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# AIR POWER IN DISASTER RELIEF

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*THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE  
IN AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO THE 2011 JAPANESE  
EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI*



GROUP CAPTAIN TONY MCCORMACK

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## ACRONYMS

ACSA	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement	J3	Chief Operations Officer
AMTDU	Air Movements Training and Development Unit	JFACC	Joint Force Air Component Commander
ARPANSA	Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	JOC	Joint Operations Centre
BJOCC	Bilateral Joint Operations Command Centre	JTF	Joint Task Force
BUB	Battle Update Brief	LNO	Liaison Officer
CAT	Crisis Action Team	MEAO	Middle East Area of Operations
CJOPS	Chief of Joint Operations	MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CIQ	Customs, Immigration and Quarantine	NEO	Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation
DA	Defence Attaché	OPSO	Operations Officer
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	PACOM	Pacific Command
DGAir	Director General Air	SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
IDETF	Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force	SCG	Strategic Command Group
IP	International Policy Division	TRANSCOM	Transportation Command
J2	Chief Intelligence Officer	UN	United Nations
		UNC	United Nations Command
		UNC(R)	United Nations Command (Rear)
		US	United States
		USFJ	United States Forces Japan
		USFK	United States Forces Korea

# AIR POWER IN DISASTER RELIEF

## GROUP CAPTAIN TONY MCCORMACK

*On 11 March 2011 a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck off the coast of north-eastern Japan. The earthquake generated a massive tsunami that engulfed coastal cities and towns and also caused significant damage to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. At the time of the disaster, Group Captain McCormack was posted to Yokota Air Base, Tokyo and worked alongside US Forces Japan supporting disaster relief efforts.*

Ladies and gentlemen, before I start, I would like to acknowledge two people in the audience today. Firstly, Colonel Tim Gellel, who was our Defence Attaché in Tokyo during the earthquake and tsunami, and secondly, Captain Stew Holbrook from the US Navy. Stew worked with the US Forces Japan (USFJ) as the Chief Intelligence Officer (J2) and had an intricate knowledge of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant which served us well when we were trying to understand what was going on inside it after it was damaged by the tsunami.

This talk will cover the context of the event itself; the Australian response; the environment we were operating in; some of the lessons that we learnt; and finally, the legacy of our participation in the operation.

I was posted to Japan in 2010 as the Commander United Nations Command (Rear) (UNC(R)). I was located at the Yokota Air Base which is about 50 kilometres west of Tokyo. While I was co-located in the same building as US Forces Japan I actually worked for United Nations Command—or more specifically US Forces Korea (USFK)—and my boss was a US Air Force Major General who was based in Seoul. So I had no command relationship with US Forces Japan—just co-located.

The UNC(R) was formed after the end of the Korean War when Headquarters, UNC relocated from Tokyo to Seoul. The Rear headquarters was created as an agreement between the UN and the

Government of Japan to enable United Nations (UN) forces to remain stationed in Japan.

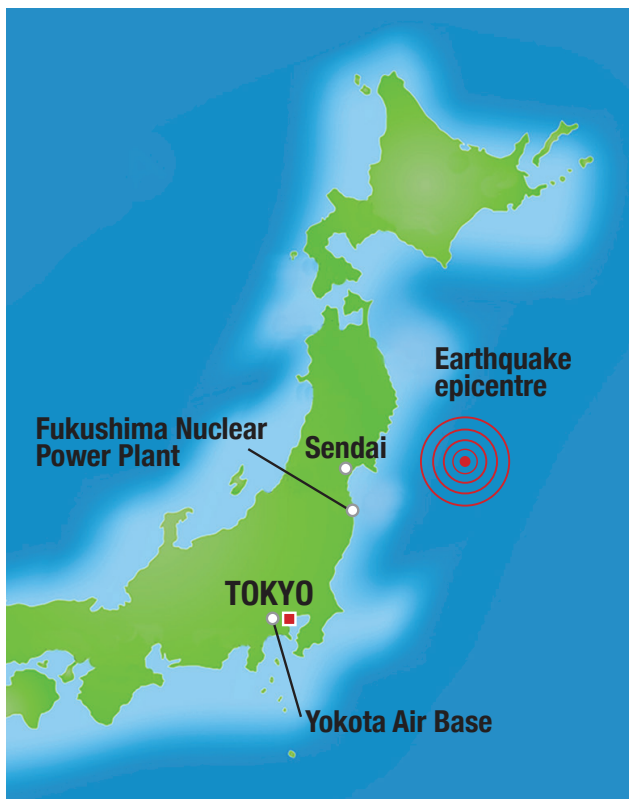
The UNC(R)'s mission statement is twofold. During armistice it manages the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the UNC and the Government of Japan. While in wartime it facilitates the movement of UN forces through Tokyo onto the peninsula and of course, everything off the peninsula, including a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) out of Korea through Japan.

