

OP HESTIA AND THE NCT

By MCpl Troy Clark, Naval Construction Troop, FCE Halifax

On 12 Jan 2010 the lives of many thousands of people in Haiti were altered forever due to the devastating earthquake that struck there. For several days after, the Naval Construction Troop (NCT) worked intensely to get prepared to deploy on a moments notice if called out. A few weeks later the NCT was deployed to support Op Hestia in their mission to help the people of Haiti. Upon the arrival in Haiti, the pace was fast and furious and remained that way until the end of the operation. The first few days were spent setting up our own camp and once that was completed, we were tasked to several locations.



Our main mission in Haiti was to support those Canadian soldiers who were going out to make the people of Haiti's lives better. This support involved many taskings such as making benches and tables, supplying lights and receptacles, and other comforts to make life a little easier for the troops. We also came up with a solution to the fuel problem that we were facing, as the fuel delivery trucks could not always be counted on. In one of the sea containers there was a fuel bladder and pumps. Within days we had the fuel farm operating, which was no small tasking as none of us had ever had the experience of constructing one. While this tasking was going on, the NCT plumbers were heading off to Leogane to set up four ablutions so that Camp Chimo 1 and Camp Lynx would be able to enjoy a real shower. Before these were set up, the soldiers living there only had access to field shower bags. After making repairs to all four ablutions, they were up and running and every tent had a power supply.



Although our main objective in Haiti was to make lives easier for our fellow troops, we also had a few opportunities to directly help the locals. One of these projects involved an orphanage in Leogane. Myself and four

others were sent to spend a week there. During this time we constructed three small buildings and one 8'6" tower. One building was for two toilets, another was for two showers and the third was a storage shed. The tower was constructed to carry the weight of a 300 gallon water tank to gravity feed the showers and toilets. The operators of the orphanage and the children were extremely grateful. The children were particularly excited when Pte Coady suggested, designed, and led the construction of a swing set and a teeter totter. We left the orphanage knowing that we made a difference in a few people's lives.



As Op Hestia started to come to a conclusion, the pace of our workload never faded. Everyday was spent preparing for our exit. Our jobs included packing up and dunnaging sea containers, packing up ablutions, disconnecting generators, etc, etc... There was never a moment to wonder what was next. Throughout the entire mission the dedication of the NCT never wavered. The teamwork displayed during our stay in Haiti was second to none.

Day in and day out the NCT contributed to Op Hestia in our overall support of the Canadian camps. We set up, repaired, maintained and then packed up many things that made everyday life easier for the troops in our camps. Obviously we were all happy when the day came that we could step on a plane and fly back to Canada, but I know we all left there knowing we made a difference. It was an opportunity we are proud to say that we were a part of.

CHIMO!