested in attending call the Media Relations cell phone to RSVP before 10:30 p.m. today, Sept. 2. All media organizations will rendezvous at the Miramar North Gate, at the intersection of Miramar Road and Clayton Drive at 9 a.m. If you are late, you will not be allowed onto the base for the event. As final arrival times are tentative, media representatives who have RSVPd for the event will be notified of any changes.

Pull to far right side of road. DO NOT attempt to enter the air station until escort arrives.

NorCal Military Police Head To New Orleans: 870th Military Police Company Based In Pittsburg

Television Station KCRA, Channel 3, Sacramento, www.kcra.com

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION Number 20-116



FAIRFIELD, Calif. -- More help for the victims of Hurricane Katrina is on the way to the Gulf region from Northern California.

One of the biggest concerns in the city of New Orleans is security, and because of that, a C-130 carrying 109 military police officers left Travis Air Force Base early Friday morning. The officers are from the 870th Military Police Company based in Pittsburg.

Some of the officers are Central Valley residents and many have served in Iraq. Many said they are eager to help return peace to New Orleans.

"What we're being told now is that there is pretty much a breakdown of civil authority there, so we're going in to assist the civilian police, regain control, so we can help people and rescue the people that need to be rescued," Capt. Paul Peterlin said.

"You have to be fully capable to respond to the worst possible scenario ... and unfortunately, in a situation like this, 98 percent of the people are doing everything they can to do the right thing and to help out wherever they can, but there's always an element that will take advantage of a situation like this," Gen. Jim Combs said.

The officers will be patrolling the streets of New Orleans armed with all the equipment they had in Iraq, but hoping not to have to use it.

Two more C-130s were scheduled leave Travis AFB later in the day. In all, about 500 members of the California National Guard will helping out in the New Orleans area.

About 11,000 members of the National Guard from around the country are headed to the area for what is the single largest deployment of the National Guard to a domestic natural disaster

Governor Orders Guard to Louisiana; Consumer Group Asks Bush To Help Stop Storm-Related Price Gouging

By Steve Geissinger, *The Oakland Tribune*

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SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Thursday ordered more than 500 National Guard troops — including 100 military police from an East Bay unit — to lawless areas that suffered "almost unimaginable" devastation by Hurricane Katrina.

Though a fourth of the 20,000-member California National Guard is in the Middle East, the dispatches of troops that began Thursday were only the beginning of California troop deployments to storm-ravaged Louisiana that could go on until June, officials said.

In a separate development related to Hurricane Katrina, a well-known California consumer group called on President Bush to halt alleged storm-related price gouging it says is driving gasoline costs over \$3 a gallon in this state.

Schwarzenegger as commander-in-chief of the California Guard deployed elements of the 870th Military Police Company, based in Pittsburg, along with security units from an armored battalion and aircraft from across the state.

The operation, dubbed Joint Task Force California, includes an elite, heavily armed Special Forces A-Team from Southern California, said Maj. Jon Siepmann, a spokesman for the California National Guard.

"This is a disaster of almost unimaginable proportions, and it is our duty to reach out to those states that need our help, just as they would aid us in our own time of need," Schwarzenegger said in announcing the deployment.

The governor's Office of Emergency Services has already sent 900 people to the region, including Urban Search and Rescue, Swift Water Rescue, and Disaster Medical Assistance teams.

In ordering mobilization of some guards units over a 48-hour period, the governor made it clear that the 500-person force represented only an initial response from California.

"I am ordering the California National Guard to provide whatever personnel or resources are necessary to support disaster relief efforts," Schwarzenegger said.

In his order to the guard's adjutant general, the governor requested a daily situation report that will include "recommended activations, the number and types of units deployed, as well as the number of personnel available for additional activations."

The order is set to remain in effect until June 2006.

With 5,000 guard troops already in Iraq or the Middle East, the additional dispatches are beginning to eat toward the limit of 10,000 soldiers who can be deployed out of California. By law, half the guard — or 10,000 soldiers — must remain in the state as a precaution against the need for troops here. Deployments to hurricane-ravaged areas also cannot include any units designated for federal use.

The Guard troops sent overseas were activated by order of President Bush while the deployment to Louisiana stems from a mutual-aid agreement between states.

Meanwhile, the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights said a report it commissioned found oil company profiteering behind gasoline price spikes.

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The foundation, which sent its findings to Bush, also said government's sales tax on gasoline makes it complicit with oil companies.

But state officials investigating gasoline prices denied the assertions and said they have found no evidence of profiteering.

Governor: Katrina Devastation 'Challenges Limits Of Despair'

Don Thompson And Robert Jablon, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO - Saying Hurricane Katrina has "challenged the limits of despair," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Friday implored Californians to help Gulf Coast residents as the state sent more than 1,500 emergency workers to the devastated region.

More than 500 **California National Guard** troops will be heading to the Gulf states through Saturday, adding to the more than 900 California search-and-rescue and medical workers already there.

"The devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina has challenged the limits of despair. Entire communities destroyed, people driven out of their homes, maybe thousands of people dead," Schwarzenegger said during a Friday news conference. "I know that the people of California have shown tremendous compassion and generosity because of this disaster. ... Please continue being generous."

Behind him was a banner reading: "Donate money, time, blood. 1-800-HELP-NOW."

"We know that the recovery's going to take months or maybe even years," Schwarzenegger said. "But this disaster is no match for the resolve for us to stand side-by-side with our fellow Americans that are struggling right now, that are hurting, that need our help."

"We are one nation, we are one people, and we will shoulder this together."

Most troops heading to the Gulf states will provide security as the devastated areas struggle with looting and civil unrest. The state also is sending specialists in search-and-rescue, communications, airlifting cargo and humanitarian aid.

About 300 California guardsmen were set to depart Friday and early Saturday from Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego. Another 100 military police officers from the Pittsburg area left Friday morning from Travis Air Force Base near Fairfield, while 100 airmen from an Air National Guard refueling wing left Friday from March Air Force Base in Riverside County.

Twenty members of a communications group were set to depart Saturday from the former Mather Air Force Base in Sacramento. The National Guard also was sending a mobile communications unit to help in areas where normal communications had largely failed.

California also sent more than 900 emergency workers, including eight swift-water rescue teams, eight urban search-and-rescue teams and more than 100 civilian doctors, nurses and paramedics, the Gov.'s Office of Emergency Services said.

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Sacramento Fire Capt. Greg Powell said he had been pulling people from their homes and into a 14-foot, flat-bottom boat since he arrived Wednesday.

He recalled rescuing an elderly man with multiple sclerosis who was stranded in his attic with water up to his neck. Powell had to swim into the nearly submerged home, a foot of air remaining below the roof, and tow the man back to the boat.

"He just said 'Thank you, thank you, thank you,'" Powell told The Sacramento Bee. "And he wanted to know where his wife was ... He doesn't know if she's dead or alive."

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer complained in a letter Thursday to Michael D. Brown, undersecretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response, that some search-and-rescue units were being forced to drive to the Gulf states. She said they should be sent by air.

On Friday, 13 members of Travis Air Force Base's 349th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron who volunteered to help hurricane victims left for Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, where they will await assignments in the disaster zone.

The Navy's southwest region sent a 50-member security team to New Orleans from Naval Air Station, North Island in Coronado, near San Diego. Beale Air Force Base near Marysville dispatched U-2 spy planes Thursday and Friday to take high-resolution photos of the storm- and flood-ravaged area. In just one six-hour mission, a U-2 can collect imagery of more than 90,000 square nautical miles, according to the Air Force.

Many of the residents who lost their homes in the hurricane have fled or been transported to neighboring states.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell said California school districts already are enrolling students displaced by Katrina and coming to live with family or friends. He also announced a California Kids Care project to solicit money from students for hurricane relief.

Schwarzenegger was asked whether California would open any of its military bases to Hurricane Katrina refugees. He deferred to Henry Renteria, director of the state Office of Emergency Services.

"Certainly if that's a resource that's requested, we're certainly able to provide it - again, if it's requested," Renteria said. "... Obviously, these people want to be near their homes and property and their jobs. They will have to return at some point. We're quite a distance away."

CA National Guard Responds To Hurricane Disaster

By Nannette Miranda, Television Station KGO, Station 7, San Francisco

There are thousands of California National Guard and state emergency workers trying to make things better in the hurricane ravaged region. They're putting to use the best equipment and technology we have. ABC7's capitol correspondent Nannette Miranda reports.

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The California National Guard took this van to the disaster zone today to help solve the area's communication problems. It will help rescue units from around the country to talk to each other.

Brig. Gen. Lewis Antonetti, CA National Guard: "Whether it's landlines, cellular, VHS, UHF, 800 megahertz, 900 megahertz of radios, ties it into a digital format and re-transmits it out, based on the switchboard system to whomever they want to talk to."

It's just one recent disaster response upgrade for California. But there are other lessons to be learned from Katrina.

Eric Lamoureaux/CA Office of Emergency Services: "Local governments will probably look at what we're seeing in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast, and look at their specific response plans and modify it where they think they need to."

Response is one thing. Lessening the damage of a disaster is another.

With California so vulnerable to earthquakes, some leaders think more can be done to retrofit older, soft-story buildings. Those are buildings with parking or retail underneath and apartments on top.

Assemblywoman Loni Hancock of Berkeley: "It makes me very anxious."

Assemblywoman Loni Hancock of Berkeley is upset that the Bush Administration has been cutting Disaster Mitigation Funds, which is suppose to fix hazardous problems like retrofitting those vulnerable soft-story buildings.

Assm. Loni Hancock, D-Berkeley: "They accounted for almost half of the buildings that became uninhabitable in the Northridge earthquake. They virtually accounted for all those deaths."

New Orleans had a similar funding problem. Already some local leaders blamed the financial pressures of the Iraq war and homeland security for a 20-percent cut in levee improvements.

Assemblywoman Hancock hates to see what cuts in retrofit money would do here.

Assm. Loni Hancock, D-Berkeley: "Well, there's a lot of terror in New Orleans right now. And I don't want to see that repeated in California."

California Troops Provide Aid To Victims Of Hurricane Katrina.

Press Release, California State Military Reserve

Armed troops rolled in to try and restore order to the chaos in New Orleans on today, bringing emergency supplies for the desperate survivors of Hurricane Katrina. LTC (CA) Terry Knight, State Public Affairs Officer deployed with California's Guardsmen to provide PAO support to the effort.

1SG (CA) Glen King and CW2 (CA) Jon-Nolan Paresa are on duty at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services where they are coordinating field requests from civilian authorities to the Joint Operations Center.

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On Wednesday, 8-31, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services activated eight of California Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces (US&R) on request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist in the Hurricane Katrina Disaster. They departed the same day for the military mobilization center at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. OES deployed eight swift water rescue teams and two State OES assistant chiefs Tuesday 8-30 along with 23 California Urban Search & Rescue Task Force managers. FEMA also called up three of the state's Disaster Medical Assistance Teams.

The Guard troops are part of a contingent of 30,000 that the military expects to put on duty in the Gulf states as demands grow for more security and relief assistance.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said it may need up to 80 days to drain the floodwaters from the city after Katrina struck Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama on Monday with 140 mile per hour winds and a huge storm surge. "We're looking at anywhere from 36 to 80 days to being done," said the Corps' Brig. Gen. Robert Crear.

In Washington, the House of Representatives gave final passage to a \$10.5 billion emergency-aid bill which was later signed by President Bush.

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Air National Guard Feels the Desire to Help

By Richard K. de Atley, The Press-Enterprise, Riverside



Figure 2. California Air National Guard members board a KC-135 aircraft at March Air Reserve Base on Friday, bound for New Orleans. About 100 troops, all of them volunteers, are on the mission. (Kurt Miller / The Press-Enterprise)

Ready to "face the unknown" of chaos, danger and disease in New Orleans, about 100 California Air National Guard troops left March Air Reserve Base on Friday to serve two weeks in the flood-ravaged city.

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"They don't know where they are sleeping or what they are going to be doing. They just know they are going to help," said unit spokeswoman Capt. Brenda Hendricksen.

All of the troops are volunteers, and one officer said none turned down the call to serve, even though each person was contacted Thursday amid mounting reports of violence.

The soldiers left with M-16 rifles slung over their shoulders but said they hoped they didn't have to use them.

"Scared? You bet," said Melanie I. Zimmers, 46, of Redlands, a senior master sergeant specializing in ground safety who described herself as "basically a desk jockey."

"This is America helping Americans, and that's why I wanted to volunteer. We run to the aid of every other country in every other type of need, and this is a way that I can help," she said.

She said her 13-year-old son, Steven is a little uptight about her trip. Her husband, Michael, is a crew chief at March.

He got back from three weeks in Guam on Thursday.

"And I said, 'Hi, welcome home. I'm leaving in the morning.' So that was tough," she said shortly before departing.

More than 500 California National Guard troops will be heading to the Gulf states through today, bringing to about 1,500 the number of emergency workers from the state sent to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

"They face the unknown," said Lt. Col. Ernie Sioson Jr., commander of the 163rd Logistics Readiness Squadron at March.

Master Sgt. John Nortz, 42, of Carlsbad said reports of gunshots fired at troops and helicopters in New Orleans did not deter him from volunteering.

He said he served five months last year in the Iraqi capital.

The crush of crowds and desperation the troops might confront "is old school for me," said Tech Sgt. Stacy Burnside, 39, of Hemet, whose civilian job is facilities manager for March Air Reserve Base.

Burnside, wearing an unbuttoned Kevlar vest over his uniform, said he was an operations commander in the Marine Corps for a mercy mission in 1991 to Bangladesh.

"I bring a little bit of experience to the team. I've seen what it's like when people are starved and they bum-rush for the food," he said.

Burnside said that if he saw someone stealing food, "personally, I would let them do it. I wouldn't feel too bad about that. But people stealing TV sets, that's another story."

Even then, he said, he would check with superiors before taking action.

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Chief Master Sgt. Starr Swift, 59, of San Bernardino said he was concerned about health risks the troops might encounter.

"My concern is ... contagious stuff. I have been all over the world, in Third World countries over the years, and this is as bad as it gets."

Swift said he served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and has been on humanitarian missions in Central America.

A part-time instructor at Riverside Community College, Swift said his call came at 10 a.m. Thursday, the first day of class for his air conditioning and refrigeration class.

On Friday, the troops and their equipment left on three KC-135 planes for a 3 ½ hour flight to New Orleans Naval Air Station. The KC-135s are normally used as refueling tankers but were pressed into service as troop and equipment cargo planes .

The upper decks of the planes were crammed with cots, duffel bags, generators and diesel fuel to run them, drinking water and ready-to-eat meals.

The troops will try to be self-sustaining and avoid using any resources that could go to flood and hurricane victims.

Half of the troops deployed Friday from March were part of the 163rd Air Refueling Wing.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Like All Catastrophes, Katrina Brings Out Worst - And Best

By Marjie Lundstrom, Staff Writer. *Sacramento Bee*

It is hard to get past the shock and horror of the Gulf Coast's natural disaster, and the man-made meltdown that followed.

But a sliver of something else is shining through.

Right here in California.

If disaster brings out the worst in humanity - looters, carjackers, thugs, profiteers, inept officials, pitiful leaders - it also brings out the best.

It has moved people like David Coad, a 35-year-old escrow officer from Fair Oaks who is giving up his Las Vegas vacation - plus another week of work - to travel to these foul, flooded parts to "do what these people need."

It has touched Californians like 62-year-old Andrew Brown, a retiree from Oakland who who was born in New Orleans and, like Coad, will travel there soon with the local Red Cross.

It has emboldened longtime volunteers like Mark Mantegani, a 47-year-old Granite Bay telecommunications manager who is making his first out-of-state relief trip because, he says simply, "I need to go."

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And it can only strengthen a soldier like Capt. John Mendoza of the **California National Guard**, a 38-year-old Los Angeles man who was deployed to Saudi Arabia in 2001 and has worked on homeland security, but has never worked a natural disaster at home.

They are among the Californians, pouring into the South in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

So far, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services has deployed more than 900 people, at the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They are firefighters, doctors, engineers, hazardous materials specialists.

They've been around.

After all, disasters are us. Earthquakes, floods, wildfires, mudslides - from one calamity to the next, the Golden State has responded.

Eight of the state's Urban Search and Rescue teams arrived in Mississippi on Friday, many of whose members helped after the 9/11 attacks, the Oklahoma City bombing and the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes. Eight of California's swift water rescue teams have also been sent. And the ranks from California keep growing, as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered in some 500 troops from the California National Guard.

"We really like doing these kind of missions where we're helping our fellow Americans. That's just straight from the heart," said Mendoza of the Guard's 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, who left Friday.

Not all Californians making this journey are following orders; some are heeding an internal voice. Brown, a retired teletype repairman, signed up this week for intensive disaster training with the Sacramento Sierra chapter of the American Red Cross, deluged with volunteers.

Brown, whose wife of 40 years died last year, considers himself fit enough for the challenge. He can hardly believe the images of his birthplace, which he just visited in June.

Now he wants to go back.

Local Red Cross officials aren't sugarcoating what he and others can expect.

Brown says he understands.

What he doesn't understand is why government relief has been so slow. Why families are without food and water and diapers and basic necessities.

"They're impoverished. It's a bad situation," he says.

As an African American living in the Bay Area, he recalls how swiftly victims got help after the Loma Prieta earthquake and Oakland hills fire.

He knows what is possible. "I should go and do the best I can, and my conscience will be clear," he said.

The empathy, the sacrifice - these are the things that are shining through.

Hundreds of National Guard Troops Fly Out of San Diego for New Orleans

By: Teri Figueroa and Mark Walker - Staff Writers, *North County Times*, San Diego

SAN DIEGO ---- Some of the 500 troops from the California National Guard who have been tapped to go to hurricane-ruined New Orleans said Friday that they are mentally ready to step up and help restore order.

"National Guard reacts to natural disaster," Staff Sgt. Javier Chavez, 42, of Escondido, said. "This is our bread and butter."

Local officials said the troops ---- including a unit from Escondido ---- are expected to be sent to the Superdome, where thousands of refugees have been stranded and conditions are deplorable in the wake of the broken levees that flooded the Big Easy.

"I'm probably going to see some bad stuff," Sgt. Carlo Ibanez of Oceanside said Friday as he sat on a bus with other troops, awaiting a ride to Miramar and then a flight to New Orleans. "That's some of the stuff I'll be dealing with. The bad stuff."

Ibanez, a machinist at ZMC in San Marcos, said he knows he will be there for at least 10 days. "After that," he said, "who knows?"

Officials with the 2nd Battalion, 185th Army of the California National Guard ---- to which most of the local troops are assigned ---- said the deployment will last for 10 days at a minimum.

Some say they are not at all concerned about forging into a city that, by many accounts, plunged into anarchy after Hurricane Katrina touched off major damage and flooding.

But they know it could be dangerous.

"When you have Americans shooting at our own military, this completely alters modern warfare," said Maj. Jim Linzey, a chaplain with the National Guard. "I'm going to be wearing my bulletproof vest. It's very unusual for a chaplain to do that. Very unusual."

Many of the troops have "rules of engagement" folded up and tucked into their front pockets. The rules tell them when they can shoot and why. Most of the troops say the rules are defined by common sense: Self defense and protecting the lives of others in the midst of crimes of violence.

Some hadn't been able to watch television or read the papers for the last day or so ---- they had been too busy getting ready to head out and had not seen news reports of rapes and of shots fired at rescue workers.

But they know the situation is bad.

"If people are doing this in our country, why should we let that happen?" Escondido resident Chavez said. "We've got to go there and stop it."

Chavez is no stranger to getting the call. He came home in January from a seven-month tour in Iraq as a guardsman.

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As he spoke, Chavez stood among dozens of troops from all over the state. Many of them hunkered down over salad, played poker to pass the time or napped on the concrete floor of the armory near Mesa College in San Diego.

Some said they knew the call from their superiors was coming, others were surprised that California troops were asked to head back East.

"I thought they would pull more from the East Coast," Poway resident Sgt. Jon Hulog said, "but I guess everyone is stretched thin, and they gotta come all the way to California to get them."

Hulog was at work this week when he got the call. He was up all night Thursday, driving a diesel truck to San Bernardino and back to pick up 400 cots, eight large tents and water jugs for the trip to the Gulf Coast.

The Guard's responsibilities include augmenting active-duty military needs and providing services to the state and other areas of the nation in the event of national emergencies and natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

In California, the Guard includes Army, air and civil support divisions as well as a state defense force and a resources division.

About 300 troops were set to depart Friday and early today from San Diego. Additionally, about 100 military police officers left Friday morning from Travis Air Force Base, and 100 airmen from an Air National Guard refueling wing left Friday from March Air Reserve Base in Riverside County.

California also has sent more than 900 emergency workers, including eight swift-water rescue teams, eight urban search-and-rescue teams and more than 100 civilian doctors, nurses and paramedics, according to state officials.

On Friday, two North County Fire Protection District firefighters flew to Atlanta, where they will receive training and immunization before deploying with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Sid Morel and Bruce Moore, both veterans with the Fallbrook fire district, will be gone at least 30 days, said John Buchanan, the district's public information officer.

Morel and Moore, who headed to the airport Friday afternoon, were feeling "probably a gamut of emotions ---- excited, maybe a little hesitant, fear of the unknown," Buchanan said. "I spoke to Bruce in depth yesterday about it. He really wanted to go to help people out and meet needs."

The city of San Marcos also has one of its firefighters already on a bus headed to New Orleans for the relief efforts, said City Manager Rick Gittings.

And as mobilization intensified Friday, Oceanside's Rick Rardon, a U.S. Marine staff sergeant assigned to a specialized munitions and obstruction clearance team, was preparing to fly out of Coronado today for Gulfport, Miss.

Rardon is assigned to the 10-member naval Special Clearance Team No. 1.

"We're always helping people in other countries, so it's great to have the chance to go and help the people in our own country," he said.

Once in Gulfport, Rardon said his unit will receive their specific assignment orders and expects the work to include recovery of victims as well as clearing out channels and rivers of debris ---- clearing any obstacles preventing ships from getting to the region.

The U.S. Navy Region Southwest command office in San Diego also sent a 50-member master-at-arm security detail to New Orleans on Friday afternoon.

Back Home in 'Whapped Down Mississippi'

By Slim Smith, *East Valley Tribune, Mesa, Arizona*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. - The plane from Dallas touched down at the Jackson airport at 9 a.m. Friday and I was home, back to the state I was born in and lived my first 35 years

Back home to the place that novelist and Mississippi native Willie Morris called "Poor old whapped down Mississippi."

That description has never been more accurate.

It is now five days since Hurricane Katrina visited her fury on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, turning the picturesque coast cities into endless piles of rubble. As far north as Jackson, 160 miles away, the storm splintered trees, ripped through roofs and unraveled power lines like a kitten playing with a ball of twine.

And there is an edge in those sugary drawls of the Jacksonians, a note of terror, a sense of dread that the worst may be yet to come. And it's hard to imagine to what crescendo the suffering has reached on the coast, where stunned residents sit among the ruins, hopeless, helpless. Whapped down.

The outer echoes of despair begin at the rental car counter at the Jackson airport. A 40-deep line of would-be customers crowds in on the harried rental agents, desperate for transportation. For some, a car represents a chance to flee the misery to points north. For others, a car is the means of rescuing family members from the devastation to the South.

A major gasoline shortage in the South, created by two pipeline ruptures, has created an added element of misery to the areas along the Gulf Coast. By Friday, rental agents are renting cars with as little as a quarter-tank of gas. By 10 a.m., the agents are trying to turn customers away, not for the lack of cars, but for the lack of fuel.

"We can't rent you a car. They're all on empty," an agent says.

"Rent it to me anyway," a customer pleads. "I know a place that has gas."

By a stroke of luck, I meet **Lt. Col. Terry Knight of the California National Guard**. Knight is being deployed as a public information officer at Camp Shelby. Camp Shelby is near Hattiesburg, 70 miles from the Gulf Coast and is the staging area for the National Guard troops dispatched to

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the Gulf Coast. Knight has secured a rental car with five eighths of a tank of gas. He says I can ride along.

As we drive down Highway 49 from Jackson it is easy to note which stations have gas. Lines of 100 to 300 cars are clogging the highway in front of the stations. It is an obvious sign of desperation: The gas supply will be exhausted long before many of the people waiting in line can get their turn at the pump. Yet they wait anyway, clinging to hope alone.

In Magee, Miss., 110 miles from the coast, food and water have joined gasoline as rare commodities. The Wal-Mart Supercenter here is open, but the store is allowing only 20 customers to enter at a time. Sixty or so people wait in line outside the Wal-Mart. A lady nearest the entrance says she's been waiting over an hour. There are no restaurants open. People buy whatever is available at convenience stores and gas stations.

As we drive south, the landscape begins to resemble some sort of battlefield. Thirty-foot pine trees are snapped in half, laying over power lines. Hattiesburg is just beginning to get electricity in some parts of town now, five days after Katrina's arrival.

In Collins, Miss., Rusty Lenoir has arrived at a gas station that is only selling gas to military personnel and emergency workers. Lenoir is from Poplarville, one of the many little towns along the Gulf Coast that seem to have simply disappeared into the abyss. He has driven to Collins in his search for gas. His reports are not encouraging.

"Dead bodies washing up everywhere, people arming themselves," he says. "It's ugly man. You don't want to go there."

I worked 14 years on the coast. And with every mile, a sense of dread washes over me. For I know it can only get worse as I go south.

I should arrive on the Gulf Coast today.

Then, I'll be home, where I learned my trade. Where my children were born. Where good friends and family are suffering.

Whupped down.

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On Guard

Sacramento Bee



Figure 3: Staff Sgt. Walter Urteaga of the California National Guard keeps watch on Sunday, Sept. 4. (Sacramento Bee/Paul Kitagaki Jr.)

National Guard Troops Put Lives on Hold to Respond to Katrina

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau, Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Louisiana Army National Guard Staff Sgt. John Jackson had much on his mind as he checked the batteries for a dozen portable radios beside the Louisiana Superdome that was surrounded by a stinking cesspool three nights after Katrina. The single father's five children were safe with his parents in New Boston, Texas. But his house in New Orleans was under water. Could he and his kids return to their home? How could he support them in a city where there were no longer any jobs? What would he do?

All of that seemed to take a back seat to the task at hand. Jackson is a National Guard soldier. He had been called to state active duty for what had evolved into the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. He was attached to the Louisiana Army Guard's engineer task force and was determined to do his duty.

"This is still a great country," said the man who had served in Iraq during the global war on terrorism and who, once again, had set his personal life aside to help others.

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So it was with nearly 30,000 other National Guard troops from across America who left their families and their civilian jobs during the week after Hurricane Katrina became the biggest national calamity since terrorists struck the World Trade Center and the Pentagon with jetliners nearly four years earlier. "This is one of the worst natural disasters we have faced with national consequences. Therefore, there will be a national response," said President Bush after observing the devastation and recovery missions Sept. 2.

New Orleans, it was pointed out, is far more than a cultural center, convention city and party town. It's the port for 20 percent of American commerce. It was flooded out, shut down. And tens of thousands of people in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana and Mississippi needed help--fast. The afflicted area covered 90,000 square miles, the size of Great Britain, twice the area of Pennsylvania, CNN reported. The National Guard was ready to respond.

By Sept. 3, five days after the storm struck with 145 mph, Category 4 fury on Aug. 29 and after the levees that protected New Orleans had broken open, nearly 27,000 Army and Air Guard men and women were on state active duty in the stricken region. That number was expected to increase to nearly 40,000 during the coming days. Forty states, including the affected ones, were sending troops, equipment and supplies by cargo planes and convoys. The Guard was providing 74 percent of Joint Task Force Katrina, the uniformed military support to civilian authorities, the National Guard Bureau reported.

Army Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, promised two basic things to Bush, Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco and whoever else asked. "We'll give you whatever you need. We're here for as long as you need us," Blum vowed.

Guard members in helicopters and Humvees and high-water trucks provided security to communities without power, helped distribute food and water, and conducted search-and-rescue missions in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and in Florida where a relatively mild, Category 1 Katrina had struck the southern Miami region three days before devastating the Gulf Coast.

They did what they could for the 20,000 or so people who flocked to the Louisiana Superdome before and after the storm and who were finally evacuated from that filthy facility on Sept. 3. They took control of the Crescent City's convention center the day before that.

"One of the objectives that we had today was to move in and secure that convention center and make sure the good folks there got food and water," Bush reported. "The main priority is to restore and maintain law and order and assist in recovery and evacuation efforts." By Sept. 3, the Air National Guard had flown 785 sorties, more than it had done in three months. The Air Guard reported flying in 12,854 troops, evacuating more than 11,000 victims to safety and delivering 39,013 tons of supplies and equipment to the devastated area.

The Guard had trucked nearly 1,600 loads of water and more than 1,000 loads of ice to afflicted people in the four states. The Guard's CH-47 Chinook helicopters had flown in 65 sandbags, each weighing 20,000 pounds, to help block a breached levee in Louisiana.

It was the largest and most comprehensive National Guard response to a natural disaster since 32,000 **California Guard** members were called up for the earthquake that hit the San Francisco Bay region area in October 1989. Yes, it was bigger than 9-11, reported National Guard historian Michael Doubler, author of the 2001 book "I Am The Guard."

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"With the commitment of 20,000 National Guard troops at this early stage, this operation is already four or five times larger than the sustained National Guard response that followed the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9-11," Doubler said.

"I couldn't be more proud of the people in the National Guard and the absolutely awesome response they're showing to this natural disaster," said Blum Sept. 3 while appearing on "Larry King Live: How You Can Help," a three-hour CNN special.

"We had over 10,000 Guardsmen on duty, who left their families, left their jobs, prepared to help others before the hurricane hit," Blum explained. "The first citizen-soldiers responded to the shot heard 'round the world. Now we're responding to the storm heard round the world."

The Guard Bureau chief also pointed out that two brigades of Guard soldiers from those states, the 256th from Louisiana and the 155th from Mississippi, are serving in Iraq.

"Many of those people ... are quite concerned about what happened to their families. They are from [the area] where the storm hit and had some its greatest devastation."

Blum appealed to the viewers to call (888) 777-7731 if they have any information about the Guard families.

"This will ease the angst and the anxiety on the soldiers who are deployed overseas and allow them to focus on their jobs while we focus back here at home on making sure we take care of their families," Blum said.

The Guard members were focusing on many things as they worked 20-hour days in the heat and humidity and went without showers.

"We're still involved in search and rescue, but we're trying to evacuate the people from here," explained Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Thompson, the engineer task force's top enlisted man on duty at the Superdome, where the plumbing had failed. "That will be the biggest relief - getting these people out of here and where they can get some real life support instead of what we can give them."

Many Guard troops serving at the dome had been flown from flooded out homes on and around Jackson Barracks, the Louisiana Guard's joint state headquarters in New Orleans. "Most of those guys came with what they had on their backs and in their bags," Thompson said. They also came to help in a hurry because that's what the Guard does. "This was a lightning-fast call for us," said Sgt. Kevin Mooney after members the 268th Military Police Company from Ripley, Tenn., rolled into Gulfport, Miss., on Sept. 2 to help police protect that ravaged city.

"We were told on Tuesday morning to be at the armory by noon with all of our gear," explained the Ripley police officer. "We packed our vehicles that afternoon and we rolled out the next morning."

Was he surprised that his outfit had been called up?

Not really, said Mooney. "This is what people get in for. It's just their nature to help."

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Bay Area Pitches In To Help Hurricane Victims

Television Station KNTV, Channel 11, San Jose, www.nbc11.com

SAN FRANCISCO -- More help is on the way to the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast from the Bay Area.

Twenty-five members of American Medical Response from northern California, Oregon and Washington, the nation's largest emergency medical provider, left SFO for the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina on Saturday morning, following dozens who left Friday night and earlier in the week.

AMR is providing help and equipment to the hurricane victims now in Texas, and plan to provide medical services and care to those who need it.

Meanwhile, the members of the **Air National Guard 129th Rescue Wing** spent Friday night at Moffett field getting ready for its mission to the Gulf Coast.

They will help rescue people and also take medical supplies to victims.

The guard members were set to leave Moffett at 8 a.m., but return later Saturday. They will go back on Sunday will more people and supplies and stay for at least two weeks.

A group of army National Guard members boarded planes Friday morning at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield. It was the largest group of troops sent out of California to help another state in 10 years.

They are ready to help reinstate order in New Orleans.

The second part of their mission is to establish a communication post. From there, they hope to restore cell and land-line phone service.

Temporary Shelters to Be Shipped To Disaster Zone

Several non-profit companies that provide temporary shelters in disaster areas are ready to ship out dozens of prefabricated domes, tent structures and other quickly assembled housing solutions.

World Shelters is a nonprofit agency based in Arcata. It uses the lightweight plastic sheeting distributed by relief agencies to build temporary structures that look like Quonset huts.

LEK Shelters is a Boston-based company that makes portable, lightweight geodesic domes. It's been fielding calls from relief agencies interested in buying their round, portable structures to set up temporary encampments for families who lost homes to the hurricane.

The shelters have been effective in Dome Village, a Los Angeles non-profit formed by formerly homeless activists who have lived in the structures for years. The domes are made of lightweight concrete and can be built in a matter of a few hours.

Volunteers Head for Region

Engineers, students, plumbers -- people from all walks of life -- took part in a two-day boot camp sponsored by the American Red Cross.

They learned how to deal with hungry, thirsty and distraught hurricane victims.

Some will be gone for two weeks, while others plan to be gone for three months.

"I think their single biggest challenge will be their own emotional involvement in the situation," said John Buckell, of the Red Cross. "They will see things they've never seen before in their lives and they must cope, all while providing service."

The Red Cross scheduled three more boot camps for this month, and they're all full.

But they plan to send relief workers to the Gulf through December, so those interested can still get on the waiting list.

No Relief from Frightening Reality

By Kiley Russell, Contra Costa Times

NEW ORLEANS - By the time the soldiers of the **49th Military Police Battalion** touched down in New Orleans late Friday, the city was a warren of flood-ruined homes and burning buildings.

News accounts that filtered down to the Pittsburg-based MPs focused on the smell of death that hung in the air, brazen looters and tens of thousands of refugees growing increasingly angry -- nearly to the point of riotous -- at the slow pace of rescue efforts.

Tired after the 12-hour trip aboard a squat, noisy and uncomfortable C130 transport, the California Army National Guard soldiers walked onto the tarmac and into the stench most had come to associate with third-world hellholes. It was the odor of raw sewage spilling out of failed treatment plants and baked by 90-plus degree heat.

The smell of decomposing bodies that hung over the city nine miles away was mercifully undetectable. The soldiers wouldn't have to face that for another 10 hours or more when they finally mustered out for their first job-- helping secure the civilian airport.

In the meantime, during what was left of Friday night and on into Saturday morning, they waited in a Navy hangar among hundreds of other National Guard soldiers from around the country and wondered what the day had in store.

For many, it seemed almost unimaginable that after Iraq, Afghanistan or other post-Sept. 11, 2001 deployments, they were being asked to defend American lives and property from other Americans.

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"It's actually a little scarier here. I'm more nervous here," said 33-year-old Sgt. Jory Preston of Antioch. "In Iraq, we knew what we were expecting. We knew they were fighting for a reason and a cause.

""(Based on) the stories we're getting from New Orleans, we've got to go and police our own citizens almost in a manner that we had to do in Iraq. Pretty much we've got New Orleans just like Baghdad. It's pretty nerve-wracking; you don't want to hurt nobody that you don't have to, especially Americans."

Still, the soldiers' mission was clear and they fully expected to complete it successfully, by force if necessary.

"We're in a combat zone," Lt. Antoine Brooks told his troops during a brief stop at the airport in Baton Rouge.

They had been warned by an anxious Baton Rouge police officer to expect "a running gun" battle" in the streets of New Orleans.

Early Saturday, the men and women of the 49th were issued ammunition for their 9mm pistols and M16 and M4 rifles. They strapped on body armor and donned helmets.

Later in the morning, a full-fledged conflagration seemed less likely, however. Officers reported crowds of angry but unarmed civilians descending on the Louis Armstrong International Airport looking for food, water, medical attention and a flight out of the chaos.

Rioting seemed possible, firefights with gangs and thugs less so. Even downtown at the Convention Center and the Superdome. both earlier scenes of unmitigated misery, things had calmed somewhat.

National Guard troops from several states arrived in force, responding to the plea for help from Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco.

At the airport, the Federal Emergency Management Agency had been coordinating evacuation flights, medical treatment, security and food distribution for almost 24 hours when the 49th arrived Saturday.

During the first full day of evacuations, 5,600 refugees boarded civilian and military aircraft bound for Texas, said Ted Monette, a FEMA director from Boston who is managing the agency's airport operations.

"We've never faced a disaster of this scope before. The pain and suffering is incredible," he said.

By the time the first flights took off, thousands of people had been living in the lobbies and ticketing areas as long as three days. At any one point, 6,000 hungry, desperate people who salvaged from their homes only what they could carry crowded into the airport looking for help, Monette said. Garbage was piling up, discarded packages of military-issue food packets and plastic bottles full of urine littered the floor.

Tempers were still running high, but the air conditioning and the prospect of a flight to one of three military bases in Texas eased tensions a bit. Volunteers even began collecting trash and sweeping up.

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"I want to do this to keep myself busy, relax my mind and help the people," said 55-year-old Bernadette Lawrence as she pushed a broom through a thick paste of filth. "If I stand here and just watch this thing it'll drive me crazy."

Lawrence and her friend Robert Carter's story is tragically similar to that of thousands of other people who mulled around the concourses looking for a way out. The pair made it to the airport Saturday morning after five days struggling to make the 20-mile trip west from St. Bernard Parish, one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

They spent the first two days atop Lawrence's single-story home after breaking through an air vent in the attic as water gushed in through the windows.

"There were cottonmouth snakes and gators floating around," Carter said.

They got to the airport after three more days spent with hundreds of others on a freeway overpass, where groups of young men would bring them food, water and cigarettes looted from nearby stores.

Exhausted and heartsick, these were the people confronting the 49th MP battalion on its arrival. But soon the battalion found a way to help tame the chaos.

The MPs discussed the situation with local and federal law enforcement and had a look around the airport. They were assigned security for about half of the departure gates and quickly ushered the crowd into three staging areas. The soldiers formed the groups into lines and moved each line along every 10 minutes or so.

The lines of thousands snaked through the airport, out the door and all the way down the street to where busloads of evacuees waited to file into the building. They grew increasingly calmer as they realized a flight out awaited. They smiled at the MPs and shook their hands.

It wasn't nearly the battle the soldiers were prepared for.

"I really didn't know what I expected, if it was going to be a little Mogadishu or what," said Staff Sgt. Andraus Williams, 33, from Modesto. "When I got here it really didn't look as bad as the news was portraying it to be. I didn't want to be bullying people around. They've been through enough.

He added, "These people just wanted hope and to realize we were here to help them."

New Orleans Desolate, Battered, Relatively Safe

Television Station KPIX, Channel 5, San Francisco

The desperate evacuation of New Orleans' Superdome and Convention Center is over, but there are still some stragglers left behind in the desolation.

KCBS reporter Doug Sovern is in New Orleans, and he's met a few people who are still on the streets. Gregory Treauvier was a merchant Marine before Hurricane Katrina - now he's

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unemployed and homeless. He tells KCBS he chose to leave the Superdome because of conditions there, and now he's troving through trash to find what he can to survive. Treauvier says he's been eating much better since the National Guard began handing out food.

