

Namesake of Ship on Which Former Old Dominion University PACE Professor Served Helps Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Victims

NORFOLK, VA – September 27 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Hurricane Katrina dealt a devastating blow to the citizens of New Orleans, Louisiana and surrounding areas. Although many have criticized the government for its slow response, and rightly so, one ship stands out as a shining example of America's commitment to helping the victims of Katrina rebuild their lives. That ship is the amphibious assault ship, USS Iwo Jima, says Dr. Archie W. Earl, Sr.

When called upon, it made a 3-day high-speed trip down the East Coast of the United States, around Florida, and into the Gulf of Mexico. It arrived in the Gulf of Mexico on September 3 and, along with other ships, began humanitarian assistance operations to the devastated region. The Iwo Jima served as the launch pad for amphibious and air operations, delivering much needed supplies during the recovery effort.

Some might think that this ship, the USS Iwo Jima, is the same highly decorated ship that, in 1992, sailed in the Adriatic Sea, off the coast of former Yugoslavia, providing search and rescue support for U.N. flights, as part of Operation Provide Promise. But, according to Dr. Archie W. Earl, Sr., that is not the case. In 1978, Dr. Earl, a resident of Chesapeake, Virginia, served aboard the USS Iwo Jima, as an Old Dominion University PACE (Program For Afloat College Education) Professor, providing young men and women in the armed services with on-site access to higher education.

He said that, "The USS Iwo Jima that helped Hurricane Katrina victims is not the same highly decorated ship that I served on in 1978, and that was deployed in the Adriatic Sea during Operation Provide Promise. That ship (the one that served in the Adriatic Sea) was an LPH (Landing Platform, Helicopter). After many decades of outstanding service, evident by a long list of commendations and awards, it was decommissioned on July 14, 1993." He further stated that "The ship that came to the aid of Hurricane Katrina victims is the namesake of the decommissioned ship. It is an LHD (Landing Helicopter Dock)." Both ships are named for the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The new USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7), according to the Iwo Jima website) was christened at the Litton Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi on March 25, 2000. The ship was commissioned on June 30, 2001 at the Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida and arrived at it's homeport of Norfolk, Virginia in August of 2001.

The new Iwo Jima has already distinguished itself. It has played key roles in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Global War on Terrorism, Joint Task Force Liberia, and many other operations. Dr. Earl said "It give me such a sense of

pride to know that the new USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7) is maintaining the high standards of excellence set by the original USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2)."

That same ship, the new USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7), is on duty, now, helping the victims of Hurricane Rita. "Kudos," Dr. Earl said enthusiastically, "to the USS Iwo Jima and its crew, and to all the ships and men and women of the armed services that have pitched in to help the American people during a time when so much help is needed. It's good to know that we can use our armed services, not only to help people in other countries that are in need, but also to help people right here at home." The Commanding Officer of the Iwo Jima (LHD-7) is Capt. Richard S. Callas.

Dr. Archie W. Earl, Sr. is an Associate Professor, in the Department of Mathematics, of the School of Science and Technology, at NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY, in Norfolk, Virginia, USA. When he served on the USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2), it was deployed in the Mediterranean Sea.

To find out more about the USS Iwo Jima, visit the website below:

*(Image:

*(Caption: Ship Aiding Hurricane Victims is Namesake of That of Former ODU Pace Professor.)

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