

USS Boxer, 15th MEU Arrive in Philippines to Deliver Emergency Relief Supplies



U.S. Marines assigned to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Philippine Marines assigned to 4th Marine Brigade load USAID supplies into an MV-22B Osprey during foreign disaster relief operations at the Laoag International Airport in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Philippines, Oct. 8, 2024. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Luis Agostini)

By Capt. Brian Tuthill, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit Public Affairs

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LUZON, PHILIPPINES – Amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), and embarked elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), arrived in the Philippines Oct. 8 to support the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) efforts in foreign disaster response operations following Typhoon Krathon (locally known as Julian), which made landfall on the Province of Cagayan, Philippines, Sept. 30.

Their support is at the request of the Philippine government and directed by U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

“The primary focus of our mission is helping the people of the Philippines recover as quickly and safely as possible,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Sean Dynan, commanding officer, 15th MEU. “Alongside the Armed Forces of the Philippines and USAID, our forces will help coordinate and transport relief supplies to those who were most affected in the Batanes Islands. Humanitarian assistance in an expeditionary environment is what we train to do, and it is one of the reasons we are

forward deployed as an amphibious force.”

The Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and 15th MEU (ARG-MEU) will send personnel and equipment from the ship to transport foreign disaster response (FDR) supplies to remote locations within the Philippines in collaboration with USAID.

“Our condolences go out to all those affected by this devastating typhoon,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Tate Robinson, commodore, Amphibious Squadron (COMPHIBRON) 5. “The unique construct of the Navy and Marine Corps team in an ARG-MEU provides us the ability to respond to crises through rapid maneuverability and embarked assets, allowing us to be on station and ready to support however we are needed. I am proud of the way our amphibious force team has come together to work alongside our Philippine allies in a timely, efficient, and professional manner to provide aid and alleviate suffering for those affected by Typhoon Krathon.”

The USAID supplies being delivered on the ground will include items such as tarps, shelter kits and food packets.

Boxer and 15th MEU will join personnel from I Marine Expeditionary Force’s Marine Rotational Force – Southeast Asia, who are already located in the country, to help facilitate the efficient distribution of materials. Additionally, U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J Hercules aircraft from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, arrived in Manila from Okinawa, Japan, last week to support the ongoing relief efforts.

The ARG-MEU team is capable of conducting operations from combat missions to humanitarian aid and disaster relief. They exemplify these capabilities with air-borne and sea-based connectors to move people and supplies where and when needed. As such, prior to the deployment, Boxer and 15th MEU conducted training and certification for humanitarian assistance

missions.

The U.S. military regularly trains with the Philippines on FDR operations. Recurring exercises, such as Balikatan and Kamandag, provide crisis response training that enhances operational readiness and develops joint interoperability during an actual disaster and the relief efforts that follow.

Boxer and embarked elements of the 15th MEU are conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.