The SOFA that UN forces have with the Government of Japan was signed in 1954. It allows UN forces to operate both through and over Japan. However, the Government of Japan must be notified of any movement of these forces. This is an important point because if we are undertaking a UN operation, we do not need approval from the Government of Japan. We just have to notify them that we are coming in or going through the area.

To use the SOFA you must be a signatory and the SOFA must be exercised regularly. This was one of the things that helped us out a lot because each year there are quite a few ship and aircraft visits through Japan via the UN bases and they were facilitated by us. There are currently nine active sending states who are signatories to the SOFA. They are: Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.



On 11 March 2011, at exactly 02:46:23 in the afternoon, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake hit. The epicentre was 129 kilometres east of Sendai that is in the Tohoku region of Japan.



Map of Japan showing location of the earthquake's epicentre 129 kms east of Sendai.

For anyone who has actually been in an earthquake will know what it feels like. For those who have experienced Questacon's earthquake simulator in Canberra—it is nothing like that.

You start feeling the tremor which makes you stop and think, 'What's this one going to be like?' Normally they're over in a few seconds, maybe 10 to 20 seconds and it's done. This one was violent, extremely violent. I went back into my office and I looked out the window. I could see the window frames moving and the glass within them flexing. Looking outside, trees were waving around; so too were the power poles and cables. This went on for about five minutes. It was the first and only earthquake where I've actually got under my desk, in accordance with standard procedure!

When the earthquake finished, we left the building, made sure that everyone was okay and then stood around waiting for any aftershocks.

With no immediate aftershocks we went back in to the building and turned on the television to see if we could find out the location and the strength of the earthquake. We immediately saw reports of a tsunami. We looked at those pictures and thought, "What's going on? Is this live?" The answer was, "yes, it was live" and as you know from the subsequent news footage it was absolutely devastating.

The tsunami itself was around 14–23 metres in height. With regard to the strength of the tsunami, there is video footage of the wave hitting the seawall of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. It was 14 metres when it hit the seawall and, because of the power of the wave, the splash reached a height of 45 metres. So there was a huge amount of power in that water coming in over the coast.

So the first thing we did was to check on our families. We made sure they were okay and made sure our houses were okay and that there was no damage. I then contacted the USFJ Chief Operations Officer (J3) and I said, "Look, myself and my staff are at your disposal. We don't know what you need done but we're here if you need us." Then the calls begin.

So here we have the timeline. At 1446 the earthquake hits, and lasts for five minutes. At around 1500 the tsunami rolls in and hits the coast. At 1539—and I know it's 1539 because I had it logged in my diary—I got a call from Colonel Gellel of the Australian Embassy.

He said, "Are you OK? Is the family OK?"

I answered, "yes, good!!"

He then told me that Australia' was going to send one or two C-17s in the next 24 to 48 hours. We don't know what's on them. Can you handle them at Yokota?"

My response was, "Sure"

A little while later, at 1640, I got a call from the New Zealand team who said, "Look, we've got an Urban Search and Rescue team. The forward part of that team is coming through Hong Kong tonight. They're going to get to Yokota at 1630 to marry up with the Australian team. Oh, and by the

way, can you get some gas bottles for us because we're going to need those for our mission?"

So I'm thinking, "Right, I guess we've (Australia) got an Urban Search and Rescue team coming in on the C-17."

Then we started getting calls from other Liaison Officers. The Liaison Officers for UNC are the Defence Attachés from those countries mentioned earlier and we're getting calls from them asking, "What is the US going to do?" Now at this stage we didn't know what the US was planning. We didn't know what the Japanese were going to do because, frankly, Japan was in a state of shock due to the size of this disaster.

During this period there were rolling blackouts and loss of cell phone connectivity at times. There was usually a shuttle bus from Narita International Airport to the Yokota Air Base every afternoon. A normal trip would take about two and a half hours. On the Friday afternoon after the earthquake, it took 12 hours to get through the traffic because of the rolling blackouts and traffic jams.

