



KUKAʻI MOKU

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



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**154 MSG
READINESS
RODEO**

Inside KŪKĀ‘ILIMOKU

APRIL
2025

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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 message from the 154th Wing Commander

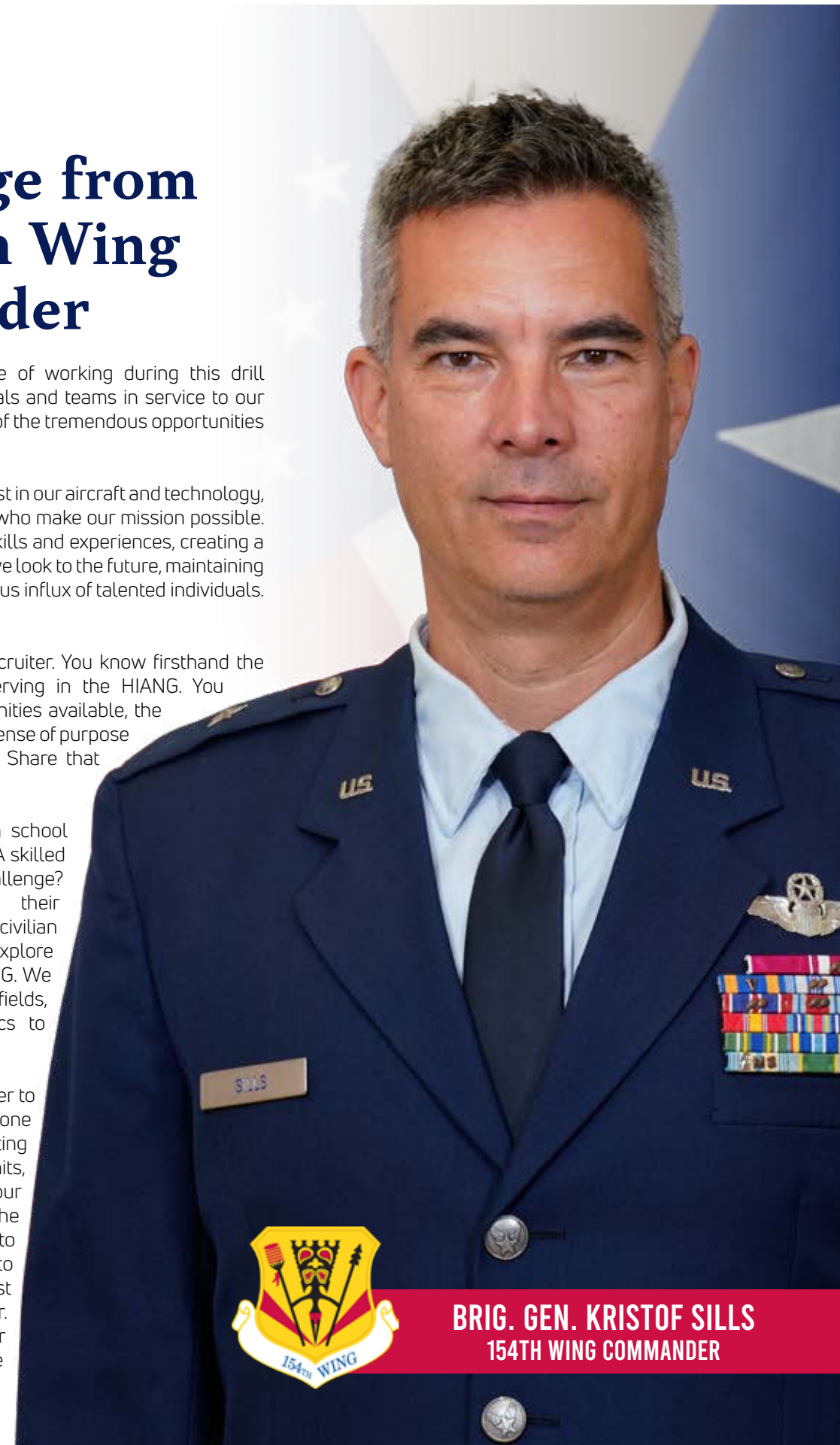
As I reflect on the privilege of working during this drill weekend with talented individuals and teams in service to our nation and state, I am reminded of the tremendous opportunities available in our wing.

Our wing's strength lies not just in our aircraft and technology, but in the dedicated individuals who make our mission possible. Each of us contributes unique skills and experiences, creating a dynamic and effective team. As we look to the future, maintaining this strength requires a continuous influx of talented individuals. That's where you come in.

Every one of us can be a recruiter. You know firsthand the rewards and challenges of serving in the HIANG. You understand the unique opportunities available, the camaraderie we share, and the sense of purpose as we derive from our service. Share that knowledge!

Do you know a recent high school graduate looking for direction? A skilled professional seeking a new challenge? Someone wanting to serve their country while pursuing their civilian career? Encourage them to explore the possibilities within the HIANG. We offer a wide variety of career fields, from maintenance and logistics to medical and cyber operations.

You don't have to be a recruiter to recruit. Simply talking to someone about your experiences, inviting them to visit one of our units, or connecting them with our recruiting team can make all the difference. Let's work together to ensure the HIANG continues to thrive with the best and brightest our communities have to offer. Help a young person find their future with us. Let's build the future of our wing, together.



