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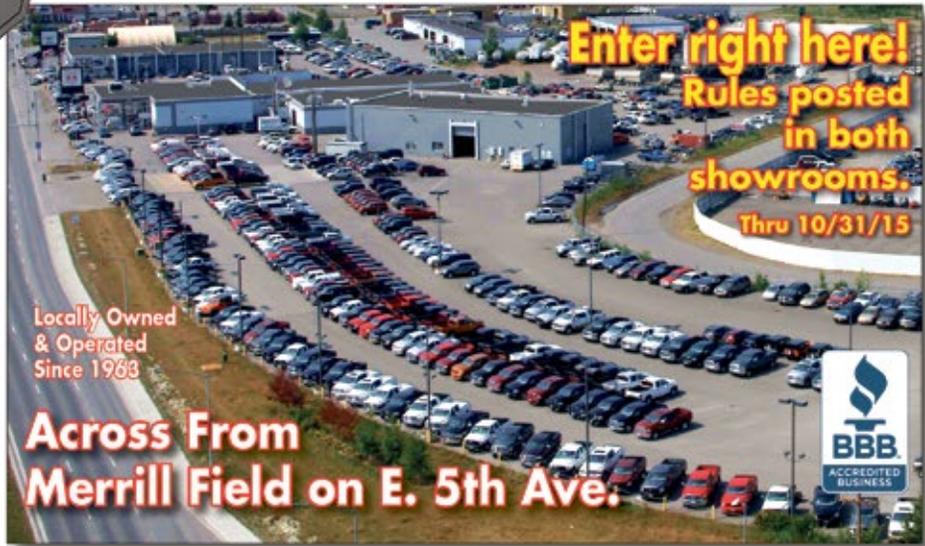


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WARRIORS

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FEATURES

Guardsmen Aim to Compete in Marksmanship Challenge	10
Response-to-Civil-Disturbance Training.....	11
Alaska Air Guard Hosts Multinational Humanitarian Exercise.....	12
Alaska Native Guard Member Honored.....	18
Alaska Army National Guard State Command Sergeant Major Retires	28
New State Command Sergeant Major off to Running Start.....	29

SECTIONS

Governor's Message.....	4	Warrior and Family Services	26
The Adjutant General	5	Employer Support of the	
Dispatches from the Front.....	7	Guard and Reserve	30
Where in the World.....	8	Who We Are.....	31
Division of Homeland Security &		Awards and Decorations.....	32
Emergency Management.....	14	Status of Discipline Actions	32
Joint Forces	16	Warriors Training Schedule.....	32
Veterans.....	20	Promotions.....	33
Chaplain's Corner.....	22	Retirements.....	33
Alaska State Defense Force	23	Changes of Command and Responsibility ...	33
Alaska Military Youth Academy	24	Start of the Trail.....	34



Security Tactics. Members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Security Forces Squadron conducted force-on-force training during exercise Polar Guard 15-1 on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Training with the Security Forces personnel were members of the 176th Wing Student Flight and 176th Civil Engineer Squadron. The training was designed to teach the participants proper tactics and techniques on how to patrol and react to contact in a combat environment. Photo: Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Aircraft Firefighting Training. Firefighters with the 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, extinguish an external plane fire during a training exercise in August. The training structure is designed to simulate larger airframes like the C-130 Hercules and C-17 Globemaster, as propane-fueled flames are hotter and more difficult to put out than a structural fire. Photo: Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, DMVA Public Affairs

<http://dmva.alaska.gov>

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Submissions: Print and visual submissions of general interest to our diverse civilian employees, Alaska National Guard military members, veterans and families are invited and encouraged. Please send articles and photos with name, phone number, email, complete mailing address and comments to:

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Governor's Message

Gov. Bill Walker
Commander in Chief

On behalf of all Alaskans, I appreciate the effort and the sacrifice of the Soldiers and Airmen of the Alaska National Guard and the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs as you serve Alaskans. Protecting Alaskans in circumstances of threat, emergency or disaster requires training and preparation in advance of these events, and this past summer has highlighted the importance of these efforts.

Natural disasters this summer created a high tempo of operations for DMVA, as you mobilized to fight wildland fires that burned more than 5-million acres of land in Alaska, making 2015 the second worst wildfire season since 1950. Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and aircrews conducted water bucket drops in support of wildfire suppression efforts, in areas where the terrain was not accessible to ground crews. The Alaska State Defense Force provided support to the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management's disaster assistance section by manning the phone lines, taking calls from those who were displaced from the fire.

With a change in the weather, the focus went from putting out wildfires to responding to the damaging effects of the Matanuska River widening and the tragic mudslide in Sitka. The state disaster declaration for Sitka will allow access to the Disaster Relief Fund to help with emergency response activities including temporary and permanent repairs to critical infrastructure.

The state's ability to rapidly respond to disasters like those we have seen in 2015 is a crucial feature to the security and well-being of our communities. The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management conducted an all-staff Continuity of Operations Plan exercise this summer in Chugiak with great success. They prepared a plan to handle when, how and where an alternate State Emergency Operations Center would be established if the SEOC is ever compromised.

President Barack Obama's historic visit to Alaska provided a unique opportunity for Alaska Guardsmen. They were able to train and collaborate with other agencies on preserving public safety and guarding the personal safety of the president, doing their

part to ensure our residents and visitors are kept safe. Additionally President Obama's visit provided me with an opportunity to personally tell Alaska's story and advocate for Alaska's interests.

In August, the Alaska Military Youth Academy celebrated more than 20 years of service to the State of Alaska during the graduation of class of 2015-2 from its ChalleNGE program. During their 22-week residential phase at the AMYA ChalleNGE program, the corps of cadets' focus included academic excellence, physical fitness, life coping skills and service to community. I proudly support

this exemplary program's mission to help intervene in and reclaim the lives of Alaska's at-risk youth. AMYA produces graduates with the values, skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.

I sincerely appreciate our Guard members, all of those who work in the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs and your families for your honorable service. Alaska is grateful for your courage and sacrifice as you keep us safe at home and abroad.

Bill Walker



Purple Heart Hero. Alaska Gov. Bill Walker presents Staff Sgt. John Skaar, with the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard, with the Purple Heart at a ceremony in the Alaska National Guard armory, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, in August. Skaar received the decoration because an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle during a cordon-and-search mission during his deployment to Iraq in 2006. Skaar, who was injured, immediately performed first aid to a fellow Soldier and assisted with his evacuation. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs



The Adjutant General

Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard
Commissioner, DMVA

In a previous issue I introduced my vision for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs:

“Through constant collaboration internally and with external partners, DMVA implements a viable Arctic strategy, increases emergency management capacity and expands engagement with Alaskan communities, all while achieving federal mission assurance.”

I promised then I would write again to introduce our departmental core values.

Core values are the guiding principles that dictate behavior and action. They articulate who we are as an organization, clarify what we stand for and guide us in making all decisions. Core values are NOT just practices, strategies or competencies. They are the essence of DMVA and provide the bedrock upon which we will stand.

I have identified three core values for DMVA. They are professionalism, commitment and teamwork.

Professionalism lies at the intersection of competence and behavior. Competence means proficient technical execution and is derived from specialized knowledge and skill. Each of us on the DMVA team needs to constantly develop our knowledge base and hone our skills in order to be technically competent in our positions. This means keeping up with changing doctrine, adopting and adapting best practices and never being complacent, thinking we know all there is to know about our jobs. Professional behavior means exhibiting **honesty** and **integrity**, which then allows colleagues to develop implicit trust in our words and actions. Professional behavior also includes acceptance and expression of **personal accountability**, **self-regulation** and maintenance of a **professional image**.

Self-regulation and professional image are critical components of professional behavior. Relating to others in a calm and controlled manner is essential. In DMVA, we will always communicate with one another, both face-to-face and in written communications, in the manner we wish to be treated. This doesn't mean we will avoid the hard conversations; it means we will exercise self-regulation so everyone is able to focus on the message, not the delivery.

As for image, professionals look the part. Our non-uniformed personnel will groom and dress appropriately for the workplace. The standards for DMVA uniformed personnel are necessarily higher. They must exhibit excellent military bearing as defined by their service, which includes physical fitness, maximum allowable body fat, personal grooming and fit/serviceability of uniforms. Sharp looking Soldiers and Airmen are the hallmark of a good unit; I ask every member of the Alaska National Guard to take stock in yourself and make sure your professional image reflects well on you and our organization.

Commitment means our degree of dedication to our mission set, those we serve and each other. It is the attitude of people who work hard to support organizational goals. As it applies to our efforts at DMVA, commitment is an obligation that restricts our freedom of action to engage in only what helps us accomplish our goals, leaving other actions aside. We have a lot to do at DMVA, and we are going to focus our energy on getting the job done, not on creating unnecessary drama in the workplace. A wonderful leader I once worked for described commitment as having all oars in the water. I like the imagery of that.



Presidential Mission. Alaska Army National Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company stand with Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, in front of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from 1-207th Aviation in Dillingham, Alaska. The Guardsmen were providing battlefield circulation control (air traffic control) for President Barack Obama during his visit to the Alaska village in September. Pictured from left: Sgt. Damian Collum, Sgt. Charles McGonigal, Sgt. Calixto Velazquez, Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Hildreth, Spc. Jacob Marlowe and Spc. Patric Patton.

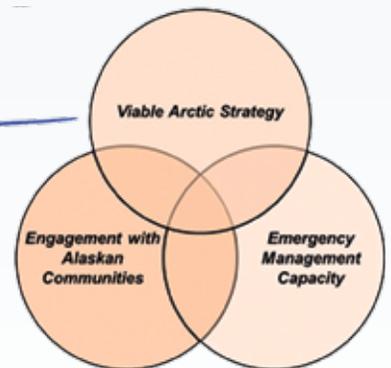
Photo: Courtesy Sgt. Damian Collum, 297th Military Police Company

Teamwork can be thought of as having all those oars rowing in the same direction. None of us can accomplish the DMVA vision alone. It will take the work of some 4,700 people who are willing to subordinate personal prominence for the success of the whole. There are many different facets of teamwork; some are in effect all the time, and some are practiced only when needed. Depending on your position, you may be called on to exercise some or all of them. Specifying goals, formulating strategy, monitoring systems or progress, coordinating, collaborating, communicating and managing conflict are all important aspects of healthy teamwork.

I want to stress the importance of communication and collaboration. One of my goals for our organization is to get rid of any “silo” mentality and to replace it with constant collaboration and sharing. Effective teamwork will bring DMVA so many benefits: improved problem solving, healthy work relationships, mutual trust and job satisfaction are just a few. We are all mission partners, and our greatest success will come when we work together.

Thanks for taking a few minutes to read and understand our DMVA core values. I selected these values because I believe they will provide the proper ethical and moral grounding for all our actions in service to our fellow Alaskans and Americans. Next issue, I will focus on the need to establish and follow sound processes within our organization, and I will provide some guidelines to help support you and your colleagues in this.

Your partner in service,





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Most Diverse Alaska Air Guard Group Trains Collectively

By Tech Sgt. N. Alicia Halla, 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Members of the 176th Mission Support Group brought together about 20 occupations for a joint training exercise here in August.

