

**DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & RESPONSE** 



### **OPERATION PHOENIX : 11/2013**



### **OPERATION PHOENIX: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In November 2013, a Rescue Global Pathfinder briefings for the Philippine Government through Team deployed to the Philippines in order to a liaison with the Philippine Air Force, as well provide urgent reconnaissance and multi- as to local and international non-governmental agency command support in the aftermath organisations (NGOs) and charities. of Super Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda. The team deployed for a total of 5 weeks into what was to be defined as the strongest storm ever to make landfall in recorded history, and the fourth largest storm ever recorded in the world<sup>1</sup>. Returning to the United Kingdom on Sunday 22nd December 2013.

Air Base (IATA: CEB, ICAO: RPVM), located on Mactan Island in Cebu, Philippines, which shares a runway with the Mactan-Cebu International Airport from the Rescue Global airbase in north London, United Kingdom, in our King Air 90c aircraft. They were joined a week later by one of our US based Pathfinders, flown in by our partners at Airlink to provide additional expertise and support.

Having initially monitored the Typhoon during its track across the Philippines, Rescue Global provided immediate support to charities and NGOs, helping to identify access points for personnel, food, water and medical supplies, whilst gathering data to inform our decision as to whether or not to deploy. In liaison with one of our Advisors, Air Marshall Philip Sturley (former Assistant Chief of the Air Staff and specialist advisor to the UK House of Common's Defence Committee), Rescue Global established that there was a clearly defined set of missions which we could risk assess, plan and execute successfully. This resulted in a decision to deploy a Pathfinder Team, Commander and Air Asset to the Philippines.

The efforts focused on providing timely and accurate reconnaissance data, also command and communication support to official agencies, as well as assisting in the delivery of aid both directly and with partners. The team conducted

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Upon arrival in Cebu, the Rescue Global team established a Silver Command base. They conducted reconnaissance of unassessed areas, delivered emergency aid and provided multi-agency coordination and support to several agencies. They delivered aid to the Quiniluban islands, an archipelago containing some of the The team of four flew to Mactan-Benito Ebuen most remote communities impacted by the typhoon. Later in the deployment Rescue Global shifted efforts to the Tacloban area, providing support to local communities centred on Pagsulhugon Elementary School. Activities there included the delivering of food collected from some of the departing military teams who donated their rations to Rescue Global. They established medical clinics in collaboration with our partners Remote Area Medical (RAM) and carried out emergency repairs to dangerous structures, whilst providing power to enable air conditioning and lighting to support the children and teachers in that area.

> Finally, the team worked with our charity partners Cadena from Mexico, to distribute water filtration kits in collaboration with the Rotary Club (Philippines), to provide safe water for up to 50,000 people for 5 years, training the local community how to use them.

> The deployment to the Philippines was titled "Operation Phoenix", in direct recognition of the spirit of the people of the Philippines, whose grace and resilience was witnessed by all who deployed. in the worst of circumstances.

This document summarises the activities of Operation Phoenix, providing highlights of key moments during the deployment.

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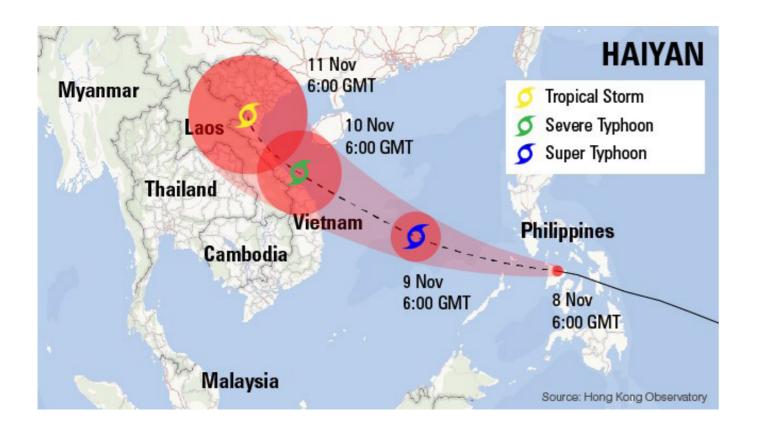
## **TYPHOON HAIYAN BACKGROUND**

Super Typhoon Haiyan, locally known in the Philippines as Yolanda, carried extremely heavy rainfall and sustained winds of almost 200mph upon landfall. It came less than 3 weeks after the earthquake in Bohol, a province in the Philippines. That earthquake measured 7.2 on the moment magnitude scale (the strongest to hit Bohol in 25 years) and affected the whole Central Visayas region, in particular Cebu and Bohol. Overall, over 53,439 houses were damaged or destroyed, 796 people were injured and 222 dead<sup>2</sup>.

