

445th AW Airmen sharpen survival skills in Key West

By Senior Airman Angela Jackson
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Members of the 445th Airlift Wing participated in a mass water survival and rescue training exercise Nov. 21-22, 2024, in Key West, Florida.

Sixty-five members with the 89th Airlift Squadron, 445th Operations Support Squadron and 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron participated in the coalition exercise that included involvement from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and Key West Police Department.

The 445th Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape team conducted the training that focused on maintaining life on a raft and recovery procedures in the event of a downed aircraft in open water. This allowed the 445th to experience the entire water evacuation process.

According to Master Sgt. Dustin Dobbs, 445th OSS SERE superintendent, the water survival training ensured aircrew and passengers are ready and resilient in adverse situations where open water rescue may be required.

"There are many factors to consider when planning a joint exercise like this," Dobbs said. "The mission objectives, capabilities of all the participating units, available resources and training areas take about six months to a year in advance to coordinate, but co-operating with our partners is a significant aspect of training."

"Although the planning process is complex, building relationships and relying on our joint partners is crucial to mission success," Dobbs continued.

The Navy's involvement included their helicopter Search and Rescue unit; the Coast Guard provided coastal protection; and the Key West Police Department



Senior Airman Angela Jackson

Reservists from the 445th Operations Group wait in a 46-man life raft as Navy rescue divers arrive in a helicopter during water survival training in Key West, Fla., Nov. 22, 2024. The training included U.S. Naval Air Station Key West Search and Rescue, Sector Key West Coast Guard and Key West Police Department.

contributed additional support and safety measures during the operations.

Officer Tyler Getchel, Key West Police Department Marine Unit, agreed that joint exercises like this are beneficial to every organization involved.

"We try to help out as much as we can," Getchel said. "Anything that we can do to keep a good partnership with the groups that come down here is what we try to do. We understand the importance of training

and are glad to help."

Simultaneous to entering the water, students inflated their life preservers, and once in the water, created a human chain to help everyone get to the raft safely. In the raft, the crew established a chain of command to delegate tasks such as bailing water out of the raft. Students also maintained accountability, solved problems and assessed injuries.

"One of the things that we were testing was our on-scene commander's ability to take control of the situation," Dobbs said. "It was crucial for them to be able to signal the C-17, get communications with it, so then the C-17 could communicate to Navy rescue helicopters to come retrieve the students. It was a huge win for us to be able to make sure that we were good on it. We don't get the opportunity very often to exercise that and to be able to go through that checklist."

Once the raft was located by the Navy's helicopter unit, Airmen prepared to be hoisted one at a time out of the raft by strap or basket with assistance from an expert Navy rescue swimmer. Cautiously, each student

445th Airlift Wing highlights 2024 accomplishments

Citizen Airmen of the 445th Airlift Wing began 2024 with a welcome home celebration for nearly 140 Airmen who returned Jan. 4, 2024, from a deployment in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Throughout the year, the wing participated in various exercises to maintain and improve readiness that included Exercises African Lion, Pacific Dagger, Northern Strike, Patriot Medic and Vigilant Elk. Nearly a dozen members deployed to various locations including Germany, Qatar, Spain and Saudi Arabia.

The 445th Airlift Wing provided personnel to support Operations Inherent Resolve, Spartan Shield and Juniper Shield. Additionally, units completed Big Safari and Integrated Munitions Flight missions.

The wing welcomed its new commander, Col. Douglas A. Perry Jr. in June. Leadership from 4th Air Force, Maj. Gen. D. Scott Durham and Chief Master Sgt. Travon Dennis, visited the wing in January and June to

learn about its missions and to recognize Airmen.

The entire wing took a moment to pause in September during the wing's annual family day event. This day was set aside for Airmen and their families to spend time with individual squadrons and have an opportunity to connect with others in the wing.

In November, the wing, with support from the Ohio Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, honored 40 of its employers from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, California and Tennessee during an Employer Appreciation Day.

The wing ended the year with a successful flying hour program. The 445th Operations Group with support from the 445th Maintenance Group flew 719 sorties for a total of 122 missions across the globe to areas including Brazil, Japan, Germany and Spain. Approximately 6.4 million pounds of cargo was transported and 3,111 passengers airlifted in calendar year 2024.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Approximately 140 Citizen Airmen with the 445th Airlift Wing returned home from a two-month deployment Jan. 4, 2024, that began in October 2023. (right) Chief Master Sgt. Travon Dennis, 4th Air Force command chief, March Air Reserve Base, Calif., met with 445th Airlift Wing Airmen and toured wing units during his visit, Jan. 6-7, 2024.