BRIG. GEN. KRISTOF SILLS
154TH WING COMMANDER

HAWAII GUARDSMAN IS FIRST TO RECEIVE SPACE FORCE ASSOCIATION AWARD

By Tech Sgt John Linzmeier



For the first time, a Hawaii Air National Guard Airman, Capt. My-Randa Quinata, commander of the 109th Electromagnetic Warfare Squadron's Intelligence Flight, has received the prestigious Space Force Association Award. Capt. Quinata earned this distinction among intelligence operations officers from Guard and Reserve units supporting space missions nationwide.

Quinata's journey with the 109th EWS began in November 2021 when she joined the squadron in Guam, playing a key role in its formative stages. In 2023, she relocated with her family to Oahu, where she has since brought her expertise and leadership to the 154th Wing. Reflecting on her move, she shared, "Leaving Guam and my family was a tough choice, but I'm happy with my decision to join the Hawaii Air National Guard.

I have fallen in love with Hawaii—the unique vibe, rich culture, and the warm aloha spirit.



officer," she said. "Over the past three years, I've had the opportunity to develop new skills, take on new responsibilities, and contribute to the development of a unique and critical capability." Beyond her groundbreaking training efforts, Capt. Quinata has focused on fostering her team's well-being, enhancing the security of classified operations, and mentoring emerging leaders.

She finds particular inspiration in the strong presence of women in leadership roles within the HIANG, whose guidance and example continue to shape her path.



Everyone in the HIANG has been incredibly welcoming and inclusive, and I couldn't be more grateful for that."

Since arriving, Quinata has been a driving force in advancing the squadron's mission. "We are much further along than when I first transferred into the squadron," she explained. "Our team has grown, with more members now fully trained in their AFSCs. We have established robust training programs tailored to achieve combat mission readiness." Facing the unique challenge of no pre-existing Space Electromagnetic Warfare (EW) Intelligence training programs, she took the initiative to create the first tailored training plan for Unit Level Intelligence specific to Space EW capabilities.

"It's been a challenging yet rewarding journey that has pushed me to grow both as a leader and as an intelligence



Quinata's contributions have not only elevated the 109th EWS but have also set an inspiring benchmark for excellence within the HIANG. Please join us in celebrating her remarkable achievements and dedication to advancing our mission in space innovation!

HAWAII ANG & INDONESIAN AIR FORCE ADVANCE PARTNERSHIP WITH SECOND YEAR OF AIR-TO-AIR REFUELING ENGAGEMENT

By **Senior Master Sgt Mysti Bicoy**

Hawaii Air National Guard personnel from the 154th Wing participated in air-to-air refueling engagement with the Indonesian Air Force as part of efforts to support F-16 recertification requirements identified during the 2024 Airmen-to-Airmen Talks. The training focused on strengthening interoperability, operational effectiveness, and regional security efforts between the two forces in Denpasar, Indonesia Feb. 17-21.

This engagement was part of the Hawaii National Guard's State Partnership Program, which has played a critical role in advancing air-to-air refueling capabilities between Hawaii ANG and the Indonesian Air Force.

In this training cycle, five new and 21 IDAF F-16 pilots successfully earned their air-refueling qualifications. The 203rd Air Refueling Squadron directly supported over 40 F-16 sorties, demonstrating the increasing complexity and operational integration of these joint capabilities.

"For many of us, this mission isn't just about fuel transfers—it's about trust, adaptability, and building a foundation for future interoperability," said 1st Lt. Alison Bowman, a pilot with the 203rd

ARS. "Through pre- and post-mission briefings, we are exchanging air refueling tactics, techniques, and procedures to enhance operational efficiency."

For the 203rd ARS, this mission extended beyond technical proficiency—it was an engagement in adaptability and cross-cultural collaboration in a region with unique airspace and logistical challenges.

"Air refueling engagements in this region gives us a great opportunity to fine-tune our skills while working closely with our partners in a dynamic environment," said Tech. Sgt. Angellica Amian, 203rd ARS inflight refueler. "By staying in constant communication and giving each other real-time feedback, we were able to work together more smoothly. It's all about building that trust and understanding so we can operate effectively as a team."

As the engagement progressed, both air forces refined their air domain awareness capabilities, reinforcing their commitment to regional stability.

"This opportunity not only strengthens our operational readiness but also ensures we have the capabilities to secure our territorial integrity," said Lt. Col Ripdho 'Mohawk' Utomo, IDAF exercise

AN INDONESIAN AIR FORCE (IDAF) F-16 FIGHTING FALCON FLIES ALONGSIDE A HAWAII AIR NATIONAL GUARD KC-135 STRATOTANKER ASSIGNED TO THE 203RD AIR REFUELING SQUADRON DURING AN AIR-TO-AIR REFUELING TRAINING MISSION OVER INDONESIA, FEB. 19, 2025.



planner. “We want to thank the Hawaii Air National Guard for their support to maintain our currency and certifications. I’m looking forward to continuing this cooperation.”

The HING SPP - Indonesia Military Bilateral Partnership, established in 2006 through the National Guard Bureau (NGB), continues to serve as a key initiative supporting USINDOPACOM's goal of enhancing defense relations and strengthening Indonesia's military capabilities.

