



**NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND
AND
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND**



NOV 29 2024

General Gregory M. Guillot
Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM
250 Vandenberg Street Ste B016
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Senator Ted Budd
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Budd:

Thank you for your letter dated 8 October 2024 concerning the unprecedented devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina.

Due to the uncertain track of Hurricane Helene, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) pre-positioned assets – requested by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – across multiple states along the storm's projected pathway. USNORTHCOM personnel and assets were prepared to respond across impacted states prior to being requested and based on FEMA assessments.

At FEMA's and North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper's request, the DoD integrated into local, state, and federal emergency responders' efforts to help the impacted citizens of North Carolina. Subsequently, nearly 1,800 active-duty military members enabled FEMA and the National Guard to reach the hardest hit areas as quickly as possible.

I am proud of the fact that DoD assets were requested, authorized, sourced, and ready for tasking within 24 hours and ahead of all established timelines for Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) or any other operational deployment. The attached pages are responsive to the specific questions you posed in your letter.

Senator, thank you for your support for the men and women of NORAD and USNORTHCOM.

Sincerely,

GREGORY M. GUILLOT
General, USAF
Commander

Attachment 1

1. What dates and times were requests for assistance (RFAs) made by FEMA, the Governor of North Carolina, and/or NCNG and what were the specific requests?

(U) In response to emergencies and disasters, Department of Defense (DoD) support requires the following: (1) a request for assistance from the state to FEMA; and (2) a mission assignment from the requesting entity (in the case of Hurricane Helene, FEMA was the requesting entity) detailing what support is needed and where (i.e., what the requested forces are asked to do, such as route clearance, search and rescue, etc.).

(U) USNORTHCOM received eleven FEMA mission assignments (MAs) regarding Federal support to North Carolina. They were as follows:

| MA/RFA# | Description | Supporting Info | Requested By | Date Received |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-03 | DCO/E | Request activation of Region 4 Defense Coordinating Official/Element | FEMA (Region 4) | 23-Sep (1552EDT) |
| 3617EM-NC-DOD-OPS-01 | High Water Vehicles | 30x H/W Vehicles (1x Truck Co) | FEMA (Region 4) | 27-Sep (1728EDT) |
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-09 | Rotary Wing Support | 18x Utility Aviation Lt/Med/Hvy lift helicopters equipped for recon, SAR (hoist capable) MEDEVAC | FEMA (REGION 4) | 28-Sep (0952EDT) |
| 3617EM-NC-DOD-OPS-02 | Command and Control (C2) Capability | Est C2 for HWV and R/W Operations. 1x JTF-CS C2 team with TF-51 augmentation for air ops (21x pax) | FEMA (Region 4) | 28-Sep (1356EDT) |
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-04 | General Purpose Troops | 1000x General Purpose Troops to deliver support and commodities to impacted communities <i>*See note on OPS-07 below</i> | FEMA (Region 4) | 1-Oct (1811EDT) ¹ |
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-05 | Rotary Wing Support | State of North Carolina is requesting Light/Medium rotary lift of commodities, personnel, or equipment | State Request (NC) | 1-Oct (2003EDT) |
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-06 | Rotary SAR Support | State of North Carolina is requesting Up to 4x SAR capable RW, with Para-Rescue Tm's & C2 | State Request (NC) | 3-Oct (1822EDT) |

¹ Note: FEMA requested DOD support via a Mission Assignment on October 1, and completed final approval by the Comptroller to obligate funding on October 2. This did not delay DOD's ability to begin supporting missions.

| MA/RFA# | Description | Supporting Info | Requested By | Date Received |
|------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-07 | Gen Purpose Troops | 1500x General Purpose Troops to deliver support and commodities to impacted communities. <i>** OPS-04 increased from 1,000 to 1,500 and became OPS-07</i> | State Request (NC) | 3-Oct (1901EDT) ² |
| 4827-NC-DOD-OPS-08 | Visual Information/ PA | Visual information and mass communication specialists | FEMA (Region 4) | 7-Oct (1902EDT) |
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-USAF-01* | CAP | Damage Assessment | FEMA (Region 4) | 30-Sep (1015EDT) |
| 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-10* | C2 Capability | Establish an ARNORTH C2 and Sustainment element/structure to manage and coordinate DoD assets responding to Hurricane Helene | FEMA (Region 4) | 8-Oct (2212EDT) |