Senior Airman Angela Jackson



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Members of the 445th Chiefs Group form a saber arch for members of the official party and annual award nominees during the wing's annual awards banquet, March 9, 2024. (right) Capt. Sean Conway, 89th Airlift Squadron pilot, explains the capabilities of a C-17 Globemaster III to members of Black Boys in Tech, April 6, 2024.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly



Year in Review: 445th Airlift Wing reflects on 2024



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(left) Maj. Gen. D. Scott Durham, 4th Air Force commander, passes the guidon to Col. Douglas A. Perry Jr., incoming 445th Airlift Wing commander, during the wing's assumption of command ceremony June 1, 2024.



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough

(right) Shanna King, 445th Force Support Squadron Military and Family Readiness director, speaks to 445th Airlift Wing Airmen about available programs and services during the annual 445th Wellness Fair June 2, 2024.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) A C-17 Globemaster III is loaded with mock patients during a multi-unit mass casualty exercise, Aug. 3, 2024. (right) Tech. Sgt. Trey Naber, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron AE technician, prepares the oxygen line aboard a C-17 Globemaster III during Patriot Medic 2024 at Fort McCoy Army Airfield, Aug. 10, 2024.



Tech. Sgt. Timothy Leddick



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Airman Gracia Halimoya-Musa, left, 445th Force Support Squadron fitness assessment cell specialist, and Senior Airman Samuel Shaffer, 445th FSS services journeyman, provide tactical combat casualty care to a simulated patient during Exercise Vigilant Elk, Oct. 7, 2024. (right) Members of the 87th Aerial Port Squadron deliver \$1,000 in monetary donations and \$2,500 in toys to the Dayton Children's Hospital, Ohio, Dec. 13, 2024. This marks the event's 40th year.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly



SERE from page 1

was raised to the hovering helicopter. Airmen were pulled aboard the helicopter once they were in arms reach where they were suspended approximately 80 feet in the air.

Staff Sgt. David Wilson, 445th OSS intelligence specialist, believed the water survival training was beneficial and prepared him for real-life rescue scenarios. He described his rescue experience in the basket hoist.

"When it was my turn to be hoisted, it was loud and there was water splashing in my face," Wilson said. "I wasn't scared, but it was intense for a few seconds while I maneuvered my body into the basket. I knew at that point if I followed the directions of the rescue swimmer it would go smoothly."

Once on the helicopter, students with simulated injuries received medical attention from Navy crew



Senior Airman Angela Jackson

Reservists from the 445th Airlift Wing chain up and swim toward a 46-man life raft during water survival training in Key West, Fla., Nov. 22, 2024

members. Students were then transported to an airfield and boarded a C-17 for further medical treatment from aeromedical individuals standing ready to conduct that operation.

"It was excellent training," Dobbs said. "We had some hiccups giving us opportunities to learn, and that's what we're here to do. It is important for the 445th to participate in joint exercises like this because it allows us to make mistakes and learn those lessons which supports us in perfecting our craft which leads to our mission success."

Airmen from the 87th Aerial Port Squadron and 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron were on hand to provide logistical and medical support as needed, bringing the total number of participants to 80.

Wing welcomes new ASTS, LRS commanders



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Col. Douglas A. Perry Jr., 445th Airlift Wing commander, passes the guidon to incoming 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron commander, Col. Michael Policastro, during an assumption of command ceremony in Hangar 4026, Dec. 7, 2024.



Senior Airman Angela Jackson

(right) Col. Robert Wengerter, 445th Mission Support Group commander, passes the guidon to the incoming 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron commander, Maj. William Harris, during an assumption of command ceremony held in the Civil Engineer Bay of building 101, Dec. 7, 2024.



Around the wing ...



Senior Airman Angela Jackson

(left) Col. Robert Wengerter, 445th Mission Support Group commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Michelle Mariacher, 445th MSG senior enlisted leader, stand next to their award winning holiday decorated door. The 445th Airlift Wing held a holiday door decoration contest, Dec. 8, 2024. MSG captured first place in the contest.