As the training concluded, the Hawaii Air National Guard reaffirmed its commitment to fostering international partnerships through high-level military operations,

activities, and investments. Working alongside allies such as Indonesia, Hawaii ANG continues to support global stability and operational excellence in air mobility and aerial refueling capabilities.

Looking ahead, future training opportunities will build upon the progress achieved during this exercise, further advancing U.S.-Indonesia defense cooperation. With continued collaboration and shared training objectives, both air forces are committed to strengthening regional security, enhancing readiness, and improving interoperational capabilities for future missions.



SENTRY ALOHA 25-1

Story by **SrA Roann Gatdula**

The Hawaii Air National Guard's 154th Wing successfully concluded their long running defense readiness exercise Sentry Aloha on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Feb. 12, 2025.

Designated Sentry Aloha 25-1, this iteration began Jan. 29 and brought approximately 800 joint personnel including Guardsman, Reservists, locally-based active duty partners from the 15th Wing, Sailors and Marines and nearly 30 aircraft from six states.

For more than 20 years, Sentry Aloha is an ongoing series of exercises that enable tailored, cost effective and realistic combat training for Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force, and other Department of Defense services. It provides U.S. war fighters with the skill sets necessary to perform homeland defense and overseas combat missions.

Sentry Aloha is built around Dissimilar Air Combat Training, which challenges pilots to engage in combat scenarios against aircraft with different performance capabilities. Rather than training against identical airframes, DACT forces pilots to adapt to unpredictable

engagements, testing their ability to exploit their own platform's strengths while capitalizing on adversary weaknesses.

The exercise operates at an intense tempo, with participants generating back-to-back combat training sorties daily. This high-paced battle rhythm ensures pilots experience continuous exposure to varied threats, refining their decision-making, reaction times and overall combat effectiveness in a dynamic and ever-evolving air combat environment.

Guest participants included U.S. Navy F-35C Lightning II's from California, and Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotankers from Washington and Mississippi. Visiting aircraft took part in simulated combat exercises with F-22A Raptors operated by the 199th and 19th Fighter Squadrons' Hickam based 'Hawaiian Raptors.'

Joint maintenance teams launched, recovered, and maintained the diverse fleet of aircraft—comprising fifth-generation fighters, refueling tankers, and cargo aircraft for support and logistic capabilities—ensuring a seamless flow of sorties

and a full-spectrum air combat scenario.

The successful execution of these flight operations highlights the importance of Hawaii's strategic location and training environment.

"Hawaii offers great weather, especially over-water airspace to train in the Indo-Pacific Theater, as well as the opportunities to practice those agile combat employment tactics, techniques, and procedures," said

Lt. Col. Matthew Ohman, 201st Combat Operations Squadron, Sentry Aloha senior director, "The Hawaiian Raptors rely heavily on these exercises to accomplish mission readiness - it's a culmination of a lot of training."

During this iteration of Sentry Aloha, the 169th Air Defense Squadron provided a team of Battle Management Operators aboard the KC-135 for the first time, delivering non-traditional tactical command and control to the forward edge. From the airborne platform, they relayed near real-time situational awareness provided via beyond line of sight communications by



Air Battle Managers and Battle Management Operators on the ground utilizing a simulated Common Operational Picture, exercising fight tonight capabilities.

“The HIANG must continue to integrate,” said Tech Sgt. Kukila Carreira-Manin, 169th ADS, weapons and tactics NCO-in-charge, “Every service member within USINDOPACOM has a significant responsibility to support each other from every aspect in every rank. Time is precious within this theater and every second counts building our relationships with one another.”

The daily tanker support provided served as a force-multiplier, enabling fighter aircraft to extend their range

and mission duration without the need for frequent landings to base, reducing congestion at the airport and creating efficient flight operations. By providing in-flight refueling, tankers allow participants to maximize their flight hours, conduct more extensive training scenarios, and remain engaged in exercises for longer periods to enhance operational effectiveness.

Agile Combat Employment concepts were deployed and rehearsed among participants across the Hawaiian Islands. Among these systems were the implementation of a Tactical Operations Center-Lite (TOC-L) brought in by the 103rd Air Control Squadron from the Connecticut ANG.

The mobile system is designed to be compact and ready for rapid deployment and advanced airspace tactical control. Unlike traditional systems that require extensive infrastructure and staffing, TOC-L integrates cloud-based command and control capabilities, enabling seamless operations worldwide. It can be packed into about two dozen hand-carried cases and be operational within an hour with minimal personnel.

“It was our most ambitious TOC-L execution to date,” said Maj. J. Seth Bopp, 103rd Air Control Squadron director of operations. “The team planned for months and built off of what they learned from similar exercises, such as AGILE PANDA, NIMBLE CHEETAH,

MOBILE MARLIN, and SENTRY SAVANNAH. They did it faster and did it with more sites. We couldn’t have done it without our joint partners from the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Space Force who acted as force enablers for our proof of concept.”

The 103rd ACS exercised a morning vulnerability from Kaneohe Marine Corps Base on Oahu, disassembled equipment, deployed from Oahu on a KC-130J Hercules to the Pacific Missile Range Facility on the neighboring island of Kauai, control vulnerability, and re-deployed back to Oahu in a five-hour window.

