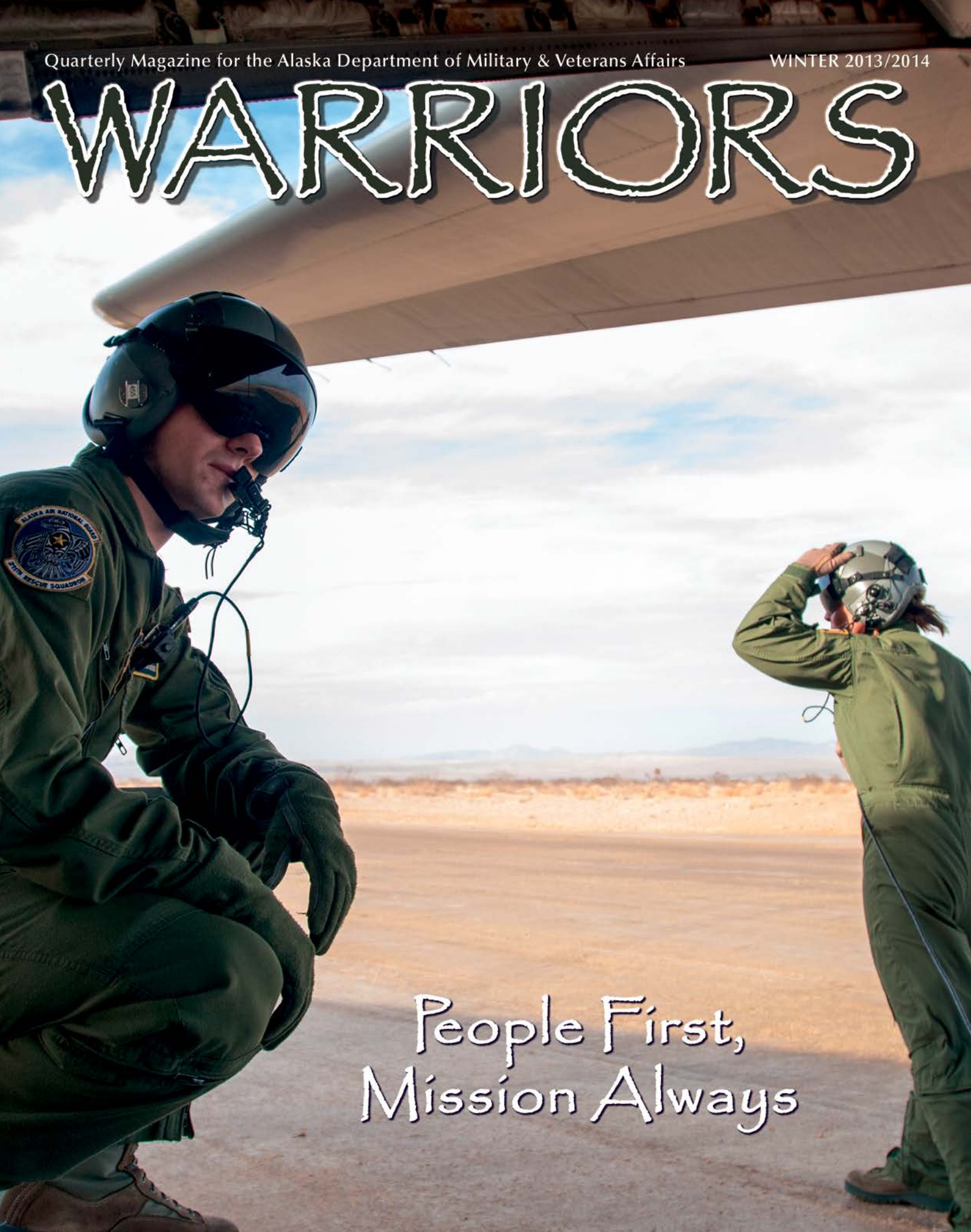
Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs WINTER 2013/2014

WARRIORS



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On the Cover: **Senior Airman Brian Rhodes and Master Sergeant Heidi Gould, both loadmasters with the 211th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, scan the horizon for HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters from the tail of their HC-130 "King" aircraft during a training mission at the Marine Corps Air Ground Training Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., in November. The Airmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron were there participating in an Integrated Training Exercise, which is designed to validate units before deploying to Afghanistan.** Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

Let's Go, Aces! **From left, Captain Paul Mehler III, Coast Guard, Sector Anchorage commander; Colonel Brian Duffy, 673rd Air Base Wing commander; Captain Joel "Henny" Jungemann, U.S. Navy, Joint Task Force Alaska, director of plans and operations; Major General Michael Shields, U.S. Army Alaska commander; and Brigadier General Catherine Jorgensen, Alaska National Guard chief of staff, receive Alaska Aces jerseys from Terry Parks, managing owner of the Aces hockey team. The presentation took place during the team's Military Appreciation weekend at the Sullivan Arena in Anchoragae in November.**
Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

Concepts for section head logos derived from clipart provided by Alaska Native Knowledge Network. **www.ankn.uaf.edu**

Warriors is a commercial enterprise publication, produced in partnership, quarterly, by the State of Alaska, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, PO Box 5800, Camp Denali, Ft. Richardson, Alaska 99505-5800, phone 907-428-6031, fax 428-6035; and AQP Publishing Inc., 8537 Corbin Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99507. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the Departments of the Army and Air Force, or the State of Alaska. All photos are Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs photos unless otherwise credited.

Distribution: Warriors is published for all current civilian employees, military members, veterans, and their families, of the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. It is distributed, free of charge, via mail and distribution, through each Division within the Department. It is also available at our website: http://dmva.alaska.gov.

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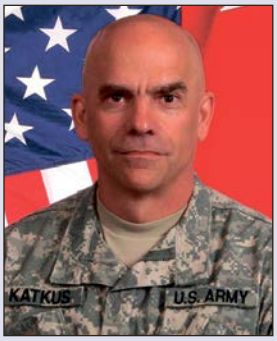
Warriors Magazine
Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
PO Box 5800, Camp Denali
Fort Richardson, AK 99505-5800
907- 428-6031 / Fax 428-6035



The Adjutant General

Major General Thomas H. Katkus
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard
& Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

Alaska National Guard Takes Sexual Assault Seriously

As commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs and adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, I am responsible for ensuring all personnel aggressively root out any harassment, hostile work environments, sexual assault or trading of sexual favors. Unequivocally, these actions have no place in America's work environment. This responsibility to our military family and our state work force is nonnegotiable.

When Governor Sean Parnell spoke at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual conference in Fairbanks in October, he clearly stated that respect is a traditional value that crosses all cultures. This is also true when it comes to the culture of the military. Choose Respect is not a slogan – it is a way of life for our military community, as it should be.

Every day, the thousands of men and women serving under my command take that mandate seriously. Yet, since 2009, 29 cases of alleged sexual assault have been reported to our sexual assault response coordinator by the Air and Army National Guard. Our leadership and investigating officers coordinated immediately with the Criminal Investigation Command and local law enforcement upon becoming aware that a crime may have been committed.

In 11 of the 29 cases, the victims chose to restrict reporting. Eighteen of those 29 cases had civilian perpetrators; 11 were military. Local law enforcement – the Anchorage Police Department and the Alaska State Troopers – was contacted in 21 cases, and for reasons specific to each case, these law enforcement agencies closed or suspended each case.

As the leader of 4,500 people in my organization, I set three priorities for the workplace: recruiting and retention, standards and safety. Sexual assault and sexual harassment directly undermine these critical pillars. Sexual assault and sexual harassment are shameful activities that are especially detrimental to our military, as they are inconsistent with our values, directly undermine our mission readiness, and erode trust and confidence.

The Alaska National Guard has made a deliberate effort to focus on prevention, victim support, investigations and accountability. I strongly feel we can change a culture by engaging the entire organizational membership as part of the solution.

We have made great strides in educating our workforce about early intervention, demanding accountability at all levels and continually improving responsive victim support. These are vital steps in combating sexual assault and fostering a culture of respect and dignity.

In educating our workforce, the Alaska National Guard instituted mandatory training blocks and yearly refresher courses to raise awareness of the problem and provide our members with specific skills for intervention. This measure equips friends, peers or colleagues to better protect potential victims. Commanders at all levels conduct command climate surveys and sensing sessions to provide every member of the organization the opportunity for anonymous or face-to-face feedback.

Demanding accountability requires the protection of the victim, while simultaneously affording the accused their rights, legal protections and due process.

The National Guard Bureau has funded a full-time investigative position in Alaska to assist the command in cases where local law enforcement is unable to take action. When an allegation is substantiated, we take disciplinary action within the full measure of applicable policy, regulation and law, regardless of rank, stature or assignment.

Specific to improving responsiveness in support of the victim, the Alaska National Guard has a Joint Service Support staff of approximately 50 individuals who support 17 programs, including a sexual assault prevention and response coordinator, a military and family life consultant, director of psychological health, Military OneSource consultant and family assistance centers. Beyond the Joint Service staff, we have an additional 40 fully trained and accredited victim advocates.

