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565th EN DET Partners with RMI to Improve Majuro Infrastructure

By Dino W. Buchanan, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 22-11) The Honolulu District-based 565th Engineer Detachment (Forward Engineer Support Team-Advance) recently returned from a week-long deployment to assist the Republic of the Marshall Islands government with prioritizing improvements to the infrastructure on the Majuro Atoll.

The team's ultimate goal was to assist the U.S. Embassy and the government of RMI by providing a relevant technical report that will prioritize recommendations for infrastructure improvements.

The FEST deployed at the request of the U.S. Embassy, Majuro and in coordination with the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The request came as a follow-up to the 565th's successful infrastructure survey mission on the island of Ebeye, part of the Kwajalein Atoll. The 565th's team was supplemented by three members from the U.S. Army Reserve's 747th Engineer Detachment (FEST-A) from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

"This mission also provided excellent interagency, multinational, and technical training and served as a major training event in the 565th's preparation for future deployments," said 565th Engineer Detachment Commander Maj. William Hannan. "This type of training cannot be replicated in the normal pre-deployment training scenarios or even at the combat training centers."

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2-2-2 565th RMI

The 565th's recent infrastructure survey was conducted on the contiguous island of Majuro (part of the Majuro Atoll), the capital of RMI. The team partnered with Majuro utility managers and operators to conduct combined surveys of Majuro's sewer, water, electricity, and trash systems in order to provide analysis and recommendations for improvement to the U.S. Embassy and to the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

"The success of the mission can be directly attributed to the teamwork between the Majuro utility workers and the 565th Engineer Detachment," said Maj. Hannan.

The 565th conducted the mission in three phases: pre-deployment research and coordination, onsite technical surveys in Majuro and writing the technical report. Following pre-deployment activities, the groups arrived in Majuro and met with the utility managers for the sewer, water, electrical and trash systems and then conducted their site surveys alongside the operators who ran individual components of each utility system.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Reach-Back Operations Center (UROC), Honolulu District Base Development Team (BDT) and other key members of the Honolulu District assisted the 565th by providing answers to technical requests for information that were beyond the team's capabilities.

Managers and operators from the Majuro Water and Sewer Company (MWSC) worked alongside the 565th Civil Engineer David Nishimura and Mechanical Engineer Jon Hosaka to analyze the water and sewer systems. The analysis included detailed assessments of pump stations, water wells, water catchments, water reservoirs, treatment components, distribution lines, fire hydrants, sewer lines, lift stations, manholes, treatment components, a sewer outfall pipe, storm drains and storm sewer outfalls.

"Although the work was very challenging, it was also rewarding to work with the Marshallese people who had the same basic goal we did - figure out how to improve the infrastructure of their Atoll," said Nishimura.

The trio of 747th EN DET personnel - Capt. Kelly Thomas, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Harden and Master Sgt. Cedric McClure - surveyed and assessed the collection and disposal of medical waste, hazardous waste and regular municipal waste with assistance from the Majuro Atoll Waste Company (MAWC) operators and manager.

Alan Avery, 565th's electrical engineer, working with Marshall's Energy Company (MEC) power plant managers and operators conducted a survey of Majuro power generation and distribution systems that included assessing seven diesel fueled generators, power plant operations components and switch gear, transformers and more than 31 miles of distribution lines and components.

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3-3-3 565th RMI

According to Maj. Hannan, the Majuro Infrastructure Survey directly links to one of the 565th's mission tasks: to provide technical engineer support.

“The work was very intense and demanding due to the short time frame available to complete the mission.” Maj. Hannan said. “Honolulu District’s support answering technical requests for information was crucial to the overall success of the mission. This mission not only enhanced the relationship between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, but also served as critical training for the 565th as it prepares to deploy to overseas contingency operations.”