The typhoon was even more devastating than the earthquake. Almost 14 million people were affected, with thousands dead, injured, or missing and several million displaced<sup>3</sup>. In some areas, flash floods reached second floors of buildings and nearly all corn and sugar crops were destroyed<sup>3</sup>. Entire plantations of coconut

trees were flattened. Coconuts account for nearly half the Philippines agricultural exports and the country is the world's biggest producer of coconut oil. The strong winds interrupted telecommunications and thus only limited information could be received from the most affected areas. Power lines were down and access to affected areas was limited due to damaged roads and fallen trees<sup>3</sup>. In the aftermath of the typhoon, looting started to occur<sup>3</sup> evacuation centres started to fill beyond capacity and fuel started to run dangerously low<sup>3</sup>.

Following landfall in the Philippines on 8th November 2013, the Philippine government accepted offers of international assistance and on 12th November, a national state of calamity was declared by the President of the Philippines<sup>3</sup>.





## **DECISION TO DEPLOY**

After monitoring the response and providing direct support to partner agencies in the first stages of the response, it was noted that the provision of food, water, shelter and medical assistance all still remained acute priorities. There existed a lack of accurate and shared information in many areas. On the 19th November 2013, Rescue Global's decision to deploy was therefore based upon the urgent requirement for reconnaissance, multi-agency command support and direct delivery of emergency aid. All are hallmarks of what Rescue Global was founded to provide.

Concurrent to the monitoring and liaison work Rescue Immediately prior to departure, Rescue Global summed Global had been engaged in up to the ultimate decision up the intent "A few days into this tragic event it has to deploy, extensive pre-deployment planning and become clear that there will be an ongoing need preparation had been conducted, enabling a response stretching into weeks, months and the years which without delay in the event that our assistance was required. follow this event. The need for timely and accurate This planning is an essential part of every Rescue Global reconnaissance, especially in areas which are deployment, permitting effective and timely decisions geographically isolated, is clear. Rescue Global is well throughout the deployment itself. Rescue Global follow a trained and equipped to provide this. We are experienced series of steps in their pre-deployment planning. Factors in collaborative engagement. The information which we considered and taking into account, include; will gather, will empower decision makers and ultimately Protection (medical precautions, vaccinations, risk assist those whose mission it is to save lives. Our method assessments, background information) of deployment and self-sustainability ensures that our contribution will add value to the aid effort immediately. Administration (flights, accommodation) and place no burden upon the host nation."

- Water and Rations •



- Personal equipment and Clothing (for each team member)
- Equipment (other)
- Radios, phones, cameras and tracking (for essential communication purposes)
- Specialist equipment and resources (including equipment and resources specific to the missions e.g. routes and timings, headquarters staffing)
- ٠ Orders and Briefings (including media and external communication)



### **MISSION OBJECTIVES**

Rescue Global was founded to meet the urgent need of 4. To conduct further and on-going assessments in the humanitarian and disaster response community for accurate information in the aftermath of a natural or manmade disaster. We are a charity dedicated to the rapid reconnaissance of critical events, as well as to the initial provision of advanced search, rescue and command support capabilities with which to empower the local, national and international decision making of others whose mission, like Rescue Global's, is to save life.