Polar Guard 15-1, known locally as “Mad Bull,” is an annual affair held mainly at the base joint-regional training site, Camp Mad Bull, where Air Guardsmen participated in a range of activities including radio communication, land navigation, field kitchen duties and heavy equipment operation.

At additional locations across base, members participated in aircraft rescue and firefighting, convoy simulation, and airdrop and cargo retrieval events. The training helps Guardsmen hone wartime skill sets and prepare for real-world emergencies.

“Mad Bull is a good opportunity to bring the group together for morale-building and for skills training,” said Col. Patty Wilbanks, the 176th MSG commander. “They don’t get the opportunity to do this unless we get them (into the field).”

Though all the training dealt with deployable skill sets, it was not for that alone. The 176th Civil Engineer Squadron was recently assigned a state mission of urban search and rescue. This means knowing how to use a skid steer to move debris, as well as personnel rescue by the firefighters.

This year, the 176th MSG shared joint training with the 477th Sustainment Services Flight — part of the Air Force Reserve unit — and community emergency personnel from the Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, Palmer Fire and Rescue and the Alaska State Fire Marshal’s office. ■



Parachute Recovery. Staff Sgt. Josef Lenz, left, and Staff Sgt. Steven Ellis recover a deployed cargo parachute after an airdrop at Malamute Drop Zone on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August during Polar Guard 15-1. Members of the 176th Mission Support Group from approximately 20 different job specialties trained in their wartime mission skills during the four-day exercise. Photo: Capt. John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Fire Suppression. Members of the Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Fire Emergency Services practiced fire suppression techniques alongside counterparts from Palmer and Chugiak fire departments on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August. Many of the Air Guardsmen work as either full-time or volunteer employees of fire departments in Alaska and training with their counterparts in a combined environment helped further develop their knowledge base.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Urban Search and Rescue. Members of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron practice operating a skid steer during Polar Guard 15-1. Skills like this are a part of both their wartime mission and the state mission of urban search and rescue.

Photo: Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla, 176th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Guardsmen Compete in Chile

By Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Staff Sgt. Jamie Haines, an Airman with the 212th Rescue Squadron, and Spc. Tadhg Nakada, a Soldier with the 1-207th Aviation Regiment, competed in the South American Military Ski Championships and International Ski Biathlon Competition at the Army of Chile Mountain School in Portillo, Chile, in August.

The biathlon is considered one of the most challenging winter sports, combining cross-country skiing and rifle shooting. This particular competition, which was held within the Andes mountain range at an elevation of more than 9,000 feet, consisted of four races, at various distances, that tested the speed, endurance and precision of each biathlete, as individuals and as teams.

“The high altitude conditions and deep snow make for a challenging and rewarding race venue,” Nakada said.

The U.S. National Guard team consisted of Haines and Nakada, as well as Spc. Jordan McElroy with the Vermont Army National Guard and Chief Warrant Officer Four Derek Lindberg with the Minnesota Army National Guard. They were led by Tech. Sgt. Travis Voyer with the Vermont National Guard and Lt. Col. Stephen Wilson with the Alaska Army National Guard.

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the People’s Republic of China and the United States were represented in the competition.

“The opportunity to compete and build friendships in these international biathlon races is immeasurable,” Haines said. “The demonstration of sportsmanship, skiing and shooting technique, along with host-nation hospitality, builds great camaraderie and athletic skills.”

The event marks the fourth international competition that both Guardsmen have competed in this season, which includes trips to Canada, Italy and Sweden.

After a grueling and challenging week, the U.S. National Guard team took 4th place overall.

“We have a young and developing team, and they are improving with each competition,” Wilson said. “It’s experiences like these, at competitive venues, that make our team better and stronger.”

The National Guard biathlon team is seeking female competitors to strengthen their competitiveness and encourage female athletes to participate in the challenging sport. ■

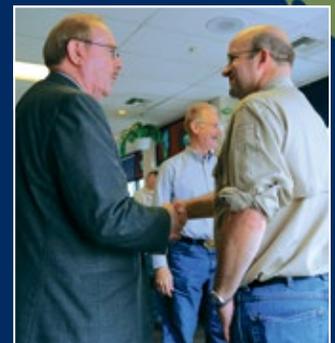


Alaskans in Nation’s Capital. Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, visits with Alaska Senators Dan Sullivan and Lisa Murkowski in Washington, D.C., in August, marking her six-month anniversary as the adjutant general with meetings at the Pentagon, National Guard Bureau and on Capitol Hill.

Photos: Courtesy Alaska National Guard

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Ice Cream Social. Roger Schnell, left, a retired colonel with the Alaska Army National Guard and former deputy commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, shakes hands with Bob Doehl, a retired colonel with the Alaska Air National Guard and current deputy commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, during an ice cream social at Tastee Freeze for Alaska National Guard retirees in July. The event was hosted by Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and DMVA commissioner, along with Doehl as a way for retirees to get to know the new leadership team as well as stay current on the priorities of the department. Photo: Alejandro Pena, U.S. Air Force



Mission of Mercy. Volunteer providers treat hundreds of patients during the Alaska Mission of Mercy 2015 in Fairbanks. The Alaska Mission of Mercy event had volunteers providing free dental care in the areas of tooth extractions, fillings, cleanings, root canals and much more. Photo: Senior Master Sgt. Danielle St. Laurent, 168th Medical Group

Mission of Mercy

By Master Sgt. Cornelius Mingo, 168th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska — Members of the Alaska Air National Guard’s 168th Medical Group participated in Alaska Mission of Mercy 2015 in Fairbanks, as volunteers treated 886 patients while providing approximately \$849,331 in total value of care.

The Mission of Mercy concept, originating in Virginia, has spread throughout the

United States, and this is the first time the event has been hosted in Fairbanks. Volunteers donated their time, resources and unique skill-sets to provide free dental care in the areas of tooth extractions, fillings, cleanings and root canals, just to name a few.

“This was my first time participating with this event, and I really didn’t know what to expect or who would show up,” said

Air Guard Participates in Multi-National Exercise

By Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Biathlon Team Takes Fourth. Members of the U.S. National Guard biathlon team gather after finishing third in the patrol race during the South American Military Ski Championships and International Ski Competition at the Army Mountain School in Portillo, Chile, in August. The biathlon, which was held in the Andes mountain range, consisted of four separate races, at various distances, in which the U.S. National Guard team took fourth place overall. Photo: Lt. Col. Stephen Wilson, Alaska Army National Guard



Red Flag. Staff Sgt. Dayton Osborn, a 176th Aircraft Maintenance crew chief, rotates the blades of a C-130 Hercules aircraft on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August during Red Flag-Alaska. Alaska Air Guardsmen of the 176th Wing trained alongside their international counterparts during the exercise. Photo: Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Matanuska River Troubles. Alaska Army National Guardsmen from the 1-207th Aviation Regiment flew Alaska Gov. Bill Walker and state employees, including members of the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, via UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter over the Matanuska River widening near Sutton to examine flood areas. The river is carving away its northern banks, and the resulting erosion is consuming homes and buildings. Photo: Mike Sutton, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management



Forest Field Training. Alaska Army National Guardsmen with A Troop, 297th Long Range Surveillance Company, 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade execute individual movement techniques during a two-day field training exercise at the Alcantra army in Wasilla in August. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs

1st Lt. Megan Binkley, 168th Medical Group health administrator. “I found it to be heartwarming to see the dental profession and the community of volunteers come together to provide free dental care to those in need.”

Alaska Mission of Mercy provided care for those in need for two days.

Volunteers said an important element of the Alaska Mission of Mercy is patient

education, which is the most cost-effective way to reduce oral disease. A program to help patients understand the importance of good daily oral hygiene practices, healthy diet and routine preventive dental care was an essential part of the care given.

The event was such a success that Alaska will host the program again in 2016. ■

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Wing played its most extensive role ever in exercise Red Flag-Alaska in August.

Conducted three to four times per year, Red Flag-Alaska provides U.S. and partner-nation forces a comprehensive, simulated combat training environment that includes offensive counter-air operations, interdiction, close air support and large force employment.

This iteration of the recurring exercise, Red Flag-Alaska 15-3, marked the heaviest involvement the 176th Wing had ever seen. All of the wing’s operations units — the 144th and 249th airlift squadrons; and the 210th, 211th and 212th rescue squadrons — participated.

176th Maintenance Group personnel were also heavily involved, as they maintain the wing’s C-130 Hercules and HC-130 King aircraft, as well as the HH-60 Pave Hawk rescue helicopters. They also help maintain C-17 Globemaster III aircraft, which belong to the Air Force, but are operated and maintained by both the Air National Guard and active-duty personnel.

“This exercise was a chance for warfighters to practice their first 10 sorties in a combat scenario,” said Maj. Kirby Chacon, deputy chief of operations support squadron-tactics, 176th Operations Group, Alaska Air National Guard. “This has always been a combat air forces driven event, so fighters go against adversarial fighters to learn to survive in war.”

Chacon said that the training is important, because it provides participants the training to operate within a complex, scenario-driven environment, designed to test their ability to navigate the risks and perils of combat operations.

“It’s unique for the fact that most of what we’ve done for the last 10 years or more — yes, we’ve been flying combat missions — but typically you don’t have air delivery C-17s and C-130s operating in a threat environment,” he said. “The potential is always there, but to actually practice flying in threats and utilizing fighter coverage is key.”

Aside from the air delivery missions supported by the 144th and 249th airlift squadrons, the 210th, 212th and 212th rescue squadrons participated in a range of scenarios, including isolated personnel recovery missions, as well as supporting the U.S. Army during an airfield seizure mission. ■

Guardsmen Aim to Compete in Marksmanship Challenge

Story and photos by Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — More than 25 Soldiers and Airmen with the Alaska National Guard came together to compete in The Adjutant General's 2015 Match, hosted by the Alaska Army National Guard, held at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson range complex in August.

The Alaska National Guard TAG Match is an annual event that promotes marksmanship training amongst Airmen and Soldiers by providing a competitive opportunity to test their marksmanship skills and weapons systems in a battle-focused environment.

"A joint event like the TAG Match enforces the bond and common thread we share with each other in the Alaska National Guard," said 1st Lt. Danny Canlas, the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's Headquarters Headquarters Company executive officer and the officer in charge for the sports fire range for the event. "The event is unique because of the background that each competitor brings to the table — where they are from, the uniform that they wear and whether they are full-time Guardsmen — yet they hold onto that common theme in the name of the competition, which is service to our state and country and weapons preparedness."

Seven four-member teams completed advanced marksmanship tasks, to include combat rifle excellence-in-marksmanship, 500 special zero, combat pistol barricade, and close quarter battle, all performed with either the 9 mm pistol or M4 rifle.

"It was evident that all teams came to win," explained Canlas. "Before each match, all the teams could be seen reviewing the

handbook or performing range drills beforehand in preparation for that particular event."

For many competitors, this was their first time participating in the TAG Match competition.

"This competition has definitely lived up to my high expectations so far," said Spc. Sawyer Slavinsky, a vehicle mechanic with the 761st Military Police Company who also placed first novice in four individual events. "Everyone has been really supportive of each other, and it's cool to see the competitors giving advice, regardless of team or military affiliation."

