



# KUKA'ILIMOKU

154th WING HAWAII AIR NATIONAL GUARD | JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM

## HIANG'S BELOVED AUNTIE RETIRES

### ALSO IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- 154TH WING COMMANDER'S FAREWELL
- URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE TRAINING
- DEPLOYERS ENSURE SECURITY IN JAPAN
- STATE LEGISLATORS ENGAGE WITH HIANG AIRMEN

# Inside KŪKĀ‘ILIMOKU

OCTOBER  
2024

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**Kuka‘ilimoku SUBMISSIONS**

**Articles:**

- Articles range from 200 to 2,000 words. All articles should be accompanied by multiple high-resolution images.
- Include first names, last names and military ranks. Always verify spelling.
- Spell out acronyms, abbreviations and full unit designations on first reference.

**Photographs:**

- Highest resolution possible: MB files, not KB.
- No retouched photos, no special effects.
- Include the photographer's name and rank, and a caption: what is happening in the photo, who is pictured and the date and location.

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## A farewell message

## from the 154th

## Wing Commander

Serving as your commander for the past two years has been an incredible honor. Witnessing how each of you derives strength from your families, community, and each other has reinforced our readiness and has truly been inspiring.

In every one of our mission sets—you have all stepped up your game! The 154th Wing's pivotal role in the Great Power Competition is undeniable, and your readiness ensures we meet these challenges head-on. Our numerous deployments and countless awards are the proof!

In addition, your response to the Lahaina Wildfire is a testament to your character and commitment to service by helping our state heal in its darkest hours.

Indeed, our efforts in supporting INDOPACOM have been extraordinary. With our flying assets providing raw firepower, global reach, and rapid global mobility, each mission has been a step towards securing a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As I depart, I am confident in Brig. Gen. Sills' leadership. His experience will guide you well. Continue to uphold the spirit of 'ohana, keep pushing the boundaries, and always remember, you are the heart and soul of the 154th Wing, and it takes each and everyone of you for us to succeed!

Forever your teammate,

- Buddha



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## COL. KEVIN HORTON ASSUMES COMMAND OF THE 201ST AIR OPERATIONS GROUP

Photos by Tech Sgt John Linzmeier

On Aug. 4, Col. Kevin Horton ceremoniously took command of the 201st Air Operations Group, marking a pivotal moment in his distinguished military career. A University of Hawaii alumnus, Horton, known by his call sign "Magoo," began his journey with the 199th Fighter Squadron, where he excelled as an F-15 and F-22 pilot. His leadership trajectory continued to rise, with key roles including Director of Operations and Commander of the 199th Fighter Squadron.

Col. Horton's dedication to the Hawaii Air National Guard is exemplified through his service as the Project Officer for high-profile engagements and his leadership as president of the Hawaii National Guard Association (HNGA). In this capacity, he has been a steadfast advocate for HIANG members, championing initiatives that enhance their professional development and well-being.

His innovation, highlighted by projects such as the Scorpion helmet initiative, has left a lasting impact, driving continuous improvement in operations. As a Legislative Liaison, Horton has represented the HIANG at the highest levels, earning the trust of senior leaders and ensuring the organization's voice is heard on critical matters.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Col. Horton is a devoted family man and active community member. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Col. Horton, his wife Jamie, and their family as they embark on this new chapter.



## LT. COL. KELLY CHURCH TAKES COMMAND OF THE 154TH OPERATIONS GROUP

Photos by Master Sgt Mysti Bicoy and Tech Sgt John Linzmeier

On August 12, 2024, Lt. Col. Kelly Church (now Col. Church) assumed command of the 154th Operations Group in a one-of-a-kind airborne Change of Command ceremony. The event took place mid-flight aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker during a routine training sortie. Presiding over the ceremony was Brig. Gen. Phillip L. Mallory, 154th Wing Commander, accompanied by outgoing commander, Col. Shane Nagatani.

In his final remarks as commander, Col. Nagatani expressed deep gratitude for the support he received throughout his tenure:

"Thank you to the mentors and leaders who guided me to this point, and to the men and women of the Operations Group, both deployed and at home, who stay ready for when the State and Federal mission calls. It has been an honor to serve as your commander these past three years. A special thanks to my family—Mom, Dad, Jessi, Tydes, and Timber—your support has meant everything."

Col. Nagatani will continue his service at Headquarters, Hawaii Air National Guard, as Director of Staff.

The 154th Operations Group, often regarded as the heartbeat of the 154th Wing, leads crucial missions that include air superiority with the F-22 Raptors, air refueling with the KC-135 Stratotankers, and tactical airlift support with the C-17 Globemaster III. The group also provides vital communication and flight operations through its Air Traffic Control Squadron and ensures mission planning and support through the Operations Support Squadron. Together, these elements sustain the Wing's readiness and operational excellence.

In his first address as commander, Church acknowledged the strong foundation built by his predecessor:

"Thank you, Nuke, for your leadership and mentorship. To the members of the 154th Operations Group, you are on my mind and in my heart, and I look forward to serving you as your commander."

Lt. Col. Church, who previously served as deputy commander of the 154th OG and commander of the 203rd Air Refueling Squadron, brings a wealth of experience to his new role. We congratulate him on this significant milestone and look forward to his leadership in guiding the Operations Group to new heights.





Courtesy Photos

# CHICHÁO 2024 ELEVATES OPERATIONAL READINESS FOR COMMUNICATIONS GUARDIANS

By Tech Sgt John Linzmeier

The Hawaii Air National Guard hosted a new joint communications exercise conducted at several locations July 8-12, throughout the state to bolster the capabilities of Multi-Capable Airmen.

