



Ohio ANG among Haiti first responders



179th Airlift Wing was ready Jan. 13 while deployed to Puerto Rico.

Ohio National Guard | Adjutant General's Department

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

The 179th deployed about 45 unit members to Puerto Rico in support of Operation Coronet Oak — a U.S. Southern Command theater airlift support mission — on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010.

Three days after they arrived in Puerto Rico, the powerful magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit neighboring Haiti. The same evening, three crews from the 179th were put on alert and early Wednesday morning the first crew was activated and airborne that same morning.

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 Jan. 13 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. The 179th crews arrived in Florida in two of these aircraft to pick up and deliver additional supplies and personnel. They arrived in Haiti by early afternoon.

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. The troops are under command and control of SOUTHCOM and the mission is federally funded.

SOUTHCOM placed three crews from the 179th on alert and in the early morning hours of Jan. 13 activated the first crew, which was airborne within three hours. **AF**



Airmen from the Mansfield-based 179th Airlift Wing load bottled water onto a C-130 "Hercules" cargo aircraft Jan. 19, at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, during relief efforts following a magnitude 7.0 earthquake Jan. 12 that devastated the capital city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The Airmen, who were deployed to Puerto Rico in support of Operation Coronet Oak, a theater airlift support mission, were immediately diverted to conduct relief efforts.