At the conclusion of the high-pressure event, the competitors were recognized during an award ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard armory on JBER.

The TAG Match trophy, awarded to the overall winner, was awarded to the Alaska Air National Guard team. The team was made up of team captain Senior Airman Matt Larson with the 213th Space Warning Squadron from Clear Air Force Station, and fellow team members Senior Master Sgt. Jamie Kurzenberger, with the 213th SWS; Master Sgt. Nicolas Blace, with the 213th SWS; and Staff Sgt. Jacob Gibson, with the 176th Wing.

"The event ran quite smoothly this year, and I could tell that the participants had fun," remarked Canlas. "I would like to see more competitors next year, myself included. Who wouldn't want to get paid to shoot weapons?" ■



Aim and Fire. Alaska Army and Air National Guardsmen take aim while firing their 9 mm pistols during The Adjutant General's Match held at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Range Complex.



Weapons Systems. Alaska Air and Army National Guardsmen operate a variety of weapons systems during The Adjutant General's Match held at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson range complex.

Survey Targets. Alaska Army and Air National Guardsmen survey their targets from 200 yards after firing their M4 rifles during The Adjutant General's Match held at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Range Complex in August. This annual event is designed to test the marksmanship skills of Alaska Guardsmen in a high-pressure, competitive environment.



Response-to-Civil-Disturbance Training

Photos by Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs



Sleeping Dragon. Alaska Army National Guardsmen with the 297th Military Police Company conduct “sleeping dragon” training in August as a portion of their training, taught by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, at the Anchorage Police Department’s Jewel Lake Training Center in Anchorage. “Sleeping dragon” training prepares the military policemen on how to safely cut and handle PVC pipe used by protestors who’ve chained themselves together by locking arms in the piping.



Ready. Alaska Army National Guard members with the 297th Military Police Company and Alaska Air National Guard members with the 176th Security Forces Squadron attend training conducted by the Anchorage Police Department SWAT team at the Alaska National Guard armory in August. The training was conducted and facilitated by the Anchorage Police Department in preparation for President Barack Obama’s visit to Alaska.



Serious Training with Smiles. Soldiers with the 297th Military Police Company, Alaska Army National Guard, and Airmen with the 176th Security Forces Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, simulate a confrontation with the Alaska Military Youth Academy posing as opposition force, during response-to-civil-disturbance training at Camp Carroll on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August. The smiling cadets had fun helping the Guard members in preparation for President Barack Obama’s visit to Alaska.



Joint Training. Alaska Army National Guard members with the 297th Military Police Company and Alaska Air National Guard members with the 176th Security Forces Squadron attend training conducted by the Anchorage Police Department SWAT team at the Alaska National Guard armory in August.

Opposition. Soldiers with the 297th Military Police Company, Alaska Army National Guard, and Airmen with the 176th Security Forces Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, simulate a confrontation with the Alaska Military Youth Academy, posing as opposition force, during response-to-civil-disturbance training at Camp Carroll on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August.

Alaska Air Guard Hosts Multinat

By Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing hosted the week-long Pacific Airlift Rally here in August, working with forces from 14 Pacific Rim nations to sharpen coordination for future humanitarian airlifts. It marks the first time that the bi-annual event has been hosted in North America and the first time it has been hosted by an Air National Guard unit.

Sponsored by Pacific Air Forces, the PAR is a multinational military-airlift symposium for nations in the Indo-Pacific region. The symposium includes informational seminars, a command-post exercise that focuses on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and a field training exercise that builds upon the command-post scenario.

"It is an honor to co-host this training with the Pacific Air Forces," said Lt. Col. Tom Bolin, commander of the 176th Operations Group, in an opening statement. "These opportunities are few and far between and are important for us and our partners in the region because it allows us to build on the capabilities to better assist in humanitarian efforts around the Pacific region."

Participants of the exercise included Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, United States and Vietnam.

"By practicing various humanitarian assistance and disaster relief responses in a multilateral environment, the United States and the Indo-Pacific nations will be better prepared to effectively deal with future natural disasters in the region," Bolin said.

In the command-post portion of the exercise, participants focused on the logistical and planning portion of hypothetical disaster and humanitarian assistance scenarios. This planning portion also further enhanced the participants' abilities to coordinate and communicate with one another in a multinational, joint environment.

The field portion of the exercise consisted of airborne operations, supply and equipment drops, search and rescue missions, hoist operations and high-altitude air refueling operations. Aircraft utilized in the field exercise included C-130 Hercules, C-130J Super Hercules, HC-130 King, C-17 Globemaster III and HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters. Along with the Alaska Air National Guard and active-duty Air Force participants, the Royal Australian Air Force also flew missions during the field training exercise.

"We're proud to be a part of this," Bolin said. "We look forward to the good lessons that will be learned together in this exercise and partnerships it will build." ■



Joint Forces. Participants of the command post exercise portion of the Pacific Airlift Rally gather for an opening speech on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August. The exercise uses a humanitarian assistance/disaster relief scenario to provide participating nations the opportunity to cooperate, interact and advance airlift topics specific to the region. Photo: Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla, 176th Wing Public Affairs

ional Humanitarian Exercise



Cargo Drop. A C-17 Globemaster III, flown by the 249th Airlift Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, drops a HMMWV vehicle fitted with a parachute system out the back of the aircraft over Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in August during Pacific Airlift Rally. PAR 15 is a biennial, military aircraft symposium sponsored by Pacific Air Forces for nations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs

Taking over the Skies. Paratroopers from the U.S. Army Alaska's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, jump from a C-17 Globemaster III, flown by the 249th Airlift Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, over Malamute Drop Zone on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, during Pacific Airlift Rally.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

When All Else Fails, Continue Emergency Response

By Jeremy Zidek and Julie Baker, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The State Emergency Operations Center is the command center from which state agencies support local communities and coordinate the state's response to a disaster event. The SEOC is equipped with 45 computer workstations, robust communication systems, white boards, touch-screen displays, private meeting rooms and strong coffee.

Alaska emergency managers get a lot of practice responding to disasters with the state receiving a disaster declaration every 90 days on average. Throughout the years, the SEOC's capabilities have evolved and can efficiently support the personnel and process the disaster response that Alaska requires. However, disasters often take away the very resource that is needed to respond.

To be ready for a disaster that would take the SEOC out of commission, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management has a Continuity of Operations Plan. The plan lays out when, how and where an alternate Emergency Operations Center would be established. Each summer, for the past three years, DHS&EM has conducted an all-staff alternate EOC COOP exercise to practice the state's ability to rapidly respond to a disaster without the use of the SEOC. Three locations have been identified as alternate locations.

DHS&EM's main office and the SEOC is at the Alaska National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. While the location has many benefits, there are also drawbacks. Damage to bridges and/or overpasses may make it difficult to reach the SEOC, base access may be limited during a situation that requires increased security and unknown events may make the SEOC inaccessible or unusable.

DHS&EM has established one alternate EOC location in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, one in the Chugiak area and one in west Anchorage. This will allow employees cut off from some areas of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley a chance to report to a location equipped to support them. The COOP locations have sufficient space for normal EOC functions, but each location has varying degrees of



Alternate Emergency Facility. Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management staff gather at the designated alternate Emergency Operations Center facility in Chugiak during an exercise in August. The goal of the drill was to test emergency recall capabilities, assess communications resources and practice EOC functions in an alternate location. Photo: Julie Baker, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

computer, phone and Internet access. To support the alternate EOCs, DHS&EM must be ready to act quickly with its capabilities to bring the alternate EOCs up to a functional level. The alternate EOCs also function as rally points for emergency managers who cannot reach their normal duty station.

Rally Point Drill

In mid-August, DHS&EM conducted a COOP drill at the Chugiak alternate EOC facility. The goal of the drill was to test emergency recall capabilities, assess communication equipment, rapid deployment capabilities and practice EOC functions at an alternate location.

The state uses an automatic telephone system, Code Red, to recall employees after duty hours in the event of a disaster. Essential employees will receive a message by home telephone, cell phone, email and text message with a brief situation report and instruction for SEOC emergency managers. Receiving the notification through several channels increases the chance that the DHS&EM employee will receive the message and be able to act as directed.

Beyond DHS&EM employees, agency liaisons, such as the Alaska State Troopers and American Red Cross of Alaska, are big parts of the emergency response process. The Code Red system notifies these essential partners as well. DHS&EM tested this capability to notify all employees for recall, with instruction about duty location, during the August exercise.

During the drill, DHS&EM used the Mobile Emergency Operation Center to provide communications capabilities to the Chugiak COOP facility. The MEOC is a 46-foot-long communications platform on a freightliner frame. Once the MEOC connects to a satellite, it can provide hardline and wireless Internet, voice over Internet phones and radio communications. The MEOC was able to run telephone and Internet lines into the alternate facility and provide communications capabilities for the entire DHS&EM response staff. ■



Communications on the Go. The MEOC is a 46-foot-long communications platform that can provide communications capabilities during a disaster, particularly useful if the State Emergency Operations Center is inaccessible. Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management staff use the MEOC during an exercise in August to manage a mock disaster.

Photo: Julie Baker, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Disaster Response is a Team Effort

By Jeremy Zidek, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Every summer we experience wildland fires in Alaska. This year, many of those wildland fires posed significant threats to our communities and have made headlines and hashtags. While the Division of Forestry is the lead state agency on these fires, disaster response coordination is a team effort.

The Division of Forestry activated Incident Management Teams to address the fires and their aftermath. They continue to work closely with communities to ensure adequate resources are available to battle the blazes, notify residents and control ingress and egress to the areas.

In some disasters, this is enough; response falls completely within the capabilities of a department, and, using their normal process and funding, the department can address the situation. But disasters are not always as cooperative as we would like.

Most times, a disaster event requires multiple agencies to respond simultaneously. The entity responsible for coordinating that response is the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs' Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

When a disaster is imminent or taking place, DHS&EM will activate the State Emergency Operations Center to orchestrate the state's response to disasters. The SEOC is the command and control center where agencies and organizations come together to plan and manage a comprehensive response.

During the response to the wildland fires, the SEOC was ably staffed with representatives from the Alaska National Guard, Alaska State Defense Force, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska State Troopers, National Weather Service, FEMA, Department of Defense, The Salvation Army, American Red Cross of Alaska and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters.

While each has its specialty, no single organization has the authority or ability to respond to all critical needs present during a disaster. For instance, through a previously existing agreement, the Division of Forestry activated the Alaska National Guard to provide Black Hawk helicopters and crews for firefighting missions.

While the fires in the Matanuska-Susitna and Kenai boroughs were covered extensively by the media, a lesser known story is that of Aniak, whose residents were forced to flee the flames and smoke from the North Aniak fire.

The Village of Aniak reached out to the SEOC for help once the fire and smoke became too much for some of the residents. People with pre-existing medical conditions were evacuated to Bethel by the Alaska Village Council Presidents and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. The evacuees took shelter at the Bethel Alaska National Guard armory, with the Bethel Alaska National Guard Family Readiness Group and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10041 providing food and support.

