

"Faces of the Tsunami:"

U.S. Response to the DECEMBER 26, 2004 Tsunami in Indonesia

Summary of actions in: Banda Aceh, Indonesia Nias Island, Indonesia 3 Feb-19 Apr 2005

Rear Admiral/USN/retired





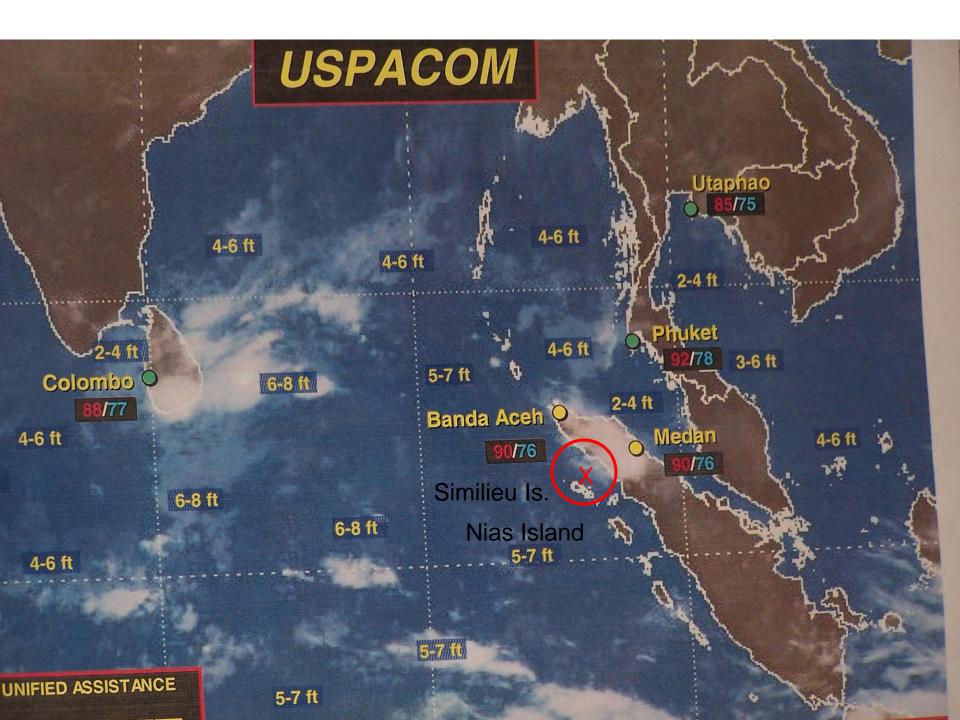
Primary Mission

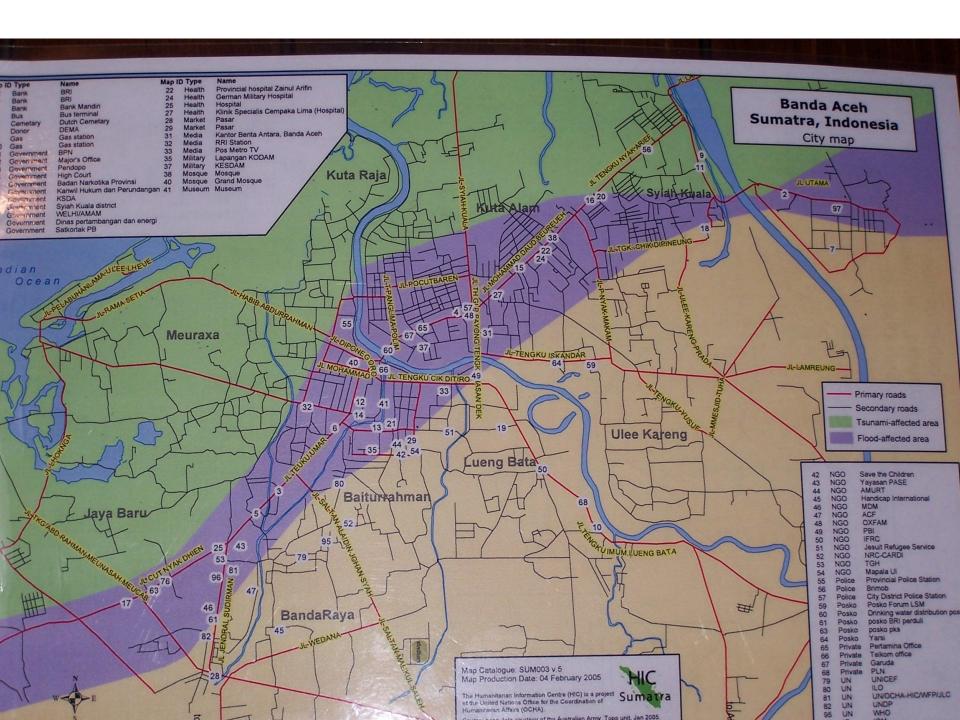
USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) Steaming to Assist!



