MAKING A DIFFERENCE...

IN DISASTER RELIEF

Since the early days of this nation's history, Americans have looked to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for assistance in preventing and reducing damage and recovering from natural and manmade disasters. All Corps districts and other elements have a

DUMPING THE DEBRIS OF HURRICANE ANDREW

In little more than half a day on August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew generated enough debris to fill a convoy of dump tricks, bumper-to-bumper, from Miami to Seattle and back. In the days that followed, a group from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started work on the problem of its removal.

The initial hurdle was to get an estimate of the amount of debris and its composition. The Corps' experience in the recoveries following hurricanes Frederick in Mobile (1979) and Hugo in Charleston (1989) was beneficial in determining the amount of debris and estimating the cost of its removal.

The Corps was tasked by FEMA with the removal of storm-related debris. The initial estimate was based on aerial photography and was produced in 10-12 hours. The Corps team determined the estimate by studying the number of structures per acre in different areas and assessing the percent of damage. Applying formulas determined the amount of debris: 22 million cubic yards. After two weeks, more than 2 million cubic yards of debris had been removed.

The second task assigned to the Corps was what to do with the debris once it had been removed. Members of the debris disposal team calculated how many trucks it would take and the rates for trucks and loaders, and then prepared technical specifications which identified each contractor's responsibilities.

Today, estimates indicate that approximately 42 million cubic yards of debris resulted from Hurricane Andrew. The timeframe for the cleanup is now being measured not in months, but in years.

readiness mission and are ready to organize and undertake emergency operations at a moment's notice.

When the Corps responds to an emergency, it can bring to bear not only experts from its force of nearly 40,000 people, but also a working relationship with local and state governments and the private architect-engineer and construction industry.

For example, during a flood, Corps emergency teams are on the scene conducting rescue operations, restoring vital utilities and transportation links, and providing water. After the immediate danger has passed, emergency teams repair damaged flood control works and other vital public facilities.

In addition to Hurricane Andrew (Florida and Louisiana), Hurricane Iniki (Hawaii), and Typhoon Omar (Guam) the Corps responded to the oil spill at Prince William Sound, Alaska. The Corps dispatched two dredges, as well as management, scientific and environmental specialists to assist with the cleanup. In October 1989, the Corps gathered a team of more than 300 people to carry out emergency repairs and damage assessment after the Loma Prieta earthquake in California.

California. Other emergencies include the Mt. St. Helen volcanic eruption, droughts, the Chicago Tunnel Flood and approximately 50 other emergency situations annually.

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