As soon as residents were evacuated, those staffing the SEOC began discussing when they could be returned home. The National Weather

Service, ADEC's Division of Air Quality and DHSS evaluated fire conditions, weather conditions and the health of those evacuated. DHS&EM sought funding to ensure nonprofit entities supporting evacuees would be reimbursed for their activities and began coordination with the Alaska Village Council Presidents and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp. to ensure transportation home was ready, when the time was right.

The sheltering effort in Bethel was a textbook example of how evacuation and care should take place. It did not happen by luck. All the training, coordination, communication and partnership-building necessary for a successful disaster response has to be in place long before an event occurs.

DHS&EM's SEOC Liaison Program and Mass Care Task Force were established for this specific purpose. The Liaison Program conducts monthly training and day-to-day coordination with partner organizations for events that don't rise to the level of a disaster but do require a coordinated response.

This coordination and training has resulted in all of the liaison organizations functioning as one team, with each participant understanding his or her roles, ready to act when the time comes. The Mass Care Task Force subcommittees focus on specific aspects of mass care such as food, shelter, pets and animals, and donation and volunteer management. The Mass Care Task Force has increased our flexibility and allowed us to fill critical mass care needs quickly and efficiently.

While the wildland fires have caused much destruction and devastation for many Alaskans, we know as a team that our state agencies and other partners executed a well-coordinated response and continue to provide the recovery efforts needed to restore the lives of those affected by this disaster. The SEOC will continue to hone our disaster response capabilities to provide the highest possible level of service to Alaska when it is needed most. ■



Multiagency Approach. The State Emergency Operations Center is staffed by multiple agencies in June to coordinate the state's response to this summer's wildfires. The SEOC is the command and control center where organizations come together to plan and manage a complete and comprehensive response. Photo: Julie Baker, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management



Flight Matrix. From left, Alaska National Guard Staff Sgt. Joseph Staunches, Spc. Sirithone Sourivong and Sgt. Flanity Briones review flight matrix spreadsheets to track U.S. personnel arrivals to Rockhampton in Queensland, Australia, during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2015. As part of the Combined Joint Reception Cell in Rockhampton, the team was responsible for personnel accountability and tracking during theater gateway operations for the exercise.

Photo: Maj. Amy Slinker, 49th Personnel Detachment



Tracking Incoming Personnel. Air Force Staff Sgt. Teri Charles and Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Sirithone Sourivong use the Tactical Personnel System to track inbound Soldiers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division arriving to Camp Rocky in Queensland, Australia, in July. Photo: Sgt. Flanity Briones, 38th Troop Command

Army Guard Members

By Maj. Amy Slinker, 49th Personnel Detachment

ROCKHAMPTON, Australia — More than 20 Alaska National Guardsmen supported theater gateway operations for Exercise Talisman Sabre 15 in Australia in late June through July.

Talisman Sabre is a combined biennial military exercise that aims to improve combat training, readiness and interoperability by exposing nearly 30,000 U.S. and Australian participants to a wide spectrum of military capabilities and training experiences.

Members of the 49th Personnel Detachment (Theater Gateway), Alaska Army National Guard, served in Combined Joint Reception Cells at theater gateways in the Brisbane, Darwin, Rockhampton and Sydney areas. Individuals from other Alaska Army National Guard units, as well as other active and reserve components, augmented the 49th Personnel Detachment for the mission.

Theater gateways are the entry and exit points where all personnel must pass through before moving on to their respective areas of operation. Upon arrival to the theater gateway, troops commence the joint reception, staging, onward-movement and integration process.

Lt. Col. Don Mercer, director of the 49th Personnel Detachment, said the CJRC teams processed and accounted for more than 18,000 inbound U.S. personnel as of mid-July. These exercise participants arrived in small and large groups on regular commercial flights, military air flights and contracted commercial charter flights.

“Our Alaska National Guard members tracked personnel and coordinated the transition of personnel from arrival in Australia to their duty location for the exercise,” Mercer said. “This real-world training



Contribute to Theater Gateway Operations

provides a tremendous opportunity to enhance our skills and ensure we're prepared for our federal and state mission."

While personnel specialists primarily serve in the CJRCs, transportation specialists at each location play a key role during operations.

In Rockhampton, Staff Sgt. Joseph Stauches, transportation non-commissioned officer, Alaska Army National Guard, led the unique mission of assisting with processing passengers from an international charter flight landing at a domestic airport. The Alaska Army National Guard teamed with the Australian Defense Force and active duty Soldiers from 10th Support Group (Regional) and U.S. Army Alaska.

"Rockhampton Airport periodically sections off a special event zone to handle international services. Bringing a large group of infantry Soldiers through the process poses unique challenges," Stauches said. "Prior to their arrival, we spent several days coordinating closely with airport managers and conducted rehearsals within our internal team. This prepared us to respond to issues quickly during the tedious process."

The group guided the troops through the airport procedures from arrival, through baggage claim, customs and the quarantine area for agriculture inspection. Once the service members and military civilians cleared customs and quarantine, buses and baggage trucks moved the troops and equipment to the nearby Australian military installation, Camp Rocky.

Staff Sgt. Kristopher Fager, operations non-commissioned officer, greeted the Soldiers upon arrival to Camp Rocky and managed the accountability process there.

"Our goal is to conduct personnel accountability quickly and accurately," Fager said. "We are able to accomplish this within minutes using the automated Tactical Personnel System."

The Tactical Personnel System is an automated tactical strength management system. It provides the field with an application that can serve as a deployment-manifesting platform for military personnel and Department of Defense civilians and contractors. The system uses a bar code scanner that allows users to quickly create exportable manifests, or reports. Because of the efficiency of the system, personnel specialists are able to manifest dozens to hundreds of personnel in a matter of minutes with just one system.

Maj. Peter Kube, an officer from the Australian 2nd Force Support Battalion, participated in the exchange session to gather ideas for a theater gateway handbook he is drafting for the Australian Defense Force.

"I was particularly impressed that the U.S. has a deployed system and dedicated unit to conduct tracking and that the U.S. values tracking highly enough to commit the resources on exercises," Kube said. "All U.S. personnel understand the need for tracking, and there appears to be a very high degree of confidence in the compliance of your forces."

This year is the sixth iteration for the Talisman Sabre, which provides the opportunity to increase both countries' ability to plan and execute a full range of operations, from combat missions to humanitarian assistance. ■



Boots on the Ground. Maj. Amy Slinker, Alaska Army National Guard, left, leads inbound Soldiers from the flight line to the terminal to prepare for the international customs process and agriculture inspection at Rockhampton Airport in Queensland, Australia. More than 20 Alaska Army National Guard members provided support for Exercise Talisman Sabre 15. Photo: Courtesy Rockhampton Airport

Alaska Native

By Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs



JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska —

“Doy’ee’t’daah.” In Athabascan, this means, “How are you?”

This is how Staff Sgt. Wanda Solomon, a native of Kaltag, Alaska, and a traffic management office packer with the Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron, began her speech when she was presented the Richard Frank Military Award at a ceremony in Fairbanks in March.

The award, named after Richard Frank, an Athabascan leader who served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, was created to honor Alaska Natives who serve in the military.

“I met (him) during 2002,” Solomon said. “He was a man of honor, and he carried his military service at the cuff of the sleeve. He served proudly and humbly.”

The award was presented to Solomon by Doyon, Limited, one of 13 regional corporations created in 1971 by Congress under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which serve to manage land and financial claims made by Native Alaskans.

“It is with great honor that I receive this award,” Solomon said.

Solomon grew up in the small village of Kaltag, which has a population of just under 200 people, and is located on the Yukon River.

Proud to Serve. Then-Spc. Wanda Solomon re-enlists into the Alaska Army National Guard in front of an Alaska Air National Guard aircraft while deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, in March 2005. Solomon has since switched to the Alaska Air National Guard and deployed again to Afghanistan, this time with her Air Guard unit in 2012.

Photo: Courtesy Staff Sgt. Wanda Solomon, 176th Logistic Readiness Squadron



Afghanistan Deployment. Then-Spc. Wanda Solomon stands in front of an old Russian MiG at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, when she was deployed in 2005 with the 117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard. Solomon’s military career spans 18 years, with service in both the Alaska Air and Army National Guard.

Photo: Courtesy Staff Sgt. Wanda Solomon, 176th Logistic Readiness Squadron



Guard Member Honored

Her father, the late William Solomon Sr., retired from the Alaska Army National Guard after 27 years of service. His love of helping people and serving his country influenced her to enlist in the Air National Guard, she explained.

Though she initially joined the Air National Guard in 1997, she later switched to the Army National Guard, serving as a photojournalist. With the Alaska Army National Guard she deployed in 2005 to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During her speech, she recalled being shot at while trying to take photos and write a story on a convoy in the mountains.

"Fortunately," she said, "the sniper was a bad shot."

She explained that witnessing firsthand the living and social conditions of women and children in Afghanistan had a profound effect on her.

"I remember driving off base and there would be women holding their infant children, selling boiled eggs to try to make a few dollars," she said. "These kinds of things touch your heart."

After serving in the AKARNG, Solomon switched back to the Air National Guard, with which she again deployed to Afghanistan in 2012.

Solomon noted that she thought her service could be an inspiration to others in her community.

"I joined the military to prove that a woman can set her career goals early on and accomplish them through hard work and dedication," she said. "I want to be a role model to other youth who are undecided about their career choices. If they see the accomplishments of other Alaskan Native peers, they can be inspired to do the same thing."

Solomon noted that service to one's community is not just accomplished in a military uniform. During her speech, she thanked not only her brothers and sisters in the military, but also the state troopers, village public safety officers, city police officers and firefighters, and all of those who choose public service as their calling.

She explained that she was humbled to receive this award from both her native and military communities.

"It is with great pleasure and honor that I thank Doyon, Limited; Angela Yatlin of RurAL CAP; and the 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron of the Alaska Air National Guard for recommending me for this award," Solomon said. "Also, I thank my family and my son for supporting me throughout my career. There are too many people to mention that have influenced my life, both in the Alaska Army and Air National Guard. I humbly accept this award on behalf of all of you."

"Ana'Mas'see," she said. That means, "thank you very much." ■



Family Support. Surrounded by her family, Alaska Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Wanda Solomon, displays her Richard Frank Military Award, which she was presented by Doyon, Limited in March for her service in the military as an Alaska Native.

Photo: Courtesy Doyon, Limited

Civilians, Army and Air Force Team up to Serve Veterans

Story and photos by Senior Airman Francine St. Laurent, 168th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska — As part of a joint-force effort, Airmen from the 168th Air Refueling Wing Medical Group provided care for veterans at the 17th annual Veterans Stand Down in Fairbanks in August.

The event, organized by community members and supported by businesses and agencies, is held annually at Pioneer Park Civic Center.

Twenty-one Airmen from the 168th Medical Group were part of a team, providing services ranging from dental and eye exams to blood pressure and glucose testing, medical screenings and diabetic foot care.

The joint-force team included civilian health care professionals, Soldiers stationed at Bassett Army Community Hospital and Airmen from the 354th Medical Group on Eielson Air Force Base. These volunteers said they were eager to give back.

