

## **U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND PROVIDES HURRICANE IRMA DISASTER RELIEF**

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. - U.S. Northern Command is fully engaged with Federal, State, territorial and international mission partners as the command continues its planning, pre-positioning and initial Department of Defense response efforts for Hurricane Irma. The USS Wasp located near the USVI is conducting medical evacuations for critical care patients from St. Thomas to St. Croix and performing damage assessments in support of the local government. They are transporting people and supplies to the affected areas with medium and heavy lift helicopters. So far there have been six search and rescue missions and approximately 21 patients have been evacuated with another 23 patients planned for evacuation today.

The amphibious ships USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) and USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), along with the Marines of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, are approaching the disaster area and will be postured north of St. Croix and ready to provide assistance to FEMA. The ships have rotary wing assets to provide search and rescue support and personnel transportation.

Air Mobility Command C-17 Globemaster IIIs carrying all-terrain vehicles, forklifts, Humvees, pallets of supplies and crew including contingency response and medical personnel are supporting ongoing relief efforts in St. Croix and St. Thomas.

USNORTHCOM is providing urban search and rescue capabilities to the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and Puerto Rico to assist with lifesaving and life-sustaining efforts.

USNORTHCOM strongly recommends for those who may be affected by Hurricane Irma to listen and adhere to the guidance given by local authorities.

USNORTHCOM's mission is to assist lead federal relief agencies in helping those affected by Hurricane Irma to minimize suffering while continuing its mission of defending the Homeland.

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