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Air Guard C-17s move to 144th Airlift Squadron

Guardsmen honor their 249th Airlift Squadron heritage

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Airmen of the 176th Wing's 249th Airlift Squadron changed their unit affiliation to the 144th Airlift Squadron during a discreet Aug. 4 ceremony when they swapped patches at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

The Alaska Air National Guard's 249th AS flies the C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft with the active Air Force's 517th Airlift Squadron in an active-association total-force integration where the Guard owns the aircraft, and the active duty provides crews and support Airmen to round out the unit.

The 144th AS has been a part of the Alaska Air National Guard in some form since its founding in 1952 and divested the last of its eight C-130H Hercules cargo aircraft in March 2017.

"The question came up: What's going to happen to the unit?" said Alaska Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Colton Nelson, 249th AS training noncommissioned officer and historian for the wing. "The 144th is the founding unit of the Alaska Air National Guard. Is it going to be deactivated? Inactivated? Are they going to get another mission?"

"The answer came from the National Guard Bureau via a change request that the 249th would be deactivated — it was the youngest unit in the Alaska Air National Guard." Nelson continued. "The 144th would then assume the C-17s and the mission."

The 249th AS stood up in 2009 and has always operated the C-17.

"The same really good people remain," Nelson said of the squadron continuity. "It's an image change rather than a structural change. It's still a great, efficient organization."

"We have the best C-17s," he elaborated. "We do virtually everything that this airplane can do. We have the coolest mission. It's just a different number (for the unit)."

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Nelson said 144th AS Airmen won't soon forget their 249th AS heritage and what they accomplished in a little less than 10 years.

"What's most likely to be remembered about the 249th is the kind of operation we put together and the skill and expertise we gathered in such a short amount of time," he said.

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PHOTOS

1. Flickr link includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/176wg/albums/72157694204288260>

2. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/288075/air-guard-c-17s-move-144th-airlift-squadron>



Senior Master Sgt. Justin Olsen with the 249th Airlift Squadron, holds both the 144th Airlift Squadron and the 249th Airlift Squadron unit guidons during a discreet patch-changing ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Aug. 4. Members of the 249 AS changed their unit affiliation to the 144 AS during the event. The 144 AS has been a part of the Alaska Air National Guard in some form since its founding in 1952. In 2017, the 144 AS divested their eight C-130H Hercules aircraft. The ceremony marks the deactivation of the 249 AS as the 144 AS assumes control of the 249th's C-17 Globemaster III aircraft, shared with their Active Duty partners, the 517th Airlift Squadron. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Egerton/released)