Staff Sgt. Michael Muirhead, 1984th U.S. Army Hospital practical nurse and case manager at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, works with veterans every day.

“I wanted to help and make sure some of our at-risk veterans came and got the stuff they needed,” Muirhead said. “The majority of the ones I was thinking about did come today, and I was glad to see that.”

Airman First Class Alyssa Penagos, 354th Medical Group optometry technician, said she wanted to gain a better understanding of her community and meet local veterans.

Private First Class Adriana Zendejas, an optometry technician at Bassett Army Community Hospital, said helping veterans feels natural.

“I am always down to help people, and some people here don’t get the benefits because they didn’t retire from the military,” Zendejas said. “They deserve these services.”

Following exams, veterans receive vouchers to visit physicians of their choice. The vouchers can be exchanged for up to \$200 toward prescriptions and \$400 for follow-up appointments such as dental cleanings.

This year, 385 veterans attended the event, which is a lower turnout than previous years.

John Duncan at the Fairbanks Vet Center said this is in part due to new requirements in place in order for homeless veterans to receive issued clothing.

A Department of Defense program donates surplus military gear to veterans who are homeless or at-risk for becoming homeless, Duncan said. This gear can include sleeping bags, foam pads, jackets, fleece jackets, backpacks, duffel and laundry bags, hats and shirts.

Now, veterans must meet one of six criteria to get the designation that allows them to receive gear, lowering this year’s turnout.

Despite this, the variety of services available is broad. Veterans can learn about breast cancer detection, meet with a chiropractor and enjoy two hot meals.

“If you really want to support vets, this is a great way to do it,” Muirhead said.

“It really doesn’t matter how little you think you might be able to contribute,” said Robert Anderson, a case manager at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, Army veteran and volunteer. “You don’t have to be medical. There’s a lot of stuff here you can help with.” ■



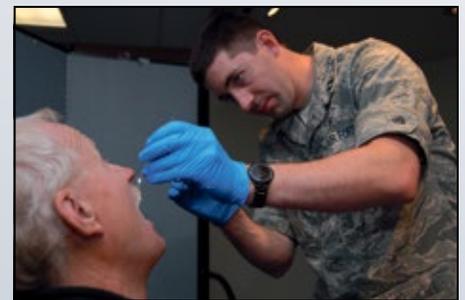
Health Assessment. Lt. Col. Heather Jones, 168th Medical Group family practice doctor, talks with a veteran about his health as part of a physical health assessment during the Veteran Stand Down at Pioneer Park Civic Center in August.



Wellness Services. Master Sgt. Kim Groat, 168th Medical Group aerospace medical technician, performs a blood pressure test for a veteran during the Veteran Stand Down at Pioneer Park Civic Center in Fairbanks, Alaska, in August.



Eyesight Test. Airman First Class Alyssa Penagos, 354th Medical Group optometry technician, conducts an eye exam for a veteran during the Veteran Stand Down in Fairbanks.



Dental Exam. Capt. Jonathan Gerik, 168th Medical Group dentist, examines a veteran’s mouth before providing him with a voucher to visit a local dentist. This exam was just one service available to veterans at the annual Veteran Stand Down in Fairbanks.



Honoring Veterans. Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, presents Alaska Territorial Guard veteran Nick Abalama with an ATG medal and certificate at his home in Wasilla in May. Abalama served in the ATG from June 13, 1943, to Oct. 13, 1944, in the Egegik unit.
Photo: Mercedes Angerman, Veterans Affairs

Help Veterans, Share Your Experiences

“The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten,” President Calvin Coolidge.

By Verdie Bowen, Veterans Affairs

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The quote from President Calvin Coolidge means a great deal to me as a veteran. You can look at this statement and add to it if you wish, but I like to think of it this way: If I forget and overlook veterans then I myself will be overlooked and forgotten. I was once told all politics are local, and I believe that is the same with veterans. They live next door to you. A smile and a thank you can go a very long way.

We as veterans can help keep the American promise alive in all who have served. Just take a little time and share your stories with each other, and make sure that those around you are receiving all the benefits that they earned through their service. For example, if you have a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan and your neighbor is also a veteran, ask if this benefit has been used. You can help a great deal just through sharing your experience. There are 22 million veterans in the United States, and each has benefits tailored to his or her service.

As I travel across the state holding town hall meetings, I try to meet as many veterans as possible. I can say without reservation

that we are blessed to have so many veteran role models. In every town and village I visit I have found great people volunteering and supporting veterans. Without these wonderful people, we would be hard-pressed to establish the programs that our veterans use in our great state. I have to marvel at the fact that many of these events I attend are arranged, planned and performed by volunteers. Please take time to thank these unsung heroes when you see them serve.

Our veterans are the best in the nation. I was so proud of each one who turned out and spoke with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald during his visit to Alaska in August. He was so honored by all those who ensured he had a true Alaska experience. He arrived in Anchorage and traveled to Kotzebue, Point Hope and Wasilla. If he had more time, we could have helped him get even a bigger picture of Alaska’s issues and challenges, but he did see the landscape and a few of our roadless communities.

Today, do me a big favor and take the time to see your fellow veterans and encourage them to file for their benefits. ■



Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain (Col.) Rick Koch
State Command Chaplain

Relationships: Building Connections with People

Building relationships, cooperating and communicating are among the top hallmarks created by our senior leadership as the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs moves into our new future. I'm reminded of the following story:

"Europe and America are united by telegraphy. Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace and good will toward men."

These were the first words sent via telegraph from Europe to America on Aug. 16, 1858. Prior to that day, the fastest possible communication across the Atlantic was 10 days. Just imagine how completely revolutionary that event was. To speed communication between people from 10 days to minutes. The occasion was so momentous that New York City fired a 100-gun salute (a popular thing to do in that era), rang their church bells and displayed flags everywhere.

On a personal level of comparison, I remember using my first cellphone in the late 1990s. The thing was at least as big as a small brick, and yet, I was smiling in amazement when I called my wife at home while driving about town. Now, we all have devices which can call, text, upload and download data and images anywhere in the world. Our youngest service members don't even know life without cellphones.

It's all about relationships and building connections with people. Since the beginnings of human life, we've been working to communicate with one another for lots of reasons, but throughout history, you could really boil it all down to the desire to create relationships.

We are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), which means a lot of things, but perhaps one of the most obvious is that we were created to be in relationship. God desires so much to be in a loving relationship

with every human being in the world. "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Revelation 3:20).

Why is it that we human beings have such a hard time making a relational connection with God? The truth be told is we do not trust. Really?!? We do not trust the most powerful force in the universe? We believe we have a better grasp on the plan for our lives than what God has to offer. How sad because what God has to offer, every time, is more glorious than what we can contrive ourselves. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Once we awaken to the idea that the No. 1 relationship to develop in life is the one we ought to have with God, then we will figure out the keys to holding onto peace and happiness. "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11). Even our relationships with others run the risk of being hollow and weak without first grounding ourselves in the relational image of the Divine. In short, a relationship first built with God is devoid of selfishness, and that truly is a joy to find.

President James Buchanan responded to the first transatlantic telegraph with this message in reply: "It is a triumph more glorious, because far more useful to mankind, than was ever won by conqueror on the field of battle. May the Atlantic telegraph, under the blessing of Heaven, prove to be a bond of perpetual peace and friendship between the kindred nations and an instrument destined by Divine Providence to diffuse religion, civilization, liberty and law throughout the world."

It seems he understood well that this new miracle of communication would truly enhance relationships and could be used, with God's blessing, for the good of human peace and happiness. So be it in our amazing world of relational connectedness. So be it as team DMVA moves forward toward the promise of tomorrow — relating, cooperating and communicating. ■

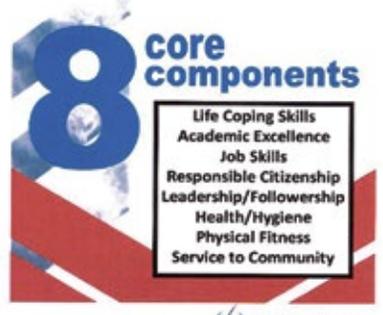


ALASKA MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

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The mission of the National Guard Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) Challenge Program is to intervene in and reclaim the lives of at-risk youth. We produce program graduates with the values, skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.

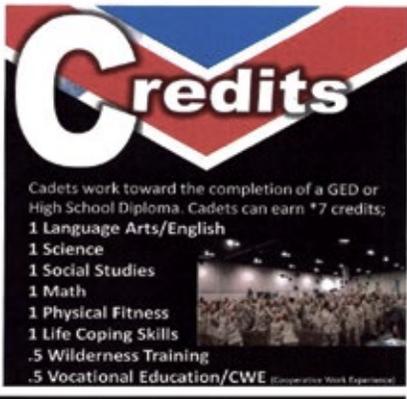
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Sockeye Wildfire Support

By Cpl. Suzannah Palmer, Alaska State Defense Force

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — On June 14, near the town of Willow, Alaska, an unattended burn site quickly turned into a wildfire that engulfed more than 12 square miles.

The Parks Highway, the main artery between Anchorage and Fairbanks, was closed, more than 55 homes were lost and about 1,000 people were forced to evacuate.

In the midst of the firestorm, Gov. Bill Walker issued a disaster declaration for this blaze, called the Sockeye fire, and signed two subsequent disaster declarations for wildfires in the state. Hundreds of firefighters were brought in to help contain the blaze, and the Sockeye Wildfire Disaster Assistance Center was established.

Eighteen Alaska State Defense Force Soldiers were placed on state active duty orders in response to a request received by the Alaska National Guard for personnel to support the disaster assistance center. These troops were activated by the Alaska National Guard Joint Operation Center at the request of the State Emergency Operation Center.

ASDF Soldiers reported for duty from mid-June to mid-August at the Alaska National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. These members served in the Sockeye Wildfire Disaster Assistance Center headquarters. Answering phones around the clock for eight hours at a time, ASDF Soldiers screened and transferred

calls to appropriate agencies to meet the needs of Alaskans displaced by the fire and requiring assistance.

As of early September, more than 760 wildland fires have burned in excess of 5 million acres across the state. ■



Wildfire Response Operations. Members of the Alaska State Defense Force gather in the State Emergency Operations Center in June for briefings and the latest information on wildfires burning across the state. Photo: 1st Sgt. James York, Alaska State Defense Force

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Alaska Military Youth Academy

Knowledge is Power

Story and photos by Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska Military Youth Academy celebrated more than 20 years of service to the State of Alaska during the graduation of 154 cadets of class 2015-2 from its ChalLeNGe program in August.

The graduation ceremony featured Alaska Gov. Bill Walker as the keynote speaker; distinguished guest Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard; and video messages from members of the Alaska congressional delegation.

Among the graduates were cadets Adrienne Carter, 16, from Anchorage, and Freedom Byard, 16, from Wasilla, both of whom said they have excelled

more than they could ever have expected within the 22-week residential phase at the AMYA ChalLeNGe program. It's during this program that cadets focus on academic excellence, leadership and followership, physical fitness, life-coping skills, responsible citizenship, vocational training and service to the community.

