



HOME > MEDIA > NEWS > 2012 > 08 > PACIFIC ENDEAVOR 2012 FACILITATES SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING

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Pacific Endeavor 2012 Facilitates Satellite Communications Training

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CHANGI NAVAL BASE, Singapore - Pacific Endeavor 2012, along with industry partners participating in the workshop, facilitated satellite communications (SATCOM) training on Changi Naval Base, Singapore, this year in hopes of providing familiarization to nations joining the Multinational Communications Interoperability Workshop (MCIP) who may require or provide aid in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

"Training is a very important portion for capacity building," said Riak Lamak of Global VSAT Forum, a not-for-profit organization based out of London. "[Militaries] need quick deployments as satellite communications is the base for all connectivity."

"Although you'd have fiber and other means of communications, the most important thing [is that people are trained] so that the network works properly, the signals don't drop and communications happens," he said.

Often times, humanitarian aid/disaster relief (HADR) operations rely on satellite communications due to damaged communications infrastructure in the wake of a catastrophic event.

"We use satellite communications across HADR efforts," said U.S. Army Maj. Linda Bozada, U.S. PACOM chief of theatre satellite communications and facilitator. "That's our transport because in most cases, fiber optic cables are going to be out, undersea cables are going to be out, and we rely on SATCOM [to communicate]."

"SATCOM can reach anywhere over air, sea or land and it's usually the main component for transport for any communications," she said.

As MCIP participants certify with SATCOM equipment, Global VSAT Forum facilitated online and hands-on training to nations who may not be as familiar as others.

"We [provided] the equipment. They assemble the equipment, and then aligned it to the satellite [to get a proper installation done]," said Lamak. "GVF came forward and has provided this training for 11 years now."

Satellite communications is also used in remote areas where communications can be difficult.

"Our goal is very simple, we want to capacity build," said Scott Griffin, MCIP technical director. "We want to provide tool sets, processes and procedures that the countries can use in a disaster response."

"We're hoping by doing planning and process development here in a training environment when it actually comes down to responding to a disaster, those processes and procedures are already worked through and in turn saves lives," said Griffin. "Quickness is really the key."

"The more we get a chance to work together and understand each other and how we communicate at the personal level, the better we'll be able to work together in a high stress crisis environment," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Justin Pickett, U.S. delegation chief for MCIP.

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2010	
2009	
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News	
Photos	
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RSS Feeds	
Social Networks	

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