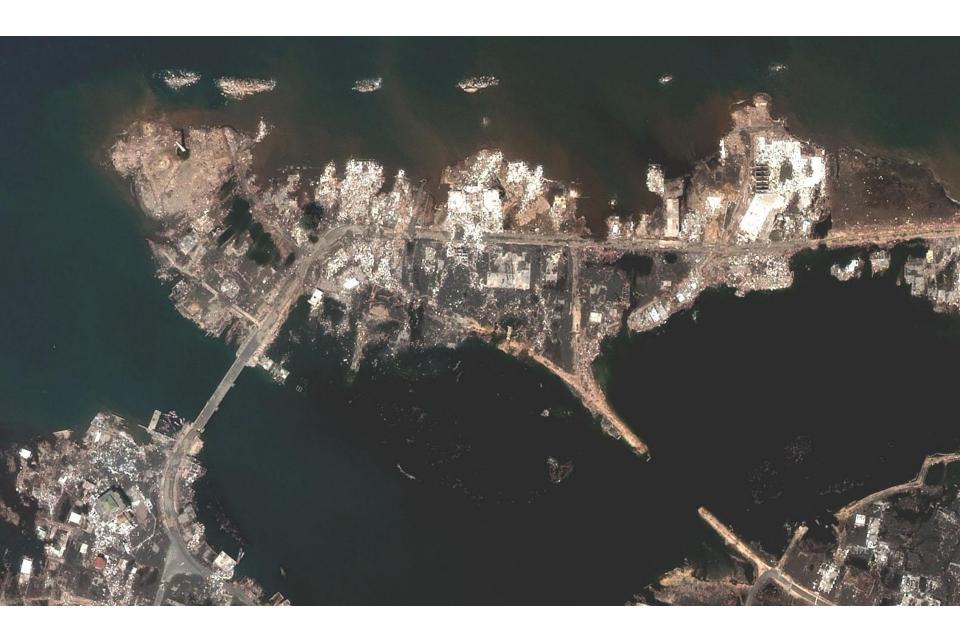
26 Dec 2004 9.0-9.3 Earthquake/tsunami

 On Dec 26, the earthquake that hit the Indian Ocean was more powerful than all the earthquakes in the world in the last 5 years combined. No one knows how many really died that day, but at least 140,000 died in Indonesia. Another 90,000 simply went missing. Most of those died in the first 10 minutes of the tsunami. This is a story of some of those incredible Indonesian people who survived.