Now anyone who has ever worked on operations knows that disasters never happen at an ideal time. The two hour time difference between Japan and Australia meant that the disaster hit at about five o'clock on Friday afternoon (AEST). However that didn't stop the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, from calling an emergency Strategic Command Group (SCG) meeting with the Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS) and all the Service chiefs.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) arranged an Inter-Departmental Emergency Task Force (IDETF) meeting which was attended by Defence officials. Soon after an executive order from CDF was received to begin Operation *Pacific Assist*.

On Saturday 12 March there was a further IDETF that refined what was to be sent from Australia. The decision was confirmed to send an Urban Search and Rescue team on board a C-17.

Defence further refined what the Defence support would be. That is, strategic lift, specialist personnel, and Defence support staff—with CJOPS

conducting the mission from the Joint Operations Centre (JOC). And because CJOPS was conducting the mission from JOC, that became a tasking for Director General Air (DGAir).

Back in Japan, on Friday afternoon, Narita International Airport had closed due to the threat of a further tsunami and also because they wanted to make sure there was no damage to the runways from the earthquake. Because of the closure, 11 commercial airliners had diverted to Yokota Air Base. By later that evening, about half had departed while five still remained. The passengers from those aircraft needed to be accommodated and, fortunately, Yokota Air Base had prepared for this, as they continually practice non-combatant evacuation operations. The American Red Cross set up camp in one of the community centres and was able to provide beds and food.

The following morning myself and Colonel Gellel were in constant contact with the aim of trying to work out what was coming on board the C-17. One of the challenges was that this was not a United Nations operation so we needed approval from the Government of Japan. This involved a diplomatic clearance to allow the aircraft to land—this would usually take about six weeks. Colonel Gellel got one in about six minutes.

The second challenge that we faced was that having a military aircraft from a third country on a US base in Japan required approval from both the United States and the Government of Japan. Fortunately, in this instance, we had another bit of good news in that the Government of Japan and the US Forces had come to an agreement that foreign military aircraft, in support of the emergency, could use US facilities.

As mentioned earlier, we needed to know what was coming on board the C-17. That is, the number of people on board the aircraft, what they were doing and how long they were going to stay. We were told that, along with various personnel, there were two Urban Search and Rescue dogs on board. Japan's quarantine is a bit like Australia's; it's very strict, so we needed to get clearance to make sure that we could bring the dogs in. We eventually

got approval from Security Forces to have the dogs bed down with the military working dogs.

On the Saturday and Sunday we worked through all the domestic arrangements. Late Sunday night, the Urban Search and Rescue team arrived with the most famous dogs in Japan at the time, I think, as they were covered everywhere in the media.

Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) was absolutely seamless. The Government of Japan knew that everyone was coming to help and they made everything flow through quickly. Once we got the team through CIQ, everybody was registered—since they were effectively coming into a theatre—and then in to their accommodation. Halfway through this the New Zealand teams had arrived. It was about five o'clock in the morning before we had everybody settled in.

For myself it was straight into another update briefing and then during that day we also discovered that the Search and Rescue team didn't have any water; they couldn't bring it with them. So we had to try and source 5000 litres of water. You can imagine that there's a lot going on at this stage but it was eventually worked out and procured through the commissary, and I think Colonel Gelle's credit card paid for 3000 litres of water that day.

You must remember that the Urban Search and Rescue team were civilians—they were not military. So we had all these foreign national civilians on a US base in Japan, which we were suddenly responsible for. We had to get approval for them and make sure that they could get in and out of the base, and that they could use the facilities. There was a lot of work going on in the background.

At around the same time, we got a call from CAF indicating that the C-17 could stay if we could find some work for it to do. So I met with the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), Colonel Mark Reece, and told him that we could keep the C-17 here based on three conditions. Firstly, it must support the Japanese. Secondly, if there was no work for the Japanese then we would look after USFJ. Thirdly, and not my preference, we could send it to Korea or Guam if you need

anything picked up from there and brought back here.

Mark's response was that there was no tasking at the moment but he knew that over the next few days there was going to be a lot of things happening.

I shook his hand and with that handshake I gave tactical control of a C-17 to US Forces Japan without any bit of paperwork being done. And I had an Army Officer standing next to me at the time and he just looked at me and said, "What just happened?" I said, "This is how we do it."