Also in New Orleans, KCBS reporter Tim Ryan is with California's more than 400 National Guard troops in the Naval Air Station. California guard members are providing security and will be moving toward the area of the convention center, but Ryan says there haven't been any major security issues so far.

Colonel Scott Johnson says he and his soldiers are glad to help, but it's been emotional hearing from their brethren from the Louisiana National Guard who have stayed on the job, even though they haven't seen their families since the disaster.

Ryan says Guard troops are in good spirits, even though there's no running water, no phone service, with extreme heat and not enough cots to go around.

California Guard Stable, Despite Export of Force

Television Station KPIX, Channel 5, San Francisco

California's National Guard is stretched, with troops abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds deployed to New Orleans. But they're confident they can fulfill their domestic duties under pressure.

Colonel David Baldwin tells KCBS's Dave McQueen says his troops will always ensure the safety of Californians first, even as 25 percent of the force is in Iraq. Baldwin says even if the "Big One" happened in quake-ridden California, its Guard would be ready.

He admits that having to shift to being an expeditionary force is causing a cultural shift...but says the Guard is adapting well.

5 September 2005

Guard Unit Finds Surreal Displays in New Orleans

By Gregory Alan Gross, *Union-Tribune* Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS – Four days after they first assembled in their Kearny Mesa armory, National Guard soldiers began patrolling the streets of this devastated city.

Two companies of the 2nd Battalion of the 185th Armor Regiment moved in two columns through the streets of the city's southern tip, a stone's throw from the Mississippi River and only blocks from the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, where chaos reigned for days in Hurricane Katrina's wake.

"There's 10,000 people out there," Capt. Joe Davis warned the men of Alpha Company as they prepared to leave New Orleans Naval Air Station and move into the city. "We're going to walk into some stuff."

What the Alpha soldiers walked into were scenes they described over and over as surreal.

Telephone poles snapped off at the base and blocking their path. Oak trees splintered and dropped across cars and homes. Piles of red bricks that had been walls. Stretch limousines that had been stolen and stripped of their batteries and even gasoline tanks. A forklift, commandeered from a nearby Wal-Mart and left in the middle of the street.

But the only sounds for block after block were the drone of military helicopters overhead and the plaintive barking of dogs locked in houses, their owners having long since fled.

A resident seated on the steps of a house called out to the patrol as it passed: "I really wish you could have been here in better days."

A New Orleans police officer described to the Alpha troopers the first nightmarish days in the spot where the California Guardsmen had set up a temporary base.

"There were hundreds, maybe thousands, of people running through this place, taking everything," said the officer, who would not give his name.

"We took it back once, but the moment we left they came and took it back. We had to take it back from them twice.

"I'm three weeks out of the police academy. I have seen some things around here."

As they passed through the neighborhood, a short distance from the picturesque Garden District, the patrol passed a dozen people moving in the opposite direction. Most were children shepherded by a handful of adults and pushing a pair of grocery carts filled with their belongings. When they saw the Guardsmen, they waved and cheered. Davis threw them some cheer right back.

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"The storm is over! The best is yet to come!" he shouted. "Hang in there!"

Unlike previous days, in which armed gangs roamed the city streets, there were no confrontations on this patrol. However, several Guardsmen were felled by any even more powerful foe – the relentless summer heat and humidity that sapped their strength despite frequent stops and reminders from Davis and others to stay hydrated.

Wherever the 200 or so Guardsmen found residents sitting in front of their homes, they stopped to ask if they needed help. Yesterday, none did.

Unlike the northern 80 percent of the city, there is no flood water on these streets. There is virtually nothing on these streets except smashed cars, and boarded-up and abandoned homes. "The largest ghost town in America," one Guardsman muttered.

Ghostly, yes, but not entirely lifeless. Around the corner from where one Guardsman nearly collapsed from heat exhaustion, bare-chested youths played a spirited game of half-court basketball.

As night fell, smaller reconnaissance patrols moved out into the darkness – without night-vision goggles in a neighborhood where electricity has been only a memory since Katrina struck the city. The battalion flew into New Orleans aboard windowless KC-135 tankers from Miramar Marine Corps Air Station. They were ferried into their patrol area by school buses brought in from Houston.

They hope to have Humvees available for more extensive patrols today. The 370 men and women that make up the two companies expect to be on duty in New Orleans for at least 10 days.

"We came here to help people," said Sgt. Alan Miranda, a veteran of both Persian Gulf wars. "Everybody volunteered to be here. Everybody sacrificed something to be here. We are going to help the people who want help, but first we have to make sure that the area is secure enough."

Red Cross Coordinates Its Largest Relief Effort: Evacuees Are Being Housed At More Than 470 Shelters

Television Station KNTV, Channel 11, San Jose, www.nbc11.com

Just one week after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, the American Red Cross is coordinating the largest single relief effort in its 125-year history.

As of Sunday night, more than 135,000 evacuees were being housed at more than 470 Red Cross shelters in 12 states.

About 250 Red Cross emergency response vehicles are in the disaster zone, with more on the way.

More than 5,000 Red Cross staffers and volunteers are serving in the affected areas.

More than \$350 million has been donated to the Red Cross for hurricane relief.

National Guard Ships Out More Supplies

The **California Air National Guard** is shipping out more supplies Monday to help in the hurricane relief effort.

Troops are loading up the goods at Moffett Field in Mountain View where they have been working all weekend long.

On Saturday, 12 para-rescue men with the Guard's 129th Rescue Wing flew out of Moffett Field for New Orleans.

They're members of Special Forces, who are also trained paramedics.

The remaining crew at Moffett has been re-supplying the men.

They've been loading up airplanes with extra goods like zodiac boats, medical supplies, food and water.

At least one supply plane has already made the roundtrip to New Orleans

The para-rescue crew plans to be in New Orleans for at least two weeks.

CHP Officers Head to Gulf Coast

Members of the California Highway Patrol are also heading to the Gulf Coast to help with hurricane relief.

More than a hundred CHP officers left from west Sacramento Sunday.

They're expected to arrive in Louisiana Monday.

Each officer is trained in special operations that will help them patrol evacuation camps, escort supply convoys and assist in evacuations.

The CHP also plans to send airplanes and helicopters to help in search and rescue missions.

Calif. Unit Deploys To Secure Streets, Provide a Presence

By Raja Mishra, *The Boston Globe*

NEW ORLEANS -- The convoy pulled up, hundreds of soldiers filed out in formation, M-16s at the ready. The Wal-Mart store was secure.

This was the business yesterday of occupying this beleaguered city, dozens of heavily armed National Guard units taking over the once banal centers of neighborhood life. Store parking lots became armed encampments. Street corners became command posts. Strip malls became police intelligence headquarters.

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In drives with military convoys through New Orleans yesterday, it became clear that the chaos and looting of last week had been replaced by stern order, with military, federal agents, and local police on nearly every street corner, the constant hum of military helicopters above.

Still, there were reports of violence: Police killed five armed men in a southwestern New Orleans neighborhood, said Commander Anthony Cannatella of the New Orleans Police Department.

"People have looted this store of all the guns, all the ammunition. They are running around armed," he said, standing in front of a Wal-Mart in the city's Sixth District, near the convention center, one of the most violent and desperate areas of New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina hit. "But we're taking the streets back."

And so this was where the California National Guard's Second Battalion of the 185th Armored Regiment was sent yesterday, just hours after arriving in this city as part of a massive deployment of military units to reestablish law and order.

"We want to show the flag, show that it's safe to come out," said Sergeant Major Earl Hackney. Despite the reports of looting, the National Guard units have orders not to use force to stop property theft and damage, only to save lives. They carry magazines in their M-16s, but no bullets in the chambers; it would take several seconds for them to fire a round.

The day's objective hardly seemed threatening: secure the Sixth District Wal-Mart Superstore parking lot. But that is part of the new law-and-order strategy that began in earnest on Friday. National Guard units are establishing command posts all over the city, from which they will police neighborhoods.

Yesterday, more than 360 California Guard members joined Texas Guard units in the Wal-Mart parking lot, lining up in five-by-five formations, then fanning around the perimeter of the massive lot. FBI agents, New Orleans police, and National Guard commanders set up a headquarters in a tent in the center of the lot. The Wal-Mart had been heavily looted, its aisles heaps of rubble, its electronics and firearms sections almost entirely empty.

"I felt sorry for everybody," said Private First Class Johnny Pillow, 19, who was born in Shreveport, La., and now serves in the Texas National Guard. "I really feel like I'm going to wake up soon, and this dream, a really bad dream, will be over. If everybody gets their stuff straight, we can clean up this mess in six months, maybe."

The neighborhood yesterday was a ghost town.

"We had no idea of how many people would be here; hardly any, it seems," Hackney said.

Minutes later, as if on cue, a huge procession came down the street: Ronnie and Shante Armant and their 14 children, all wearing light blue shirts printed with "Ping Pong Champions," several of the children pushing shopping carts.

The National Guardsmen watched them curiously, none of them fingering their M-16s.

"First it came as a trickle, and then we was flooded, like 9 feet of water," said Ronnie Armant. "We walked uptown to stay with my niece. We're going to the convention center. I hear we can get buses out."

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Until yesterday, the Armants had been afraid to walk through the Sixth District to get to the convention center. Then they saw the National Guard's heavy presence in the Wal-Mart parking lot.

"It's been a living hell," said Shante Armant. "Now I feel safer." ■

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6 September 2005

Press Release: California National Guard Support to Katrina Nears 1000 Troops

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Nearly 1000 California Air and Army National Guard personnel statewide are on duty supporting relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

More than 720 troops from California are on the ground in Louisiana restoring security and providing humanitarian relief and more than 200 are supporting the effort from here at home.

The California Army Guard's 870th Military Police Company, based out of Pittsburg, Calif. arrived in Louisiana Wednesday and has since been operating at the Louis Armstrong International Airport. The 2/185 Armor Battalion from San Diego arrived Saturday. Their mission is to secure businesses and residences in nearby New Orleans. The 240th Signal Company based out of Compton, the 118th Maintenance Company in Stockton and Air National Guard units from throughout the state are also supporting the efforts on the ground in Louisiana.

"It's an honor for the California guard and the rest of our guard brothers to be here. Every little contribution from all the states is going to make a huge difference," said Col. Steve Dabadie, Chief of Staff of the Louisiana National Guard.

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California National Guard soldiers and airmen left their own families, homes and jobs on a moments notice to help those in need in the affected areas. Nationwide, The National Guard is providing 74% of the uniformed military support to relief efforts.

"It's astounding how fast the states are being put together and deployed in such a short time. I'm amazed by the quick response from our fellow National Guard states," said Col. David Aycock, joint task force operations officer for the Louisiana National Guard.

The California Joint Task Force (CJTF) is commanded by Col. Scott Johnson, chief of staff of the Army Guard's 100th Joint Combat Support Command in Fairfield. The CJTF secured its operations at Naval Air Station New Orleans, which is about a four-hour flight from New Orleans. The CJTF key elements provide operations, logistics and communications in a coordinated effort to assist Louisiana's recovery.

The California Air National Guard is using C-130 and KC-135 aircraft to transport troops, equipment and necessities to NAS New Orleans. The Naval Air Station is the main transfer point for all supporting states.

"Nothing comes close to the catastrophic event that happened here in the entire United States," said Dabadie. "That's why we're so thankful for California and other states for joining us. Our recovery efforts will now run quickly and smoothly."

Press Release: Joint Task Force California

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION Number 20-116

Public Affairs Office: Joint Task Force California

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, La – Since the cry for help yawned in Louisiana, the California Army and Air National Guards have extended their support in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath.

California's initial dedication of 500 troops has increased to more than 700 in a span of three days. And food, water and supplies arrive even more abundantly to aid the remaining Bayou state victims.

"It's astounding how fast the states are being put together and deployed in such a short time. I'm amazed by the quick response from our fellow National Guard states," said Col. David Aycock, joint task force operations officer for the Louisiana National Guard.

About 20 units throughout the Golden State contribute to Louisiana's recovery.

California's 870th Military Police [Company], a 162-member Army Guard unit from Pittsburg, secures the Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans. The 2/185th Armor Battalion situated in San Diego protects residential and business areas in downtown Orleans Parrish.

"It's an honor for the California guard and the rest of our guard brothers to be here. Every little contribution from all the states is going to make a huge difference," said Col. Steve Dabadie, Chief of Staff for the Louisiana National Guard.

The Joint Task Force California (JTFC) is commanded by Col. Scott Johnson, chief of staff of the Army Guard's 100th Joint Combat Support Command in Fairfield. Its key personnel are minutes away from flood-ravaged New Orleans. The JTFC key elements provide operations, logistics, and communications in a coordinated effort to assist Louisiana's recovery.

The Air National Guard upped its efforts to four in-and-out flights daily. Using C-130 aircrafts, Guardsmen transport troops, equipment, and necessities to this facility. The Naval Air Station is the main transfer point for all supporting states.

California is joined by more than 30 National Guard states in Louisiana's recovery. Its soldier-contribution is one of the highest of all states.

7 September 2005

On Patrol: California National Guard Soldiers Find Heartbreak, Prayer—and Some Racism—During Their Deployment to Hurricane-Battered New Orleans

By Andrew Murr, *Newsweek*



Figure 4. Schwartz, Brady and Ridgeway search for survivors in a flooded street

Capt. Bruce Gaffney of the California National Guard was cruising up flooded Johnson Street in a motorboat late Tuesday afternoon when he spotted a woman named Ollie Brownfield stranded on a second-story porch. Gaffney offered to ferry her to safety, but she balked at first, explaining that she already spent four dreadful days at the New Orleans Superdome before fleeing home again. Then Gaffney noticed that Brownfield's foot was swollen and bleeding. She'd fallen down the stairs and spent two days with her injured leg submerged in the bacteria-ridden flood waters. Making it worse: she lost her heart and blood-pressure meds in the flood. Gaffney decided she had to go whether she wanted to or not. "If she had stayed, she might have died in there," he recounted an hour later.

Gaffney was able to talk Brownfield into the motor launch but she changed her mind as soon as her fiancé appeared on the balcony shouting angrily that "If she left, she was going for good," as Gaffney recalled it. The frantic woman tried to leap out of the boat into the filthy water. When soldiers tried to restrain her she thrashed about wildly. Gaffney groped for a way to calm her. Nothing worked. Then he found that she was religious and he asked her to pray with him. "She calmed right down," Gaffney said. "As I started praying with her, I signaled my men to get the boat out of there."

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Saving Ollie Brownfield was a small part of the job of the 382-member California guard contingent that flew into battered New Orleans on Saturday night to help the city recover from Hurricane Katrina. The mission of the citizen soldiers of the San Diego-based Second Battalion of the 185th Regiment: restore order and lend humanitarian assistance in a pie-shaped slice of the Uptown section of New Orleans that ran from the Mississippi River north into flooded neighborhoods. Soldiers in combat gear carrying M-16s knocked on doors to find out who remained in the city and what they needed. Setting up headquarters at a middle school on Napoleon Avenue, soldiers fanned out on foot, in Humvees and even in commandeered private boats to patrol areas ranging from 19th-century mansions on high ground to shotgun houses in poor neighborhoods under eight feet of water. Commanders impressed on soldiers how serious their mission was. "This is not a training environment," Maj. Frank Emanuel, the commanding officer, warned his staff. Martial law made the guard the ultimate local authority.

Guard training couldn't prepare the soldiers completely for the unusual conditions. On Monday, a squad of Captain Gaffney's Bravo Company soldiers saw four possible looters as they hopped out of a black Pontiac Grand Prix and scattered onto Baronne Street. "Take cover," hissed First Sgt. Chad Basye to his squad. The men quickly surrounded the car, searched nearby yards and hailed a pair of Jefferson Parish sheriff's deputies. Opening the trunk, the guardsman found whiskey, vodka, several backpacks and a watch still in its case. The deputies found the four men and marched them back to the car. They arrested one of the men after finding what appeared to be crack cocaine in his pocket.

The incident appeared to take on a racial tinge when the two white deputies treated the black men roughly. A deputy who identified himself only as Ronnie grabbed one man by his cornrows and shook vigorously. Both deputies shouted that the men would be shot if they returned to New Orleans. The guardsmen watched without comment. "I'd say it was a little over the top if it wasn't for the extraordinary situation," Sergeant Basye, a civilian employee of the California Highway Patrol, said later.

The soldiers patrolled the street west of the Wal-Mart on Tchoupitoulas Street, looted days before. Flat-screen TV boxes and discarded sneakers littered the road. "That's live ammo," warned one sergeant pointing to a pile of shiny .22 caliber shells spilled on the pavement. On Soraparu Street, soldiers met Aliska Harris, 30, who'd weathered the storm in the green one-story home where she'd grown up. In a window was a spray-painted sign: YOU LOOT. WE SHOOT. "We're glad to see you," Harris told the guard soldiers.

Inside the Wal-Mart Captain Gaffney walked down the wrecked aisles. The looters had worked selectively. Virtually all the videogames, DVDs and CDs were stripped from the shelves. TVs and stereo systems were gone, as was all the clothing. "People clearly weren't taking just necessities," Gaffney said dryly. "In the liquor section, a beer cooler 15 yards long lay empty, but most of the wine on the opposite side remained." Books, magazines and even tabloid weeklies hadn't been touched.

For many soldiers, the most dreaded assignment was finding and noting the locations of dead bodies. As squads headed out on patrol Wednesday morning, chaplain Jim Linzey advised soldiers to "disassociate" themselves from the task. "You're going to remember it for a long time," he said. "Don't make it a part of your life." On Tuesday Bravo Company found more than 20 bodies on boat patrol. Most lay bloated in the water along Claiborne Avenue, a boulevard running east and west through Uptown. A foot patrol found a dead man on his porch on Constance Street. He had been covered with a blue blanket and neighbors had posted a makeshift yellow memorial

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sign: REST IN LOVING ARMS OF JESUS. Spc. Russell Palmer, 45, a security guard from San Diego and a self described “bible thumper” offered a prayer.

Twenty blocks north, at the Memorial Medical Center—evacuated in the days after the storm—looters had ravaged the first floor. On the second floor, three corpses were wrapped in white sheets. “We’ll report the location,” said Spc. Ryan Schwartz. The problem: the guard had ordered body bags but there was no central location to take the corpses. The city morgue was under water. For the time being the soldiers left the bodies where they were.

While most residents of New Orleans seemed glad to see the soldiers, some were distraught and unfriendly. In another indicator of racial attitudes, one white man on a blue bicycle grew testy when he saw the battle-dressed soldiers with their M-16s. “You need to relax here,” Grady Hardy warned Sergeant Basye’s patrol. “You don’t need those guns. These are good neighborhoods. It’s all white through here.” On Camp Street a resident named Charles Lee became angry when a Bravo Company night patrol asked him for identification. Lee announced to Sgt. Charles Rowe that he would shoot anyone who tried to make him go. “I’ll be shot before I leave here,” Lee said. Rowe soothed the man and then noted the address as a location where a homeowner was armed.

Some who remain behind couldn’t be saved. On Tuesday, Spcs. Ryan Schwartz and Eric Brady and Sgt. Jeremy Ridgeway steered a skiff through flooded streets with a reporter and a local guide, Kenny Ballou. Two days earlier, Ballou had tried to persuade a frail elderly woman on Roman Street to leave her second-story apartment. She would not go, Ballou recounted to the soldiers. “Yesterday I got the Louisiana State Police to go get her. When we got there, she was face down in her morning coat. She was gone.”

The soldiers ranged in age from their 20s to their 50s. And some had recently returned from Iraq or Afghanistan. Many had volunteered for the New Orleans mission. “I figured I wanted to help out,” said Sgt. Randall Trinidad of Rosamond, Calif. “The devastation is real bad and they need the help.” The work was hard and the creature comforts slight. Without power and water, the soldiers sweltered in the heat and lived off MREs and bottled water. Soldiers who went into the flood waters had to be decontaminated by washing off with heavily-chlorinated water and officers warned that a New Orleans cop had had his leg amputated after exposure to polluted water. But as the week went on the soldiers made their new home at the Sophie B. Wright School more comfortable. Generators lit up the school’s two lower floors. Food and water arrived for them to hand out to stranded residents. “Civilization slowly returns,” said Sgt. Ray Grossman of West Covina.

More than 1,000 California National Guardsmen Assist Rallying Louisianans

Compiled by California National Guard Public Affairs Staff, based on “on scene” reports submitted by 69th Press Camp Headquarters, California National Guard

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Figure 5. Soldiers and Airmen from the California National Guard perform various duties while providing disaster relief missions in Louisiana.

Within hours of notification, nearly 1,000 California National Guard soldiers and airmen have responded to the rapid restoration of public confidence and helping spearhead assistance to disaster-stricken New Orleans residents in the aftermath of Katrina. More than 700 are in Louisiana, and another 212 remain in California coordinating relief efforts that include moving 80 tons of equipment to the Gulf Coast.

“It’s astounding how fast the states are being put together and deployed in such a short time,” said Col. David Aycock, joint task force operations officer for the Louisiana National Guard

The California National Guard’s troops, representing 20 different Army and Air Guard units, reacted quickly, adding security to Louis Armstrong Airport, augmenting security presence in the business areas in downtown Orleans Parrish, evacuating residents, handing out water and MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), loading pallets of containers for movement to shelters and evacuation staging areas, and maintaining a steady flow of uninterrupted of logistical relief to Bayou residents.

“It’s an honor for the California Guard and the rest of our guard brothers to be here,” said Col. Steve Dabadie, chief of staff for the Louisiana National Guard. “Every contribution from all the states is making a huge difference.”

The 163rd Airlift Wing, California Air National Guard, are flying its C-130 aircrafts efficiently and effectively, transporting troops, equipment, and necessities to a Naval Air Station near New Orleans. The Air Station is the main transfer point for all supporting states. California’s 870th Military Police (Pittsburgh) is guarding Louis Armstrong Airport, the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment from San Diego is protecting residential and business areas in downtown Orleans Parrish, Compton’s 240th Signal Company (Army), Stockton’s 118th Maintenance Company are supporting logistical operations.

The deployed soldiers received very little warning for the deployment, but because the California National Guard has historically responded from between a third to half of the Nation’s emergencies during the last two decades. This experience paid off instantly as soldiers and airmen no time in reporting for duty.

Col. Scott Johnson, chief of staff of the Army Guard’s 100th Joint Combat Support Command in Fairfield, commands joint Task Force California (JTFCFA). The JTFCFA key elements provide operations, logistics, and communications in a coordinated effort to assist Louisiana’s recovery.

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Hurricane Katrina, a category five storm, ravaged Louisiana and parts of Mississippi forced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes.

“Nothing comes close to the catastrophic event that happened here in the entire United States,” said Dabadie. “That’s why we’re so thankful for California and other states for joining us. Our recovery efforts will now run quickly and smoothly.”

The California National Guard has nearly 20,000 soldiers and Airmen. More than 5,000 are deployed around the world in support of the Global War on Terrorism and nearly 1,000 are supporting Katrina disaster relief operation, leaving nearly two-thirds of its force available for any state contingency.

San Diego Guardsmen Find Life, Death in Waters: Soldiers Provide Aid, Security in Flooded Area

By Gregory Alan Gross *Union-Tribune* Staff Writer, San Diego



Figure 6 Soldiers from the California National Guard were given a hand from New Orleans resident Mike Bealer as he pulled their boat down a flooded Napoleon Street in the Garden District yesterday. The Guardsmen improvised whatever resources they could while patrolling the city. Earnie Grafton / Union-Tribune

NEW ORLEANS – For the first time since their arrival Sunday, San Diego-based National Guard soldiers entered the flooded Uptown sections of the city yesterday, including a hospital where three bodies were found on a sheet-covered pallet. Another was found on the roof of the hospital, Memorial Medical Center.

About 25 bodies were found floating in the still-flooded streets nearby.

The Guardsmen are under orders not to touch decaying corpses, leaving the recovery to specialized civilian crews.

Identification of the bodies will occur later. Memorial Medical Center, a campus of red brick buildings, reported on its Web site that the evacuation of patients and staff members was completed Friday.

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Parked in the hospital's flooded loading docks were buses operated by the local blood bank. "Celebrate life" was emblazoned on their sides.

While protecting the living, the San Diego-based 2nd Battalion of the 185th Armor Regiment has encountered the dead.

The battalion is assigned to provide security and humanitarian aid in Uptown, an area with a mix of well-to-do and poor neighborhoods west of the French Quarter and about a half mile from the Mississippi River.

The Guardsmen have code-named their area of operations AO Torrey Pines.

In addition to scouting the flooded portions of their sector by boat, they are conducting around-the-clock foot patrols below St. Charles Avenue not affected by flooding.

Patrolling at night is partly in response to persistent reports of looters and street gangs coming out after dark.

National Guard patrols have fanned out through the neighborhoods south of the Garden District, going door to door, checking on those who refuse to leave their homes despite the continued absence of electricity and clean water.

The night patrols were handicapped, however, by the soldiers' lack of night-vision goggles. Such equipment normally assigned to the unit is reserved for Iraq, officers said.

Just the same, there was still plenty to do in AO Torrey Pines.

Under normal conditions, Napoleon Avenue is a broad, tree-lined boulevard divided by the wide, grassy median called "the neutral ground." Yesterday, the avenue was deep as well as wide. It represents the southernmost point of flooding in the city.

Flying just above tree-top level, Army Blackhawk helicopters crisscrossed the neighborhoods east and west of Napoleon.

Below the choppers, police officers in flatboats and airboats plied the side streets, ferrying out residents who had stayed in their homes during Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding, but couldn't hold out any longer.

Bravo Company helped 29 such people leave their homes yesterday.

Capt. Bruce Gaffney, 48, commander of Bravo Company, had to talk one woman out of her home even though she had a badly injured foot. It started when the Guard's boat patrol cruised up to the second-floor balcony of her home on Jackson Street.

"The boat operator had been by her house five times, and she always said the same thing. She didn't want to go," said Gaffney, who is a criminal investigator for the federal courts in San Diego when he's not serving with the Guard.

Over the operator's objections, Gaffney stopped to talk to her. She still didn't want to go. But when Gaffney saw blood on her foot, he was determined to take the decision out of her hands.

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Under his gentle prodding, she finally acknowledged that she had cut her foot in the contaminated floodwaters when she tried to go down to the first level of her house.

"I asked her to show me her foot," Gaffney said. "It was still bleeding and it had swollen up to the size of a football. She'd been in that water for two days."

Still, she refused to budge. Her fiance had told her that residents who leave their homes with soldiers would never be allowed to return. But Gaffney wouldn't give up.

After a lengthy argument, stubborn immovable object gave way to quietly irresistible force. The woman, in her 60s, agreed to get in the boat.

Until her fiance showed up.

"She started trying to get out of the boat," Gaffney said. "We had to restrain her." Even as she fought to get out of the boat, Gaffney continued to talk to her, asking her about everything from her health to her religious background. The latter proved to be the final key.

"I asked her if she wanted to pray with me. That's when she started to calm down. So we prayed together awhile," he said.

By the time they got the woman to an ambulance, she could no longer walk.

Gaffney said his background as a criminal investigator made the difference.

"It's all in how you approach people. You have to show some concern. You can't just come up to people and say, 'You want to leave?' "

Local Guard Bases Seen As Possible Evacuee Sites: SLO County Leaders Have Expressed Willingness to Help Victims, But State and Federal Officials Are Waiting To See If Victims Will Be Sent To California

Bob Cuddy, *The Tribune*. San Luis Obispo

San Luis Obispo County administrators have declared their willingness to supply services to people displaced by Hurricane Katrina, raising the possibility that an unknown number might be brought to the area's two National Guard bases.

But while locals say they are willing to help, the responses of California and federal officials remain vague and cautious.

The higher agencies say it's too early to know how many evacuees may come to California, when they will arrive, where they will go and how long they will stay.

California National Guard bases are among many possible sites that could host them, said Bob Stern, a spokesman for the state Office of Emergency Services.

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Guard bases such as Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo are being considered, but state and local officials are awaiting word from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on whether evacuees will be sent to California or elsewhere, Stern said.

'Our own people'

The county has told the federal and state governments it has the "political will" to help, said County Administrator David Edge, who also serves as director of emergency services.

Should any of those left homeless by the hurricane come to San Luis Obispo County, the county would help with infrastructure: social services, health services and the like, Edge said.

"We are willing to accept that if evacuees come here, they are going to be here for a long period of time," he said.

However, he added, "Nobody should get carried away." He said he considers it unlikely that large numbers of people would come here -- "hundreds rather than thousands."

"People want to be as close as possible to home," when they are forced to flee the place they live, Edge said.

County Supervisors Shirley Bianchi and Katcho Achadjian said the county will open its arms.

"It's a great idea," Achadjian said. "When people around the world need help, they ask us. Now it's our own people, and when it's our own people, there are no questions asked."

Similar offers

Other cities and counties around the state have made similar offers. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has said the state can take 1,000 people.

A FEMA spokesman in Oakland was not able to answer questions about what criteria the agency uses when it decides to dispatch hurricane victims to various locales.

"We're ready to accept them if they come," said Stern, with the state. "We have had many talks with local communities and government officials to facilitate their arrival."

As far as cities housing those displaced, Stern said, Emergency Services will look first to San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose.

Stern said the 1,000 evacuees figure is subject to change.

Assessing resources

Bianchi first offered the county as a place of refuge. She said she's frustrated that the decisions hinge on FEMA, an agency that has been widely criticized for its response to Hurricane Katrina.

However, Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo, said the various governments need time to coordinate short, intermediate and long-range solutions.

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The state has to assess what resources it has for evacuees, he said. For example, he said FEMA needs to make sure the water at Camp Roberts is of high enough quality.

The length of stay is a "significant concern," he added.

"If they come, there has to be a commitment to get them back to their homes" as swiftly as possible, he said, because they need to return to their lives. "We don't need a permanent refugee situation" here, he said.

The offices of Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Bill Thomas were looking into the county's offer Tuesday.

"We've spoken with the Department of Homeland Security about using military bases and closed bases for housing," said Howard Gantman, spokesman for Feinstein. "We've also communicated with the governor's office, which is working with cities, FEMA and the American Red Cross on the best way to house hurricane victims in California."

Staff writers Lindsay Christians and Nick Wilson contributed to this report.

Central Coast Comes Together

Wendy Thies, Television Station, KSBY, Channel 6, San Luis Obispo

The plan to possibly move hundreds of evacuees from Louisiana to the Central Coast has been placed on hold.

Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Roberts are two of three military bases in California asked by the state to start planning for the possibility of hosting hurricane evacuees. The National Guard base believes they could handle up to 300 people for 30 to 60 days.

"Basically, we'd be providing them some structure, providing them some facilities where they can eat, live, bathe, and basically get back on their feet," says Major Mark Johnson, of Camp San Luis Obispo. "It would be an interim processing point to try to get them linked up with their families and starting off on their new lives, or getting back to New Orleans or whatever the case may be."

Late Wednesday afternoon, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) notified the state that their facilities wouldn't be needed, as majority of evacuees are reluctant to move far away from the south and their families.

Fire Battle 'Just Doesn't Stop': The Rash Of Blazes Is Exhausting A Department That Has No Water System.

By Lee Hancock, *The Dallas Morning News*

NEW ORLEANS - Firefighter Byron Muse slumped on the wet pavement near Magazine Street on Tuesday, exhausted, gulping bottled water near the gutted remains of an apartment building.

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It wasn't even 8 a.m. and his department already had battled a blaze that gutted a 19th-century apartment building and a neighboring home. And other engines' crews that helped save nearby homes and businesses were racing off to still another fire.

"I don't know what time it is. I don't know what day it is. We're just fighting these every day. We have no water. We have no water system," he said, his voice hoarse and his face drenched in sweat. "Everybody's sticking together. We're doing the best we can."

Fires continue to plague this storm-ravaged city, even as looting and violence have ebbed with the weekend arrival of U.S. Army 82nd Airborne troops, Marines and **National Guard units from as far away as California and Oregon.**

Smoke from house fires and warehouse and business blazes has wafted across the city. Some have clearly been arson. Others are believed to have been touched off by the leaking gas mains that still pose a hazard in flooded neighborhoods. Fire officials say they are having to focus on saving people and keeping other structures from burning, because the loss of electricity has slowed flows in the city's water system.

The officials say their crews have not been able to respond to some fires because of flooding. And at least one city fire truck was stolen in the looting that followed the storm. The department had to post armed guards at fire halls. And armed escorts have had to accompany crews to protect them from sniper fire. In one incident, more than a dozen firefighters were briefly pinned down and had to radio for a helicopter rescue at the Fairgrounds, home of the city's famed Jazz Fest.

'We're Together as Teams'

But unlike the morale-plagued Police Department, which has lost as much as a third of its officers since the hurricane crisis began, fire officials say their crews have not suffered significant desertions.

"It helps that we're together as teams, that we work and live together. Nobody is out there alone," Fire Department spokesman Roman Nelson said.

Hurricane Katrina and the flooding that followed inundated at least half of the city's fire stations and knocked out the city's emergency communications system for days, undermining firefighting and rescue efforts. Thirty-six firefighters who had to flee their flooded station were briefly trapped in a three-story Bell South building in New Orleans East.

Capt. Larry White said he and his colleagues decided to stay in the area to try to rescue residents. Several firefighters had brought boats to their station before the storm, and they helped about 2,000 people to safety.

The crisis has taken a visible toll. Some firefighters lost relatives, and the district chief in charge of the department's hurricane-response plan lost the home he had just spent three years renovating.

Firefighters have worked without a break, first helping mount rescues and then trying to keep the city from burning.

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"We got fires all over the city, every day," said a city health-department EMT who travels with the fire crews. "I was out 16 hours yesterday. We're doing better than we were right after the storm, but it just doesn't stop."

On Tuesday, the strain was visible on firefighters as trucks from across the city responded to a fire at the Isabelle Apartments, a 19th-century apartment building near the antiques shops of Magazine Street.

At least eight people were in the building when it began to burn, and neighbors said some emerged from the smoke and flames saying that one resident had set the building on fire after arguing with another over alcohol and threatening to burn up his belongings.

Some elderly residents stood on nearby sidewalks and watched as tanker trucks brought water to help fight the fire and firefighters maneuvered pump trucks and other equipment to try to keep the blaze from spreading. Soldiers from an Oregon National Guard unit stood watch, keeping spectators back as they protected the fire crew.

Overhead, helicopters used slings to haul water from the nearby Mississippi River and dropped it on the burning building to try to extinguish the blaze.

By the time it was under control, the blaze had melted garbage bags on a sidewalk across the street and had burned the old apartment building to the ground.

Even as Muse's crew cleaned up, other engine crews were speeding off to another call.

"We've got enough people, and we've got a strong enough operation," he said. "We'll get through this."

Fact Sheet: Joint Task Force California

Public Affairs Office, Joint Forces Headquarters, California National Guard

- At the direction of Governor Schwarzenegger, the California National Guard and Air National Guard has established Joint Task Force (JTF) California and has deployed 739 soldiers and airmen in support of hurricane Katrina relief operations in and around the affected areas in Louisiana.
- JTF California is Commanded by COL Scott Johnson and is comprised of soldiers from the following units:
 - Headquarters, Air National Guard, Sacramento
 - 100th Joint Combat Support Command, National Guard, Fairfield
 - 69th Press Camp Headquarters, National Guard, Fairfield
 - 2/185th Armor Battalion, National Guard, San Diego
 - 240th Signal Battalion, National Guard, Compton
 - 640th Military Intelligence Battalion, Air National Guard, Long Beach
 - 870 Military Police Company, National Guard, Pittsburg
 - 118th Maintenance Company, National Guard, Stockton
 - A/5/19th Special Forces, Air National Guard, Redwood City

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- Counter Drug, National Guard, Sacramento
- 129th Rescue Wing, Air National Guard, Mountain View
 - 131st Medical Squadron
- 144th Fighter Wing, Air National Guard, Fresno
- 146th Air Lift Wing, Air National Guard, Channel Islands
- 163rd Air Refueling Wing, CA Air National Guard, March Air Force Base
- 162nd Combat Communications Group, Air National Guard, North Highlands
 - 147th Combat Communications Squadron, Air National Guard, San Diego
 - 149th Combat Communications Squadron, Air National Guard, North Highlands
 - 222nd Combat Communications Squadron, Air National Guard, Costa Mesa
 - 261st Combat Communications Squadron, Air National Guard, Van Nuys
- The deployed California National Guard soldiers and airmen are working in conjunction with Louisiana National Guard and local authorities.
- The soldiers and airmen are performing a wide array of security and humanitarian support missions, to include, support to local law enforcement agencies, communications, logistics and other humanitarian relief support in the areas of the Louis Armstrong International Airport, the area of New Orleans Parrish and at the Belle Chasse Naval Air Station.
- In addition to the soldiers and airmen, California has also deployed four IC4U (Incident Commander's Command, Control and Communications) systems in support of the communication needs of the mission.
- Three additional IC4U systems have been requested and are being deployed to the affected area.
- The IC4U is a military vehicle outfitted to perform as an in the field Commander's communication tool.
- These soldiers and airmen have left their own families, homes and jobs on a moments notice to help those in need in the affected areas. They are citizens helping citizens.
- California National Guard soldiers and airmen are operating under an agreement between CA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and LA Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanon.
- This agreement gives the California National Guard soldiers and airmen the same powers, duties, rights, privileges, and immunities as members of the National Guard of Louisiana.
- California National Guard soldiers and airmen are operating under strict rules governing the use of force as determined by the Louisiana National Guard. These rules on the use of force always include using minimum force necessary with every soldier's right to self-defense.

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- The California National Guard is fully capable of providing ongoing support to hurricane Katrina relief missions, maintain its support of contingency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and other locations around the world, and still be available and ready to respond to a potential emergency in California, should one arise.
- Currently, more than 12,300 soldiers and airmen of the California National Guard are available if needed.

Mayor Orders New Orleans Evacuation

The Guardian, London, The United Kingdom



Figure 7. A woman with two California national guard officers after being evacuated from her home in New Orleans. Photograph: Nicholas Kamm AFP/Getty

New Orleans authorities today began to forcibly evacuate the 10,000 residents refusing to move more than a week after Hurricane Katrina flooded 80% of the city.

Mayor Ray Nagin yesterday gave orders that only relief workers could remain behind for the clean-up, and 5,000 paratroopers were dispatched in small boats to find and rescue anyone still left behind.

Gas leaks and disease carried by the floodwaters could carry a serious risk to anyone remaining in the city, Nagin said in a radio message to remaining residents.

"This is not a safe environment," he said. "I understand the spirit that's basically, 'I don't want to abandon my city'. [But] it's OK. Leave for a little while. Let us get you to a better place. Let us clean the city up."

Police Superintendent P Edwin Compass said he would be prepared to evacuate people against their will: "We'll do everything it takes to make this city safe. These people don't understand they're putting themselves in harm's way."

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But many residents were still refusing to move. John Ebanks, 69, waved off would-be rescuers from a porch stocked with food, insect repellent and other supplies. "You've got to protect your property, that's the main thing," he said. "This is all I've got. I'm pretty damn old to start over."

In St Bernard Parish, 38-year-old Dennis Rizzuto took a break from a Monopoly game with his family to emerge from the second-floor window of his home. He said he had plenty of water, food to last a month and a generator powering his home. "They're going to have to drag me out", he said.

Martha Smith-Aguillard, 72, complained about how she had been brought against her will to an evacuation point alongside the city's wrecked convention centre.

"They came got me out of my house and manhandled me into a truck and brought me here," she said. Aguillard's foot had swollen up after she trod on a rusty nail and she said she needed a tetanus jab. Nonetheless she refused to board a government helicopter.