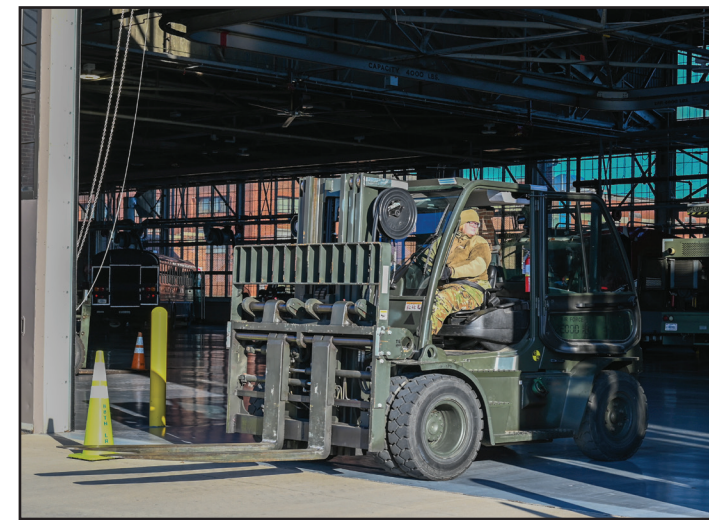
Senior Airman Angela Jackson

(right) Senior Airman Shantel Scott, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron supply management apprentice, cleans toys during the Rising 6 community service project at the Ronald McDonald House in Dayton Ohio, Dec. 8, 2024. In addition to volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, the Rising 6 also donated toys and clothes to the organization. The Dayton Ronald McDonald House, the 16th in the U.S., began with seven rooms, expanded to 14, and will grow to 42 rooms by early 2025.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Quarterly award winners from the 445th Airlift Wing pose with 89th Airlift Squadron pilots before take-off on a C-17 Globemaster III at Wright-Patterson, Air Force Base, Dec. 8, 2024. The winners were awarded an incentive flight for their outstanding job performance.



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough

(right) Master Sgt. Kira Sanders, 445th Operations Support Squadron support staff, operates a Hyster forklift as part of training conducted by the 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dec. 8, 2024. Airmen involved practiced basic maneuvers with the forklift.



Right place, right time

By Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Being in the right place at the right time and talking to the right people can change an Airman’s path when least expected.

That seemed to be the case for Airman 1st Class David Lopez, 87th Aerial Port Squadron cargo apprentice, when he applied to attend the 2024 annual Student Veterans of American Leadership Institute conference.

Lopez, a student at Shawnee State University and president of the school’s SVA chapter, was one of 80 out of over 200,000 applicants who attended the conference in Washington, D.C.

The SVA is an organization that promotes academic, professional and personal development of veterans in higher education through chapter programs and services. Lopez said there are around 750,000 members in SVA all over the U.S. and two other countries.

“I hesitated when applying,” Lopez said. “I didn’t know if I’d be able to get through the selection process. When I got the acceptance email two days later, I was in shock that I got it.”

In late October 2024, Lopez was flown to Washington, D.C. where he spent the next four days attending the course and exploring the nation’s capital.

“It was phenomenal to say the least,” Lopez said. “They showed us things that we didn’t even think of and things we didn’t even know were possible. The whole course was about learning how to become a good leader, how to lead, being a part of a group and being an effective contributor in a group.”

In lieu of presenting questions to Congress, attendees were given the chance to present their questions to higher up members of the Department of Defense, members of the Biden administration and some indi-



Airman 1st Class David Lopez, 87th Aerial Port Squadron cargo apprentice, poses for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol in October 2024.



Courtesy Photos

Jared Lyon, president and CEO of Student Veterans of America, addresses 80 SVA members in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in October 2024.

viduals from the Department of Education.

However, due to some issues, Lopez and other students were unable to participate in this portion of the conference and passed along their questions to other students.

Lopez was presented with the opportunity to showcase the flexibility of Airmen and decided to coordinate a tour of the National Gallery of Art by reaching out to a fellow Airman he knew in the area who is a Capitol Police officer.

The officer was not on duty at the time, so he introduced them to another officer who took them around the area, hooked them up with challenge coins and some other swag.

Lopez said the highlight of the tour was a stop at the Library of Congress where the officer took them in an elevator which took them into the dome of the building.

“It was a phenomenal view,” Lopez said. “You could see the entire D.C. area. You could see the Pentagon, the Capitol, the Washington Monument, the White House, Cathedrals, everything. It was amazing to say the least.”

Lopez said the combination of the stellar training and the amazing tour really made up for him not being able to present his questions in person. He missed out on doing some of the exciting things planned but still stumbled into a great overall experience.

“My roommate and I did kind of a self-study of, ‘What are the chances?’” Lopez said. “What are the chances of getting into the Leadership Institute? You had to serve in the military just to get in. Then, you had to apply and be one of the 80 selected. After being picked, what are the odds you end up at the Library of Congress enjoying a breathtaking view? It was just too cool.”