“Doing all of that in a short window across two islands was

paramount in proving ACE concepts for TOC-L,” said Senior Master Sgt. Jonathan Burr, 103rd Air Control Squadron senior enlisted leader. “Traveling out from our home base in Connecticut and across the Hawaiian Islands, the team had to jump through hoops to make things happen and they were exceptional.”

Over a two-week span, the 103rd ACS trained and tested at three locations across two islands, and ended with four locations across three islands. It was the first time a unit was able to remote in two radio sites.

“I would say the 103rd definitely showed up ready to work and utilize their TOC-L system to kind of be the highlights, it’s definitely

something new and different that we haven’t really done before,” said Ohman, “Everyone showed up and did the job they were ready and trained to do. I definitely would give credit to our tankers, it didn’t seem like during the exercise we had many or any tanker cancellations, but the tankers seemed to be flying well throughout the entire exercise.”

With 182 sorties flown and well over 300 flight hours logged, Sentry Aloha 25-1 successfully enhanced combat readiness and interoperability among participating units. The second phase of this year’s training is projected to be held in the first half of this year, bringing another opportunity to refine warfighting capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region.





“THE HIANG MUST CONTINUE TO INTEGRATE,” SAID TECH SGT. KUKILA CARREIRA-MANIN, 169TH ADS, WEAPONS AND TACTICS NCO-IN-CHARGE, “EVERY SERVICE MEMBER WITHIN USINDOPACOM HAS A SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER FROM EVERY ASPECT IN EVERY RANK. TIME IS PRECIOUS WITHIN THIS THEATER AND EVERY SECOND COUNTS BUILDING OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER.”



LAUNA'OLE AWARDS CEREMONY HONORS OUTSTANDING AIRMEN

The HIANG held its annual Launa'ole Awards Ceremony to recognize its top-performing Airmen for the year of 2024 at the Hollister Auditorium, a fitting venue to honor the dedication and excellence of the award recipients. This event celebrated the outstanding achievements of the organization's full-time and drill-status guardsmen (DSG) who went above and beyond in their duties and contributions to the HIANG mission.

Launa'ole in the Hawaiian language means "without comparison," embodying the spirit of excellence that the HIANG aims to foster in its Airmen. By recognizing the top performers, the organization acknowledges their exceptional work and encourages others to strive for excellence as well.

Leaders from all units of the HIANG gathered to celebrate the achievements of the top performers and to recognize each for their outstanding contributions. The ceremony was a way to show appreciation for the hard work and dedication of these Airmen, who are the backbone of the HIANG.

The significance of the Launa'ole Awards goes beyond mere recognition; it highlights the profound impact these individuals and competing nominees have had on their community and the nation's wartime readiness. The recipients of these awards have demonstrated exceptional leadership,

innovation, and commitment, contributing to the safety and security of the nation and fostering a stronger, more resilient community.

During the ceremony, Airmen were recognized in two categories: the full-time category and the DSG category. The full-time category recognized the top performers who were employed by the HIANG on a full-time basis, while the DSG category recognized the top performers who were part-time Guardsmen.

In addition to the individual awards, a traveling award called the Kaleo Nui Award was presented to the 154th Mission Support Group for delivering a high-spirited music video that incorporated vocal talent, unique choreography, and dance moves from all levels of the MSG, including that of its commander, Col. Glen Hayase. This award is presented to a unit or individual who demonstrates exceptional creativity and innovation in their work.

The ceremony is a testament to the HIANG's commitment to fostering a culture of excellence and encouraging its Airmen to push themselves to be the best they can be. By recognizing their achievements, the HIANG is showing its appreciation for the Airmen who make its mission possible. The Launa'ole Awards serve as an inspiration, motivating all members to continue striving for greatness and ensuring the continued success and readiness of the HIANG and the community it serves.





OUTSTANDING UNIT OF THE YEAR
199TH FIGHTER SQUADRON



WINNING TEAM OF THE YEAR
201ST COMBAT OPERATIONS SQUADRON



SERVICE TEAM OF THE YEAR
154TH COMPTROLLER FLIGHT



KALEO NUI AWARD
154TH MISSION SUPPORT GROUP



AIRMAN OF THE YEAR
FULL TIME
**SRA ALBERT
INSISIENGMA**
201ST COMBAT
OPERATIONS SQUADRON



AIRMAN OF THE YEAR
PART TIME
**SRA CATHLEEN
DRAKE**
154TH CIVIL ENGINEER
SQUADRON



NCO OF THE YEAR
FULL TIME
**SSGT SAVANNAH
BISE**
201ST INTELLIGENCE
SQUADRON



NCO OF THE YEAR
PART TIME
**SSGT PHILIP
ELISARA**
201ST COMBAT
OPERATIONS SQUADRON



SNCO OF THE YEAR
FULL TIME
**MSGT RANDY
FERRIMAN**
201ST INTELLIGENCE
SQUADRON



SNCO OF THE YEAR
PART TIME
**SMSGT BLES
MAY DAOG**
199TH FIGHTER
SQUADRON



CGO OF THE YEAR
FULL TIME
**CAPT CHASE
HAZLEWOOD**
154TH MAINTENANCE SQUADRON



CGO OF THE YEAR
PART TIME
**CAPT JAMES
RO**
154TH COMMUNICATIONS
SQUADRON



FGO OF THE YEAR
FULL TIME
**MAJ GORDON
KAI**
169TH AIR DEFENSE
SQUADRON



FGO OF THE YEAR
PART TIME
**LT COL CHUCK
GOMES**
201ST COMBAT
OPERATIONS SQUADRON



FIRST SERGEANT OF THE YEAR
**MSGT KEVIN
NEEDHAM**
154TH MEDICAL GROUP



BRIDGING THE DISTANCE: 434TH COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON TRAINS WITH THE 154TH COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON

by **Capt James Ro**

Geographic distance couldn't diminish the impact of a recent training partnership as members of the 434th Communications Squadron from Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, joined forces with the 154th Communications Squadron, 154th Wing, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. The 434th CS completed their annual training requirements, honing essential skills and contributing directly to the 154th CS's mission success.

This critical training opportunity, is a cornerstone for readiness for every Air Force Reservist and Guardsman. It allowed members from the 434th CS to seamlessly integrated with the members of the 154th CS. Completing annual training requirements ensures every service member remains current on the latest technologies, tactics, and procedures, guaranteeing a cohesive and ready force capable of addressing any challenges.

"Witnessing the seamless integration of the 434th CS Airmen with our team at the 154th has been remarkable,"

said Maj. Jay Munechika, 154th CS commander. "They tackled challenges head-on, shared valuable expertise, and truly embodied the strength of the total force in action."

The 434th's expertise proved invaluable as they directly contributed to the 154th CS's mission success. Facing a looming deadline for the Air Force's Windows 11 migration, the 434th CS played a crucial role in imaging over 145 workstations, ensuring the 154th CS stays ahead of the October 2025 deadline. This massive undertaking showcased the tangible impact Reservists bring to the total force, directly enhancing the 154th's Wing operational capability.

"Getting out in the field and tackling new challenges with the equipment was invaluable," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Davies, 434th CS Cyber Operations journeyman. "We just don't have those same opportunities back home. It was especially rewarding to gain experience in areas I'd never worked before – I'm definitely bringing those lessons back to my unit."

Beyond the Windows migration, the 434th CS actively participated in a Joint Incident Site Communications Capability exercise alongside the 154th CS. This exercise provided hands-on experience with establishing critical communication channels in a simulated field environment, exposing the 434th CS to new systems and equipment, broadening their skillsets and enhancing their ability to integrate into diverse operational scenarios.

"The JISCC setup during the joint Army-Air Force exercise was a real eye-opener," said SrA Travis Tuttle, a 434th CS Reservist. "Seeing the flow of data firsthand and understanding how my role impacted the entire mission was incredible. It really hit home – we're all vital pieces of the puzzle, and our contributions directly affect the success of the operation."

The success of this training partnership between the 434th CS and the 154th CS highlights the critical role of both the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard in maintaining operational readiness. By leveraging the unique strengths, experiences, and dedication of both components, the Air Force ensures a robust and agile force ready to face any challenge, anytime, anywhere.



TANKER PILOT CONTINUES FAMILY'S SERVICE

by Tech Sgt John Linzmeier



The Hawaii Air National Guard stands on a foundation of generations of Airmen—family lines who have found purpose in service, passing down a commitment to the skies. Among them is 1st Lt. Micah Partika, a KC-135R Stratotanker pilot in the 203rd Air Refueling Squadron and a third-generation member of this storied ‘ohana. For the Partika family, aviation isn’t just a job—it’s a legacy spanning 96 years across Micah, his father Chris Partika, his uncle Andy Partika, and his grandfather Lawrence Partika.

The Partika saga begins with Micah’s grandfather, Lawrence Partika, a fighter mechanic who kept everything from the F-86 Sabre to the F-4 Phantom flying. His son Chris and brother Andy later served together in the HIANG, maintaining newer generations of jets—F-4s, F-15s, and F-22 Raptors—side by side at Hickam Field. Even after retiring from the HIANG, Chris Partika stayed in aviation, preserving Hickam’s static displays and teaching aircraft maintenance in the commercial sector.

Micah’s passion for flight took root early. He has plenty of memories of riding in the iconic maintenance ‘bread van’ during family functions 25 years ago, all while wearing a miniature Battle Dress Uniform to match his dad Chris’s. “I loved it,” he recalls. “I was always thrilled to spend time with my father on the job. The dream back then—me and all the ‘Guard kids,’ my Guard family—was to fly.” Some of his fondest memories, he said, were watching jets taking off with their afterburners, a sight that only stoked his passion for flight.

Raised by mechanics like Chris and Andy, who restored classic cars, Micah was pushing pistons into engines since he was in kindergarten. “I was always in the garage, wanting to do what

[my dad] was doing,” he says. Racing dirt bikes with friends, breaking them and fixing them for the next weekend. “I probably could have been a better mechanic than a pilot,” he jokingly admits, a nod to his respect for maintainers. “I can’t even touch the jet without them. Their dedication is unbelievable—especially here, with maybe the most pristine fleet of KC-135s out there.”