"They manhandled me and paid no mind to what I said. I ain't never been in no helicopter in my life, or no airplane, and I'm 72, I ain't starting now," she said.

"I'm not going to get that tetanus shot, so I guess I'll just have to die," she said, adding, "We're all going to die and if I'm going to die, it's gonna be right here in New Orleans."

The water level in the inundated streets has begun to subside after army engineers managed to plug some of the bigger gaps in the levee embankments protecting the city.

Much of the urban area in New Orleans lies below the normal water level of the Mississippi river and lake Pontchartrain, which bound the city to the north and south, and the breaching of levees during Katrina caused the extensive flooding which destroyed most of the city.

Mr Nagin said flooding appeared to have receded and was covering only 60% of the city yesterday, but progress in pumping out the water has been slow.

Only three of the 148 drainage pumps which normally keep the city dry were operating yesterday.

Once the full system is running they will be able to draw out up to 110m cubic metres, and lower the water level by 30cm, every day.

However, army engineers warned that it could take up to three months to drain the streets if progress was hampered by rainfall, damaged pumps or debris clogging the drainage channels.

Rescue efforts were also held up by fires spreading through parts of the city and by sporadic gunfire, although officials claim that lawlessness has decreased since last week. Those caught looting in the area that has been declared a disaster zone face up to 15 years in jail.

State officials said 140,000 to 160,000 homes were flooded and would not be recovered, and it would take years to restore water services to the whole city.

The political fallout of the disaster was being felt more keenly in Washington yesterday with members of President George Bush's Republican Party joining calls for a September 11-style investigation into what went wrong.

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"If our system did such a poor job when there was no enemy, how would the federal, state and local governments have coped with a terrorist attack that provided no advance warning and that was intent on causing as much death and destruction as possible?" asked Senator Susan Collins, a Maine Republican who will lead the investigation by the Senate homeland security committee.

The death toll from the disaster is estimated to be around 10,000, although a full count will be impossible until rescue teams have scoured the city to recover bodies in the coming weeks.

The White House is preparing a new emergency budget request likely to total \$40bn (£22bn) to \$50bn for recovery efforts, supplementing \$10.5bn approved by Congress last week.

But President Bush resisted calls for an immediate probe. "There will be ample time for people to figure out what went right, and what went wrong. What I'm interested (in) is helping save lives," he said.

Guardsmen Search for the Living

By Jennifer Jacobs, The Des Moines Register

New Orleans, La. — A body is floating, face-down, not far from Edward Livingston Middle School.

Someone is probably praying for this man to telephone with word that he's OK.

It's hard to make out identifying features that might be helpful for a worried relative or friend, aside from a red bandanna tied around the man's close-cut hair and pale-colored shorts and T-shirt.

His skin is a patchy white after days in the floodwaters, and his body is bloated, distorting his true size.

Two National Guardsmen in a search-and-rescue boat fall silent and slow their motor as they cruise past.

It isn't easy to leave the man there, but they are not equipped to recover bodies.

Their mission Tuesday was to rescue the living — although a combined search party of guardsmen from Kentucky, California, Texas and New York located no one to save in a residential neighborhood just blocks from Lake Pontchartrain.

"Most of the people we found today were 'swimming,' " said Master Sgt. Robert Simmons, 36, of the California National Guard, meaning they were dead. "The way the cars are flipped over, the water came through here in a hurry."

Eventually, the bodies of those who drowned when Hurricane Katrina hit will end up in the hands of a morgue staff from Iowa and other states who are identifying victims by the driver's licenses in their pockets, fingerprints, DNA or other methods.

Polk County Medical Examiner Gregory Schmunk is assigned to the federal morgue in St. Gabriel, just outside Baton Rouge, a temporary facility that can identify more than 140 bodies a day.

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Meanwhile, hundreds of boat crews continue to search assigned areas, spray-painting markings on buildings when they're done.

The four-state National Guard team, which can radio to helicopters circling overhead, rescued 165 flood victims Monday.

The day before, 700 people.

And on Saturday, 650.

But it became clear Tuesday that many of the remaining city dwellers have no intention of leaving, the guardsmen said after boating for hours.

Dodging antennas, the only clue that there was a car below the greasy black surface, the guardsmen hunted for signs of life: open windows or clothing drying on balconies.

"Hello!" bellowed Ryan Schultz, 34, of the Kentucky National Guard. "Search and rescue!"

After trolling eerily empty streets past half-submerged homes without an answer, the guardsmen debated why most of the flooded cars' trunks had popped open, and why smoke alarms were sounding at several homes.

At a two-story apartment complex at Camelia and Dwyer roads, Laura Mae Hughes, 81, appeared on the oak-shaded deck and offered coffee.

The day after Katrina hit, Hughes was eating breakfast in the house she's lived in for 40 years when water seeped through the cracks. She reached for a mop. But in minutes the water chased her into the attic.

Hughes is now living with her dog, Beaux, and three friends.

When the guardsmen offered to evacuate her to the airport and an out-of-state shelter, Hughes snapped, "No way!"

She added: "We've got plenty of food and water, firefighters check on us daily, and we're happy."

A few blocks away on Dwyer Road, a spray-painted white sheet announces that the "professor" has renamed his second-floor apartment "Gilligan's Isle."

"Looks like he's already been to the supermarket today," Simmons said, nodding at the foodstuff in an inflatable boat docked at the swamped apartment.

Jesse DoLive, 60, approached guardsmen just to ask them to post his name on the Internet so his daughter would know that he is alive. He's been staying at his Eastview Drive house for eight days.

Master Sgt. John Down of the Kentucky National Guard said he spotted a man sitting on the curb at a Social Security office. "I said, 'You want us to fly you out?' He said, 'No, I'm just waiting for

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this place to open so I can get my check.' I said, 'Sir, it's not going to open for a long time.' He said, 'I'll just go back under the bridge, then,' " Down recalled.

Another search boat came upon a German shepherd that was in the middle of an 8-foot-deep road, all four of the dog's paws almost touching as it balanced on a small submerged object. "Let's get one save, I guess," Schultz said.

But there were too many underwater cars blocking the boat's path. "Sorry, doggie," Schultz said.

In another boat, on Tara Lane, near apartments whose walls had been ripped completely off, exposing intact sofas and kitchen tables, Simmons and Tristan Grell, 31, of the California National Guard saw two dogs staring balefully through balcony railings.

Simmons carried the dogs into the boat, then dumped out some pretzels for them to eat.

A nearby business district on Crowder Boulevard, with Walgreens and Family Dollar stores and a smattering of restaurants, was deep in water. "I could use a drive-through. MREs (meals ready-to-eat) are getting a little old," said Jules Roy, 30, of the New York National Guard.

Master Sgt. Bill Sprake of the Kentucky National Guard, who found a volleyball stuck in a tree, spray-painted a smiley face on it and dubbed it Wilson. "We were getting a little lonely not picking anybody up today," he said.

Once the rescuers decide they've gathered up everyone who needs to be assisted from balconies and attics, the gruesome task of recovering bodies will fall on local emergency crews and some of the 40,000 guardsmen from about 40 states dispatched to deal with the catastrophe.

A group of Iowa guardsmen from Sioux City are busily flying missions in and out of New Orleans, evacuating hurricane victims and ferrying in troops from other states in KC-135 Stratotankers.

"They got us here in like three hours (Sunday) - those guys are amazing," said Maj. Mike Papariello of the Vermont National Guard. "It seemed like they hadn't slept much, and they were in a hurry because they had another mission."

Another group of about 200 Iowa guardsmen is preparing to go to Mississippi to provide hurricane relief Friday.

Guard Carries Out Duty in Devastated New Orleans

By Kiley Russell, *Contra Costa Times*

NEW ORLEANS - Posted in the turret of a Humvee rolling through the streets of this crippled city, Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Davis stood exposed Monday to the full magnitude of what Hurricane Katrina left in her wake.

From his vantage atop the vehicle, Davis watched scene after scene of destruction roll by.

For the first time since he arrived in the city Friday, Davis saw homes and businesses shattered by Katrina's winds, stores ransacked by looters.

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Trees felled during the storm still blocked boulevards once lined with massive oaks. Standing water rendered many other streets impassable.

Air thick with the fetid odor of feces-laden floodwater and faint traces of undiscovered corpses washed over Davis as he scanned the neighborhoods for signs of trouble and clear routes around traffic jams and debris.

Davis is a member of the Pittsburg-based 49th Military Police Battalion, deployed to help secure the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

On Monday, with the airport safe and tens of thousands of evacuees on their way to other states, the 49th was able run its first mission out of the evacuation area.

For Davis, who served nine months in Iraq, the destruction of New Orleans rekindles memories of the war -- the burning trash, the swarm of military helicopters -- but there's something darker in this city.

"The last time I saw something like this it was in Baghdad," he said. "It hurts more here. It drives home the point that we need to be here helping out."

The MPs' first order of business Sunday was to locate a stray pallet of gear left behind at Naval Air Station New Orleans, where the battalion spent its first night after flying in from California on three C130 transports.

The battalion's base at the airport had been calm for a couple of days and newly arriving National Guard and 82nd Airborne Division soldiers were deployed inside the city. They were there to restore order, but the MPs still had no real idea about what was going on inside New Orleans.

In case the mission went awry and Davis' squad was kept from its airport base overnight, they loaded up the Humvee with boxes of water and "Meals Ready to Eat," the military version of camping food.

They carried M16 and M4 rifles and 9 mm pistols.

The task was to get the battalion supply sergeant, 29-year-old Heather Zongker from Oakley, to the air station so she could find the missing gear -- hands-free canteens to carry water, knee and elbow pads, Baby Wipes, sunscreen and radios.

"Hopefully it's still there and nobody rifled through and stole our stuff," Zongker said. "It's important gear. We need it."

At 8:20 a.m., the group of four soldiers pulled away from the airport and headed out of the gates. They immediately ran into a massive traffic jam comprised of emergency vehicles and an exodus of New Orleans residents driving their way to safety.

They picked their way around traffic, driving over median strips, along shoulders and through roadblocks. None of the traffic signals worked.

"It's like Iraq, you drive all over the place. No roads, no stop lights," Zongker said.

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Signs of the disaster were everywhere: a man stumbled past a looted mini-mart swilling a 40-ounce bottle of beer; on an abandoned storefront someone had scrawled "kill or die" in black paint.

The MPs took it all in with a kind of calm resignation. It was bad, but seemed orderly.

After one wrong turn, they made the 26 miles to the air station in a little over an hour.

Once there, Zongker quickly found the pallet of gear that belonged to the 124 men and women of the 49th Battalion and arranged for it to be moved to the airport in town.

She and Pfc. Robert Calloway stayed behind to ride back with the equipment, and Lt. Col. Kelly Fisher hopped in the Humvee.

As the liaison officer for the California National Guard's New Orleans deployment, she led the MPs on their second mission of the day: hook up with the other Californian units in the city to make sure they were okay and had everything they needed.

All of the communication equipment had yet to arrive and Fisher needed to see for herself what the situation was like inside the city.

It was her first trip out of a secure area, as well.

The 12-mile trip from the air station began under a pall of smoke from something unseen burning off in the distance. Virtually no traffic other than military and law enforcement vehicles was moving into the city and the trip was short.

The soldiers drove over the Mississippi River on the Crescent City Connection bridge and entered downtown on the Claiborne Street overpass, which just days before sheltered thousands from the flooding river.

Once in the city streets, they began navigating around flooded streets and debris. The downtown area was nearly deserted but, despite the evacuation order, perhaps thousands of people remain in New Orleans.

People were sitting on half-destroyed porches, walking ankle- and knee-deep through the reeking water.

On St. Charles Avenue, they were flagged down by 35-year-old Lamon Roberts who said he'd been trying to make it the 18 blocks to his mother's house since Katrina hit.

"I haven't talked to her since Tuesday. The phone lines are dead," he said. "The radio said St. Charles and Magazine street were dry."

He said he stayed despite the storm warnings because she wouldn't leave, and she stayed behind to protect her home.

The soldiers gave him food and water, put him in the Humvee and tried to drive him to her house. But they again encountered a lake of floodwater the vehicle couldn't traverse. Roberts thanked them, got out and began slogging through it.

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The damage to this part of town was the worst they'd seen yet. The beautiful old homes along St. Charles were battered relentlessly by the hurricane. People spray-painted messages on the plywood nailed over windows.

One read "Pete I'm out," another "Katrina sucks."

Toppled trees and water blocked most of the streets leading off the avenue.

"It's like stepping into the Twilight Zone. It's unimaginable," Fisher said. "Every sense, the odor, the sight ..."

Fisher found her other soldiers at an abandoned junior high school, where they set up a command post, jotted down a list of everything they needed and got back in the Humvee to try to find two other soldiers who had been sent to the Superdome the day before.

The mass of soldiers already stationed there and the lack of good communication equipment prevented her making contact, so the soldiers headed back to the civilian airport.

Once there, Fisher made her final contact of the day, this time the 49th Battalion.

What she saw inside the city stunned her, but Fisher was impressed with her men and women. "What I found was some pretty competent soldiers out there who are very resourceful," she said.

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California National Guard Communication Innovation Bridges Hurricane Katrina Communication Gaps

Compiled by California National Guard Public Affairs Staff, based on “on scene” reports submitted by 69th Press Camp Headquarters, California National Guard



Figure 8: The California National Guard’s Incident Commander Command Control and Communications Unit sits at the Joint Task Force California here in Louisiana. This emergency system has been vital to the Army and Air Guard’s mission to support Hurricane Katrina recovery. (69th Press Camp Headquarters Photo)

Hurricane Katrina destroyed many communication venues in its destructive path—cell phone towers, telephone terminals, television stations—creating one of many obstacles for rescue workers, but its deadly tantrum is no obstacle for the California National Guard’s Incident, Commander’s Command, Control and Communications Unit (IC4U).

“Without that (IC4U), we wouldn’t be able to accomplish our mission,” said Col. Scott Johnson, Commander of Joint Force California. “We were able to coordinate our operation the minute we got here. Let’s not forget there was no means of communication. But once that got off the plane, we were talking to Sacramento.”

The California National Guard has deployed five IC4Us to support Hurricane Katrina’s recovery effort. The task force is based at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station, Louisiana supporting Task Force Pelican—which includes three sub-task forces delivering a balanced mix of engineer, aviation, logistical, communication, security, and evacuation support to New Orleans’ disaster-stricken residents. Two IC4Us remain in Sacramento in case of a state emergency.

“It’s extremely valuable,” said Staff Sgt. Charles Devon, telecommunications operator from the 240th Signal Battalion in Compton. “It has one satellite, but it’s being used for three or four different functions. It’s intriguing to see how some of this equipment can be used.”



Figure 9. The inside of the IC4U contains just about every emergency communication necessity. Internet link ups, surveillance cameras, CB and HAM radios, etc. This one-man system also features a computer, printer, fax machine, and digital player.

The IC4U is the brainchild of David Golden, California National Guard technician. Mounted on a six-by-six-foot metallic frame its “self-acquiring satellite antenna” can uplink and plug into communication systems anywhere within the Continental United States, sending and receiving streaming video, telephone, fax, television, and internet communications as well as generating up-to-the-minute weather reports and other valuable incoming information. It’s highly flexible in that it can link into higher headquarters as well as to radio systems on the ground of civilian or military rescue units.

“Whether it’s landline, cellular, VHF, UHF, HF, 800 Megahertz or even military radios, the IC4U translates the signal into a digital format and retransmits it to whomever you want to talk to” said Brig. Gen. Louis Antonetti, deputy adjutant general, Resource Services Division, California National Guard. “It’s just one more recent disaster response upgrade for California. Hurricane Katrina will provide us other lessons in its deployment and use.”

The IC4U can also function as an internet Café, allowing deployed troops or evacuees, if necessary, to communicate via internet with loved ones back home.

“Right now it’s the only commercial telephone operation available,” said Golden. “No operation

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can flow successfully without communication. With this, we can communicate with anyone anywhere in the world in the toughest of situations.”

Recovery Update as of Sept. 7, 2005: 5:30 p.m.

47,000 Lives Saved

33,000 Saved by the U.S. Coast Guard—six times the number saved in 2004
235, 400 evacuees in shelters in 750 shelters in 20 states

70,000 personnel on the Ground

41,500 National Guardsmen

17,000 Active Duty

2,100 Federal Law Enforcement

4,000 Coast Guard

7,000 Federal Emergency Management Administration

11.9 million Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) distributed

21 million liters of water distributed

The Joint Task Force California is using the IC4U to its full capacity. Katrina marks the first time the mobile communication center is being used in a military operation. The IC4U was initially tested at the U.S. Olympic Trials in Sacramento in May 2004.

“It’s really a tactical communications van,” said Sr. Airman Stephen R. Lebb of the California Air National Guard’s 149th Combat Communications Squadron in Sacramento. Sr. Airman Lebb is the IC4U systems administrator at JTF California. “Basically it’s two things: first, it’s a communication bridge for different frequencies—the police and fire department talking on two different frequencies can be linked through the IC4U; second, it can produce live video with web access.”

The IC4U is highly mobile. It sits on a Humvee and can be driven through harsh terrain. Four bolts secure it to the vehicle frame, making removal so that it can be lifted by helicopter or carried onto a boat and lowered onto buildings or even mountain tops when terrain is simply too restrictive.

“This was designed to fit onto the back of a commercial pickup truck,” Golden said, “It’s built to last. As long as we have satellite link, it won’t fail.”

Local Bases Won't Be Shelters: Camp Roberts and Camp SLO Are Prepared For Evacuees, but FEMA Has Stopped Sending Them to California; Some Are Arriving On Their Own

By Bob Cuddy, *The Tribune*, San Luis Obispo

Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo will not house evacuees from Hurricane Katrina because the federal government on Wednesday stopped sending victims to California and several other states.

Federal officials said many survivors are reluctant to move so far from their families and damaged homes.

"Because of the reluctance or resistance of evacuees to go long-distance from their home areas, we're certainly not going to insist that someone get on a plane to a place they don't want to go to," said William L. Rukheyser, a Federal Emergency Management Agency spokesman in Texas. Nevertheless, evacuees continued to trickle into San Luis Obispo County on their own.

"In the aftermath of a disaster, people often take part in their own recovery," said Bill Rukeyser, a spokesman for the FEMA in Oakland. "We expect evacuees to find their way to all 50 states."

In California, hundreds have gone to San Diego and San Francisco. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has said California can take 1,000. Officials with the state Office of Emergency Services said the agency has received offers to house evacuees from many cities and counties, in addition to San Luis Obispo.

The move to halt sending evacuees to California came a day after the county officially welcomed evacuees, and Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo prepared to take them.

Camp Roberts has been told that it is "not presently needed," said spokesman Sgt. Tom Murotake.

Maj. Mark Johnson at Camp San Luis Obispo said, "We don't expect anything at this time." However, he said, preparing for evacuees was a useful effort in case the camp needs to take people in the future.

He said the camp was prepared to take 200 to 400 people.

Despite the official stand down, some people from the disaster area have arrived in the county, and others will follow.

Cal Poly continued its efforts to bring 50 students here from the Gulf Coast. By Wednesday, none had arrived, but the university had spoken to 11 who want to attend classes there.

Some had been accepted by Cal Poly at some point but chose to go to Tulane University, which has become a victim of Hurricane Katrina.

The number will change from day to day, said Robert Detweiler, interim provost. The university has to find housing, among providing other services, he said.

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"We're doing whatever we can as a campus community," said Jim Maraviglia, Cal Poly's admissions director.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Press Release: Search And Rescue Missions Are A Continuing Success

Public Affairs Office, Joint Task Force California

NEW ORLEANS, LA. – Successful missions start with strategic planning. Strategic planning leads to saving lives. Saving lives has been the mission handed down to a group of dedicated people.

A team of soldiers in the California Army National Guard from the 2/185th Armor Battalion out of San Diego have had several successful search and rescue missions lately.

Led by their Alpha Co. commanding officer, Capt. Gerold Davis, soldiers of the 2/185th have saved more than 30 local residents from their damaged homes.

"It feels good to be out here making a difference in the lives of these people," said Davis.

The soldiers have been using power boats and flat-bottom tin boats in the slowly receding flood waters to patrol neighborhoods which still have residents trapped inside their homes.

"These residents know that time has run out, and to stay in their homes would just be jeopardizing their health and ultimately their lives," said Davis.

Food and water were given to every resident needing help in the water-logged streets. Some people, who wanted to stay, were gently persuaded to board the search and rescue boats and were taken to a facility that would give them the proper medical treatment they deserved.

"It breaks your heart to see these people in such dire need who are torn between staying right where they are to protect their property and then making the right decision to leave their homes," said Spc. Ryan Schwartz, one of the boat operators from Atwater, California.

Soldiers from the 2/185th search and rescue team will continue to patrol the neighborhoods during the daylight hours until every resident has been brought to safety.

Press Release: Statement Of Senator Dianne Feinstein On The Federal Response To Hurricane Katrina

Office of United States Senator Dianne Feinstein

Washington, DC – Citing the massive failure of government on all levels to anticipate, prepare, and respond to Hurricane Katrina, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today urged the establishment of concrete emergency plans for every city in America in cooperation with State and Federal officials to prepare for a future calamity.

Senator Feinstein also said the Administration and Congress “need to conduct a nationwide assessment to determine the other most vulnerable areas and have federal disaster assistance resources pre-positioned if possible so no time is lost in the aftermath of another future tragedy.” Senator Feinstein also urged that:

- An independent commission be created to investigate the failures in relief efforts;
- There be a careful reexamination of the role and mission of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), including prioritizing disaster preparation funding and staffing the agency from top to bottom with professionals knowledgeable and experienced in handling disasters and eliminating political appointments.
- The U.S. Conference of Mayors convene a national intercity effort to share information and assist in emergency preparation efforts.
- Consideration be given to establishing a Strategic Food & Water Reserve so these supplies can be airlifted directly into areas such as New Orleans that are struck by catastrophe.

The following is the prepared text of Senator Feinstein’s floor speech entered into the Congressional Record:

“Mr. President, I come to the floor today -- heart-sick -- to speak about the absolute devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. This tragedy represents the worst natural disaster in our nation’s history.

This hurricane spared nothing. Estimates of damage now run as high as \$200 billion. The cost, in human lives and suffering, is just staggering.

Tragically, it will take weeks and weeks to ascertain the true loss of life. As the recovery proceeds, I pledge to do all in my power to help those in need – to rebuild cities, communities, and shattered lives and families across the Gulf Coast.

My home state of California knows well the destruction possible from natural disasters. So many times the people of California have been saved by the generosity of the American people.

I have no doubt that the people of my state will now rally to the aid of those in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Many already have.

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*In addition to monetary contributions from residents throughout the state, over 1,500 California first responders are on the scene as well as over 700 **California National Guard** personnel, 116 California Highway Patrol officers, eight Swiftwater Rescue Teams, eight Urban Search & Rescue Task Forces, and six Disaster Medical Assistance Teams.*

On Tuesday, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that California had accepted a request from FEMA to provide housing and assistance for 1,000 storm victims left homeless by the hurricane. San Diego has made 600 beds available, San Francisco 300, and San Jose 100. And if FEMA asks for more, the state will be ready. Los Angeles has planned accommodations for 2,000 evacuees and Sacramento County is preparing for 300.

Campuses of the University of California and California State University systems as well as private colleges and universities from across the state have opened their doors to college students that were displaced or had their educational plans interrupted by the hurricane. Hundreds of students have already taken advantage of these opportunities and will be starting classes this fall.

My heart goes out to all those suffering from this catastrophe. I have seen the destruction caused by massive mudslides, major earthquakes, and torrential rains. I have seen the fear and hopelessness that comes when families lose everything except the shirts on their backs. My thoughts and prayers are with those Americans in the pitch dark with no electricity, in shelters with their homes swept away, and with a future that seems without hope.

I'd like to commend all those who have worked literally around the clock in response to the disaster. The emergency responders—from the National Guard and Coast Guard to hospital workers to the local police and fire departments—have been nothing short of heroic. They are risking their lives and deserve our deep gratitude.

The American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and many other charitable organizations and religious groups have mobilized thousands of volunteer workers to bring aid and shelter to victims of the devastation.

The American people are already demonstrating their tremendous compassion and magnanimity – contributions exceed \$500 million – with surely much more to come. Nations from around the world have also offered to help. I thank them as well.

But despite the effort and concern of all these individuals, I am shocked at what has gone terribly wrong in preparation for Hurricane Katrina. What we saw in the days following the storm has been a massive failure of government on all levels to anticipate, prepare, and respond. Days before the storm FEMA knew it was coming. It was announced well in advance that Katrina had become a lethal Category 5 storm as it made its way through the Gulf of Mexico.

To see the horrific images of the dead lying in the street unattended, bodies floating aimlessly facedown in the water, and Americans with no choice but to relieve themselves on the field of the Superdome – it boggles the mind that such depraved conditions descended on one of America's great cities.

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It was a flat embarrassment to the country. Those who have lost loved ones deserved much better than these appalling conditions.

Senators Collins and Lieberman have launched a Government Affairs Committee oversight investigation to ensure that the requisite support and resources go to those in need. They will also be examining the inadequate preparation and response to this disaster.

Senator Clinton and others have called on President Bush to appoint an independent national commission to review Hurricane Katrina relief efforts modeled after the 9/11 Commission.

I completely support these efforts, and would like to go on record with a few of the serious concerns that I have regarding what has taken place. These are all problems that we must grapple with if we are to truly protect our homeland from disasters of all kinds.

Two days before the storm, a mandatory evacuation order went out for the residents of New Orleans. But didn't federal, state and local authorities know that tens of thousands of city residents lacked the funds and means to depart, and more fundamentally had nowhere to go?

As a result, the poor stayed put: stranded throughout the city, and away from any safe and secure shelter. Clearly there is not an adequate mechanism for removing Americans out of harm's way in the face of a crisis.

Warning systems and evacuation plans, prepositioning of transportation assets and emergency communications facilities, are all in dire need of an overhaul.

As always in these situations, the first priority is to save lives. Once the storm had passed, emergency responders went to dramatic lengths to save those stranded in houses, in apartments, and on rooftops throughout the region. Through their tireless efforts, thousands have been saved.

But what should have been an immediate and massive delivery of food, water, and medical supplies to evacuees came much too late. Thousands of hurricane victims went for days without anything to eat or drink. Babies went without formula. Diabetics went without insulin. People took refuge on freeways only to bake in the heat without relief or water and nowhere to go.

I realize the unprecedented magnitude of this disaster. But the delay in response was simply inexcusable. It pains me to admit that people died because aid did not arrive fast enough to those in need.

Downtown New Orleans' Charity Hospital went unevacuated for days with no food, clean water, or basic medical supplies. These represent the sickest and neediest of the storm victims and all efforts should have been made for their immediate evacuation – by boat to reach the hospital or at least helicopter airlifts from the roof if possible. Vigilant doctors, nurses, and other hospital workers performed courageously but did not have the support they needed.

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There seemed to be no plan in place for providing shelter once the storm was over. Ad hoc decisions appeared to cause widespread confusion as desperate evacuees did not know where to find basic needs. Rumors swirled of food here, and fuel there, forcing victims to scavenge in search of the basic necessities of life.

As regional evacuation centers filled there was no effective plan for long or even short-term shelter and care of displaced residents. With nowhere for storm victims to go, evacuation centers turned to squalor. Serious reports of abuse and assault have come out of these shelters.

Other cities graciously volunteered to open facilities to evacuees. For that I offer them my sincere gratitude. But now even they have reached capacity – the Houston Astrodome, for example. We were just not prepared to handle an evacuation of this magnitude.

We were quickly and brutally reminded that an effective response to this type of tragedy cannot happen until a reasonably safe situation exists on the ground. This is nothing new. It is a given in these types of situations.

Yet days passed before adequate National Guard troops arrived. Meanwhile, thugs, miscreants and ruthless pillagers terrorized the streets and thwarted rescue and aid.

Command and control breakdowns have been rampant. Throughout the region complaints abound that no one seems to be in charge. This is a recipe for chaos, which only works to hamper relief efforts and put innocent people in serious danger. Again, this points to the fact that we do not have adequate plans and mechanisms for dealing with serious disasters.

Regrettably, I could go on, but the time for dealing with the faults in preparation and response has not yet come. Right now, the victims of Hurricane Katrina need our help. Entire communities have been destroyed. Families have been torn apart. Many are still missing. Tens of thousands remain homeless. We must find a way to help bring some stability and hope back into their lives.

Congress has made a start by keeping FEMA operations running through an immediate \$10.5 billion appropriation last week. And the President has asked for \$51.8 billion more, which Congress will surely approve soon. But even this will not be enough -- we have just begun the effort to rebuild these cities and communities.

This is a process that will take years to accomplish and require a great deal of commitment on our part. I call on all Americans to do what they can to assist in the recovery efforts. There are countless opportunities and help is vitally needed.

As we move forward together as a nation, we also need to focus on concrete solutions for improving our preparedness for calamities that engulf any part of the country.

In close cooperation with state and federal emergency agencies, each city in this country absolutely must have an effective emergency plan in place.

These plans need to include professional and skilled emergency operations directors, clear lines of authority, practical evacuation strategies, and previously determined

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command centers that can be up and running on a moment's notice with satellite connections and powered by their own generators.

Key department heads should carry two-way radios with extra battery packs at all times.

The plans also must have mechanisms to immediately call for and facilitate the delivery of food, water, and medical supplies to areas in need.

But it is not enough to just have a plan in place. These plans must be rehearsed and drilled until they become second nature for the public agencies, emergency responders, and communities involved. When disaster strikes, there can be no confusion as to what must happen.

Unfortunately, even when effective and rehearsed plans exist, large-scale catastrophic events such as Hurricane Katrina can quickly overwhelm local jurisdictions.

In these cases, we need a system in place that allows the federal government to come in immediately with the full force of its resources and assume primary responsibility for response and relief.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors should convene a national intercity effort to share information and assist in emergency preparation efforts.

In emergency situations such as this, communications capabilities are essential. Emergency responders must have the equipment that will allow essential communications efforts to continue in case of the major damage to infrastructure we have seen in New Orleans.

Clearly, the Federal Emergency Management Agency needs to change. We need to look at whether the tasks charged to FEMA are too large to be included with 21 other agencies under the Department of Homeland Security.

Let's seriously consider professionalizing FEMA from top to bottom – some have called for the current Director Michael Brown's resignation, whose credentials as an emergency manager have been widely questioned.

FEMA needs to be devoid of political appointees and employ only the highest trained professionals with expertise in transportation, emergency medical aid, communications, and providing federal disaster assistance.

Funds Congress appropriates for FEMA from this point forward ought to be prioritized for disaster preparation, and we need to intensively review programmatic appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security which, some critics point out, has received funds diverted from the levee project in New Orleans.

We have a Strategic Petroleum Reserve, but shouldn't we have a Strategic Food & Water Reserve too, that can, within hours, be airlifted into directly and brutally hit areas such as New Orleans?

We need pre-planned, carefully thought out means for moving National Guardsmen and other military forces and particularly assets, such as high-water vehicles and Chinook

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transport helicopters, swiftly into place to prevent urban areas from sinking into anarchy – as was so painfully evident at the Convention Center in New Orleans and throughout the city.

The Army Corps of Engineers, the Administration and Congress knew for years about New Orleans' vulnerable topography and the inherent weaknesses of the 350 mile city levee system but limited funding for flood control work nonetheless – why?

The Administration and Congress need to conduct a nationwide assessment to determine the other most vulnerable areas and have federal disaster assistance resources pre-positioned if possible so no time is lost in the aftermath of another future tragedy.

These are just a few ideas to consider. President Bush was conveniently understating the case last Thursday when he said that federal efforts were “not acceptable”.

Americans have an obligation to come together, now, with their resources, money, and can do spirit to save New Orleanians, their great city, and all those suffering down the Gulf Coast.

Nothing less is acceptable.”

San Mateo County Ready to Assist Katrina Evacuees: Gulf Coast Disaster Serves as Reminder for Local Preparedness

County of San Mateo

Redwood City—As the Gulf Coast slowly recovers from Hurricane Katrina, San Mateo County stands ready to assist evacuees if and when requests come from federal agencies through the state and county Office of Emergency Services. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, represented by Supervisors Rose Jacobs Gibson, Jerry Hill and Adrienne J. Tissier, joined by Under Sheriff Greg Munks, Red Cross Disaster Action Team Member Chuck Nile and representatives from several first responder agencies added assurances that San Mateo County is prepared, especially given the Bay Area's seismic situation and the fact that earthquakes cannot be tracked like a hurricane

The state has deployed 500 **California National Guard** and 900 emergency response professionals, first responders and medical personnel to the storm ravaged Gulf Coast states, including 40 urban search and rescue team members, 6 disaster medical team members and more than 20 Red Cross volunteers from San Mateo County.

“This coordinated assistance from San Mateo County comes from the hearts of our residents through local officials who together want to respond with appropriate help to Hurricane Katrina survivors,” added Hill. “The County has put into action an emergency plan to address the various needs that arise from a crisis including care and shelter, health and mental health services and other necessary services to help disaster victims. We know this recovery will take months, possibly years. San Mateo County stands ready to assist over the long haul.”

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"I am touched by the generosity and compassion," Tissier said. "County offices have been overwhelmed by requests on how best to help. Right now, the best gift would be cash donations, give blood or volunteer at the local Red Cross," continued Tissier.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims of Hurricane Katrina," said Jacobs Gibson. "When called by the Governor's Office over the Labor Day weekend, the County of San Mateo was prepared to respond with services and support for Gulf Coast."

Three families from Louisiana have relocated to San Mateo County and the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA) is providing direct assistance.

Is L.A. Prepared For Disaster? Maybe Not

KNBC, Channel 4, Los Angeles, www.nbc4.tv

LOS ANGELES -- As events have unfolded in New Orleans, many people might be wondering: Are we prepared in Southern California for a major disaster?

NBC4 investigative reporter Joel Grover has uncovered some information that raises serious questions about our preparedness.

Thousands of National Guardsmen have been on the scene in New Orleans, using their choppers to save lives and troops to keep order. It's a role they also played in Los Angeles during the 1992 riots and during the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

"The national guard is very busy, busier than we have ever been," says Lt. Col. Tom Lasser, with the California National Guard.

That could be a problem.

Currently, nearly one-third of the California Army National Guard troops are overseas in hot spots like Iraq.

In a major disaster in Los Angeles, we might need every one of the 18,000 California guardsmen. "Right now, if called upon, we could probably deploy over 12,000 National Guard maximum to an event," Lasser told NBC4.

There also could be a shortage in the air.

NBC4 obtained internal government documents that contain information on National Guard resources in California. The documents are color-coded red, meaning a serious deficiency exists. "When I see red, that clearly is a warning sign and when I see the 140th, that's the helicopter group, that's not good," says California National Guard retired Brig. Gen. John Iffland.

Iffland referred to the fleet of 16 Blackhawk helicopters stationed at Los Alamitos Armory near Long Beach. The choppers are the same type rescuing victims in New Orleans.

But according to the documents NBC4 obtained, the black hawks in the Los Angeles area are unavailable because they are in Iraq.

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"The aviation, the brigade is low on strength. That's not good," Iffland told NBC4.

In case of a local disaster, the guard could bring in troops and choppers from Northern California or surrounding states, according to the guard.

"You can't get it (the choppers) from Oregon or Nevada within hours, and that's an issue," Iffland told NBC4.

It was that kind of delay in New Orleans, officials said, that cost lives.

That is why Assemblywoman Karen Bass, of Los Angeles, co-authored a resolution in an attempt to bring California guard troops home from Iraq.

"If all of our troops are overseas fighting in Iraq, who is here to protect us in case of a natural disaster?" Bass said.

In the meantime, the National Guard is forced to work with the resources it has and the experiences of past events.

"I like to think the book was written in Southern California about how to deal with disasters," Lasser told NBC4.

Not only are California Guard troops deployed overseas -- but another 800 of them have been sent to help with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Surreal Scenes from a Sunken City

By Chris Rose, Columnist, *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans

They're telling the people they have to go. They're going door to door with rifles now.

They came to our little hovel on Laurel Street Uptown -- a dozen heavily-armed members of the **California National Guard** -- they pounded on our door and wanted to know who we were.

We told them we were the newspaper, the Big City Daily. I admit, it doesn't look like the newsrooms you see on TV. I suppose if we wore shirts, we'd look more professional.

The Guard moved on, next door, next block.

They're telling people they have to go.

It won't be easy. The people who stayed here have weathered ten days of unfathomable stench and fear and if they haven't left yet, it seems unlikely that they're going to be willing now.

In a strange way, life just goes on for the remaining. In the dark and fetid Winn-Dixie on Tchoupitoulas, an old woman I passed in the pet food aisle was wearing a house frock and puffy slippers and she just looked at me as she pushed her cart by and said: "How you doin', baby?"

Like it's just another afternoon making groceries.

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I love the way strangers call you baby in this town.

Outside the store, there's an old guy who parks his old groaning car by the front door from sunup to sundown. There are extension cords running from his trunk into the store, which still has power – don't ask me how; I have no idea – and he watches TV in his front seat and drinks juice.

That is what he does, all day, every day.

At this point, I just can't see this guy leaving. I don't imagine he has anyplace else in the world but this.

A young guy walked up and said to him: "I hear you can charge your cell phone here?" and the old guy said "Yes, indeedy," and walked him into the store and showed him a plug that still had juice.

And life goes on.

Down on St. Claude Avenue, a tribe of survivors has blossomed at Kajun's Pub where, incredibly, they have cold beer and cigarettes and a stereo playing Elvis and you'd think everything was in standard operating procedure but it is not: The Saturday night karaoke has been indefinitely suspended.

The people here have a touch of Mad Max syndrome; they're using an old blue Cadillac for errands and when parts fall off of it – and many parts have fallen off – they just throw them in the trunk.

Melvin, a bar owner from down the block, had the thing up for sale for \$895, but he'll probably take best offer now.

Melvin's Bar and Kajun's Pub have pooled their inventories to stay in business.

"We've blended our fortunes together," said Renee dePnthieux, a bartender at Melvin's. "We carried everything we could down here, and we'll make the accounting later. What else are you gonna do? In case you haven't heard, Budweiser ain't delivering."

A guy with a long goatee and multiple tattoos was covering a couple of aluminum foil pans of lasagna and carrying them up to the roof to cook them in the sun on the hot slate shingles.

Joann Guidos, the proprietor at Kajun's, called out for a game of bourre and they all dumped their money on a table and sat down and let the cars and liquor flow.

A National Guard truck pulled up and asked if they were ready to leave yet. Two guys standing out on the sidewalk in the company of pit bulls said: "Hell no."

DePonthiux said: "We're the last fort on the edge of the wilderness. My family's been in exile for 300 years; this ain't shit."

I just don't see these people leaving.

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Uptown, on what was once a shady street, a tribe is living in a beautiful home owned by a guy named Peanut. There is a seaplane in his driveway, a bass boat in the front yard and generators running the power.

Let's just say they were prepared.

All the men wear pistols in visible holsters. They've got the only manicured lawn in the city. What else is there to do all afternoon, really?

Christine Paternostro is a member of this tribe and she is an out-of-work hair stylist from Supercuts in a city where no one shaves or bathes. Not many prospects for her at this point.

"Everyone will need a haircut when this is over," I offered.

While members of this tribe stood talking on their street, a woman came running out of the house, yelling: "Y'all, come quick. We on WWL! We on WWL!"