2. What dates and times were PTDOs issued to XVIII Airborne Corps, or any other active-duty units or personnel, assigned for Hurricane Helene response? Please provide a copy of such orders or official correspondence related to such PTDOs.

(U) FEMA is the lead federal agency responsible for coordinating and providing federal assistance to state and local authorities for declared disasters. All active-duty units or personnel assigned for Hurricane Helene response were ordered to deploy once sourced. USNORTHCOM forces were prepared to respond across states in the area of impact if requested based on assessments. Additionally, USNORTHCOM coordinated extensively with FEMA, the Joint Staff, and the military services to have active-duty forces pre-positioned prior to requests.

(U) Active-duty forces involved in Hurricane Helene response efforts provide support requested under a number of FEMA mission assignments. The active-duty forces were organized into two task forces: one providing support from the air and sourced from multiple locations to provide search-and-rescue capabilities as well as movement for commodities and personnel, and a ground task force based out of Fort Liberty, North Carolina moved to locations in western North Carolina to assist with emergency route clearance and commodity distribution.

(U) On 28 September, FEMA requested the Department of Defense provide 18 helicopters to support both FEMA missions and requests from impacted states. The Secretary of Defense authorized the sourcing of these helicopters on the same day (28 September). The helicopters

² Based upon the State's request, FEMA and DOD began planning for additional General Purpose Troops on October 3. The White House announced these additional troops would begin moving into Western NC October 6.

were consolidated at Fort Liberty and ready for tasking the same day, 28 September. They flew their first missions on 1 October, assisting in surveying the impacted area. They began moving commodities at the request of North Carolina on 3 October, having moved from Fort Liberty to Asheville.

(U) On 2 October, as part of this airlift support mission, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade aircraft began operating from Western North Carolina, in the vicinity of Asheville, to airlift commodities to isolated and impacted areas. The active-duty Army helicopter forces, comprised of 76 personnel, remained in Asheville conducting commodity airlift missions until mission completion.

(U) After initial assessments had been conducted, FEMA identified a need for additional capabilities to clear routes and deliver commodities. Between 1-3 October, 1,000 ground troops were requested by FEMA, authorized by the Secretary of Defense, sourced from the Army to USNORTHCOM, and ready for tasking within 24 hours and ahead of established timelines. During the 36-hour period:

- (U) FEMA requested the Department of Defense provide up to “1,000 General Purpose Troops” to provide support to the region impacted by Hurricane Helene.
- (U) Consistent with President Biden’s direction on 2 October, the Secretary of Defense authorized the sourcing of troops on 1 October. The Joint Staff sourced troops from the Army, and U.S. Northern Command received command of the approximately 1,000 XVIII Airborne Corps soldiers and associated equipment.
- (U) Commander, U.S. Northern Command appointed the dual status commander,³ Army National Guard Brigadier General (BG) Wes Morrison, in accordance with the Secretary of Defense’s authorization and direction. The dual status commander (DSC) is permitted to simultaneously command state and federal forces, improving unity of effort and ensuring a coordinated response to an emergency or major disaster within the U.S.
- (U) USNORTHCOM directed an advance party of approximately 125 soldiers to Hickory, North Carolina in anticipation of receiving specific tasking from North Carolina. Upon arriving in Hickory, USNORTHCOM transferred tactical control to the DSC, BG Wes Morrison, a practice that continued with each subsequent group of soldiers deployed to Western North Carolina. These soldiers conducted route clearance and commodity distribution tasks.

