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Army Corps Teams with FEMA, State to Weather *Makani Pahili* 2009

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Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 13-09) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers joined forces June 2-4 with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IX, Hawaii State Civil Defense, city and county other federal services to test the state and federal response to a simulated Category 4 hurricane landfall in Hawaii during Makani Pahili 2009.

The 2009 Makani Pahili ("strong wind" in Hawaiian) exercise scenario focused on agency response if Oahu were struck by a Category 4 hurricane blowing in excess of 131 mph, with gusts to 200 mph and the eye of the would-be hurricane passing over the west Oahu city of Kapolei.

Starting June 1, Honolulu District began simulating all pre-landfall exercise activities and simulated all post-landfall exercise activities during the following two days.

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2-2-2 ARMY CORPS MAKANI PAHILI

The Makani Pahili exercise gave Honolulu District the opportunity to rehearse emergency operations -- specifically reconstitution of the district as it would be heavily impacted in this scenario. With direct support from the Corps of Engineers' Pacific Ocean Division (POD), Corps of Engineers headquarters in Washington, DC and all three POD sister districts - Japan, Alaska and Far East (South Korea) the Honolulu District focused on reconstitution while sister Districts assumed the district's other emergency response missions of engineering support to FEMA, the State of Hawaii, and to our military stakeholders.

"We exercised our continuity of operations plan for when we become an "impacted" District," said Maj. John Henderson, Honolulu District Deputy Commander. "For Honolulu District, this means Alaska District deploys a Recovery Field Office (RFO) to assume our civil response missions and Japan District deploys a team to assume response missions in support of the Army's Installation Management Command-Pacific (IMCOM). This exercise was very well-resourced by FEMA and the Corps of Engineers HQs, and provided us an unprecedented opportunity to exercise our inter-agency relationships with Federal, State, and local leaders to evaluate the State of Hawaii OPLAN and the re-published USACE All Hazards Plan while practicing our roles, responsibilities, and authorities for responding to a catastrophic hurricane."

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3-3-3 ARMY CORPS MAKANI PAHILI

During the exercise FEMA officials said that in the aftermath of such a hurricane, some major priorities would include reopening ports and clearing debris from runways and roadways to enable the delivery of medical supplies, food and other supplies to designated shelters. Several of these major disaster response responsibilities most likely would be directed to the Corps to support the state.

Under the National Response Framework the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the primary agency for FEMA's Emergency Support Function #3 (ESF #3), Public Works and Engineering.

Typical USACE ESF#3 missions include the provision of critical goods and services such as debris removal, water supply, temporary housing, temporary roofing, emergency power supply and structural safety assessment. In a real emergency, the governor of the state is in charge, and FEMA supports the state governor. The Corps of Engineers provides aid through FEMA in a post-hurricane recovery when called upon by state or federal authorities.

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4-4-4 ARMY CORPS MAKANI PAHILI

“We are not in charge; we are in support of FEMA and the Joint Task Force-Homeland Defense which are supporting state and local authorities,” said Honolulu District Commander Lt. Col. Jon J. Chytka. “But when called upon, the Corps can provide a significant amount of personnel and equipment capability - prepositioned if necessary - with our Emergency Planning and Response Teams, our Deployable Tactical Operations Systems (DTOS) and through the activation of several pre-awarded national contracts designed to provide immediate response during disasters.” he said.

For the exercise, Honolulu District alerted and activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Bldg. 525 at Fort Shafter to manage the simulated missions assigned to the District from POD and FEMA; activated the District’s Emergency Power Planning and Response Team (PRT), Forward Engineering Support Team - Advanced (FEST-A), and the District’s Crisis Management teams. In addition, the District received subject matter expert support from Corps districts all over the Nation and the 249th Prime Power Battalion to assist with the certification of our response teams and to serve as observers for this exercise. The POD EOC was also activated and played a critical role as the overall command and control HQs for all USACE units participating in the exercise.

Makani Pahili 2009 tested all participating agencies abilities to respond to a post-landfall scenario where:

- * 650,000 people on Oahu will seek shelter post landfall
- * 350,000 residences are destroyed or severely damaged

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5-5-5 ARMY CORPS MAKANI PAHILI

- * No power for 30-45 days
- * Estimated 38 million cubic yards of debris
- * Evacuation of 70-80,000 tourist pre-landfall
- * No cell phone service
- * Severely damaged ports
- * Honolulu International Airport closed for at least four days
- * One million emergency meals each day would be needed.
- * Damage exceeding \$25 billion

“We're looking at 70 percent of our homes heavily damaged, if not destroyed,” said Vice Director of State Civil Defense Edward Teixeira during the exercise.

“Not only will an event like this impact our District, but it will also impact each of us personally to varying degrees,” said Chytka.

“Living on an island in the middle of the Pacific means each person and family should have an emergency plan every hurricane season. It is now time to review these plans before a storm threatens,” said Jim Weyman, director of the Central Pacific Hurricane Center in a recent NOAA press release. “Planning and preparation are key to surviving a hurricane.”

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6-6-6 ARMY CORPS MAKANI PAHILI

“The single most important thing you can do to prepare for the season is to make a Personal Preparedness Plan (PPP),” said Honolulu District’s Emergency Management Chief Joel Hendrix. “It’s you and your family making a few decisions about what you are going to do and putting it down on paper so the whole family knows. Our state (Hawaii) has a great web site that has a one page, fill-in-the-blank example.”

http://www.scd.state.hi.us/documents/bw_emergency_plan1.pdf

Hendrix added that the state civil defense web site now also has a printable list of shelters personnel might consider as part of their PPP.

Even with all the emergency service providers prepared and exercised, and with a lighter than usual hurricane season predicted for 2009, FEMA said a single hurricane can be a disaster and preparedness is everything.

In mid-August 2007, Hurricane Flossie weakened just enough that it was not a major disaster for the Island of Hawaii. Had that hurricane strengthened instead on August 14, 2007, the entire state of Hawaii would have been dealing with just the kind of disaster Makani Pahili envisions each year, what might be called “a worst case scenario.” According to the FEMA, the most powerful hurricane to ever hit Hawaii was Hurricane Iniki, which passed through the island of Kauai in Sept.1992. Because of this Category 4 hurricane, the state of Hawaii started the annual exercise - Makani Pahili.

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7-7-7 ARMY CORPS MAKANI PAHILI

A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2007 computer model designed for the annual statewide hurricane preparedness exercise showed that a fictitious Category 4 hurricane making landfall at Pearl Harbor, Honolulu International Airport and parts of downtown Honolulu would cause at least \$25 billion in damage.

“We used Makani Pahili 2009 to ensure that we are all personally prepared to respond to the unthinkable...a catastrophic event on Oahu - and that each of us clearly understand our roles, responsibilities and authorities – while also ensuring all necessary plans and Standard Operating Procedures are updated and in place, so that if the unthinkable becomes reality, we are as prepared as we can be,” said Chytka.

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