Everyone ran in the house and watched a segment about how people are surviving in the city. And these guys are doing just that. (Although I think the airplane in the driveway is a little over the top.)

As I was leaving, the WWL woman said to me: "Are you staying for dinner?"

I was not, but I asked what they were having. "Tuna steaks," she said. "Grilled."

If and when they rebuild this city and we all get to come home, I want to live near people like this. I just can't imagine them ever leaving.

They make me wonder if I ever could.

Local Rescue Team Returns Home Early

Television Station KNTV, Channel 11, San Jose, www.nbc11.com

A Bay Area Air National Guard wing is back from New Orleans more than a week earlier than expected.

About a dozen members of the 129th Rescue Wing out of Moffett Field returned to Mountain View Wednesday night.

The group left for New Orleans on Monday and helped remove more than 200 people from their flooded homes.

The team came home early because they say rescue efforts are winding down.

One member says he wishes they had been sent sooner.

"We failed the people, the system failed the people. I wish we could've done something better - we could've done more, I guess. That's my only regret," said Senior Airman Mickey Chan.

The unit sent medical teams and a chaplain to New Orleans.

Bay Area Residents Offer a Helping Hand

By Chris McVicar, *Epoch Times*, New York

Count residents of the San Francisco Bay Area among the thousands, if not millions, of Americans who are reaching out to the victims of Katrina, the hurricane that devastated New Orleans and other cities in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama last week.

Setting aside concerns about skyrocketing gas prices and the prospect of soaring insurance premiums as a result of the devastation wreaked by the storm, Bay Area residents are responding in a variety of ways.

The Bay Area is playing host to more than 300 refugees, some of whom lost everything to Katrina. The Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, and other faith-based organizations are setting up shelters across the state, using high school gymnasiums and other donated structures. Many of the evacuees will be provided temporary accommodations at St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco.

The Red Cross has taken the lead in relief efforts, providing food, shelter, and other needed assistance. Meanwhile, more than 100 Bay Area residents have undergone a two-day training regimen—such training normally takes two weeks—by the Red Cross before they leave for Louisiana and Mississippi. At the same time, more help is needed locally: The Red Cross says it needs more volunteers to answer phones, process donations, and help in other emergency operations.

Private citizens are also chipping in. David Perez, for instance, a businessman from Carmel Valley, spent \$200,000 to charter an airplane to carry supplies to Louisiana and bring back to California people who lost their homes and possessions.

Websites have been set up around the country to aid in relief efforts and to reunite families and friends separated during the hurricane. Among these is Craigslist.org, which was started in San Francisco by Craig Newmark. According to local television KRON 4, this site is being used to coordinate "lost and found, offers of free housing, food and relief, and efforts to match missing victims with their loved ones."

In addition to volunteers, hundreds of **National Guard Military Police** and more than 100 California Highway Patrol officers have been sent to the devastated region. Despite many California National Guard personnel now dispersed to Louisiana and the warfront in Iraq, Henry Renteria, director of the governor's Office of Emergency Services said there are enough remaining at home to handle any state emergency that might arise.

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War Veterans Volunteer To Care For Hurricane Victims

By Maj. Ann Peru Knabe, Public Affairs, 440th Airlift Wing,

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas. Within 48 hours of Hurricane Katrina slamming the Gulf Coast Aug. 29, Capt. Frances Robertson was ready to go save lives. At 6 a.m., she reported for duty, realized the gravity of the situation, and promptly called her mother and asked her to watch her kids, warning her it might be several days before she came home.

During the next two days, Captain Robertson would fly several aeromedical evacuation missions out of Louis Armstrong International Airport, New Orleans, La., rescuing critically ill patients who clung to life as conditions at the airport rapidly deteriorated.

Assigned to the 433rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron here, Captain Robertson is just one of hundreds of Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard members who jumped at the opportunity to serve their country by saving hurricane victims.

"These are amazing Citizen Airmen," said Col. Delbert Lewis, 433rd Operations Group commander, referring to the 433rd AES. "Ninety-eight percent of these volunteers were activated for Iraq or Afghanistan, and here they are volunteering again."

Most of these "double-volunteers" are professional health-care workers or emergency responders in their civilian occupations. Many of their civilian employers also feel the pinch because many of the San Antonio area hospitals are experiencing a high volume of hurricane victims.

But these Citizen Airmen with multiple skills are an asset amid crisis.

"One of our med techs works for the San Antonio Police Department," said Captain Robertson. "He was a terrific resource in evaluating security risks at the airport in New Orleans. He quickly assessed the security risks, and we were better able to focus on the mission of saving lives."

Lives were at stake. Reservists like Captain Robertson knew they had to think smart and act quickly.

On her first flight in, Captain Robertson took a "shopping order" from medical workers on the ground at the airport. The list included fresh water, intravenous fluids, litters and narcotics. A short time later, the C-130 took off from New Orleans with 44 acute care patients stacked five litters high.

It was difficult to diagnose many of the patients.

"Because people were responding with great urgency in a crisis situation, most of the patients lacked accurate medical documentation," said Captain Robertson. "We tried to create some facsimile of a manifest and diagnosed needs on the spot as best we could."

Acute-care patients included quadriplegics, people with organ transplants, those suffering from respiratory failure and patients on kidney dialysis. They ranged from small children to the elderly.

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Because of the tight space on the aircraft, the aeromed team needed to remain flexible and agile. When one patient's oxygen level plummeted to 79 percent (ideally it should be close to 100 percent), Captain Robertson deftly climbed on top of the litters to retrieve an oxygen mask. Weighing less than 100 pounds, the reservist earned the nickname "Spider Woman."

A young boy with cerebral palsy was terrified when the plane engines started. Captain Robertson tried everything to calm the boy, fearing he would hurt himself by sitting up and hitting his head on the litter above him. When all else failed, she took an unconventional approach and asked the boy's mother if she would hold him instead of having him lie on the litter. Miraculously, the child settled down on his mother's lap and was peaceful throughout the rest of the flight.

Later, as patients deplaned, Captain Robertson talked to her key contacts at the base.

"Amazingly, all the bureaucratic red tape was removed from the process, and I walked out with everything on the wish-list for New Orleans," said the nurse. "People came together, and we were able to deliver critical supplies to the airport on our next flight in."

Other aeromed reports tell stories of heroes and hope on every flight.

"Certain things touched my heart," said Capt. Jennifer Clar, a nurse with the **146th Airlift Wing [California Air National Guard]** based in the Channel Islands [ANG Base], Calif. "Normally I am always composed and professional, but for some reason I was completely touched by an old man who clung to his little dog. It just hit me; this is all he has left - only his dog. The man had lost everything else in life. I had never cried before on a mission," said the nurse, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On another flight, a patient with mental illness screamed in fear at every little noise and bump. Medication didn't help, and she started to scare other passengers with her fearful shrieking. When all else failed, Tech. Sgt. Raymond Caldwell, a medical technician with the 146th AW, laid next to her on the floor of the C-130 and held her hand the rest of the flight. His compassion had a ripple effect, and as the woman's screams silenced, the rest of the passengers sighed in relief.

Captain Robertson said there was the heart of a hero in every mission.

"We were dealing with people who have lost everything, but we had professional medical crews that cared more than anything," she said. "This is the face of the Reserve, and this is the face of the total force." (AFRC News Service)

Press Release: Logistics Critical To Katrina Support Mission

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. – The supply and logistics professionals of the California National Guard are sending and distributing life-sustaining supplies to support the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.

The Joint Task Force California logistics team is supporting the Soldiers and Airman with food and water, vehicles, ice, portable toilets, pens and markers and more.

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"We just have to make sure the soldier has what they need," said U.S. Army Maj. Louise Goodwater, purchasing agent. "Some things are costly, but you can't put a budget line on a mission like this. That's like putting a budget on war."

California's 730-plus Soldiers and Airmen consume about 800 cases of pre-packed food a week, says U.S. Army Master Sgt. Rea Cichocki, Joint Task Force California's logistics noncommissioned officer in charge. Each case contains 24 pre-packed items.

Soldier-care has the highest priority. Goodwater recently purchased four washers, four dryers, fans, decontamination items -- such as bleach and alcohol -- and tools and materials to build portable showers. One day's cost: \$6,000.

"The washer and dryer, that's a health issue," Goodwater explained. "Soldiers can't keep their bodies clean if they wear dirty clothes." Clothes, uniforms and boots are next on the priority logistics line.

The California Guard is also using more than 100 vehicles including HMMWV's (high mobility vehicles, or humvees), 2 1/2- to 10-ton trucks, fuelers, wreckers and two light armored vehicles (LAVs).

"We're providing all that's needed to operate and be safe," said U.S. Army Major Mile Lovings, logistics officer. "To take 700 people with all life support systems takes time. But we're 10 days into the operation. And we're operating at a successful level."

California Troops Provide Aid To Victims Of Hurricane Katrina.

Press Release, California State Military Reserve:

Support activity is expected to continue for an extended period. COL (CA) Martin Ledwitz, CASMR Director of Civil and Public Affairs filed the following status report on CASMR troops:

- 152 SMR members had volunteered to be called to duty in support of the CANG.

Army Component

- LTC (CA) Knight (G-5) is on active duty at the order of the National Guard Bureau and has supported the Guard in Mississippi and is currently in Louisiana.
- CW2 (CA) Paresa (G-5), CSM (CA) McWilliams and 1SG (CA) King are on State Active Duty in the Joint Operations Center (JOC).
- Center for Military History is supporting the Guard as the historians for the Katrina relief effort.
- SMR Communications & Electronics Detachment is training Guard (25 soldiers) and SMR personnel in the operation of the IC4U equipment that is being used in the deployment.
- Our Medical personnel will be involved in the return medical checkups and decontamination of NG personnel.
- Public Affairs (G-5) personnel have been asked to cover the return of the NG troops to Mather Field (CW2 (CA) Paresa) and March ARB (COL (CA) Ledwitz, CPT (CA) Brown, 2LT (CA) Williams).

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- Our G-1 Section has seven people working full time for the Guard.

Air Component

- COL (CA) Doheny is active as an Air Operations Officer in the JOC.
- COL (CA) Anthenian is active as an OES LNO and JOC OIC.
- LTC (CA) Sampognaro is active as JOC OIC, Air Ops Officer and Deputy J3.
- CPT (CA) Decker and MAJ (CA) Noel are being scheduled for the JOC.
- LTC (CA) Chambers (RN) has volunteered for DMAT duty.
- LTC (CA) Baxter and CPT (CA) Lief will be working in the JOC as JAG volunteers.
- LTC (CA) King and LTC (CA) Salge will be working in the JOC as Air Ops Officers.

Soldier Uses Civilian Skills to Assist California Guard, New Orleans

Compiled by California National Guard Public Affairs Staff, based on “on scene” reports submitted by 69th Press Camp Headquarters, California National Guard



Figure 10. An electrician by day and citizen-soldier by night, Spc. Carlos Villasenor uses his civilian skills to good use. The San Diego resident took the lead and led contractors in powering up a school building that housed the 2/185th Armor Battalion, California Army National Guard. The building was occupied by more than 200 Guardsmen, is the only structure with electricity in an 18-block radius in Orleans Parish. (69th Press Camp Headquarters)

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. – Thanks to one California National Guard soldier’s electrical ingenuity, the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment surged ahead in its support operations by reducing delays, increasing focus on its recovery operations, and rapidly establishing an operation center capable of sustaining 24-hour operations.

Spc. Carlos Villasenor, a civilian electrician with 19 years experience, immediately recognized that he could begin wiring an entire school where the 185th was stationed with one 5,000-watt generator, some copper wires, temporary electrical wires and a dose of electrical magic conjured from his vast experience as an electrician at Santee, San Diego.

“I just know because this is my line of work,” Villasenor said. “This is what I do for a living.”

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After restoring electricity at the Louisiana high school, Villasenor seized an opportunity to increase the buildings functional use by requesting two additional 12-kilowatt generators, which Battalion Commander Maj. Frank Emanuel quickly acquired.

“With those two generators, we’re able to get 100 amps of power,” Villasenor said. “We can run a lot more things.”



Figure 11: San Diego resident Spc. Carlos Villasenor has been the most “powerful” man in the 2/185th Armor Battalion based out of his home town. He’s been the key to providing electricity in an Orleans Parish school, the battalions temporary home while completing missions in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He’s an electrician in civilian life and “offered his credentials” to help power up the facility. (69th Press Camp Headquarters)

The 185th now had a building where they could feed their soldiers hot meals, keep water and food cold, plan and coordinate under lights through the entire night and more effectively monitor and direct support efforts to support local residents.

“The more power we have, the more resources we can make available,” said Emanuel. “We can run lights, making it safer for soldiers to operate. We can run the kitchen, creating a dining facility. We can feed soldiers hot food and keep drinks cold. We can do more things to make our jobs easier and expedite support to the recovery mission.”

Because Villasenor’s was able to use his electrical skills, it freed up a group of New Orleans contractors to help restore electricity in the 185th’s building as well as surrounding structures. The school is currently the only structure in a 10-block radius in Orleans Parish with power, bringing life to a highly decimated area. Flooding and destructive hurricane winds forced most residents to abandon their homes; creating a ghost town.

“There are just so many avenues we can take with this school,” added Emanuel. “So many things we can when full power is finally restored.”

Now that the 2/185th’s has a functional base from which to house its troops and direct its operations, what is Villasenor doing? He’s on foot and boat patrols, searching for looters and people who need help, and assisting with security.

“Those are things you have to do. They’re important,” Villasenor said. “But (being an electrician) is also important right now. “

Villasenor further explained that when his unit has power, it has a safe haven from which to operate recovery operations and to maintain a concentrated effort on helping Louisianans recover

Relief Workers Make Strides in New Orleans

By Erin McClam, Associated Press National Writer

NEW ORLEANS - Workers here were picking up trash Sunday, a small miracle under the circumstances. The airport opened to cargo traffic. A bullhorn-wielding volunteer led relief workers in a chorus of "Amazing Grace."

Nearly two weeks after Hurricane Katrina's onslaught, the day was marked by signs that hopelessness was beginning to lift in this shattered city. While the final toll from the disaster remains unknown, there were indications New Orleans had begun to turn a corner.

"You see the cleaning of the streets. You see the people coming out," said the volunteer with the bullhorn, Norman Flowers. "The people aren't as afraid anymore."

Flowers, deployed by the Southern Baptist Convention, stood in the bed of a pickup truck on Canal Street, leading police, firefighters and relief workers in song, punctuated by the exuberant honk of a fire truck nearby.

"This is a sign of progress," said New Orleans resident Linda Taylor, gesturing at the impromptu gathering. "Last Sunday, I couldn't find any church services. This Sunday, people have gathered together to worship."

Numerous residents were able to visit their homes for the first time, however briefly, as floodwaters receded and work crews cleared trees, debris and downed telephone poles from major streets.

Albert Gaude III, a Louisiana State University fisheries agent, was among those returning for the first time since the storm.

"They wouldn't let us in before, but we made it now and we could drive all the way here with no problem," he said.

President Bush planned to fly to New Orleans later Sunday and spend the night. On Monday, he planned to tour the devastated town of Gulfport, Miss.

The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport reopened for cargo traffic Sunday, and limited passenger service was expected to resume Tuesday, airport director Roy Williams said.

Williams said he expects about 30 departures and arrivals of passenger planes a day — far below the usual 174 — at the airport, where a week ago terminals became triage units and more than two dozen people died.

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Authorities raised Louisiana's death toll to 197 on Sunday, and recovery of corpses continued. Teams pulled an unspecified number of bodies from Memorial Medical Center, a 317-bed hospital in uptown New Orleans that closed more than a week ago after being surrounded by floodwaters. Trash collection began over the weekend, a service unimaginable in the apocalyptic first days after Katrina's fury battered the Gulf Coast and broke holes in two levees, flooding most of New Orleans.

Mayor C. Ray Nagin was asked NBC's "Meet the Press" whether New Orleans could stage Mardi Gras in February 2006. "I haven't even thought that far out yet," he said.

But he added, "It's not out of the realm of possibilities. ... It would be a huge boost if we could make it happen."

Nagin declined to say when the city might be drained of floodwaters.

"But I always knew that once we got the pumps up, some of our significant pumps going, that we could accelerate the draining process," he said. "The big one is pumping station six, which is our most powerful pump, and I am understanding that's just about ready to go."

The city's main wastewater treatment facility will be running by Monday, said Sgt. John Zeller, an engineer with the **California National Guard**.

"We're making progress," Zeller said. "This building was underwater yesterday."

David Smith, a volunteer firefighter from Baton Rouge, said it's a sign of progress that people like him are now in New Orleans aiding the city's recovery.

"We are helping people get the medicine they need," Smith said. "People who haven't been able to get prescriptions filled. That's a big step forward."

Army Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, the commander of active duty troops engaged in hurricane relief, told CNN's "Late Edition" the number of dead would be "a heck of a lot lower" than dire initial projections of 10,000 or more. Recovery of corpses continued Sunday.

On CBS' "Face the Nation," Honore asked Americans to take care of hurricane evacuees and help reunite them with their families. "And there's light at the end of the tunnel here," he added.

Throughout the shattered city, many of the thousands of the troops and relief workers paused to reflect — some to mark the fourth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, some simply because it was Sunday.

At a Sept. 11 memorial service in the Algiers neighborhood, firefighters from New York told their colleagues they understood the pain and frustration wrought by Katrina.

"I just want to see what's going to happen tomorrow. And tomorrow after that," said Capt. Mike Donaldson, a New Orleans firefighter who attended. "It starts looking up from here."

Step by small step, residents tried to re-establish pieces of the city's inimitable character.

Kenny Claiborne has been running what has become known as Radio Marigny from his front porch — no actual radio signal, only generator-powered speakers that carry music by local groups through the breeze down Chartres Street.

"We just got that feeling like, it's not the end anymore, it's the beginning now," he said.

Tommy Hendricks, who owns a small apartment house in the French Quarter, returned to his ground-floor apartment and found it damaged by squatters who took refuge there — empty bottles and clothes strewn about.

"It's on life support," he said of his neighborhood, "but it's not dead."

Associated Press reporters Brett Martel, Mary Foster, Colleen Long and Warren Levinson contributed to this report.

Trying To Save a City

By Jessica Portner, Mercury News. San Jose

Tristan Grell, a rookie rescueman in the California Air National Guard, had a memorable first assignment last week: slogging through putrid New Orleans water in a five-ton truck to save elderly residents stranded on balconies or in water-logged homes.



Figure 12. From left, Tristan Grell, Jimmy Petrolia, Don Allie and Mickey Chan of the 131st Rescue Squadron. Anne-Marie McReynolds / Mercury News

And Grell's unit, the 131st Rescue Squadron, had a record-breaking week. Since its founding in 1975, the 129th Rescue Wing, which oversees the squadron, has rescued 315 stranded people. In New Orleans, the 131st squadron alone saved 212 people -- in two days.

Among the people scooped up by Grell were a diabetic grandmother and residents whose food and water stocks were running thin. Around every corner, the dead bobbed in the filthy water a week after Hurricane Katrina pounded the city.

"It was awful. In random spots, they'd be floating," said the Mountain View man, one of a dozen members of the 131st Rescue Squadron who flew back to Moffett Field Wednesday night. Still, he added, "I'm just happy to be able to help somebody."

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Members of the 131st Rescue Squadron were among 40,000 National Guard troops from about 40 states detailed to the Gulf Coast to respond to one of the nation's worst natural disasters. The "para-rescuers" -- some civilian, some career military -- have spent years plucking swimmers or stranded boaters from thrashing waves. Their motto is: "That Others Might Live."

"I thought my first mission would be saving one person off a boat," said Mickey Chan, 26, another rookie from San Francisco who finished his training in June. "But this was about saving a city."

Even the squadron's most experienced rescuer said this mission was like no other.

Don Allie, the team's leader, has been in combat search-and-rescue missions and medical evacuations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last week, Allie and his crew cruised from street to street without rest, coaxing ill and traumatized New Orleanians to abandon their balconies so they could be evacuated to a freeway overpass and later flown to safety.

The 131st squadron was authorized to use persuasion only, not force. One day, the group spent two hours trying to extricate 20 residents from a complex who were intent on staying put. Most eventually complied.

Though the city was a floating morgue, the rescue workers couldn't recover the dead because they were charged with saving the living. They had to leave that gruesome task to other emergency crews.

"This operation was huge," said Allie, who works and lives at Moffett Field. "This was an apocalyptic event."

The California crew was joined by state guardsmen from Kentucky, Texas and New York.

Allie said the job was made more difficult because of the mixed messages residents were getting from various agencies and the media. Some were being given food and water by aid agencies or neighbors, which led residents to believe it was safe to stay in their homes. Others had heard orders to vacate and were waiting for help.

The guardsmen didn't just rescue humans. Grell said they saved two dogs, a spaniel and a Labrador, that were stuck on a railing. "Everyone has a soft spot for a puppy," Grell said.

Now that they are back in the Bay Area, team members are focusing on their own health.

The water-rescue experts were moving through water laden with household chemicals and sewage -- and without wetsuits that could hamper their mobility. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency declared this week that the water quality in New Orleans is several times more toxic than recommended levels.

"That whole place is like a petri dish," said Jimmy Petrolia, a full-time fireman who works from Las Vegas and is part of the Moffett Field unit. "It smells like death."

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Allie said all the men, some of whom have developed rashes and respiratory problems, were hosed down by a hazardous materials team and are on a standard, post-mission regimen of antibiotics.

Grell and Chan both said the first thing they did when they got home was shower, sleep and eat something fresh. While in New Orleans, all they ate were military rations -- vegetarian barbecue patties, cheese and brownies.

State guard officials have not said when or whether this crew will be returning to New Orleans. But at the 131st's headquarters at Moffett Field on Thursday, Chan said he is already hoping to return.

“We accomplished a lot, but we could have done more,” Chan said. “I want to go back and get more people out.”

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National Guard Aircrews Bring Aid to Mississippians

By Capt. Steve Alvarez, USA, American Forces Press Service



Figure 13: Flanked by stacks of cases of military rations, a California Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter prepares to take off loaded with humanitarian supplies. Photo by Capt. Steve Alvarez, USA

GULFPORT, Miss., Sept. 9, 2005 – National Guard soldiers flying helicopters from dawn to dusk are providing a critical air bridge to communities throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Throughout the Mississippi Delta, thousands of residents are not able to reach relief-distribution points; many don't have cars, and countless roads are impassable.

"We're flying 300 missions a day, flying out food and water to these people," Mississippi Army National Guard Lt. Col. Tim Powell said. Aircrews here say they fly four to 15 missions per day, depending on the distance of their drops from the busy Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Center airfield.

Aircrews hail from all over the United States. Aircraft tail markers from California, Ohio, Mississippi and other states were visible on the tarmac.

An air operations officer said 62 helicopters flew relief missions here and into affected Mississippi areas Sept. 8.

The helicopter airlift fleet is mostly UH-1 Hueys and UH-60 Black Hawks. Several OH-58 Kiowas are used for reconnaissance. Each Huey or Black Hawk can carry about two pallets of military rations, water and ice. Their cargo areas are filled with supplies as the helicopters lift off and fly into the damaged areas.

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The airlift crews also perform reconnaissance. "We'll go out over debris fields and see if we see anything," Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. Clayton Pickle, a UH-60 crew chief, said. "We'll go looking in places where people are cut off."

Crews generally fly to known supply points. But, in areas where they can land, they will also provide aid to victims on the ground who wave at them or display a distress signal. If the pilots can't land their aircraft safely, they plot the position of the victims and send help from the ground.

"I heard a lot of helicopters one day," White Cypress Lakes resident Shirley Lott said. Her community of 300 has one road in and out, Lott said.

"I couldn't do a sign in the yard because of all the debris," Lott said. So she climbed atop her home and wrote "Help" on her roof.

"It wasn't long before the first Black Hawk stopped down there and downloaded some food and water," Lott said. Since then, Lott, a former soldier, and her husband have become leaders in their communities. She coordinates the reception of supplies at nearby Mint Julep Airpark, and her husband drives through the community and distributes military rations, water, ice and baby products.

Sept. 8 she greeted aircrews with two trucks and told an aircrew from the New York National Guard that parents in the community are running low on diapers and baby formula. The pilot scribbled notes attentively.

"This should last us several days," Lott told the crew who delivered the supplies. "It's wonderful," she said about the relief drops. "It's overwhelming."

Lott, now an unemployed medical paralegal who lost her job in New Orleans and the tin roof on her home, also told a pilot about people in need of medication; she mentioned diabetics, pregnant women and people with heart ailments.

"We're really, really pleased with the response," Lott said. "Everybody's coming together in this really nicely."

"They're grateful for everything they get," Ohio Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 Tom Fair said Sept. 8 after flying a relief drop into the backwoods of Mississippi. He and his crew carefully set down in a clearing in the woods and were met by victims who helped unload the Black Hawk. It was noon, and already he and his crew had flown six missions.

Fair is one of 45 Ohio Army Guardsmen serving in Mississippi, after returning from a deployment to Kosovo earlier this year.

"This is the reason why I joined the National Guard," Ohio Army National Guard Sgt. Foster Kennedy said. A light-wheeled-vehicle mechanic by trade, Kennedy services vehicles, but volunteers and puts in extra hours loading and unloading helicopters and travels with aircrews to deliver supplies. "I wasn't going to miss a chance to help. We're here to help our own," he said.

Aircrews here said that while most of them fly only during daylight hours, the average crew duty day is 12 to 18 hours. On the ground at the airfield, 10 aircraft are normally moving about, landing or taking off, while others are loaded and refueled. The process continues systematically throughout the day.

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Officials: State's Still Protected: Plenty Of Guard Troops And Civilian Crews Remain Home To Handle Emergencies, They Say.

By Pamela Martineau, *Sacramento Bee*

California's fire season is here, and the state has large numbers of National Guard troops deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and now the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast region.

Another 1,000 civilian emergency workers from California also are assisting with the hurricane response.

Would California have enough troops and other emergency personnel available if massive fires or another large natural or man-made disaster should strike now?

California National Guard and state Office of Emergency Services officials say yes.

"We're in a good position to respond to any likely disaster or state emergency," said Maj. Jon Siepmann, a spokesman for the California National Guard.

"And in the unlikely event a disaster were to hit that exceeded our capacity," Siepmann added, "we are part of the large national system of resources that can be brought to bear to assist us in the same way that we are currently assisting Louisiana."

OES spokeswoman Sheryl Tankersley agreed.

"With the troops in Iraq and other places we would definitely feel it if we had something here, but we also ensure that we have backup plans in place," Tankersley said.

According to Siepmann, California hit an all-time peak in the number of deployed soldiers last year and is now on a downward trend.

In spring 2004, 8,000 of California's 20,000 Army and Air National Guard troops were deployed overseas. Deployments included tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantánamo Bay, Kosovo and the Sinai. Another 100 or so California troops were deployed stateside performing homeland security duties, Siepmann said.

In recent months, the Pentagon ordered the drawdown of Guard troops abroad. Consequently, California's number of overseas troops fell to about 6,000 this spring and has been further reduced to about 5,000 now.

"We expect that number to continue to decrease to 2,000," added Siepmann.

In recent days, about 1,000 California National Guard troops were called up to offer disaster assistance following Hurricane Katrina. Of those, about 720 have deployed to the Gulf Coast region and about 200 are in California in support roles for the hurricane effort, Guard officials said.

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The deployed troops include the California Army Guard's 870th Military Police Company, which is based in Pittsburg, Contra Costa County. That company arrived in Louisiana on Wednesday and is operating out of Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

The California Guard's 2-185 Armor Battalion from San Diego arrived Saturday in Louisiana and is working to secure residences and businesses.

Other California units that have deployed soldiers to the hurricane-hit region include Stockton's 118th Maintenance Company and the 240th Signal Company out of Compton in Southern California.

Siepmann said about 90 California Guard vehicles also have been sent, including 5-ton trucks and Humvees.

Siepmann said the California Guard has been careful not to deploy too much equipment, especially firefighting equipment.

"We were very careful during this disaster in Louisiana and surrounding states to retain enough equipment, specifically firefighting equipment, to meet our needs back here in California," he said.

Siepmann said a large number of helicopters and C-130 airplanes remain to help fight fires, although he did not have exact numbers.

There are also plenty of California troops available for deployment, he said.

"We have approximately 12,000 California Guardsmen that remain available for duty in support of natural disasters and other state emergencies," he said.

Tankersley said the Office of Emergency Services also is being careful to keep enough civilian emergency personnel and equipment in the state.

About 1,000 civilian emergency workers, such as swift-water rescue and urban rescue team members, are helping with relief efforts on the Gulf Coast. Under mutual-aid agreements, Tankersley said, local officials decide which employees go and which stay when they contribute workers to help in an emergency elsewhere. Those officials are careful to keep enough personnel in their city or county should an emergency erupt here, she said.

UC Davis associate professor Scott Sigmund Gartner, an expert in national security and military response, said the nation's mutual-aid system is extensive and designed to respond to more than one disaster simultaneously. But he cautioned that if a major disaster in California required a quick and large mobilization, it might take more time to find troops or emergency workers to respond since so many are out of state.

"It has the potential to be a problem depending on how many people need to be sent," said Gartner. "And a lot of it depends on time. If you have a lot of time (to respond) then the government and the military have tremendous resources to bring to bear ... but if it's a short period of time ... getting people activated, mobilized and deployed will be a complex process."

Federal Evacuation of Katrina Victims to California on Hold

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By Don Thompson, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO (AP) - California's plan to house 1,000 federally sponsored Hurricane Katrina evacuees was halted Wednesday after federal officials said many survivors are reluctant to move so far from their families and damaged homes.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency offered flights to California to evacuees in the large hurricane shelters, primarily in Texas. But FEMA regional spokesman William L. Rukheyser said there were few takers.

"The hurricane victims felt, 'We're not that far from home; this is where we feel most comfortable,'" he said. "Because of the reluctance or resistance of evacuees to go long-distance from their home areas, we're certainly not going to insist that someone get on a plane to a place they don't want to go to."

Rukheyser said the evacuation plan "is on hold for the time being. As people in the Southeast indicate they want to come to California, that may happen. But it's not going to be immediate, as we thought previously."

The same situation applies in several other states.

State and local officials had prepared for hundreds of hurricane refugees to be housed in San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose, with other cities ready to follow. Officials in several of the cities on Wednesday said they were continuing with plans to house and care for evacuees, but with less urgency after the FEMA announcement.

"We're maybe not scrambling like we were yesterday, when we thought they were coming in 48 hours," said Sue O'Brien, a special assistant with the Sacramento mayor's office.

David Vossbrink, a spokesman for the San Jose mayor's office, said, "We can certainly understand the reluctance of people to leave the immediate area."

The 1,000 beds being readied to receive refugees are long-term housing, not emergency shelters as in Texas, said Bob Stern, spokesman for the California governor's Office of Emergency Services. The evacuees would have help getting jobs, schooling and financial aid as they settled in for possibly months away from the devastated areas, Stern said.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's office said the state would be ready to offer whatever help is needed, spokeswoman Katherine McLane said.

"I think the real issue here is what's best for the evacuees," she said.

Even as the federal relocation efforts to California were put on hold, Schwarzenegger estimated that "hundreds, if not thousands, of evacuees have arrived independently." They are coming on their own or with the help of churches, charities or other private organizations.

The governor projected the cost to the state will exceed \$5 million, depending on the number of evacuees. On Wednesday, he asked President Bush to declare the state a disaster area to help cover the expense. Other states also are seeking federal disaster declarations so they can be eligible for federal reimbursement.

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Neither FEMA nor the American Red Cross could immediately say how many people had registered within California. So many people are coming in through private means that "it's impossible to keep tabs," said Chris Johnson, a regional spokesman for the Red Cross in Sacramento.

The state Department of Education is trying to establish a system to track students who enroll in California schools due to the hurricane but did not yet have a count, said Hilary McLean, a spokeswoman for state Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell.

O'Connell on Wednesday traveled to Burbank, where he joined Thomas Edison Elementary School students in starting a "California Kids Care" effort to collect students' donations for Katrina victims. Schwarzenegger toured Red Cross and Salvation Army operations in Sacramento to draw attention to hurricane relief efforts.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer sent Bush a letter asking for a copy of FEMA's California disaster plan.

"Having witnessed what happened in the Gulf States, I am extremely concerned that FEMA is not prepared should California experience a major earthquake," Boxer wrote.

Also Wednesday, the California National Guard said it had sent 726 soldiers and airmen to the Gulf states, up from about 500 late last week. And the California Highway Patrol said 116 officers, including Commissioner Mike Brown, were in Louisiana to help local authorities.

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**Relief Work Mixes Tedium, Satisfaction: The Doers: Crew From Kulis Miss
Dramatic Rescues But Fulfill Needed Tasks.**

By Rachel d'Oro, The Associated Press



Figure 14. California Air National Guard members waited to load an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 on Thursday in Fresno, Calif. The troops were accompanying an aircraft fire truck to Stennis International Airport in Bay St. Louis, Miss., to be used to assist aircraft involved in the mission for hurricane rescue and cleanup operations. (Photo by Al Grillo / The Associated Press)

BAY ST. LOUIS, Miss. -- The Alaska Air National Guard cargo plane finally landed at 2:30 a.m. CDT Friday, its crew red-eyed and yawning in the humid night after flying almost 4,000 miles to deliver a firetruck at the edge of Hurricane Katrina's deadly path.

"The work's not done yet. We've still got at least another hour left to go," the C-130's navigator, Capt. John Owens, said moments after touching down at Stennis International Airport.

Like so many relief missions being launched from military bases around the country, the job carried out on Day One of the 144th Airlift Squadron's 10-day assignment was marked by grueling tedium and little glamour. The highlight of the day was unloading the bright yellow truck at Stennis, a busy hub for relief crews heading out to devastated areas along the Gulf Coast.

A close second, perhaps, was finding available motel rooms in Columbus, Miss., 205 miles to the north, before dawn Friday.

There was no plucking people from roofs or controlling crowds for this eight-member crew, part of the 176th Wing based at Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage. There were just hours and hours sitting on canvas benches in the noisy C-130 plane, landing only for brief stops at Guard bases in Reno, Nev., and Fresno, Calif., where they picked up the firetruck to be used at Stennis. But don't expect any complaints from this crew. They say they're just glad to be part of the national response to Katrina.

"These guys are busting their humps to get essential missions done," said Capt. Candis Olmstead, a Kulis spokeswoman. "They may not be directly saving lives, but indirectly lives can be saved in the equipment and supplies they deliver."

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The crew departed Anchorage on Thursday morning. Also on board were nine members of the 176th Wing's security forces squadron. They were dropped off at the Nevada Air National Guard Base in Reno, where they'll do guard duty at the annual Reno Air Show.

There was no dawdling in the dry desert heat, just a 10-minute stop, to let the security team scamper out of the plane. Next stop was the California Air National Guard Base in Fresno.

When emergency response planners in Mississippi heard the truck was heading their way, they asked Fresno officials for a favor, said Col. Jonathan Flaughter, the wing commander.

"They said, 'Dude, can you send us some stuff?'" Flaughter said. "We said: 'Oh, absolutely. Right away. What do you need?'"

That explained the huge pallet tucked behind the firetruck in the C-130 that was heaped with bottled water, mosquito repellent, gloves, sunscreen and other essentials.

Such a mishmash of pooling resources comes with the constantly changing job, officials said.

The Central California base doesn't have C-130s, for example. Home of the **144th Fighter Wing**, its role is West Coast air defense, so it just has F-16 fighter planes -- and you can't transport a firetruck in one of those.

Two of California's four Guard installations do have C-130s, but those were immediately dispatched to hurricane relief, said Lt. Col. John Cotter, in charge of logistics planning at the Fresno base. As odd as it may seem to use an Alaska crew to deliver California equipment to the opposite end of the nation, it's perfectly logical to top military planners coordinating a vast network of crews, Cotter said.

"It's actually very efficiently done, and it's very effective," he said. "Here you've got an air crew going to Reno, so it makes a lot of sense to simply drop over to Fresno. We're actually utilizing the availability of aircraft."

The C-130 team is the latest round to head out from Alaska. Another Kulis crew wrapping up its mission Friday encountered more hands-on work, wading through flooded areas to reach survivors.

With immediate rescue work virtually wrapped up, chances are the newest mission won't include the adrenaline rushes their colleagues encountered, but that's OK with Maj. Chaz Fitzgerald, chief pilot and aircraft commander. Being called is what matters.

"These humanitarian efforts, that's what we live for," he said. "We like to help people."

Yes, Fitzgerald is well aware of the criticism over the initial sluggish response to the disaster, and he concedes that Katrina caused more damage than anyone may have anticipated or prepared for. But that's an issue best left to politicians and columnists, as far as he's concerned.

"We're the doers," he said. "We just want to do something."

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Can History Repeat Here? Inland Southern Californians Know Their Own Katrina Is Possible. Will The Region Be Ready For The Epic Earthquake, Cataclysmic Wildfire Or Terror Attack That May One Day Come?

The Press-Enterprise, Riverside

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Inland residents and public officials want to know: Is the region ready for its own major disaster -- earthquake, flood, wildfire or terrorist attack -- that could kill or injure tens of thousands, flatten buildings, crumple freeways, silence telephones and snap waterlines?

Survivors would find limited food, medicine and water and no cash for supplies if ATM's aren't working.

California is considered among the best-prepared states by federal disaster planners, but the extent of devastation along the Gulf Coast is prompting local agencies to examine their ability to respond to a cataclysmic event.

Evacuation of many of the Inland area's 3.2 million residents might be ineffective after a major quake, particularly when it comes to rescuing the elderly and disabled.

More than a third of Inland hospitals still do not meet tougher earthquake-safety standards and might be unusable after a major quake.

Inland officials aren't sure they could provide shelter or medical care in a mass evacuation of the city of Los Angeles, whose population is about that of Louisiana.

Rescuers in Riverside and San Bernardino counties would have trouble talking to each other because they use different radio systems.

The failure of governments to evacuate thousands in the path of Hurricane Katrina, especially New Orleans residents without transportation, is something emergency officials everywhere need to take note of, said Redlands resident Richard A. Andrews, the former director of the state Office of Emergency Services, which oversees disaster preparedness.

"We haven't faced that in California, and I don't think the nation has faced it on this scale," Andrews said of the evacuation of an entire city with a half-million people.

Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, a frequent critic of the Bush administration, said last week that she is worried that the Federal Emergency Management Agency, criticized for its slow response in the Gulf Coast, is not prepared to help if a catastrophic earthquake hits California.

"I want to see how they plan to move quickly, immediately, and have the resources that are necessary to meet the worst scenario that you can imagine," she said.

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FEMA started a series of workshops last year to prepare Louisiana officials for a massive hurricane or flood in New Orleans, but it had not finished, said spokeswoman Mary Margaret Walker. Other workshops on how to handle a large-scale earthquake were to take place in California.

"We didn't get to California," she said.

The state remains on the agenda, Walker said.

Riverside County supervisors last week called for a report by Tuesday on the strengths and flaws of the county's disaster-relief plan.

"I think we have some lessons to learn from the past week, realizing the federal government is not going to come to our rescue in the first 72 hours," said Supervisor Roy Wilson, whose desert district is riddled with major earthquake faults.

Disaster planners must consider the county's poor and elderly with limited access to transportation and scant resources, supervisors said.

Televised images of people clinging to rooftops or wading through putrid floodwaters in New Orleans have disturbed most Americans and unnerved public officials in charge of disaster preparedness.

Local communities must be ready to handle a massive evacuation from the Los Angeles Basin, said Riverside County Fire Chief Craig Anthony.

