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NON-COMPETITIVE DIVISION

An Operation Center's Pivotal Role in Tsunami Operations across the Pacific

NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) in the Pacific Region covers everything from tropical cyclones to blizzards to tsunamis. In the middle of the action is the NWS' Pacific Region - Regional Operation Center (PR-ROC), whose mission is to provide and maintain a high level of support to our federal and local partners, NWS National HQ, our regional field offices, and other Pacific NOAA line office partners.

The Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai eruption in Tonga in January 2022 set PR-ROC into action. This eruption produced a Pacific basin-wide tsunami with the initial eruption felt in American Samoa, over 500 miles away from the source. The NWS Weather Service Office Pago Pago (WSO PPG) issued a Tsunami Warning based on local reports of a rapidly receding ocean. PR-ROC acted as the intermediary between WSO PPG and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC), coordinating the local warning with PTWC, subsequently liaising with PTWC for the issuance of the official warning. WSO PPG then evacuated to their COOP site and transferred operations to NWS Weather Forecast Office Honolulu. PR-ROC helped to

facilitate this transfer, keeping the main line of communication open with WSO PPG.

This event was generated from a violent volcanic eruption, not an earthquake. The science behind the nature of these events is limited due to their rarity, which led to initialization of and product complications for PTWC. PR-ROC was able to assist partners, like FEMA, by interpreting and clarifying PTWC products.

Through updated situation reports, PR-ROC was able to keep the NWS Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, FEMA Region IX, and the other NOAA line offices in the Pacific Region aware and current on this dynamic event. As a member of NOAA's Inouye Regional Center's (IRC) Emergency Management Committee, PR-ROC has a pivotal role in making sure the other line offices, especially those in remote areas, have the most current and correct information on significant weather and water events.

Presentation Theme: The role that NWS Pacific Region Headquarters in the dissemination and coordination of information with the emergency management community along with other government entities during the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai eruption and resultant tsunami that impacted numerous locations around the world.

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