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The USFJ activated the Bilateral Joint Operations Command Centre (BJOCC) and it was bilateral in name and bilateral in nature. It's US-Japan eyes only. They did, however, make an exception for Australia because we brought something to the table, in the shape of a C-17—but it wasn't the same for my Deputy who was a Turkish Major. So we were allowed access and was able to work with the US team to get things done.

What my team essentially became was the multinational coordination cell. That is, the point of contact between the Liaison Officers (LNOs) down in Tokyo and the US Forces. At that stage, there were things like fuel shortages where none of the visiting forces could get any fuel but we had some on the base. So we were getting approval to be able to get vehicles refuelled out at Yokota or other military bases. In effect, we were dealing with the JFACC, the J staff in US Forces Japan, 5th Air Force, 374th Airlift Wing (who actually ran Yokota), Public Affairs Office, Security Forces and anybody else we needed to talk to. So we were the ones who were coordinating with the international forces into the US system. We also liaised with the Government of Japan, where necessary, for some of the countries.

So the C-17 was put to work. The first day was a bit of a mess because loads were being moved to the wrong places and weren't where they were supposed to be. For example, the Government of Japan might contact the embassy and say, "Look, we've got a load for you up at Misawa. Can you

pick that up?” We would then get a call from the embassy with the request. We would have to say, “No, stop. The C-17 is working for the JFAC. Any tasking needs to come through the JFAC and then it will be distributed out so that the right asset does the right thing.” Bread and butter for Air Force but some people didn’t understand the process, but once we got it squared away, it all worked perfectly.

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It was just before the C-17 arrived that we heard that the Fukushima reactor had started heating up and that 250,000 people were being evacuated from the area. We had the added complication of an 80 kilometre radius around Fukushima; no one was flying in there because of the fear of radiation.

Water was being pumped through the reactor to keep the temperature down because if the temperature got too hot, you could end up with an explosion or a complete meltdown.

Initially, fire trucks were used to get the water to the site but there were fears that this would be insufficient. So a company called Bechtel Corporation made an unsolicited proposal to the US government to provide pumps—which were based in Perth—that were originally designed for mining operations. The US government agreed and then we looked at options as to how transport them to Japan.

Back in Australia, heaven and earth was moved to get air load teams across to Western Australia and to make the C-17s available to move the pumps. Nobody had ever seen these pumps and we had no idea how big they were, or what they weighed and there were no load plans for them. Consequently, we had Air Movements Training and Development Unit (AMTDU) as well as the air load team over in Perth building rigs and pallets to facilitate the transportation of the pumps.

It was determined that we would need two C-17 loads to get it through. We had a C-17 on its way back from the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO), which we diverted to RAAF Base Pearce, which is about 35km north-east of Perth. So we had

one C-17 already in Japan; two at RAAF Base Pearce and the fourth—we only owned four at the time—was in pieces in a hangar for maintenance.

Over time there were questions raised about who would pay for the pumps and, indeed, whether they were required at all. We knew that we had a potential problem here. The teams in Australia were working hard to get them to Japan and we didn’t want C-17s carrying things that were not needed. So late into one Saturday night we ended up getting three ambassadors out of bed to solve the problem, which they did. Yes, the pumps were needed and soon after the pumps arrived.

Along with the pumps were three civilians to help assemble the pumps. So we had these three civilians on a military base and a question that was raised was, “What the hell do we do with these guys?” As Commander of UNC(R) I cut United Nations orders for them. So they effectively became UNC personnel in Japan. I said, “if you’ve got any problems, flash your passport, flash your orders and tell people to contact my office if you’ve got a problem. This will get you on to Yokota and the other bases.” I’m not sure if this was legal, but it worked.

So what did we do? Firstly, we provided an Urban Search and Rescue team and two search and rescue dogs as well as water to support the team. We delivered vital pumping equipment for the Fukushima reactors. We also moved 13 Brigade from Okinawa up to the Tohoku region. This was the first time this brigade had ever deployed off Okinawa and we did it! So from 14–25 March, the C-17 detachment moved in excess of one million pounds of cargo which was about 10% of the entire JFAC. And of course there were VIPs and media everywhere.

While doing this, we were also supporting other nations. At one stage New Zealand needed 940 ration packs because they were going to run out of food for the Search and Rescue team. However, being an Urban Search and Rescue team, they were civilians. They were not covered by the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) to buy food from the US so we had to find an alternative. So for a while, I was the proud owner of 940 ration



packs until New Zealand's Defence Attaché (DA) paid for them. I'm pleased he eventually did.