Promotions

Senior Master Sergeant
Maggie Fazzini-Malidai, FSS

Master Sergeant
Maggie Kim, ASTS
Amanda McMillan, AES
Ashley Whitt, FSS

Technical Sergeant
Sara Bennett, OSS
Jennifer Brann, AES

Staff Sergeant
David Devore, 87 APS
Alexander Gill, MXS
Stephanie Gillispie, MXS
Christopher Landrum, AMDS
William Martin, 87 APS
Patrick McClain, OSS
Shawn Parks, 87 APS
Cameron Seibertreed, AMDS

Jorden Terry, AMXS
Chester Williamson, CES

Senior Airman
Alyssa Barga, CES
Dylan Budd, CES
Trent Hutchison, SFS
Gregory Knoop, AMXS
Adedamola Ojo, MXS
Heaven White, 87 APS
Parker Zimmerman, SFS

Airman First Class
Ryan Connor, 87 APS
Danny Corbett, ASTS
Zachary Ewald, AMXS
Fuja Khabatari, SFS

Airman
Landen Krall, AES
Francisco Garcia-Arellano, 87 APS

Newcomers

Capt. Tanisha Silva,

News Briefs

ASTS
Capt Breanna Swartout, LRS
Capt Tiffany Trivett, LRS
1 Lt Hannah Hobart, ASTS
MSGt Nicole Camarata, MSG
TSgt Phillip Myles, AMXS
SSgt Jacob Cooper, MXS
SSgt Kalib Murthy, SFS
SSgt Marquise Riley, OSS
SrA Marco Olah, MXS
SrA Keaton Rider, AES
A1C Rene Forghab, 87 APS
A1C Tshimuanga Kabongo, CES
A1C Joseph Saa, LRS
A1C Jayla Tremble, ASTS
A1C Parker Zimmerman, FSS
Amn Mia Soliz, AMDS

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SAVE THE DATE

Annual awards banquet

The 445th Airlift Wing Annual Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, April 5, at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The reception is slated to begin at 6 p.m. and the program at 7 p.m.

A medallion ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. to formally recognize all nominees. Family members and leadership are invited to attend. More details will be emailed to nominees.

The awards banquet will recognize those selected for Airman, NCO, senior NCO, company grade offi-

cer, first sergeant, field grade officer, recruiter, honor guard member, civilian (category I GS-09 and below/ category II, GS-11 and above), spouse, youth and squadron of the year. The winner of each category will be announced at the banquet.

The cost of the event is \$55 for adults; \$25 for children 6 to 10; and children 5 and under are free. Method of payment to be determined.

Award Nominations being accepted

Nominations for Airman, NCO, senior NCO, first sergeant and first sergeant council are due no later than close of business Jan. 12. Packages should be emailed to 445aw.ccc.res@us.af.mil. Please refer to previous guidance for more details. Contact Chief Master Sgt. Gordon Wager at gordon.wager.1@us.af.mil if you have questions.

Nominations are currently being accepted for company grade officer, field grade officer, civilian, spouse, youth and squadron of the year. Nominations should be submitted on an Air Force Form 1206 to 445aw.pa2@us.af.mil. Individual award packages must include a photograph. If a photograph is needed or if you have questions, please contact the public affairs office at 937-257-5784. Submissions are due no later than close of business Feb. 28.



SPOTLIGHT



Rank/Name: Senior Airman Jackie Hwang

Unit: 445th Security Forces Squadron

Duty Title: Fire team member

Hometown: West Carrollton, Ohio

Civilian Job: Full-time student

Education: Associate degree in criminal justice from the Community College of the Air Force. Cur-

rently pursuing a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from Wright State University.

Hobbies: Basketball, eating, traveling, board games

Career goal: To serve as a commissioned officer in the Air Force and inspire other enlisted members to further their education, in order to cultivate their professional and personal goal. And continue to be approachable and friendly, be an example as someone who never falters from any challenges.

What do I like about working with the 445th?

Never have I worked with a unit that is so helpful and caring. As soon as I arrived and was asked about my goals, they immediately showed interest in helping me achieve them. Every leader I have had the chance to work with has demonstrated what it means to be a leader, and every peer I have had the chance to join forces with has been knowledgeable and insightful. It did not take long for me to find a word that describes the 445th: TEAM!

Why did I join the Air Force? Prior to enlisting, I was unambitious and passionless. I had barely any self-discipline and didn't have what it takes to achieve my goals and dreams, so I decided to do something drastically different. I told myself I would never join the military, but I did to get out of my comfort zone and learn discipline.



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