Accordingly, the overall objectives for Operation Phoenix were:

- 1. To deploy safely to all locations where assistance can be provided
- 2. To link with the United Nations Cluster at Cebu to ensure that Rescue Global assets and expertise can be utilised
- 3. To gather all available impact assessments to date, in order to understand current and future needs as well as to identify gaps in current knowledge. This to ensure that Rescue Global's actions can be tailored to meet the exact requirements of all stakeholders

- order to empower others and to deliver aid based upon the priorities Rescue Global set. These being the emergency provision of water, food, shelter and medical assistance
- 5. To provide multi-agency coordination and support to enable partners to work collaboratively both within the UN Cluster system, as well as with the local Philippine authorities and NGO's
- 6. To provide ground and aerial disaster reconnaissance upon request

These 6 objectives were to be realised in the following ways;

#### Using our aircraft to:

- Provide reconnaissance for any agency with a need for accurate and timely data
- Provide a communication relay where required
- Move key personnel and equipment efficiently to the areas of identified need

- Assist with monitoring of delivery of aid, services and project management
- Helping international media gain a deeper understanding of the crisis and ensure global public awareness is maintained

#### Providing high grade tracking:

- Tracking of personnel and assets in real time, ensuring situational awareness as part of our risk management procedure and so duty of care to the deployed team
- · Increasing ground truth understanding for those at strategic level, ensuring efficient use of assets, matched to real-time needs

#### Providing video and audio feeds:

• Using body worn (including Google Glass) and handheld, audio-visual equipment to record and transmit, in real-time, video and audio back to specialists on the ground and in the USA and UK as well as to our partners



#### Using our trained communication specialists and equipment:

To improve communication flow from the ground • back to our HQ and those of our partner agencies, as well as to our technology partners who support us by using data gathered from social media and run through HAC's (Human Actor Collectives, people and computers working together) to ensure relief is targeted to the areas most in need

#### Gathering data for use by experienced Rescue Global personnel at our London HQ:

 To collate, analyse and rationalise disparate reports to which our reconnaissance information is then added, in order to enable efficient and risk assessed decision making processes geared towards getting aid to the most vulnerable, quickly



David, Brian, Daniel, Simon and David

### THE PATHFINDER TEAM

As with every Rescue Global deployment a Pathfinder team was selected, their experience, knowledge and specialisms matched to the exact requirements of that particular crisis or disaster. This ensures that Rescue Global has the most effective team on the ground.

#### DAVID

#### **Team Leader**

David has spent his career in government and civilian emergency service sectors, specialising in operational command, control and instructional roles. He is a multi-disciplinarian and a qualified instructor in incident command, control, search and rescue operations.

David is on the Leadership Council of the UN Foundation, Humanitarian Awards, and the Editorial Panel of the Crisis Response Journal. He is a specialist advisor and trainer instructor in the fields of Disaster Response and Reconnaissance in Humanitarian Operations for the governments of the USA, India and the Philippines. He is a guest speaker at the Emergency Planning College, Cabinet Office, United Kingdom, and the US National Search and Rescue Academy.

#### **BRIAN**

#### **Deputy Team Leader & Medic**

Brian is a former Staff Sergeant with the US Army special forces and brings with him critical leadership experience earned in a variety of hostile environments. A specialist in survival, mountain search and rescue, hostile environment medicine and life-saving procedures, he is a proficient operator, team leader and instructor. Brian is also cross-trained in air / land / sea deployment methods, and specialist communications.

#### DANIEL

#### Pathfinder & Medic

Daniel is specialised in both mountain and water rescue with a diploma in outdoor education. and is cross-trained in medicine. As a survivor of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami he has experienced, at first hand, the destructive power of water. As well as his work for Rescue Global he is a volunteer for Cornwall Search and Rescue.

#### **SIMON**

#### **Communications Officer, Medic**

Simon is a former communications specialist with the UK special forces and he brings tenacity, ingenuity and technical ability He sources, creates, maintains and deploys the communication systems which are vital to the work that we do, ensuring that our Pathfinders can communicate with each other, with other teams and Silver and Gold command.

#### DAVID

#### Pilot, Medic

David is both a qualified pilot and experienced search and rescue operator, proficient in managing risk and saving life following 8 years' service as a Firefighter and Operational Manager in the London Fire Brigade.

### GOLD & SILVER COMMAND AND PARTNERS

Rescue Global Gold (Strategic) Command operated continuously during the deployment, providing real time support and guidance to the Rescue Global Silver (Tactical) Command which was established in Cebu.

