Words from the Tsunami Assistance Front Linesâ€¦

Description

Update: And pictures of the relief effort by the US Navyâ€¦

I picked up this report in the comments section on a post at Little Greeen Footballs. A Navy helipcopter pilot sent these remarkable words from the operations.

Please note, for the uninitited, that â€œcrew restâ€• for Naval Aviators is a big deal and the NATOPS Manuals require they get â€œeight hours of sleepâ€• a day. While often this is a point of reference for barbed comments between the â€œshoesâ€• (â€œship driversâ€• or â€œblack shoesâ€•) and the aviators, this post indicates someone has locally modified that requirement in order to help out at a level of effort necessary (and Iâ€™m sure some of those crews feel they arenâ€™t doing enough, even with 4 hours off a day).

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Hereâ€™s the post:

> Village Idiotâ€™s Apprentice 1/4/2005 10:58AM PST
> Just a quick copy of something one of the officers here at the Academy sent me. These guys are amazing.
>
> Hereâ€™s a great story about the US Navy helping out the tsunami victims. â€œJust spoke with one of my helo buds about what is going on on the flight deck here in Aceh. The devistation is much greater than can be described. This morning, there were dead bodies face down floating all around the ship. We have since moved position. My helo bud was working till 0130 AM and had to brief at 0430 AM. Every helo crew is working from sunrise to sunset (9 hours straight in helo) bringing food and supplies to villages all over the northern part of Indonesia. USS Lincoln was first on seen I am told. He said that he counted 15 bodies floating in water on his short few mile trip
> to the shore line. Thousands of bodies are in mass graves all over the country and in one town, population 50,000, only 1000 people are still alive. Most large several story concrete buildings now have no concrete on them â€“ just the metal frame of building remains. One bridge was completely displaced from its original location several miles inland and has been flopped upside down. A huge tanker ship was overturned by the Tsunami and displaced over land. He said it looks like a bulldozer several miles wide has run its steel edge across the landscape, leveling everything. He is doing flights about 100nm away from ship taking supplies to make shift landing zones near leveled villages. On the way there are people with flags waiving for him to stop to give them food and water. His copilot logs the lat longs so that supplies can be brought to the people on a future mission. The people are now dying from exposure, lack of water and food. The medical team predicts many people will die in 3 days. My friend says that there are about 300 helos (he describes the sky as â€œgrey with Navy helosâ€•) working the effort but it doesnâ€™t even come close to what is needed to

even dent what needs to be done. He said that even if every aircraft on the flight deck was able to bring supplies â€“ it wouldnâ€™t be enough. When CAG went flying with him, he got out of the helo to off load supplies. The people flocked
to CAG, trying to hug him but he had to direct them to the boxes of food, water and supplies to not be run over. The destruction is especially bad where the surge wave was funneled in between two areas of rising terrain. The water surged and picked up speed as it was squeezed into valleys between the mountains. When listening to my bud, I could see that he could not fully describe how bad things really are. He was tired too. Please pray for the people in desparation over here and pray for helo pilots. I am getting my final medical screening and chaiplain brief today and should be one of the teams going in in the next week or so. The security is not good enough for us to stay over night so we are limited to 6 helos bringing 8 people each morning and we have to come home each night. I am on team 36 so donâ€™t know when I will get off to help out. It is frustrating to not be able to help out.

God Bless,

I agree, praying would be a good thing, for the deck and flight crews who are putting in the herculean effort, just as much as if they were supporting a war, but in this case, in the name of humanity.

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Category

1. Uncategorized

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