"You know, I knew that it would be an adventure, but I thought that the academy would be so much different from what it actually was," explained Carter, who was raised in a military family where she was homeschooled and experienced the many challenges associated with military moves. She had lived in Alaska for only a few weeks when she left home for AMYA.

"It was so much harder than what I'd expected, but at the same time incredibly rewarding because I was able to overcome those obstacles," Carter continued. "Here I

am, graduating from AMYA with a 3.75 GPA and with having finished second overall in my physical training."

Byard, who has wanted to join the military since she was old enough to voice an opinion about her future, felt similarly to Carter about her AMYA expectations.

"I felt like it would be a huge adventure and truly didn't understand what I was getting into," said Byard, who earned AMYA's Ironwoman Award for outstanding physical fitness. "Here, at AMYA, I've learned to push myself harder than I could ever imagine — physically and academically — and have learned what it feels like when you don't give up."

Overall, the AMYA cadets provided more than 1,200 hours of community service, 23 cadets earned their high school diploma, 52 cadets earned their GED and this class' overall grade point average increased by 1.47.



Hats off to You. Alaska Military Youth Academy cadets ceremoniously toss their berets in the air at the closing of their graduation, which was held at the Egan Civic and Convention Center in downtown Anchorage.

"I'm walking away from the academy with discipline, respect for myself, and I feel like I can do anything. ... I feel powerful," Carter said. "So if you're on the fence about whether or not AMYA is a good idea for you or your kids? Come on! You don't know what you're missing out on!"

Now that they've graduated, Carter, Byard and their fellow cadets are taking part in the yearlong post-residential phase where graduates return to their communities to put into practice the life skills principles they received and continue their education, enter the workplace or enter the military. The goal of this phase is for graduates to sustain and build on the gains made during the residential phase while serving as a productive member of society.

As far as Carter's and Byard's futures, Carter, who was awarded the Aero Femme scholarship, is looking forward to a life of academia while Byard is looking to speak with a U.S. Marine Corps recruiter and is excited about the prospect of protecting the United States.

This class of 154 cadets joined the 4,486 previous graduates since 1994. ■



Successful Cadets. Alaska Military Youth Academy cadet Freedom Byard, right, of Wasilla, sits with fellow cadets during the graduation ceremony of Class 2015-2 from the Challenge program in August.



Graduation Happiness. Cadet Aubrey Evans of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson walks across the stage to receive her diploma during the graduation ceremony of class 2015-2. The 154 cadets of class of 2015-2 are part of the program's 4,640 graduates since 1994.

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Congratulations. Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, left, shakes the hand of Alaska Military Youth Academy cadet Adrienne Carter of Anchorage and congratulates her on her graduation from the academy's Challenge program in August.



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Air National Guard Youth of the Year

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton, 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — He is confident, yet equally humble, a combination of qualities often not found in youth. Compounded with accomplishment, Brice Wilbanks, a sophomore at South Anchorage High School, made the perfect candidate to receive the 2015 Air National Guard Youth of the Year award, for which he was recognized at a ceremony here in August.

His mother, Col. Patty Wilbanks, commander of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Mission Support Group, nominated him for the award because she felt he possessed the right qualities to do well in the national contest.

"I saw the application [for the award] through the system," she said, "and given what it was and what he's done, I thought that he was exceptionally competitive."

His enthusiasm at the possibility of being nominated, like his passion for videography and technology on which many of his qualifying accomplishments were based, was a mix of both excitement and modesty.

The award is part of the Military Youth of the Year program from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and is a component of the National Youth of the Year program. According to the club's website, the program is designed to recognize club members located on military installations who have overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments.

What characteristics and accomplishments make one competitive?

After the ceremony, Brice spoke candidly about his efforts to help build his school's media program. Photos he took on his phone showed a studio commensurate with that of a small-scale news agency, complete with multiple sets, monitors, lighting fixtures and cameras.

"Mr. Butterfield, his video program teacher, created the program for the first time this year," said Patty Wilbanks. "He's a great teacher, and he's kind of a mentor to Brice. He got KTVA to donate a bunch of cameras, and they run a no-kidding news studio."

"I really love it," he said, enthusiastically.

Brice said he feels a certain responsibility to the program, taking the initiative to help build it up through construction projects

in the studio, as well implementing an inventory control for all of the expensive equipment.

Brice also developed a smartphone application for his school.

"He got into app building back in the seventh grade; he basically taught himself how to build the apps on his own," said his mother.

"Just for fun," added Brice.

The app, called the Wild Wolverine, allows the school's administration to connect with students and their parents to get messages back to them. Since its adoption by the school, his app has been downloaded more than 1,700 times, he said.

"They do a morning broadcast show through his video program, and people can watch them through this app," Wilbanks said. "You can get on the app and read what's going on, or you can watch the videos. You can go [to another part of the app] and check on their grades."

It was because of this app that his teacher recommended Brice to the Anchorage Education Association, which led to Brice getting contracted to build another app.

"They seemed to be really happy with it," Brice said.

Once he had a paying contract for the new app, Brice decided to contract a friend to do the design artwork, which had its share of ups and downs, involving delays and renegotiations between he and his friend on compensation. The experience, his mother said, taught him a lot about business.

Winning the award allowed to Brice to travel to San Antonio, Texas, in July to attend a workshop with other nominees from other branches of the service. Brice said he enjoyed the experience, and that it was a good opportunity.

"I learned a lot about leadership down there," he said.

During the ceremony at which Brice received his award, Col. Blake Gettys, commander of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing, also presented him with a letter of thanks from Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard.

Despite the recognition, Brice said he feels uncomfortable with some of the connotations of being selected for the award, stating that it is not about the recognition but the work it took to get there.

"I don't like ego," he said. "You can't let your ego get the best of you, and I try to avoid it as much as possible. If you let your ego get the best of you, you lose what matters most. I'm not motivated by that kind of thing; what motivates me is just doing my work." ■



High Honor. Col. Blake Gettys, commander of the 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, poses for a photo with Brice Wilbanks and his mother, Col. Patty Wilbanks, commander of the 176th Mission Support Group, after being presented with a letter of thanks from Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard, at a ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in August. Brice was presented the letter in recognition of being the recipient of the 2015 Air National Guard Youth of the Year award.

Warrior and Family Services Evolves

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, DMVA Public Affairs



Networking. Lt. Col. Kay Spear-Budd, State Family Program director, speaks with JP Ouellette, program administrator and family mediator for the Conflict Resolution Center, during an Alaska-Forget Me Not Coalition workshop held at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage in April. The workshop included presentations on the Partners in Care and Adverse Childhood Experiences programs and afforded participants the opportunity to network and learn more about the coalition.

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska National Guard Warrior and Family Services program is rolling out new ways to reach out to service members and their families.

The program seeks to educate and empower service members and families, help them develop skills and encourage behaviors that strengthen self-reliance, promote retention and enhance readiness within the Alaska National Guard. Warrior and Family Services continues to expand, despite budget decreases, and has recently unveiled new communication tools and partnerships.

“We’re always looking for creative ways to reach our service members and families,” said Lt. Col. Kay Spear-Budd, State Family Program director. “We rolled out our web page hosted by the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs and hope to continue to grow it into a self-help ‘Google of the Guard’ for resources available to our service members and families in Alaska.”

Warrior and Family Services comprises more than a dozen programs, ranging from transition assistance to sexual assault prevention, to meet the unique needs of service members and families. These are at no cost to service members, and help is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, through the Family Assistance Center at 907-428-6663 or 888-917-3608 (outside Anchorage).

“We are the only 24-hour military Family Assistance Center in Alaska, and we can assist any military component, not just National Guard and Reserves,” Spear-Budd said.

“The 24-hour emergency number allows us to provide resources and referrals when a service member or family needs them,” she explained. “More importantly, it provides a level of security to a service member who, during a deployment or in response to a natural disaster,

needs to concentrate on the mission at hand and know that there is a resource available to his or her family when they need assistance.”

In addition to existing collaboration between National Guard resource programs such as Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention; Military Family Life Consultant; and Education Services; WFS spearheaded the development of the Alaska-Forget Me Not Coalition, part of the national Joining Community Forces initiative.

The mission of the Alaska-Forget Me Not Coalition is to ensure that service members, veterans and families are supported and cared for within their communities through a collaborative effort. The coalition focuses on statewide coordination, community outreach and education.

On its own, WFS provided transitional, emotional and financial support. As part of the coalition, which includes behavioral health, faith, legal and education services, WFS can provide direct referrals for many more services such as addiction recovery, mediation, and youth and adult fellowship groups.

Spear-Budd encourages Guardsmen to access the many services that WFS offers via phone and the web or by visiting the nearest Family Assistance Center. There are six locations in Alaska, including Bethel, Juneau, Fairbanks, Fort Greely, Matanuska-Susitna and Anchorage.

“Family Assistance Centers and our webpage are accessible and welcoming points of entry for our service members and families to reach out to us for help,” Spear-Budd added.

More information about Alaska National Guard WFS and the Alaska-Forget Me Not Coalition can be found at www.dmva.alaska.gov/Family. For more information about joining the coalition, please contact Lt. Col. Kay Spear-Budd via email kay.l.spearbudd.mil@mail.mil or call 907-428-6680. ■



Building Partnerships. Alaska National Guard Warrior and Family Services and Army OneSource join members from across the community at the Alaska-Forget Me Not Coalition workshop held at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage in April.

Alaska Army National Guard State Command Sergeant Major Retires

By Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — State Command Sgt. Maj. Pamela Harrington retired after nearly 28 years of National Guard service during a ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard Armory in June.

A career National Guardsman who served in Missouri and Alaska, Harrington started her journey with the Army in hopes of finding discipline and escaping destructive behaviors that she had developed after she had left home for college.

“I initially joined because I wanted to find an external influence that I felt I needed to fix my issues,” Harrington said. “I was very perfectionistic and self-critical, which can be dangerous in a young woman, so I looked to the Army as an outlet for those potentially destructive behaviors.”

A few years after enlisting as a private first class in the Missouri Army National Guard on Jan. 20, 1987, as a chaplain’s assistant, Harrington, a newly-pinned non-commissioned officer, wanted to make a fresh start in a new state. Although she’d have yet to set foot in Alaska, she followed the call of the outdoors and set her sights on the Last Frontier.

“I definitely took a leap of faith in coming up here to Alaska,” explained Harrington, who transferred into the maintenance career field and into the Alaska Army National Guard in 1994. “But, I knew two things: that I wanted to live in this great state, and that I wanted to continue serving the community as an Army National Guardsman, so I did what I could in order to make both of those ideas a reality.”

Harrington maintains that throughout the beginning of her career, although she enjoyed her work, she never thought to look past her current enlistment obligation.

“I lived with the day-to-day expectation that I would fulfill my duties and responsibilities to the utmost of my abilities and ensure those around me were taken care of, whether they were my leadership or subordinates,” Harrington said. “As I began to make rank and be trusted with more responsibility, it finally dawned on me that I could make it, and my aspirations really began to grow.”