Silver Command planned and led the missions, facilitated local resource management and ensured effective communication flow between the teams on the ground, other Philippine based organisations and Gold Command in London.

Rescue Global partners who assisted before, during and after the missions, included Remote Area Medical, Airlink, DHL, Cadena, Team Rubicon, Arcteryx, University College London and the Orchid Project (the Universities of Oxford, Nottingham and Southampton).

Many were engaged at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

### TECHNOLOGY

Body-worn (including Google Glass) and hand-held audio-visual equipment was used to record and transmit real-time information to specialists on the ground, as well as the USA and UK and our network of partners. The Rescue Global team toggled Glass into their communications and tracking system, allowing team members at Silver Command in Cebu and back at Gold Command in London to track and observe Pathfinders in the field.

As well as being interesting and informative, this enabled communication with external experts, such as a John Hopkins surgeon based in the USA, who was able to examine patients remotely, with the Pathfinders and local medical staff in the Philippines carrying out his instructions.

Other technology deployed included, satellite phones with integral tracking features, satellite terminals with which the team created their own internet and phone service, as well as personal survival tools on trial from manufacturers.

Our Partners at the Orchid Project gathered vital data throughout and after the missions, in order to start to create models with which we could later assess our performance, in order to improve upon this in future, as well as to help us collaborate on new technology which we are jointly creating.



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### THE JOURNEY

The Rescue Global Pathfinder team deployed from London and made their journey to the Philippines in Rescue Global's King Air 90c aircraft. The team, with all their equipment and supplies, flew to the island of Cebu. The King Air 90c aircraft was also used to commute between the different islands throughout the deployment. This permitted efficient, self-sufficient freedom of movement, the ability to self-deploy very close to all the required areas, as well as being able to provide an effective communication and reconnaissance platform.

This also meant that one of Rescue Global's principal tenets was satisfied; to place no pressure on existing in-country infrastructure and resources. Rescue Global always aims to be entirely self-sufficient in relation to food, water, power and mobility for the first 72 hours of a deployment and for as long as possible thereafter.

The route had to take into account various environmental, political and logistical factors. The experienced team were fully equipped with communications, tracking and navigation equipment. They had the benefit of a resilient air asset capable of short field take-off and landing, ensuring maximum accessibility to all areas of need.

The flight plan was carefully crafted, but was subject to alterations due to early sand storm warnings and Indian Cyclone Helen and wind changes.

- Day 1: London Italy Greece Egypt
- Day 2: Delay of flight programme due to early sandstorm warming and Indian Cyclone Helen. Route changed slightly north for extra safety.
- Day 3: Egypt Bahrain Pakistan India
- Day 4: India Thailand
- Day 5: Thailand Vietnam Philippines





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### **ARRIVAL AND CEBU**

The Rescue Global Pathfinder Team arrived in the Philippines on 25th November 2013 at 2200, to be joined by an additional Pathfinder from the USA a week later. The team embarked upon an intensive round of meetings with local officials and humanitarian organisations, engaging with the United Nations Cluster Cebu, also the Canadian led military co-ordination centre at Roxas, to co-ordinate our efforts.

These meetings were invaluable as they enabled Rescue Global to link in with decision makers from the outset, to whom we could report our findings in order to inform emergency planning in a short space of time.

# **IMMEDIATE MISSIONS**

Following the establishment of Silver Command at Cebu and comprehensive contact with other organisations, the Pathfinder Team initiated two initial missions which had been pre-planned during the journey from the UK to the Philippines;

- possibility of disease outbreaks and evidence of food shortage
- most people, for the longest period of time





1. Conducting medical reconnaissance in regions yet to be surveyed; locating injured and sick people, assessing medical facilities and conducting a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) assessment, as well as detecting the

2. Distribution of water filters in collaboration with Cadena, a Mexican charity. Rescue Global conducted assessments of immediate need and took input from the Rotary Club (Philippines), to identify the optimum delivery methods and locations to site the filters. This enabled the planning for the most effective provision of safe water for the