Staff

- Mix of Project Hope personnel, Navy personnel, US Public Health Service, and Civilian mariners
- Experiment proposed by Chief of Naval Operations to CEO of Project Hope
- Is currently the template for all use of the ships













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Scope of work of USNS Mercy

- Tertiary care for 350 patients
- 9,500 outpatients
- Engineering support for facility repair
- Preventive medicine support—water and air testing, structural damage assessment
- Psychological teaching for trainers
- Mass immunizations with UNICEF
- Ancillary support for all local medical facilities
- COMREL projects galore
- Indonesian response to our care













Iqbal

- 12yo boy. Washed out to sea by Tsunami
- Family killed
- Survived by hanging on to wood; rescued 24 hours later
- Eventually found by uncle in IDP camp. Malnourished.
- Developed Aspiration Pneumonia ("Tsunami Lung".)
- Respiratory arrest. Intubated by Australians and transported to MERCY in BGEN Glueck's Helo.
- Two weeks in ICU on respirator hanging on to life.
- Another 2 weeks in hospital
- Left with new family to many tears on the ship.





Maknawiyah

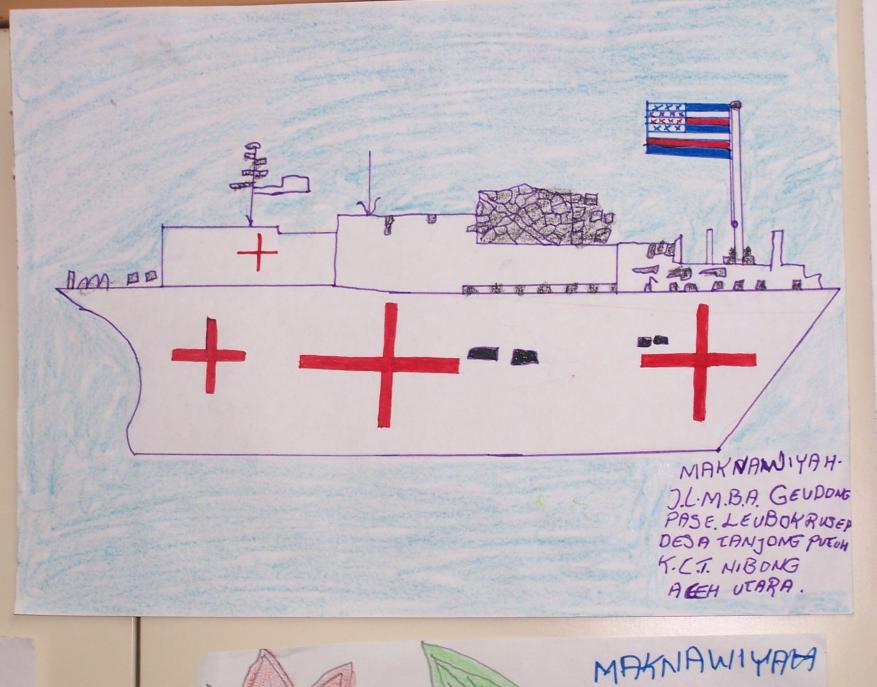
- 15yo girl
- Malignant tumor of left forearm
- Severe pain and miserable
- Amputation of left arm below elbow.
- Never stopped smiling and lifting everyone's spirit
- Learning English at an astounding rate!
- Sadly, the cancer was discovered to be widely spread throughout her small body.







Maknawiyay Pohon Makna







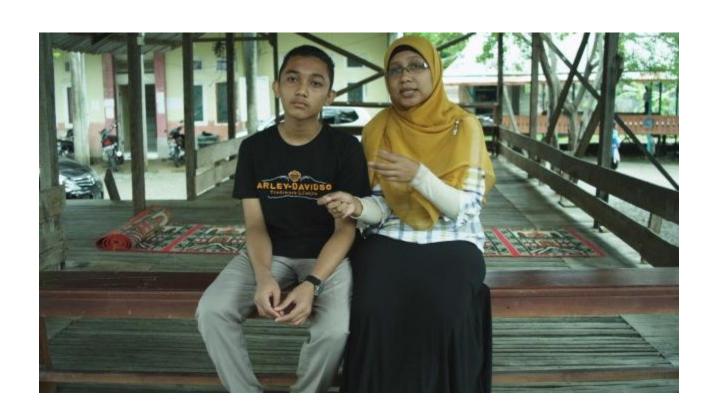








Zahrul today



Failures

- Habibah
- 41 y.o. with necrotizing pancreatitis
- 2 week old with hemorrhagic dengue feve
- 38 year old hemiplegic in Nias
- Lots of tears...on our side

