



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Alaska National Guard**  
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## **Alaska, California Air Guardsmen continue rescue operations in Vidor**

**Vidor, Texas**—A 16-man team from Air National Guard units in Alaska and California continue to provide support to the city of Vidor in the wake of Hurricane Harvey Sept. 1, 2017.

A Texas Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter from the 2-149th General Support Aviation Battalion inserted the team of pararescuemen and combat rescue officers into an emergency operations center in Orange, Aug. 30. The Guardsmen and their equipment were then transferred using City of Vidor dump trucks along the eastbound lanes of Interstate 10. Water on the highway covered the oversized tires as it traveled down the wrong side of the road due to a westbound lane closure.

Guardsmen from the Alaska Air Guard's 212th Rescue Squadron and California Air Guard's 129th Rescue Wing joined 25 community volunteers from the local police department, Texas Department of Transportation, and members of the Orange County Emergency District Number 1 Fire Station.

Under the guidance of Fire Chief Bryant Champagne, the Guardsmen were immediately tasked to conduct water search and rescue operations via inflatable rubber boats and dump trucks.

"We are on Zodiak boats with outboard engines and we are making access into these neighborhoods to treat, assess and evacuate as many people as possible," said Lt. Dan Warren, a combat rescue officer with the 212th Rescue Squadron.

Thursday, water continued to rise as levies were released the night before. The Guardsmen focused on recovering people and animals from the surrounding communities of Pine Forest and Lakeview along the Neches River.

"These guys are here to work," explained Warren. "The fire chief described us as cats on a hot-tin roof because we are so antsy to get to work."

Warren remarked how proud he was of his team with their "train hard, work hard" mentality and that he is humbled to be a part of this experience.

The Alaska Guard units and others from across the nation have joined to support the Texas National Guard, which has been aggressive, using both their organic Guard capabilities and Department of Defense capabilities, all in support of Texas Governor Greg Abbott's response effort.

Members of the National Guard train to save lives at home, to fight our wars, and to build partnerships. Saving lives at home is part of the National Guard's commitment to support civil authorities, as part of an integrated federal, state and local response to the storm.

“Since Tuesday, we’ve rescued 89 people, 16 dogs, a cat and horse from flood waters,” said Warren.

As water levels began to fall Friday morning, Champagne shifted focus to identifying the emergency and critical needs of the community.

Teams of Guardsmen were sent out door-to-door to conduct health and welfare checks to gather information on critical items and provide paramedic care if needed.

Pararescuemen have specialized medical training, which can be especially beneficial during a natural disaster or its aftermath.

“We’re also operating out of the fire station, and we’ve been able to assist local authorities responding to emergency medical calls,” said Warren.

The rescue teams are being tasked with missions to support the Texas National Guard and the state of Texas as ongoing storm conditions continue to inflict damage.

The National Guard Bureau continues to work closely in coordination with the Texas National Guard to ensure they have the forces and equipment they need.

The National Guard has 450,000 Guard members across the nation to help respond in the humanitarian disaster recovery effort.

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#### **PHOTOS**

**DVIDS link** includes full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.)

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/547430/alaska-california-air-guardsmen-continue-conduct-hurricane-disaster-relief-operations>

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/547400/alaska-air-guardsmen-continue-conduct-hurricane-disaster-relief-operations>

**Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (Flickr is not generally accessible from .mil computers.)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/albums/72157685896267363>

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