"That would be our equivalent to Louisiana."

Region at Risk

California's two most powerful faults -- the San Andreas and the San Jacinto -- slice through the Inland Empire. A major eruption of the southern stretch of the San Andreas has been expected by experts for more than 20 years.

That section of the fault, which weaves from the Cajon Pass northwest of San Bernardino to the Salton Sea in the southeast corner of the state, is capable of at least a magnitude 7.5 earthquake, said seismologist Lucy Jones, scientist-in-charge of the U.S. Geological Survey's Southern California Earthquake Hazards Team in Pasadena.

And some seismologists say the fault is overdue because the last major quake, a magnitude 7.1, struck the southern part of the fault near Thousand Palms in 1690.

The San Jacinto fault, which runs from Lytle Creek in San Bernardino County to Anza in Riverside County and beyond, is also capable of a 7.5 magnitude quake.

It's not always the earthquake itself, but fires, landslides and dam failures that can be dangerous, Jones said.

In July, the state said the two-mile-long dam at Lake Perris could fail in a major earthquake, flooding low-lying communities and sending billions of gallons of water rushing toward homes and

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people in Lake Elsinore. Officials are draining the lake to drop the level by 25 feet, a process that may not be completed until November, to examine the dam.

Reed, Riverside County's emergency official, said the state has yet to update a 5-year-old map that would show where flooding would occur in one of California's fastest-growing regions should the Lake Perris dam fail. Susan Sims, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Water Resources, said it would be ready by the end of this month.

The impact of a 7.4 magnitude quake on the San Andreas fault six miles north northwest of Palm Springs would be felt 50 miles away, killing 900 people in the city of Riverside and San Bernardino County and injuring 14,699 under a scenario developed by the state Office of Emergency Services. In all, the region could suffer \$13.3 billion in damage.

"I was shocked at these numbers," said Carmen Nieves, Riverside's emergency services coordinator, who requested the scenario a few years ago for a disaster drill.

Cynthia Spalding Vermeule, a 40-year-old Hemet resident, said she's ready for the worst.

She is co-manager of Hemet Hospice Thrift Store, which occupies a building in downtown Hemet that has not been retrofitted to strengthen it against quakes. A sign taped to the window states: "This is an unreinforced masonry building. You may not be safe inside or near unreinforced masonry buildings during an earthquake."

"If it starts to shake, I think about where I would run to," said Vermeule, who added that she would try to get customers out of the building to safety.

Good News

Statewide, Caltrans has spent more than \$2 billion strengthening 2,300 highway and freeway bridges -- 98 percent of state-owned bridges. Improvements that began after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake include securing bridge decks to their supports, using steel reinforcement in new columns and encasing older concrete columns in steel.

Caltrans officials say the goal is to make bridges earthquake resistant, not earthquake proof.

Major retrofitted freeway interchanges in the Inland region include the junctions of interstates 10 and 215 in San Bernardino, I-10 and Interstate 15 in Ontario and Highway 91 and I-15 in Corona. When completed, the interchange of I-215 and highways 91 and 60 under construction in Riverside will better withstand a major quake, Caltrans spokesman Thomas Knox said.

If disaster struck the Inland region as quickly as floods drowned New Orleans, local officials would follow the state's detailed and oft-rehearsed Emergency Plan in requesting aid from neighboring cities, counties and the state.

The governor could mobilize the **California National Guard**, which can respond to any part of the state within 24 hours of receiving orders, said Maj. Jon Siepmann.

Siepmann said 12,000 of the state's 20,000-Guard force are in the state right now. About 5,000 are in Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar, Kosovo and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, supporting various overseas missions. Some 1,000 have been called to duty for Katrina rescue and recovery efforts.

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Once the governor requests federal help, the president could order Marines from Camp Pendleton in San Diego County deployed to the Inland area to assist, said base spokesman Lance Cpl. Patrick Carroll.

Evacuation Plans

If there is a weakness in disaster preparedness statewide, it is planning to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people as in Louisiana, said Andrews, who headed the Office of Emergency Services from 1991 to 1998. He's now an adviser to the federal Homeland Security Department. Many local governments may be unprepared, he said.

The geography of the Inland area -- sandwiched between mountains, deserts and dense population centers -- could be especially problematic. Damaged freeway bridges could cut off escape routes on interstate and state highways.

Mountain residents would find it tough to evacuate on roads that already are prone to closures from falling rock and mudslides.

During the 2003 firestorms, planning was key in evacuating more than 60,000 people down narrow roads in the San Bernardino Mountains without panic, said Denise Benson, San Bernardino County's office of emergency services manager.

"They knew what the expectations were and what the action would be on the part of local government," she said.

Coral Albee-Grimwood and her husband, Pat Grimwood, evacuated the mountain community of Cedar Glen. Coral said residents were orderly in their departure, even though there was no one to direct traffic.

Martha Foley, a Big Bear City resident, said she witnessed a smooth relocation during the 2003 wildfires. Mountain communities were evacuated in groups over a number of days, with her community told to leave on the third day.

Foley, 55, stayed at her mother's house and witnessed a well-organized scene at the former Norton Air Force Base, where thousands made a temporary home. As a postal worker, she went to work at the base, where the Postal Service had set up a temporary mail site for displaced mountain residents

"I thought it went incredibly smooth," she said. "It was a lot more work, but everybody just comes together in those times. It's amazing how it happens. Everybody is so close."

The evacuation of Corona residents downstream from Prado Dam did not go as smoothly. In January, engineers found a small leak in the dam as historic rainfall drenched the region. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did not know the affected area was in Corona, so it notified Riverside County officials instead.

When Corona officials finally spoke with the agency, it was unclear how great the risk was, said Lynn Mata, Corona's emergency manager. So the city ordered the evacuation of 2,000 residents below the dam. School and city buses were available to help evacuate but weren't needed, she said.

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Residents criticized city officials for waiting more than seven hours after they were notified of the problem to evacuate neighborhoods downstream, a process that took three hours.

Massive evacuations would pose tremendous challenges for nursing homes, in particular, directors say. Most homes rely on private bus companies and ambulances to move their residents, but they might find few available if homes are counting on the same firms. If roads are impassible, reaching the homes would pose additional problems.

"That would probably be a problem we'd have to address using private vehicles," said Janet Dial, director of staff development for California Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Palm Springs. "I think it would be improvised at the time."

Her 80-bed facility doesn't have vehicles of its own, but Dial said after watching the Hurricane Katrina disaster, she might question her corporate directors about the need for them.

Evacuee Care

Public-health officials are re-examining a long-held belief that some of Riverside County's 15 hospitals would be useable and accessible after a major quake.

"We have to think what will happen if none are there," said Michael Osur, deputy director of public health. "What if hospitals in neighboring counties are not there?"

California hospitals fall under a 2008 deadline to upgrade or replace buildings at risk of collapse in a strong earthquake. Twelve of the Inland region's 33 acute-care hospitals have requested extensions of as long as five years.

A 2001 state survey found that 29 of 80 buildings at Riverside County's 15 acute-care hospitals are at risk of collapse during a major quake. In San Bernardino County, 53 of 129 structures at 18 hospitals are at risk.

Many Inland hospitals already have plans to retrofit or replace buildings that don't meet current earthquake safety standards. Nearly \$2 billion worth of projects are planned by Riverside and San Bernardino county hospitals over the coming decade.

Without permanent useable buildings, hospital tents the county has purchased with federal anti-terrorism funds may help. Caches of medicine and medical supplies may be too small.

"We've got to think much bigger," Osur said.

March Air Reserve Base spokesman Maj. Don Traud said the base could provide shelter for several hundreds evacuees in Riverside County within 24 hours and could become a staging area for troops supporting disaster-relief efforts here. The base's 13,300-foot runway, the longest in Southern California, was built to handle loaded B-52 bombers and giant C-5 cargo planes.

It has a better chance to survive than most other runways," Traud said.

San Bernardino International Airport, the former Norton Air Base, was used to house evacuees from the 2003 firestorm. But Penny Chua, the airport's marketing director, said the base might not be available again because some hangars used to house evacuees have since been leased to tenants.

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Chris Baker, director of preparedness and response for the Inland Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross, said she has identified 300 locations that could serve as shelters in the event of a major disaster, including some public schools. The chapter keeps seven trailers stationed around San Bernardino County, each stocked with 250 to 1,000 sleeping cots and blankets.

The Riverside County Chapter of the Red Cross has 16 trailers stationed in strategic locations with a total of about 3,000 cots and blankets, said spokeswoman Sandy Lowry. The chapter keeps limited supply of water and snacks at its offices.

Riverside County also has arrangements with private vendors to supply food, water and supplies, said Tony Coletta, emergency services coordinator.

Retrieving Bodies

If the Inland region suffered a massive death count like that feared in New Orleans, both Riverside and San Bernardino counties would need help from neighboring counties -- including Los Angeles and Orange -- and the federal Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team. The federal team would fly in mobile morgues that could be set up at various sites, such as airport hangars, ice-skating rinks and cemeteries.

San Bernardino County's morgue can hold 100 bodies. The county has identified 12 to 15 sites for possible temporary holding facilities, said Rocky Shaw, lead supervising deputy coroner.

Riverside County can store as many as 275 bodies in its Perris and Indio facilities and has a 75-foot refrigeration truck where 100 more bodies could be stored, said Curtis James, supervising deputy coroner. Also, 10 fire stations scattered throughout the county have kits that include body bags, cameras, latex gloves and other equipment needed to process bodies.

In an extreme case, San Bernardino County's mass-casualty plan calls for a mass burial.

Utilities

Problems exist in the ability of Inland first responders to talk to each other.

Riverside County has pumped slightly more than \$1 million in homeland-security funding over the past 18 months into making sure that county radios can communicate with city radios. Some departments were using 400-megahertz systems, while others were using 800 megahertz.

But, the county could have problems talking to other agencies in the state. San Bernardino County uses a different system.

The California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Radio Systems, operated by the state Office of Emergency Services during disasters, is antiquated and requires a line of sight to operate.

"Once it becomes overwhelmed, it becomes ineffective," said Lt. Joe DeArmond, disaster-response coordinator for Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

If cell phone towers topple during a quake and radio system is busy, law-enforcement and emergency-services personnel would not be able to talk to each other or coordinate rescues and other efforts, he said.

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In San Bernardino County, many police agencies and the Sheriff's Department pooled homeland-security money to buy Red Channel, an interagency radio system. The \$4 million system should be installed next summer and would enable police agencies to better coordinate a regional response to a disaster.

A major quake could knock out telephone, electrical power, natural gas, sewer and water service for some time.

The Southland's two major phone companies, SBC and Verizon, could lose a large number of poles, killing telephone service to a large area. Disaster crews would respond as soon as it is safe to begin repairs, Verizon spokesman Jon Davies said.

Southern California Edison's service area is so large that if it loses a transmission line, transformer or substation, it can avoid a massive power loss by routing power from another part of the region, said Ron Ferree, director of grid operations. The utility stores spare parts to repair power stations throughout the region.

About 47,000 miles of natural-gas pipelines crisscross California, and the main transmission lines are monitored constantly, said Denise King, spokeswoman for the Southern California Gas Co. The lines can be shut down remotely and gas rerouted, King said. However, the U.S. Geological Survey believes a major earthquake could move a pipeline by as much as 20 feet, a fact that King said the gas company's engineers recognize.

There are no sensors in residential areas so residents have to rely on their sense of smell to alert them to a rupture, King said by phone.

Kinder Morgan Energy Partners LP, which operates the petroleum pipeline through the Cajon Pass to Las Vegas, has safeguards that include sensors to automatically shut down the line if it ruptures. The pipeline is designed to move with the earth, said Rick Rainey, spokesman for the Houston-based company. The steel lines could be replaced within hours.

Wake-up Call?

Inland officials all said they believe this area is well-prepared to cope with a disaster, but after seeing the devastation wrought by Katrina, they are wondering what could go wrong here.

"This is a call to arms," said Mary Moreland, director of the Riverside County Office of Emergency Services.

The biggest challenge the county faces is its geographic expanse of 7,200 miles with remote mountain and desert communities that may be hard to reach, she said.

State Sen. Nell Soto, D-Pomona, asked Gov. Schwarzenegger last week to reinstitute the Blue Ribbon Commission that was formed after the deadly wildfires of 2003. She wants the commission to study disaster preparedness beyond just wildfires.

There was no immediate response from Schwarzenegger.

"It is only a matter of time before California suffers another major wildfire, flood, earthquake or other major calamity," Soto said.

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION
Number 20-116

12 September 2005

National Guard Soldiers Return from Hurricane Relief Duty

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

Sacramento, Calif. – More than 100 California National Guard Soldiers and Airmen that have been providing Hurricane Katrina relief in the Gulf Coast will be returning to Mather Field at approximately 4:00 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 16, 2005.

The Army Guard Soldiers are primarily from the 870th Military Police Company based in Pittsburgh, Calif.; the Airmen are from the 163rd Air Refueling Wing, March Air Reserve Base, Riverside, Calif. Additional Soldiers and Airmen from other units around the state are also returning with these units.

These troops were some of the first National Guard men and women to be deployed to the region after California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger mobilized the California National Guard on Sept. 1.

The California National Guard's troops, representing 20 different Army and Air Guard units, reacted quickly, performing search and rescue missions, adding security to Louis Armstrong Airport, augmenting security presence in the business areas in downtown Orleans Parish, evacuating residents, handing out water and MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), loading pallets of containers for movement to shelters and evacuation staging areas, and maintaining a steady flow of uninterrupted logistical relief to Bayou residents.

The deployed soldiers received very little warning for the deployment, but because the California National Guard has historically responded from between a third to half of the Nation's emergencies during the last two decades. This experience paid off instantly as Soldiers and Airmen with little or no preparation time reported for duty.

The California National Guard has nearly 20,000 Soldiers and Airmen. More than 5,000 are deployed around the world in support of the Global War on Terrorism and nearly 1,000 are supporting Katrina disaster relief operation, leaving nearly two-thirds of its force available for any state contingency.

Base Living Conditions Improve Tenfold After One Week

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The living conditions at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station, La. are continually changing. What started out as just a few individuals occupying the area has grown into a small town, and several members of the armed forces have seen to it that the "small town" has everything it needs.

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Some Soldiers and Airmen started out in cots under the stars in “pole barns,” which look like giant car ports on the tarmac runway. Others slept in an airplane hangar filled with supplies and luggage from incoming service members.

“When I first arrived here nothing was operational,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Adams, Telecommunications Specialist with the California Air National Guard’s 162nd Combat Communications Group from North Highlands. “There were small generators running everything. Now there are loud, gigantic generators providing electricity all over the base.”

“We have gone from primitive to high-tech very quickly,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Hines, Operations Sgt. Maj. of the California Joint Task Force (CJTF).

“First, the area was given an evaluation of what it could withstand, and then the adjustment period began. I am impressed at the timeline of events that have brought this area to a fully functioning support element.”

Members of the supply team worked overtime to transform the base into a more hospitable environment. “There are 18-wheel trucks and airplanes dropping off supplies and amenities on a daily basis,” said Hines.

Cell phone usage was almost non-existent after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the base area, which made contacting family difficult. “Receiving cell phone signals during the first few days was a situation that had to be addressed quickly,” said Hines. Special thanks to service members for setting up local satellite and communication operations to allow Guard Members can speak to their loved ones back home. Even internet connections have been established.”

From running water and restrooms, to ice-cold sodas and air conditioning, the facilities here keep improving to make the relief effort more sustainable. “The standard of living here has gone way up,” said Adams. “And with local businesses and restaurants opening back up, we have more options and resources available to us. That is truly a blessing.”

Press Release: New Communication Technology Aids in Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

Public Affairs Office, Joint Forces Headquarters, California National Guard

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – A vital element in relief and recovery efforts is being solely implemented by the California Army and Air National Guard in the gulf port regions.

The Golden State rolled out its new technological device: The Incident Commander’s Command, Control, and Communications Unit (IC4U). This state of the art system, built into a 6-foot-by-6-foot metallic frame, has been California’s key source of communication in the effected areas. It features a satellite-capability link where information is exchanged by electronic mail, phone, radio, fax and even television.

The system was initially tested in May 2004 for the US Olympic Trials in Sacramento.

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The Joint Task Force California has been utilizing the IC4U to its full capacity in the gulf region, which marks the first field usage of the IC4U in a military capacity for the California National Guard.

“We were able to coordinate our operation the minute we got here. Let’s not forget there was no means of communication. But once that got off the plane, we were talking to Sacramento. Without that, we wouldn’t be able to accomplish our mission,” said Colonel Scott Johnson, JTF California commander.”

The IC4U is highly mobile. It sits on a Humvee and can be driven through harsh terrain. Four bolts secure it to the vehicle, making removal easy and lifted by helicopter or carried onto a boat and dropped onto a building or mountain top. The unit was designed to fit onto the back of a commercial pickup truck.

With satellite capability, the IC4U can stream 240 kilobytes of high-quality video to anywhere in the continental United States with only a one- to five-second delay. It features a satellite bandwidth of 512 kilobyte uplink and 1.5 megabyte downlink. It provides internet capabilities. It is also equipped with CB and HAM radio-type communication devices. Atop the frame sits a 360-degree camera, where images can be viewed live on the internet or television. Inside, a computer, printer and fax machine sit near a microwave and refrigerator.

Five IC4Us are currently being utilized in Hurricane Katrina’s recovery effort. Two IC4U’s are here in Sacramento in case of any local or state emergency.

Press Release: California Soldier Uses Civilian Experience To Get Water Flowing In Louisiana

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. – The California Army National Guard matched talent to the situation when it sent a soldier with civilian experience in water control to help drain flooded areas during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Bravo Company’s Sgt. John L. Zeller is helping county and city officials in Louisiana restructure their water and sewage systems, which were severely damaged by flooding and high winds. In civilian life, Zeller works as an associate engineer for the Marina Coast Water District of Marina, Calif., north of Monterey. As a soldier in the 2/185th Armor Battalion out of San Diego, Sgt. Zeller has helped restart pumps to drain contaminated water out of damaged areas.

“Water’s dropping two feet a day as compared to two inches a day not long ago,” said Zeller in mid-September. “But there’s still so much to do. It’s sad to see how (New Orleans) is torn apart. Power lines are down, streets are torn up, there’s no water running and sewage is overflowing. They need help and I’m glad to do what I can.”

Zeller works up to 20 hours a day with civilians getting pumps online and opening sewage drains. At a sewage plant, Zeller helped restart a critical pump that drains 1,000 cubic feet of water per second, Emanuel confirmed. And Zeller helped set up portable pumps, provided by civilian contractors, in various areas. The contaminated water, caused when three levees shattered, is now draining much faster.

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While in uniform, the 42-year-old Californian is a tanker. After four years in the Air Force, Zeller became a civilian water treatment operator in 1987. He joined the Guard in the early 1990s and earned his engineering degree from the University of California-Riverside in 1996.

"What he's done is beyond the call of duty," said Maj. Frank Emanuel, 2/185th battalion commander. "He's been incredible. They've adopted him into the city. We were aware of his background, but we didn't know he was capable of doing what he's doing."

National Guard Helps with New Orleans Cleanup, Recovery

By Mike O'Sullivan, Voice of America

New Orleans. Cleanup continues in New Orleans, which was devastated two weeks ago by Hurricane Katrina. More than half of the city remains under water, and throughout the area, National Guard troops are providing security and helping with the recovery effort. Guardsmen in one neighborhood say they are making progress, but their work is far from finished.

Saint Charles Avenue runs from New Orleans' famous French Quarter through the Garden District, the site of many of the city's grand Victorian mansions. Some streets now appear almost normal, except for the absence of traffic. With a mandatory evacuation order in place, most of the city's residents have left.

An unknown number, possibly thousands, defied the order. Local police are not yet using force to get the holdouts out of the city. And the National Guard is watching over residents who have stayed. Master Sergeant Timothy Palmer says the holdouts have no gas, clean water, or power.



Figure 15. Master Sgt Timothy Palmer (VOA photo by M. O'Sullivan)

"We know where they are. We drop them off water," he says. "We encourage them to leave, provide them with any medical supplies or medical assistance necessary. So I'd say they're really not too worse for the wear, except that I don't think I would voluntarily want to be living in these conditions. That's for sure."

The California National Guard 185th [Armor] Regiment, based in San Diego, uses an elementary school near Saint Charles Avenue as its base of operations. Guard units from different states are in other neighborhoods. The troops make daily rounds, checking home by home as they search for bodies, survivors, broken gas or water lines, or unusual odors.

Even adjacent houses may have different levels of damage. A tree has crushed the roof of one home. There may have been water damage or looting in another. The home next door might be in immaculate condition.

One holdout, named Bob Rue, says he expects to remain here until the normal rhythms of life return to the city. He looks forward to Mardi Gras, the French-heritage carnival held each springtime, and a parade to honor Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, which passes in front of the shop where he sells antique carpets. He stayed here to keep out the looters, and says he was not afraid of them or of the hurricane, his 36th tropical storm here in New Orleans.

"I know how to do this. I'm fine. I've got food until Christmas," Mr. Rue says. "I've got water until Carnival. You can tell everybody's that out there that's from News Orleans, that I've got my spot for the Bacchus parade right here on Saint Charles Avenue. I'm all ready, and I expect them back."

Most of New Orleans' 450,000 people are gone now, and no one knows when they can safely come home.

National Guard Captain Robert Atkinson was teaching elementary school in Bakersfield, California, just two weeks ago, before getting the call to report for emergency duty. For the past week and a half, he has been here assessing the damage.

"You still have buildings that are well over halfway flooded with water," Captain Atkinson says. "What you use as landmarks is, you use the streets signs, which you can barely see the tops of." Captain Atkinson sees progress in the battle against the water, which is subsiding day by day, as pumps work to drain the flooded parts of the city. This neighborhood off Saint Charles Avenue appears almost normal.

A couple is cooking food on a barbecue grill in front of their house. Nearby, two women sit on the second-floor balcony. One is giving the other a haircut.

The National Guardsman says the appearance of near-normality is deceptive.

"On September 1, the water line was at our headquarters," Captain Atkinson says. "Outside our headquarters, the water is gone. It's not until you leave the area to which you're specifically assigned and you go outside that you see the devastation, that you see the water still flooding buildings up to half-way up their length that you realize there's still a lot to do here."

A drive with the Guardsman through other parts of the city reveals the force of the storm that swept through here, and the power of the water that flooded in from nearby Lake Pontchartrain. Barges and boats along the coastline have been scattered like children's toys, and whole neighborhoods of New Orleans are only slowly emerging from the water.

Katrina Cleanup Lifts Spirits

By Erin McClam, The Associated Press

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION

Number 20-116

NEW ORLEANS — Workers here were picking up trash yesterday, a small miracle under the circumstances. The airport opened to cargo traffic. A bullhorn-wielding volunteer led relief workers in a chorus of “Amazing Grace.”

Nearly two weeks after Hurricane Katrina’s onslaught, the day was marked by signs that hopelessness was beginning to lift in this shattered city. While the final toll from the disaster remains unknown, there were indications New Orleans had begun to turn a corner.

“You see the cleaning of the streets. You see the people coming out,” said the volunteer with the bullhorn, Norman Flowers. “The people aren’t as afraid anymore.”

Flowers, deployed by the Southern Baptist Convention, stood in the bed of a pickup truck on Canal Street, leading police, firefighters and relief workers in song, punctuated by the exuberant honk of a fire truck nearby.

“This is a sign of progress,” said New Orleans resident Linda Taylor, gesturing at the impromptu gathering. “Last Sunday, I couldn’t find any church services. This Sunday, people have gathered together to worship.”

President Bush flew to New Orleans yesterday to spend the night aboard the USS Iwo Jima, an amphibious assault ship that is serving as a control center in the relief efforts. Today, he planned to tour the devastated town of Gulfport, Miss.

Numerous residents were able to visit their homes for the first time, however briefly, as floodwaters receded and work crews cleared trees, debris and downed telephone poles from major streets.

Albert Gaude III, a Louisiana State University fisheries agent, was among those returning for the first time since the storm.

“They wouldn’t let us in before, but we made it now and we could drive all the way here with no problem,” he said.

The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport reopened for cargo traffic yesterday, and limited passenger service was expected to resume Tuesday, airport director Roy Williams said. Williams said he expects about 30 departures and arrivals of passenger planes a day — far below the usual 174 — at the airport, where a week ago terminals became triage units and more than two dozen people died.

Authorities raised Louisiana’s death toll to 197 yesterday, and recovery of corpses continued. Teams pulled an unspecified number of bodies from Memorial Medical Center, a 317-bed hospital in uptown New Orleans that closed more than a week ago after being surrounded by floodwaters. Mayor C. Ray Nagin was asked on NBC’s “Meet the Press” whether New Orleans could stage Mardi Gras in February 2006. “I haven’t even thought that far out yet,” he said.

But he added, “It’s not out of the realm of possibilities... It would be a huge boost if we could make it happen.”

Nagin declined to say when the city might be drained of floodwaters.

“But I always knew that once we got the pumps up, some of our significant pumps going, that we could accelerate the draining process,” he said. “The big one is pumping station six, which is our most powerful pump, and I am understanding that’s just about ready to go.”

The city’s main wastewater treatment facility will be running by today, said Sgt. John Zeller, an engineer with the **California National Guard**.

Army Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, the commander of active duty troops engaged in hurricane relief, told CNN’s “Late Edition” the number of dead would be “a heck of a lot lower” than dire initial projections of 10,000 or more.

On CBS’ “Face the Nation,” Honore asked Americans to take care of hurricane evacuees and help reunite them with their families. “And there’s light at the end of the tunnel here,” he added.

New Orleans Cyclist Becomes Guide for Guard Unit

Times-Picayune, New Orleans

When word of Hurricane Katrina’s destruction arrived, Kenny Bellau, a professional racing cyclist from New Orleans, was nearing the end of a French Guiana tour, the Caribbean answer to the Tour de France.

He finished the race, then raced back to New Orleans, furious about the early reports of chaos in official efforts to help storm victims, and worried about his home town.

“The main reason I wanted to come back here was because of all the confusion I saw on the news,” he said. “I honestly didn’t see anybody doing the right thing.”

Bellau, 37, a Brother Martin High graduate, arrived two days after Katrina hit the city and plunged headlong into rescue work. Gathering acquaintances’ requests for help in locating loved ones, Bellau attached himself to Alpha Company [2nd Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment] of the California Army National Guard, working out of Sophie Wright School on Napoleon Avenue. He offered boat-driving skills and an intimate knowledge of city streets and neighborhoods.

For most of the last two weeks Bellau has served as the Guard unit’s native guide, visiting house after house in Uptown and Central City enclaves, helping pull out survivors.

“He had beads on people in their houses, people who were in need, he saved us a lot of time,” said Capt. Gerald Davis from the California unit. “Every day he would come out and take care of us.”

Bellau said he has seen too much death and misery. He is not one to cry, but has cried every day since he returned to New Orleans.

“These are people’s grandmothers, people’s grandfathers. We pulled a Mardi Gras Indian out the other day,” he said. “It just hurts to see the fabric of the city torn apart and know it’ll never be the same.”

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Bellau, who is staying in his powerless house on Constance Street Uptown, is glad that his mother evacuated to Tylertown, Miss., before the storm, but her eastern New Orleans home is now destroyed. He paddled to the brick house, on Perelli Drive, a few days ago, finding it filled with five-plus feet of water, amid so many houses suffering the same fate.

"I was just overwhelmed at the destruction, the totalness of the destruction."

In City of Melted Clocks, Scribes Paint Dali Scenes

By Chris Rose, *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS -- You hear the word "surreal" in every report from this city now. There is no better word for it.

If Salvador Dali showed up here, he wouldn't be able to make heads or tails of it. Nobody could paint this.

He did that famous painting of the melting clock and our clocks melted at 6:45 the morning of Aug. 29. That's what the clocks in the French Quarter still say. That's when time stood still.

The Quarter survived all this; you've probably heard that much. Most of what remains unscathed - - and I'm using a very relative term here -- is a swath of dry land from the Riverbend through Audubon Park, down St. Charles and Tchoupitoulas to the Quarter and into the Bywater.

It's like a land mass the size of Bermuda, maybe, but with not so many golf courses.

There are other dry outposts in the great beyond -- little Key Wests across the city -- but I haven't seen them.

The weather is beautiful, I don't mind telling you. But if I wrote you a postcard, it wouldn't say, "Wish You Were Here."

There are still hearty rose bushes blooming on front porches and there are still birds singing in the park. But the park is a huge National Guard encampment.

There are men and women from other towns living there in tents. They have left their families to come help us and they are in the park clearing out the fallen timber. My fellow Americans.

Every damn one of them tells you they're happy to be here (despite what you've heard, it still beats the hell out of Fallujah) and every time I try to thank them -- on behalf of all of us -- I just lose it. I absolutely melt down.

There is nothing quite as ignominious as weeping in front of a soldier.

This is no environment for a wuss like me. We reporters go to other places to cover wars and disasters and pestilence and famine. There's no manual to tell you how to do this when it's your own city.

And I'm telling you: It's hard.

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It's hard not to get crispy around the edges. It's hard not to cry. It's hard not to be very, very afraid.

My colleagues who are down here are warriors. There are a half-dozen of us living in a small house on a side street Uptown. Everyone else has been cleared out.

We have a generator and water and military C-rations and Doritos and smokes and booze. After deadline, the call goes out: "Anyone for some warm brown liquor?" and we sit on the porch in the very, very still of the night and we try to laugh.

Some of these guys lost their houses -- everything in them. But they're here, telling our city's story.

And they stink. We all stink. We stink together.

We have a bunch of guns but it's not clear to me if anyone in this "news bureau" knows how to use them.

The **California National Guard** came by and wanted an accounting of every weapon in the building. They wrote the serial numbers down and apparently our guns are pretty rad because they were all cooing over the .38s.

I guess that's good to know.

The Guard wanted to know exactly what we had so they would be able to identify -- apparently by sound -- what guns were in whose hands if anything "went down" after dark here at this house.

That's not so good to know.

They took all our information and bid us a good day and then sauntered off to retrieve a dead guy on a front porch down the street.

Then the California Highway Patrol -- the CHiPs! -- came and demanded we turn over our weapons.

What are you going to do? We were certainly outnumbered so we turned over the guns. Then, an hour later, they brought them back. With no explanation.

Whatever. So here we are. Just another day at the office.

Maybe you've seen that Times-Picayune advertising slogan before: "News, Sports and More."

More indeed. You're getting your money's worth today.

Hopelessness Begins To Lift In New Orleans

By Brett Martel, Associated Press

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION

Number 20-116

NEW ORLEANS -- Though 50 percent of New Orleans remains flooded and teams are still working to recover the dead, there are signs that hopelessness is beginning to lift two weeks after Hurricane Katrina plowed ashore.

Burnt-orange rubble from terra-cotta tiles, wrenched from roofs and scattered about the French Quarter, wait in neat piles for collection along the curb. Bourbon Street is cleaner than it ever is during Mardi Gras. And Donald Jones, a 57-year-old lifelong resident, is no longer armed when walking his street.

"The first five days I never went out of my house without my gun, now I don't carry it," Jones said, starting to laugh. "The only people I meet is military."

"Each day there's a little bit of an improvement," Coast Guard Vice Adm. Thad W. Allen, commander of the New Orleans relief efforts, told NBC News on Sunday night. "And in the end run, maybe a week, two weeks from now, someone's going to wake in the morning and have something they didn't have the day before, and that's hope."

President Bush will get his first up-close look at the destruction in New Orleans on Monday. He spent the night aboard the USS Iwo Jima, an amphibious assault ship anchored in the Mississippi River in front of the convention center, where thousands of people waited in squalor for days before being rescued.

Bush also planned to tour the devastated town of Gulfport, Miss.

The waters in New Orleans, which once covered 80 percent of the city, have pulled back far enough to allow for a scenic drive down Esplanade Avenue, past the handsome, columned two-story home where French painter Edgar Degas once lived to the New Orleans Museum of Art in City Park.

The same can be said for Saint Charles Avenue. While many homes are deserted and the old green street cars are gone, the beauty of the Greek Revival and Victorian homes, fronted by a canopy of live oaks, overwhelms the sight of debris piled along the roadway.

"I think it's livable," said John Lopez, who moved to New Orleans from the New York City area about a year ago. "If they got running water to all these buildings that are obviously inhabitable, they could get the city cleaned up a lot faster because people would be cleaning up their own blocks and their own neighborhoods."

Lopez and others are among those in the city who survived the hurricane at home, refused the subsequent order to leave and have started to clean up their neighborhoods. While they are worried about authorities forcing them to evacuate, there so far have been no reports that's happened in New Orleans.

Starting Monday, businesses owners in the central commercial district will be able to get temporary passes into the city so they can retrieve vital records or equipment needed to pay employees or otherwise run their companies, said state police spokesman Johnny Brown.

While there were clear signs of progress, flood waters do remain in large areas of the city. And even those areas that finally dried out over the weekend were covered in a brown film emitting nauseating fumes, with little left to salvage.

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Authorities raised Louisiana's death toll to 197 on Sunday, and recovery of corpses continued. Teams pulled an unspecified number of bodies from Memorial Medical Center, a 317-bed hospital in uptown New Orleans that closed more than a week ago after being surrounded by floodwaters.

Elsewhere, there were nuggets of encouraging news.

- Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport reopened for cargo traffic Sunday, and planned to open to limited passenger service starting Tuesday.
- The city's main wastewater treatment facility will be running by Monday, said **Sgt. John Zeller, an engineer with the California National Guard.**
- Army Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, commander of active duty troops engaged in hurricane relief, reiterated Sunday the number of dead would be "a heck of a lot lower" than initial projections of 10,000 or more.

And residents of New Orleans were trying to re-establish pieces of the city's inimitable character. Some even found things to laugh about.

Barbara Hoover, who lives in the Faubourg-Marigny neighborhood just down river from the French Quarter, said the military's ready-to-eat meals are "just as good, if not better, than the South Beach Diet. They're amazing."

Associated Press writers Erin McClam, Mary Foster, Colleen Long, Warren Levinson and Howie Rumberg contributed to this report.

13 September 2005

Hollister Continues to Help the Gulf Coast

By Brett Rowland, *The Free Lance*, Hollister

Hollister - Residents continue to donate time and money to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region, several have already visited the devastated area and many more are working locally to raise money.

Hollister resident and National Guardsman John Lafaver feels like he's making a difference in the devastated region. Lafaver was deployed to New Orleans on Sept. 1 with 870th Military Police Company. He and his fellow MPs spent their first few days securing Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans and getting evacuees through security checkpoints and onto their flights. Then the company focused their efforts on search and rescue.

"We used helicopters and took boats through the flooded streets," said Lafaver, who was reached by phone Monday. "So many people's houses and homes were destroyed by the flood waters, but it felt good that we were helping people."

After several days of search and rescue operations through the city's foul smelling streets, the company returned to the airport, Lafaver said.

"The only people that are still out there are the ones who don't want to leave," he said.

Former Hollister Mayor Tony Bruscia, a local business owner, recently returned from New Orleans, where he volunteered his time to assist hurricane victims with the Red Cross. Bruscia drove an emergency response vehicle to a staging area in the region last week and then spent six days working in a Baton Rouge shelter for people who had lost their homes. Bruscia spent most of his time working with children.

"I became the activity director at the shelter," he said. "And we did stuff the Red Cross never does, because this disaster is so different than anything we have dealt with before."

Bruscia spent his time finding activities for the displaced children because many of them had nothing to do. He contacted local businesses in the area and was able to get Ping-Pong, air hockey and pool tables donated to the shelter to occupy the kids during the long days. Bruscia also worked with others to help set up a preschool and daycare facility as well as make-shift schools for older children.

"It was so rewarding because I really got to make a difference with the kids," Bruscia said.

The 5,000 shelter inhabitants sleep on cots or airbeds on the floor and have very little privacy and quiet, he said.

"The hardest part is to see what these people are dealing with," he said. "It's not something I'd want to do for any length of time."

Linda Roma, a Morgan Hill resident who works for the San Benito County Sheriff's Department, also left for the Gulf Coast Saturday. After flying to Houston, the Red Cross' dispatch area, Roma

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was scheduled to be briefed with other volunteers before being assigned a location for her two-week deployment.

She will not know until she gets to Houston where she is needed. She's not even sure exactly what she'll be doing when she gets there.

"I'm trained in search and rescue, but that's mostly over now," Roma said. "I imagine I'll be cooking mass quantities of food, or serving mass quantities of food. And of course, listening. That's important, too."

Here in Hollister, San Benito High School students are working to raise money and collect food for hurricane victims, Associated Student Body Spokeswoman Vanessa Buelna said Monday. Students raised more than \$2,000 in donations last Friday at a special Hurricane Katrina Dance, she said.

"We're doing all we can to support the people who need us over there," Buelna said.

Students have also collected more than 1,600 bags of canned food to send to the region, and Buelna said the ASB is working to plan additional fundraisers. Several car washes have been planned and a specific high school club will be established to organize the school's efforts

The Hurricane Katrina Club is looking to adopt students from the Gulf Coast who have lost their school as a result of the flood waters. Buelna said no definitive plans have been made yet, but students will continue their efforts.

"Students know that the hurricane had a big effect on the people there," she said. "And (students) are willing to help out."

14 September 2005

California's 163rd Air Refueling Wing Brings Stranded Evacuees Hope

By the 69th Press Camp Headquarters



Figure 16. California Air National Guardsman Tech. Sgt. Dan Lowe of the 163rd Air Refueling Wing from March Air Force Base checks the I.D. of a media reporter at the Louis Armstrong International Airport. (Photo by the 69th Press Camp Headquarters)

The 163rd Air Refueling Wing from Riverside quickly restored order and authority at the Louis Armstrong International Airport over the weekend, accelerating its anticipated reopening and restoring hope to those who sought both refuge and escape from it during the early stages of Hurricane Katrina.

“All of the terminals were filled with people who just wanted to get somewhere besides where they were at that moment,” said Master. Sgt. Virgil Hathaway, team leader of operations for the 163rd Air Refueling Wing.

The 163rd's common first impressions of the airport when they first arrived were “garbage dump,” “surreal,” and “chaotic.” Many of the evacuees had been at the airport since Hurricane Katrina casts its first deadly destructive winds, forcing residents to flee in hopes of catching a flight from the area. Some evacuees stood in line soaking wet from the contaminated water. Many brought their own protection when they realized that law and order broke down early in the disaster.

“Most of these individuals were completely confused, and I don’t blame them,” said Tech. Sgt. Dan Lowe, a member of the security force team. “I would feel the same if I had just lost everything.”

Once they helped restore order and safety, the airmen rapidly launched into humanitarian efforts.

“We gave out food, water and medical supplies to everyone who needed it,” said Lowe. “After being thanked over and over for our services, all of the long hours we put in were worth it.”

California National Guardsmen’s Civilian Experience Accelerates Hopes in Louisiana Recovery Efforts

By the 69th Press Camp Headquarters



Figure 17: Pumps are becoming operational in New Orleans' flooded streets thanks to efforts by Sgt. John L. Zeller, 2/185th Armor Battalion, California Army National Guard. (Photo by the 69th Press Camp Headquarters)

Hopes of Recovery continue to rise as Katrina’s flood waters steadily decline at accelerated rates due in part to one California National Guardsmen’s engineering experience with the Marina Coast Water District in Marina, CA.