NAME: FAISAL MR. Andres: PATER CITY ACEH Sunam! FUSO 220 PS

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Elisa

Abscess in brain

- 17 yo girl
- "Tsunami Lung"
- Half of family lost in Tsunami
- Brain abscess resulting in loss of speech and right sided paralysis.
- Cared for by Team of Internal Medicine, Critical Care, Infectious Disease, and Neurology
- Recovered most of speech and motor function
- Referred from ICRC; returned there when we left









Sick children...scare the devil out of me. I became an orthopod to get away from this!











Lessons learned..sort of

Communication is the biggest problem...always!

- Ship to ship, ship to shore. Local cell phones, sat phones (not so good)
- Higher authority comms are frequently too good! Second guessing, undermining local commander, too much external interference!
- Comms between all parties (ship, hospital, NGO's, UN agencies, host nation entities, etc) is not a one time occurrence!

Form relationships ashore

- I.e., all patients were technically admitted to Abidin Hospital, then to the ship.
- Again, make the rounds. Nurse to nurse, doctor to doctor makes all the difference.
- Educate, educate, educate! They thrive on it and we get tremendous return.
- Know all the players and communicate with them several times a week.

Comms, cont

 For the most effective utilization of our assets, there should be one fairly senior person assigned to facilitate constant interchange with all other entities. That person should have the authority to get things done, and the ear of the highest person in the chain of command. That person cannot go in heavy handed! We are there to support and facilitate, not take over.

Projection ashore

- Need the ability to project personnel and equipment ashore when needed.
 (Ophthalmology operating scope, Preventive med assets, OR equipment when needed. Stay ashore at times.)
- Need significant local input as to security.
- Med repair techs, engineers are invaluable.

Tailor your assets

- Correct mix of specialists.
- Regardless, heavy on eye, dental, and preventive medicine.
- Avoid labor and time intensive specialty intervention...neurosurgery, complex repairs, ones requiring long term follow-up.

Follow Up

 Gilbert Zebua Bill I have met Sister Clara as a nun who run the orphanage, Putri Duha has been adopted by someone since she is an ophan. She will try to find last address and will contact me ASAP. According to her, Putri is now in a good condition.

Patient explanation

"We are a strong people. We take time to look ahead. We find time every day to laugh and sometime to remember. Those of us who survive must live our lives, and we will be OK."

From a letter of one of our Banda Aceh translators...

 "Here you not only healed their bodies but you treated them with such gentleness, such compassion and such great courtesy. For the first time in their lives they were treated as human beings who have worth. You see a man who has lost an arm, a patient who has lost a leg and yet when they leave the ship they are all smiling. The joy in them is overwhelming. They are perhaps happier than they have ever been in their lives because for the first time they are aware of their worth as people that their thoughts and feelings and lives count. When they leave here they know that they are valuable. They leave with self-esteem. This is something very special and very rare that you have given them. "

So, is this kind of endeavor worth while?

Absolutely!



LTR from Jabal

Hy, Sorry for the first time, may be my english is not well, i'm really happy when i read your email and i told to my father about your email, he said thanks for your attention, and for the long time we never talk like this time, he give the greeting for all crews of USNS Mercy who help us in Aceh after tsunami, and also thanks for book you have wrote about Aceh.

In this time i have been collage student in jakarta, i took the accounting for the major, i have leave aceh since 2013 for collage in jakarta.

This is my mailing address in jakarta, "Mesjid Almakmur street No.2 RT 015 RW 07 east pejaten. Pasar Minggu. South of Jakarta. 12510"

Send my greeting for all crews of Mercy, especially for you.

Jabal (Muhammad Iqbal)

Today



