



### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources

On the Web:  
<http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil>

For More Information:  
+1 (703) 428-9090

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#### **Pacific Resilience Featured in *Asia Pacific Defense Forum***

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. U.S. Army Lt. Colonel G. Scott Dewitt and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Institute for Water Resources (IWR) Geographer Justin Pummell recently wrote an article published in *Asia Pacific Defense Forum*. In "Enhancing Resiliency to Transcend Disaster: The U.S. Army Pacific Employs a Civil-Military Approach," Dewitt and Pummell detail the history behind Pacific Resilience, the current scope of the initiative, and how the program will develop into the future. Pummell is assigned to U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) and acts as a liaison between USARPAC, USACE Pacific Ocean Division (POD) and IWR.

Pacific Resilience evolved out of USARPAC's Disaster Response Expert Exchange (DREE). DREE began as a way for USARPAC to share best practices and lessons learned with Indonesian disaster responders. From its inception in 2007, the DREE initiative grew in size and scope until it became part of Pacific Resilience in 2012. Beginning with Indonesia, the program grew to engage civilian and military organizations across South and Southeast Asia. Pacific Resilience incorporates medical, engineering, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief and related efforts in preparation for a variety of likely emergency scenarios in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Natural disasters provide mounting challenges to governments, populations and the environment. Without proper preparation and response planning, the increase in the severity, length and scale of disasters will detrimentally impact responders' abilities to overcome and recover effectively and efficiently. In this age, it is paramount that all countries in the Asia-Pacific region work collaboratively to respond to floods, earthquakes, typhoons, droughts, tornados and other natural disasters," wrote Dewitt and Pummell.

USARPAC has developed methods to improve emergency response to natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific region. With an emphasis on international collaboration, USARPAC established the Pacific Resilience program to better handle response to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, typhoons and droughts. U.S. military disaster response is often limited due to narrow or restricted military and international aid timelines. Pacific Resilience is designed to work within those limitations and utilize the military's unique skills and assets for international disaster operations. The program focuses on the relationships between military and civilian stakeholders and establishes shared response procedures which help speed and extend disaster response efforts.

"At the 2012 Disaster Response Expert Exchange (DREE) in Bangladesh, the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) engaged the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division and the Ministry of Disaster Management with its civil-military approach," wrote authors Dewitt and Pummell. "This made all parties at the table feel comfortable and resulted in a successful field training exercise that included more than 70 organizations and 1,250 participants throughout the city of Dhaka."

"Usually when we plan any military activity, it is led, organized and managed by military participants. However, Pacific Resilience takes a new approach to the military-led paradigm by enabling military and civilian leadership to

jointly execute the training. This leads to a more realistic event, which forces us to break down communication barriers and roll up our sleeves to solve common problems,” said Maj. Greg Pipes, USARPAC South Asia desk officer, in a quote in the article.

The *Asia Pacific Defense Forum* is published by the Commander of the United States Pacific Command as a forum for the Asian and Pacific military communities.

### **More about IWR’s Role in Pacific Resilience**

USACE IWR Geographer Justin Pummell is responsible for USACE’s International Capacity Development Program in the U.S. Army Pacific Command (USPACOM) area of responsibility. As part of IWR’s International Capacity Development Program, he works directly with the USARPAC, USPACOM, U.S. Embassies and partner nations. He provides theater security cooperation support, geographic information system (GIS) technical expertise and disaster management planning to USARPAC, USPACOM and POD.

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