Designated as Chicháo 2024, the primary goal of the training was to deliver top-tier instruction across a wide range of combat communication technologies, enabling Airmen to excel in Agile Combat Employment across diverse environments.

The event saw participation from several National Guard units: 291st Combat Communications Squadron, 292nd CBCS, 183rd Army Aviation Regiment, 302nd Communications Flight

from Colorado, and 142nd Communications Flight from Oregon. These units collaborated to execute the training and ensure the smooth transport of personnel and equipment.

Lt. Col. Krystelle Kenney, 291st Combat Communications Squadron commander, stated that Hawaii Guardsmen effortlessly integrated with the visiting units from Colorado and Oregon at the start of the exercise, thanks to the intermixed teams built beforehand. She emphasized that swiftly deploying communication assets across the state is necessary to enhance our personnel's ability to respond rapidly to threats at home.

Training was conducted at various sites, including the 291st CBCS in Hilo, the 292nd CBCS and Army National Guard installations on Maui, and Upolu Airport on the island of Hawaii.

The primary training activities included Communications Fly-away Kit (CFK) training and helicopter safety training. The CFK, a stand-alone kit that provides mobile and secure communications, was a focal point of the exercise. Its successful deployment and operation were critical in achieving the exercise's communication objectives.

Participants made considerable progress in familiarizing themselves with essential helicopter competencies,

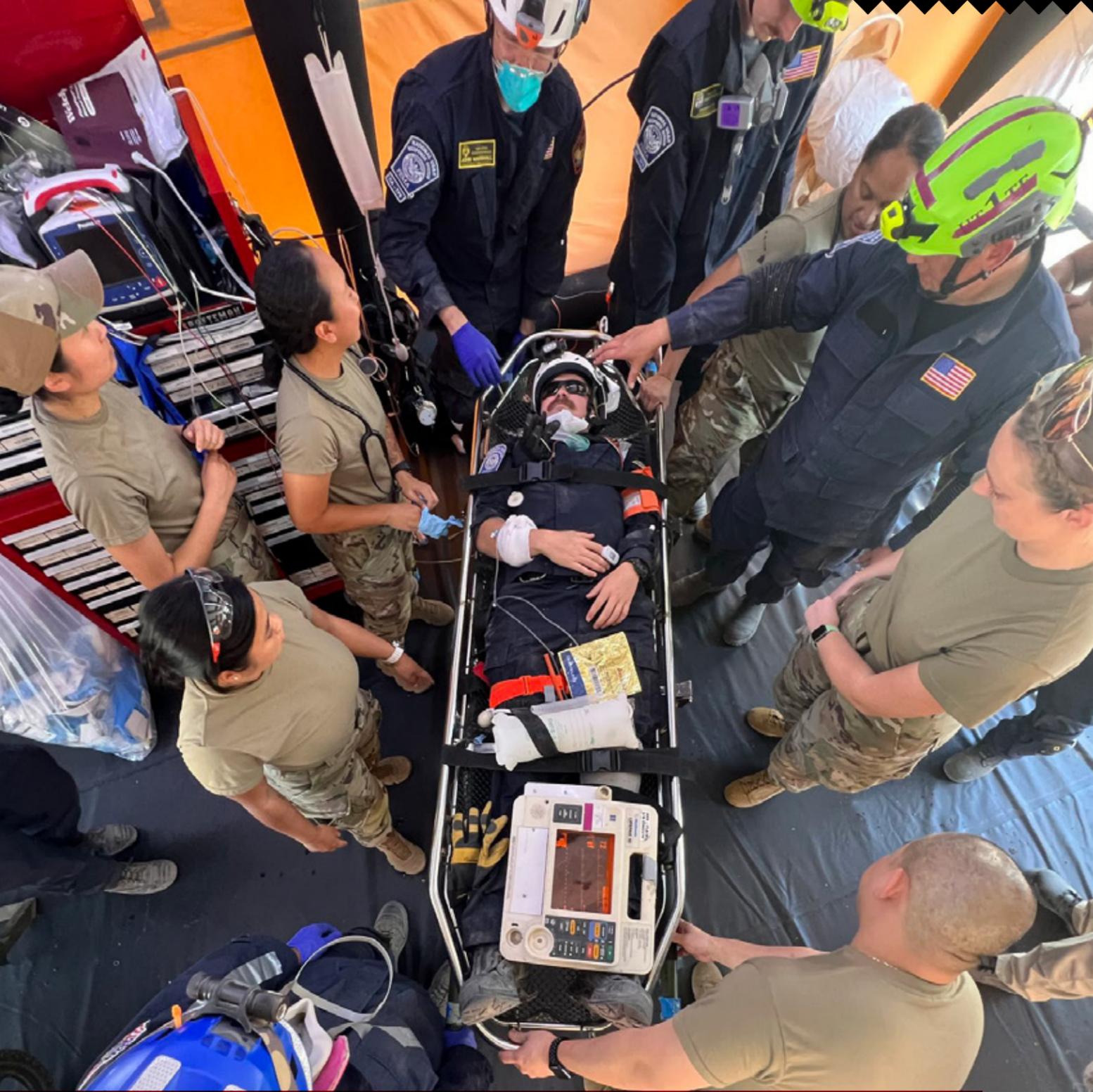
including aircraft overview, safety procedures, emergency protocols, and the use of onboard safety equipment. However, the training came to an abrupt halt due to a real-world brushfire incident in Maui. This urgent situation necessitated the rerouting of Army National Guard aircraft to support the firefighting efforts, thereby interrupting the scheduled training activities.

