



An aerial photograph of a vast, snow-covered mountain range. The peaks are jagged and partially covered in white snow, with deep blue shadows in the crevasses. A wide, flat valley floor is visible, also covered in snow. In the lower right foreground, the wing and tail section of a dark-colored jet aircraft are visible, flying over the landscape. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

# Red Flag Alaska

**Airmen from USAF and foreign nations come to Alaska for realistic air combat training.**

Photography by Ted Carlson and USAF photographers

*An Aggressor sporting special markings flies over the Pacific Alaskan Range Complex at Red Flag Alaska.*



USAF photo by A1C Jonathan Snyder

**R**ED FLAG Alaska brought together more than 1,500 military personnel and 80 aircraft from several nations last July for air combat training. It was the third joint-service, multinational Red Flag exercise held in Alaska in 2007. Sponsored by Pacific Air Forces, Red Flag tests joint offensive counterair, interdiction, close air support, and large-force employment in simulated combat.

**[1]** An F-15 pilot from the 19th Fighter Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, prepares for a Red Flag mission. Blue Force strike aircraft staged from both Elmendorf and Eielson AFB, Alaska. **[2]** Since Elmendorf is located in Anchorage and Eielson is in Fairbanks—some 200 miles north—face-to-face briefings weren't possible. The next best thing: teleconferencing.



USAF photo by A1C Jonathan Snyder



**[3]** SSgt. Munkhuu Batmunkh of the Mongolian Air Defense Force aims an SA-7 man-portable defense system. Japan, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, and Mongolia sent military personnel to Red Flag Alaska. Representatives from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, Russia, and Sri Lanka observed the exercise. **[4]** An EF-18A, one of eight brought by the Spanish Air Force, refuels from a Spanish KC-137E. Spain brought KC-130Hs to the exercise, as well.





*[1] A Japan Air Self-Defense Force E-767 AWACS lands at Elmendorf after a Red Flag mission. More than 125 Japanese airmen went to Alaska for the air combat training. [2] Armed with AIM-120C AMRAAMs, a specially marked F-15C from Elmendorf's 3rd Wing heads to the fight in afterburner. Other USAF aircraft at Red Flag Alaska included B-52s from Andersen AFB, Guam, and HH-60G Pave Hawks. [3] A 3rd Wing C-17 loadmaster watches as the Globemaster III taxis to its parking spot. Crews often open up the ramp after landing, to acclimate the aircraft and expedite unloading after the engines shut down.*



*[4] A Royal Thai Air Force C-130H-30 performed airdrops at Red Flag, working with Spanish Air Force KC-130H crews. [5] A pair of Spanish Hornets—a single-seat EF-18A and a two-seat EF-18B—prepare for an interdiction mission.*







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USAF photo by A1C Jonathan Snyder

**[1]** An F-16 (foreground) from Eielson's 18th Fighter Squadron and an F-15C from the 65th Aggressor Squadron, Nellis AFB, Nev., simulate air combat over the Pacific Alaskan Range Complex. Red Flag Alaska takes place in airspace over 67,000 square miles. Up to 70 fighter aircraft can fly in the same airspace for a single event. Two missions—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—took place every day except the last during the 10 days of this Red Flag. **[2]** An AWACS from 3rd Wing's 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron awaits its new mission. A NATO Germany-based E-3 also flew controller missions from Elmendorf during the exercise. **[3]** Spanish Air Force Brigada Jacinto Gamboa carries out his duties as flight engineer in a KC-137E tanker. Turkey also provided aerial refuelers.



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**[4]** A C-17 takes off for the range on a low-level aerial delivery mission. Elmendorf's 517th Airlift Squadron had received its first C-17s only a month before. **[5]** A C-17 loadmaster checks that everything has cleared the back. The aircraft made low and fast runs, demonstrating its tactical prowess.



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**[1]** A 19th FS F-15C takes off from Elmendorf. The Eagles provided cover for Blue Forces, going head-to-head with Red Air aggressors. **[2]** US Navy EA-6Bs provided suppression of enemy air defenses and electronic attack capability. **[3]** The view through a C-17's head-up display illustrates some of the new technology on the transport. **[4]** C-17 pilots Maj. Pete Axtell (left) and 1st Lt. Jeff Hoelscher follow another Globemaster III heading to Elmendorf. **[5]** A Spanish Air Force KC-130H waits on the ramp for its next air-drop mission. Red Flag Alaska allows military forces to improve coordination, communication, interoperability, and warfighting capabilities. ■