The Department of Military & Veterans Affairs is a proud and diverse institution, predominantly composed of the exceptionally professional women and men who wear our nation's military uniform. The Alaska National Guard is committed to protecting our men and women from sexual assault and ensuring justice is served. We are focusing efforts on prevention, victim support, investigations and accountability. Sexual assault and harassment are inconsistent with our values. When an allegation is substantiated, we deal with it within the full measure of applicable policy, regulation and law. ■

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Changes, Improvements and Support

By Octavia Thompson, Alaska National Guard Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

CAMP DENALI, Alaska … It seems like there has been a lot of information in the news lately about sexual assault in the military. Even the Alaska National Guard has been looked at with scrutiny about assaults on our own Soldiers and Airmen. While the media attention may be stressful, I welcome it because it reminds us that we must continue to look at our leadership, units, the sexual assault prevention and response program and each individual to assess how well we are doing to combat sexual assault.

Increased dialogue and attention to the topic makes us all more aware of how we respond to situations and hold others accountable when a situation is questionable, concerning or outrageous. It also affects how we treat people if they bravely tell us about an incident they have experienced. Although this topic isn't new, the military is doing more and more every year to try to conquer the inexcusable acts of sexual assault and bring offenders to justice.

It is important to realize that there is always more to the story than what is in the media. One reason is that information is not releasable to the media during an investigation. Another reason is that we do not publicly discuss the cases of individual complaints or allegations, nor do we characterize specific cases in any way out of respect for the individuals, their privacy and for the legal process.

Throughout the past year, there have been many positive changes in the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, not just here in Alaska but throughout the Department of Defense. One improvement involves the requirement of national certification for unit sexual assault response coordinators and sexual harassment/assault response and prevention personnel – known as victim advocates.

All sexual assault response coordinators and sexual harassment/assault response and prevention personnel must now go through extensive training and background checks before working with victims, thus ensuring the highest quality support possible for our members. To remain victim advocates, they must also receive continuing education to retain their credentials. Recruitment of victim advocates has increased to provide greater availability and services at the company, brigade, squadron and group levels.

Perhaps the biggest change for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program is the National Guard Bureau's creation of the Office of Complex Investigations, which now investigates all sexual assault allegations not investigated or prosecuted by local authorities. In the past, commanders could use a commander's inquiry to investigate a sexual assault allegation. Those are no longer used. When a case is referred to NGB for an OCI investigation, NGB assigns trained investigators from different states to conduct the investigation in an effort to obtain complete and unbiased reporting.

Many people don't know that sexual assault investigations that involve National Guard members are handled by local law enforcement, and local laws take precedence. However, that is only if the member chooses to file an unrestricted report.

Because of changes in reporting options and procedures, more victims have chosen unrestricted reporting, which gives victim advocates permission to notify the victim's command and local law enforcement. In the past couple of years, the majority of our cases have been unrestricted – a complete reversal from previous years' reports, where most victims chose restricted reporting, which did not give us permission to contact local law enforcement.

Survivors still have the option of filing a restricted or unrestricted report. However, now they can reach out to a battle buddy or friend, unless that friend is in their chain of command, and it will not force them into an automatic unrestricted report, as it used to be. Survivors have access to, and are assisted in receiving support both on and off base, including medical care, counseling services, support groups, spiritual support and legal resources. ■

Note: *The Alaska National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters sexual assault response coordinator, Octavia Thompson, is one of only four National Guard SARCs nationwide who has qualified at the highest level of experience and training, Level IV. She can be reached at octavia.l.thompson2.civ@mail.mil or 907-428-6219. Her office is in the Alaska National Guard armory, Suite D-101, on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.*

176th Wing Squadron Commander Receives BRONZE STAR

Story and phtoso by Captain John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska … The commander of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron was presented with one of the nation's highest individual military awards in a well-attended ceremony here in September.

Lieutenant Colonel Ed Soto earned the Bronze Star Medal for his exceptionally distinguished performance while deployed to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, where from February to August 2012 he served as the Civil Affairs director for the 777th Expeditionary Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force (Prime BEEF) Squadron.

"I'm just so humbled by this," Soto said. "This award is really a tribute to the team of engineers I served with who went out every day and did great things."

In Afghanistan, Soto oversaw the programming, design and over-the-horizon troop labor execution for 215 construction and life-health-safety requirements valued at more than $73 million, 116 designs supporting $43 million in awarded engineering contracts and inspection of 75 Afghan National Security Force construction projects. He also oversaw the Southwest Expansion Area construction program at Camp Marmal – United States Forces – Afghanistan's number one construction priority in the theater, valued at more than $92 million.

Bronze Star. Lieutenant Colonel Ed Soto, commander of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron, receives the Bronze Star Medal from Colonel Patty Wilbanks, commander of the 176th Mission Support Group, in a ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in September. Soto earned the award, one of America's highest military decorations, for exceptionally distinguished performance while deployed to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, from February to August 2012.

Passing the Star. Lieutenant Colonel Ed Soto, commander of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron, takes the pin he received along with the Bronze Star Medal and pins it to the lapel of his wife, Maile, to express his appreciation for her support.

Soto was particularly recognized for his effectiveness at incorporating Air Force engineers in the training of Afghan Security Forces, preparing them to assume increasing responsibility and promoting effective long-term operations and maintenance of critical ANSF infrastructure.

"We did everything I could think of to push the mission forward," he said, "making sure we left no stone unturned as we worked toward a successful transfer of authority [to the Afghans]."

Soto was nominated for the award by Lieutenant Colonel David Norton, commander of the 777th EPBS. ■

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Four Wing Members Earn Bronze Star Medals

By Captain John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELEMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska … Four members of the Alaska Air National Guard's famed 212th Rescue Squadron were awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor device – one of the nation's highest individual military honors – in a ceremony at the squadron's headquarters building in December.

Major Matthew Komatsu, combat rescue officer, and Chief Master Sergeant Paul Barendregt and Master Sergeant Kyle Minshew, both pararescuemen, received the award for their actions in response to an insurgent attack on Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, in September 2012. Senior Airman Andrew Nichols was recognized for his rescue of a critically injured U.S. Soldier in Afghanistan's Konar Valley in July 2011.

On the evening of Sept. 14, 2012, 15 heavily armed insurgents wearing American military uniforms penetrated the perimeter of Camp Bastion in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. The heavily armed attackers killed two American Marines and wounded nine others; they also destroyed six of the Marines' Harrier ground-attack jets and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage.

A pararescuer's normal duty is helicopter-borne combat search and rescue, pulling injured service members out of difficult and sometimes hostile situations. Komatsu, Barendregt and Minshew were resting at Camp Bastion that evening, when reports started to come in that the base was under attack. The three headed toward the fighting to treat casualties, when they realized the insurgents were inside the wire.

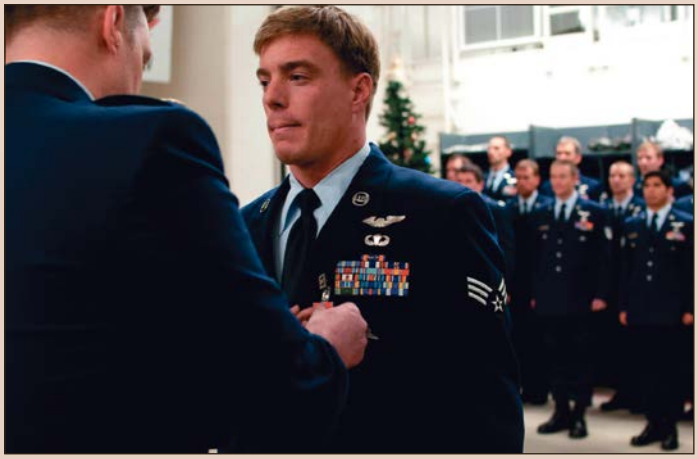
"In my mind it meant that they could potentially be anywhere, not necessarily an obvious line of conflict," Barendregt said. "They were also wearing U.S. uniforms, which complicated things and increased the complexity. It was [going to be] necessary to temper our actions so as not to induce fratricide."

"There is no page in a book that covers this scenario," Barendregt remembered thinking, "so let's figure it out."

Over the next few hours, the Guardsmen would find themselves not only treating patients but helping to clear out the base and re-establish the perimeter. Komatsu recounted his experience in an extended piece written for the New York Times blog, "At War."

The Bronze Star award was "a reflection on the squadron and all that everyone in our unit does," Barendregt said. "There were a lot of moving pieces that preceded that event – training, logistics and personnel. I just happened to be one of the lucky guys there that night."

Courageous Response. Major Matthew S. Komatsu, Chief Master Sergeant Paul J. Barendregt, Master Sergeant Kyle T. Minshew and Senior Airman Andrew J. Nichols, all with the Alaska Air National Guard's 212th Rescue Squadron, receive the Bronze Star Medal with Valor device at a ceremony in December at Joint Base Elmentdorf-Richardson. Komatsu, Barendregt and Minshew were awarded the Bronze Star for their courageous response to an insurgent attack on Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, in September 2012. Nichols was recognized for saving the life of a U.S. Soldier in Afghanistan's Konar Valley in July 2011.
Photo: Technical Sergeant Jennifer Theulen, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Bronze Star Medal. Senior Airman Andrew J. Nichols, a pararescueman with the Alaska Air National Guard's 212th Rescue Squadron, receives the Bronze Star Medal with Valor device in a ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in December. Nichols was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor device for his courageous actions to save a wounded U.S. Soldier under enemy fire in Afghanistan's Konar Valley on July 19, 2011.
Photo: Technical Sergeant Jennifer Theulen, 176th Wing Public Affairs

Nichols was part of a helicopter mission to rescue a badly injured Soldier on July 19, 2011. The Soldier's unit was still taking fire, and the terrain was rough, so the helicopter was forced to land 100 meters – and six steep terraces – above the Soldier's location. Nichols and his teammate began taking fire as soon as they exited the helicopter. After initially taking cover, the two sprinted the 100 meters under fire.