Lawrence Partika



Chris Partika



Micah Partika

When he faced the Undergraduate Pilot Training Board, Micah’s goal was simple: “I wanted to fly anything grey,” he said. “Even if I followed my father Chris’s footsteps into maintenance, that’d be great too. It was about being part of the mission.” After earning a degree in Hawaiian Studies and Language from the University of Hawaii in 2018, he got his wings and became the family’s first tanker pilot.

Since returning from flight training in the fall of 2023, Micah has flown the KC-135 Stratotanker, refueling local HIANG aircraft and transient airframes across the Pacific. His career took off just as his father Chris retired, and now he refuels the same F-22s his dad once maintained—a seamless handoff, but in a different capacity. A very busy deployment to Guam and flights to places such as Japan have already marked his logbook. “Flying tankers is such a great lifestyle,” he says. “You travel the world and become family with your crew.”

Micah has never met his grandfather Lawrence, who passed away before he was born, but his career path is forging a connection across generations. Every now and then, Micah passes by black-and-white photos of a twenty-something Lawrence Partika working alongside other legacy aircraft maintainers in the fighter maintenance squadron. Not surprisingly, the resemblance between Micah and his grandfather is striking—eerily similar faces staring across decades.

This bond was deepened in an unexpected way through a gift Lawrence once made. More than 50 years ago, Micah’s grandfather crafted an overly gracious, jest-filled present for a fellow Guardsman and family friend, Lionel Camara. It was a paperweight-sized

emblem of a 2nd Lieutenant emblem, widely recognized as a ‘butter bar.’ The gift playfully celebrated Camara’s transition to the commissioned officer corps, poking fun at his rapid rise through the ranks. Camara, who later became the godfather of Micah’s father Chris, held onto it for decades. When Micah returned from Officer Training School as the first commissioned officer in the family, Camara passed the handcrafted “butter bar” to him, turning a playful gift into a treasured family heirloom.

That full-circle moment wasn’t the only one. On a recent holiday trip, Micah and his father Chris boarded a 203rd ARS tanker together through the Space Available Program, bridging their shared history in the air.

Micah’s excitement for coming to work every day is palpable, especially since the first sight that greets him as he passes the gate entry is the static displays of aircraft—the very same jets his family, from Lawrence to Chris to Andy, has worked on for generations. As he goes about his duty day, it’s common for him to cross paths with many others who worked with his father Chris, making the Partika family name a true fixture of the organization.

For now, Micah said his short, medium, and long-term goals are clear: become an aircraft commander, then an instructor pilot, and finally become ‘that open book of knowledge’ for the next generation of pilots in his squadron. “The squadron has been incredibly generous to me,” he said. “My sole focus right now is on improving myself, striving to grow so that one day I can contribute back to the HIANG just as much as it has enriched my life.”



A FAMILY HEIRLOOM, HAND-CRAFTED BY MICAH'S GRANDFATHER LAWRENCE, DEPICTS A 'BUTTER BAR.' THIS PIECE WAS INITIALLY GIFTED TO LIONEL CAMARA, THE GODFATHER OF LAWRENCE'S SON, UPON HIS FIRST PROMOTION AS A COMMISSIONED OFFICER. NEARLY FIFTY YEARS LATER, LIONEL PASSED DOWN THE HEIRLOOM TO MICAH AFTER HE BECAME THE FIRST OF HIS FAMILY TO GRADUATE OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL.

PENGUIN ENCOUNTERS, ENDLESS SUNSHINE & SPIRITUAL GROWTH FOUND DURING SAFETY NCO'S ANTARCTICA TOUR

Story by **Tech Sgt John Linzmeier**

Master Sgt. Sy Kageyama from the 154th Wing's Safety Office said he never imagined his career would take him to the frozen edge of the world. Yet, in January 2025, he stepped off a ski-equipped LC-130 Skibird onto the ice runway of McMurdo Station, Antarctica, for a 47-day Operation Deep Freeze assignment as the Joint Task Force Safety Manager.

Departing from Christchurch, New

Zealand—the U.S. hub for Antarctic missions — Kageyama arrived at McMurdo, bringing years of experience as a safety professional to one of the most unique missions of his career.

McMurdo Station sits on Ross Island's volcanic rock and is managed by the U.S. National Science Foundation. Housing over 1,200 in summer, it's a hub for science—

glaciology, biology, astrophysics—born from a naval outpost in 1956.

For Kageyama, stepping into this remote outpost meant finding himself in a completely new landscape, a stark contrast to his usual surroundings. Here, he encountered unfamiliar wildlife, such as the iconic penguins that waddle across the icy terrain, adding a sense of wonder to his already extraordinary assignment.

As the 13th Air Expeditionary Group JTF Safety Manager assigned to oversee all multinational and multi service military flight, land and sea operations. One of the taskings was briefing military personnel on Antarctica's hazards—blizzards, crevasses, frostbite—Kageyama ensured safety where advanced medical care was a distant flight away. He helped oversee the mooring of multiple vessels, vessel operations, cargo ship carrying a mobilized pier,

and drilled crews on environmental rules under the Antarctic Treaty: no litter, no wildlife disturbance, preserving a fragile ecosystem.