## **QUINILUBAN ISLANDS**

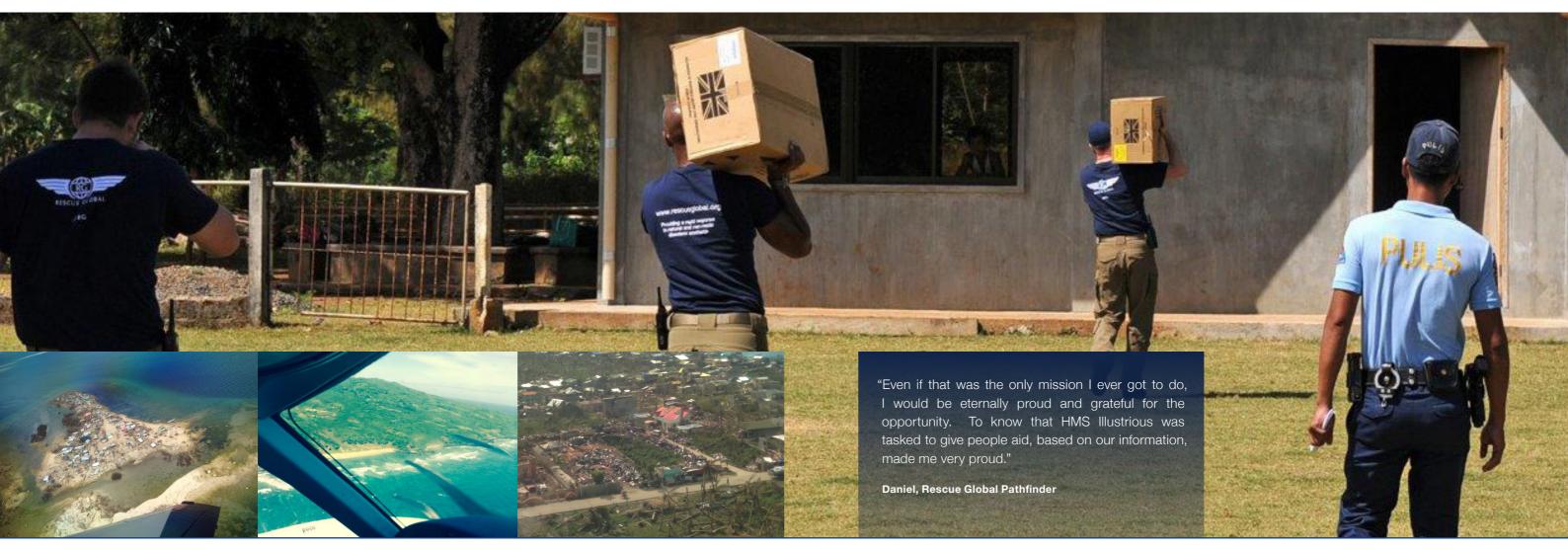
On 1st December 2013 the Rescue Global Pathfinder Team deployed from Cebu via their aircraft to the Quiniluban Islands. The archipelago of the Quiniluban Islands contained some of the most remote communities impacted by Typhoon Haiyan.

The mission objectives were to:

- Use our aircraft and Pathfinders to provide humanitarian reconnaissance of areas which have yet to be assessed
- Provide follow up assessments of areas which have already been visited and where aid had already been delivered, in order to confirm outcomes and establish changing and continuing needs
- To use these assessments to deliver key personnel, assets and emergency aid to areas which Rescue Global can reach, through working closely with the local communities as well as charity and agency partners
- Continue Rescue Global's work to provide multi-agency coordination and support in order to enable partners to work collaboratively within the cluster system and with the local Philippine authorities

The activity in the Quiniluban Islands identified six islands in serious need. Previously received aid had run out and further aid supplies were some time away via ship (which was confirmed with external organisations and community leaders). The Rescue Global team developed plans to supply these islands with food, water and hygiene packs, flown in by the Rescue Global aircraft. Additionally, after discussion with the liaison officer from HMS Illustrious and in consultation with the Department for International Development, UK (DFID) as well as the Head of United Nations Office at Roxas, HMS Illustrious set sail for these communities and delivered fresh supplies.