(U) In response to Hurricane Helene, assigned and allocated forces were activated and immediately ordered to deploy under Operational Control (OPCON) of USNORTHCOM upon receipt of valid requests. Forces were not employed until the required Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) MA request and Mission Assignment Tasking Order (MATO) were received from FEMA.

(U) When requests for assistance or mission assignments either exceeded USNORTHCOM’s assigned or allocated capacity, USNORTHCOM submitted a Request for Forces (RFF) to the Joint Staff in accordance with established procedures.

(U) The Army sourced the 1,000 General Purpose Troops and USNORTHCOM was prepared to employ the forces prior to receipt of a DFA or MATO.

³ While active-duty military forces are under the ultimate command and control of the President as Commander-in-Chief, National Guard forces remain under the command and control of their state or territorial governor unless called into federal service. Both groups can be used in defense support of civil authority operations. When both active-duty and National Guard personnel are used in response to an incident within the state, DOD may appoint a dual-status commander with the consent of the governor.

(U) On 1 October at 6:11 p.m. EDT, USNORTHCOM received MA 4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-04 from FEMA requesting 1,000 General Purpose Troops, exceeding USNORTHCOM's DSCA assigned or allocated forces. In response to the MA, on 1 October at 8:49 p.m. EDT, USNORTHCOM submitted an RFF requesting two battalion sized elements of 500 general purpose troops. On 1 October at 11:09 p.m. EDT, the Secretary of Defense approved sourcing the Infantry Battalion Task Force from Fort Liberty, so long as North Carolina wanted to receive the support. On 2 October at 4:07 a.m. EDT, the Joint Staff allocated to USNORTHCOM the 1,000 General Purpose Troops in support of the MA. On 2 October at 3:45 p.m. EDT, U.S. Army's Forces Command (FORSCOM)/XVIII Airborne Corps placed the 1,000 Soldiers on a 24-hour PTDO to deploy when directed by USNORTHCOM.

(U) On 3 October at 6:00 a.m. EDT, the sourced unit within the XVIII Airborne Corps, the 20th Engineer Brigade/ 27th Engineer Battalion, was ready to deploy, and per USNORTHCOM order, the advance party departed Fort Liberty at 8:00 a.m. for Hickory, NC in anticipation of a DFA from North Carolina. On 3 October at 7:01 p.m. EDT, USNORTHCOM received the state of North Carolina DFA (4827DR-NC-DOD-OPS-07) for 1,000 General Purpose Troops to deliver support and commodities to impacted communities. On 3 October at 9:00 p.m. EDT, USNORTHCOM received a verbal Mission Assignment Tasking Order (MATO) 01 to begin initial movement. On 4 October at 2:12 p.m. EDT, USNORTHCOM received MATO 03 tasking emergency route clearance and commodity distribution in the vicinity of Marion, North Carolina. On 5 October at 4:20 p.m. EDT, North Carolina concurred via email with a request to amend the DFA and increase the number of general-purpose troops from 1,000 to no more than 1,500.

(U) Between 4-7 October, active-duty forces were ready to support requests from FEMA and the North Carolina National Guard. During this time frame, active-duty forces steadily moved into the impacted areas and ultimately reached approximately 1,450 personnel. As forces arrived, they began relief efforts. Although ready to deploy before requested, due to capacity challenges in Western North Carolina staging locations, active-duty forces were incrementally deployed from Fort Liberty and Fort Campbell at the DSC's request as additional bed-down space in the vicinity of Marion, NC was contracted and prepared.

3. What military services have provided active-duty forces to NORTHCOM for Hurricane Helene response and what types of units or personnel were activated?

(U) Active-duty forces involved in Hurricane Helene response efforts provide support requested under a number of FEMA mission assignments. The active-duty forces were organized into two task forces: one providing support from the air and sourced from multiple locations to provide search-and-rescue capabilities as well as movement for commodities and personnel, and a ground task force based out of Fort Liberty, North Carolina moved to locations in western North Carolina to assist with emergency route clearance and commodity distribution.

