



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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For Immediate Release

179th Airlift Wing assists Haiti relief efforts

COLUMBUS, Ohio—As many stand poised around the country ready to answer the call, the Ohio Air National Guard has already provided two C-130 “Hercules” cargo aircraft from the Mansfield-based 179th Airlift Wing to provide immediate assistance to Haiti.

The 179th originally deployed to Puerto Rico during a planned rotation in support of Operation Coronet Oak—a U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) theater airlift support mission—on Dec. 26, 2009. The current rotation of 45 Airmen arrived Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010. The troops are under command and control of SOUTHCOM and the mission is federally funded.

Three days after the current rotation of Airmen arrived in Puerto Rico, the powerful magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit neighboring Haiti. The same evening, SOUTHCOM placed three crews from the 179th on alert and early Wednesday morning activated the first crew, which was airborne within three hours. The aircraft flew to Florida to collect search and rescue teams and communication crews and deliver them to Port-au-Prince. Shortly after, a second crew was alerted and airborne.

The first crew, led by Lt. Col. Kenneth Pecoraro, arrived in Port-au-Prince as the sun was setting Wednesday evening and landed successfully, despite challenging terrain and a downed communication tower. The Ohio National Guard C-130 was the first such aircraft to land in Port-au-Prince. The second crew, commanded by Lt. Col. William Baukmon, arrived after sunset with three pallets of communication materials to improve departure and approach communication at Port-au-Prince airport.

In addition, three Puerto Rico Air National Guard aircraft have been tasked to the 179th Airlift Wing for this operation. This morning, 179th crews arrived in Florida in two of these aircraft to pick up and deliver additional supplies and personnel. They will arrive in Haiti by early afternoon.

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For more information: Ohio National Guard Public Affairs Office, PHONE: (614) 336-7125.
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