The Antarctic Summer was in full swing and yielded 24-hour daylight, amplifying the surreal experience of being in a location where few will ever visit.

Beyond his duties, Kageyama seized rare opportunities. He volunteered as the chaplain's assistant throughout his tour, helping isolated members reconnect with their faith, and he also explored Scott's Hut at Cape Evans—a 1911 relic of Robert Falcon Scott's Terra Nova Expedition. Preserved with old equipment from their South Pole journey, it stands as a testament to the team that reached their goal in 1912, only to tragically perish on the return.

Another highlight, he said, was climbing Observation Hill, a 754-foot vantage near McMurdo. At the summit, he encountered a cross honoring Scott's fallen party, set against a one-of-a-kind view.

His efforts didn't go unnoticed. During his tour, Pacific Air Forces commander, Gen. Kevin B. Schneider recognized Kageyama's contributions to safety, stewardship, and support, presenting him with a commander's coin as thanks. On February 24, 2025, Sy departed aboard an C-17 Globemaster II, carrying cherished memories, spiritual insights, and a token of excellence from the world's southernmost continent.



154TH MISSION SUPPORT GROUP READINESS RODEO ENHANCES WARFIGHTING SKILLS

Story by **Staff Sgt. Robert Cabuco**

In an effort to enhance war fighting skills and readiness, the Hawaii Air National Guard, 154th Mission Support Group conducted a comprehensive training exercise over their February 1-2 Drill Weekend at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Base X Training Area.

This two-day event aimed to reinforce tasks learned from Readiness Airman Training and apply Agile Combat Employment competencies, strengthening their ability to practice skills that lie beyond their designated career field.

The initial day of training encompassed critical topics such as base defense,

incident reporting, accountability checks, tactical combat casualty care, communications and explosive ordnance hazards. Participants received instruction on comprehensive Airman fitness, including family readiness and psychological health, and applied it in field training the next day.

"The primary goal of this training is to develop and enhance Airmen's warfighting skills," said Col. Glen Hayase, commander of the 154th MSG. "Our approach is to offer Airmen from across the group an opportunity to learn and practice essential survival and operational skills in an expeditionary environment. Additionally, we aimed to

train for and validate several mission-essential tasks for multiple units, which we accomplished. I am proud of the Airmen who participated, undertook new roles, and stepped out of their comfort zones. I am also very grateful to the team who planned and led the event."

At daybreak, boots stepped onto the designated training area, where the hot, humid, and flat terrain posed unique challenges. The main objective was to deploy to an undisclosed location, secure an operational base, and prepare for the arrival of fighter aircraft and USAF personnel. This included securing the perimeter first, then simulating the establishment of a functional airfield,

and ensuring infrastructure was in place to support sustained operations.

Personnel were tasked with securing the base, defending it from opposition forces, and setting up operations for follow-on forces. The exercise included simulated threats, such as ground assaults and air attacks, to test the participants' readiness and response capabilities.

The service members incorporated a "Hub and Spoke" deployment construct, allowing Airmen to practice securing and operating from a central location while supporting dispersed operational sites.

Participants were challenged to



quickly don protective equipment as they navigated simulated chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats, reinforcing their ability to operate in contaminated environments. The training emphasized the importance of communication, teamwork and preparedness for rapid forward deployment to bare bases. By adhering to the provisions outlined in the operational order, the Group enhanced its capability to deploy swiftly and decisively in support of national objectives.

Chief Master Sgt. Sean Johnson, senior enlisted leader of the 154th MSG, highlighted the importance of adapting to evolving mission requirements. He

noted that the training reinforced critical readiness skills and prepared Airmen for future exercises, where they will tackle new mission-essential tasks and enhance command and control, accountability, and control center operations. The next Rodeo is expected to introduce additional challenges, further strengthening the group's operational capabilities.

The exercise concluded with an after-action brief and feedback session, allowing participants to reflect on their performance and identify areas for improvement.

Lt. Col. Jesse Park, deputy commander of the 154th MSG, highlighted the





challenges and learning opportunities posed by the training scenarios. "The scenarios are designed to be challenging to facilitate learning. Overall, the participants maintained a positive attitude and utilized teamwork to achieve exercise objectives. Moving forward, we will explore ways to enhance the curriculum and provide Airmen consistent opportunities to develop proficiency in 12 [fundamental] Ready Training Areas," Park explained.

The exercise's success stemmed from the strong commitment and skilled coordination

of the planning and execution teams, with vital contributions from the Security Forces Squadron, Logistic Readiness Squadron, Force Support Squadron, Communication Squadron, and Civil Engineering Squadron. In one weekend, Airmen completed extensive training, securing and defending a base under simulated threats while executing critical tasks, greatly enhancing wartime readiness for rapidly establishing and sustaining airfield operations as needed.



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Imagine This...

You're in the middle of your workday, and you notice something—an inefficiency, a challenge, or maybe even a simple tweak that could make life easier for you and your fellow Airmen. You think to yourself, "I know there is a better way."

Now, instead of letting that thought slip away, what if you had a direct line to leadership—a way to turn your idea into real change?

That's exactly what the PONO Proposal (Partners in Ongoing Navigation and Optimization) is all about.

