Navy, Marine Corps Beef Up Relief Efforts in the Bahamas



U.S. Navy Sailors transport supplies on Sept. 7 in response to Hurricane Dorian. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Katie Cox

ARLNGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have increased their forces involved in relief and rescue efforts in the Bahamas as recovery efforts continue after Hurricane Dorian devastated some of the islands.

In a Sept. 9 Pentagon briefing, Jonathan R. Hoffman, assistant to the secretary of defense, said that U.S Northern Command had received 30 relief requirement requests and had deployed 1,200 personnel in support of those requests.

"Secretary [of Defense Mark T.] Esper authorized NORTHCOM to utilize 30 Army and Navy helicopters to provide transportation logistics and conduct assessments of transportation nodes to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance," Hoffman said. "We are pursuing options to assist in airspace deconfliction as well."

The amphibious assault ship USS Bataan has deployed to the Bahamas and is operating Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor and CH-53E Super Stallion heavy-lift helicopters in support of the relief efforts. Navy MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopters also have been providing logistics for the relief efforts.

"Four U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Ospreys from the USS Bataan transported a U.S. Air Force airfield assessment team to conduct its mission," Hoffman said. "The airfield assessment team completed its evaluation of Grand Bahama International Airport and reported the field is C-130 and C-17 capable."

The Coast Guard continues its rescue-and-recovery efforts in the Bahamas with five MH-60T helicopters and five cutters. As of Sept. 9, the service had rescued 383 people.