

# USNS Comfort Completes Continuing Promise 2022 Stop in the Dominican Republic



The hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) sits anchored in the harbor of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on Nov. 27, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Deven Fernandez*

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic – U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) completed its fourth mission stop of Continuing Promise 2022 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Dec. 6, 2022, Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Sophia Simons of the U.S. Fourth Fleet said in a Dec. release.

For the duration of the 10-day visit to the Dominican Republic, the Comfort team, comprised of medical professionals from the U.S., the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Canada, U.K., the Netherlands and Chile, service members from the Puerto Rico National Guard, and interpreters and medical students, provided care for 4,435 patients at the medical sites in Santo Domingo and Azua. The team also filled 7,446 prescriptions,

conducted 209 x-rays and 78 ultrasounds, and performed 87 surgeries aboard the ship.

“The Comfort team hit their stride in the Dominican Republic, incorporating lessons learned from previous port stops and improving our process daily,” said Cmdr. Bryan Carmichael, commodore of Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 4. “Despite the added difficulty of two medical sites, rough seas and transportation of two medical sites equipment via helicopter, the Continuing Promise team adapted and carried out their mission in stride with the utmost professionalism. As we prepare for our last mission stop, the team will continue to improve on these lessons learned, maintaining an attitude of gratefulness towards the experience gained along the way.”

In addition to providing medical assistance, the Comfort worked alongside the local government and 25 non-government organizations to conduct subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs), Women, Peace and Security (WPS) initiative seminars and activities, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) projects, and community relations (COMREL), in line with Continuing Promise lines of effort.

Twelve SMEEs were completed during the mission stop in the form of basic life support, side-by-side at hospital Moscoso Puello, veterinary services, food safety, dermatology and other subject areas. This support allowed for a total of 12,941 personnel from the community to be engaged by the Comfort Team, along with the two medical sites.

Working alongside the Dominican Ministry of Women, the team hosted two women’s health fairs, a military-to-military roundtable and a volleyball event to support the WPS line of effort.

To enhance HADR readiness, Comfort organized an academics day, held a mass fire drill alongside the “Chargers” of Helicopter

Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 26, directed SMEE and aircraft loading training.

Additionally, military and civilian personnel assigned to Comfort participated in three COMRELS in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and local schools to provide education exchanges for the students in the community. Concurrently, members of the U.S. Fleet Forces Band supported mission events, held concerts and fostered the Empowerment Through Music program.

“This multi-national public-private multi-service team demonstrated the power of partnership, as well as demonstrated how health security is national security.” said Gen. Laura Richardson, “This team has changed lives and built relationships that will last a long time. In working together, we are striving to build a future with our partners, neighbors and friends. It’s a future based on mutual respect, protection of sovereignty, defense of democracy and service to the citizens of this great country.”

Since the inauguration of Continuing Promise in 2007, Comfort medical teams have treated more than 484,000 patients, which comprises over 83% of the patients treated during all Continuing Promise missions, and conducted more than 7,400 surgeries, including over 800 surgeries during the 2010 earthquake relief mission in Haiti. Comfort’s current mission is the 12th Continuing Promise mission conducted in U.S. Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet area of responsibility.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command’s joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.