Our team wants to hear from you. Whether it's a small process improvement or a big-picture innovation, your voice has the power to shape the future of our organization. And now, sharing your ideas is easier than ever—just scan the QR code and submit your proposal.

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Because you are the expert in what you do every day. You see the challenges, the opportunities, and the places where we can improve. No one knows the mission from your perspective better than you.

By submitting a proposal, you're not just offering a suggestion—you're taking an active role in making HIANG better. And you won't be alone. A team of subject matter experts and enlisted council members is ready to support you, review your idea, provide mentorship and coaching, and help turn it into action.

The Time is now.

We're in the beta trial period (March 1 – April 6, 2025), fine-tuning our process so every submission gets the attention it deserves. Don't let this opportunity pass—your ideas could make a lasting impact!

So next time you see something that could be improved, don't just think about it—submit it. Scan the QR code, share your idea, and be part of the change.

Together, let's make the 154 Wing and entire HIANG the best it can be!



CMSGT KURT UCHIMURA
154TH WING COMMAND CHIEF

OPTIMIZED

MODERNIZE

PARTNER

OHANA

Strength In Every Season

By Capt Nicholas Love

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up." — Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

As we step into the heart of summer, many of us look forward to a change of pace perhaps a well-earned break, more time with family, or simply enjoying the longer days. Summer invites us to breathe, to reflect, and to reset. But it also brings its own kind of pressure an operational tempo that doesn't always slow down, personal challenges that persist, and the weight of responsibilities we continue to carry.

That's why this season is a timely opportunity to consider what it means to build resilience not just individually, but together.

Ecclesiastes reminds us that strength is found in community. "Two are better than one," the Scripture says, because when one falls, the other is there to help



Nicholas Love

them up. It's a simple truth, but one we often forget in a culture that prizes self-reliance. Real resilience isn't just about pushing through on your own; it's about leaning in, linking arms, and choosing not to walk alone.

The heat of summer can wear us down, but it can also forge something stronger if we let it. When we show up for each other, check in on one another, and take the time to listen, we cultivate the kind of trust that keeps us grounded when life gets heavy. Whether you're a seasoned leader or brand new to the HIANG, you have something to offer and something to receive.

So, this summer, I challenge each of us to be intentional. Strengthen the friendships around you. Look for the quiet signs that someone might be struggling. Offer encouragement, and when you need help, be willing to accept it. Resilience isn't a solo pursuit it's a shared effort, built one conversation, one act of kindness, and one honest moment at a time.

Let's be the kind of team that doesn't just endure the heat but grows stronger because of it. And remember you don't have to face anything alone. Whether you need someone to listen, a word of encouragement, or just a quiet space to reflect, we are here for you.



Sometimes Lemons Are Just Lemons

By Dr. Yumi K. Panui, DSW, LCSW, CSAC

There is an idiom that tells us that we are to take life's difficulties, a sour lemon, and turn it into, lemonade, something better, something sweet and refreshing. But what if, sometimes, a lemon is just a lemon? Ever have one of those days, or a series of days, when life seems to be a sack full of lemons? Could it be that the object lesson is not about making lemonade and more about acknowledging that lemons are sour? Ever blend a whole lemon? It's also bitter.

Life can be painful, we are all prone to thoughts such as doubt, fear, grief, blame, especially when we are distressed. Our thoughts can spin into a cycle because suffering can feel endless. Ever notice how time seems to fly by when you are enjoying something and 5 minutes with a toothache can feel like an eternity? Mental and emotional suffering can feel the same way. The days seem to drag, and every moment can feel excruciating, like a negativity vortex spinning out of control.

Ever notice how easy it is to get sucked into a vortex of negativity? I call negativity a vortex because it has the tendency to consume, to overtake our ability to see beyond our suffering. Sometimes, when the negativity vortex sucks us in, we succumb to thoughts and feelings of anger because we want justice or vindication, someone or something to be responsible, or we become hopeless and condemn ourselves, so we try to avoid. The harder we try to avoid, the more we are consumed.

Reducing the energy that propels it forward, slows the vortex, and

when that energy is removed, the vortex stops. Slowing down and acknowledging the lemons, or that sack full of lemons, might be the first step in getting yourself out of that spinning vortex of negativity. The next step is not about making lemonade because escaping the negative vortex isn't about denying suffering or pretending everything is fine. It's about the relationship we have with the discomfort that is trying to consume.

The goal is not to avoid hardship, the goal is to get through what you are going through as gracefully as possible. Take a moment, engage your feeling(s) by naming it/them, consider the feeling(s) without placing a label (i.e. good/bad), take a deep slow breath - do this several times. Be present in the moment and remove your thoughts from an imagined future of suffering. Give yourself some compassion and remember that you have made it through a 100% of all your past challenges.

When life gives us lemons, we want an elixir that's easy to take, we want to make our lemons taste better. Perhaps those lemons are not a problem to solve. Sometimes things are just sour and bitter, and we are reminded that discomfort is a part of being human. Accepting those lemons is about sitting with difficulties, learning that life disappoints, and it's okay to be uncertain about what to do with all those lemons. Making lemonade out of lemons is wonderful but not every lemon is meant to be lemonade. What are you doing with your lemons?





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.