The Thai Air Force had sent two Hercules C130s across for a voluntary evacuation of some of their personnel. We facilitated this as well by getting them onto Yokota—again as uncleared civilians. This was a quite a special scenario where we had uncleared Thai civilians entering a US military base in Japan to board a foreign aircraft. We spoke to Security Forces and they didn't want anything to do with it. They were too busy. So in the end, these uncleared Thai civilians became the responsibility of an Australian and a Turkish Officer to get onto a US military base. That was the level of trust that we had.

As mentioned previously, Fukushima had gone critical and we had radiation fears. The most important brief we had was the weather update and the predicted wind direction because we knew there was a plume coming out of the reactors. We wanted to know where that radiation was going.

We were having the water tested for raised iodine levels. We had to learn how to interpret the readings to determine whether or not it was safe. Additionally, every aircraft that went up there was tested to see if it had been exposed. We also learnt that you don't say, "contaminated," you say "exposed" because there's apparently a big difference between the two. We were also issued with potassium iodine tablets which apparently prevents the thyroid gland from absorbing radioactive iodine.

At the same time there was a voluntary assisted departure for US personnel. Half of the civilian dependants from the US bases departed. We also needed to consider our own families. We had all of our bags packed and ready to go just in case Fukushima did melt down.

In the first 24 hours after the major earthquake, we had about 75 aftershocks of magnitude 5.0 and above. I noted in my diary about a week later: "... only 200 shocks in the last four days." The word "only" was underlined because it was starting to get less and less. Then at one stage, I think it was on the Wednesday, there was a magnitude 6.0 under Mount Fuji. Mount Fuji is a dormant volcano, which is overdue for an eruption.

So we were in a situation now where there had been a major earthquake and hundreds of aftershocks, an enormous tsunami, a nuclear reactor on the boil and the potential for Mount Fuji—which is not too far away from Yokota—erupting. Lieutenant General Field, who was running the Joint Task Force (JTF), had joked, "... if they gave you this problem at Staff College, you wouldn't believe them ... and yet here we are, right in the middle of it."

One thing that we didn't realise at the time was just how important it was to keep the information flowing. Every day I would ring the LNOs and find out what their country was doing, whether they were going to need any support from us and what the plan was. I'd then put this information in an email and I would send it down to the BJOCC and Crisis Action Team (CAT) Chief. It then got distributed to USFJ. By the time I had finished, this information was going to US Forces Japan, US Forces Korea, through to Pacific Command (PACOM), to Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) and to all the sending state LNOs. Afterwards I was told, "This was the only piece of information coming through to the US system that enabled them to understand what everybody else was doing and what the impact was going to be on them." So they could plan their workloads on it and it also helped me plan my workloads.

After each Battle Update Brief (BUB), I would prepare a summary and send it through to International Policy (IP) Division as well as the embassy so that they had awareness of what was going on.

We were also getting reports from the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) on what they thought was happening inside the Fukushima reactor. I was sending those through to the J2 so that he could get a feed on what we thought was going on because nobody really knew what was happening inside the reactor.

I spent a day with the US Marines in the Tohoku area helping to deliver aid and water. I can tell you that television did not do justice to the devastation caused by the tsunami. For many





**The town of Minamisanriku where the Urban Search and Rescue team was sent to. Soon after their arrival they realised that what was supposed to be a search and rescue operation quickly became a recovery operation due to the total devastation that took place.**

towns it wasn't a search and rescue operation but a recovery operation because there was nothing left—just total devastation.

You could see upturned boats seven kilometres inland because the waves just took them in. Approximately 15–16,000 people died, and for many their remains will never be found.

Australia's decision to act quickly—a phone call within an hour of the earthquake—gave us and the embassy the opportunity to start getting ready to plan what we were going to do. USFJ and Government of Japan approval to use US bases took a problem out of the equation allowed us get the aircraft in where they needed to be.

Lieutenant General Field, Commander US Forces Japan, had accepted our offer of help from the beginning and the Government of Japan assisted us by giving approvals and diplomatic clearances.

### **Lessons Learned**

*Chain of Command:* I think I had about five bosses when I was over there. You only need one tasking authority otherwise there's confusion and you're probably misusing your asset. So no matter how many bosses you have, make sure you only have one tasking authority.