(U) During Hurricane Helene response, multiple services, as well as combatant commands, provided active-duty forces in support. Specifically, the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, USTRANSCOM, and USCYBERCOM provided forces of multiple types:

| Service Provider | Asset Provided | Date N&NC Received OPCON |
|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| U.S. Army | Defense Coordinating Official/Element (Region 4) | 23 Sep 24 |
| | Light Composite Truck Company consisting of 30 High Water Vehicles, 268 personnel | 29 Sep 24 |
| | Eight Light / Medium Rotary Wing Aircraft, 70 personnel | 29 Sep 24 |
| | Three Battalion-Sized General-Purpose Units, approximately 1,500 personnel total | 02 Oct 24/ 06 Oct 20 |
| | One Engineer Brigade Headquarters, 200 personnel | 06 Oct 24 |
| | One Public Affairs Detachment, 4 personnel | 10 Oct 24 |
| U.S. Air Force | Three Search and Rescue (SAR) Helicopters, 87 personnel | 24 Sep 24 |
| | Personal Recovery (PR) Team, 14 personnel | 24 Sep 24 |
| | Air and Space Expeditionary Group, 16 personnel | 24 Sep 24 |
| | PR Fixed Wing / Air-Refueling aircraft, 52 personnel | 02 Oct 24 |
| | One Religious Support Team, 2 personnel | 08 Oct 24 |
| U.S. Navy | Four Medium / Heavy Rotary Wing Aircraft, 176 personnel | 29 Sep 24 |
| | Six Light / Medium Rotary Wing Aircraft, 184 personnel | 29 Sep 24 |
| USCYBERCOM | Combat Camera Team (Public Affairs support), 7 personnel | 01 Oct 24 |
| USTRANSCOM | Joint Planning Support Element (JPSE), 8 personnel | 08 Oct 24 |
| | Communications Detachment, 8 personnel | 08 Oct 24 |

4. What dates and times were such forces assigned to NORTHCOM for Hurricane Helene response?

(U) USNORTHCOM received the allocation of forces from the Military Services and other Combatant Commands in order to execute the DSCA mission as detailed in the "Date N&NC Received OPCON" column of the table for the answer to question 3 above. This column

identifies when Commander, USNORTHCOM accepted the forces and exercised Operational Control (OPCON) of those forces via published order.

5. What time on October 2nd was Brigadier General Charles Morrison officially assigned as the DSC for North Carolina?

(U) On 30 September, North Carolina Governor Cooper consented to BG Charles Morrison as DSC.⁴ On 1 October, Secretary Austin contingently authorized the DSC on the condition that CDRUSNORTHCOM determines: "1) Federal military forces that would be under the command of the Combatant Commander have been directed to support civil authorities in the response to Tropical Cyclone Helene in North Carolina; 2) North Carolina National Guard forces have been directed to support civil authorities in the response to Tropical Cyclone Helene in North Carolina; and 3) Consistent with condition #1, determines that there is an operational requirement for a DSC and assigns forces to that DSC in order to fulfill a Federal mission requirement."

(U) With rotary wing helicopters under USNORTHCOM's operational control and ground military personnel beginning movement (meeting condition #1, as conditions #2 and #3 already were met), General Guillot appointed BG Morrison at 8:37 a.m. EDT on 2 October. At that time, BG Morrison was officially assigned as the DSC for North Carolina.

6. What dates and times were active-duty forces assigned by NORTHCOM to the DSC and/or in support of FEMA?

(U) Commander, USNORTHCOM delegated tactical control of rotary wing forces to the DSC on 2 October.

7. What date and time was the advanced echelon of ground forces ordered to initiate movement from Fort Liberty and conduct operations, by who, to where, and what for?

