



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release 26-13

May 20, 2013

U.S. Fleet Forces assists in hurricane exercise

By MC2(SW) Jonathan E. Donnelly, U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF) and Commander, Naval Installations Command (CNIC) are working together during the Navy's annual Hurricane Exercise (HURREX) and Citadel Gale May 13-24 to prepare units and personnel for the upcoming hurricane season.

Atlantic hurricane season routinely brings a number of threatening storms to areas ranging from the Gulf of Mexico up through the Eastern Seaboard. Last year Hurricane Sandy swept through the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, leaving over a hundred dead, millions without power and causing more than \$60 billion in damage.

This year's exercise will feature three simulated storm systems that will develop and intensify to varying degrees of hurricane strength and threaten the Caribbean Islands, Gulf Coast and East Coast.

"HURREX is a focused training event conducted to analyze, forecast, disseminate information and provide recommendations about simulated hurricanes to fleet and naval installation commanders in order to practice the operational decision processes and keep Navy assets safe from destructive weather," said Capt. Raymond Delgado, Fleet Weather Center Norfolk's commanding officer.

The exercise includes all Atlantic-based ships, submarines and aircraft. All ship movements during the exercise are simulated.

Because every decision impacts the safety of military assets and personnel, the exercise requires a great deal of coordination. USFF and CNIC work closely with the Fleet Weather Center, Military Sealift Command, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, Northern Command, Marine Forces Command, Marine Forces North, Army North and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“HURREX trains the staff to handle critical decisions that may be required during the upcoming hurricane season. It forces organizations at multiple levels to go through deliberate planning,” said Cmdr. Marianne O. Balolong, U.S. Fleet Forces battle watch captain mentor.

As weather systems change, the partnership between USFF and the Fleet Weather Center becomes a vital part of the decision-making process.

“USFF Meteorological and Oceanographic Center (METOC) personnel work hand in glove with Fleet Weather Center. Fleet Weather Center has the forecasting expertise and USFF METOC provides this information to the USFF leadership to mitigate hazardous weather and protect the fleet,” said Balolong.

Every decision takes both the fleet and military families into consideration.

“The safety, security, and accountability of our Sailors and Navy family members during natural disasters such as hurricanes remain one of our highest priorities,” said Aerographers Mate 1st Class (IDW/EXW/AW) Horace H. Webster, Fleet Weather Center Norfolk’s hurricane duty officer and training and readiness leading petty officer.

HURREX 13 will include accounting for Sailors and their families through the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS). NFAAS also allows leaders to identify, medical, housing, transportation, counseling, and other disaster-related needs.

“I would encourage all Sailors to go to <http://www.ready.navy.mil> to develop individual family preparedness plans,” said Cmdr. James Mason, Fleet Command Center training director. “Sailors need to understand they may be required to sortie with the fleet while their families are asked to evacuate separately. Deployed Sailors will be much more operationally effective if they know their families are safe.”

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