*Flexibility:* Having the C-17 with two crews, air load teams, operational support personal as well as other support people around, gave us the

flexibility to operate around the clock. It also gave us the flexibility to carry many different loads that we were given—we didn't have to look up a manual and think, "Well, that one's not cleared so you can put that one aside."

*Exercises count:* We had previously sent a C-17 to Japan. We had loaded and unloaded Japanese Self Defence cargo. All of that was important because we knew we could do it and the Japanese knew they could work with us.

*Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO):* This is critically important. When you have a NEO it's because something bad has happened. When we practice NEOs we usually just practice the NEO and focus on that. When you actually have a NEO or a voluntary assisted departure, it means that your focus is going to be on the bad thing that's happened and the NEO becomes secondary to what is going on. So you need to understand what your NEO plan is. You need to understand how you're going to get those people out, where you're going to muster them and pets! Pet owners can be very attached to their animals—they would rather die than leave their dog behind. So you need to consider little things like that whenever you're planning for a NEO.

*Social media:* I don't use Twitter or Facebook but a lot of people do and the strange part is that many people believe almost everything that's on it. When we are in a situation of a fast developing emergency we, as a military and government organisation, need to be on top of it. We need to be in a position to disseminate accurate information quickly because if there are any gaps, someone will fill it—usually with something that's not true. So social media needs to be managed very, very closely and quickly in the event of an emergency because if you don't it's going to cause you a lot of problems.

*Relationships matter:* The relationships we had established with our US colleagues at Yokota, together with the relationships Colonel Gellel had established with his Japanese colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Defence, mattered, because it got us access. We had built up a level of trust. They knew that they could deal with us and they knew that if

we said something, we would follow through with it and get it done.

*Have the right people in the right place:* I've spoken to Personnel about this. That is, if you're going to send somebody to a job, make sure that they have the capacity and the capability to do it.

*Foreign Policy:* It is very important to have a solid foreign policy and to act on that foreign policy by supporting friends and allies—not just talking about it—and having a clear task and end state. We took the C-17 out when we believed that there was not much more we could do. The time was up and the USAR team left along with the C-17. We didn't hang around looking for extra work.

### **What was the Impact We Made?**

*The Sending States.* While the Sending States didn't use our C-17, they were in constant communication with me so it was an Australian Officer who was their link between themselves and the US Forces. It was an Australian Officer who was making things happen. And when they had problems it was an Australian officer they were calling to help sort it out.

Australia got a lot of kudos for that, the fact that we were right in the middle of it and were dealing directly with the US and the Japanese.

*The United States:* The US was very appreciative of what we did because we just didn't turn up with a C-17 and say, "Here you are, now help us." We turned up with load teams and support personnel. We provided Operations Officers (OPSOs) in on the **CAT floor** so that they could help out. We didn't want to be passengers—we value added.

*The Region:* Those in the region were aware of what we had done. They saw how quickly we reacted and the fact that we were present. That is very important, it was mentioned to me afterwards by our Korean colleagues.

*Japan:* Probably the most powerful things that was said to me—and I can't remember who said it—was that, "You didn't have to come." And they were quite right; we didn't have to come. Japan is a first world nation and their military is much bigger than ours. They have a population five times

as big as us. The US military was there supporting them as well. But we did come. And we did come because they are our friends and we always help our friends.

In late April 2011, Prime Minister Gilliard visited the Tohoku region. She was the first foreign Head of Government to visit the disaster area. That counted as well. For months afterwards, we were praised for our efforts.

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Now I'll tell you a little story that was told to me about one of the US Officers who escorted a Japanese General to Washington. You have to remember that in response to the earthquake and the tsunami, the US brought in the Seventh Fleet. They also brought in elements of the Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group, the 13th Air Force, the III Marine Expeditionary Force, the US Army Japan, the 5th Air Force as well as also other units from the US. They brought in tens of thousands of personnel to help. We had three C-17s and, at the time, they were all we had.

This General was overheard talking to senior Generals in Washington. He said, "Thank you for everything you did in Operation *Tomodachi*. Thank you for the support. But did you hear what the Australians did? The Australians sent all their C-17s to help us." So with tens of thousands of Americans, the focus was on what we did. And that counted in the eyes of the Japanese, that we sent all our C-17s up to help them when we didn't have to.

So that was very telling. And I hope in some way that the recent agreements between Australian and Japan were influenced by what we did in that two week period.