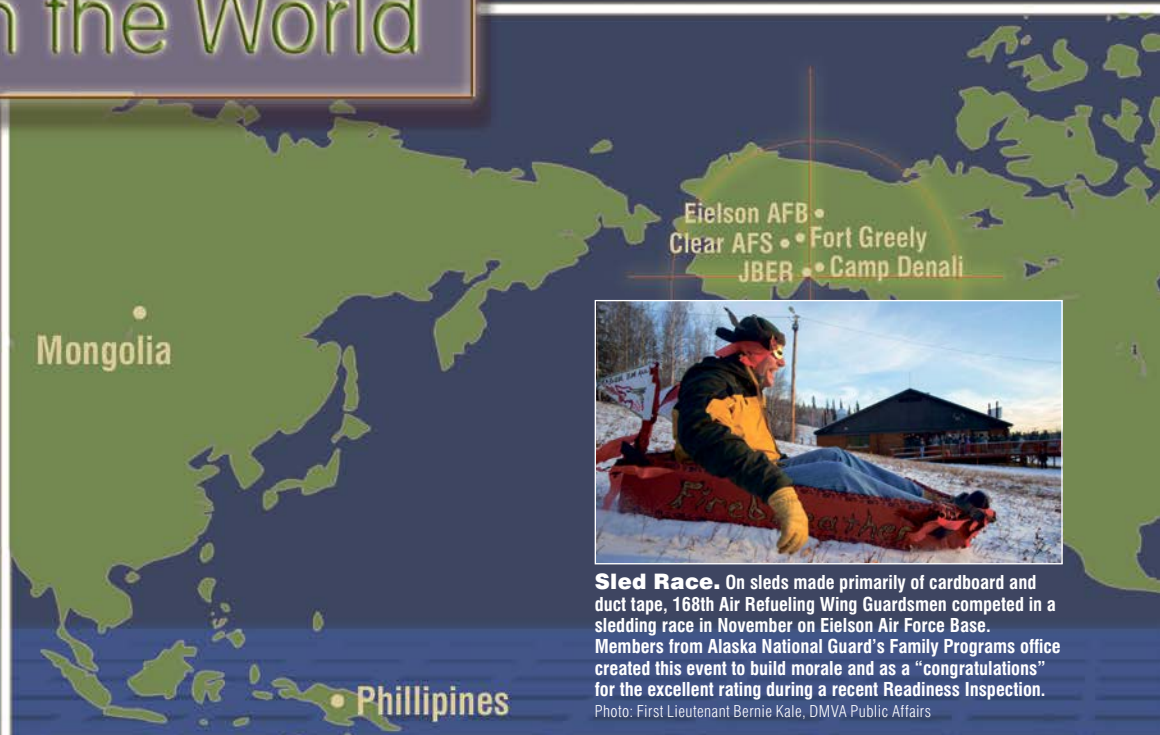
"The medical assessment was quick, maybe five to 10 seconds," Nichols said. "He needed the surgical unit, but it was immediately obvious that we [had to] move fast to get out of the situation."

Nichols then hoisted the large Soldier into a fireman's carry and brought him back the 100 meters, uphill and under fire, to safety.

"I've trained hundreds of times for firefights and, in the moment, it seemed like training," he said. "Our whole pipeline – upgrade and predeployment training – is tailored to situations just like that. For years before I was in Afghanistan, I was training for this exact mission: treating patients while under enemy fire, performing call for fires and returning fire as the situation dictates."

"I'm proud to be part of this team," Nichols said of his fellow squadron members. "Everyone here is exceptional at the job. I'm proud to be a part of that." ■

Where in the World



Alaska National Guardsmen Assist in Philippines Typhoon Relief

By First Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska … Nine Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 176th Wing's 249th Airlift Squadron in November deployed in support of "Operation Damayan," the relief effort in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan ravaged the island country.

Pacific Air Forces placed active-duty Airmen and Alaska Air Guardsmen from the Alaska-based C-17 Globemaster squadrons on alert shortly after the initial disaster reports were received.

"We ended up loading up two 42,000-pound vehicles and a pallet of water which we delivered to the city of Tacloban," said Master Sergeant Brian Johnson, a C-17 loadmaster with Alaska Air National Guard's 249th Airlift Squadron.

Johnson deployed on the first aircraft from JBER that included active duty and Guardsmen. He said they made a difference with the people who needed it the most.

Of the more than 1,000 refugees airlifted by his unit, one woman sticks out in his mind.

"On one trip, we had to leave quickly because we had a pregnant woman who was 11 days overdue and had begun bleeding," Johnson said. "We quickly transported the refugees to Kadena Air Base, Japan, where the pregnant woman was met with medical professionals."

Three C-17s from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson with a combination of active duty and Alaska Air Guardsmen operated jointly. ■

Sled Race. On sleds made primarily of cardboard and duct tape, 168th Air Refueling Wing Guardsmen competed in a sledding race in November on Eielson Air Force Base. Members from Alaska National Guard's Family Programs office created this event to build morale and as a "congratulations" for the excellent rating during a recent Readiness Inspection.
Photo: First Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

Refugees. Tacloban, Philippines, residents displaced by Typhoon Haiyan fill a C-17 Globemaster assigned to the 517th Airlift Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, with support from crews from the 249th Airlift Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard. Approximately 400 personnel were loaded onto the aircraft as part of Operation Damayan, storm relief work in the Philippines. The Alaska aircrews transported more than 1,000 refugees to safety and conducted search and rescue missions, supply drops and personnel airlifts in support of Operation Damayan.
Photo: Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Peter D. Blair, U.S. Navy

State Partnership. Alaska National Guardsmen Sergeant First Class Lane Smith, left, A Troop, 1-297th Cavalry Reconnaissance and Surveillance, and Major Matthew Wilson, right, Joint Forces Headquarters, take one last picture with Major Purevjav Namjildorj, Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force 8 executive officer, before he departs to Mongolia in October. The Guardsmen deployed in July as U.S. liaisons in support of the METF in Afghanistan.
Courtesy: Major Matthew Wilson, Joint Forces Headquarters

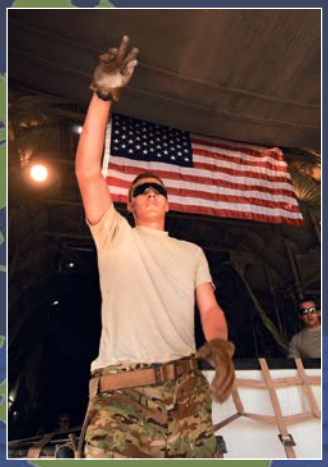
Alaska Soldiers Navigate from Desert to Sea

By Major Randall Stillinger, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait … Since April, A Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard endured harsh conditions that few Alaskans will ever experience: daily high temperatures exceeding 100 degrees for five months straight, with many days above 120 degrees.

These Guardsmen and their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters deployed with the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Their mission was to provide security to the region and build partnerships with countries that will further long-term stability in and around the Arabian Gulf.

GTMO Bound. Specialist Chris Meserve, 761st Military Police Battalion, gives a thumbs up before boarding a plane at Biggs Army Airfield, Fort Bliss, Texas, in November. Approximately 80 Alaska Guardsmen from the 297th MP Company and 761st MP Battalion deployed to Guantanamo, Cuba, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom after completing mobilization training at Fort Bliss. Photo: Courtesy Directorate of Mobilization and Deployment



Right This Way. Senior Airman Casey Hill, 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130H Hercules loadmaster, guides cargo loading equipment away from the aircraft during a retrograde mission at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, in October. The 737th EAS is assigned to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing and is a tactical airlift hub responsible for transporting passengers and cargo across U.S. Central Command. Hill is deployed from the 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard. Photo: Master Sergeant Ben Bloker, U.S. Air Force

Deck Landing. UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from A Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard, land on the flight deck of the USS Ponce (AFSB(I)15) during training operations in the Persian Gulf in June. The company was deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Photo: Sergeant Mark Scovell, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade

A Company had a front row seat for what may be the future of Army aviation operations in the post-Iraq/Afghanistan era as they ventured out over the water. Once used as a stepping stone for units headed north into Iraq, Camp Buehring was their home base for operations and training missions across the region.

A significant key to regional security is the free flow of maritime traffic in the Arabian Gulf. Of particular importance is the Strait of Hormuz between the United Arab Emirates and Iran. It is crucial to the export of oil to the world market. Working over the water and embarking on U.S. Navy ships is a new skill for most Army aviators, and the Alaska Soldiers rose to the challenge.

Maritime missions for Black Hawk helicopters include combat search and rescue, medical evacuation, and the transfer of personnel and logistics support to U.S. Navy ships in the area. These overwater missions require Army aviators to add challenging tasks and extensive knowledge to an already long list of training requirements.

"I think the shipboard missions that we were able to participate in was probably one of the most exciting things we were able to do as part of our Army mission here. It was extremely challenging," said Captain Nathan Cornilles, unit company commander.

Cornilles, of Eagle River, Alaska, is proud of his unit's ability to adapt to the changing missions before them.