“Real world missions always take precedence over exercises and training,” stated Kenney. “No matter the challenges, the 291st CBCS demonstrated incredible flexibility and determination. We adapted, overcame obstacles, and got the job done and we were still able to meet the training requirements and objectives with our out-of-state partners.”

Upon completion of the exercise, participants achieved several significant milestones. They attained proficiency and task certification for both intermediate and advanced skill levels. They successfully facilitated collaborative discussions between communication squadrons and combat communications units, aligning with future standards and concepts. Additionally, they mastered Agile Combat Employment concepts, focusing on the deployment and sustainment of operations in secure environments, ensuring a continuous and effective battle rhythm.

Lt. Col. Kenney noted that the training significantly boosted the morale of the participating units by involving them in innovative tactical communication exercises. She highlighted that for out-of-state participants, it was an eye-opening experience, providing invaluable exposure to tactical communications that they may need to apply operationally as soon as next year. This exercise not only enhanced their skills but also prepared them for future challenges, solidifying their readiness and capability in real-world scenarios.





# 154TH MEDICAL GROUP DET1 PARTICIPATES IN 2024 FEMA URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE MEDICAL SPECIALIST COURSE

By Tech Sgt John Linzmeier



Members of the 154th Medical Group Detachment 1 (DET1) successfully participated in the 2024 FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Medical Specialist Course, from June 1-7, held at the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Training Center in Livermore, CA.

The annual course is hosted by California Task Force 4 in the East Bay area of Northern California and brings together some of the most experienced USAR professionals from around the nation to hold lectures and navigate through a plethora of hands-on training in a realistic field-training environment.

Lt. Col. Hiura, 154th Medical Group (MDG) DET1 mission commander, said that the course is a rare and privileged opportunity to train alongside USAR Task Forces from all over the nation, with the 24 Hawaii ANG members joining in as the only military participants.

Its world-class instructor cadre includes physicians, rescue firefighters, paramedics and veterinarians who have deployed in response to the Oklahoma City bombing, Sri Lanka Tsunami, Haiti Earthquake, Hurricane Katrina, the Tsunami that struck Tōhoku in Japan, events of 9/11, the recent 2022 Surfside apartment collapse in Florida and many other disasters.

Students became proficient with patient packaging and extrication in confined spaces, ingress and egress of collapsed structures and medical management of crush injury. They also practiced emergency surgical airways, intubations, ventilator management and field amputations on real tissue samples.

This marked the third consecutive year of having DET1 members attending as students, having three enrolled, and its second year with DET1 members participating as instructors. Maj. Jason Habu, 154th MDG DET1 Search and Extractions Rescue Operations officer-in-charge and one of the two instructors from DET 1, emphasized how the course's realism and intensity mirrored real-life disaster scenarios.

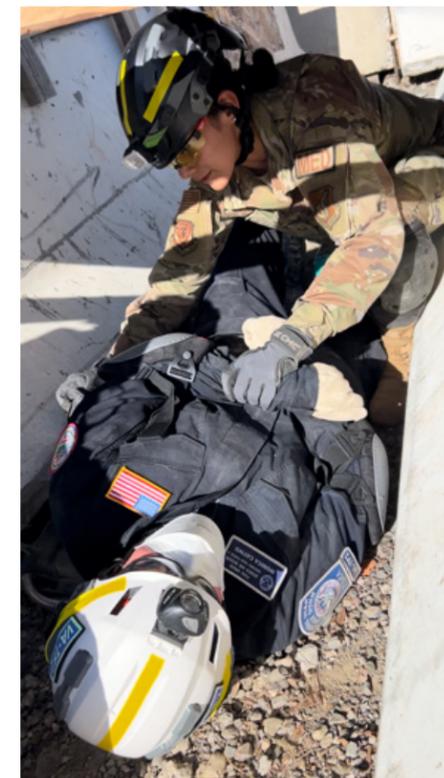
"The class was a physically intense experience where you're crawling around in a live rubble pile extricating live patients," said Habu. "Imagine exerting yourself trying to reach a patient, then having to treat and extricate them while being drilled by an MD on how and why you are providing certain medical treatments."

Further integrating into this year's course, 19 other members from DET1 also attended to fulfill the needs of an on-scene Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT). This mobilized unit provides prehospital treatment and rapid-response medical care during public health and medical emergencies.

Master Sgt. Kyra Santos, a 154th MDG DET1 aerospace medical technician and DMAT participant, stated that standing up this capability was only possible because the men and women of DET1 bring a wide variety of medical and emergency response backgrounds from their civilian and military roles, ranging from administrative support and medics to nurses and physicians.

Portions of the course included a simulated mass casualty scenario, where attendees extricated and treated simulated patients using live actors and mannequins. These patients were then transported to the DET1 treatment team for triage, treatment, and stabilization.

The training utilized rubble piles made from live materials, adding an element of realism with the potential for shifting as simulated victims were egressed.





