



# Unified Response

**The killer earthquake that shook Haiti touched off a massive USAF response.**

*Below, TSgt. Aaron Avery, standing in the cavernous cargo bay of a C-17 transport, prepares to release pallets of relief supplies on Jan. 18. The C-17 and aircrew flew the first humanitarian airdrop mission of Operation Unified Response, moving more than 69,000 pounds of supplies into earthquake-stricken Haiti.*



USAF photo by MSgt. Shane Cuomo

**Supplies rigged  
the capital, br  
14,500 prepac  
performed by  
Airlift Wing, C**





USAF photo by SSGT. Desiree N. Palacios



*Left, Haitians seeking to get off the island line up to board a C-17 at Toussaint Louverture Airport in Port-au-Prince. In this photo, a Haitian picks his way through rubble from the shattered National Cathedral, devastated by a 6.1-magnitude aftershock in Port-au-Prince on Jan. 20.*

AP photo by Gerald Herbert

*ed with parachutes float down toward  
ing 14,000 bottles of water and  
ked meals. The Jan. 23 airdrop was  
a C-17 and aircrew of USAF's 437th  
harleston AFB, S.C.*



USAF photo by TSgt. James L. Harper Jr.



**I**n the wake of Haiti's devastating Jan. 12 earthquake, which measured 7.0 magnitude on the Richter Scale, USAF and other US armed services mounted Operation Unified Response, a massive Total Force relief effort. As can be seen in the photos on these pages, airmen had key roles. **[1]** An injured Haitian receives treatment from two Air Force Special Operations Command medics, MSgt. Douglas Brook (l) and TSgt. Nicholas Wentworth in Port-au-Prince. **[2]** A1C Brian Long, 87th Medical Group, Joint Base McGuire, N.J., carries a Haitian child from an ambulance to the base's passenger terminal. **[3]** Three airmen at JB McGuire load equipment on a C-17 bound for Haiti.

USAF photo by MSgt. Russell E. Cooley IV



1

USAF photo by SSgt. Danielle Johnson



2



3

USAF photo by SrA. Katie Gieratz

**[4]** Airmen of Air Mobility Command's 621st Contingency Response Wing at JB McGuire secure a pallet on a C-17. The deliveries often made life-and-death differences in the stricken island nation.



4

USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua L. DeMotts





USAF photo by A1C Perry Aston



1

USAF photo by TSgt. James L. Harper Jr.



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USAF photo by MSgt. Russell E. Cooley IV



USAF photo by SSgt. Jacob N. Bailey

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USAF photo by SSgt. Chad Chisholm

**[1]** Critical tasks were performed by USAF's combat controllers such as this unidentified airman of the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla. Often, special operations airmen were first on a scene to re-open airfields and facilities. They also helped operate Toussaint Louverture to handle the stream of relief aircraft bearing equipment and supplies. **[2]** Military and civilian aircraft fill the

airport ramp in Haiti. This photo was taken Jan. 16 by an OC-135 Open Skies aircraft of the 45th Reconnaissance Squadron, Offutt AFB, Neb. US authorities tasked the OC-135 to survey earthquake damage with its panoramic cameras. **[3]** Airmen from Hurlburt carry an injured Haitian to a medical treatment site. **[4]** Americans buckled into a USAF C-17 prepare to leave Haiti on a special Jan. 18 flight.

This C-17 and crew, with the 452nd Air Mobility Wing, deployed from March ARB, Calif., to Haiti. **[5]** SSgt. Lynzey Thorton (r), a loadmaster of the 41st Airlift Squadron, Gulfport-Biloxi Arpt., Miss., and another unidentified airman load a Humvee onto a C-130J for the hop to Haiti. The massive scope of earthquake destruction and humanitarian need dictated round-the-clock airlift operations.



**[1]** Col. Todd Wall, a C-17 pilot, carries a sleeping toddler making the flight to the US. **[2]** Mobility airmen at Charleston shove a pallet of food and other consumables onto a C-17 bound for Haiti. The pallet was part of a 116,000-pound shipment of food and water needed by desperate Haitian survivors. **[3]** A pararescueman of USAF's 23rd Special Tactics Squadron and several other rescuers climb a ladder to reach a woman trapped for seven days in a collapsed building. **[4]** Detailed image of the devastated National Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, taken by an Air Force RQ-4 Global Hawk two days after the earthquake. **[5]** Civilian rescue teams, some of them bringing specially trained search and rescue dogs, were frequently ferried by C-17s to Haiti. Here, Ron Wickbacher and his dog, Dawson, wait their turn to board a C-17 at March.



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USAF photo by MSgt. Alvin Johnson



USAF photo by SSgt. Daniel Bowles

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USAF photo by TSgt. James L. Harper Jr.



USAF photo

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USAF photo by 2nd Lt. Holly Hess





USAF photo by TSgt. James L. Harper Jr.

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USAF photo by TSgt. James L. Harper Jr.



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USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua L. DeMotts



USAF photo by SSgt. Desiree N. Palacios

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**[1]** A combat controller from the 23rd STS at Hurlburt checks out the just-delivered pallets air-dropped into Port-au-Prince on Jan. 18. **[2]** Parachutes laden with life-saving supplies float from a C-17. The airlifter also has the ability to land on short

and unimproved airstrips. **[3]** Airmen offload heavy equipment from a C-17 from Charleston at the Port-au-Prince airport. The airmen are assigned to the 621st Contingency Response Wing. Operation Unified Response is expected to continue for weeks

to come. **[4]** Haitians standing in a queue are dwarfed by a C-17 parked at the airport terminal.



**[1]** Airmen at Charleston stand ready to help launch a C-17 for relief operations to Haiti. **[2]** The OC-135B aircraft took this shot of a C-130 on its final approach to the airport at Port-au-Prince. The devastation was documented in 10,000 feet of film photographed from the OC-135B. **[3]** Airmen at McGuire, having already loaded one Hum-vee, continue the task of filling this C-17 with humanitarian supplies and rescue gear. **[4]** Reservist Maj. Mark Smith, 437th Airlift Wing, performs a preflight walk-around inspection before the start of a relief flight in Charleston. **[5]** Air National Guardsmen assigned to the 156th Airlift Wing, Puerto Rico, guide cargo onto a C-130 during nighttime operations.



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USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua L. DeMotts



USAF photo by A1C Perry Aston

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USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua L. DeMotts



USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua L. DeMotts

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USAF photo by SSgt. Desiree N. Palacios





USAF photo by SSgt. Joshua L. DeMotts

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USAF photo by TSgt. James L. Harper Jr.

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USAF photo by SSgt. Greg C. Biondo

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USAF photo by SSgt. Desiree N. Palacios

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**[1]** TSgt. Robert Mabry, a loadmaster of the 437th Airlift Wing, conducts nighttime preflight duties on a Haiti-bound airlifter. **[2]** Wheels down, a C-17 from JB McChord, Wash., lands at Port-au-Prince on Jan. 24. **[3]** A Japanese C-130 at Homestead ARB, Fla., awaits cargo loaded by Japan Air Self-Defense Force personnel and US airmen from Homestead's 70th Aerial Port Squadron. **[4]** With a civilian airliner in the background, combat controllers of the 23rd STS talk to aircraft circling the airport awaiting landing clearance. The earthquake put the control tower out of action. Once USAF combat controllers established operational control, humanitarian relief flights numbered 120 a day. ■