

176th AERIAL PORT FLIGHT



LINEAGE

176th Mobile Aerial Port Flight
176th Aerial Port Flight

STATIONS

Kulis ANGB, Anchorage, AK
Elmendorf AFB, AK

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

LTC Glenn R. Hughton, #2010

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The mission of the squadron is to rapidly deploy, establish and operate cargo and passenger capable air terminals at non-fixed and bare-base forward operations locations. Provide aerial delivery training support to the 144th Airlift Squadron and 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons. Supports Army Guard 207th Infantry Brigade, Federal and State Counter Drug Interdiction Program, United States Naval Oceanographic Command, 3rd Wing at EAFB, and AMC assets transiting through Anchorage International.

As Good Friday began on 24 Mar 1989, the U.S. Coast Guard received a call from the super tanker EXXON VALDEZ at 12:28 A.M. The vessel had gone hard aground on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound near the oil pipeline terminal city of Valdez, Alaska. The Adjutant General made an initial study and assessment of the situation on 25 Mar. He designated the Operations and Plans Officer, LTC Willard Masker, as the officer in charge of controlling and coordinating the support effort. Operations were centralized at the Valdez National Guard Armory and the communications and logistical base was run from that facility. A Command Post was set up at State Headquarters and all reporting requirements and coordination was accomplished through the Office of the Adjutant General in Anchorage to the appropriate agency. At the height of the crisis, approximately 125 Guard personnel supported the oil spill cleanup effort. As operations progressed from initial response to actual cleanup, the Alaska Guard handed off their responsibilities to the Alaska Division of Emergency Services and other civilian agencies. One of the first Guardsmen on the scene at Valdez was Master Sergeant Tom Henery from the 176th Aerial Port Flight at Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage. He spent the first few days in Valdez almost by himself. From the airport in Valdez he loaded cargo, rigged slings for helicopters and helped to direct air traffic, which grew by the hour. The local airport was overwhelmed and airport workers sought direction and guidance from the Guardsman. It soon became apparent the tiny airport could not handle the air traffic bringing people into the disaster area. An Air Coordination and Control Center was set up on March 28, to overcome the shortfalls at the Valdez Airport. The Lodal airport was not equipped or manned to support the large volume of air traffic. The various types of aircraft arriving or departing could not be loaded or off-loaded with the resources available. There were no plans for parking excess aircraft at Valdez. The Air National Guard provided an Aerial Port Team with equipment to take care of the problem. Guardsmen assisted the airport manager in laying out aircraft parking and helped designate taxiways for fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. The shortage of civilian fire-fighting equipment and personnel also became a problem at the Valdez Airport, so the Air Guard deployed a fire truck and four firefighters to Valdez during the crisis. The Army and Air Guard provided air resources during the initial phases of the oil spill. Air Guard C-130's flew support missions, deploying badly needed equipment and boom material while the Army Guard provided lift support with its CH-54B and UH-60. The National Guard also furnished a 5,000-gallon tanker and a 1,200-gallon tanker for fueling aircraft and established a second refueling point at the airport to cut down on the confusion during refueling operations.



Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit History. AK ANG. *176 Tactical Airlift Group, 30th Anniversary, 1952-1982.*

Unit History. AK ANG. *Alaska Air National Guard, The 40th Anniversary, 40 Years and Still Going Strong, 1952-1992.*