



Just Who is Daniel W. Clark?



Some folks know Dan Clark as a Supervisory Exotic Plant Specialist with the National Park Service, Biological Resources Management Division, Florida/Caribbean Exotic Plant Management Team or, more simply, as Weedman Dan. He was also the Program Chair for this year's 20th Annual FLEPPC Symposium. And he's a well-known and well-liked world traveler, fisherman extraordinaire and a super-nice guy. What many people don't know about Dan is that he's a virtual American hero, as well. A Lieutenant Commander with the US Coast Guard, Dan is a reservist officer assigned to Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico. He served in Bahrain following the attack on the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he served in Boston Harbor and in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

After Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed in February 2004, a United Nations international peacekeeping force began deployment to Haiti following months of civil unrest, floods and a list of humanitarian crises faced by the island's 8,000,000 inhabitants. Deployed for 100 days, Lieutenant Commander Dan Clark was the first Coast Guard officer to be directly assigned to a United Nations military staff in a peacekeeping mission, serving as Maritime Operations Officer. His duties involved detailed field reconnaissance

of sites throughout Haiti for the placement of multinational troops sent to assure civil security and stability. He translated texts from Spanish into English, provided oral translation for officers from a variety of countries, acted as Military Deputy Liaison to the Haitian National



Police, and coordinated visits from dignitaries from other countries, such as the presidents of Chile and Uruguay.

"Lieutenant Commander Clark was the embodiment of *Semper Paratus* [the U.S. Coast Guard's motto: Always ready]. He helped establish the UN's Joint Operations Center, he created and maintained an Operations Order tracking database, and he coordinated humanitarian field efforts by the UN Civilian Police and NGO civilians. Lieutenant General Heleno (MINUSTAH Force Commander) did not want to see him leave."

Dan has earned a vast array of medals in his lengthy career including the Coast Guard Commendation Medal, the Coast Guard Achievement Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He most recently was simultaneously awarded the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti Service Medal, and the Meritorious Service Medal.

"I was part of something much bigger than me, or even the Coast Guard. I had an opportunity to serve those needing relief from the ravages of political strife and natural disasters. The personal and military lessons learned will stay with me forever."



Way to go, Dan! We're proud of you!

— Your friends at FLEPPC