# TECH MEETS TACTICAL: 154TH COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON HOLDS INNOVATIVE MCA EXERCISE

By Tech. Sgt. John Linzmeier

*This level of authenticity was so realistic that an actual USAR rescue team was on standby during the training to respond in case of a real-world collapse.*

*In addition to the realistic scenarios, the training schedule was designed to match the intensity of a real incident. Students and instructors alike put in 12-16-hour days, often starting at 7:30 a.m. and finishing close to midnight.*

*This grueling schedule culminated with a final 18-hour exercise, with a scenario that involved a simulated 8.4 earthquake that resulted in structure collapse with multiple casualties and survivors requiring extrication, medical management and transport.*

*"This course was challenging to our HIANG members because, out of a class of 36, our three were the only military members," said Habu. "The class is usually only open to USAR Task Force Team Members, which*

*typically include firefighters and physicians. Our members stick out like sore thumbs, but their great attitudes and hard work made them successful. Because of these attributes, we have been invited back to participate in this training as students and adjunct #instructors, which is an honor for us."*

*Currently, the State of Hawaii does not have an assigned FEMA USAR Task Force and DET 1 is helping to fill this void in the event of a disaster or catastrophic event that involves Search and Rescue operations. Detachment 1 is one of 17 CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package medical units in the U.S. and the first to have five certified FEMA USAR Medical Specialists.*

*DET1's mission is to deliver scalable responses to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive, and disaster medical emergencies worldwide. Holding this training event alongside*

*civilian emergency response counterparts significantly enhanced their capabilities and preparedness, as such collaboration is crucial because teamwork and coordination are expected in real-world crises.*

*Hiura said that DET1 has been fostering a strong relationship with the FEMA USAR Training Coordinator for more than seven years to ensure seamless integration and joint preparedness efforts.*

*"Attending these specific courses allows our members to learn the latest life-saving measures and guidelines from medical professionals who are the subject matter experts in this field," said Hiura. "Many of these skills learned are perishable if not used or practiced. I believe our DET1 Airmen will be more prepared to make a difference in saving lives if Hawaii experiences a major disaster."*

*The 154th Communication Squadron reached new heights during their first-ever Multi-Capable Airmen (MCA) annual exercise, held from July 8-14, 2024. Airmen went above and beyond their typical duties, taking on a variety of tasks such as executing cybersecurity objectives, troubleshooting devices, setting up secure radio systems, and raising mobile structures.*

*The training scenarios were intense, involving basecamp defense, maintaining communications, and responding under pressure. Yet, amidst the serious challenges, morale soared as Airmen engaged in simulated battles with biodegradable ammunition, making the rigorous training both effective and enjoyable.*

*Adding to the excitement, participants used virtual reality (VR) technology for immersive training in weapons handling, forklift operations, and large trailer navigation. The innovative approach further enhanced the development of critical skills.*

*"Airmen were truly put to the test," said Capt. James Ro, 154th CS exercise planner. "It didn't matter what AFSC [career field] they held but had to work together and use all the training they received prior to accomplishing the mission at hand. By the end of the training, everyone was able to experience what it meant to be a Multi-Capable Airman."*



# TOTAL FORCE AIRMEN PLAY CRITICAL ROLE IN PACIFIC THEATER STABILITY

Photos By A1C Jonathan Sifuentes



*As part of an ongoing deployment, 154th Wing leadership visited deployed Airmen in mid-July, recognizing their significant contributions to Pacific security operations. Total-Force Airmen from Hawaii are playing a critical role in maintaining stability in the Pacific Theater during their deployment to Okinawa, Japan.*

*HIANG members from the 154th Wing, working alongside active-duty partners from the 15th Wing, are supporting a continuous rotation of fighter units at Kadena Air Base. Their presence ensures uninterrupted airpower in the region, a cornerstone for preserving security and stability.*

*Within the 199th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, these dedicated Airmen enhance operations at Japan's largest airbase, contributing to a diverse mix of reconnaissance, command and control, and a formidable array of fourth-generation fighter assets.*

*During the 154th Wing Command team's visit, Brig. Gen. Mallory participated in flight operations, showcasing the Airmen's excellence under Okinawa's demanding conditions. The visit served to bolster morale and underscore the vital role these Airmen play in executing the mission with precision.*





# HAWAIIAN RAPTORS MAKE FIRST LANDING AT BASA AIR BASE

By Master Sgt Mysti Bicoy

*The Hawaiian Raptors from the 199th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron made a historic first landing at Basa Air Base, Philippines on June 13, marking a significant milestone in U.S.-Philippine military relations.*

*This inaugural landing occurred during the Marine Aviation Support Activity (MASA) 24, an annual Philippine-U.S. military exercise focused on mutual defense, relationship strengthening, and the rehearsal of emerging aviation concepts. MASA 24 encompasses a range of interoperability training events consistent with the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board.*

*The Hawaiian Raptors, based out of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam's 154th Wing, Hawaii Air National Guard, are currently deployed in the area of responsibility. Maj. Jared Fujii, 199th EFS project officer, working closely with U.S. Marine Air Control Group 38 and the Philippine Air Force's 5th Fighter Wing, planned and executed the movement of F-22 Raptors, personnel, and equipment from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, to Basa Air Base.*

*"The integration was very successful," Fujii emphasized. "Two U.S. F-22 Raptors seamlessly integrated with the PAF's three FA-50 fighter aircraft from the 5th FW, allowing us to conduct tactical flights through the challenging terrain of the Luzon Low-Level Tactical Training area. This combined operation not only demonstrated our interoperability but also strengthened our partnership with the PAF and the U.S. Marines, showcasing our combined warfight-*

*ing capability to operate in complex environments."*

*In addition to conducting operations to enhance cooperation and interoperability between Philippine and U.S. forces, participants engaged in various subject matter expertise exchanges (SMEE) across various military disciplines.*

*Maj. David Jung, 199th EFS pilot-physician, led a SMEE focused on low-level tactical flying with the 5th FW. This event was particularly notable as PAF members expressed keen interest in the Tactical Letdown maneuver—an advanced technique enabling rapid altitude descent from 20,000 to 500 feet.*