“Water’s dropping two feet a day as compared to two inches a day not long ago,” said Sgt. John L. Zeller, civilian associate engineer with the Marina Coast Water District. “But there’s still so much to do. It’s sad to see how (New Orleans) is torn apart. Power lines are down, streets are torn up, there’s no water running and sewage is overflowing. They need help and I’m glad to do what I can.”

As authorities loosen Katrina’s grip on the city, more streets are becoming useable, enabling rescuers to go house-to-house more rapidly, as well as accessing more buildings. As streets become more usable, the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor is extending its boundaries for searching for evacuees and providing humanitarian aid. Soldiers are also quickening the recovery pace by

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recording observed damages to sewer, water, electric and gas lines and submitting reports through channels to civilian authorities.

Maj. Frank Emanuel, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor detailed Zeller, a member of the 2/185th's Bravo Company, to assist county and city officials restructure their water and sewage system once he realized his civilian experience and skills. New Orleans' water and sewage systems were severely damaged by flooding waters and high winds. Emanuel garnered a list of all his soldier's civilian skills when his battalion first touched down at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station near New Orleans. That's when Zeller's experience surfaced.

"The unit can now move into infrastructure restoration now that the city is safer," Emanuel said. "There will still be routine street patrols and search and rescue missions, but with more people evacuated and more civilian help on the ground, the Army Guard can take on different responsibilities."

Zeller spends up to 20 hours a day with civilians working on getting pumps online and sewage drains opened.

"What he's done is beyond the call of duty," said Emanuel. "He's been incredible. They've adopted him into the city. We were aware of his background, but we didn't know he's capable of doing what he's doing."

The city has two main sewer plants, Zeller explained. One is completely underwater. The other sustained significant damage to pipes, pumps and machinery. "The main water plant is not treating water because there are so many pipe breaks," he added.

At a sewage plant, Zeller helped restart a critical pump that drains 1,000 cubic feet of water per second, according to Emanuel. And Zeller helped set up portable pumps—donated by civilian contractors—at various sites. His efforts have helped New Orleans authorities speed up the removal of contaminated water.

"The biggest thing that we need to do is to keep the pumps pumping and drain the contaminated water out of the city," Zeller said. "That's one. Now we need to treat potable water. We've got to repair water mains from beginning to end. And we do need to get the sewer plants up and running. These are all important areas."

Zeller, an Aptos, Santa Cruz resident, said time is of the essence. Mosquitoes and diseases are actively present, he said

"Right now there is potential disease. So draining water into the river saves us," said Zeller. "We're making strides, but there is still a lot more that needs to be done. It's not blocks, it's miles that's underwater. As for the water system, the whole distribution needs to be replaced."

While in uniform, the 42-year-old Californian is a tanker. After four years in the Air Force, Zeller and became a civilian water treatment operator in 1987. He enlisted into the Guard in the early 1990s. It was in 1996 when he earned his engineering degree from the University of California-Riverside.

"Zeller has a passion for water; He's almost obsessed with it," Emanuel said. "His abilities are typical of the National Guard. A lot of guys have skills that don't relate to anything in the military. When we discover them, we're using them to the best advantage of the area."

Cleanup, Rescues Continue in New Orleans

By Mike O'Sullivan, Voice of America

Rescue workers who are making house-to-house searches in New Orleans continue to find survivors of Hurricane Katrina, which swept the American Gulf Coast more than two weeks ago. Thousands of residents still remain in the city, but evacuations continue for those who are ready to leave.

The death count in Louisiana alone has risen past 400 people. Authorities have filed charges against a couple who ran a nursing home where 32 victims died and are investigating the deaths of another 40 people at a medical center. However, Tuesday there was some good news. **California National Guard Sergeant Jeremy Ridgeway** was searching homes in New Orleans when he found a survivor.

"I happened to be looking around through the screen door and I saw a leg," he said. "And at that time I made a decision to break the door down. And, fortunately the gentleman was still breathing and we were able to perform first aid on him and get the emergency personnel out there to rescue him out of the building."

The man was given first aid and evacuated to a medical center.

A mandatory evacuation order remains in place for the city, although police are not enforcing it. Residents who stayed are being asked to leave. However, they can remain, if they want to. Each day, some 40 people decide they have had enough of life without electric power or clean running water. At a downtown evacuation center, they receive a medical check and are given transportation out of the city. Today's evacuees are headed for shelter an hour away, in Baton Rouge, where damage from the storm was far less serious.

Army Sergeant Samuel Suslik says an elderly woman was also rescued Monday, after waving a flag to attract the rescuers. "She was on the porch laying there. She said she'd been waving a flag for a day or two," he added. "Finally, someone noticed her and brought her in here, gave her an exam. She was fine, and we evacuated her out."

National Guard member Tracy Sidebottom says many people refused to leave without their pet animals. They are being evacuated to shelters that allow their pets to stay with them. "Yesterday, we sent out a woman with her five birds, four cats, and three dogs," she said. "It was really pretty interesting."

Renaldo Curry is now waiting at the evacuation center for transportation out of the city. He stayed in New Orleans because he saw no reason to leave - even after flooding inundated much of the city. He says he and a friend had food and water and suffered no hardships.

"Oh, no. It wasn't uncomfortable. We had everything," said Mr. Curry. "But the generator went off, the air conditioning and electricity. That was it."

A six pm curfew is in effect for residents who refuse to leave the city. During daylight hours, National Guard Captain Bruce Gaffney says troops will continue to search for people trapped in houses.

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"We know that there are people out there. There are a lot of people that are unaccounted for, and we know they're someplace," said Mr. Gaffney. "Most people that have been rescued have been identified and they're out there telling us that they have loved ones that are still out there."

He says, as soldiers make their daily rounds, they approach each home as if there are survivors.

Family Feels Safe after National Guard Arrives

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada, Texas National Guard Public Affairs

NEW ORLEANS, La. — After spending days in the dark, with their windows boarded up, no water, and no electricity, a family of 10 finally felt safe to come out of their Orleans Parish home Sept. 3 and seek help.

The family members, all dressed in light blue shirts, their belongings in a shopping cart, appeared as if from nowhere and were quickly surrounded by the media because of their sudden appearance in a deserted part of town.

Texas Army National Guard Task Force 536 mission got under way at 8 a.m. on Belle Chasse Joint Reserve Base but took on an unexpected mission, providing transportation for the **California Army National Guard** personnel whose task it was to secure a looted Wal-Mart.

The family appeared at a cross road as soon as the vehicles arrived and the Soldiers took their position. The family members explained that they had been holed up in their home and had been afraid to come out because of the looting they had observed.

The Wal-Mart, not far from their home, was broken into and looted of its contents. Inside the Wal-Mart, even with the doors wide open, the stench of rotting meat and vegetables was overwhelming, yet a neighborhood child roamed around in the store, oblivious of the devastation inside and outside.

The family, sensing that some of the looters might not stop with simple looting and do them bodily harm, had stayed in their home until they saw the military vehicles approach and take up position in the Wal-Mart parking lot. Then they knew that this was their chance to come out of their home and make their way to the Convention center and seek help.

"We were afraid until the National Guard arrived," the father said. "Now we know it is safe to walk to the convention center." He also explained why they all dressed alike: "So we will recognize each other in the crowd, and hopefully we will be able to stay together."

The father took the lead, and the family disappeared from view, through streets littered with bricks from buildings torn apart by Hurricane Katrina.

Katrina Victim Rescued After 16 Days

United Press International

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California National Guard searchers broke some rules looking for bodies in New Orleans, but saved the life of an unconscious 74-year-old man and his dog.

A team from the 80-member California Task Force 5 from Orange County was going house-to-house Tuesday in the city's Broadmoor district, badly damaged Aug. 29 by Hurricane Katrina. As they were looking through windows and calling out, they spotted a man's foot dangling from a couch.

While the Federal Emergency Management Agency has ordered searchers not to break into homes, Lt. Frederick Fell decided to investigate regardless.

They found Edgar Hollingsworth unconscious and emaciated, but alive. A doctor managed to start an intravenous saline drip, and the man was taken to a hospital. The rescuers also sent along the man's frantic pit bull puppy, the Orange County Register reported.

Everyone's adrenaline was pumping, but they were professional about it, said National Guard officer-in-charge Bruce Gaffney. We're just happy we got this guy out.

15 September 2005

Major Developments in Katrina's Aftermath

The Associated Press

Major developments in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina:

- More than 40 bodies are discovered in a New Orleans hospital. One official says a few of the patients died before the hurricane struck, while another says some patients died waiting to be evacuated when temperatures hit 106 degrees.
- Officials say nearly two-thirds of southeastern Louisiana's water treatment plants are up and running. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport plans to resume limited passenger service Tuesday morning.
- It will be at least three months before New Orleans' public water system is fully operational, according to a **California National Guard** engineer working on the systems. Some homes have running water now, but it's mostly untreated river water.
- FEMA says it expects to provide temporary housing for some 200,000 hurricane victims for up to five years, most of them in Louisiana. It plans to use trailer homes to create "temporary cities," some with populations up to 25,000.
- Former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial calls for a compensation fund for the hurricane victims similar to the fund created for victims of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.
- A team of investigators is being sent to the Katrina-ravaged Gulf Coast to keep track of billions of dollars in relief aid the federal government is pouring into the region without normal contracting safeguards.
- President Bush taps a federal official with three decades of firefighting experience to be acting FEMA head after former chief Michael Brown resigns amid criticism over the federal government's sluggish response to the crisis.

Home to New Orleans, Canned Tuna, and the California Guard

By Tony Dunbar, The Tennessean, Nashville

New Orleans attorney Tony Dunbar and his family evacuated their hometown ahead of Hurricane Katrina to head for the safety of Nashville, and he wrote about it last week in this space. Today, Dunbar writes about his return to New Orleans.

Tree limbs cover the sidewalks, but someone has cleared them from the street. The streetcar cables have been felled by branches. Still, we reach our homes — and miraculously, they look good.

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In fact, most of the Uptown New Orleans we see looks good. Ignore the downed trees and broken roof tiles, the electric lines pulled to the ground, the smell of moldy food in the kitchen, and my house looks about as we left it nine days ago.

A squad of California national guard troops marches past, weapons at the ready. I give them directions to the Xavier Preparatory School, which is their destination but which is not correctly located on their map. So now, I have done something useful.

They do not threaten to expel me. "We'll be the force in this neighborhood," the leader tells me, and they move on. They are tanned and have smudges under their eyes like athletes. They are from San Diego. "Glad you fellows are here," I tell them. I wish they had been here last Monday, or Tuesday, or ...

Half an hour later, while hauling rotten food out of my kitchen, I notice that there is a fire down the block. Three houses, at least, are gone, and in the middle of the rubble is a flame 10 feet high. I run over to Xavier Prep and find our Guardsmen. They come to look at the situation, agree that it is a fire, and return to base. A friend passes briefly to say that Judge Waldron, my neighbor, was in his courtroom until two days ago.

Now it is dark. Periodically I go outside to see if the fire is spreading. The streets are empty, and I do not venture far. Helicopters circle overhead from time to time, bathing my house with spotlights.

I invent an interesting dish that someday I might serve to company. Combine canned tuna with medium black olives, add lots of olive juice, put in Cucina All Natural Pecorino Romano Cheese (the only cheese that can survive nine days in my refrigerator), and top it with Crystal hot sauce. Plus a touch of Deep Woods Off.

The cell phone beeps. My wife, safe in Nashville, wants me to bring her the pictures of her grandmother. She gives me news of the Daigres, who lost their bookstore in Bay St. Louis, but their house near Casino Magic is OK. The Rousseaus did indeed evacuate and are safe. Questions continue as to the whereabouts of Jessie Beach and of my business partner Peggy.

I put a sign on the front door. "Armed Homeowner Inside. Please Check with the California National Guard at Xavier Prep."

I think I am the only person spending the night on this block or in the surrounding ones, for that matter.

The open doors allow a little breeze. The closed screens keep West Nile virus away. Uptown New Orleans has never been so dark or so quiet.

In the intervals between unidentifiable bursts of light from the direction of downtown, I can see the Milky Way.

16 September 2005

Inland-Based CHP Officers Wing Way To New Orleans On Security Mission

By Nathan Max, The Press-Enterprise, Riverside



Figure 18. Two Air National Guard C-130 planes on Thursday flew 104 Inland-based CHP officers from March Air Reserve Base to Baton Rouge, La., where they will be sworn in as special Louisiana State Troopers and based at the Louisiana State Police training academy.

MARCH AIR RESERVE BASE - California Highway Patrol Officer Dave Williams' sister-in-law was days away from her closing on a new home just 20 minutes outside New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina struck.

The storm flooded the house, but his sister-in-law was lucky.

"Fortunately, they were able to get out of the purchase because it was in escrow," Williams said. For Williams, 39, the next two weeks will be an opportunity to help thousands of others who were not as fortunate as his sister-in-law.

Williams, along with 103 other Inland-based CHP officers, flew out of March Air Reserve Base shortly after 10 a.m. Thursday in two **Air National Guard** C130 planes on a direct, 4-hour, 15-minute flight to Baton Rouge.

The men and women will replace 116 CHP officers who arrived in the hurricane-ravaged area two weeks ago, said CHP Spokeswoman Rosa Ray. The 104 Inland-based officers will be sworn in as special Louisiana State Troopers and will work to protect evacuation camps, escort supply convoys, assist with evacuations and be involved in patrolling Jefferson Parish, Ray said.

The officers' mission will last two weeks, and they will be based at the Louisiana State Police training academy in Baton Rouge, Ray said.

"They're going to be roughing it in a tent," Ray said of the officers' sleeping quarters.

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The officers, wearing dark blue jumpsuits, walked single-file onto the tarmac Thursday morning before cramming into the tightly packed, propeller-powered planes. Several of the officers were watching coverage of the disaster on television only minutes before boarding.

"With the media coverage, you're only seeing one dimension, and a lot of times you see the same thing over and over again," said 30-year-old Grady Stevens, of Fontana, who lived in the small town of Roanoke, Ala., before moving to Southern California in junior high school.

"Once you get there and you see the devastation, block after block, and you can look into peoples' eyes, I'm sure it's just going to be a little bit tougher to handle than just seeing it on CNN," he said.

San Bernardino County-resident Peter Recatto, 33, said he has prepared himself to see a much different city than the one he's visited about 10 times in his life. Recatto, whose father's side of the family lives throughout southeastern Louisiana, still has not touched base with everyone, he said.

Recatto said some family members who live in Baton Rouge just suffered wind damage.

"Even them we couldn't get hold of for several days because communications were down," Recatto said.

For Williams, the hurricane also inconvenienced his parents, who were scheduled to fly to New Orleans in November for their 45-year college reunion at Xavier University.

But Thursday he was thinking more about what he and his colleagues would find upon their arrival.

"From what I understand, a lot of homes were just checked for survivors and not actually entered," Williams said. "I'm wondering if there's going to be substantial recovery in the homes that weren't actually entered."

New Orleans Airport Reopens After 2 Weeks

By Adam Nossiter, Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - The airport reopened to commercial flights Tuesday for the first time since Hurricane Katrina struck more than two weeks ago, and the port was back in operation, too, as a battered New Orleans struggled to get up and running again.

The slow signs of recovery came amid promises from the White House and FEMA to learn from their mistakes and intensify their efforts to help the victims.

Northwest Airlines Flight 947 from Memphis, Tenn., - the first commercial flight into or out of Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport since the storm hit - landed around midday with about 30 people aboard, far fewer than the jet could hold.

Those aboard included emergency workers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some carried only a few belongings in plastic bags and gym bags.

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Among those returning to New Orleans was Steven Kischner, who said the mood aboard the plane was "eerie."

"I'm anxious to get home to see what our house is going to look like," said Sandy Rozales, who lives in the Lakeshore section of New Orleans, close to a levee break, and left on the last flight out of town Aug. 28 just before the hurricane hit.

She said those on the flight were "preoccupied thinking about what they'd see when they get home and hoping that the worst wasn't quite what they got."

Using generator power, New Orleans' airport was back in operation the day after the hurricane hit, but was reserved for emergency use, including evacuation flights.

The city's recovery could be seen along the New Orleans waterfront as well. A shipment of steel coils left the port by barge Monday, bound for a Hyundai auto plant in Greenville, Ala., port spokesman Chris Bonura said.

The port expected the arrival late Tuesday of its first cargo ship since the hurricane, and at least three more ships by week's end, said Gary LaGrange, port president and chief executive. The arriving ship was carrying up to 500 containers of coffee and wood products from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, LaGrange said.

"It's a historical moment. Two weeks ago the prognosis was six months, so to pull it off so our customers have enough faith and confidence in us is very heartwarming," LaGrange said. He added: "From a commercial and psychological standpoint, this is five stars. This shows the people of New Orleans their city is back in business."

The port of New Orleans is the gateway to a river system serving 33 states along the Mississippi River or its tributaries. The port also connects to six railroads.

During a tour of hurricane-stricken Mississippi, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta pronounced Katrina the worst disaster for transportation in U.S. history.

Mineta said Katrina affected ports, highways and rivers. "Add that all up and it's a larger magnitude than anything we've ever experienced," he said.

The government has estimated the damage to highways and bridges in Mississippi and Louisiana at \$3 billion.

In New Orleans, Tuesday brought a sharp influx of people checking on their businesses.

Rusty White received a pass from police to check on the Bulldog, his bar on the edge of the Garden District. He drove in from his temporary lodgings in the town of Rayne and retrieved a data cartridge from the bar's computer. He also planned to swing by his house - if he could get to it - in a still-flooded neighborhood near Lake Pontchartrain.

"I probably lost my house, but I'm still in good spirits, considering," White said. "If you had told me before the storm I would lose everything, I'd probably tell you I'd be devastated. It makes me think all that stuff that I had isn't really as important as I thought it was - at least until I go in and see it, and then I may cry."

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White was relieved to find that the bar had sustained little damage from the storm, though looters had smashed open the cash register and video poker machines and apparently took a few bottles of bourbon on their way out. They left behind a flat-screen TV.

White was encouraged by his first visit to the city since Katrina.

"Many of the things that make this place special are still here. Everybody I talk to is coming back. They're not even thinking of going someplace else," White said. "I hope I'm not being naively optimistic, but that's the feeling I have."

In Washington, President Bush said "I take responsibility" for the government's failures in dealing with the hurricane, and he said the disaster raised questions about the nation's ability to respond to natural disasters as well as terrorist attacks.

"Are we capable of dealing with a severe attack? That's a very important question and it's in the national interest that we find out what went on so we can better respond," the president said.

The new acting director of FEMA pledged to intensify efforts to find more permanent housing for the tens of thousands of Katrina survivors now in shelters.

"We're going to get people out of the shelters. We're going to move on and get them the help they need," R. David Paulison said in his first public comments since he was named to replace Michael Brown. Brown resigned under fire over the government's sluggish response to the disaster.

Dr. Frank Minyard, the Orleans Parish coroner, said autopsies will be performed on at least 44 patients found dead at a flooded-out hospital. The discovery at the 317-bed Memorial Medical Center raised Louisiana's official death toll to nearly 280.

It was not immediately clear how the patients died.

Dave Goodson, an assistant administrator, said at least some of the patients died while waiting to be evacuated after Katrina struck, as temperatures inside the hospital reached 106 degrees. He said the heat probably contributed to some of the deaths.

Family members and nurses were "literally standing over the patients, fanning them," he said.

However, Steven Campanini, a spokesman for hospital owner Tenet Healthcare Corp., said that some of the patients lay dead in the morgue before Katrina hit, and that none of the deaths resulted from lack of food, water or electricity to power medical equipment.

The coroner suggested that further such discoveries are possible as the floodwaters recede.

"There just may be a lot of people who are still down in those deep waters, and some of waters were 10, 12, 15 feet deep," Minyard said. "My biggest fear is that we will find something down there that is way out of proportion. Hopefully, it doesn't happen, but we worry."

While public health authorities have been warning about the risk of germs from the filthy floodwaters, workers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are not seeing many cases of disease.

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Instead, between 40 percent and 50 percent of patients seeking emergency care have injuries - CDC has counted 148 injuries in just the past two days, Carol Rubin, an agency hurricane-relief specialist. She said they include chainsaw injuries and carbon monoxide poisoning from generators.

Sgt. John Zeller, a **California National Guard** engineer, said it will be at least three months before the New Orleans' public water system is fully operational. Some homes have running water now, but it is mostly untreated Mississippi River water - for anyone wanting a bath, "It's like jumping in the river right now," he said.

Some of those displaced may end up in temporary housing provided by FEMA, which expects to use trailer homes to create "temporary cities," where some 200,000 hurricane victims - most of them in Louisiana - could live for up to five years.

"This may not be quite on the scale of building the pyramids, but it's close," said Brad Fair, head of the FEMA's housing effort.

Guardsmen Sense Ghostly Presence In New Orleans

By Janet Yee, Television Station KPIX, Channel 5, San Francisco, www.cbs5.com

The presence of the supernatural and the influence of voodoo long have been synonymous with New Orleans.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, members of the U.S. military are saying that there's something spooky going on and it's not just images of death and destruction that's haunting them.

By all accounts, the Sophie B. Wright Middle School in New Orleans sits empty and evacuated except for military personnel who have taken over the campus as a staging site for missions around the battered city.

But the men in uniform have the feeling that they're not alone. It prompted a chaplain to utter this directive: "In the name of Jesus Chris, I command you Satan to leave the dark areas of this building."

Said Sgt. Robin Hairston of the California National Guard: "I was in my sleeping bag and I opened by eyes and in the doorway was a little girl," . "It wasn't my imagination."

Hairston wasn't the only one seeing things. Spc. Rosales Leonor had her own close encounter.

"I was using the restroom and I just saw a little shadow," Leonor said, "kind of looming in front of me."

Another member of the Guard unit said that she saw and heard a little girl laughing when she opened a closet that contained cleaning supplies.

At a Baton Rouge marina, boats were strewn like trash, but not a shred of paper could be found.

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Except for the pages of a Bible, which was found by a soldier. It was open to the Book of Revelations.

At a nearby church, nearly destroyed, another Bible was found, showing the exact same passage from Revelations.

Like the power of nature, there is a power at work in New Orleans that defies explanation.

17 September 2005

Press Release: Light Armored Vehicles Provide Mobility for Task Force

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

DOWNTOWN NEW ORLEANS, LA. – Armored transport that will float? Look out Batman. The Counter Drug Task Force (CDTF) has a mode of transportation just as cool as the Batmobile. It's called the LAV (Light Armored Vehicle).

The LAV is a standard thirteen ton vehicle, with a crew of three, which is capable of speeds up to sixty miles per hour. It has eight wheels, can seat up to twelve, is equipped with long-range infrared, and is designed to deflect bullets.

"These vehicles are essential to search and rescue efforts in situations where other military transportation simply won't do," said Sgt. "M" (full name withheld to comply with operational security requests), non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the LAV team.

LAV's are also amphibious. They can operate in high-water locations, such as the flooded areas of Louisiana. "It's amazing. In four to five feet of water, the LAV can maneuver at a top speed of eight miles per hour," said Staff Sgt. "K" (full name withheld to comply with operational security requests), LAV crew chief. "We have armored transport that floats."

Teamed with members of the S.W.A.T. organization, U.S. marshals, and federal agents, the CDTF use the LAV's for several types of missions. "We have teams on night patrols looking for looters, search and rescue missions during the daylight hours, and ongoing humanitarian efforts," said Mack.

The LAV teams have joint missions with local police such as; handling a considerable amount of 911 calls and helping law enforcement officers reach their homes to gather weapons and other supplies to support missions. "Just like (the military), the (local) police need to be ready for whatever comes their way," said Sgt. "K".

Unlike the local authorities though, the CDTF has the ultimate mode of transportation. Bullet deflecting. Aquatic. It is the LAV.

19 September 2005

Press Release: Soldiers Saving Pets in Louisiana

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters, California National Guard

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. – In addition to moving tons of cargo and thousands of Soldiers and Airmen to support the Hurricane Katrina relief effort California National Guard Soldiers have saved more than 30 stranded pets in the past two weeks.

“Our soldiers are very concerned about the losses these people suffered. So if it means saving pets, that’s what they’re going to do,” said U.S. Army Capt. Robert Atkinson, special projects officer. “While conducting operations in various patrols, if we come across animals, we’ll bring them back as long as we don’t put the animals at risk or ourselves at risk.”

The soldiers have taken in all kinds of animals. They leash up the animals and escort back to the operations center where Soldiers give them food and water and wait for civilian animal control groups to show up.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in New Orleans has rescued 1,600 animals, ranging from domestic to exotic pets like snakes and iguanas.

“What the California Guardsmen are doing is unbelievable. They’re really making it easier for us to get to animals. They’re marking doors and they’re also bringing pets right here,” said HSUS’ Jane Garrison, standing at the battalion headquarters. “They’re telling us where to find dogs and cats. We go into homes every time we see their signs.”

Pvt. Alejandro Espinosa, a San Francisco resident, recently put three puppies into his kevlar helmet and carried them back to headquarters.

“It’s just the human thing to do,” said Espinosa.

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The Guard Is Back In Its Element: California Troops Who Have Served In Iraq Feel More Comfortable With Their Latest Assignment: Providing Relief For Hurricane Victims.

By Rone Tempest and Ryan Lillis, Special to *The Los Angeles Times*



Figure 19. California National Guard Sgt. Ricardo Cisneros, 55, uses an abandoned car for cover while others search for the source of possible gunfire at a school in New Orleans. Whoever was inside the school had fled, leaving a smoldering cigarette. (Jakob Schiller / For *The Times*)

NEW ORLEANS — In Iraq, Capt. Paul Peterlin commanded a California National Guard transportation team that logged 400,000 miles, frequently under attack by roadside insurgents.

Here in post-hurricane New Orleans, the 35-year-old father of three from the Sierra foothills city of Grass Valley, Calif., heads a military police company at Louis Armstrong International Airport processing thousands of evacuees and dispatching patrols into the city to look for survivors and victims.

"This is a case of the National Guard doing what we were set up to do," said Peterlin, a stocky UC Davis graduate with a degree in history. "We are helping our own country here. In Iraq, it was harder to understand what was going on or whether we were helping or not."

On the ground in New Orleans, where Times reporters were embedded with the 726-soldier California National Guard Hurricane Katrina Task Force last week, soldiers generally spoke enthusiastically of their relief efforts in Louisiana.

"I'm very proud to be here. This is what we are all about," said Maj. John McBrearty, 45, of Riverside. McBrearty, who in civilian life is a screenwriter, served as executive officer with the

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San Bernardino-based 1st Battalion 185th Armor at Camp Scania, a forward operating base south of Baghdad.

"The cool thing about New Orleans," said Lt. Jerry Gold, 35, of Lone, about 30 miles southeast of Sacramento, "is that my troops were all fired up to do the work. In Iraq, morale was a big issue."

Several hundred of the California soldiers in New Orleans, particularly with the 2nd Battalion 185th Armor out of San Diego and the 870th Military Police [Company] from the Bay Area city of Pittsburg, have had recent service in Iraq.

Some, like Gold, a Marine before joining the Guard in 1998, served in the Gulf War and the Iraq conflict.

Mixed with their satisfaction about the work in Louisiana was residual bitterness among many soldiers from their time in Iraq — unexpectedly long tours, which many said destroyed marriages and disrupted their civilian careers.



Figure 20. Lt. Jerry Gold, 35, tries to find a way around a flooded road during a search and rescue mission near Empire, La. (Jakob Schiller / For The Times)

"When I left for Iraq," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Neal, 41, married father of three from Galt, just north of Lodi, "I was safety manager for a construction company making about \$75,000 a year. When I came back, the company said they could no longer guarantee me a 40-hour week. I ended up having to leave the company that I worked with for 12 years."

Spc. David Walter, 44, of Vacaville, who in civilian life is a corrections officer with the Solano

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County Sheriff's Department, said assignments like hurricane relief were what he had in mind when he signed up for the Guard five years ago.

"When I joined, I thought we were like the minutemen," Walter said. "We are the last defense on American soil. In five years, it's changed. We're now front-line. We're almost part of the Army."

The California soldiers' duties in the muggy New Orleans heat ranged from neighborhood patrols to animal rescue missions.

When Peterlin arrived at the airport Sept. 2 with the 119 soldiers in his military police company, he immediately found himself thrust into New Orleans' volatile political scene.



Figure 21. Pfc. Robert Calloway transports supplies from Belle Chasse Naval Air Station on the outskirts of New Orleans to the city's Louis Armstrong International Airport.(Jakob Schiller / For The Times)

"We came in a tenuous situation where the local [Jefferson Parish] sheriff had closed the airport to evacuees," said Peterlin, who in civilian life is an emergency services investigator. "We teamed up with Louisiana state troopers and basically came in and took the airport. The Sheriff's Department had blocked entrances, and we had to remove barriers."

Once in control of the airport, the MPs found what Peterlin described as "near riot" conditions as several hundred tired and hungry evacuees threatened to overrun the handful of federal border agents who were manning the crowded airport terminals.

The soldiers organized the evacuees into lines that at one point stretched for more than a mile. After several days, they had fed and processed more than 40,000 people and organized their transport to other cities.

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On one steamy afternoon, one element of the MPs was assigned to escort a task force from Orange County wading through stagnant, foul-smelling floodwaters in house-by-house searches on a remote peninsula in St. Bernard Parish, about 20 miles southeast of central New Orleans.

The houses were a contrasting mix of trailer homes and expensive two-story brick structures in developments with French names such as Terre Aux-Boeuf Estates.



Figure 22. Pfc. Dennis Lopez, 24, of Garden Grove, patrols a neighborhood on the edge of New Orleans' Garden District. The National Guard soldiers' other duties included animal rescues. (Jakob Schiller / For The Times)

"It's getting pretty gnarly out there," said task force leader Marc Hawkins, who back home is a battalion commander for the Orange County Fire Department. "We have cottonmouths everywhere, mosquitoes as big as my head and even had an alligator."

The Guard's role as security provider was put to the test on several occasions. On foot patrols that fanned out through muddy streets, soldiers burst through front doors left open by fleeing residents and stood at armed guard before public buildings.

Sept. 11, when a cloudless sky unleashed the late-summer sun on New Orleans, a squad from San Diego's 185th Armor Battalion heard what might have been gunshots ring from inside Samuel J. Green Junior High School, on the edge of the Garden District. The soldiers spread out, some taking cover behind abandoned cars caked in black mud, others bursting through the school's front doors.

"California National Guard — anybody in there?" one soldier yelled from a second-floor classroom.

"Come on out with your hands up if you're in there," another soldier screamed a few minutes later.

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But no one was in there, at least not by the time the squad reached the school's third floor and found empty cans of tuna and a cigarette left burning by someone who had left through an exit to the roof.

"You can tell people had been there; they were probably just a little faster than we were," said 1st Sgt. Ed Martinelli of San Diego.

When asked if, over his 26 years in the National Guard, he had ever done something like this on American soil, Martinelli was quick to answer.

"Probably not on this volume, not even in the L.A. riots," he said. "You've really got to be a little careful; you're not sure what you're going to walk into."

Tempest is a Los Angeles Times staff writer. Lillis is a writer with the Los Angeles Times UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism California National Guard project. Additional stories in the series can be found at latimes.com/guardgoes.

California Responders Return Home after Assisting With Hurricane Relief

Eric Nelson News Director. Radio Stations KKBN 93.5 FM and KVML 1450 AM, Sonora

Sacramento, CA -- About 200 first responders from California are back home after spending more than two weeks in the Gulf Coast area assisting with relief efforts there.

About 100 California Army National Guard Troops and 100 California Highway Patrol Officers returned Friday evening.

Governor Schwarzenegger sent the responders to the area in late August to help with search and rescue missions, security detail and supply work.

Officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency also requested eight swift-water rescue teams statewide .

In addition to the Guardsmen and CHP officers, the Sacramento team arrived back home early Friday morning.

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Katrina Survivor Dies Four Days After Found In New Orleans Home

Associated Press

A 74-year-old survivor of Hurricane Katrina found trapped in a New Orleans home for about two weeks has died of complications related to dehydration and malnutrition, the **California National Guard** said.

Edgar Hollingsworth, an Army veteran of the Korean War, died Saturday at a hospital, four days after he was found Sept. 13 buried under rubble, said Air Force Capt. Brenda Hendrickson, spokeswoman for the California National Guard.

Hollingsworth was scheduled to be buried Tuesday with military honors at the Port Hudson National Cemetery, which is 10 miles north of Baton Rouge.

At the request of his wife, Lillian, military personnel and other authorities who helped rescue him will serve as pallbearers, along with his son, Wesley, the California National Guard said in a prepared statement.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency had issued orders to rescue workers not to enter Katrina-ravaged homes unless they heard the cries of survivors. However, a National Guard team disobeyed orders after seeing Hollingsworth's foot protruding from the rubble of a home.

The guardsmen bashed open the door and found Hollingsworth unconscious and emaciated. Rescue workers immediately pumped him with saline solution through an IV and rushed him to a local hospital.

He died with his wife and daughter at his side, said Tracy Sayge, spokesman for the California National Guard.

Guardsmen to Assume Mission in New Orleans Neighborhood

By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON— A National Guard unit soon will be conducting security and recovery missions for residents in Algiers, a New Orleans neighborhood located across the Mississippi River from the French Quarter.

"We're going to put soldiers in grocery stores helping them to stock shelves, whatever we have to do," said Army 1st Lt. Richard J. Chappell, executive officer of **Company C, 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, of the California National Guard**. The 185th is headquartered in Escondido, Calif.

The Golden State guardsmen will continue to assist Algiers residents and help the area's business community get back on its feet, Chappell explained. That mission is now being performed by paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division's Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 319th

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Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, which is slated to turn over its duties to the guardsmen today as it prepares to redeploy to Fort Bragg, N.C.

The Guard unit deployed to Louisiana Sept. 1 to perform security missions in flooded areas of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The guardsmen will likely be in Algiers for a week or two, Chappell noted.

Army Sgt. Michael D. Kelly, a 50-year-old infantryman with the 185th Armor Regiment, called his duty tour in the Crescent City "the best mission I've done." New Orleans residents "are our people, and they need our help," the Ventura, Calif., native said.

For the past week, the 82nd's paratroopers have teamed with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and other disaster-relief agencies, and local places of worship to provide Algiers residents with drinking water, ice, food, toiletries and other needed items, said Army Capt. Kenton R. Barber, executive officer of 319th's Battery A.

Before that, Barber's paratroopers and members of the 82nd's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment performed search-and-rescue and security missions across the river in the downtown area, Barber said.

On Sept. 19, Barber provided Chappell and the other guardsmen with a windshield and walking tour of his battery's area of operations in Algiers. The guardsmen were introduced to several local businesses that reopened after Katrina, including a combined gas station/convenience store, a coin-operated laundry, and a drug store that filled prescriptions dropped off by Algiers residents at an 82nd Airborne Division-operated field medical clinic.

Barber said his unit's stint in New Orleans was a good experience that sharpened everyone's soldiering skills. While in Algiers, Barber's soldiers conducted security patrols, assisted in cooking meals at a local church mission, set up field health clinics, and distributed humanitarian aid and information fliers to residents.

"It exposes the soldiers to different responsibilities and puts them in positions that they're not going to be in otherwise," Barber said.

Clarifying the Chain of Command after Katrina

by Steve Inskeep, National Public Radio

Morning Edition · Amid the mixed messages about safety and access in Katrina-affected areas, Steve Inskeep turns to Army Lt. Gen. Russell Honore for clarification about the recovery's chain of command. Honore commands military units responding to the storms along the Gulf Coast.



Figure 23.. Spc. Antonio Betancourt of the 40th Infantry Division of the California National Guard hands out an informational flier to a resident in Algiers, La., Sept. 20. (Reuters)

Honore says his units' responsibility has been to save lives and provide recovery support, not to enforce the law. Though he admits there military's preparation in terms of communicating after the storm could have been better, he voices a commitment to improvement.

Longtime Friends Reunite: Men Part of Guard Units in Relief Effort

Pacific Daily News. Guam



Figure 24. Louisiana: Air Force Tech Sgt. Andy Remis, left, and Master Sgt. Melchor Delin reunited in Louisiana recently. The former Guam residents met for the first time in eight years while working on Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Louisiana. Remis is godfather to Delin's youngest son. It was "pure luck" they met in Louisiana. (69th Press Camp Headquarters)

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. -- Amid the disorder at New Orleans' Louis Armstrong International Airport recently, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andy Remis heard a familiar voice, one not heard in many years.

"At first, all I heard was 'Pare!'" Remis said. "I didn't know where it was coming from until I finally saw him. I was surprised."

The voice came from Air Force Master Sgt. Melchor Delin. And before anything else was said, the former Guam residents hugged, shook hands and patted each other's backs.

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"The first thing I asked was 'How is your family? How is your wife and my godson?' I didn't bother to ask how he was," Remis laughed. "I'm happy to see him. It's been a long time."

"That's pretty much the reason why it's good to see him, too," Delin responded. "It's been a long time."

Eight years. That's the last time these former Guam Air National Guardsmen met. Their reunion in Louisiana sheds a light of happiness around an area devastated by Hurricane Katrina. And their story typifies the Chamorro heritage of family, friends and faith.

This is the worst of times for Louisiana. It has only seen this devastation once: Hurricane Camille, 1969. Today more than 20,000 National Guardsmen from close to 40 states have rallied to Louisiana's aid. Tens of thousands more civil law enforcement personnel, paramedics and technicians are assisting New Orleans officials in getting the city back to form.

So how did their paths meet?

Delin, formerly of Chalan Pago, lives in Louisiana. He's been here since 1997, when he left Guam following a reduction in force at Naval Station's Ship Repair Facility. He was a sheet metal worker until the Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, committee shut down the yard. Delin was offered and accepted a civil service job here.

Remis, formerly of Dededo, lives in San Diego, California. He left Guam in 1999 after eight years as a Guam Customs and Quarantine officer. He's godfather to Delin's youngest child, Kyle, now a 9-year-old student.

The Guam duo have been friends -- practically blood relatives -- since 1988. They enlisted into the Guam Air Guard's 254th Civil Engineering Squadron that year. They were both electricians. Delin joined just after graduating from George Washington High School. Remis, a 1981 John F. Kennedy High School graduate, joined the Guam Air Guard months later.

Katrina's devastation spurred the reunion.

Remis has been with the California Air National Guard's **147th Combat Communications Squadron** from San Diego for five years. His unit, manned under the 162nd Air Base Wing, was mobilized by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for hurricane relief. Remis knew he would be coming to Louisiana. He just had no idea how to find Delin.

"I just knew he lived in Louisiana. I didn't know which base he'll be in because there's another (Louisiana) Guard unit further inland," said Remis.

Remis arrived at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station in New Orleans Sept. 2. For the first three days he tended to his duties as an electrician.

Remis, 42, runs power generators for Joint Task Force California, the main command staff. But all along, concerns for his pare ran through his head. So Remis pulled out his cellular phone and called his California unit. He asked a sergeant to do an Internet search on an Air Force Web site. He gave Delin's name. Sure enough, Delin's contact number was there.

"When I got his (work) number, I called him. Within an hour he called back," said Remis.

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They arranged a meeting at the airport. Remis was pulling force protection duty. Delin, a civil engineer with Louisiana's 159th Fighter Wing, was there to check his staff.

"It's definitely a surprise for him to be here," said Delin, 38. "And I'm glad he's here. It's like having family together."

One of the first exchanges of Chamorro bonding came when Delin brought Remis dinner. The menu? Rice, Spam and finadene.

Katrina spared Delin's family and home.

