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By Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla/176th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Air Guard C-17s fresh tail paint harkens to past and future

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing and the active duty Air Force's 3rd Wing witnessed the unveiling of a new tail flash here Oct. 1 on the C-17 Globemaster IIIs assigned to the 176th Wing's 144th Airlift Squadron.

Current and former 144th AS Airmen took a moment to reflect on their history and future together with their associate unit, the 517th Airlift Squadron, whose active duty Air Force aircrews also fly the Alaska Air National Guard's eight-ship C-17 fleet.

"The occasion of the unveiling of a new tail flash [is] one that represents a... joining of forces of the 144th and the 517th Airlift Squadron(s) under one new tail flash -- a tail flash representing the heritage of both and the future of the same," said Chaplain (Maj.) Brad Burns, the 176th Wing head chaplain, during the ceremony invocation.

Although the C-17 association between the Alaska Air National Guard and Regular Air Force was established in 2009, the 144th AS's active-association total-force integration with the 517th is new as of August 2018 when the squadron assumed responsibility for the C-17 mission.

The new tail flash depicts a wolf head, (the 144th AS's emblem), on one side, and a firebird (the 517th AS's emblem), of equal size on the other. In addition, the yellow tail stripe with "ANCHORAGE" across it links to the first C-130H Hercules' assigned to the 176th Wing.

Many details go into developing a tail flash, from color schemes and size to general impression and effect to morale.

"The tail flash is a visual representation of ownership," said TSgt. Colton Nelson, 176th Wing historian and aircraft loadmaster with the 144th AS. "You spend a lot of time on the road in these aircraft so the plane becomes as meaningful as your own car. This is our bird."

Lt. Col. Kirk Palmberg, commander of the 144th AS, said 144th wolf pack members can look to the next chapter of the squadron's life.

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“As the past has been bright for the 144th, the future is even brighter,” Palmberg said. “The power of the total-force team; the legacy of our state’s first squadron; the esprit de corps and strength of our current and legacy wolf pack members; and we’re all combined. I proudly wear the wolf that symbolizes (and signifies) strength and endurance in the Arctic, something that is needed both in our state and our global missions.”

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.) <https://flic.kr/s/aHskFNgo9n>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://dvidshub.net/r/wyrag9>



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Members of the Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Wing and the active duty Air Force’s 3rd Wing witnessed the unveiling of a new tail flash on the C-17 Globemaster IIIs assigned to the 176th Wing’s 144th Airlift Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Oct. 1, 2018. The new tail flash depicts a wolf head, (the 144th AS’s emblem), on one side, and a firebird (the 517th AS’s emblem), of equal size on the other. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla)



181001-Z-DU133-0048

Members of the Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Wing and the active duty Air Force’s 3rd Wing witnessed the unveiling of a new tail flash on the C-17 Globemaster IIIs assigned to the 176th Wing’s 144th Airlift Squadron on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Oct. 1, 2018. The new tail flash depicts a wolf head, (the 144th AS’s emblem), on one side, and a firebird (the 517th AS’s emblem), of equal size on the other. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla)