

PV on the
Battlefield

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New Generators

**Powering
the Soldier**



**Military
Perspective**

Mr. Terry Yonkers

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
Installations, Environment, and Logistics



CORPS OF ENGINEERS

SOFTENS SANDY'S BLOW

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“When the first generator kicked on, there were screams of excitement from the buildings,” said Col. Paul Owen, New York District commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“They were so excited about hearing the generator come on after struggling without power for a week,” said Owen, talking about the residents of a public housing complex in Rockaway Beach, Queens, NY.

Owen was in Rockaway as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Hurricane Sandy Response Mission as assigned by FEMA.

Hundreds of Army Corps employees teamed with federal, state, city, regional agencies, and soldiers from the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) to provide temporary emergency power to critical facilities in the New York-New Jersey Metro area.

In addition, they dewatered flooded areas, removed debris, provided bottled water to impacted communities, and performed standard assigned Army Corps emergency operations missions.

Hurricane Sandy was the largest Atlantic hurricane on record, causing severe damage across 24 states and hitting New York and New Jersey especially hard.

The superstorm's 95-mile-per-hour winds and record-breaking storm surge flooded streets, subways, and vehicular tunnels with salt water, wreaking havoc on communities throughout the region, especially those in coastal areas; creating major debris issues; and knocking out power to millions of residents.

The Army Corps plays a major role in disaster response, with more than 40 specially trained response teams capable of providing a wide variety of public works and engineering-related support.

After the hurricane, the Army Corps immediately had teams on the ground working around the clock to get things back to normal, families safely back in their homes, and people back to work.

Task Force Power was one of the teams that provided temporary power for critical facilities including water and wastewater treatment plants, hospitals, nursing homes, public housing developments, fire stations, and police stations.

The temporary power allowed these sites some level of operability while the commercial grid was restored by local power authorities.

“Power is what people need immediately after a disaster because it means life,” said Jim Balocki, chief, Interagency and International Services, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who served as the Army Corps leader for Task Force Power.

“It's important to get power to such places as hospitals because people's lives are on the line. People there are receiving critical care for illnesses and injuries that need the power to stay alive. Hospitals were also experiencing a surge of new people coming in because they were harmed during Sandy,” Balocki said.

The team also provided temporary power to life-sustaining facilities—ensuring that families would not require additional support from the state and federal government—and to mass



Clockwise from top left: Soldiers with C Company, 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) install electrical generator equipment at a Carteret, NJ, fuel depot that lost power during Hurricane Sandy (USACE). Staff Sgt. Henry Howell and Sgt. Nathaniel Boecker of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 249th Eng. Battalion (Prime Power), inspect generators at the Ocean Bay Public Housing complex. The 249th has installed 22 generators powering 24 family building structures in the Rockaways (Brooks Hubbard IV, USACE). Generators in central New Jersey staged for deployment in their Emergency Temporary Power mission. USACE aggressively helped to bring temporary emergency power to critical facilities in New York and New Jersey following Hurricane Sandy (Mary Markos, St. Louis District, Public Affairs).

transit systems such as the Hudson Ferry, New Jersey's PATH trains, and the Long Island railroad. Additionally, the team allotted power to petroleum terminals that were critical to restoring fuel availability in the region after the storm.

Task Force Power installed 202 temporary FEMA generators throughout the metro area. The generators had the capacity to provide 54 megawatts of power (enough to power a city of 55,000 people) and directly supported more than 25,000 residents, with thousands more benefitting indirectly.

The generators were specific to the various power situations they encountered. "This is not a one-size-fits-all situation where we rolled up with 75 generators in the back of a van and started dropping them off and hooking them up," Balocki said. "Every one of the generators had to be specially matched and connected to safely provide temporary power. Because it's

custom made, it takes a bit longer than what people expect and want, but it's for the safety of the people living and working in the facility."

One of the places the team installed generators was in the public housing development where Owen was present. The development houses 1,200 residents who didn't have power for more than a week.

"Two ladies from the development were there watching us do our work, and I explained everything we were doing so they would understand the situation," Balocki said. "Although they were not pleased with having to wait for electricity, they were grateful to have the Army Corps there, and that we took the time to explain things to them. They gave me a hug."

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