(U) On 3 October at 8:00 a.m. EDT, USNORTHCOM directed an advance party of approximately 125 XVIII Airborne Corps soldiers to Hickory, NC, ahead of request but in anticipation of receiving specific tasking from North Carolina officials. Upon their arrival in Hickory, Commander, USNORTHCOM authorized the DSC to exercise tactical control of those soldiers, a practice that continued with each subsequent group of soldiers deployed to Western North Carolina. North Carolina requested "General Purpose Troops" for the specific duties of emergency road clearing, emergency debris removal, and commodity distribution. The forces were directed to arrive on 4 October in western North Carolina.

8. What date and time was Task Force Castle ordered to initiate movement from Fort Liberty and conduct operations, by who, to where, and what for?

(U) On 3 October at 8:00 a.m. EDT, in anticipation of the receipt of a MATO from FEMA, TF Castle's initial forces (125 soldiers) deployed from Fort Liberty, NC, to the forward staging areas of Winston-Salem NG Armory and Hickory NG Armory, to provide emergency route clearance and commodity distribution. A verbal MATO was issued by Integration Branch FEMA Region 4

⁴ While active-duty military forces are under the ultimate command and control of the President as Commander-in-Chief, National Guard forces remain under the command and control of their state or territorial governor unless called into federal service. Both groups can be used in defense support of civil authority operations. When both active-duty and National Guard personnel are used in response to an incident within the state, DOD may appoint a dual-status commander with the consent of the governor.

to USNORTHCOM on 3 October at 9:00 p.m. EDT via email published in Department of Defense, Defense Support of Civil Authorities, Automated System DDASS. Subsequently, on 4 October, at 7:00 a.m. EDT, the remaining elements of TF Castle (375 soldiers) departed Fort Liberty, NC, to link up with initial forces in Hickory. With the arrival of these 500 active-duty personnel, both Armories reached capacity.

(U) Consequently, the NC National Guard contracted a camping space near Marion, NC, to accommodate 500 Soldiers from Fort Liberty, NC, as well as the remaining inbound 500 active-duty forces from Fort Campbell, KY.

9. What dates and times were the remainder of the previously authorized 1,000 active-duty forces ordered to initiate movement and conduct operations, by who, to where, and what for?

(U) The DSC held movement of the 500 Fort Campbell soldiers until the capacity at the Marion camping space bed-down location was established. On 5 October, the DSC requested the remaining active-duty forces incrementally initiate movement from Fort Campbell, KY, to Marion, NC as campground capacity increased. 185 personnel traveled by air and arrived in Marion on 5 October. 366 personnel traveled by ground with equipment and remained overnight in Greenville, TN awaiting DSC clearance to proceed to Marion. Between 5-7 October, the remaining Soldiers from Fort Campbell were incrementally deployed to Marion at the DSC's request, as conditions in Marion permitted, and immediately began relief operations. The total active-duty forces in the impacted area during these dates are as follows: Oct. 5 – 685; Oct. 6 – 885; Oct. 7 – 1,054.

10. What dates and times were additional active-duty planning staff, information collection analysts, and advanced technological assets provided by NORTHCOM or assigned forces to improve the DSC's situational awareness and C2 capabilities? What specific advanced technological assets were provided?

(U) On 7 October, USNORTHCOM obtained FAA Certification of Authorization approval for U.S. Army teams to employ their organic sUAS to provide Electro-Optical/Infrared information in support of emergency management responders in Hurricane Helene affected areas. The available sUAS for Hurricane Helene included: Skydio X2D, Parrot Anafi, Vantage Robotics Vesper, PDWC100, FlightWave Edge 130, and FLIR BlackHawk.

11. Please provide a copy of all mission assignments issued for active-duty forces to support FEMA and/or the NCNG.

(U) Pursuant to Section 1707 of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 116-92), the Department is required to transmit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives copies of such Requests for Assistance. Per your request, attached are the FEMA Hurricane Helene MAs received by USNORTHCOM.

12. What authorities does NORTHCOM have to immediately provide disaster response when civilian authorities are unavailable or incapable of providing RFAs?