His wife, Helen, and three children left for Fort Worth, Texas, two days before the hurricane. Their Belle Chasse home was untouched; a perimeter fence collapsed and a tree fell away from the house. But the house withstood damaging winds. Delin stayed behind to wait out the hurricane. He was assigned for force protection at the New Orleans Superdome. He braved the storm with tens of thousands of civilians.

"Oh yeah, it got pretty chaotic there," said Delin. "There just wasn't enough information to pass on. People were asking so many questions. They wanted to know about food and water. They wanted to know when they're getting out of there. We didn't have the right people to give that information."

21 September 2005

Algiers Church Opens Doors, Hearts to Those in Need: A Reverend's Mission Now Feeds Hundreds

By Paul Purpura, West Bank Bureau, *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans

The day after Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast, throwing the New Orleans area into chaos, the Rev. James Brown opened St. Mary's Church in Algiers just as he has done three times a week for eight years.

There would be impoverished and homeless people to feed.

That day, he and 15 church volunteers served 19 people.

Now, about 500 people line up for free hot lunches, served daily from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the community center at 3815 General Meyer Ave.

"How you doing, sir? Got an appetite?" volunteer Carey Peyton, the church's minister of music, asked an elderly man who walked in out of Tuesday afternoon's sweltering heat.

"I got a little one," the man replied with a chuckle before getting in line for lunch.

"The needs motivate me," Brown said. "I see needs. That's why I didn't leave (during Katrina). I knew there would be a lot of needy people."

Churches nationwide have heard of Brown's work and have donated food and supplies. The American Red Cross and the Salvation Army have donated cleaning supplies for distribution. The military has chipped in water, ice and military MRE's (Meals, Ready to Eat). An Army major general and colonels have visited and agreed to lend support, Brown said. **California National Guard** soldiers provide security and help in the kitchen.

The church has garnered national and international media attention, attracting the interest of a private group in Israel that shipped cases of clothing to St. Mary's for distribution.

George Rainey, owner of Rainey's Restaurant and Catering in Algiers which is known for its gumbo, began running the kitchen nine days after Katrina passed. With his business temporarily closed, Rainey said his philosophy is that businesses rely on communities, so during a crisis, businesses should serve the community. But he deflected attention to Brown.

"He's a miracle to Algiers," Rainey said of Brown.

"He took it on himself," state Sen. Francis Heitmeier, D-Algiers, said of Brown's community service. "When you talk about heroes, this guy is one."

Still, the city of New Orleans has not formally recognized St. Mary's as a "point of distribution," Heitmeier said. Such a designation would open the church as a hub for Federal Emergency

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Management Agency services and allow the church to recoup its out-of-pocket expenses, Heitmeier said.

City Councilwoman Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson is working to get St. Mary's that designation, he said. "This guy needs some assistance," Heitmeier said.

Somber Task for California Guard in New Orleans

By Jan Yee, Television Station KPIX, Channel 5, San Francisco, www.cbs5.com

In New Orleans, they have begun the grim task of laying to rest the victims of Katrina.

One of the people buried on Tuesday, was rescued just last week by the California National Guard. The soldiers are understandably saddened that he passed away, but grateful that he didn't have to die alone.

Soldiers acted as pallbearers for Edgar Hollingsworth. A man who was trapped by Katrina for more than two weeks before guardsmen rescued him last Wednesday.

California soldiers used their civilian expertise to help Hollingsworth. One was a medic, another a security contract expert, who realized that something was amiss at the New Orleans home.

"I looked through the screen door and I noticed a leg and then decided to pry the door open," said Jeremy Ridgeway of the California National Guard. "He was still alive."

A few days later, Soldier's identified the man and found his family. Hollingsworth died, but his family was at his side. He too was once a soldier. He served the Army during the Korean War.

His widow says he was a proud man, who refused to heed the hurricane warnings. She says she will miss him.

"I'm sure he's looking down smiling," Lillian Hollingsworth says. "He really would be loving this day."

23 September 2005

NMCS D Personnel Vaccinate Troops Deploying to Gulf Coast

By JO1 (SW) Joshua Smith, Naval Medical Center San Diego



Figure 25. HM2 (SW) Nathan Robinson administers an immunization to a Soldier of the California National Guard prior to his unit's deployment to the Gulf Coast in support of Hurricane Katrina disaster relief operations. Corpsmen from Naval Medical Center San Diego's Directorate for Occupational Health and Preventive Medicine immunized 400 National Guard Soldiers. Official U.S. Navy photo by MM1 Ricardo Gutierrez

SAN DIEGO - With less than a day's notice, a team from Naval Medical Center San Diego's (NMCS D) Directorate for Occupational Health and Preventive Medicine provided immunizations to 400 Soldiers from a **California Army National Guard** unit at their headquarters in Linda Vista, Calif.

The team administered Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Tetanus-Diphtheria vaccinations to the unit prior to its deployment to the Gulf Coast where the Soldiers will support the ongoing disaster relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

According to Lt. Cherie Morin, the immunizations team leader, it was extremely vital that the National Guard personnel receive the immunizations prior to deploying to the disaster area. "The reason for vaccine administration is that it's a health protection measure. Administering vaccinations for preventable diseases is the best way to decrease the risk of disease and to maintain the operational integrity of a unit," explained Morin. "As all service members know, it's impossible to help others if you're a casualty yourself."

Despite the need to get the immunizations completed quickly, Morin said her team of preventive medicine technicians, and hospital corpsmen who specialize in preventive medicine, were excited

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to work with a different branch of the service and looks forward to the opportunity to do it again in the future.

“Although we weren’t deploying, it was rewarding to support our fellow service members as they deployed to the Gulf area,” Morin said.

According to Cmdr. Phil Smith, NMCS D’s industrial hygiene department head, completing the immunizations on short notice for the deploying Soldiers was all in a day’s work. “This team really did a great job of organizing the logistics and execution of this mission with less than a full-day advance warning,” said Smith. “They represented our command and Navy Medicine in an exemplary fashion.”

24 September 2005

'Rita Has Louisiana in Her Sights': State Readies for Blow from Massive Storm, National Guard Nits Pull Back, Await Fallout from Storm

By John Pope, Staff Writer, Times-Picayune, New Orleans

Hurricane Rita churned closer to shore Thursday, downgraded to a Category 4 storm but still fierce enough to prompt the evacuation of about 1.8 million Gulf Coast residents and make officials and engineers in the New Orleans area order evacuations of low-lying areas and scramble to shore up levees weakened by Hurricane Katrina.

Rita, packing 150-mph winds, followed a west-northwest path in the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday but was expected to turn to the northwest today, poised to strike early Saturday somewhere between Galveston, Texas, and southwest Louisiana.

The storm's progress motivated Gov. Kathleen Blanco to urge about 500,000 residents of southwest Louisiana, especially people living south of Interstate 10, to head north as soon as possible.

"We feel it is very, very important that everyone leave now," she said at a briefing in Baton Rouge. "Everything is fragile. ... Rita has Louisiana in her sights, and we must move."

When asked what people should do if they are determined to ride out the storm, Blanco replied, "Perhaps they should write their Social Security number on their arms in indelible ink."

Some people needed no persuasion.

In Texas, interstate highways became virtual parking lots Thursday, prompting state officials to set up the largest contraflow effort in the state's history to get drivers out of harm's way. Traffic crept at 2 mph, and some cars began to stall and run out of fuel.

"Stay calm. Stay patient," Gov. Rick Perry said in a televised news conference. "You've done the right thing. You will get out of the coastal region on time. ... I would rather you be sitting in traffic for eight to 12 hours moving out of that storm's path than taking a chance on staying."

On Thursday morning in Cameron Parish, about 40 miles east of the Texas-Louisiana line, fewer than 500 of the 9,000 residents remained, and the National Guard was working with sheriff's deputies to round up stragglers and urge them to flee.

"This is going to be worse than Audrey," Sheriff Theos Duhon said, referring to the 1957 storm that killed about 530 people when it struck that part of the state.

'A massive storm'

Rita is expected to dump up to 10 inches of rain, Blanco said, and send out hurricane-force winds across western Louisiana.

"This is a massive storm, a powerful storm," she said.

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Because of Rita's size, with storm surges and tropical-storm-force winds that could extend as far as 160 miles from the center, officials on the other side of the state issued evacuation orders for Grand Isle, Crown Point, Barataria and low-lying parts of Plaquemines Parish.

In New Orleans, evacuation efforts continued, said Mayor Ray Nagin, who had scrapped his plan to let residents return home earlier this week because of Rita's approach.

Stressing what individuals can do to mitigate the storm's effects, Jefferson Parish Council Chairman Tom Capella urged everyone to check storm drains near their home to make sure they are free of debris that could clog the drain and make water rise.

"It's something that only takes five minutes but really can make a huge difference, especially with all the debris already on the streets," he said.

At his news conference Thursday afternoon, Nagin said New Orleans stands a 50 percent to 60 percent chance of receiving tropical-storm-force winds up to 75 mph, as well as storm surges as high as 5 feet.

But citing information from the Army Corps of Engineers, he said, "They can handle that type of storm surge."

To protect the New Orleans area from recurrences of levee breaches that inundated much of the city after Hurricane Katrina swept through last month, the Corps of Engineers put down 60-foot sheets of steel piling to block Lake Pontchartrain's tidal surge from the 17th Street and London Avenue canals. The Orleans Canal is not blocked.

"Metropolitan New Orleans can take about 6 inches of rain," corps spokeswoman Susan Jackson said. "Though a concern, it's not our main concern. . . . Storm surge is the real issue because it stresses the levee repairs and some areas that we haven't had time to assess and repair."

While New Orleans can withstand a 10- to 12-foot surge from the lake, St. Bernard Parish can take only a 5- to 6-foot surge, she said, because its pumps are working at 60 percent capacity.

At the 17th Street Canal levee on Thursday afternoon, workers used a bulldozer to load sandbags around the sheet pilings to seal up any leaks.

"I'm pretty confident that, based on current predictions, we will weather this storm just fine," said Duane Gatinski, who leads the corps task force charged with getting floodwater out of the city.

Water returns

Despite his confidence, a levee hurriedly rebuilt with riprap and gravel after Katrina to stop the flooding of the Industrial Canal into the Lower 9th Ward is punctured in several spots with clear water running into the ravaged streets.

"Any drop of rain that falls is going to stay," said Chad Rachel, a civil engineer with the Corps of Engineers.

But, he said, the leaks should not constitute a crisis.

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"Don't expect a catastrophic failure," Rachel said Thursday. "It's localized seepage."

Nevertheless, the seeping water caused a search-and-rescue team to order evacuation of the Lower 9th Ward, cutting short the daily search for survivors and bodies.

Caffin Avenue, right along the canal at St. Claude Avenue, had 1 1/2 foot of water in some places early Thursday afternoon. Water built up to several inches on nearby Jourdan Avenue.

A day earlier, those same streets had been dry.

As Rita barreled closer to the coastline, about 4,000 National Guard troops were transferred to southwest Louisiana from New Orleans, where they had been doing relief and recovery work after Katrina. That would leave about 17,000 members of the National Guard in the New Orleans area, along with about 6,000 Army troops, state Adjutant General Bennett Landreneau said.

New missions

Members of the Texas National Guard had disappeared from their digs at Loyola University, redeployed to the path of Hurricane Rita, bearing down on their home state. The Puerto Rican National Guard had also gone home. Other units readied themselves to stay in New Orleans, pinpointing refuges from the possible flooding to come.

"We've identified high ground and multi-story buildings," said Col. Henry "Pat" Scully, Oklahoma National Guard public affairs officer. "Some outlying units will ride out the storm there, then come out and help with relief. We'd discussed bugging out to Baton Rouge then rushing back."

The Oklahoma Guard had moved its logistical operations, including food, supplies and maintenance, or, as one soldier put it "anybody but trigger-pullers" to the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. At Sophie B. Wright Junior High School on Napoleon Avenue at the outer reaches of Katrina's flooding, California guardsmen loaded equipment on a waiting truck. The **California National Guard** was moving across the river to Algiers, where they were to patrol the area from Bridge City to Algiers, setting up headquarters in Gretna Junior High. Soldiers said the move had been planned pre-Rita.

Maj. Pat Simon, public affairs officer with Task Force Pelican, Louisiana's coordinated military response to Hurricane Katrina, said some National Guard troops have been reassigned to staging areas for Task Force Rita in Opelousas and Ville Platte.

"All the while we've requested more forces to be sure we have enough for Task Force Pelican and Rita," he said. "We're continuing with as many guardsmen as possible in Pelican. Nobody's bailed. Those missions will continue."

But some New Orleanians fretted that the redeployment of security forces would leave their homes vulnerable to the kind of looting that prevailed shortly after Katrina roared through.

"It's really scary," said Sheryl LeBlanc, a Lake Vista resident.

Lakeview and Lakefront areas were virtually devoid of National Guard and other police forces Thursday, although members of the Oklahoma National Guard, setting up camp at Delgado

Community College's City Park Campus, said there were plans to resume a visible security presence in the area.

Seeking to allay residents' worries, Blanco said, "There will be plenty of soldiers in the city to handle whatever Rita dishes out."

New Orleans police stand ready, too, Superintendent Eddie Compass said.

Police are "still at a heightened state of emergency," he said. "We can't get any higher."

Staff writers Brett Anderson, Ed Anderson, Drew Broach, Gwen Filosa, Bruce Hamilton, Bruce Nolan, Andrea Shaw, Manuel Torres and Tara Young, and staff photographer David Grunfeld contributed to this report.

More Bay Area Helpers Heading To Disaster Zone: Relief Workers to Spell Exhausted Volunteers

By Julie Patel, Mercury News, San Jose

Hurricane Rita has sent dozens of Bay Area relief volunteers rushing back to the Gulf Coast, while more than 200 already in disaster areas are racing to Texas to help.

The double whammy from Katrina and Rita has been a challenge for the American Red Cross, which is seeking more volunteers and training thousands of others while fighting "hurricane fatigue" -- the exhaustion felt not only by relief workers but by potential donors already tapped out from Katrina. The California National Guard plans to send a team of 22 disaster specialists to Texas. And the Menlo Park-based California Task Force 3 urban search and rescue team is planning to head back to the gulf.

"The Red Cross has not geared down; it has moved full speed," said Cynthia Shaw, spokeswoman for the Red Cross' Santa Clara Valley chapter. "Where it becomes challenging is that we have some people out there who have done their two weeks and they're tired and ready to come home, but they can't get out of the affected areas because of Rita."

Ronald Bates, 57, a United Airlines mechanic from San Mateo, returned Saturday from Florida and Alabama, where he had helped distribute food and supplies at shelters. He used up three weeks of vacation and is trying to get more time off now so he can head back. He said most volunteers worked 12-hour days.

"When you're doing something you like to do -- helping people -- you just find the energy," said Bates, who has volunteered for 25 disasters since 1989.

The Red Cross' Bay Area chapter has spent \$1 million to help about 1,472 evacuated families here, said Greg Smith, the chapter's chief public support officer. The chapter plans to send an additional 130 volunteers to Texas by Sunday, Smith said.

"We desperately need the help of the American public," Smith said. To give a sense of the scale of the disaster, Smith said the American Red Cross spent \$130 million on relief efforts for the four

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back-to-back hurricanes last year. Katrina's projected cost is more than \$2 billion -- without Rita. Much of the money is spent on hotel, food and living expenses for 264,000 evacuees.

California National Guard Maj. Jon Siepmann said that in the next few days, the 22-member 95th Civilian Support Team in Hayward will go to Texas to help. As of Friday, fewer than 10 California National Guard members were still in Louisiana waiting for the storm to pass before they can start helping out again, Siepmann said.

Katrina's Aftermath: Aptos Resident Offers His Skills for Rebuilding

By Jondi Gumz, Santa Cruz Sentinel

APTOS — Claudia Zeller misses her husband, John, who was sent with the National Guard to New Orleans three weeks ago for hurricane cleanup, but she's proud of what he's accomplished. "See what they wrote about him," she said, referring to a report posted on the Web page of the California National Guard.

Sgt. Zeller, 42, an engineer with the Marina Coast Water District, was tapped by his commander to help county and city officials restructure water and sewage systems damaged by flooding and high winds.

Zeller told Guard staffers last week there was a lot of work to do.

"It's sad to see how (New Orleans) is torn apart," he said. "Power lines are down, streets are torn up, there's no water running and sewage is overflowing. They need help, and I'm glad to do what I can."

Maj. Frank Emanuel, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor, surveyed his soldiers to find out their civilian skills once they landed at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station in New Orleans.

Zeller served in the Air Force, then trained as a water treatment operator. He enlisted in the National Guard in the early 1990s and earned an engineering degree at UC Riverside in 1996.

Like the other soldiers, he focused on searching for flood victims, recovering bodies and reporting damage to sewer, water, electric and gas lines. Once rescues were completed, the Guard turned its attention to repairing city infrastructure.

Zeller has spent up to 20 hours a day with civilians getting pumps operating and opening sewage drains.

"What he's done is beyond the call of duty," said Emanuel. "He's been incredible. They've adopted him into the city. We were aware of his background, but we didn't know he's capable of doing what he's doing."

One of the main sewer plants was completely under water. Others sustained major damage to pipes, pumps and machinery.

At a sewage plant, Zeller helped restart a pump critical for draining water into the river. He also helped set up portable pumps donated by civilian contractors to speed the removal of contaminated water.

The next step is to treat water so it is safe for drinking, repair mains, and get the sewer plants operating again before contamination sparks an outbreak of disease.

"Zeller has a passion for water; he's almost obsessed with it," Emanuel said. "His abilities are typical of the National Guard. A lot of guys have skills that don't relate to anything in the military. When we discover them, we're using them to the best advantage of the area."

Zeller's wife, who works at Scotts Valley High School, would like to have him home with their two daughters, Amanda, a sophomore at Scotts Valley High School, and Amber, an eighth-grader at Scotts Valley Middle School.

When he called on his cell phone Thursday, he warned he might be out of reach for a while because his next assignment is at the levees as Hurricane Rita approaches.

"I told him, 'Don't be a hero and make sure you have a boat,' " she said, laughing.

His efforts in Louisiana earned him "another stripe," she added, and his expertise may keep him there beyond Oct. 1, depending on the situation.

Aid Workers Face Threats to Physical, Mental Health

By Gregor McGavin. *The Press-Enterprise*, Riverside

The hundreds of Inland residents helping the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast recover now face another task - making sure they're not bringing any unwanted physical or psychological baggage back home.

Disaster-relief workers responding to New Orleans and elsewhere have found streets teeming with a toxic mix of sewage, chemicals and debris. Workers also saw their share of devastating images, some that could lead to the need for psychological help, experts say.

While federal health officials have downplayed early fears about an outbreak of cholera or typhoid fever, they say it's vital that disaster-relief workers take steps to ensure their own well-being.

"It was putrid, like a cesspool," Rick Albee of Redlands said of the streets of New Orleans.

Albee, part of a 14-member swift-water rescue team from Orange County, spent 17 days guiding an inflatable raft through water brimming with sewage and bodies, in search of stranded people.

As soon as the rescuers returned on Sept. 16, they underwent complete physical examinations and blood tests "to make sure that we don't have anything floating in our system," said Albee, who works for the Orange County Fire Authority.

Albee, who returned to work Thursday, said he and his teammates will have a "critical stress debriefing" in the next week or two, standard practice after working on any traumatic event.

In the meantime, they'll monitor themselves as they try to settle back into normal lives -- on the lookout for sleeplessness, recurring nightmares and other holdovers of the mental images they know will not soon fade.

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What They Face

Albee and the police officers, soldiers and assorted Good Samaritans who rushed in from across the nation to help the devastated region took more with them than goodwill. They went with rubber gloves and boots, updated inoculations and other precautions laid out in guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CDC officials now say that feared outbreaks of infectious diseases common in Third World countries -- such as typhoid fever and cholera -- never occurred because those illnesses were not present before the hurricane struck.

But the fecal matter and other pollution in some flooded areas, particularly in New Orleans, could cause gastrointestinal ailments such as dysentery, which can be fatal if the victim becomes sufficiently dehydrated.

Officials say simple steps such as protective clothing and frequent hand-washing should keep volunteers healthy.

"We do have fairly complete guidelines, and if they're followed appropriately, (responders) should be pretty safe," said Bernadette Burden, a CDC spokeswoman.

Albee said his team included two doctors who analyzed the floodwater, where they found E. coli and other bacteria that can cause gastroenteritis if ingested.

Each team member had hepatitis, tetanus and other immunizations updated before they left. They wore "dry suits" to keep the water off and decontaminated regularly with bleach, water and soap.

They rescued nearly 600 people the first day and similar numbers each day thereafter. They found people stranded on rooftops, in attics and on freeway offramps. They tried to stay out of the putrid water but sometimes did get splashed or worse, he said.

Despite the precautions, the risk of infection remained.

"I'm a guy who always talks with his hands, and my hands go in my mouth," Albee said.

More on the Way

The Southern California Baptist Convention has sent more than 120 volunteers from San Bernardino, Riverside and other counties to help out after Katrina and is training hundreds more to respond to Hurricane Rita.

Each volunteer is well-supplied and thoroughly trained by the group, which responds to disasters worldwide, including the tsunami that struck Asia and Africa in January, said Director Don Hargis.

The volunteers know to seek help for any health problems that surface upon their return, he said.

The 104 officers from the California Highway Patrol's Inland Division who left Sept. 15 for Louisiana all got shots for tetanus and Hepatitis B and C, spokeswoman Rosa Ray said.

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The officers, who are assisting their counterparts in Jefferson Parish with patrols and protection of evacuation camps, were counseled on what to expect while they're there -- from misplaced children to floating bodies -- and how to deal with it.

"The one thing they can expect is that it's going to be horrible," said Nancy Bohl, who heads The Counseling Group International of San Bernardino, which provides psychological help for disaster responders worldwide.

Bohl told the officers that they must remain connected to family and friends by calling home or e-mailing to avoid internalizing troubling events. They should take breaks when their work is over and do something to get their minds off the disaster.

Highway Patrol officials plan to give officers a couple days after they return to reconnect with their families and catch up on sleep. Then they will gather in small groups to discuss what they saw, followed by a barbecue or other informal event to provide closure, Bohl said.

He Won't Forget

Starr Swift, a chief master sergeant with the California Air National Guard who helped secure New Orleans International Airport for two weeks, said he will not forget what he saw there.

As many as 6,000 victims crowded into the airport from the Superdome. Thousands more pounded on the doors, demanding to be let in.

The evacuees were filthy, hungry and dehydrated. Along with those who had lost everything came predators who had robbed and raped victims in the dome, Swift said by cell phone from the airport.

Old ladies in wheelchairs were pushed out of lines waiting for departing planes, he said. Children wandered alone, crying for their mothers.

Swift and the more than 200 other National Guard members from across California kept order. They handed out bottled water and food -- sometimes their own rations.

"I can tell you for myself it's very much a life-changing experience," said Swift, 59, who returned Sept. 16 to his job as an air-conditioning contractor in San Bernardino. "We've seen thousands of people who have less than nothing, and it kind of puts things into perspective."

26 September 2005

State's National Guard May Be Getting Spread Thin: L.A.'S Blackout Focuses Attention On Whether There Are Enough Troops To Handle An Emergency.

By Rone Tempest. Staff Writer, *Los Angeles Times*

SACRAMENTO — When the lights went out in Los Angeles two weeks ago, one day after a purported Al Qaeda terrorist threat to the city, concern quickly spread to California National Guard headquarters here.

With more than 25% of its troops deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan and the U.S. Gulf Coast, state National Guard leaders prepared to mobilize even more soldiers for law enforcement duties in California's largest city.

"We were postured to respond quickly if needed," said Col. David Baldwin, California National Guard operations director. There was no need, however, as the L.A. Department of Water and Power, which cited multiple errors and lack of communication as causes of the blackout, restored electricity to most of the city in less than two hours.

But the power break gave a brief scare to those who worry that the National Guard, already experiencing a decline in recruitment, risks losing its capacity for emergency service in a state prone to natural and man-made disasters.

"We can only spread our forces so thin without endangering the safety net," said Assemblyman Tom Umberg, (D-Anaheim), who is also a colonel in the Army Reserve.

"Until someone can predict earthquakes, fires and floods accurately," Umberg said, "the Guard is a critical element in the event of a state emergency."

In early August, Umberg and fellow Assemblyman Pedro Nava (D-Santa Barbara) asked California's state auditor to investigate whether the Guard has enough troops to meet state and federal demands.

State Sen. Joe Dunn (D-Santa Ana), meanwhile, is conducting a budget subcommittee investigation of the Guard, including allegations that the state's Military Department has inflated the number of available troops. Dunn contends that the Guard ranks include "a significant number of ghost positions" listed by the department in order to obtain extra funding.

Dunn, who estimates that the Guard's troop strength is several thousand fewer than listed, plans hearings to probe this and other issues.

Concern among state officials increased after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast Aug. 29, resulting in the mobilizing of Guard units from all 50 states, including nearly 1,000 soldiers from California.

In fact, the critical role played by more than 55,000 Guard troops along the Gulf Coast underlines the dilemma faced by the Bush administration and California officials as they attempt to balance

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the extraordinary overseas demands on the state militias in Iraq and Afghanistan with their traditional role responding to domestic emergencies.

Military analysts argue that the double duty — foreign and domestic — undermines the "citizen soldier" principle that has characterized the National Guard since the American Revolution. State leaders worry that the changing role compromises the Guard's ability to respond to natural disasters and civil unrest at home. Soldiers say the mix of long overseas tours and disaster duty breaks down family structure and shatters civilian careers.

"The Iraq campaign shows that we are misusing the National Guard by substituting them for what are classic active-duty roles," said University of North Carolina history professor Richard Kohn.

The National Guard, although it has federal responsibilities in the case of national emergency, is different from the federal armed forces on several levels. The Guard in each state reports to its governor, who can order it into action for emergencies. It handles its own recruiting and promotion system. It is also the only military component whose members can, under U.S. law, carry weapons and conduct law enforcement within the country without a presidential order or congressional act.

This distinction was clear in New Orleans, where troops from the regular Army 82nd Airborne Division were sent to help but were not permitted to carry loaded weapons. Only Guard troops could do that.

For half a century before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the National Guard was rarely tapped for long-term overseas missions, concentrating its efforts instead on natural calamities and social unrest, including the 1992 Los Angeles riots, in which 12,000 Guard soldiers were deployed.

But faced with an insurgent resistance in Iraq much greater than anticipated, the Pentagon has depended on use of National Guard forces in Iraq and Afghanistan to a degree not seen since the Korean War.

National Guard Bureau leadership in Washington insists that the expanded role is just what the 436,000-troop National Guard needed and that it is more than up to the task. Reacting to reports that heavy deployments in Iraq had affected response along the Gulf Coast, National Guard chief Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum issued a strong statement.

"The fact that National Guard units were deployed in Iraq at the time of Katrina," Blum said, "did not lessen the Guard's ability to respond."

Blum earlier told reporters, however, that if the 5,900 Louisiana and Mississippi National Guard troops deployed overseas had "been at home and not in Iraq, their expertise and capabilities could have been brought to bear."

In California, about 5,300 of the state's 20,000 National Guard members are overseas, mainly in Iraq. Guard officials are optimistic about their ability to answer emergency calls, even with major commitments in Iraq and Louisiana. More than 900 California Guard soldiers are on the Gulf Coast, dealing with effects of Hurricane Katrina, including 726 on the ground in New Orleans.

According to Baldwin, the California National Guard operations director, that leaves about 13,000 troops available for an emergency. He said the added responsibilities after Sept. 11 and

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deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have enhanced the California Guard's ability to respond on short notice.

"After 9/11," Baldwin said, "the National Guard had to shift to become an expeditionary force where we would get short-notice orders for deployments overseas. The impact of that shift is that we have more veterans coming back who know how to mobilize quickly."

Amanda Beck, a student at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, contributed to this report as part of a project by The Times and the school. More project reports can be found at latimes.com/guardgoes.

27 September 2005

Storms' Evacuees Begin to Come Home: Many Find Losses Overwhelming

By Charlie Savage and Brian MacQuarrie, *The Boston Globe*



Figure 26. California National Guard soldiers patrolled the French Quarter of New Orleans yesterday. Mayor C. Ray Nagin allowed some owners and residents to inspect the damage in their areas. (Kevork Djansezian, Associated Press)

BATON ROUGE -- As hurricane evacuees streamed back to the emptied city of New Orleans and its environs yesterday, they confronted a grim reality, witnessing for the first time the destruction caused by the flooding that followed Hurricane Katrina a month ago.

"Just make me a fair offer, and I'm gone," said Robert Jorns, a retired 70-year-old construction worker, as his sons-in-law pulled the plywood off the windows of his brick bungalow in the Chalmette suburb of New Orleans.

Thick mud had cracked and dried on his driveway, and a neighbor's refrigerator sat on his lawn. Inside, his own fridge lay toppled in the dining room.

Outside, a brown line about 6 feet high showed how high the floodwater had climbed.

Dank, polluted water still filled portions of the Ninth Ward of New Orleans, which flooded again after Hurricane Rita.

Rita's storm surge, officials have said, broke through a patched-up levee that had been damaged by Katrina.

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But Mayor C. Ray Nagin invited residents of Algiers, a higher-elevation neighborhood of 57,000 people, as well as business owners in the French Quarter, Uptown, and the Central Business District, to return. Residents of more damaged sectors were also streaming in to assess the losses.

"With Hurricane Rita behind us, the task at hand is to bring New Orleans back," Nagin said. "We want people to return and help us rebuild the city. However, we want everyone to assess the risks and make an informed decision about reentry plans."

Nagin warned that there were limited police and firefighting services, and hospitals were unequipped to deal with critical injuries. City water was safe to drink only in the Algiers section of the city, he said. The mayor also imposed a curfew on returning residents from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. But in Houston, which had all but emptied ahead of Hurricane Rita, a holiday atmosphere filled the nation's fourth largest city. Power was on, gas stations had fuel, and customers shopped to restock their refrigerators.

"The restaurants are open, and the gas stations have gas," said Phillip Rawlins, 34, as he took a lunch break in his tow truck. "This feels like a vacation day."

Outside of Houston, however, the situation was far different. Officials barred residents from returning to smaller towns and rural coastal regions of Louisiana and Texas, where flooding remained extensive and roads became impassable without warning.

Top federal officials charged with the relief and recovery effort traveled to Lake Charles, La., to inspect the local efforts to clear debris, restore power, and distribute food, water, and ice to those who had not evacuated.

"There's pretty much utter devastation along the coastline down there," Vice Admiral Thad Allen of the Coast Guard, head of the hurricane relief operation, said in a news conference.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency beamed the news conference to the operation's headquarters in Baton Rouge.

Rita caused an estimated \$6 billion in damage, according to storm modeler Equecat Inc. Some coastal fishing communities were flooded, and large swaths of sugar cane crops were destroyed. The storm also hit the nation's energy supplies by damaging or shutting down offshore drilling rigs and refineries in Texas and Louisiana.

In Washington, President Bush urged Americans yesterday to cut back on unnecessary travel to make up for fuel shortages caused by Rita. Bush said the government was ready to release fuel from its emergency oil stockpile to alleviate high prices. And he suggested he would name a federal official to oversee the reconstruction of the Gulf Coast, after local officials produce a rebuilding vision.

The storm may also have killed thousands of cattle. Louisiana had 860,000 head of cattle before the storm, but about a third of the state's cattle are raised in coastal areas that are now under water.

Yesterday, the Army used Blackhawk helicopters to search for thousands of cattle stranded among the flattened towns and swamped fields in Cameron and Vermilion parishes, just east of the Texas line. Scores of cattle were seen alive in the brown floodwaters.

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"The big thing now is the focus on keeping the cattle alive," said Lieutenant General Russel Honore of the Army, commander of the military task force in charge in Louisiana. He said there were reports that 4,000 cattle had died in Cameron Parish alone, where ranchers on horseback struggled to herd the animals into corrals.

Authorities were also trying to clear roads to Pecan Island to rescue roughly 5,000 cattle there, said Robert LeBlanc, director of the Vermilion Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness. He said that helicopters may be called in.

"These people's livelihood depends on this," LeBlanc said of the parish's livestock farmers, who number about 500. David Paulison, the acting director of FEMA, pledged that the government would stay with flood victims.

"I am here to tell you that there are people who lost everything -- lost their homes and lost all their possessions -- and we are going to stay here and help them get back on their feet," Paulison said.

The number of people who had died directly because of the storm increased yesterday, local authorities said.

Workers in Beaumont, Texas, near where Rita made landfall early Saturday as a Category 3 hurricane, found five bodies in an apartment. The unidentified man, woman, and three children, who probably suffocated on fumes from a generator, brought the death toll directly attributable to Rita to seven, according to the authorities.

A month ago, Hurricane Katrina killed more than 1,000 people. But Rita was weaker than Katrina when it made landfall, and it came ashore in a more sparsely populated area. Moreover, the evacuation before Rita was much more extensive, with 3 million people scrambling to get out of the second storm's path.

"I am crediting the lack of loss of life, and the lack of major injuries, to that evacuation," Paulison said. "It was difficult and tough around the edges, but it worked."

Meanwhile, the FEMA official in charge of housing relief, Ron Sherman, said the government had identified 253,000 people in Louisiana and 8,000 in Mississippi whose homes were in areas too hard-hit by Hurricane Katrina to be habitable without repairs. Those people would be eligible for \$2,300 vouchers to pay for rent in transitional housing.

It was too early to tell how that number would grow from Rita survivors in Louisiana and Texas, Sherman said, but damage assessments were underway. In addition, FEMA has processed 920,229 applicants for other forms of housing repairs assistance, and has paid out about \$1.7 billion in housing assistance.

FEMA was also working to erect thousands of mobile homes across the region. The first 100 people have moved into trailers in Louisiana, he said, and more than 1,000 more mobile homes would be ready by the end of the week.

"We have outstanding orders nationwide to keep trailers flowing until we don't need them anymore," Sherman said.

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Power remained out for hundreds of thousands of customers along the coastal region of Louisiana. Another 250,000 customers near Houston expected power to be restored by Friday. As Houston hummed back to life yesterday, Frank Chatmon, 54, a bellman at the Westin Oaks hotel, said the hurricane's close call would be a long-term blessing.

"When you get people to stop staring at themselves, then you have a chance to bring a community together," Chatmon said.

Savage reported from Baton Rouge; MacQuarrie from Houston. Material from wire services was also used.

National Guard Brings Relief To New Orleans: Another Unit Is Coming Back To California After Serving In The Battered City.

By Imran Vittachi, *The Press-Enterprise*, Riverside

A 300-member contingent from the California Army National Guard took off Monday on a post-hurricane relief mission to New Orleans from March Air Reserve Base.

A C-130 military cargo plane and a chartered World Airways DC-10 airliner took off from March, carrying 300 troops, their equipment, and a month's worth of food, water and other supplies, said Maj. Don Traud, the base spokesman. Both planes took off after 10 a.m., he said.

The troops, from the 144th Field Artillery Regiment out of Bakersfield, were going to New Orleans to patrol the flooded city, where levees broke last week as Hurricane Rita approached the Gulf Coast, said officials at California National Guard headquarters in Sacramento.

"They are going to be doing security patrols and going house-to-house, looking for people who are trapped or injured," said Scott Ghiringhelli, a public information officer at Guard headquarters.

The Guardsmen will be relieving troops from the California Guard's 2nd Battalion 185th Regiment out of San Diego, which had been deployed to the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina swept through the region in late August. The troops being relieved are due to fly home Thursday, Ghiringhelli said.

On Monday it was unclear if the returning troops would be landing at the Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego or another air base.

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Figure 27: California Army National Guard troops prepare to board a plane at March Air Reserve Base, heading for Louisiana to relieve troops who had been deployed to the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. (William Wilson Lewis III / The Press-Enterprise)

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Deputy Returns after Duty on Gulf Coast

by Christine Bensen-Messinger, The Eureka Reporter



Figure 28. Gary Cooper (The Eureka Reporter/Christine Bensen-Messinger)

Just three days after his first child was born, Humboldt County Sheriff's Deputy Gary Cooper was sent to Louisiana in his capacity as a National Guardsman to help evacuees.

"They first called us ... looking for volunteers, (but) they didn't get enough volunteers so they called and said 'you're all going,'" said Cooper, a member of detachment one of the 870th Military Police Co. based in Eureka.

"I don't think the general population of Eureka even knows we went."

Approximately 15 people from the Eureka division, which includes Crescent City residents, loaded up in Army Humvees late on the night of Aug. 31 and traveled to Pittsburg, where they met up with more than 100 of their comrades.

"Most of the guys are active duty, Army, Navy (or) Marines and then they join the National Guard," Cooper said.

He was in the Navy for three years and joined the National Guard once he got out. Cooper has been in the National Guard for 16 years and plans to retire next year.

Once they arrived in Louisiana, they spent their first couple days at the New Orleans National Airport.

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“That first day we pushed 40,000 people through the Louisiana airport,” he said. “It was organized chaos.”

Many of the evacuees they dealt with were respectful, cooperative and appreciative, Cooper said.

“We ran into a broad spectrum of people and everyone was glad to see us,” he said. “They said ‘we’re glad you’re here.’ We really didn’t have any problems. We didn’t fire one round.”

During their stint in Louisiana, they slept between the luggage carousels on the bottom floor of the airport and mostly served as a presence to help keep people calm, Cooper said.

“Some people, you could just see it, they were totally distraught,” he said. “But others were like ‘well, we have our family and our health and we’re going to make the best of it.’”

A few days after they arrived in Louisiana, their vehicles, which had been trucked over, arrived and they were able to leave the airport and help in other ways.

“Once we got our vehicles, we went with the rescuers,” Cooper said.

By boat, or in waders, they searched for people in flooded areas.

After almost 20 years in the military, Cooper said he has seen a lot.

He’s spent time in Iraq and was part of one of the first groups to arrive at the Los Angeles riots in April 1992. Cooper said he has also spent time in different areas across the country and around the world.

Each mission is different, and comes with its own merits, he said.

“New Orleans, it was a natural disaster and we were there to help the people,” Cooper said. “Everybody going thought this was a really good mission because we ... got to help our fellow Americans.”

Whether in Iraq fighting a war, or in Louisiana saving evacuees, one thing Cooper said he notices regularly is the support he and his fellow soldiers receive in almost every situation they have been in.

“It’s great that people support our troops,” he said. “I don’t care if people don’t agree with the politics (of the war), but you have to support those people. Those are our families.”

29 September 2005

Local National Guard Members Return from Gulf Coast

By Gregory Alan Gross, *Union-Tribune* Breaking News Team, San Diego



Figure 29. Members of the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armored Regiment return from a month of duty in the Gulf Coast.
Gregory Alan Gross / Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO – Soldiers of the California National Guard returned Thursday to San Diego after spending in a month in the New Orleans area, devastated by back-to-back hurricanes.

They returned with stories of a ruined region, shattered communities already stricken by poverty and political infighting among local leaders that all but paralyzed relief efforts in some of the areas hardest hit by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

A pair of chartered Boeing 727s touched down late Thursday morning at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station. Guardsmen of the 2nd battalion, 185th Armor Regiment filed across the flight line, met by a piper in kilts playing patriotic songs on a bagpipe.

"Man, it's good to be home," said Specialist Ryan Schwartz, who took part in several boat patrols through uptown New Orleans.

The 2/185 had left from this same spot Sept. 3 aboard hot, windowless KC-135 Air Force tankers to New Orleans, where they found tangles of downed trees and power lines, looted stores and block after block of flooded streets, homes and even hospitals.

