



**PRESS RELEASE
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By Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla

Alaska Air Guard C-17 crews and Guardian Angels train in Hawaii

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Nearly 50 members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing participated in a search and rescue (SAR) exercise in Hawaii from Feb. 16 to 26, strengthening the C-17 Globemaster III's standing in the SAR community, and enhancing coordination between the Wing's Guardian Angels and C-17 operators and maintainers.

Members of the 249th Airlift Squadron, 212th Rescue Squadron and 176th Wing support units came together to reinforce rescue techniques and certify more C-17 crews on SAR missions, making more aircrews available — complete with long range capabilities — to answer calls for help.

The long-range contribution to the SAR mission is something C-17s could uniquely provide, but were not being harnessed for. Developing C-17 search and rescue tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) began about five years ago after a question was posed whether the SAR community had long range capability. The TTPs were proven effective during previous exercises, such as Vigilant Ace 16 last November.

The majority of long range SAR missions in Pacific Air Forces are going to be oceanic rescues, according to Lt.Col. Kirk Palmberg, the 249th AS mission commander.

Hawaii provides ample ocean to practice rescue scenarios, as well as the closest warm waters in the same theater of operation as the 176th Wing. Warmer waters allow the 212th RQS Guardian Angels — teams of pararescuemen and combat rescue officers — to forgo the use of dry suits and cold-water equipment, enabling longer and more effective water training. The missions are also less likely to be cancelled due to weather conditions

Many of the pilots who participated in this exercise are traditional Guardsmen with full-time civilian careers. Each aircrew member requires specific training in a set amount of time to stay proficient, and home station training can be more limited due to weather, aircraft maintenance and other real-world events. Trips like these mean pilots don't have to wait in line for a spot in the cockpit.

"It's beneficial for me to do training like this because I can take two weeks off my job and knock off a tremendous amount of training," said Capt. Andy Beuch, a 249th AS pilot.

This exercise was a valuable training opportunity for the C-17 aircrews, crew chiefs and other maintenance personnel, support staff, and rescue personnel.

“Everyone has put in hard work and long hours,” said Maj. Aaron Zamora, the 212th RQS mission lead. “The most beneficial part of the training was exercising rescue jump master procedures with the C-17 crews.”

Exercise participants took the opportunity to accomplish other training objectives such as proficiency airdrops, air refueling, water survival, scuba lift-bag recovery operations and search dives.

They also worked National Guard interoperability with the Hawaii Air National Guard into their training objectives, which included a flight formation, and transporting cargo and personnel to Kauai for mobility training.

This was the first all-Guard, C-17 formation, according to Palmberg.

“The unique training opportunity that Hawaii provides supports the 176th Wing rescue,” Palmberg said, “But also furthers C-17 TTPs reinforcement and seasons young aircrew in an unfamiliar environment.”

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and photos.
2. **Flickr album** for full resolution and additional photographs (<https://flic.kr/s/aHskva9QLq>)
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and photos. (DVIDS is generally accessible from all computers) (<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/190745/alaska-air-guard-c-17-crews-and-guardian-angels-train-hawaii#.VtYTEMe49E4>)



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HONOLULU, Hawaii -- Senior Airman Jason Hughes, a pararescueman with the 212th Rescue Squadron, jumps from a C-17 Globemaster III over the Pacific's warm waters here Feb. 23, 2016. Nearly 50 Alaska Air Guardsman from the 249th Airlift Squadron, 212th Rescue Squadron and 176th Wing support units participated in a search and rescue exercise during their two weeks of training in Hawaii. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Blue/Released)



160224-Z-DU133-101
HONOLULU, Hawaii --
Capt. Megan Flynt, a pilot
with the 249th Airlift

Squadron, scans the skies here Feb. 24, 2016, as she returns to Oahu from a mission in Kauai. Nearly 50 Alaska Air Guardsman from the 249th Airlift Squadron, 212th Rescue Squadron and 176th Wing support units participated in a search and rescue exercise during their two weeks of training in Hawaii. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla/Released)



160223-Z-DU133-044
HONOLULU, Hawaii -- Airman 1st Class Arvin Ting, a crew chief with the 176th Maintenance Group, checks the security of the cargo on a C-17 Globemaster III here Feb. 23, 2016, before its next mission. Nearly 50 Alaska Air Guardsman from the 249th Airlift Squadron, 212th Rescue Squadron and 176th Wing support units participated in a search and rescue exercise during their two weeks of training in Hawaii. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla/Released)



160224-Z-DU133-053
HONOLULU, Hawaii -- Air
Guardsmen of the Hawaii

Air Guard's 154th Communications Flight unload equipment under the direction of Tech. Sgt. Chase Carrier, a loadmaster with the Alaska Air Guard's 249th Airlift Squadron. The local Guardsmen were transported to Kauai on an Alaska Guard C-17 Globemaster III for mobility training. Nearly 50 Alaska Air Guardsman from the 249th Airlift Squadron, 212th Rescue Squadron and 176th Wing support units participated in a search and rescue exercise during their two weeks of training in Hawaii. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla/Released)