"We can operate in almost any environment. We're familiar with overwater operations, cold weather operations, dust landings and snow landings," Cornilles said. "I think we've got a really diverse group of Soldiers that can answer any mission that's asked of them."

The Alaska Soldiers also worked with the Kuwaiti Air Force and other multinational partners in the region to strengthen cohesiveness, carry out joint training events and learn best practices from each other to provide long-term stability.

The 1-189th General Support Aviation Battalion from Montana served as the company's higher headquarters for this deployment. Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Wilkins, battalion commander, said that the Alaska Guard team did an exceptional job during the deployment.

"The Alaska team pulled together and as a unit contributed to the overall success of the battalion and the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade," Wilkins said.

"I just want to thank our families for all the support that they gave us while we were over here," Cornilles said. "Every single Soldier benefitted from that consistent contact with the families and their support. Without them this mission wouldn't have been possible."

The company returned to their home base at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson this winter. ■

Alaska National Guard Team Wins Western Regional Biathlon

Pursuit Shooting. Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Schell, commander of 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, fires during the pursuit competition of the National Guard Bureau's Western Regional Biathlon.

Story and photos by Sergeant Michelle Brown, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

ANCHORAGE, Alaska … With his rifle strapped to his back, Staff Sergeant Jamie Haines, 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, took off with speed and determination, knowing the rough terrain ahead would require physical and mental strength.

Quickly, the elements began to wear down his body and increase his heart rate.

He reminded himself to focus on the mission and his training. As he approached the targets, he controlled his breathing, fired five shots and sprinted to his next objective.

Haines was one of about 70 Guardsmen from 10 western states who skied and shot their way through the National Guard Bureau's Western Regional Biathlon in January at Kincaid Park in Anchorage.

"Participating in biathlons contributes to my success as an Alaska National Guardsman," said Haines, who placed second in the men's pursuit competition. "The marksmanship training has given me a mental edge."

Skiing in Pursuit. Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Wilson, deputy director of current operations, Joint Forces Headquarters, Alaska Army National Guard, skis during the pursuit competition of the National Guard Bureau's Western Regional Biathlon in January at Kincaid Park in Anchorage.

Biathlon is a winter sport that combines skiing and precision marksmanship. Participants alternate between skiing laps intended to get their heart rate up, and then transitioning to shooting small targets at 50 meters while attempting to control their breathing.

"This is a fun and challenging sport," said Captain Karl Bruening, Joint Force Headquarters, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment commander, Alaska Army National Guard. "Your heart rate is elevated from skiing, so you have to clear your mind, take a few breaths and then focus on shooting."

Race participants and volunteers were recognized during an awards ceremony held at the park. A special thank you was addressed to the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage for helping with the event.

The Alaska National Guard's biathlon team placed first overall. Second place went to the Montana National Guard, and the Colorado National Guard team placed third.

The Alaska team had nine competitors: Air and Army Guardsman from across the state, both men and women, enlisted and officers.

Each year, regional competitions are held to select Guardsmen to participate in the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon, explained Lieutenant Colonel

Stephen Wilson, deputy director of current operations, Joint Forces Headquarters, Alaska Army National Guard.

Through this program, members have gone on to represent the nation in various international competitions, including the Biathlon World Cup and the Winter Olympics.

This is the first year that the Alaska National Guard has hosted the Western Regionals.

"Traditionally, the Western Regionals have been hosted at West Yellowstone, Mont., and also at Soldier Hollow, Utah," Wilson said. "They also host central and east races in the upper-Midwest and eastern regions." ■

Firing in Pursuit. Specialist Jake Todd, Alaska Army National Guard, fires during the pursuit competition of the National Guard Bureau's Western Regional Biathlon at Kincaid Park in Anchorage. Todd placed third in the men's division of the pursuit competition.

WESTERN REGIONAL BIATHLON RESULTS

Overall Biathlon Team Award

First . . . . . .Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

Second . . . . . .Colorado National Guard Biathlon Team

Third . . . . . Montana National Guard Biathlon Team

Sprint Race

MEN'S

First . . . . . Private Gunther Ott, Colorado National Guard Biathlon Team

Second . . . . . Specialist Jake Todd, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

Third . . . . . .Captain David Cunningham, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

WOMEN'S

First . . . . . First Lieutenant Kristine Laughlin-Hall, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

Second . . . . . .Sergeant Emily Taylor, Montana National Guard Biathlon Team

Third . . . . . Sergeant Sara Fletcher, Colorado National Guard Biathlon Team

JUNIOR MEN'S

First . . . . . Private First Class Tadhg Nakada, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

JUNIOR WOMEN'S

First . . . . . Private Elise Putnam, Washington National Guard Biathlon Team

Pursuit Race

MEN'S

First . . . . . Private Gunther Ott, Colorado National Guard Biathlon Team

Second . . . . . Staff Sergeant Jaime Haines, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

Third . . . . . Specialist Jake Todd, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

WOMEN'S

First . . . . . First Lieutenant Kristine Laughlin-Hall, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

Second . . . . . Sergeant Sara Fletcher, Colorado National Guard Biathlon Team

Third . . . . . .Sergeant Emily Taylor, Montana National Guard Biathlon Team

JUNIOR MEN'S

First . . . . . Private First Class Tadhg Nakada, Alaska National Guard Biathlon Team

JUNIOR WOMEN'S

First . . . . . .Private Elise Putnam, Washington National Guard Biathlon Team

Alaska Disaster Response Takes Many Partners

By Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Alaska is one of the most disaster-prone states in the nation. On average, we have a state and/or federally declared disaster every 90 days. The frequency of disasters is due in part to our state's large geographic area, location and diverse topography. We have massive seismic activity, intense sea storms, frigid arctic temperatures and extensive flooding. The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management is at the heart of the state's response and recovery efforts.

To effectively respond and assist with recovery, DHS&EM calls upon a cadre of disaster response partners. State and federal agencies are included in this group, each bringing response capabilities aligned with their particular agency's mission. Calling upon response partners allows DHS&EM to multiply the amount of aid provided. One of the most valuable partners called upon are the non-governmental organizations and agencies.

Mass Care in Galena. Bureau of Land Management kitchen facility staff, FEMA's mass care coordinator and the Salvation Army's Jenni Ragland formed a team that fed displaced Galena residents and volunteers engaged in the recovery effort. The Salvation Army provided key supplies and volunteer staff that proved essential to the success of the mission. Photo: Cory Grogan, DHS&EM

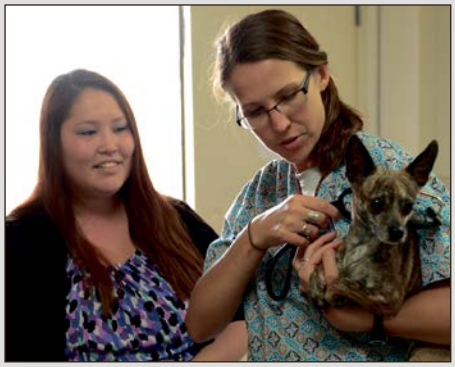
Volunteers at Work. United Methodist Volunteers in Mission replace flooring and insulation last summer in Galena. Through the tremendous effort of volunteers almost all residents were able to return to their homes prior to winter. Photo: Brock Jones, DHS&EM

When the State Emergency Operation Center is activated, non-government agencies are often working side by side with emergency managers and other state/federal agencies during the disaster event.

"Our non-government agencies are often much nimbler and can operate at a much lower cost," said John Madden, director of the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. "We call upon our non-government partners to utilize their capabilities whenever possible."

Non-government agencies, such as the American Red Cross of Alaska, have an extensive network of emergency response staff throughout the state. They provide relief to victims of disasters and help others prevent, prepare and respond to emergencies. During the November 2013 storms, the Red Cross sent two disaster response specialists to Kotlik and another two to Stebbins. These specialists provided numerous services to disaster-impacted residents. Services included providing shelter support, arranging relief supplies, obtaining funding for essential purchases and conducting preliminary damage assessments. The Red Cross is called upon by local governments throughout the state on a regular basis to support shelter operations and provide emergency response training.

During major flooding in eight rural communities last spring, DHS&EM called upon additional non-government response and recovery partners. Flooding caused by river ice jams significantly damaged homes and public structures in each of the eight communities. Galena was the hardest hit, where every home suffered some type of damage. Many had damaged insulation and drywall, while others were ripped from their pilings and totally destroyed. Numerous residents from Galena and other communities were evacuated during the flooding and found themselves without a home to return to. The American Red Cross of Alaska activated its disaster assistance teams to provide for immediate needs. Hotel rooms,



Yukon River Pets Yelp for Help. **A veterinarian with the Alaska Rural Veterinarian Outreach program provides a checkup on a pooch in Galena in August. ARVO and the Alaska Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals provided support to animals that were evacuated and that were left behind when their owners were forced to evacuate.** Photo: Cory Grogan, DHS&EM

hygiene kits, transportation and financial support were provided to the displaced residents.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference helped evacuate residents and provided housing at Willow House in Fairbanks. Willow House normally provides temporary housing to villagers in Fairbanks for medical treatments or other housing needs.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals provided more than 1,000 pounds of dog food for pets affected by the spring floods. The Alaska Rural Veterinary Outreach group flew a team to Galena and provided veterinary checkups to animals affected by the flood.

