



## NRO team members donate blood to help with U.S. disaster relief efforts

By Laura L. Lundin, NRO Office of Public Affairs

CHANTILLY, Va. – Team members with the National Reconnaissance Office’s headquarters in Chantilly, Virginia, donated more than 45 units during a blood drive September 6 to help with the recent string of natural disasters that have impacted the United States and its territories.



*U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joe lungerman and Capt. Melissa Sawyer participate in NRO’s emergency blood drive, which mobilized volunteers from the agency’s workforce to donate more than 45 units of blood and platelets in Chantilly, Va., September 6. NRO Photo*

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joe lungerman and Capt. Melissa Sawyer with the NRO teamed up with Virginia-based Inova Blood Donor Services to mobilize volunteers from the agency’s workforce to donate blood and platelets during the five-hour event.

“We wanted to provide an outlet to the NRO workforce, who can’t deploy, where they can take action and be supportive when a crisis occurs,” said lungerman.

The NRO workforce has a long history of responding to crises in this

way – gathering lessons learned from previous blood drive efforts, like the one they conducted in response to the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando in June 2016.

“We know how to do this quickly,” said lungerman. “We’ve taken the lessons learned from past events in order to make sure our future efforts are effective and beneficial for both our volunteers and the people we’re trying to help.”

The September 6 blood drive originally developed in response to the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey in Texas along the Gulf Coast in late August, but since the early-September impact of Hurricane Irma on the southeast, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the efforts of these NRO volunteers will help ensure the region keeps a sufficient blood supply on hand for other needs.

According to the American Red Cross in an article published to its website on September 13, Hurricane Irma “forced the cancellation of nearly 100 American Red Cross blood drives in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, resulting in more than 2700 uncollected blood and platelet donations.” This loss of donations has

significant impact on the region's ability to support the needs of their residents while also assisting federal agencies and national organizations in carrying out disaster health services and mass care for those areas recently impacted by the storms.