



CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT
& HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Center for Excellence holds second humanitarian assistance/disaster response training for U.S. military in Hawaii

HONOLULU (Sept. 24, 2008) – More than 75 military personnel from throughout the U.S. Pacific military command (USPACOM) attended a key humanitarian assistance/disaster response training held at Camp Smith Sept. 17-18.

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE) executed the Training Assistance Program (TAP) workshop, the second in Hawaii this year, which is designed to educate the U.S. military about the international civilian humanitarian community.

“It’s been valuable because in my job at the USPACOM J4 (logistics) directorate, one of the aspects we deal with is international logistics,” said Air Force Col. Ronald Yakkel, Chief of the Logistics Readiness Division. “And for me. . . learning a little more about what the NGOs do, who they are, how they relate to the military - when one is deployed and has to deal with them on the ground, is helpful.”

The U.S. military continues to be a key part of the overall U.S. response to disaster situations in the Asia-Pacific region. Being able to interface well with civilian humanitarian organizations is integral to the mission of assisting the people of the host nation effectively.

Thomas Frey from the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) said that while the course had similarities to the ones his agency executes, they are put on from the perspective of USAID, and therefore have a slightly different focus.

“Any time that we can learn more about each other, the better it’s going to be in the field – when we actually get down to humanitarian assistance/disaster response activities,” said Frey, adding that he found new information from the course and perspectives from the military audience educational.

Yakkel also said the course helped highlight the fact that commonly used acronyms, such as NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and IOs (international organizations), are often confused. Better knowledge of each category of “organization” results in better understanding of the international humanitarian field.

Course topics provided an understanding of how these organizations work, as well as information on refugees, international relief standards, and public health considerations in disaster situations.

The course lead was Jessica Adler of COE's Humanitarian Affairs & Practice unit. Other speakers included COE subject matter experts and staff, as well as a USPACOM Humanitarian Assistance Program Manager as a guest instructor.

The workshop is COE's fifth humanitarian training for the U.S. military in 2008, COE's highest number of humanitarian training workshops in a year. Throughout the year, COE held training workshops at Camp Zama (Japan), and for the 3rd Marine Division and the III Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa. In January, a TAP was held for USPACOM personnel at Pearl Harbor.

As part of its congressional mandate to promote effective civil-military relations in the Asia-Pacific region, COE has executed more than 16 events and supported at least 27 others in 10 countries in 2008.

For photos of the event, please go to: <http://www.coe-dmha.org/articles.htm>

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COE, a direct reporting unit to the U.S. DoD, partners with a wide variety of national and international governmental, non-governmental and international organizations. COE was established by the US Congress in 1994 to promote effective civil-military management in international humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and peacekeeping, with emphasis in the Asia-Pacific region. <http://www.coe-dmh.org>