

Hospital Ship Comfort Arrives in New York City



The USNS Comfort leaves Naval Station Norfolk on March 28. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jonathan Clay

NORFOLK, Va. – The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort arrived in New York City on March 30 in support of the nation's COVID-19 response efforts, the U.S. 2nd Fleet announced.

While in New York, the ship will serve as a hospital for non-COVID-19 patients admitted to shore-based hospitals and will provide medical care to include general surgeries, critical care and ward care for adults, allowing local health professionals to focus on treating COVID-19 patients and for hospitals there to use their intensive care units and ventilators for those patients.

Comfort is a seagoing medical treatment facility that has more than 1,200 personnel embarked for the New York mission, including U.S. Navy medical and support staff assembled from 22 commands as well as over 70 civil mariners.

“The USNS Comfort arrives in New York City this morning with more than 1,100 medical personnel who are ready to provide safe, high-quality health care to non-COVID patients,” said Capt. Patrick Amersbach, commanding officer of the USNS Comfort Military Treatment Facility (MTF). “We are ready and grateful to serve the needs of our nation.”

Comfort's primary mission is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility to the U.S. military that is flexible, capable and uniquely adaptable to support expeditionary warfare. Comfort's secondary mission is to provide hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and

humanitarian operations worldwide.

“Like her sister ship, USNS Mercy, which recently moored in Los Angeles, this great ship will support civil authorities by increasing medical capacity and collaboration for medical assistance,” said Rear Adm. John Mustin, vice commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. “Not treating COVID-19 patients ... but by acting as a relief valve for other urgent needs, freeing New York’s hospitals and medical professionals to focus on the pandemic.”

“This USNS Comfort team of Sailors, Marines and civilian mariners came together during the transit to New York City and our medical professionals are ready to begin receiving patients from local hospitals tomorrow,” said Capt. Joseph O’Brien, mission commander of Task Force New York City. “Our personnel are our strength – the men and women of our military services accomplish incredible things every day, and I am confident in their abilities as we start the next phase of this mission.”

The ship expects to begin receiving patients 24 hours after arriving in New York. All patient transfers will be coordinated with local hospitals, thus ensuring a consistent handoff of care between medical providers. Patients will not be accepted on a walk-on basis and should not come to the pier expecting to receive care.

“The last time that this great hospital ship was here was in the wake of 9/11, where she served as respite and comfort for our first responders working around the clock,” Mustin said. “Our message to New Yorkers – now your Navy has returned, and we are with you, committed in this fight.”