

199 WEATHER FLIGHT

MISSION

The 199 Weather Flight provides meteorological support to its primary customer, the 29th Infantry Brigade (Separate) of the Hawaii Army National Guard. In addition to supporting its primary customer, the 199 Weather Flight has provided meteorological support to aviation elements stationed at Wheeler and to various units in the Pacific Theater. The flight also supports the 25th Air Support Operations Squadron, U.S. Army Pacific, 199th Fighter Squadron and 203rd Air Refueling Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Airlift Squadron and 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons

The 199 WF is fully staffed at 14 members. The 199 WF has three officers, and 11 enlisted personnel. One administrative specialist is part of the 11 enlisted personnel. The remaining 10 enlisted personnel are responsible for the forecasting and observing functions of the unit. The observers make weather observations which consist of discerning cloud types and heights, wind direction and speed, temperature, dew point, and barometric pressure. The forecasters in turn use the information from the observations as well as from other data to formulate their weather forecasts.

LINEAGE

199 Weather Flight (Fixed), Nov. 4, 1946
199 Weather Station
199 Forecasting Flight, 1 May 1953
199 Weather Flight

STATIONS

Wheeler AAF, HI

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Cpt Allen D. Pearson
Cpt James A. Forsyth, 1 Jun 1963
LTC Thomas Mau

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

199th Weather Flight is one of the Hawaii Air National Guard's charter units. Founded in September 1946, its original mission was to provide weather forecasting and observing for the pilots of the Hawaii Air National Guard at Hickam AFB.

The 199th Weather Flight spent four days of annual training at Kilauea Military Camp on the Big Island and apparently took the "weather with them". It rained the entire time they were there. One day, the Hawaii Volcano Observatory's rain gauge recorded 19 inches of rainfall. At that time, Hilo had experienced approximately 22 consecutive days of rain. Pretty good timing for the Weather Flight, a "non-prophet" organization.

The 199th Weather Flight WF was designated a Representative Observation Site, using a mobile meteorological van. The ROS observer relayed surface observations to the HANG Weather Station by means of a field telephone providing continuous weather watch during all flying activities. Additionally, a pilot balloon program had been established to support flying operations at any base. The unit's mobile meteorological van was eventually scrapped because of poor maintainability and the improbability of its use in an actual emergency.

The 199 WF worked at the base weather station during UTAs and during AT. The primary means of obtaining weather information was through teletype and facsimile machines before the use of weather satellites, facsimile charts were often inaccurate for forecasting weather in Hawaii, since perturbations in the atmosphere were not always picked up due to a lack of data. Unlike the continental United States where there is a rough distance of approximately 300 miles from each weather station, the distance from the Hawaiian Islands to the next weather station could be thousands of miles away. The addition of a Harris Laser Satellite Facsimile Machine greatly enhanced the flight's ability to produce more accurate forecasts. These weather satellites are able to provide the weather forecaster with a picture of the clouds where data is not available.

In 1987 the 199 WF changed its primary mission from base weather support to supporting an

infantry brigade in the held. At this time, the primary means of obtaining weather information was through the use of the Goldwing high frequency communication system, the Wrasse portable satellite picture/weather bulletin retrieval system, and an observing kit. The Goldwing system is designed to provide a secure means of communication between weather units in the field.

The 199 WF began the 90s by participating in Team Spirit with the 29th Infantry Brigade (Separate) in March 1990. Forced to endure nearly three weeks of Korean winter in floorless tents, questionable restroom facilities, and marginal food, this weary contingent was happy to return to the warm and friendly Hawaiian islands. This exercise has taught the 199 WF that personnel on mobility status must be in good health and be mentally tough. Other major exercises that the 199 WF has participated in include Keen Edge, Cascade Peak, and Yama Sakura. The 199 WF has supported I Corps, IX Corps, 5th Air-Force, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force, and US Army Japan. In the summer of 1994, the 199 WF was able to simultaneously support the 29th Infantry Brigade (Separate) and monitor six tropical cyclones in the Central Pacific during it's AT.

Flight deployed one enlisted forecaster to Thailand to serve as the joint Metoc (meteorological and oceanographic) officer for Exercise COPE TIGER with the 199th Fighter Squadron.

The flight alleviated critical manpower shortages at the Wheeler Army Airfield Weather Station during the 25th Infantry Division (Light) Iraqi deployment. The unit performed over 80 percent of the daily mission execution forecasting and basic weather-watch duties to keep the station operational.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Unit history. *HANG Twenty Five Plus Five; History of the Hawaii Air National Guard 4 Nov 1971-3 Nov 1976*. 1976.
Unit history. *Five Decades of Service Excellence*. 1996.