In 2012 Harrington was appointed AKARNG’s first female state command



A Career of Dedication. The Alaska National Guard’s senior enlisted leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Hildreth, shakes Alaska Army National Guard then-State Command Sgt. Maj. Pamela Harrington’s hand after being awarded the Meritorious Service Medal during her retirement ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in June.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, DMVA Public Affairs

sergeant major, serving under retired Brig. Gen. Mike Bridges as his senior enlisted advisor.

“I remember seeing my picture in Warriors magazine next to the headline, first female state command sergeant major,” Harrington said with a chuckle. “I thought to myself, wow, I can’t believe that’s me. I did it. I made it to the show!”

Harrington insisted that although it was her job to help facilitate the work of the National Guard, it’s the Soldiers who deserve the recognition.

“I absolutely believe that I was only able to do my job as well as I did because the Soldiers beneath me were doing what they were supposed to be doing,” explained Harrington. “I appreciate every single one, from the officers I worked alongside right down to the private.”

After 28 years of military service, she leaves her fellow Soldiers with some advice.

“As a matter of practice in life, at the end of the day, every day, take out your Army values card and look in the mirror,” Harrington said. “Always look for ways to improve — for yourself and for those around you.”

Post-retirement, Harrington looks forward to a simpler life with her husband of 14 years, Brent. She plans to return to her first love, working as a maintenance technician, away from the hustle and bustle of Anchorage, and dreams of a life of subsistence, off-the-grid living in a cabin near the ocean.

“Being a part of this special community has been awesome — it’s been an honor and a privilege to serve,” Harrington added. “I’ll always look back fondly on my time in the National Guard and the family that I gained within this organization.” ■

New State Command Sergeant Major off to Running Start

By Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, DMVA Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Petersen assumed the state command sergeant major position for the Alaska Army National Guard effective in August, bringing with him a career that has spanned three decades and multiple continents.

Petersen's story begins in 1973, not more than 10 miles from his new office within the National Guard armory. His father retired from the active-duty Air Force and moved the family to the Last Frontier when he was offered a job with the Health, Education and Welfare federal government agency in Anchorage.

"Even as an Air Force brat, to tell you the truth, it never crossed my mind to join the military," Petersen said with a laugh. "All that I knew was that I was interested in aviation and maintenance."

It wasn't until he began talking to his best friend and his best friend's dad, who was a Vietnam veteran and Huey helicopter pilot, that the long journey within the Alaska National Guard took hold.

"The year was 1985, and my best friend and I were having a conversation about how the National Guard was getting Black Hawk helicopters later on that year," Petersen explained. "The wheels started turning, and I thought to myself, 'I could stay in Alaska, gain immense experience and knowledge on all things aviation, to include Black Hawk helicopters, and get paid to do it.' It almost seemed too easy."

The first four Black Hawks arrived by C-5 aircraft in fall 1985, and Petersen, along with two of his best friends, joined the Alaska Army National Guard in January 1986.

"Like so many people, I hadn't initially started out thinking that I would make the Guard a career, but within a few years, and thanks to some wonderful mentors along the way, the Guard became so much more than a one-weekend-a-month job," Petersen said.

Ultimately, Petersen stayed the Army Guard course. He progressed quickly with the aviation career field and focused on



"Like so many people, I hadn't initially started out thinking that I would make the Guard a career ..."

helping advance junior Soldiers through training and mentoring. Petersen volunteered for disaster relief missions in Guatemala and Haiti, and he was a member of the first Alaska Army National Guard aviation company to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005.

With his new position, Petersen's focus continues to be the upcoming junior enlisted Soldiers and ensuring they know their career options and that the people of this organization care about them and want to see them succeed.

"One item that I particularly want to concentrate on is enlisted career management," Petersen said. "I would like to see tools and processes in place to ensure that periodic counseling sessions are taking place in a timely manner and also that each Soldier's direct leadership understands the short- and long-term professional and personal goals of their subordinates."

With Petersen's new role keeping him busy, he continues to make time for what's most important to him: his wife of 18 years, Heather, and their two children.

"Heather, she's my rock," Petersen said, beaming. "With my continually hectic job and through two deployments, she's raised our kids and run our home. She does everything — she does it all."

Outside of home and work, Petersen enjoys lacing up his running shoes and hitting the trails, as it allows for an outlet to think through work situations, reflect on the day's events and to feed his competitive spirit.

"I entered my first half-marathon in 2003, and I was hooked," Petersen said. "Since then, I have completed a few 10-milers, more than 10 half-marathons, 17 marathons and two ultra marathons. I hope to run as long as I can."

A 30-year career with the Guard could be compared to a marathon in itself, but Petersen takes it all one step at a time.

"I just want to make a difference," Petersen said, "for this organization and, most importantly, for the Soldiers who keep it running." ■

New Region Chairman Aims to Help Service Members

By Jamie Abordonado, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — The Alaska Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve welcomes the newest region chairman for Southcentral (Anchorage): Leverette Hoover.

Hoover joined the committee less than a year ago and has volunteered to step into the leadership role.

“It is an honor for me to serve Alaska’s Guard & Reserve as the Southcentral region chairman,” Hoover said. “As a veteran myself and the son of a Korean War veteran, I can never do enough to repay all that our veterans have done to protect our great nation.”

Hoover was first introduced to ESGR when he was awarded the Above and Beyond Award as the general manager for Siemens Building Technologies and was nominated for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award in 2012. This nomination led the corporate level of Siemens Building Industry to win the Freedom Award that year, and the Alaska nomination was used to build that nomination packet.

In 2014, the Alaska Committee ESGR nominated Hoover for an Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Gold Pan award, which he won for his contributions to the community.

Hoover is serving as honorary commander of the 176th Wing and has worked closely with members of the Alaska Air National Guard for several years. In February 2013, Hoover participated in the “Boss Lift” to Guam. As one of five Anchorage-based employers, he flew to Fairbanks then boarded a KC-135 Stratotanker flown by the 168th Air Refueling Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, to Anderson Air Force Base, Guam. He spent three days visiting National Guard and Reserve units.

Hoover is a disabled veteran and served in the U.S. Air Force. He has been involved with many outreach programs that benefit veterans like himself, such as Wounded Heroes and Alaska Healing Hearts. He is an active member of the University of Alaska alumni board, as well as Rotary International. ■



Southcentral Chairman. Leverette Hoover, the new Alaska Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Southcentral chairman, points to a circuit box with the Siemens stamp that he noticed during a visit to the Army Reserve base in Guam in 2013. Photo: Courtesy Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve



Ten Tips to Help Ready You for a Job Fair

1. Know what career field interests you. Knowing what you want to do helps narrow your search for employers.
2. Be prepared to do an interview on the spot. Many employers are there to hire a position that day.
3. Dress to impress. Attend the job fair as if it is the only opportunity you have to interview for the job.
4. Research positions and requirements for those positions. The employer you want might be at the job fair looking to fill a position you are interested in.
5. Watch your manners and mannerisms. Remember this could be your future supervisor.
6. Handshakes and eye contact are critical. These are signs of determination and can seal the fate of meeting an employer.
7. Don't be misled into thinking job fairs are social events. Employers are there to fill positions and are committing their resources to just that.
8. Carry a folio (or folder) to keep your resumes organized and ready. Also, have a cover letter and references prepared.
9. Research types of resumes and have options available. If your experience is vast, cover your talents wisely.
10. This is your opportunity to be evaluated on more than just your resume prior to the interview.

Who We Are ...

Do you have any fun fall family traditions?

2nd Lt. Joy Petway

297th Battlefield Surveillance
Brigade



"I traditionally mourn the passing of summer throughout the fall."

Tech. Sgt. Joe Campbell

168th Air Refueling Wing



"We have a family trip down to Seward where we go to see glaciers and everything that the area has to offer."

Jessica Dennis

Division of Homeland Security &
Emergency Management



"We all rake leaves! We have this big contest between the parents and kids to see who can make the biggest pile."

Tech. Sgt. Asdrubal Peguero

Joint Forces Headquarters (Air)



"I like to take my 5-year-old son moose hunting in the fall."

Staff Sgt. Christina Watson

Medical Detachment,
38th Troop Command



"My son and I just started a new tradition this year. Now that he has started school, we celebrate the new school year with a trip to the state fair."

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Legion of Merit

CW4 William F. Clutton 1-207th AVN
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 SCSM Pamela B. Harrington
 JFHQ (Army)



Meritorious Service Medal

Lt Col Joseph Conroy 212th RQS
 Lt Col Guy Hayes 176th WG
 Maj Matthew Ubedel 176th MDG
 LTC Matthew C. Schell 1-207th AVN
 MAJ Michele D. Edwards... 1-207th AVN
 1SG Charles E. Hooper 207th BSC
 MSG Maria L. Weaver JFHQ (Army)
 SFC Danny L. Counts 297th BfSB
 SFC Robert R. Hughes 297th MP CO



Army Commendation Medal

SFC Elizabeth M. Robinson
 JFHQ (Army)
 SSG Aracellis E. Ovalles ... JFHQ (Army)



Air Force Commendation Medal

SSgt Janet Garrido 168th AMXS
 TSgt Kristen Huey 176th MXS
 Capt Joshua Lester 210th RQS
 TSgt Bryan Loporto 176th MXS



Air Force Achievement Medal

TSgt Brandon Sipes 176th AMXS
 SrA Sean Wulf 176th AMXS



Alaska Legion of Merit

COL Katrina G. Pillow JFHQ (Army)
 Mr. Michael R. Walsh USPFO



Alaska Distinguished Service Medal

MSG Maria L. Weaver JFHQ (Army)
 Ms. Suzanne M. Coomes USPFO



Alaska Commendation Medal

LTC Jane L. Wawersik JFHQ (Army)
 SSG Trent K. Lee JFHQ (Army)
 Mr. Paul O. Loughman AKARNG



Alaska Humanitarian Service Medal

SFC Michael L. Manson 38th TC



Alaska Community Service Medal

MAJ Kirk V. Thorsteinson... 297TH BfSB



Alaska State Service Medal

MSG Terry W. Severin JFHQ (Army)
 SFC Eric D. Wood 49th GMD

Army Senior Instructor Badge

SFC Michael A. Nelson 207th MFTR

Army Basic Instructor Badge

SSG Matthew P. Blanchett
 207th MFTR

Master Aviation Badge

SFC Seth A. Gordon 207th EQP SPT

Master Recruiter Badge

SFC Natasha M. May R&R

Senior Recruiter Badge

SSG Caleb E. Funk R&R

Basic Recruiter Badge

SSG Keefe A. Blankenship R&R
 SSG Joseph A. Coonse R&R
 SSG Ivan G. Cuevasruiz R&R
 SPC Flint Warner R&R

Status of Discipline Actions

In the interest of transparency, these are the actions that the Alaska Army National Guard has taken recently.