*"Due to its complexity, a flight simulator was utilized to demonstrate the maneuver, highlighting the challenges posed by ground rush effects encountered during high-speed descents," said Jung. "This exchange not only facilitated participant skill enhancement but also stressed the practical benefits of collaborative learning and capability development in challenging operational environments."*

*These interactions not only improve combined operational capabilities but also build upon lasting friendships and connections, strengthening the partnership between both countries.*

*The historic landing of the Hawaiian Raptors at Basa AB demonstrates the growing bond and enhanced military cooperation between the U.S. and the Philippines. As both*



# OPERATION HOMEFRONT: JOINT MILITARY EFFORT CONSTRUCTS HOMES IN PU'UHONUA O' WAI'ANAE

By Master. Sgt. Mysti Bicoy



In a collaborative effort to address houselessness on O'ahu, the Air National Guard, in partnership with the Marine Corps, Air Force Reserve Command, and Dynamic Community Solutions came together to construct permanent housing for residents in Wai'anae. This mission, which began in June 2024, aims to provide stability and shelter for those living unhoused in the Pu'uhonua O' Wai'anae village.

Over 300 Department of Defense personnel have participated in this construction mission, which is scheduled to continue through September 2024. The project will not only benefit the community but also serve as a valuable training opportunity for military personnel, offering over 20,000 training hours and fulfilling 8,000 critical Air Force training tasks.

The mission is part of the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program, which allows Guardsmen to collaborate with general contractors, train together, and serve alongside their local communities. The 154th Wing Civil Engineering Squadron from the Hawai'i Air National Guard has played a key role in providing both logistical and service support throughout the IRT mission, ensuring the smooth execution of con-

struction and training activities. Additionally, they had the opportunity to send members to participate in an IRT program in Arizona, gaining valuable out-of-state experience.

"The IRT program is invaluable because it allows us to train in unique locations, using resources from both the DoD and local communities to build partnerships and expand our knowledge," said Senior Master Sgt. Brad Wilson, deputy program manager. "It's more than just training; it's about being present in communities where we might not usually go. We're proud of this program and eager to work with our joint partners to help strengthen the communities we serve."

Pu'uhonua O'Wai'anae, located on the leeward side of Oahu near the Wai'anae Small Boat Harbor, is home to approximately 200 individuals, including keiki (children), kupuna (respected elders), and working families, with two-thirds of the population being Native Hawaiian.

The community, once guided by the late Twinkle Borge, has built a unique and self-sustaining village rooted in traditional Hawaiian values of kuleana (responsibility) and communal care.



The initiative to build permanent housing for the village began in 2018 when the community, facing potential eviction by the State, sought to secure a stable future. With the intervention of former State Governor, David Ige, and subsequent fundraising efforts, the community was able to acquire a 20-acre site in Wai'anae Valley in 2020. This land, nestled near Mt. Ka'ala, will serve as the location for the new Mauka Village, which is expected to house nearly 300 residents upon completion.

During the current construction phases, DoD personnel are focused on building 14 hales (homes) and initiating work on a Hale 'Aina (kitchen/bathroom) as part of the site master plan. The new village will combine modern amenities with traditional Hawaiian communal living, providing a sustainable and regenerative agricultural community for its residents.

The impact of this project is expected to be significant, offering shelter and stability to approximately 250 people, or about 10 percent of the island's houseless population. The development costs, operating expenses, and rents are projected to be lower than those of conventional affordable housing, making Pu'uhonua O' Wai'anae a model for future communities across Hawaii and potentially the entire United States.

Wai'anae, with a population of 51,965 according to the 2020 Census, has a rich history rooted in agriculture, though government employment and tourism now dominate its economy. The area faces social challenges, including a poverty rate of 18.5 percent and a median household income of \$79,575. The construction of the Mauka Village is seen as a critical step toward alleviating these challenges by providing much-needed housing and support to the community's most vulnerable members.

Capt. Theresa Bowie, project manager, emphasized that the military's efforts have been highly impactful and appreciated. "As of July 31st, Airmen have accumulated over 17,000 training hours, resulting in a cost savings of more than \$877,000 for our community partners," Bowie said. "Consider the number of lives we are positively affecting with our investment. Ultimately, we anticipate saving our community partners a million dollars."

Capt. Bowie also expressed a deep appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the local community and immerse their team in Hawaiian culture. "Along with the chance to train in the local community, our personnel have worked closely with local contractors and adopted the phrase, 'E Ala! E Alu! E Kuilima!' which means 'Up! Together! Join hands!' This phrase embodies the cultural essence of unity and collaboration," Bowie said. "It's a call for us to unite, join hands, and engage in our mission daily. It is deeply rooted in the community's cultural values."

This military-led initiative highlights the power of collaboration between government, military, and community organizations in tackling complex social issues. As the Mauka Village nears completion, it stands as a testament to the dedication and effort of those involved in creating a brighter future for the residents of Wai'anae.