The effort to shuttle between the islands and Cebu, refreshing and delivering emergency supplies took several days, in part utilising Rescue Global's aircraft to provide an 'air-bridge' to deliver rations donated by some of the military teams at Cebu, collected by the Disaster Response Team of DHL. Updates were delivered quickly using Rescue Global's resilient communications systems. Furthermore Rescue Global worked with the community to establish two locally empowered supply chains which guaranteed that arriving aid would be moved quickly throughout the islands.





**DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & RESPONSE** 

### PAGSULHUGON

On 6th December 2013, the Rescue Global Pathfinder team flew to Tacloban using their aircraft, then travelled by road to Pagsulhugon Elementary School. Here immediate aid was rendered to 494 children followed by an assessment of how short, medium and long term assistance could be provided. Rescue Global worked with Remote Area Medical (RAM), who had joined Rescue Global's flight from Roxas. This collaboration permitted provision of a generator, rations and the ability to perform medical assessments and deliver emergency treatment.

Following the provision of our immediate assistance and upon completion of a full needs assessment, further support was then planned. The community was revisited on Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th December, when Pathfinders worked on essential building projects, such as making classrooms safe again and the RAM team set up a mobile health clinic, where 265 people were treated over two days.

During this particular mission the Pathfinder team made use of the Rescue Global proprietary live video link to Gold Command in London to share information and tap into medical expertise (paediatric).

> "The mission is a great success not just because of the quantitative results that both teams have accomplished, but also because of the effects the team have had in boasting the morale of the community. To be able to see the children laugh and play again and see them hope for a better future again is a joy to see. The Rescue Global team started buying building supplies, fixing the walls and the roof of the school, engaging local people to encourage them to help with the rebuild, and even milling wood from coconut trees to save costs on building materials. Rescue Global also set up a generator they had donated to the school, to power the lights and refrigerator so important in helping recovery. They built rapport with the school children by engaging them in play and games. This deployment in particular made use of the live video link with the headquarter team back in London."

Heidi Sampang, MD, FAAP RAM Volunteer





### **GUIUAN**

From 12th December 2013, the Rescue Global Pathfinder team worked in close collaboration with the charity Cadena to distribute water filtration kits throughout the Guiuan Peninsula in Eastern Samar and train the local community on how to use them. Altogether, these filters have the capacity to provide safe water to 50,000 people for 5 years. By using their own aircraft, the Rescue Global team was able to transport these filters to the places where they were desperately needed, based on the earlier reconnaissance work and liaison with the Rotary Club (Philippines) and many local NGO's.

Together the Pathfinders and specialists from Cadena worked with the Guiuan community to train NGOs, hospital personnel and key leaders, including church and community leaders, on the most effective use of the filters so that they could train others in their communities. The joint team also established further needs, working closely with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) who were operating in the area.

When they returned to Cebu, the joint team debriefed local NGO's, Rotary and the Philippine Air Force, who continued the distribution and training work.

As well as the distribution of water filtration kits during the last few days in the Philippines, the team paid one last visit to Pagsulhugon and visited the Cuyo Island Atol to check on relief progress.







## **OUTCOMES**

Rescue Global completed a successful 5 week deployment to assist post Super Typhoon Haiyan. The team arrived back in London in late December 2013.

During their deployment, Rescue Global worked closely with other charities and agencies, NGO's and the Philippine government. Most significantly, Rescue Global worked closely with local communities and the Philippine Air Force, delivering reconnaissance, relief and ongoing support.

In summary;

- 5,000 people were identified as being in need of emergency aid and HMS Illustrious quickly delivered food and water on the basis of the Rescue Global intelligence reports
- Clean water was provided to up to 50,000 people for 5 years, through the distribution of water filters in partnership with Cadena and the Rotary Club (Philippines)
- Casualties from Tacloban were evacuated to Manila at the request of the Philippine Air Force and support their capacity to develop local resilience
- 494 children were provided with emergency aid (security, food, water, medical supplies) with Remote Area Medical
- Plans have been made to continue supporting



