

DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., loads USS Gunston Hall for humanitarian mission

Despite a cold and raw January day, the ship loaders of DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., carefully lifted and spotted 89 pallets' multiwalls onto the flight deck of the USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44), an amphibious ship based in Little Creek, Va., just outside of Norfolk.

Ordinarily, these multiwalls would contain subsistence or spare parts for the ship and its crew. However, this was no ordinary load. The multiwalls contained humanitarian material destined for Central and South American countries under operation "Southern Partnership Station 2011."

Inside the 89 multiwalls were wheelchairs and personal water filtering equipment, weighing in at over 118,000 lbs.

The ship planners, stevedores, riggers, blockers and bracers, and crane operators lifted the entire load onboard, and secured each pallet so that it was ready for the rock and roll of potentially rough seas, in just one day.

During its three-month deployment, the USS Gunston Hall will make deliveries in Columbia, Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize, delivering freight provided by United States Navy's Project Handclasp program.

Project Handclasp is a one-of-a-kind public/private outreach program headquartered in San Diego, Calif. Established in 1962 through a presidential directive, the program allows humanitarian, educational, and goodwill materials that are donated at no-cost by America's private sector to be distributed to those in need.

"Even though DLA Distribution Norfolk, Virginia, specializes in support to the Warfighter, it's also rewarding to support those who specialize in making peace," said Crispin Toledo, chief, Intermodal Hub, DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va.



A water filtration system shipped by DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., for Project Handclasp.



Project Handclasp freight loaded on to the USS Gunston Hall flight deck.