# ONE YEAR LATER: REFLECTING ON LAHAINA RESPONSE

Story by **Master. Sgt. Mysti Bicoy**

**August 8, 2024, marks the solemn first anniversary of the wildfire that devastated the historic town of Lahaina on Maui, a disaster that forever changed the island. In the wake of this unprecedented tragedy, the Hawaii National Guard stepped up, playing a pivotal role in relief efforts.**

**Among the brave men and women who answered the call were two specialized teams whose contributions were of significant importance. Activated under Joint Task Force 5-0 on August 11, 2023, the Hawaii Air National Guard's Fatality Search and Recovery Team (FSRT) and the Search and Extraction Rescue Operations (SERO) Team from the 154th Wing were thrust into an unimaginable situation. The gravity of their mission—recovering and identifying human remains amidst the ashes of Lahaina—was both heartbreaking and vital to the healing of the community.**

**Reflecting on the mission, Maj. Adrian Remington, FSRT commander, underscored the profound responsibility his team bore. "I took on the role of FSRT commander during the**

**initial response phase of the Lahaina wildfire," Remington recalled. "Our team was charged with one of the most difficult tasks—recovering human remains within the charred footprint of this beloved town. Every step we took was taken with care, knowing the weight of our work on those grieving loved ones."**

**The FSRT, one of six specialized elements of the CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP), played an essential role in assisting the Maui Police Department. Remington described the difficulty of operating in an environment still smoldering, emphasizing the physical and emotional challenges faced by the team.**

**"Despite the media coverage, nothing can truly convey the sheer devastation that we witnessed," said Remington. "Historic Lahaina, a town rich in culture and history, was reduced to ashes. There was little left to recognize, except the overwhelming sense of loss."**

**Trained to operate in Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive environments, the FSRT's expertise allowed them to**

**recover, process, and honorably transfer remains, offering a measure of closure to families and loved ones.**

**Tech. Sgt. Eddie Song, a medic with the Hawaii Air National Guard's SERO team, also played a pivotal role in these efforts. With more than 16 years of experience as a fire investigator for the Honolulu Fire Department, Song brought critical awareness to the severe health risks present in the post-fire environment. His expertise in assessing hazardous conditions and implementing personal protective measures was essential in safeguarding the team.**

**"The heat from the fire was so intense that it melted car rims and lithium-ion batteries into pools of metal, releasing toxic fumes," Song recounted. "The air was thick with the smell of burnt wood, plastic, metal—and tragically, human and animal remains. It was a visceral reminder of the life that was lost here."**

**Song's insights proved invaluable as the team navigated a dangerous and contaminated environment. His advocacy for proper personal protective equipment and decontamination protocols ensured that every member of the team remained as safe as possible. Thanks to his efforts, the Honolulu Fire Department generously donated 12 pairs of boots to help protect the team from further harm.**

**"This disaster was unlike anything we had encountered before," Song added. "But we were determined to complete our mission with the respect and dignity the people of Lahaina deserved."**

**The Hawaii FSRT's deployment for the Lahaina wildfire marked their first real-world mass fatality incident—a challenging and emotionally taxing mission. Maj. Remington praised his team for their unwavering dedication, professionalism, and compassion throughout the recovery process. Each discovery was treated with the utmost respect, reinforcing the team's reputation as one of the nation's top FSRT units.**

**"Our team exists for moments like this," said Remington. "Our skills are constantly sharpened so we can respond to community-impacting events with precision and care. We were there when Hawaii needed us most—and we will always be ready."**

**As we mark this anniversary, we recognize the significant efforts of the men and women who responded during Lahaina's most challenging moments. The Hawaii National Guard was instrumental in this mission, assisting with the recovery of remains for 34 of the 102 official recoveries, providing essential support to the community during a period of great difficulty.**

# Paper Cranes Spread Messages of Hope

By 154th Wing Public Affairs

*For the second consecutive year, Hawaii Air National Guard members are folding origami cranes and sharing messages of hope across their workstations in observance of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month this September.*

*This tradition started when volunteers in a non-chartered prevention task force strung together a display of thousands of paper cranes at the Pearl Harbor Navy Exchange, giving patrons and opportunity to receive inspirational messages inscribed on the thousands of origamis.*

*While the display of cranes serves as a colorful and eye-catching work of art, its purpose goes much deeper. Each crane is accompanied by a message of hope, written by volunteers and observers alike, with the intention of offering encouragement to those who may be struggling. These personal messages, woven into the display, symbolize the community's collective commitment to spreading hope and supporting one another in times of need.*

*“The successful implementation of last year’s effort sparked the motivation to make the ‘Messages of Hope’ origami crane activity a tradition,” said Dr. Yumi Panui, from the 154th Wing Director of Psychological Health Team. “The effort was so well received by our Hawaii Air National Guard Members and their family members so it made sense to continue the effort again this year.”*

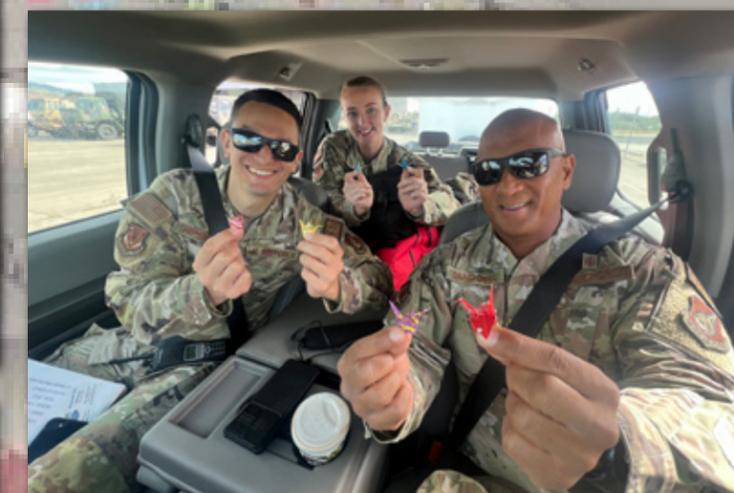
*Across the workspaces and common areas in the HIANG, including geographically separated units such as the 291st Combat Communications Squadron in Hilo, members have erected their own crane displays and re-purposed many origami donations from last year’s event; this includes thousands of contributions which originated from members who were deployed.*