Food Bank of Alaska provided hundreds of pounds of fish to residents who could not fish because their subsistence gear was destroyed. The Salvation Army Alaska division sent staff to Galena to support mass care and feeding operations. The Salvation Army volunteers worked with Bureau of Land Management kitchen staff in Galena to prepare and deliver thousands of meals to residents and recovery volunteers.

In addition to providing support to Alaskans and their pets during response efforts, non-government partners are essential to recovery efforts. Samaritan's Purse proved to be a critical player during rebuilding efforts following the 2011 spring floods that devastated Crooked Creek in the Bethel region. Samaritan's Purse brought skilled construction volunteers from around the country to help rebuild the flood-ravaged homes. This remote community needed to have nine homes rebuilt in a matter of months. In addition to volunteers, Samaritan's Purse sent project managers, construction foremen and cooks to support the field crews. Samaritan's Purse also used their Soldotna-based airplanes to deliver supplies, construction materials and personnel to Crooked Creek. Samaritan's expertise, transportation capabilities and hard work enabled the complete rebuilding of all nine homes outside the flood zone.

Last summer in Galena, the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission sent more than 100 volunteers to repair homes in the flood-stricken community. UMVIM members who traveled from the lower 48 were assisted in Galena by a Baptist work group from Arizona. Mennonite disaster volunteers repaired homes in Circle, World Renew volunteers repaired homes in Fort Yukon and Disciples of Christ volunteers repaired homes in Hughes.

Other contributing volunteers from across the state were organized by Change Point church in Anchorage and other churches in the area. Adventist Community Services supported a Fairbanks area warehouse that accepted donations and provided logistic support for items that needed transport to the affected communities.

This past summer, Galena residents submitted a needs list that included work gloves, trash bags, shovels, bleach and building materials. When Scott Smith, pastor of Central Christian Church in Anchorage, learned of the request, he began "Pallets with a Purpose" to provide a practical means for churches and businesses to donate the needed goods. Smith set up pallets with the list or needed items in several Anchorage churches and other locations. In all, Pallets with a Purpose shipped hundreds of pounds of goods to communities in need.

"The state and federal government have disaster recovery programs that provide funding for recovery effort. These programs have limitations, and for the most severely affected disaster survivors, they often fall

Murkowski Meets with Volunteers. **U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski meets with Salvation Army volunteers in Galena as they prepared sandwiches for volunteer work crews in August.** Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM

short of what is needed," said Debbie Reed, DHS&EM volunteer agency liaison. "The generosity of volunteers and their organizations is an essential part of the recovery effort. They do an incredible job."

The DHS&EM volunteer agency liaison maintains relationships with non-government agencies throughout the state and nation. In Alaska, the volunteer agency liaison works extensively with Alaska Volunteers Active in Disasters, an umbrella group that organizes numerous Alaska volunteer and faith-based charitable organizations. When the state receives a request that is appropriate for a volunteer agency to meet, the VAL forwards the request to AKVOAD. The request will be disseminated to numerous organizations, charities and churches across the state.

"The notion that strangers are willing to come from all parts of the country to help one of our small remote communities rebuild is touching," Reed said. "Knowing that so many people care about their well-being definitely raises the spirits of the disaster survivors. It brings the survivors hope when things appear to be very bleak." ■

No Time to Waste. **Skilled work crews wasted no time rebuilding homes in Crooked Creek following ice jam flooding that devastated the Bethel region community in 2011. Samaritan's Purse experienced crews, construction management expertise and transportation capabilities made it possible to construct nine homes in less than four months.** Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM

Sleigh Upgrade. Santa and Mrs. Claus give a final wave before departing from St. George Island via an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 in November. Members of the Alaska National Guard, Salvation Army, Tastee Freez, and other Alaska community members delivered donated toys, food, books and winter clothing to the children of the remote Pribilof Island community. Operation Santa Claus has been delivering supplies and smiles to remote Alaska villages every year since 1956. Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal. DMVA Public Affairs

OPERATION SANTA CLAUS HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The Alaska Air National Guard originally started Operation Santa Claus in 1956 as a result of a request from St. Mary's Mission for toys for their children. Spring floods denied a fishing season that year, and the drought that followed eliminated the big game. Every bit of money the mission had was used to pay for food to be shipped in, so it appeared there was no money to buy gifts for the children for Christmas that year.

So Guardsmen accepted new and used toys, in those days, from members of the Anchorage community. They'd rehab the used toys, then hand everything over to Santa Claus for delivery aboard an Air Guard C-123J Provider.

Throughout the years, as time and social conditions in rural Alaska changed, other villages, schools and groups have invited Operation Santa Claus to their communities. Tens of thousands of Alaska's children and adults have been on the receiving end of St. Nick's good cheer. ■

Holiday Treat. Colonel Timothy O'Brien, Alaska Air National Guard commander, and Rich Owens, Tastee Freez owner, serve sundaes to youngsters in Kwethluk during a December Operation Santa Claus trip.
Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

Plane Swap. After flying on an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 to Bethel, Santa boards a plane bound for Kwethluck generously donated by Grant Aviation in December. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

Christmas Wish List. Cordell Merculief, 8, shows Santa and Mrs. Claus his Christmas list at the St. George Island schoolhouse in November. Santa and Mrs. Claus were in town as part of Operation Santa Claus. The operation is an Alaska National Guard program to collect and distribute donated toys, books, gifts and Christmas goodies to children in remote rural areas of the state.
Photo: Captain John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs

Books Galore. A Kake elementary school student picks out a book during Operation Santa Claus in November. The yearly community relations and support program also provides toys, clothing, school supplies, fresh fruit and sundaes to youngsters in remote communities across the state. Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affair

Santa's New Sleigh. Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in Kake on an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during Operation Santa Claus in November. Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

Alaska Air Guardsmen Train in California Desert Joint Forces Exercise

Look Out Below. Guardian Angels with the 306th Rescue Squadron, U.S. Air Force, jump off the ramp of an Alaska Air National Guard HC-130 King aircraft during an airborne operation over the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Training Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., in November. The Airmen were taking part in an integrated training exercise designed to validate units before deploying to Afghanistan.

Story and photos by Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

PALM SPRINGS, California … Fifteen Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing took part in a 28-day integrated training exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., in October and November.

The exercise consisted of core competency training and a mission rehearsal exercise for units to increase their knowledge and experience in preparation for possible overseas deployments to areas that share similar desert terrain.

"The training was excellent," said Captain Hans Jagow, a navigator with the 176th Operations Support Squadron, Group Tactics Shop, Alaska Air National Guard. "I've never seen an area that more closely resembles desert warfare. I've been to Afghanistan, and when you're sitting out there on that Marine Corps airstrip, you wouldn't know that you're in California. It looks a lot like Afghanistan."

The Alaska Guardsmen were there to work with other units and branches of service in fully integrated, scenario-based exercises.

"We set up an isolated personnel scenario and also a mass-casualty scenario," Jagow said. "Those were the two large-force exercises we were able to integrate with."

Alaska Air Guard members from the 176th Maintenance Squadron and 176th Operations Support Squadron participated in support of the 211th Rescue Squadron aircrews and HC-130 King aircraft.

Another mission included nighttime mid-air refueling of Pave Hawk helicopters. Crew members donned night vision goggles, and loadmasters – harnessed to the plane and sitting at the edge of the opened

Training Exercise. An HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the 66th Rescue Squadron, U.S. Air Force, lands behind an HC-130 King aircraft from the 211th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, during a training mission at the Marine Corps Air Ground Training Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., in November. The Airmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron were there participating in an integrated training exercise designed to validate units before deploying to Afghanistan.

GPS. Technical Sergeant Ryan Conti, a flight engineer with the 211th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, identifies the landing zone while returning to the Palm Springs International Airport, Palm Springs, Calif., in November. The Guardsmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron participated in an integrated training exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Training Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

HC-130 ramp – helped guide the helicopter refueling boom into the fuel line dangling from the tank under the wing.

"I think one of the better things about the training down here [is that] we get out of our comfort zone," said Senior Airman Brian Rhodes, a loadmaster in the 211th Rescue Squadron. "In Alaska, you get into the routine of doing the same drops, the same training scenarios. Down here, it being a joint forces exercise with the Marines, we got to see and do some things we don't normally do. It was a great opportunity for us to come down here and work with other units we don't usually work with." ■

Alaska Proud. Master Sergeant Ed Kenna, a communications navigation technician in the 176th Maintenance Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, replaces a traffic collision avoidance system antenna atop an HC-130 King aircraft from the 211th Rescue Squadron before departing from the Palm Springs International Airport, Palm Springs, Calif. The Alaska Guardsmen were there to participate in an integrated training exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Training Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., in November. The exercise was designed to validate units before deploying to Afghanistan.