(U) Under DoD policy as approved by the Secretary of Defense, all Federal military commanders, Heads of DoD components, and/or responsible DoD civilian officials have the authority to immediately respond to disasters in response to a request from a competent civilian authority. This response authority is called "Immediate Response Authority," under DoD policy

and authorizes a DoD response to requests for assistance from civilian authorities under imminently serious conditions and if time does not permit approval from a higher authority. DoD officials may provide an immediate response by temporarily employing the resources under their immediate control, subject to any supplemental direction provided by higher headquarters, to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage within the United States.

(U) Immediate Response Authority does not permit actions that would subject civilians to the use of military power that is regulatory, prescriptive, or compulsory. An immediate response shall end when the necessity giving rise to the response is no longer present (e.g. when there are sufficient resources available from State, local, and other Federal agencies to respond adequately and that agency or department has initiated response activities.). Absent a specific request for assistance from a competent civilian authority, DoD commanders are generally not authorized to respond.

(U) The Commander, USNORTHCOM may deploy pre-identified assets and request additional assets from the Secretary of Defense in advance of a request for assistance from a state, as conducted in this case, but DoD's ability to respond is ultimately predicated on a state or other competent civilian authority's request.

13. In the event a Governor or Dual Status Commander is unavailable, incapable, or slow to provide command and control (C2) of assigned active-duty forces following an RFA, what legal authorities does the NORTHCOM Commander have to deploy or provide C2 of active-duty forces in the continental United States for disaster response?

(U) In cases where the state does not consent to a DSC, or a decision has been made that a DSC is not necessary, a Title-10 commander under the direction of the USNORTHCOM Commander would be authorized to command Title-10 forces engaged in the state at FEMA's request or the state's request under an approved Mission Assignment.

14. In the event of a conventional attack on the United States by a nation state, what legal authorities and capabilities does the NORTHCOM Commander have to deploy aerial and ground forces and provide C2 of those forces in homeland defense efforts, including the protection of military installations and critical infrastructure?

(U) In the event of a conventional attack on the United States by a nation state, the Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM has the authorities and Command and Control (C2) of capabilities within both organizations to respond.

(U) USNORTHCOM executes homeland defense in one of three ways: unilaterally; in support of NORAD; or bilaterally with Canada. In conducting bilateral missions with Canada outside of the NORAD construct, USNORTHCOM coordinates actions with Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC). Effective utilization of bilateral, binational, and unilateral authorities is necessary to accomplish all missions.

(U) NORAD and USNORTHCOM have access to assigned and allocated forces in steady state/campaigning for deterrence and response as needed. The Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM may activate certain forces for homeland defense operations and certain forces at the direction of the Secretary of Defense. In the event of, or in anticipation of, an attack on the United States by a nation state or other threat, NORAD and USNORTHCOM would, as needed, request any additional forces to execute homeland defense operations.

(U) To defend Defense Critical Infrastructure, NORAD has allocated forces and authorities to defend North America. USNORTHCOM can also utilize NORAD allocated forces for air defense and other forces allocated to USNORTHCOM under various Secretary of Defense orders for land and maritime threats.

15. What legal, policy, or practical limitations exist on the assignment, mobilization, deployment, and/or employment of forces by NORTHCOM, whether for homeland defense or DSCA?

(U) USNORTHCOM has access to, and can employ, resources to respond to Homeland Defense and DSCA events pursuant to each respective mission set. In the event of an attack on the United States, USNORTHCOM's initial response would occur by accessing the threshold forces allocated under various Secretary of Defense orders. If the threat dictated greater capacity to defend the United States, NORAD and USNORTHCOM would submit an RFF for additional capability to include cyber, air, land, and maritime forces. For DSCA events, USNORTHCOM has the appropriate authority to respond using pre-identified assets, with capabilities responsive to anticipated natural disasters. In each of these instances, if additional forces were needed, USNORTHCOM would request additional forces through the Secretary of Defense.

(U) For U.S. domestic operations, the Posse Comitatus Act generally prohibits Title-10 forces from executing civilian law enforcement functions, subject to certain exceptions.