Rank	Category	Action
Enlisted	Reckless Driving	Reduced to E3
Enlisted	Misconduct – Drunk on Duty	Local LOR
Enlisted	2 DUIs	Honorable Discharge as result of Administrative Separation Board Action
Enlisted	DUI – Speeding in Excess of 100 mph	LOR and Removal from Promotion Recommended List
Officer	Fraudulent Documentation	Referred for an LOR
Senior NCO	Inappropriate Professional and Personal Conduct	Separation from Active Guard Reserve program; separation from Alaska Army National Guard under General Discharge characterization
Senior NCO	Inappropriate Professional and Personal Conduct	Permanent LOR

DEFINITIONS – LOR: Letter of Reprimand

WARRIORS Training Schedule

Here are the inactive training dates for most Alaska Army and Air National Guard units. All dates are subject to change.

ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	5-6	9-10	20-21
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	5-6	9-10	19-21
ALASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD			
297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	4-6	8-10	19-21
38th Troop Command	4-6	9-10	20-21
ALASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD			
168th Air Refueling Wing	5-6	9-10	20-21
176th Wing	5-6	9-10	18-21/20-21
ALASKA STATE DEFENSE FORCE			
Headquarters	12-13	9-10	6-7

Promotions

Colonel

Kimberly DeRouen JFHQ (Army)
David McPhetres..... JFHQ (Air)
Charles Knowles 297th BfSB

Lieutenant Colonel

Aaron Kelsey..... 297th BfSB

Major

Aaron Zamora..... 212th RQS
Brock Roden 212th RQS
Christian Braunlich 212th RQS
David Kang JFHQ (Army)
Amy Slinker 207th MFTR

Captain

Daniel Koch 176 CES
Forrest Dunbar..... 1244th JAG
James Eyester 1-297th CAV
Kevin Fulmer 49th GMD
Daniel Harkleroad 1-297th CAV
Jeffrey Johnson 1-297th CAV

First Lieutenant

Jessica Gianoli..... 176th MDG

Second Lieutenant

Leslie Darnell..... 176th MDG

Chief Warrant Officer Three

Thomas Buchwald 1-207th AVN
David Friend 1-207th AVN

Command Sergeant Major/Sergeant Major (E-9 Army)

Charles Hooper III 38th TC

Chief Master Sergeant (E-9 Air)

Christopher Wilson..... 212th RQS
Robert Carte 176th ADS
Winfield Hinkley 176th LRS

Master Sergeant/First Sergeant (E-8 Army)

Jeremy Hanson..... 1-207th AVN
Russell Throckmorton 1-297th R&S

Senior Master Sergeant (E-8 Air)

William Lewis 176th WG
Janet Lemmons 176th FSF
Todd Maynard 176th SFS
Martin Bellerive 211th RQS
Eric Shinsato 176th ADS
Robert Schnell 212th RQS
Robert Stavang 210th RQS
Benjamin Devries..... 176th MXS
Joedy Wake 176th WG

Master Sergeant (E-7 Air)

Christopher Geisler 176th MXG
Bradley Newton 176th ADS
Shelana Richards..... 176th OSS
James Mcilmail 176th OG
Miller, Woods 176th LRS

Staff Sergeant (E-6 Army)

James Breton JFHQ (Army)
Caroline Domenech 49th GMD
Erica Edwards..... 38th TC
Grant Endres..... 49th GMD
Balinda Dresel 134th PAD
Leonard Petersen..... JFHQ (Army)
Elvin Reynavega 49th GMD
Seth Walker 207th CS
Dayton Will 1-297th R&S

Technical Sergeant (E-6 Air)

Colton Nelson 144th AS
Dennis Walker..... 144th AS
Kelli Naramore..... 176th CES
Daniel Sharp 176th LRS
Daniel Stanberry 176th ADS
Cody Inman 176th OG
Laurel Foster..... 176th SFS
Ferdie VillaFlores..... 176th OSS
Ryan Stark..... 249th AS

Sergeant (E-5 Army)

Corinne Barrera 207th EQP SPT
Leslibeth Bonilla 49th GMD
John Day 1-297th CAV
Elizabeth Erickson..... 1-207th AVN
Alexandra Flores 297th BfSB
Dillon Gilroy 1-297th R&S
Mikana Halloran..... MED DET
Zachary Lane..... 1-297th CAV
Matthew Millette..... 1-297th R&S
Ryan Johnson 143rd IN ABN
Daniel Pau 1-207th AVN
Matthew Punt 761ST MP
Yamil Ramirez Lopez..... 49th GMD
Jacob Rukovichnikoff 1-297th R&S
Nika Saunders JFHQ (Army)
Danielle Tejeda MED DET
Blake Trahan..... 49th GMD
Brent Wolfer..... 1-297th R&S

Staff Sergeant (E-5 Air)

Nicholas Dube 176th SFS
Frankie Graham 210th RQS
Robert Ortolano 176th ADS
Matthew Posey 176th SFS
Gregory Rowland 176th AMXS
Douglas Wright 176th MXS

CONGRATULATIONS and WELCOME!

The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate would like to congratulate Capt. Gregory Vanison, who was recently admitted to the Alaska State Bar. The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate would also like to welcome 1st Lt. Carole Holley, Alaska Army National Guard and Col. Bill Rogers, Alaska Air National Guard, to the Alaska National Guard Judge Advocate General Corps.



Well Done. Alaska Capt. Gregory Vanison, left, Alaska Army National Guard, talks with Anchorage Superior Court Judge Michael Spaan after being sworn into the Alaska State Bar in July. Vanison works in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

Photo: Courtesy Maj. Safiya Ingram, Alaska Army National Guard

Retirements

SMSgt Walter Ames 168th MXG	BG Catherine Jorgensen .. JFHQ (Army)
SMSgt John Brunsberg 168th LRS	SFC Scott Wesierski 38th TC
MAJ Gary Rowe JFHQ (Army)	SSG Brian Cade 297th BfSB
COL Katrina Pillow JFHQ (Army)	CMSgt Karl Howard..... 176th MXG
CPT James Yeo 38th TC	TSgt Thomas Hogland 176th AMXS
LTC Timothy Abrell JFHQ (Army)	Lt Col Scott Fell..... 176th OG
CSM Pamela Harrington... JFHQ (Army)	Lt Col Erika Marasco..... 211th RQS
COL Hunt Kerrigan JFHQ (Army)	SMSgt Michael Soik..... 211th RQS
SFC Anibal Jorge 297th BfSB	SMSgt Everett Johnson..... JFHQ (Air)
MSG Maria Weaver JFHQ (Army)	CMSgt Kristine Joyce..... JFHQ (Air)
SFC Danny Counts 297th BfSB	MSgt Todd Pederson 212th RQS
SFC Tyson Drew..... JFHQ (Army)	

Changes of Command and Responsibility

Lt Col Thomas Bolin 176th OG
Lt Col Matthew Komatsu 212th RQS
Lt Col Michael Cummings 144th AS
Lt Col Kelly Mellard 168th FSF
Capt Jeremy Groat..... 210th RQS, Det. 1
SGM Michael R. Grunst 38th TC

Start of the Trail

Welcome to our newest members and employees.

761st Military Police Battalion

Sheila Wilson

297th Military Police Company

Chavous Levao
Allyson Diel
Austin Huesser
Patrick Patton
Gian Salvanera

1-297th Long Range Surveillance

Jonathan Kummer
Joseph Bryk

208th Construction Management Team

Ryan Newman

297th Signal Company

Maxwell Severance

Joint Forces Headquarters (Army)

Amanda Plachek
Kimberely DeRouen

1-297th Reconnaissance & Surveillance

Tim Smith
Jason Gilder
Tristan Edinger
Samuel Ahsoak
Christopher Young
Colin Oppgard

1-143rd Infantry Airborne

Brandon Stoner
Draiden McMinn
Theodore Arscott
Francis Oscar
Kyle Crim
Zachary Vaughan
Geoffrey Tomm

103rd Civil Support Team

Roger Tran
Scott Krueger
Thomas Lee

1-207th Aviation

Bryan Kruse
Lolitta Lapriel
Nathaniel Crawford
Austin Mamat
Tiwon Johnson

Joshua Wellborn
Joseph Reyes
Benjamin Jimenez
Caleb Dumitry
Rosario Tatis

49th Missile Defense Battalion

Eduardo Plantillas
Justus Neumann
Karl Gansler
Melecio Vazquez
Gonzalez Nieves
Velazquez Alvarez
Matias Rivera
Matos Rivera
Cintron Hernandez

207th Equipment Support Platoon

Kolten Conant
Austin Fierro
Marc Fisher
Andrew Arrow
Juan Carlos Rivera Negrón

297th Support Battalion

James Howard
Antonio Won

1-297th Cavalry

Kyle Foree
Tanner Combs

Joint Forces Headquarters (Air)

Bill Rogers
Brent Feick

144th Airlift Squadron

David Myers

176th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Randolph Rimple
Vaa Salevi
Justice Gibson
Caleb Doseck
Sidney Dacquel

176th Maintenance Group

Thomas Andrukiewicz
Eric Dreier
Anthony Hemenway
Bryan Loporto
Patrick Read
Daniel Reed

Monica Rodriguez Sanchez
Daniel Roth
Michael Hurt
Joseph Waller
Jennifer Ramaekers
Elhadj Diallo
Cody Boyles

176th Wing

Douglas Dickson

176th Medical Group

Matthew Ubedei
Jennifer Pugatch

176th Force Support Flight

Samantha Meyer

176th Security Forces Squadron

Raci Wallace
Baileigh Howard
Dolores VillaSenor
Jessica Schwarz
Kevin Waters
Patrick Dodd

176th Operations Group

Charity Mollison

176th Comptroller Flight

Jessie Janes

212th Rescue Squadron

Daniel Warren

176 Civil Engineer Squadron

Paul McBride
Gregory Shropshire

176th Air Defense Squadron

Roman Kropidlowski

168th Maintenance Squadron

Matthew Coleman
George Smith
Jimmy Easton
Kara Goodness-Tisland
Chad Presley
Steven Munoz
Timothy Murer
Kaylee Schmidt

168th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Donald Hardy
Tyler Winterton

168th Mission Support Group

Joseph Sundy
Keith Horen
Clint Shulenski
Michael Faris
Roderick Miranda
Donald Cronce
William Holmes
Julian Coleman
Joel Jiskra
Michael Stayrock

213th Space Warning Squadron

Robert Propst
Chadwick Petrie
Jonathan Riveracalderon
Ramon Aquino
Michael Laslovich
Matthew Phebus

168th Comptroller Flight

Christina Love
Michaela Heyrend

168th Operational Support Squadron

Joshua Frady
Lucas Hernandez
Cody Auton

168th Air Refueling Squadron

Andre Boyd
Alex Narveson
John Laqua
Lacree Parrish
Thomas Haley

168th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Sean Lake
Shane McKinstry

168th Force Support Flight

Monaja Gregory
Emma Copeland

168th Security Forces Squadron

Jacob Watkins

168th Medical Group

Nicole Brown

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Ad Council

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TELEPHONE: _____

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION: _____

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ready

Family Emergency Plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE: _____
TELEPHONE: _____

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION: _____

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ready

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What's in the cloud?

Nicotine — Addictive

Ultra-fine particles — Asthma

Acetone — Nail polish remover

Lead — Brain damage

Formaldehyde — Embalming fluid

E-cigs. Not harmless. Not healthy.



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