From the Top Down:

Redesigning the Future

Story and photos by Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

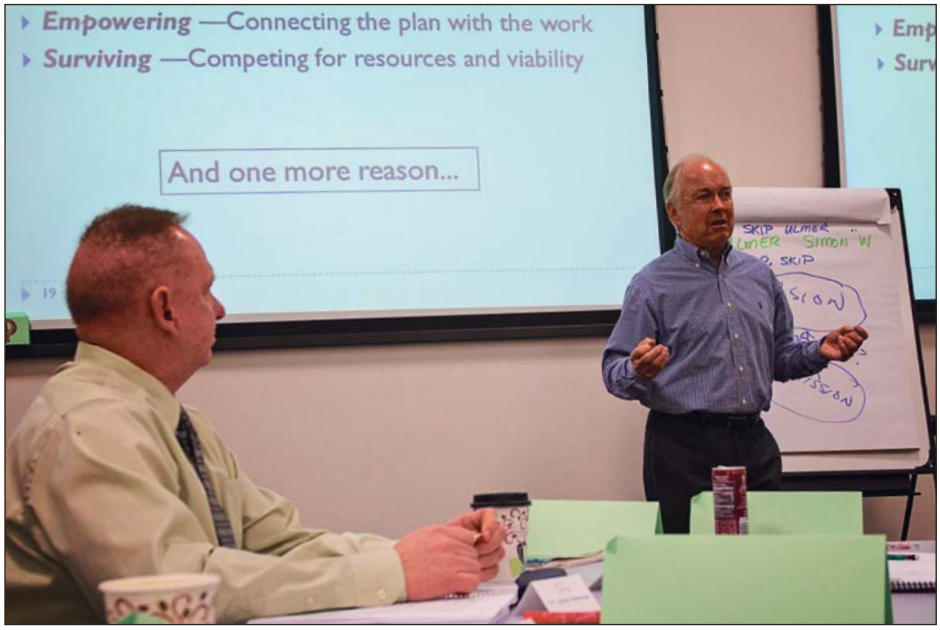
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska … As the adage goes, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," but that is exactly what the Army Communities of Excellence Strategic Execution Course is designed to do.

Approximately 30 Guardsmen from Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, and Montana attended a five-day course in January to learn how to develop a strategic plan and communicate it to all levels of their organizations.

"They're training the next generation of leaders," said Major Chad Daniels, a performance assessment officer with the Business Transformation Office, National Guard Bureau. "It really is a culture change. With the fiscal environment being the way it is and money going away, we have to look at the way we're doing things; we have to look at how to do our processes more efficiently."

The senior and mid-level leaders who attended the Strategic Execution course used the case-study of a private-sector company as an example of a failing business model. During the class, they were taught a set of tools to analyze that business model and develop a strategic plan to effect positive change for the company.

Strategic Vision. Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, gives a welcome speech at the start of a Strategic Execution course at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in January. Approximately 30 National Guardsmen from four states attended the Strategic Execution course.



Training Leaders. Skip Ulmer, a consultant and trainer for the Strategic Execution course from Simon Says Consulting in Denver, Colo., gives a lecture during the course, which is designed to teach senior and mid-level leaders how to create a strategic plan to shape the direction of their organizations and communicate those plans to all levels of the organization.

"Fourteen years ago, Major General Roger Schultz from the National Guard Bureau felt there was a close connection between military planning when it comes to running an organization and corporate planning," said Skip Ulmer, a consultant and trainer for the Strategic Execution course from Simon Says Consulting in Denver, Colo.

Through analyzing where an organization is, and figuring out where they want to go, the students were then challenged to prioritize what steps to take and how to

By involving all levels of the organization in the strategic planning process, the collective vision of an organization gains a sense of continuity that could not exist without a solid communication in place to instill those core values.

communicate that plan to their organization.

"You have to do a strategic scan," said Colin Dunn, a consultant and trainer for the course from Colin K. Dunn and Associates of Woodbridge, Va. "You have to identify what your problems are internally and what your threats are externally. You then narrow those down to the most important things to address and make a plan. Then you take a step back and make sure everybody in the organization is on board with that vision."

One of the challenges in communicating this vision is that the National Guard is mostly made up of traditional Guardsmen who drill for one weekend a month and two weeks a year during their annual training.

Outside of drill weekends and annual training, Guardsmen typically pursue careers and education within the civilian sector. During National Guard training, their individual missions and training revolve around maintaining proficiency in their skill sets. So how would a traditional Guardsman understand the larger picture of an organization without the continuity of doing their service-related job every day?

"There needs to be involvement, and not just from the headquarters or senior leadership, but from throughout the entire organization," said Colonel Jeff Ireland, chief of staff for the Montana National Guard. "If we can get the employees excited and show them that what we're doing is going to help us help them, then there's going to be success."

Leadership and those tasked with redesigning the future are an often changing and evolutionary element of the military. By involving all levels of the organization in the strategic planning process, the collective vision of an organization gains a sense of continuity that could not exist without a solid communication in place to instill those core values.

"I can take this process of strategic planning and apply it to my foxhole right now," said Major Tim Brower, assistant professor of military science at the University of Alaska Anchorage Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program, Alaska Army National Guard. "By doing that, it's going to make the ROTC program better. It will be nested with the guidance that I receive from higher levels of command, and in turn, will be conveyed to the next generation of leaders."

According to Dunn, the last step of the process involves a sustainment phase that challenges the organizations to continually reassess their progress and adjust their directions as the situations change.

"Where do we want to go in the future?" Dunn asked. "What does the promised land look like? What compelling vision can we cast that shows people where we're going? That is so critical because most people come to work every day wanting to be a part of something bigger than themselves. That's the strategic plan." ■

Creating a Vision. Chief Master Sergeant Daniel S. Siekawitch, management and program analyst, Joint Forces Headquarters, Alaska Air National Guard, reads course materials during the Strategic Execution course held on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in January. Approximately 30 National Guardsmen from Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho and Montana attended the five-day course.

Alaska Army National Guardsmen Compete in 2014 Best Warrior Competition

By Sergeant Michelle Brown, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP DENALI, Alaska … Ten Soldiers competed in the 2014 Alaska National Guard Best Warrior Competition at training areas within Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in September.

This year's competition included 14 events designed to test the physical and mental toughness of each participant.

Master Sergeant Justin Shaffer, 207th Multifunctional Training Regiment operations sergeant and deputy commandant, said the state-run competition incorporates the shoot, move and communicate aspect of the military into each event.

"Everything we do is based on Soldier skills and warfighting doctrine, tasks that they have done from the time they entered the

◀ **Circle Around.** Participants from the 2014 Alaska National Guard Best Warrior Competition circle around during a rest period on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in September. The competition is hosted by the Army National Guard every year to pick the best of the best to represent the state at the Regional Best Warrior Competition.
Photo: Airman First Class Tammie Ramsouer, U.S. Air Force

military and will continue to do throughout their entire career," Shaffer said.

The competition began early in the morning with a land navigation course followed by a written exam testing each individual's general military knowledge.

"I decided to participate in the competition because I wanted to become a better Soldier, a better noncommissioned officer, and mentor my Soldiers in the Alaska Army National Guard," said Sergeant Matthew Blanchett, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance Squadron.

Blanchett said participating in the competition exposes your strengths and weaknesses and gives you the opportunity to enhance your Soldier skills.

"From there it's up to you to decide how you're going to use those lessons learned in the future. Are you satisfied with where you're at right now, or do you want to learn more and make yourself better?" said Blanchett.

Some of the other events included were live fire exercises, a written exam, the Army Physical Fitness Test, land navigation, a 10-mile road march and obstacle course.

"This starts off as a competition in the beginning, but as it moves through, you can see guys helping each other from different units, talking about strategies, what equipment works for them and helping one another," Shaffer said.

On the final day, the participants began their day with a road march followed by a sergeants major board, where they were evaluated on personal appearance and military knowledge.

At the awards ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory, Private 1st Class Tadhg Nakada, 1-207th Aviation Regiment, was named the junior enlisted Soldier of the Year and Staff Sergeant Trampas Vojtasek, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. ■

Physical Challenge. A Soldier preparing to engage his target maneuvers toward a training facility during the 2014 Alaskan National Guard Best Warrior Competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in September. The competition tested each Soldier's mental and physical prowess during a three-day challenge, with events ranging from land navigation to weapons skill. Photo: Airman First Class Tammie Ramsouer, U.S. Air Force

Best Warriors. State Command Sergeant Major Pamela Harrington leads a round of applause for Private First Class Tadhg Nakada, left, 1-207th Aviation Regiment, and Staff Sergeant Trampas Vojtasek, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, after receiving the Alaska Commendation Medal for their success in the 2014 Alaskan National Guard Best Warrior Competition.
Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

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Alaska Army Guard Aviators Return from Kuwait

By Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas … Approximately 60 Alaska Army National Guardsmen returned to the United States in December, following a yearlong deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Guardsmen from A Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, arrived at Robert Gray Army Airfield on Fort Hood in December to begin outprocessing before their return to Alaska.

"I am very proud of Alpha Company and thankful that they are home safely from Kuwait," said Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Schell, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment commander. "I want all the deployed Soldiers to know that I appreciate their dedication and perseverance, as they have sacrificed a year away from their families."

In Kuwait, the Guardsmen deployed with the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade to provide aviation support with UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to U.S. and coalition forces.

"We did a lot of partnership missions with the Kuwaiti nationals. This afforded us the opportunity to bridge that gap between our countries," said Sergeant First Class Julie Small, human resources sergeant and door gunner for A Company, 1-207th Aviation Regiment. "We practiced training and flying with their helicopters."

In addition to building partnerships, the aviators mastered overwater work and deck landings. The crews also built their flight time with night vision devices and formation flights.

"I look forward to having them back on our team with the additional experience and sharpened skills," Schell said. "These are skills that can be applied to our domestic operations. Everyone improved their individual skills, which will strengthen the battalion in the years ahead."

The returning Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers hail from Anchorage, Eagle River, Wasilla, Palmer, Fairbanks, Nome and Juneau. ■

"I want all the deployed Soldiers to know that I appreciate their dedication and perseverance, as they have sacrificed a year away from their families."

– Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Schell

Home Safe and Sound. Chief Warrant Officer Robert Faust, A Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, takes the final step off the plane as he arrives in the United States in December, following a yearlong deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Approximately 200 Army National Guard Soldiers returning from Kuwait arrived at Robert Gray Army Airfield on Fort Hood, Texas, to begin out-processing. Photo: Gloria Harris, U.S. Army

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

By Verdie Bowen, Veterans Affairs

ANCHORAGE, Alaska … This is the second year the Veterans Day National Committee selected our program at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson as a regional site for honoring veterans on Veterans Day. It was clear to see the honor provided to our veterans and to see why the National Committee could select us as a one of the 72 sites across the nation.

It is sometimes difficult to put into words what this day means to so many people here in Alaska.

Our veterans have affected countries and their citizens on a worldwide basis. As an example, as violent as war can be, those of us who have seen war can also tell you about the many acts of kindness that were the direct result of our veterans doing what they could to take care of people and even their animals.

It was that can of C-rations/K-rations/MRE given to a village elder, a stick of chewing gum for a crying child, or that scrap of meat for a stray dog. The military members I served with thought nothing about sharing what little they had with

Distinguished Honors. Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, presented retired Air Force Master Sergeant Thomas Struth with a distinguished honors silver coin and the State of Alaska Medal during a Veterans Day Ceremony at the Alaska National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Nov. 11, one day before his 100th birthday. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

◀ **21-gun Salute.** Members of the Air Force Honor Guard fire their rifles during a 21-gun salute at the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Nov. 11. Veterans from the U.S. Armed Forces and Canadian Forces gathered for the ceremony after attending the Veteran's Day Ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard armory on Camp Denali.
Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

people they did not know, and in most cases, would never see again.

These were the acts of people who, while fighting a war, did not lose their humanity or sense of right and wrong. For some, their service in the uniform of our armed forces was the best they would ever be. For others, it was simply a view into what they would accomplish in the years ahead.

In any case, the overwhelming majority of our veterans served with honor, respect and pride. They constantly reflected the mission and the urgency of the events around them either in peacetime or war.

This Veterans Day once again found us still at war in a place far from home. Sometimes these events continue to trouble some of our veterans who have just returned, or it brings memories back from the past. I believe long after the conflicts, post-traumatic stress disorder becomes that silent bullet you never hear.

Reflection. Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell takes a moment of reflection after placing a wreath during the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Nov. 11.
Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

PTSD disrupts the lives of combat veterans who have served their country, along with the lives of family and friends. It does not distinguish between race, age or gender and often goes undiagnosed. Even with proper diagnosis, many individuals do not know where to turn to get help. I know for myself Veterans Day brings with it some pain from combat past, and this could be for you as well. I will offer this solution: if you don't know what to do, just call 1-800-248-3682 and talk to me or one of my staff. We will be greatly honored to help you. ■

Remembrance. Veterans from the U.S. Armed Forces and Canadian Forces gathered for a Veterans Day Ceremony at the Alaska National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Nov. 11, to honor those who have served their nation. Afterward, the Canadian Forces then conducted a Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery.
Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

168th Air Refueling Wing Scores "Excellent" on Consolidated Unit Inspection

By First Lieutenant Bernie Kale,
DMVA Public Affairs

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska … The Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing received an "excellent" rating while conducting a readiness-focused consolidated unit inspection in September on Eielson Air Force Base under the redesigned Air Force Inspection System.

Eielson was the first installation in Pacific Air Forces to be inspected under the new guidelines including wing inspectors general and management internal control toolsets, which allow Airmen to review their checklists and identify areas that are in need of improvement or are in compliance.

The 168th implemented the new AFIS and the wing plans section planned, executed and assessed a challenging Phase II readiness exercise to demonstrate their global power projection wartime mission, according to the final PACAF IG report. The PACAF/IG team observed the 168th ARW inspection team and Airmen throughout the inspection and deemed overall readiness "excellent."

"With shrinking budgets and the tyranny of distance within the Pacific area of responsibility, what we need to do is try to bundle our trips," said Colonel David G. Van der Veer, PACAF inspector general. "So if we travel to Alaska to see Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, I have to leverage that opportunity to try and go see something at Eielson that may be completely different. We will try to wrap a couple different sites into one trip and then document and archive our findings."

"I couldn't be more proud of everyone in the wing and the outstanding effort that they showed during our inspection," said Colonel Mark Hedlund, 168th ARW commander. "Everyone earned this excellent rating, and they should be proud of what they have accomplished."

"The 168th ARW successfully completed a Phase II Readiness Exercise where they executed their wartime KC-135R Stratotanker mission in a conventional/chemical weapons environment," Van der Veer said in an email to General Herbert Carlisle, Pacific Air Force commander. "The 168th Guardsmen demonstrated a sense of urgency working through numerous attacks to successfully generate and fly four of five tasked missions. The wing displayed excellent understanding and skills during ability to survive and operate scenarios such as self-aid buddy care, post-attack reconnaissance sweeps, chemical protection/decontamination and unexploded ordnance identification/marking."

Watchful Eyes. **Master Sergeant Jeff Ling, 168th Air Refueling Wing's first sergeant, keeps an eye out for simulated unexploded ordnance during the operational readiness exercise, which prepared the wing for the graded inspection in September.** Photo: Danae VanAken, 168th Air Refueling Wing

The 168th ARW is only the second wing to implement the new AFIS; the inspection team was excited to see the Guardsmen's positive attitude and work ethic.

"The 168 ARW is doing a great job transitioning to AFIS across the wing and is very capable developing scenarios for readiness training," Van der Veer said. "My team was impressed with their level of detail and commitment."

Chemical Warfare. **The 168th ARW conducts an operational readiness exercise to test its capabilities to survive and operate while in a chemical warfare environment. The exercise was a precursor to the September graded inspection, in which the wing scored an "excellent" rating.** Photo: Danae VanAken, 168th Air Refueling Wing

State Guard Association of the United States Recognizes the Alaska State Defense Force

Group Shot. Leaders of the State Guard Association of the United States pose at the SGAUS annual conference in Charleston, S.C., in October. The 2014 annual conference is scheduled to take place in Anchorage. Photo: Courtesy ASDF

By Brigadier General Roger E. Holl, Alaska State Defense Force

ANCHORAGE, Alaska ... The State Guard Association of the United States supports state defense forces and state guards throughout the United States and Puerto Rico through training. Approximately 15,000 Americans serve in their state defense forces throughout the United States and its territories. These citizen Soldiers serve their state military departments in time of disasters and other state emergencies. State defense forces augment their National Guards and train year around to be prepared.

The State Guard Association of the United States assists state guards in training to augment and complement the missions of the National Guard in the United States. The SGAUS military emergency management specialist training is a course of study to teach state defense forces how to work within the Incident Command System.

Now, new schools are being created by SGAUS including a chaplain's school, noncommissioned officer schools and an officer training school. A new engineering school is being developed by SGAUS for state defense forces to provide engineering as a mission capability.

The State Guard Association of the United States supports state defense forces and state guards throughout the United States and Puerto Rico through training.

At the October 2013 annual conference of SGAUS in Charleston, S.C., SGAUS awarded the Alaska State Defense Force the Meritorious Unit Citation for its augmentation of the National Guard in Operation Arctic Care. Alaska was the only state to receive this national award. The Alaska State Defense Force was also awarded the SGAUS Medal of Merit for initiating and planning the Chaplain's School held in Alaska in June 2013. As a result of this latter effort, two more chaplain's schools are being funded in other states by the nonprofit SGAUS Foundation.

SGAUS has also announced that the next SGAUS Annual Conference will be held in Anchorage, Alaska, Sept. 11-14, 2014. This conference will bring officers and enlisted personnel from Alaska and other states to share their best practices. ■

Coalition Formed for Alaska's Service Members, Veterans and Families

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Throughout the next few years, two million warriors will join the 22 million veterans already living in our nation's communities. The government and armed services need the support of community organizations, federal, state and tribal agencies, and others to provide service members, veterans and their families the support they have earned. The coalition was founded through national initiatives to collaborate, communicate and strengthen support services for those who have served us.

MISSION

Alaska's service members, veterans, and families will be supported and cared for within their communities.

VISION

Educating, informing, and linking Alaska communities, service members, veterans and their families to ensure a healthy future.

FOCUS

Statewide coordination and collaboration – Ensuring a consistent, comprehensive approach to supporting service members, veterans, and families and aligning national, state, and local initiatives and programs.

Community outreach and education – Providing information, training, and resources to all sectors of the community on military culture and how those impact the life cycle and our community, military and veteran population.

Strategic partnerships – Leveraging community assets, connecting organizations and fostering collaboration among partners to decrease duplication of efforts and maximize funding efforts.

STRUCTURE

Advisory board – Will be composed of leaders to promote policy, regulatory, and resource changes to accomplish the state plan while sustaining a nonpartisan approach and ensure the accountability of the overall coalition.

Development team – Consisting of stakeholders to facilitate the development of the action plan and foundation for the coalition.

Alliances – Civilian and military service and support groups representing focus areas designed to help mitigate the negative effects associated with military service. Alliances formed to date include: behavioral health/health, faith, finance, legal, and child and youth.

