

Working Together for **Aid to Haiti**



Following the January 12, 2010, 7.0-magnitude earthquake in Haiti, the U.S. Navy deployed several ships to help with relief efforts under Operation Unified Response, a coordinated military humanitarian aid response. One ship, the USS Kearsarge, was set to deploy in less than a week when engineers noticed they had a problem: A COULTER Ac•T diff2 Hematology Analyzer* onboard had been shut down, improperly, for several months and was not working.

Bill Dodson, senior clinical diagnostics engineer, went out to see if the unit could be repaired. "We determined that the instrument actually needed to be replaced," said Dodson. He and Clinical Diagnostics Engineer Todd Kirkland thought they could make the repairs, but not before the Kearsarge had to ship out in a couple of days. The cost and time to repair and test the old Ac•T diff2 made a replacement unit a better move. "They called the ship's C.O. to get approval, and I called Sal to see what we could do to get a new unit to the ship in time."

Answering the call of duty

Employees from around the world responded generously to the enormous need of the Haitian people. Within two days of the earthquake disaster, the Beckman Coulter Foundation, Beckman Coulter's philanthropic arm, instituted a relief campaign and employees immediately heeded the call. By way of the American Red Cross, employees from several countries—France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States—made personal donations, which were matched by the Foundation. "Employees from across the globe donated more than \$92,000," said Marci Raudez, senior corporate communications specialist and representative of the Beckman Coulter Foundation. "Together with the Foundation's dollar-for-dollar match, that number has been increased to more than \$184,000 in aid."



Sal Savarese, hematology sales consultant, spoke with Dodson, then the ship's laboratory officer. "After speaking with the lab officer, I started the process to order a new system, but the supply officer on the ship was able to order an analyzer through one of our distributors, Infolab. Once I found this out, I contacted my PCD counterpart, Sue Wien."

Wien, an instrument specialist in the Primary Care Diagnostics (PCD) business group, had already been contacted by Infolab when Savarese's call came. "I was actually on vacation when I got the call from Infolab," said Wien. "They had reacted very quickly to the request." Wien completed the necessary paperwork and rushed it over to Rochelle Currie, senior specialist, Customer Support in Contract Administration. "I sent it to Rochelle right away so she could get it processed, and my manager, Frank Bartholf (PCD eastern region sales manager) approved the urgent request."

With the ship setting out to provide humanitarian aid, Hematology Marketing Manager Kelly Colwell offered to get approval to cover the cost of overnight shipping. "The Navy had asked about shipping costs, which they anticipated," said Colwell, but with the approval from her manager, Jim Cureton, director of marketing, "we gave our cost center and covered it."

This was not the Kearsarge's first relief trip to Haiti. In September 2008, the Kearsarge had delivered more than three million pounds of internationally-donated aid to the country following the devastation caused by four consecutive hurricanes—Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike. Today, the amphibious assault ship is the flagship of the U.S. 2nd Fleet, but also houses extensive medical facilities (operating rooms, emergency rooms, blood bank, laboratories) and can provide care to 600 patients. For the earthquake relief effort, Kearsarge would be supporting several U.S. Navy hospital ships, including the USNS Comfort, a Beckman Coulter instrument-equipped ship transporting a medical team of approximately 560 doctors, nurses, technicians and support staff to Haiti.

Dodson, who has worked for Beckman Coulter since 1991 and performed hundreds of installations on military vessels, returned to the base to install the new Ac•T diff2. "I've done many rush jobs over the years," he said, "but none this quick. They are appreciative that we are so responsive."

And the medical relief provided by Operation Unified Response was tremendous. According to the official U.S. Navy website, "the Comfort had more than 540 critically injured patients on board within the first 10 days," and over the seven weeks that followed, 10 operating rooms were run at full capacity, 843 surgeries performed, and nine infants delivered on board. ●

* Ac•T is a trademark of Beckman Coulter, Inc.

