



NEWS RELEASE

179th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

Contact: 1st Lt. Paul Stennett
Phone: 419-520-6377
Email: paul.m.stennett.mil@mail.mil

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200th RED HORSE Squadron Sends Over 183 Tons of Assets to U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to Aid in Hurricane Relief Efforts

MANSFIELD, Ohio – In the wake of Hurricane Irma and Maria the Ohio Air National Guard's 200th RED HORSE Squadron (RHS) has been deployed assisting in the recovery efforts in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico since nearly the beginning of a historic hurricane season. The unit's capabilities to be able to deploy anywhere in the world within 72 hours and self-sustain gives them the unique ability to provide the exact support needed in the areas affected by the hurricanes.

The 200 RHS has sent two complete Disaster Relief Bed-down System's (DRBS) to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands and then the second to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria hit. Each system provides basic life needs such as shelter, showers, latrines and laundry that sustains up to 150 people for as long as needed.

The 200 RHS first sent a 26 person team to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, with a DRBS after Hurricane Irma. The team led by Capt. Kevin Smalley, set up the first system U.S. Virgin Islands, 18 Alaskan small shelter systems (tents), 19 Environmental Control Units (ECUs), 6 generators, a field latrine, a shower/shave unit, 13K All Terrain (AT) forklift, skid steer, electrical support kit and two light carts, all within the initial 48 hours of arriving.

However, the team had to disassemble the kit, secure it and evacuate for safety with Hurricane Maria quickly approaching.

Once Hurricane Maria passed, the team headed back to St. Thomas and had the kit fully functional again within 48 hours. Smalley's team maintained the base camp for over 120 Army personnel from the 602nd Area Support Medical Company, Fort Bragg, N.C. and military police.

Smalley said "I could not be more impressed with the work ethic and attitude of my Airmen in the face of multiple adversities and still making an impact to try to support and improve the local area".

However, a week later, disaster struck again. The camp was flooded with three feet of water from rains after the hurricane. The team spent the next 24 hours relocating 16 of the tents to higher ground about 200 yards away.

“This situation has pushed all of our career fields to work together as a cohesive unit. It’s very impressive to see how everyone has come together, working outside of the specialties, to help these people during their greatest time of need” said Master Sgt. Richard Good. “You will rarely find a group of more capable people to accomplish such a task”.

In addition to maintaining the base camp, Smalley’s team also worked with FEMA to help load cargo onto trucks, worked with the Army Corps of Engineers to clear debris in the local area, helped restore chillers at the University of the Virgin Islands and removed a roof from the roadway blown off from the hurricane.

The Ohio Air National Guard unit also sent a six-man team to Puerto Rico with a Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU). With the island being devastated by the hurricane, basic life essential needs such as drinking water is vital to not only our deployed members but to the local population.

“We are taking the ROWPU to Puerto Rico, we are going down there to set it up to produce fresh drinking water for the local communities for the next several months” Master Sgt. Isaac Strickler, a Power Production Supervisor with the 200th RHS said.

The ROWPU can provide purified drinking water for thousands of people by using a variety of raw water sources such as wells, lakes, seas, lagoons, rivers, oceans and ice holes.

Technical Sgt. Brock Mowry, an electrical power production craftsman with the 200 RHS said, “We will be able to purify up to 1,500 gallons per hour.”

The treatment of water is necessary to prevent various waterborne diseases, such as typhoid and dysentery. Providing this asset to the area will increase the quality of life for the population while recovery efforts continue.

Assets such as the DRBS and ROWPU provide basic life needs to military personnel so they can forward operate in austere conditions and keep the mission going.

In total, the 200 RHS sent 183.5 tons of assets on three C-17s and five C-130s in support of hurricane relief efforts. The unique skillsets and capabilities of the unit and its members are what allow them to deploy anywhere in the world and self-sustain in forward operating areas. These type of scenarios are what the unit trains for and is why America has a National Guard. Whether supporting the fight or helping our neighbors, the 200 RHS has a team of trusted Airmen ready for any mission.

Photos: <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/3852829/200th-red-horse-squadron-sends-second-disaster-relief-beddown-system-puerto-rico-hurricane-relief-efforts>

<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/3861318/200th-red-horse-squadron-virgin-islands-support-hurricane-relief-efforts>

B-ROLL: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/557769/200th-red-horse-squadron-sends-second-disaster-relief-beddown-system-puerto-rico-hurricane-relief-efforts>