

Operation "Arctic Aloha": Strategic Deployment of the 11th Airborne Division from Alaska to Hawaii

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JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — In an unprecedented demonstration of strategic mobility and intercontinental power projection, paratroopers from the **11th Airborne Division** conducted a joint airborne assault operation (*Joint Forcible Entry Operation*) directly into Hawaii. The highlight marked the division's participation in the *Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC) Rotation 27-01*.

Dubbed **“Arctic Aloha”**, the mission saw Alaska-based units depart from *Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)* on a nonstop flight of nearly 3,000 miles (about 4,800 km) across the Pacific, culminating in an operational jump over Hawaii.

Flight planning and In-Flight Rigging: preserving combat effectiveness

One of the most complex and critical technical aspects of the entire operation was **in-flight rigging**. For a flight of this scale — lasting about eight hours — having paratroopers don their parachutes and full combat equipment before taking off from Alaska would have subjected the soldiers to unsustainable physical strain, forcing them to travel under the crushing weight of their loads for the entire route.

- **How it works:** Inside C-17 aircraft in flight, paratroopers rigged, adjusted, and conducted stringent safety checks on their parachutes and heavy equipment at altitude.
- **The tactical advantage:** This technique enabled the troops to preserve their physical endurance, landing fresh, alert, and immediately ready to enter the *close battle*.

  «This exercise gives us the opportunity to validate our ability to deploy and project strategic power over long distances», said **Col. Matthew Adamczyk**, Deputy Commanding Officer for Operations of the 11th Airborne Division. *«We can project a battalion task force or larger from Alaska, conduct in-flight rigging, and insert directly into the Pacific AOR to secure critical infrastructure in support of follow-on operations»*.

Global synchronization: the in-flight link-up with Japan

The mission required an extraordinary level of multi-echelon and international coordination. While the main body departed from JBER in Alaska, the division conducted an **in-flight link-up** with one of the battalion's infantry companies arriving from Japan over the Pacific.

This second contingent of troops had just completed the joint Japanese-U.S. exercise **Operation Keen Sword**. The two force streams merged in flight, coordinating seamlessly to land in Hawaii as a single, cohesive battalion task force ready for action.

Command from the Sky and the *How the Army Fights* Doctrine

For the first time on such a large scale, commanders successfully tested **in-route mission command**.

As the C-17 crossed the skies over the Pacific Ocean, the division maintained a **constant, uninterrupted digital link** with *I Corps*, headquarters of *U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)*, and the joint forces monitoring the operation from *Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam* in Hawaii.

The operation represents the practical field application of the Army's new land warfare strategic guidance, **"How the Army Fights"**, which is structured around four fundamental pillars:

1. **Convergence (Convergence):** I Corps coordinated space, cyber, and electronic warfare assets in real time to blind the simulated enemy.
2. **Strike (Attack):** Theater forces and the 25th Infantry Division conducted precision strikes to neutralize enemy air defenses.
3. **Close Battle (Close Combat):** Once conditions had been set, paratroopers from the 11th Airborne Division jumped in to seize key infrastructure.
4. **Endurance (Endurance):** Sustaining operational pressure and logistical support on contested ground.



Strategic Deterrence: From the Arctic to the Pacific (and Back)

The rapid shift from Alaska's freezing temperatures to Hawaii's tropical climate and island terrain highlights the unique flexibility of the **"Arctic Angels"**, the U.S. Army's only airborne division specializing in Arctic environments and the Pacific theater.

- **Global capability:** *«This test demonstrates our ability to rapidly project credible power in archipelagic environments»*, Adamczyk stressed. *«Because we are the Arctic airborne division, we can operate in the Pacific AOR or fly over the pole and be in Northern Europe*

within eight to nine hours».

The exercise brought together approximately **10,000 service members** from the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps, along with international partners and allies, integrating with the *2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team* of the *25th Infantry Division*.

Next Steps: Toward February's Extreme Cold

With the operational phase in Hawaii complete, paratroopers from the 11th Airborne Division will have no respite. They will return to Alaska for a new airborne assault into the training areas at *Richardson Training Area*.

This intensive training cycle serves as crucial preparation for the upcoming **JPMRC 27-02**, scheduled for February at the *Donnelly Training Area* in Alaska’s interior, where the 2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) will face extreme conditions, with temperatures regularly dropping to **40 degrees below zero**.

Operation "Arctic Aloha" thus confirms the division as a lethal, highly survivable strategic force capable of delivering a rapid and flexible response in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.