Pathfinder Brian - Interview BBC World News

schools through links with British schools and Remote Area Medical

- The Clinton Global Initiative was briefed on relief operations and assessed future needs, based on the deployed teams observations
- A Memorandum of Understanding with the Philippine Air Force and Search and Rescue specialist units within the ASEAN Region was put in place in order to co-deploy and co-operate on future operations
- Aid training was provided to local communities and leadership was empowered with communications and specialist advice at every contact point
- Rescue Global was invited by the BBC World News to comment on the situation in Tacloban in a feature which ran globally
- Rescue Global was recognised and honoured by the Philippine Air Force for "invaluable contribution and assistance"
- Rescue Global was thanked "on behalf of a grateful nation" by the Philippines Ambassador to the United Kingdom
- HRH The Duke of Edinburgh presented Rescue Global with an award from the Air League in recognition of our efforts



Air League Award

Rescue Global made the following statement on return to the UK;

"It has been a privilege to play a part in the response to Super Typhoon Haiyan. Working closely with our partners, other charities and especially with the people of the Philippines, who have displayed incredible resilience and gratitude, has been both rewarding and humbling.

Our deployment has enabled us to deliver emergency aid as well as life saving support which will continue when we return to London, with follow on projects and commitments which we will honour.

This deployment has highlighted the value which Rescue Global brings to a crisis environment. This is demonstrated nowhere better than in our new partnership with the Philippine Air Force, leaders themselves in CMO – Civil Military Operations.

Reflecting upon our operations in the Philippines we are reminded that the work we do is only possible by those who support our objectives. We are grateful for this support and offer sincere thanks on behal o the entire Rescue Global team and those whom we strive to help."

Upon returning to their home airbase, standard procedures were followed to ensure re-deployment was possible within hours of landing, demonstrating Rescue Global's ongoing commitment to provide a rapid response to disasters worldwide, in order to save life.

**Rescue Global have already planned a return visit to the Philippines in August 2014.** A senior management team will travel to Manila and Cebu, to establish the Disaster And Risk Alliance (Philippines), DARA(P), in collaboration with the Philippine Government, Civil Defence, several branches of the Military, local and international NGO's, Academic Institutions and Rescue Global partner responders from around the word. DARA(P) will have the following initial objectives:



- Evaluate the 2013 contribution of Rescue Global as part of our values and governance process to continually improve
- Establish a Rescue Global Regional Team for Asia Pacific (APAC) – building a permanent presence, based in Cebu
- Establish formal coordination and control relationships in conjunction with Heads of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Civil Defence, Health, Transport, Civil Aviation, Agriculture and the Military to enable future DARA(P) operations and training
- Enable the provision of a free and permanent Air Ambulance Service for the Philippines, through our Partners at Remote Area Medical
- Develop local resilience and response capability by the delivery of training to staff and liaison with the heads of c.300 local NGOs
- Further develop our partnerships with our international charity and NGO partners, to enable rapid deployment and maximum best use of our collective resource if needed in the future

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# THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rescue Global would like to thank DHL whose Disaster Response Team they worked alongside. The scale of work undertaken at Pagsulhugon Elementary School would not have been possible without the expertise of the team from RAM (Remote Area Medical). The partnership with the charity Cadena, who jointly distributed and trained communities on the water filtration system, was invaluable, as was the link with Médecins Sans Frontières.

Rescue Global benefited from the help of Airlink who flew one of the American Pathfinders to the Philippines, where he joined the rest of the team.

The equipment that Rescue Global used during Operation Phoenix was fundamental to the success of the mission. For details of our industry partners and supports, please visit our website.

The expertise of our Academic partners provides Rescue Global with vigour in our planning (before) and review (after) our missions, which is invaluable.



The University of Nottingham



### Southampton

Rescue Global is eternally grateful to our Ambassadors, Advisors and volunteers who supported us at every stage nothing would be possible without their generosity.

Finally, Rescue Global is proud to have a team of individuals whom are by themselves hard working, motivated, skilled and experienced in dealing with the sort of events, which they had to manage throughout Operation Phoenix. As individuals, they are efficient and expert. As a Team, they enable the successful execution of missions, which by their nature can be dangerous, but which are in our view essential in order to empower others to save lives. Rescue Global thanks every employee and volunteer, for their sterling efforts.

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If you would like to learn more about the Crisis Reconnaissance, Data Collection and Command Support capabilities of Rescue Global, or to find out how you can assist us through partnering or volunteering, please visit:

### www.rescueglobal.org





