

**Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe**

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By David Bedard

*176th Wing Public Affairs*

## **176th Wing prepares mobile rescue operations center for ARCTIC ACE**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of 176th Communications Flight, 210th Rescue Squadron, 211th Rescue Squadron, and 176th Operations Support Squadron Intelligence partnered with associated contractors March 22 to validate the rapid employment of a mobile rescue operations center tailor made for Agile Combat Employment training in Alaska and operations throughout the Indo-Pacific Command area of operations.

The MROC is a command-and-control suite comprising radios, computers, amplifiers, and antennas that is specially packaged to rapidly deploy in order to establish combat search and rescue operations at remote and often-austere airfields.

Wing members huddled on the loading dock of JBER's Hangar 18 where they rapidly put together the MROC's components and demonstrated it could ably perform all necessary mission functions.

Alaska Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Dustin Hayden, 176th Communications Flight Agile Communications Systems supervisor, said the hallmark of the MROC is its capability despite fitting in a lightweight package.

"The theory behind Agile Communications is to be able to go anywhere and set up an expeditionary communications system," he said. "We can load this equipment on an HC-130[J Combat King II], potentially an HH-60[G Pave Hawk], take it to the middle of nowhere, and bring in data and voice communications."

Alaska Air National Guard Maj. Allan Sain, 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60 pilot, said the radios can transmit line-of-sight or over satellite communications, supporting voice and data communications.

Sain said the MROC will deploy to Western Alaska in April where it will serve as the communications backbone for simulated CSAR operations during exercise ARCTIC ACE.

"We're setting up a forward location that isn't going to be a full-fledged base that we can maintain for an extended duration," he said. "It's going to be for a small amount of time, but it's long enough to where you still want maintenance operations and other support functions like [personnel] services, civil engineers, and the logistics readiness squadron to get equipment in and out, fuels, everything else that supports the operations location."

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Sain said in addition to voice communications, data communications are critical for Joint All-Domain Command and Control, which provides a common operating picture for all U.S. forces operating in an expeditionary area of operations.

“The standard issues moving away from the base are maintaining the communications chain, and that entails everything from daily status reports to information relay for a mission,” he said. “In rescue, we’re used to dealing with this challenge. This is something we have seen for years in a combat situation where we may have to move helicopters and HC-130s forward to get closer to facilitate quicker rescue.”

Sain said the rapid move during ARCTIC ACE will pose unique challenges for wing support agencies who will have to balance agility with sustainability to see through the training operation.

Hayden said 176th Wing isn’t tackling ACE alone and continues to work with mission partners to refine agile tactics and techniques.

“Everyone’s key phrase lately is total force integration,” he said. “We have a great relationship with the (regular Air Force’s) 673d Communications Squadron, and they have a similar system, so we work together on setting these systems up and configuring them.”

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## PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes selected full-resolution photos. (Accessible from military computers.)

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/392700/176th-wing-prepares-mobile-rescue-operations-center-arctic-ace>



Alaska Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Preston Fernandez, a radio frequency transmission systems technician with 176th Communications Flight, installs a satellite communications antenna March 22, 2021, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The SATCOM antenna is part of the 176th Wing’s Mobile Rescue Operations Center, a rapidly deployable command-and-control suite that supports rescue operations. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by David Bedard/Released)