*This year’s effort extends beyond the HIANG, to include community partners such as the active-duty 15th Wing and the Cohen Clinic at Child and Family Service in Mililani.*

*The initiative emphasizes how even the smallest gesture—a folded crane with a handwritten note—can have a lasting impact. Each crane is a small symbol of kindness with messages of hope to remind us that we’re all in this together.*

*“This campaign provides a tangible way for us to come together,” said Panui. “There is a cultural aspect that resonates with our organizational as well as our statewide community. The response has revealed how motivated we are as an organization to promote hope and do this effort together as a team, as an ohana.”*

*Members who may have missed out on the crane folding this year are encouraged to take part in helping to continue spreading the message of hope by taking a photo with the cranes or displays and tagging*



# STATE LEGISLATORS TOUR HIANG, DISCUSS REPRESENTATION FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

By Master Sgt Mysti Bicoy

*On July 7, the 154th Wing hosted State Senators Glenn Wakai and Brandon Elefante for an in-depth tour of the Guard's facilities. During their visit, the senators gained a firsthand look at the multifaceted missions that HIANG Airmen carry out daily.*

*The visit provided a unique opportunity for HIANG members to engage directly with the legislators, sharing personal insights into the challenges they face while responding to state and national crises. In turn, Senators Wakai and Elefante highlighted legislative initiatives aimed at expanding medical coverage for Guardsmen on State Active Duty, emphasizing their dedication to improving benefits for service members.*

*The discussions focused on the critical role of legislative support in enhancing the resources available to Guardsmen, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and family support. Airmen shared experiences that resonated with the senators, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the unique needs of the Guard community.*

*Both senators expressed a strong commitment to ensuring the Hawaii National Guard remains well-supported and prepared to fulfill its duties. Their visit underscored the importance of continuous collaboration between legislators and service members to ensure the Guard's readiness to serve both the state and the nation.*



# AUNTIE LORNA SOUZA: A PILLAR OF STRENGTH FOR THE HAWAII AIR NATIONAL GUARD RETIRES

By Tech. Sgt. John Linzmeier

The Hawaii Air National Guard bid farewell to a cherished member of its ohana on Aug. 23, as she retired from her role as the Airman and Family Readiness program manager during a ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Lorna Souza's departure marks the end of an era, but her legacy of compassion, resilience, and pervasive support will remain ingrained in the hearts of Guardsmen and the families she supported.

Lorna's journey with the HIANG began long before she took on her official role in 2006. She initially became involved with the National Guard as a Key Spouse volunteer in 2001, supporting her husband, Chief Master Sergeant Stanley Souza, and three sons who would also enlist in the field of aircraft maintenance. During her Key Spouse years, she quickly became a fixture within the HIANG community, known affectionately as 'Auntie' by many who had the benefit of crossing her path.

While 'Auntie' is a term of endearment often used in Hawaii to show respect and affection, in Lorna's case, it became much more than that. Her warm presence and nurturing spirit made her the embodiment of what it means to be a beloved figure who looks after everyone as if they were family.

Senior Master Sgt. Ryan Schreiner, 154th Security Forces Squadron

logistics and readiness senior enlisted leader, said Auntie was a pillar of stability for countless Guardsmen and their families who relied on her during the challenging years of the Global War on Terrorism. For nearly a decade, HIANG defenders faced back-to-back six-month deployments, causing consistent separation from their loved ones.

Schreiner, who deployed nearly a dozen times, noted that even in her early years as a volunteer, Auntie Lorna was the first person senior leaders turned to when an Airman faced significant adversity.

"She carried this unit through the war, from beginning to end," said Schreiner. "I've sent guys home who endured unimaginable hardships, and Auntie Lorna was always there on the home front. She wasn't just looking out for the member in crisis; she was also checking in on the rest of us down-range, sending care packages, and making sure we were okay."

In 2003, Auntie Lorna transitioned from her volunteer role to an official position within the HIANG as the Yellow Ribbon Program Coordinator. In this capacity, she was responsible for supporting service members and their families before, during, and after deployments.

Three years later, she became the Airman and Family Readiness

program manager. In this role, Auntie Lorna provided and directed members to comprehensive support services, including financial counseling, career transition assistance, and emotional support for both Airmen and their families. She was instrumental in coordinating deployment readiness and post-deployment reintegration, organizing newcomer orientations, and offering ongoing education and outreach programs.

"From the Wing Commander's perspective, she is a strong advocate for our families and young Airmen," said Brig. Gen. Phillip L. Mallory, 154th Wing commander. "Particularly, for those who might be struggling because of the high cost of living, deployments, or high operational tempo. Her efforts brought us the perspective of those individuals, but more importantly, brought tangible ways that the organization could help."

During Auntie Lorna Souza's tenure, her support extended far beyond deployments, reaching into the heart of every major domestic activation undertaken by the HIANG. She played a crucial role in aiding Guardsmen who responded to a wide range of emergencies, including the tsunami that struck American Samoa in 2009, the Puna Lava Flows of 2018 and the COVID Response Joint Task Force.

In response to the financial hard-

ships many faced during the pandemic, Auntie Lorna and her team collaborated with the 154th Wing Chaplain Corps to establish and maintain the 'Pono Pantry.'

This free food storage closet was designed to discreetly provide donated food to families in need. Recognizing the pantry's importance, Auntie Lorna and her team took full ownership of the program last year, continuing to manage and sustain it ever since.

More recently, she was instrumental in setting up an Emergency Family Assistance Center in Maui during the response to the devastating Lahaina Wildfire in the summer of 2023. In addition to attending to the families of service members who were impacted by the event, Souza was able to provide much-needed resources to Airmen who have not encountered such devastation within their community.

2nd Lt. Priscilla Kim, from the 154th Support Squadron, was previously embedded in the Airmen and Family Readiness team and served on the Fatality Search and Recovery Team during the fire response on Maui.

Kim shared that Souza's presence on the island provided crucial support to herself and many other responders during one of the most demanding and harrowing chapters of their careers. As they were tasked with the search and recovery of wildfire victims' remains,

Auntie Lorna's guidance and compassion helped them navigate the emotional toll of their work, ultimately helping the HIANG bring much-needed closure to the community.

"From the moment I met Auntie 17 years ago," said Kim, "I could tell what she brought to the table. She's been the face of every major event in my career, from deployments to marriage, and even the unfortunate downsides of life. No matter how stressful the situation, the moment you see her, she brings a sense of comfort and reminds you that everything is going to be okay."

As Auntie Lorna steps into retirement, she leaves behind a legacy of kindness, resilience, and a profound sense of ohana. Her impact on the HIANG community is immeasurable, and her presence will be sorely missed. But the lessons she imparted and the warmth she brought to every interaction will continue to inspire many of those who had the benefit of serving alongside her.

"Auntie Lorna is synonymous with Aloha and she will be missed in her role on the family care team," said Mallory. "Taking care of our Airmen and their families



## SEASONS OF SERVICE

# *A Journey of Life and Duty*

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.” And indeed, there are seasons in life, and I actually find this to be very comforting. There was the season of childhood, the season of young adulthood, meeting and marrying my wife, raising a family, watching my children become young adults, and now the season of my own life where I am looking forward to retirement. In fact, for me, a new season of my life is about to begin in that January of 2025 will be my last active drill with the HIANG before I retire. My dear Ohana, it has been such a privilege and pleasure serving you, our amazing State of Hawaii and our great country together here these many years now. I have made friends and colleagues I will cherish forever and indeed the Spirit of Aloha is alive and well within our Wing and our HIANG. I have so enjoyed meeting Airmen for various backgrounds and walks in life, from brand new E1’s to wonderful O7 and O8 leaders—talking story under the wings of an F22 or a KC 135, eating sausage together in the maintenance hangar, singing together in worship, laughing together, and crying together. There is a time and a season for every matter under heaven!

You also certainly have times and seasons in your own life. Sometimes change can be scary, but when we remember that God Himself has told us to expect changes (times and seasons), it is comforting—especially when you know that God is with you through all these times.

## Chaplain's Corner

That’s His promise! So, embrace the changes that come your way. Remember, this isn’t the first time you’ve been through change. And it won’t be the last. Some of the changes I have experienced in my own life were ones I would not have chosen for myself, but then when I look back, I see what an incredible blessing they ended up being. Be thankful for all the things in your life that you have been blessed with! Cherish and live each moment while looking forward to the next and being thankful for the last. And remember, you don’t have to go through any change alone—reach out to God, to family and friends, and other resources, including your HIANG family. We are Ohana, after all!

I still have three drills left here at the 154th Wing, so please if you see me, say hi! Know that I will miss each of you and will always be thankful for the work we did together for both God and country.

Aloha Ke Akua and a Hui Hou!



Capt. Becker,  
154th Wing Chaplain



## 1,000 HOURS OF MASTERY IN THE SKIES: BRIG. GEN. PHILLIP L. MALLORY'S FINI FLIGHT

Photos by Master Sgt Mysti Bicoy and Tech Sgt John Linzmeier

**On September 30, Brig. Gen. Phillip L. Mallory achieved a remarkable milestone by completing his 1,000th flight hour in the F-22 Raptor, a feat accomplished by only a select few pilots around the world. This event also marked his final flight as the commander of the 154th Wing, where he has served with distinction for the past two years.**

**Throughout his 24-year career, Brig. Gen. Mallory has logged over 2,700 flying hours in various aircraft, demonstrating exceptional contributions to air superiority. His family, friends, and colleagues gathered to celebrate this achievement and to reflect on his**

**impactful career.**

**As Brig. Gen. Mallory transitions to his new role as the Hawaii National Guard Deputy Adjutant General and Assistant Adjutant General - Air at the State of Hawaii, Department of Defense Headquarters, we extend our congratulations for his past achievements and best wishes for his future endeavors. Here's to continued success in shaping the future of our force.**





## 154TH WING EMBLEM

A Hawaiian idol with eyes, mouth, and malo, holding to dexter a Hawaiian kahili standard with a wooden shaft, crested with feathers in a cylindrical shape at the top, and in sinister a Hawaiian wooden spear, all within an orle.

Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The shield symbolizes defense. The colors are derived from the colors used for the feather caps and helmets traditionally worn by royalty in ancient Hawaii.

The stylized idol was used by the ancient Hawaiian kings and chiefs as visual symbols of personal gods. The idol has been emblematic with the Hawaii Air National Guard since its post-war formation.

The design is symbolic of fearlessness, valor, strength in the heat of battle and readiness for combat.

The spear is symbolic of battle. The kahili represents authority and was used to identify the ranks of kings and chiefs.

The emblem was approved on 26 October 1961.