The soldiers got a firsthand look at the grinding poverty that is a reality of life for a large part of the New Orleans population, a sight that Sgt. Kevin Shaughnessy described as "heart-wrenching."

"I'm glad we had a chance to go down there and help," said Shaughnessy, a retired San Diego firefighter who now lives in Victorville.

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Not all the flood-damaged homes they found were empty. Soldiers found caches of clothes and shoes looted from local stores, Shaughnessy said. The looters themselves avoided confrontations with the Guardsmen, however.

"They had lookouts," he said. "When they saw us coming, they'd (run away)."

They spent weeks in an old middle school in the Garden District, sleeping on the floors, without power or running water nearly the entire time.

None of that, however, prepared them for what they saw when they were sent into neighboring St. Bernard Parish. Soldiers described finding cars on rooftops or perched in trees, destroyed neighborhoods, and survivors infuriated after having endured weeks with little or no outside help. Thousands of homes had been damaged or destroyed, they said; virtually none had been checked for survivors or victims.

"They hadn't received any relief from Katrina, and then Rita came through," said Capt. Bruce Gaffney. "No FEMA, no Red Cross, no power, no water, only scattered police patrols and absolutely no food."

They also found local government all but paralyzed by squabbles over what to do, said Maj. Frank Emanuel, the unit commander.

"They were fighting over what to do first, what to do second, what do to next," he said.

Even more disheartening to some soldiers was the utter distrust of the local authorities.

"Whenever we talked to the people, they feared the New Orleans police more than anybody else," Shaughnessy said. "That's pretty sad when the police department can't be trusted."

None of that came as a surprise to Specialist Frank Toro, a native New Yorker who had spent a large chunk of his youth in New Orleans' Ninth Ward, the neighborhood all but destroyed by Katrina and the floods that followed.

"In a lot of places, they were just opening the doors for looters," he said of the police. "I left there 30 years ago. In some ways, I feel like they're still 30 years behind. There were a lot of things there I just refused to deal with.

"Serving my country in the military was my ticket out of there."

Big Easy Battered But Still Resilient: New Orleans Residents Stay Upbeat After Losing Everything to Katrina

By Sean Holstege, The Oakland Tribune

NEW ORLEANS — Exactly one month after Katrina engulfed the Big Easy, residents of St. Bernard Parish came home to find no home worth living in, and **California National Guard** troops started going home to something better.

The troops have been to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo, to hell and back, some twice. Yet many answered the call to help New Orleans after two hurricanes. And in St. Bernard Parish, the 700 Guard troops that joined Task Force Pelican found the Devil's paradise.

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"I feel so sorry for anybody who has to explain to their kids that everything they've ever known or had is gone," Rudy Philibert said after an afternoon sifting through the muddy remains of his house.

The only things intact were the crucifixes and religious items above his twins' beds. The beds were gone, but the 7-month-old boys were safe.

"Every cross in my house was still on the wall. Somebody was looking out for me. I definitely feel blessed. Everybody I know got away from this," he added. "I'm never coming back except to visit family with the kids."

It was the same all through the neighborhood.

Houses — two-story brick houses — were picked up by a 30-foot wall of water and dumped a quarter-mile away. Houses were dumped on other houses. Cars and trucks hang in trees or took nose-dives in backyard swimming pools, which are now murky miniature swamps.

In isolated places there still lingers the unmistakable stench of death. Everywhere there is the odor of the sea and gasoline and rotting garbage.

Seaweed and swamp grass hang from the eaves in middle-class neighborhoods that were built in the last five years. Without the destruction, it would look like any typical subdivision in Livermore, Fremont or San Mateo.

Overhead, C-130s spray the city with disinfectant. At Catherine Pizzuto's house, where she has lived for 21 years, she found baby shoes, Nerf footballs and clothes hanging on the roof mixed with the seaweed. It was Kmart merchandise from a strip mall a mile or more away.

How does anyone find happiness in such a place?

"I found my cross-stitching. It took me the longest time to make," she said.

She plans to move to Colorado and learn carpentry, to honor the memory of her dead husband, whose custom-built furniture and tools were destroyed by the oily black sludge that filled her house and caked all of St. Bernard Parish.

Around the corner, Tim and Mary Thrower and sons Matt and Tim were picking through the sludge in their house. Asked if any of their neighbors were coming back, they all point in different directions and say over and over, "They aren't, they aren't, they aren't."

Nor are the Throwers. But a simple bag of ice on the back of Mary Thrower's neck brings the biggest smile you'll ever see.

The bags come courtesy of California National Guard Col. John Munoz-Atkinson, who commands a brigade of 5,000 troops but makes the time to personally hand out pre-packaged MREs (meals ready to eat), ice and water. He calls the ice bags "California air-conditioners."

After a day of watching people come back to St. Bernard, he returned to the air-conditioned office at Belle Chase Naval Air Station and tells his team: "This stopped being fun, guys."

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He has been in the military since 1971 and watched his daughter die in his arms of cancer before she reached 3. Asked if he was professionally or emotionally prepared for what he has seen here, he lost words, and then choked out through tears, "No ... No ... No."

As he picks through rubble where the wall of water wiped out a block of houses, his head sinks and he mutters to himself, "This was somebody's home, some kid's toy, somebody's home video. Somebody slept here."

On Wednesday, Bay Area Guard troops rotated in to relieve those who are weary. All of the ones shipping out today said the first thing they would do when they got home was get rest. Among those going home were Staff Sgt. Andrew Stephenson of Tracy and Spc. Orlando Aburto of Hayward.

Both serve in the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armored Regiment, and both patrolled Baghdad as recently as March. Both expected widespread damage and sorrow and were not surprised. Iraq toughened them, they said.

"Iraq was worse, but I never thought I'd carry an M-16 in the United States," Aburto said.

He said he will tell his wife "how bad things are here and how people lost everything. An earthquake could hit us."

He plans to get a quake preparedness kit now. Stephenson, a student, said he was surprised by the destruction left by looters and will remember the scrawny pets that were left by fleeing residents, which his platoon fed.

He and colleagues put their bullets in their hats as one of their final acts before going home. Another was a ceremony to promote heroes in the field, such as Capt. Bruce Gaffney, who saved a gaunt old man, in one of the last rescues in this tortured city. The man died, but the rescue allowed his family to be there.

The men coming in said they do not know what to expect. TV images don't tell them, but they are eager to help.

Among them are Spc. Robert Dunn of Oakland, a medic at Summit Medical Center; Spc. John Pierre Kelani, a San Francisco student; and Staff Sgt. Ernesto Buena Vista, an instructor at Oakland Military Institute. All are attached to the 143rd Field Artillery. Dunn was a medic in Iraq, the others served at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"It's a pleasure to be here. I could be worse off. I like to help people," Kelani said.

Buena Vista said he has no idea what to expect but plans to tell his students about his experience when he returns.

If he asked the residents of St. Bernard Parish, they would tell him nothing will prepare them. They keep their little children away and tell relatives not to bother to come.

But come they do, and it helps them move on. So does their irrepressible humor.

Buzzy Vanderbrook points to cars in his tree and says, "I want to get me a job as a valet parking attendant."

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For the next Mardi Gras, he says, "We're all gonna get grocery carts and go as homeless people." And he says it's time, after his business was wiped out, to figure out what to do when he grows up. He's 53.

All though St. Bernard and the Ninth Ward, hand-painted plywood signs show the resilience of these people. One says, "Big sale. All cars 89 percent off. Some free."

Somebody painted on an abandoned boat S.S. Brown, presumably named for the departed FEMA director, Michael Brown.

The resiliency has left an impression with Guard troops.

"Every one of us Californians has been motivated to help in any way we can. I'm very proud," said Col. Scott Johnson, who commands the Joint Task Force California-Louisiana and lives in Fairfield. "We've been here for the long haul. We've been one of the very first states here, and we'll be one of the last.

"It's a little odd. This experience will make the California National Guard better to respond to a catastrophe in California," Johnson said. "And we know we can count on people around the country to help."

30 September 2005

Press Release: Guardsmen Secured, Safe from Second Storm

Public Affairs Office, Joint Forces Headquarters, California National Guard

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. – Even with Hurricane Rita threatening Louisiana, Joint Task Force California was not deterred from its original mission to the Bayou State for Hurricane Katrina.

Soldiers and airmen from the California National Guard remained in the New Orleans district despite Rita's presence, and drove on with the mission to support Louisiana after Katrina.

"We're fine," said Col. John B. Munoz-Atkinson, deputy commander, Joint Task Force California. "Everyone's on high ground; everyone's safe. We've positioned California Army National Guard soldiers in locations throughout Katrina where we'll respond quickly in the aftermath of Rita."

The latest storm, which lashed western Louisiana and parts of east Texas Saturday (Sept. 24), put California in secure mode. Joint Task Force California moved its operation center to Slidell, a city north of its former location at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station. Close to 50 soldiers and airmen waited out the storm from there. About 20 Guardsmen remained at Belle Chasse to continue operations from a temporary facility.

The 400-member 2/185th Armored Battalion moved out of Orleans Parish to Algiers, a city closer to California's former main headquarters in Belle Chasse. Battalion soldiers continued duties as facilities security, traffic control, and debris cleanup according to Maj. Frank Emanuel, battalion commander.

"We came here with a mission to help the people of Louisiana recover from Katrina. We're going to stick to that mission," Emanuel said. "And if our help is needed after Rita, we'll continue to provide support as best as we can."

"Every soldier is in a safe location, away from hurricane danger," said Capt. Bruce Gaffney, 2/185th Bravo Company commander. "They're all in hard structures: Buildings, churches, schools. They're safe from harm."

Press Release: Wayne Newton and Friends Entertain TF Katrina Troops

Public Affairs Office, Joint Forces Headquarters, California National Guard

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA- Wayne Newton and other entertainers performed yesterday evening to an enthusiastic crowd of service personnel as part of a USO tour of Task Force Katrina units.

The hour-long show was another of the famous singer's many performances for US service personnel all over the world. Newton, dressed in black trousers, shirt, and cowboy boots initially acted as master of ceremonies during the show introducing the other entertainers, then bombarded the crowd with a rousing closer.

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Country western singer Neil McCoy received a warm welcome while performing two of his hit songs. Service men and women, sang along, cheered, waved, and swayed to the music. Many still and video cameras were in use, capturing images of the performer. McCoy seemed thrilled to play to the crowd, thanking them for their service while singing about beer goggles and other country western themes.

One of the main highlights of the show was singer Brenda Lee's inspiring voice. Lee stood at the side of the stage for most of the one-hour show, but moved up front to sing a soulful, heart-felt gospel piece, and amazed the audience with her rich voice during the emotional, spiritual number.

The program concluded with Newton climbing back on stage, pulling out a fiddle, and showing why this versatile performer still has what it takes to please a crowd of any age or cultural background after nearly a half-century of playing and singing. Newton's country fiddle work was nothing short of amazing as he practically made the strings smoke and the band struggled to keep up. The audience spontaneously rose up and cheered wildly as he finished with a flourish.

The hour-long show ended with Newton's traditional standard, "Danke Schoen." He performed the song in his now famous deep and swinging lounge style rather than the high-pitch of his younger days.

As the music ended, Newton took a deep bow and made sure the crowd cheered the other performers one final time before running off backstage. Newton was headed for yet

another show; another opportunity to entertain troops who will surely appreciate the thanks and encouragement provided by the generous and tireless performers of the USO.

Relief-Duty Guardsmen Return To San Diego: They Tell Of Seeing Grinding Poverty

By Gregory Alan Gross, Union-Tribune Staff Writer

After spending a month in the New Orleans area, soldiers of the California National Guard returned to San Diego yesterday with stories of shattered communities and political infighting that all but paralyzed hurricane relief efforts.

A pair of chartered Boeing 727s touched down late yesterday morning at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station. National Guardsmen of the 2nd Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment filed across the flight line, met by a bagpiper playing patriotic songs.

"Man, it's good to be home," said Specialist Ryan Schwartz, who took part in several boat patrols through the Uptown area of New Orleans.

The 2/185 had left from Miramar Sept. 3 aboard hot, windowless KC-135 Air Force tankers to New Orleans, where they found tangles of downed trees and power lines, looted stores and block after block of flooded streets, homes and even hospitals.

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The soldiers got a firsthand look at the grinding poverty that is a reality of life for a large part of the New Orleans population, a sight that Sgt. Kevin Shaughnessy described as heart-wrenching.

"I'm glad we had a chance to go down there and help," said Shaughnessy, a retired San Diego firefighter who now lives in Victorville.

Not all the flood-damaged homes they found were empty. Soldiers found caches of clothes and shoes looted from local stores, Shaughnessy said. The looters themselves avoided confrontations with the National Guardsmen, however.

"They had lookouts," he said. "When they saw us coming, they'd (run away)."

The National Guardsmen spent weeks in an old middle school in the Garden District, sleeping on the floors, without power or running water nearly the entire time.

None of that, however, prepared them for what they saw when they were sent into neighboring St. Bernard Parish. Soldiers described finding cars on rooftops or perched in trees, destroyed neighborhoods, and survivors infuriated after having endured weeks with little or no outside help.

Thousands of homes had been damaged or destroyed, they said; virtually none had been checked for survivors or victims.

"They hadn't received any relief from Katrina, and then Rita came through," Capt. Bruce Gaffney said. "No FEMA, no Red Cross, no power, no water, only scattered police patrols and absolutely no food."

They also found local government all but paralyzed by squabbles over what to do, said Maj. Frank Emanuel, the unit commander.

"They were fighting over what to do first, what to do second, what do to next," he said.

Even more disheartening to some soldiers was the utter distrust of the local authorities.

"Whenever we talked to the people, they feared the New Orleans police more than anybody else," Shaughnessy said. "That's pretty sad when the police department can't be trusted."

None of that came as a surprise to Spec. Frank Toro, a native New Yorker who had spent much of his youth in New Orleans' Ninth Ward, the neighborhood all but destroyed by Katrina and the floods that followed.

"In a lot of places, they were just opening the doors for looters," he said of the police. "I left there 30 years ago. In some ways, I feel like they're still 30 years behind. There were a lot of things there I just refused to deal with.

"Serving my country in the military was my ticket out of there."

Home from the Hurricane

By Heather Murtagh, *Daily Journal* Correspondent, San Mateo

CALIFORNIA MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATION

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After a month in New Orleans maintaining control and helping the humanitarian effort, the initial group of California Army National Guard Infantrymen deployed to Operation Hurricane Katrina Relief returned home Sept. 30.

First Lt. Joseph Calder of Redwood City led the 22 man group. The group, 2nd platoon Alpha Company of 2-185 [Armor Battalion] task force, had a two-point mission: deter crime and help the humanitarian effort.

Calder said the men were from all over Northern California including the Bay Area, Sacramento area and the Central Valley. Katrina hit the Gulf Coast Aug. 29. The group was mobilized Sept. 1 and arrived in New Orleans by Sept. 3. Most of the men volunteered — including Calder. “The major said the police were losing control,” Calder said. “... When we got there, we became the law.”

The infantry team specializes in close quarters control. Many parts of the city had experienced looters, Calder said. The task force’s presence significantly diminished crime.

The group helped in any capacity they could from patrolling the streets, removing citizens’ trash and mowing laws to just getting to know the concerns of locals.

When they arrived though, most of their patrolling was in areas with flood water.

“Everything was destroyed. There was so much destruction. There was just chaos. It gave you a realization of how a city can become lawless without quick reaction,” Calder said.

Men worked anywhere from 16- to 48-hour shifts during their stay in New Orleans. Part of the efforts included a 24-hour quick reaction force ready to respond to anything.

Gun shots rang out their first day of patrol. The group patrolled houses for electricity, damage and anyone living or dead. The men checked thousands of homes, Calder said.

One man pronounced dead by officials prior to the infantrymen arriving was actually alive, Calder said. His me helped get the man to a hospital. The group also passed out water and ready-to-eat meals.

“It was a very unique situation to be able to help your fellow American in their time of need,” Calder said.

The water’s toxicity became an issue. Not only were there dead bodies and animals floating around but the sewer line broke, Calder said. New Orleans will most likely be contaminated for years, he said. In some areas, the water was 14 feet deep and could only be accessed by boat.

Vehicles that traveled through the contaminated water would have to be detoxified. When men traveled through it, their clothing and boots would sometimes have to be tossed out.

“There was a man helping the Army who had a cut on his leg. After being through the water, they had to cut off his leg,” Calder said.

Calder kept his men away from contaminated areas as much as possible, however many still began to feel sick at times.

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With replacements in place, the group of men returned home last week and are currently on leave until Thursday, Oct. 7

Calder said he is very proud of the way his men performed and that the group did the best it could to help.

When the group is at home in California it can be recognized as 1-184 infantry out of Modesto and Pleasanton. Half of their unit is currently deployed to Iraq

Guard Comes Home.

Voice of San Diego

After three weeks of helping out in the storm-ravaged states affected by Hurricane Katrina, 300 National Guard soldiers returned to San Diego on Thursday.

One hundred more National Guard members will arrive today at Naval Air Station North Island.

The soldiers, who rescued more than 100 people, were members of San Diego's 2nd Battallion, 185th Armor Unit.

5 October 2005

Local National Guardsmen in Daring Rescue

Television Station KRON, San Francisco, www.kron4.com

Posted: 5 October 2005 at 5:46 p.m.

MOUNTAIN VIEW (KRON) -- Members of the California Air National Guard are home after successfully carrying out a risky rescue at sea.

The rescue happened over a three-day period. On Sunday, an MC-130 took off from Moffett Field headed for a tanker some 1,000 miles at sea.

Three para-rescuers from the 129th Rescue Wing, armed with medical gear, jumped into the ocean and boarded the Liberian-registered vessel.

The ship's captain had sent out a distress call, saying that two crew needed immediate medical help. One had broken both of his arms.

The other, a crewmember with mental problems, was suffering from hypothermia after having jumped overboard.

The dramatic rescue ended Tuesday when a Pavehawk helicopter, also from Moffett Field, arrived on the scene and picked up the rescuers and their patients.

During its mission, the MC-130 aircraft re-fueled the chopper, enabling it to make the long journey to and from Moffett Field.

It was helicopter pilot Capt. Matt Thomas' first rescue at sea.

Thomas was, "excited to finally go out and help somebody," he told KRON 4's Vic Lee. "A little nervous, saying the co-pilot's prayer, 'Dear Lord, don't let me screw up.' "

Sgt. Eric was one of the three rescuers. Because he's also with special forces, we've been asked not to reveal his last name.

Sgt. Eric served in the Gulf states after Hurricane Katrina hit.

The 129th Rescue Wing saved more than 200 people over three days.

"It's really hard to explain what it was like out there," he said. "Luckily we were able to do a lot of good."

Another 90 airmen from the 129th Rescue Wing are due home from the Middle East. Those we spoke with here say it's tough and dangerous work but rewarding, which explains why the retention rate among the 129th Rescue Wing is so high.

7 October 2005

143rd Field Artillery Regiment in New Orleans

U.S. Army Website, www.army.mil



Figure 30: Spc. John Hernandez, from 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, searches the streets of New Orleans for people in need of assistance as well as providing security, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Photo by Pvt. John Higgins.

10 October 2005

**Soldier Recalls Relief Efforts Guardsman Says Time Spent In New Orleans
A Rewarding Experience**

By Simon Read, Tri-Valley Herald, Pleasanton

Spending one month in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina was an eye-opening experience for members of the California Army National Guard, one guardsman said upon his recent return.

First Lt. Joseph Calder from the 1-184 Infantry, stationed out of Camp Parks, led a group of National Guard infantry men from California for nearly one month in the storm-devastated city. The guardsmen were culled from Bravo Company at Camp Parks and Charlie Company in Auburn, and arrived in New Orleans on Sept. 1.

"We were told that we would see dead bodies and encounter hostile people, and that we would encounter people in distress," Calder said. "It was really surprising to see much of the city full of water."

The level of destruction was stunning, Calder, 33, said.

"Things were just completely destroyed, and there was so much crime," he said. "There were massive signs of looting. You'd see cars with gas tanks open and the gas gone, broken windows, stores broken into."

Calder said his men were told by local authorities that some people had intentionally stayed in the city to take advantage of the situation and steal what they wanted.

"There were some aggressive people there," he said. "On one of our first patrols, we heard a lot of gunfire."

18 October 2005

Fate and a Fishing Boat Help One Man Rescue 400 in Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

The Ultimate Bass Fishing Resource Guide, www.bassresource.com

NEW ORLEANS -- The three fishing buddies never expected their new Skeeter fishing boat to survive Hurricane Katrina. So when they found only the boat's trailer in storm-ravaged New Orleans, they assumed the worst.

But when two of the owners returned several weeks later, on the first day the water had receded enough to allow travel, they checked their homes and then drove around viewing the devastation. They did indeed find the boat, worse for wear like a battle-scarred veteran, and with a cryptic message written on the side: "This boat rescued over 400 people -- thank you! -- Ken Bellau," along with his telephone number.

The abandoned boat was found on the side of Napoleon Avenue, filthy, damaged, with items abandoned by some of those rescued. What had happened to that boat?

This then is the story of how that Skeeter boat and Ken Bellau, a 37-year-old New Orleans resident, home renovator and competitive bicyclist, would play a significant role in the evacuation efforts of the city's Uptown section.

When Bellau rushed home from a South American bike race, friends asked him to check on missing relatives. His plan was to find those people, then help wherever he could for a day or so and then go home to clean up his own storm damage.

Little did he know that in his first two weeks home, he would end up as a guide to a battalion of 462 **California National Guardsmen**, rescue more than 400 people trapped in the floodwaters, help capture two looters by ramming their boat, bluff five gang members into a peaceful outcome of an armed standoff and use his connections to bring 500 donated hot pizzas. He would also help with 600 donated steaks to give the Guardsmen and another unit their first normal meals since they'd arrived in the disaster zone.

Fate Intervenes

The sequence of events that would bring Bellau and the Skeeter together began while he was still in South America. Before the storm, the boat's owners, all New Orleans residents -- Ward Howard, Jeff Haynes and Dr. Terry Habig, one of the team doctors for the New Orleans Saints, decided to move their new boat to a safer spot at Dr. Habig's office. The sleek 24-foot center console model with its top-of-the line Yamaha F250 outboard, state-of-the-art electronics and GPS navigation was their fishing pride and joy, recently delivered by Blue Dot Marine, a local dealer. They had only used the boat for 20 hours.

Moving the boat from their in-water slip at The Tally Ho fishing and hunting club would prove a wise but fateful decision. The Tally Ho, the oldest such club in North America, had survived other

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hurricanes and even wars since 1815, its founding year, but this time it would be one of the hurricane's first victims, flattened and washed away entirely by Katrina.

By now, Bellau was back in New Orleans and trying to contact the people on his list. His frustration began to mount as checkpoints were set up around the city and he was rebuffed at every turn.

"Here I was, trying to track down these friends and relatives, and here were federal and state people in trucks and boats wearing SWAT gear, intimidating people who were desperate for help," Bellau said, "I just thought I could help since I knew the area and could drive a boat. In the Uptown area where I lived, these were my neighbors and fellow citizens of a really vibrant city. And yet, the media focused mostly on the negative showing only violence and looting, even on South American TV. It really made me angry."

That was the turning point for Bellau. He went home, put on a set of fatigues and a 40mm handgun with holster, looking as official as any one and set out.

"It was total chaos, no one in charge, no organization, nothing was happening," he said. "I never expected to be wearing a gun for protection in the streets of New Orleans."

He started looking again for people when he noticed the 24-foot Skeeter idling down the flooded street. A small group of men was onboard.

He asked them to stop and talked with them, whom he said were residents from a local substance-abuse treatment center.

"They were mighty glad to see me, as they thought I was some kind of official since I was armed and in military fatigues," Bellau said. "They decided that they couldn't do any more good, and all the hassles of being stopped were stressing them, so they gave me the boat. I dropped them off, and they returned to the treatment center."

Bellau was mighty glad to see them, too. Until he found the roomy, stable Skeeter with its powerful V6 Yamaha, he had been paddling seven hours a day in a pirogue, a long, narrow boat favored by Louisianans. But it wasn't much for rescue. One day, he rescued a St. Bernard dog and was trying to get a woman to join them in the small boat. She refused because it looked unsafe and was tipsy with the big dog. However, there were natural gas leaks all around them and they could smell them, a dangerous situation. Finally, she relented and came aboard. As they were leaving, a gas explosion blew up a nearby house and knocked both of them out of the boat. The dog stayed in the boat. Bellau said the woman was very angry with him for her fall into the smelly water. Compared to the pirogue, the Skeeter was the Queen Mary.

"I got the Skeeter on Day 3 after the hurricane, which is how people had begun referring to time and date. Days and calendar dates had no meaning. Everything revolved around the hurricane. I had been bringing in lots of people using the Skeeter when a military patrol stopped me and wanted to use the boat. When they found out I knew the area, they asked me to assist."

The unit was from the 2nd Battalion of 185th Armor [Regiment, California Army] National Guard from San Diego. Maj. Frank Emanuel, the commanding officer, would later joke that they commandeered not only the boat but also Bellau.

"Ken knew where everything was in Uptown, the infrastructure, schools, streets, dead-ends,

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power grid locations,” Emanuel said. “He even drove us around before our military vehicles arrived. He was a critical component in boat operations as our liaison to find more boats to use. He just wanted to help. It totally blew us away.”

If by now, you get the feeling Ken is a little bit of Indiana Jones, a miracle worker and an Army Scout all rolled into one. you might not be too far off.

For example, the battalion needed a headquarters and secure place for its tactical operation center. Bellau knew the Sophie B. Wright School was nearby and not in use. It wasn't too long before the military engineers had power restored there making the school the first building in New Orleans after Katrina to have power back on and air conditioning. It was a much-needed relief for the Guardsmen and a real boost to their morale.

According to Maj. Emanuel, before the battalion would depart New Orleans, it would tally 11,023 structure searches, many of which Bellau participated in. Ken was also involved in 92 water rescues using the Skeeter while with the Guard.

All told, 400 people -- from babies to the elderly, from gang members to stranded rescuers -- rode the Skeeter to safety. But that wasn't the only way Bellau helped.

He knew the owner of Moe's Pizza, which baked 500 pizzas for the guard battalion -- the first normal food they had eaten during their time there. Chris Rose, an enterprising newspaper reporter arranged for Antoine's, one of the city's great landmark restaurants, to donate 600 frozen steaks, which would otherwise have spoiled. Bellau pitched in and helped scrounge up some grills and charcoal. Twice now, America's Finest got to enjoy fine N'awlins cuisine, although not in the manner most visitors enjoy it.

A Boat To Rely On

The Skeeter boat that fate had delivered to Bellau soon became one of the most trustworthy tools the battalion had.

“Every morning, I'd paddle a canoe out to the boats where we'd tied them up, and often the only one floating was the Skeeter,” Bellau said. “We used an abandoned Shell station for our 'marina', and the pump islands were our docks where we'd tie up the boats each night. It was too shallow near the school for anything other than a canoe.

“Most donated or commandeered boats only lasted a day or so in this harsh environment, but we needed four boats a day so we were always looking for replacements. They'd sink overnight or have engine or propeller problems we couldn't fix. But not once did that Yamaha fail to start, and it ran non-stop dawn to dark for nearly two weeks.

“To prevent the Skeeter from being stolen, each night I would disconnect the battery and take the ignition switch assembly with me. Then, each day I'd re-install it and off we'd go.”

He wasn't the only one the boat helped. The Guard said actor Sean Penn used the Skeeter to rescue a stranded friend after the boat he had used earlier filled with water and couldn't be used.

While reliability wasn't a worry with the Skeeter or the Yamaha, finding fuel was.

“The Guard was helpful but had mostly diesel,” Bellau said. “I got most of my fuel from sending

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text messages over my cell phone to friends, and each night, they'd deliver 15 or so gallons. Text messaging was the only communication that worked while I was there."

Each day, Bellau and several Guardsmen would patrol the streets turned waterways, looking for people to evacuate from the floodwaters. At one point, the boat's depth finder showed the water was 21 feet deep.

"Even so, we ground down the prop down pretty good, hitting submerged cars, trucks, houses, fences, concrete slabs, downed power poles and wires," Bellau said.

"At one point, as we were throttling up to leave, we snagged a power line and the prop just wrapped the line up/ But there was so much engine torque, it actually pulled down the power pole which happened to have a transformer on it. It narrowly missed the boat. It took some time to free the prop, but it happened so often, we were getting pretty good at it."

Searching for survivors was a priority.

"The Yamaha was very quiet, which helped us hear cries for help," he said. "Some were pretty weak. We'd sound the boat's horn, calling for people and if they were in the attic or inside, their replies were pretty muffled.

"Once, we ended up with 39 adults and children in the boat all at one time. We had no choice. It was dangerous and scary, but had to be done. The water was close to coming in over the sides, but we only had to go a couple of blocks so we went very slowly and no one moved in the boat.

Obviously, we were overloaded, and I wouldn't do anything like that normally. But this wasn't a normal time. Thank God for all that flotation in the boat. Even under that load, the motor still purred.

"In fact, I can't say enough good things about the boat and motor. We towed in a lot of boats that had begun to leak or sink or whose engines quit or props broke. I really came to trust that Yamaha. It started every day without a hiccup and worked all day with no problems. It was one of those things you knew you could count on every day. It was very reliable."

Drama Amid The Floodwaters

As the days passed, Bellau and the Guards found fewer people wanting to evacuate. Some were hiding, fearful of what looters might do to their belongings. And people thought the worst was over.

"We encountered looters, too," Bellau said. "For several days, we saw two guys in the same boat in the area and thought at first they were there to help. But when we saw a bicycle in the boat, we got suspicious.

"So several Guardsmen were with me and we approached them in the Skeeter, hailing to them to stop. But they wouldn't. To get them to stop, I had to ram the other boat and shove it up against a house, trapping them.

"These guys were definitely looters. They had more than \$11,000 in cash plus a lot of jewelry and watches, not to mention two handguns."

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The Guardsmen held them until the police came to get them. The men had Syrian passports but no other ID, so the police turned them over to the FBI.

While ramming looters' boats might get the adrenalin pumping, an even more frightening episode was yet to come. Bellau said they found five men dressed in gang gear on the porch of a house, and they were nervous.

"As we approached them, I asked the guys if they wanted a ride to dry land. They said no," Bellau said. "We could tell they all had guns under their shirts, so we asked if they were armed. They denied it.

"Things were starting to get tense now. I asked one if he would lift up his shirt, and he refused. He said if he lifted his shirt, there might be some shooting.

"I told them that in case they hadn't noticed, the Guardsmen had slightly more firepower with their M16s. It got very quiet right about then, and adding to the tension was the complete quiet of the neighborhood. No birds, no traffic, just the lapping of the rising water and the quiet idling of the motor.

"Something had to happen and soon. So I told the speaker I'd show him my sidearm if he'd show me his. I held it out to him. He stared at it, broke into a smile, took my handgun and then pulled his out of his shirt and let me examine his. This broke the tension, and after we returned the side arms, the gang members agreed to leave their guns in the house. After they came out, we could still see the outlines under their shirts. We decided to not push the issue, as we'd accomplished our goal. But the Guardsmen were very, very alert until we got them ashore and off the boat."

High, Low Moments

The rescuers' days were mostly dark and depressing with so much destruction and death all around them. Bellau said the only bright spots were pulling people out of terrible situations and that they were always grateful.

"My most gratifying moment happened on Day 14, my last day in the Skeeter," Bellau said. "We were near our makeshift marina where I'd go out to get the Skeeter. About a block away on Napoleon Avenue, there was a dry cleaner, and on the second floor was the apartment of Dr. M.J. Hirsch, a retiree suffering from dementia.

"We must have passed his place 100 times, and on the last day, there he was, waving at us from the window. He said he had waved every day but was missed by all the rescue teams. We were stunned -- how did he get there? Worse, how could all of us have missed him?"

"We got him out and saved him. I called his relatives in Dallas and let him talk to them."

Bellau also said there were some light moments. For example, he said it was a kick to be piloting the Skeeter at 45 mph down the flooded streets among the tall buildings and to pass speed limit signs of 35 mph. And he gave the younger Guardsmen boating lessons, as many had never driven a boat this powerful.

But with the good comes the bad. Bellau's worst moment came in helping an elderly lady.

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“She told us to leave, saying she was fine, she just wanted to be left alone and didn’t want to leave,” he said. “She was one of those traditional sweet Southern ladies. Even in the heat and humidity, she was dressed all proper in a long dress, sitting on her porch, using a fan.

“Most of those who didn’t want to leave their homes were elderly or afraid looters would get their possessions. She was content to stay home in familiar surroundings. We made sure she had food and water and checked her frequently.

The government hadn’t yet authorized the rescuers to forcibly require evacuation, so they could only continue to look in on her and see if she was OK.

“We went back to bring her more water and food, but she had died in the night,” Bellau said. We found her in the water. She may have slipped or maybe got an infection or drowned. The floodwater was really a nasty toxic soup. Had she only gone with us, she might be alive today.”

Evidence Of Rescue Efforts

The lost, but now found boat had clearly been through the wringer. There was damage to the bow and part of the stern. And it was filthy, smelly and littered with evacuees’ personal belongings -- children’s achievement awards, toys, water bottles, even a small American flag much the worse for wear, but defiantly and proudly displayed from the starboard gunnel, facing the street. It was as if it was a statement that its mission was accomplished.

But it was the message scrawled on the side of the boat that led the owners to Bellau and his story of helping others in the aftermath of the greatest natural disaster ever to hit the United States.

“I came there to help thinking it was going to be for a short period. But the more I saw, I realized early on there would be little help and few rescue efforts until someone took charge,” Bellau said. “The police agencies would typically follow the media around. In those early days, at least in my area, I never saw them come in with any evacuees. Thank God for the California National Guard and others like them.

“But I know, too, there were plenty of good people working hard to help others. Look at us, just one boat and we pulled out 400 survivors. And others were doing the same and more. In fact, one of the reasons I wrote the message on the boat was to let others know what that boat had gone through and accomplished.”

National Guard Capt. David Como, who was probably the last to drive the boat due to the receding floodwaters, said the Yamaha was so reliable, it reminded him of those ads where the watch takes a licking and keeps on ticking. Well, that was the same for that engine.”

Shortly after the boat was discovered and photos taken, it disappeared. Some say it was stolen, others say it was picked up by the state of Louisiana and taken to storage near Belle Chasse. The search is on. However, word of this Skeeter/Yamaha rig’s 400 rescues was spreading. Howard received a call from Greg Lambousy of the Louisiana State Museum, asking to put the boat in a display of hurricane artifacts. Yamaha and Skeeter might like to have the boat, too, for boat show displays as a testimony to their products’ ruggedness and reliability. But first, the boat has to be found. Howard thought the museum would be the best place for it.

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The Times-Picayune newspaper ran a photo of the boat with its message and Bellau said that while they were rescuing people, news crews interviewed them, including CNN, NBC and CBS.

But what of the owners, would they want their boat back? Ward Howard said the boat will be a total loss, but they will replace it with an identical boat. But this time, they might give the boat a name. He said the name Katrina 400 seems to fit.

No doubt thousands of ordinary people all along the Gulf Coast did extraordinary things to help strangers and neighbors after the hurricane and flooding, just as Ken Bellau did. By the story Bellau and his boat, set amid the horrible devastation of Hurricane Katrina, shows us how one determined, caring man can indeed make a difference.

1 November 2005

**Returning To Normal: National Guard Regiment Headquartered Out Of
Burbank Armory View Firsthand The Destruction In Louisiana Left By
Hurricanes Katrina, Rita**

By Mark R. Madler *The Burbank Leader*



Figure 31. Almost home. Members of the 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, unload their equipment from the bus after they returned to the armory Monday.

BURBANK -- Describing what he saw in hurricane-ravaged Louisiana, California National Guard Cpl. Omar Conger could only come up with one word: sad.

Yet, despite the devastation, the local people the Guardsmen were there to help showed a great appreciation for the mission, Conger said Monday.

"We had civilians cook meals for us and, for the most part, were very often," said Conger of Sacramento.

Conger and 249 other guardsman, primarily with the 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery Regiment, returned home Monday to the Burbank Armory after serving 45 days in the Gulf Coast state to help the residents get their lives back in order, provide security and repair buildings in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which hit shore on Aug. 29.

The Guardsman landed at Bob Hope Airport in two shifts, aboard planes chartered by the military. The regiment includes residents of both Burbank and Glendale.

More than 1,000 people were killed in areas in the Gulf Coast hit by Katrina, which ripped through the Gulf Coast on with 145 mph winds. Damage from the storm has been estimated at \$200 billion.

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Less than a month later, just as the Guardsmen were ready to deploy, Hurricane Rita struck the Louisiana and Texas coasts creating billions in damage but far fewer deaths.

Sgt. Damian Eismann had a hard time coming up with words to describe what he saw.

"When you got over there, you saw a lot of people homeless and there were dead bodies and stuff like that," said Eismann, of Riverside. "It was pretty emotional for everybody."

National Guard Capt. Tish Henderson had visited New Orleans prior to the hurricanes. The devastation she saw was a lot worse than she had expected.

Although the flood waters were receding, some areas still had standing water and a lot of homes had been demolished, Henderson said.

"Every person we talked to were happy we were there," said Henderson, of Huntington Beach. "They felt safer simply because the neighborhoods were not as nice."

Conger accompanied the New Orleans Police on patrols, went on security missions and assisted with humanitarian aid in areas that were absent of any immediate danger.

"It was returning to normal, for what normal could be," Conger said.

At the armory, after having unloaded their bags and other equipment from a bus, the Guardsmen were thanked for their work by 40th Division Commander Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Gidley.

They should all be proud that their work made a difference in the lives of the people they helped, Gidley said.

"Our ability to support our national security and other states is what makes us the unique organization we are," Gidley said.

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11 November 2005

Roving Units Aim To Bridge Gaps In Communication

By Barney McManigal, Santa Barbara News-Press Staff Writer



Figure 32. Sgt. 1st Class Lisa Jefferson of the Army National Guard operates one of the state's IC4Us -- or incident command, control, communication and computer units -- mounted on the back of a Humvee on Thursday. The vehicle, seen below, was on display outside the County Administration Building. Mike Eliason / News-Press

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast last summer, the California National Guard leaped into action, dispatching techno-savvy teams to reverse a communications blackout in the waterlogged region.

In Santa Barbara on Thursday, several guardsmen displayed one of the roving command units that came in so handy in New Orleans.

"There was no communication for three weeks," National Guard spokesman David Golden said of traditional means.

The box-shaped centers, which cost about \$250,000, provide telephone, radio, e-mail and Internet access, and can fit on top of a Humvee or pickup. The National Guard has placed about seven of them across the state and boast that any community is only about two hours away by plane.

The display near the County Administration Building preceded a special hearing led by Assemblyman Pedro Nava, D-Santa Barbara, to discuss disaster preparedness. The four-hour subcommittee meeting featured panelists versed in the area's emergency response strategies.

"Every effort made at emergency preparedness translates into lives saved and property protected," Mr. Nava said.

Representatives from the state auditor's and Legislative Analyst's offices, county Supervisor Susan Rose and county Office of Emergency Services spokesman Bruce Carter provided testimony.

"We have had fires and floods, and I believe our county is responding well," Ms. Rose said.

In one colorful moment, Mr. Nava's colleague, Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn, D-San Jose, blasted the federal government for withholding disaster relief money meant for the state.

"It's isn't going to do us diddly-squat to have well-trained, well-intentioned people who do not have what they need in the aftermath of a disaster," he said.

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