

## *Water, water (almost) everywhere*

# Flying Boats to the Rescue

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With 71.11% of the Earth's surface covered by water it's amazing to me that 99% of all commercial cargo-type aircraft require solid runways.

The lack of what used to be known as "Flying Boats" came to mind as I watched tv reports of the Haiti earthquake. According to a map shown on the small screen, the epicenter is relatively close to the sea.

Air traffic to and from Haiti is non-existent - apparently the 'quake damaged the airport or perhaps there simply are no people to man the place.

Now, if we - the world - had C-5 class - or even C-130 class - flying boats to ferry aid and heavy rescue equipment into Haiti and to bring out the injured, things could be coming on shore as this is written.

Instead, we are waiting for navy and commercial vessels to head to a port, load up with "whatever," and slowly make their way to Haiti - or any other place that needs help and is near a port.

## *A few floating around*

There ARE flying boats floating around. Colson Flying Tankers owns a Martin JRM-3 Mars (photo copyright Gerhard Plomitzer). The "Hawaii Mars," shown in the photo, was built by Martin sometime between 1943 and 1947.  
(Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JRM\\_Mars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JRM_Mars))



See additional shots at [http://www.airliners.net/search/photo.search?aircraftsearch=Martin%20JRM-3%20Mars&distinct\\_entry=true](http://www.airliners.net/search/photo.search?aircraftsearch=Martin%20JRM-3%20Mars&distinct_entry=true)

Boeing made the B-314 flying boat that Pan Am dubbed the "Clipper." The B-314 could carry 74 passengers and 10 crew, although in overnight sleeper configuration, the ship accommodated 40 passengers in seven luxurious compartments, including a 14-seat dining room and a private "honeymoon suite" at the tail end of the plane. (Source: <http://www.clipperflyingboats.com/pan-am/boeing-b314> ). Imagine turning those "seven luxurious compartments" into operating suites or stripping the interior bare to load supplies. (Clipper illustration from Life magazine, 23 Aug 1937.)



See enlarged photo at <http://www.clipperflyingboats.com/wp-content/images/b-314-cutaway-interior-174-web.jpg>

Granted, the B-314 probably could not accommodate monster earth moving machines, but it could be configured to carry a variety of critical people and supplies.

All flying boats - by the way, not to be confused with current "flying boats", literally small boats with parasail type wings and a motor attached - also had wheels so they could land on terra firma as well as water.

## **Next day response**

Imagine for a moment if Lockheed or Boeing built a C-5 size aircraft with a flying boat fuselage or hull. If the US had, say, a small fleet of such aircraft, the United States' rapid response (and associated Showing of the Colors) could start "the day after" in places such as Haiti or Mumbai (Bombay), Somalia or Sumatra.

A flying boat might be a worthwhile product from the former Soviet Union. Right now, there is no competition but given the events of the world, it would seem the time is ripe for a return of the flying boat.

Start small with a C-130 size high wing aircraft; possibly mounting the engines above the wing rather than under (typical for jets) or on (typical for prop planes) the wings.

Combine the land versatility of Lockheed's C-130 with a sea bird's hull . . . a plane for all seasons (since landing gear can be fitted with skis for visits to really cold climes).

John Glenn, MBCI, has been helping organizations of all types avoid or mitigate risks to their operations since 1994. Comments about this article, or others at <http://JohnGlennMBCI.com/> may be sent to [Planner@JohnGlennMBCI.com](mailto:Planner@JohnGlennMBCI.com).

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