Behavioral Health/Health Alliance

Alaska communities, service members, veterans, and their families will be educated, informed, and connected with military sensitive health services and resources.

Goal: Collaborate with 10 stakeholders to improve service delivery for service members, veterans and families by Sept. 30, 2014.

Goal: Provide information regarding military culture and resources to 10,000 community members, service members, veterans and families by Sept. 30, 2014.

Faith & Service

Alaska communities, service members, veterans and families will be connected to faith and service organizations to ensure a healthy future.

Goal: Provide five "Boot Camp" workshops to include culturally diverse faith and service organizations by Sept. 1, 2014.

Finance (Education & Employment)

Promote financial self-sufficiency through the education of Alaska's military community.

Goal: Provide information about available military resources to 4,000 community members, service members, veterans and families utilizing existing outreach services by Sept. 30, 2014.

Goal: Improve service delivery for service members, veterans, and families through collaboration and partnership with 10 stakeholders by Sept. 30, 2014.

Legal Alliance

Service members, veterans, families, and communities will have increased knowledge of and access to legal services.

Goal: Provide education and information regarding military and legal services to 3,000 community members, service members, veterans and families by Sept. 30, 2014.

If you would like to participate, add your name to our mailing list, or if you have questions, please contact Lieutenant Colonel Kay Spear-Budd at 907-428-6680 / kay.l.spearbudd.mil@mail.mil or Colette Moring at 907-231-2322 / coleete.moring@serco-na.com. ■

Farewell Salute. From left, Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Schell, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment commander; Lieutenant Colonel Joe Lyon, state aviation officer; and Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, salute as the last two C-23 Sherpa aircraft, of the Alaska Army National Guard, leave Bryant Army Airfield on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in September. For the past 18 years, the C-23 has filled essential missions for the Alaska National Guard. Photo: Major Michele Edwards, 1-207th Aviation

Last Two C-23 Sherpas Leave Alaska

Story by retired First Sergeant Don Teter, 1-207th Aviation

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska … The C-23 Sherpa first arrived in Alaska during the summer of 1996, replacing the UV-18 Twin Otter. The C-23 Sherpa has long been the Army's only cargo aircraft, and since its arrival in Alaska, the C-23 has been put to the test on various missions both statewide and abroad ranging from paradrops to tactical low-level flights.

In peace time, the aircraft has been an indispensable asset to the National Guard and active duty in Alaska. Stateside, the C-23 has been the primary aircraft for paradrop missions; it has transported an immeasurable amount of cargo and passengers and supported search and rescue missions.

F Company, 207th Theater Aviation Company, formerly E Company, has deployed on numerous overseas missions with the C-23 including Operation New Horizon in Central America, three tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and most recently to Egypt for the Multinational Force and Observers mission. The unit has safely flown more than 12,000 combat hours.

During the company's first deployment to Iraq in 2005, aviators flew more than 2.5 million pounds of cargo and more than 3,000 passengers with four C-23 Sherpas and crews. Their motto became "Unarmed, unarmored and unafraid" because of their unconventional use of the C-23 to support a combat mission with an aircraft designed to be a civilian light-cargo commuter.

Saying Goodbye. Guardsmen and friends of 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, gather for a final picture before the last two C-23 Sherpas, of the Alaska Army National Guard, leave Alaska in September. The C-23 Sherpas, crewed by F Company, 207th Theater Aviation Company, were flown to Fort Sill, Okla. Photo: Major Michele Edwards, 1-207th Aviation

During two subsequent tours to Iraq in 2007 and 2009, the aircraft and crews continued to be a key player in the war fight by moving cargo and Soldiers throughout the area of operations. In the Central Command Theater of operations, they were a vital asset and quickly earned a reputation for reliable transport of cargo and personnel throughout Iraq and Kuwait.

For the past 18 years, the C-23 has filled the essential cargo and personnel transport need for the Alaska National Guard and active duty Army. The aircraft and crews have flown supplies from bullets and aircraft parts to food and water. They have shuttled VIPs, delivered special operations troops and carried provisions to remote locations in both peacetime and war, often landing and taking off from primitive air strips.

The last two C-23 aircraft, of the Alaska Army National Guard, departed from Alaska in September. The aircraft were flown to Fort Sill, Okla., by First Lieutenant Dustin Loehndorf, Chief Mel Rush, Chief Wayne Horton, Chief Dave Friend, Staff Sergeant Billy Austin and Staff Sergeant Eric Lumba. ■

ESGR Chairman Visits Bethel, ATG Park

Story and photo by Greg Lincoln,
The Delta Discovery

BETHEL, Alaska ... Retired Major General Paul E. Mock, national chair for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, visited Bethel in September along with former Lieutenant Governor Craig Campbell, who now serves as the state chairman for the Alaska ESGR.

During their visit, they toured the new Alaska Army National Guard readiness center at the airport, the Alaska Territorial Guard Memorial Park and Cemetery, and attended a luncheon hosted by the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation with local ESGR supporters. Mock said that it was a lot cooler in Bethel than the 100-degree weather he had just come from where he lives in southern California.

Also accompanying Mock were Major General Thomas Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, and Jamie Abordonado, program support technician.

"Bethel has been an outstanding community who supports the Guard, especially with the recent deployments," Mock said. "We are very impressed with the quality of Soldiers – they are excellent."

He also was appreciative of all the work done by volunteers at the Alaska Territorial Guard Memorial Park and Cemetery. In the center of the park proudly stands the ATG Soldier with his rifle ready at arms.

The bronze statue stands ever watchful, facing 270 degrees in the direction from which the initial threat came in the 1940s when Japan attacked the United States in the Aleutians.

The statue was erected and dedicated on July 2, 2012, in honor of the 6,368 men and approximately 30 women between the ages of 12-80 for their personal sacrifices and heroism in defending the entire coast of the Territory of Alaska during World War II.

Also at the park are garden boxes, some bursting with leafy greens ready for harvest. The American flag adorned each garden box, fluttering in the wind with each gust on that blustery day.

Greeting the chairmen at the ATG park were members of the American Legion, the VFW Post 10041, City of Bethel Manager Lee Foley and City Clerk Lori Strickler and ESGR Western Area Chairman Louie Crew.

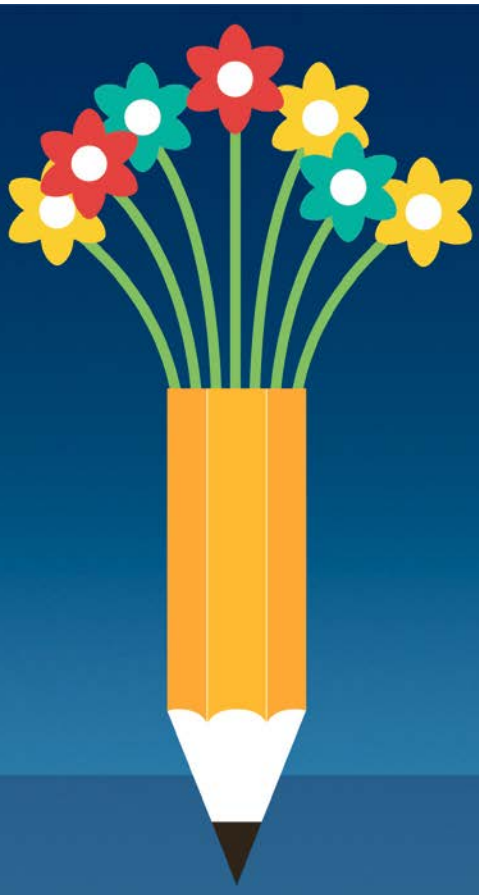
The ESGR party, after their trip to Bethel, also attended the annual awards banquet in Anchorage for employers in gratitude for their support of their military employees. ESGR is a Department of Defense office and was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between military service members and their civilian employers and to help in the resolution of conflicts that may occur during an employee's military commitment.

ESGR has served its members for more than 40 years and has fostered a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States.

"These citizen warriors could not defend and protect us at home and abroad without the continued promise of meaningful civilian employment for themselves and their families," says the ESGR. "ESGR has continued to adapt to meet the needs of Reserve Component members, their families, and America's employers by joining forces with a network of other national, state, and local government and professional trade organizations." ■

Chairman Visits Bethel. Visiting the Alaska Territorial Guard Memorial Park and Cemetery, from left, veterans Tundy Rodgers and Fritz Grenfell; Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve National Chairman Paul Mock; former Lieutenant Governor Craig Campbell, now state ESGR chairman; ESGR Western Area Chairman Louie Crew; Major General Thomas Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard; Jamie Abordonado, ESGR; and veteran David Trantham Jr.

Stellar Support. During his visit to Alaska, Paul Mock, left, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve national chairman, attends the annual employer awards banquet. Featured in the photo are, from left, Mock; Joey Crum, CEO Northern Industrial Training; Rollin Hansen, ESGR awards director; Bill Brophy, vice president, Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc; and Craig Campbell, ESGR state chair. Crum and Brophy are the 2013 recipients of the Pro Patria award, the highest ESGR honor in the state to recognize stellar civilian employer support for their National Guard and Reserve employees. Photo: Courtesy ESGR



Let's celebrate
our teachers.

What's one secret to improved student performance in math and science? Great teachers. Research shows that great teachers make the biggest difference in student performance. And long-term benefits — including college attendance and lifelong earnings — can be affected by the quality of a student's teacher in a single year. That's why ExxonMobil has invested nearly $140 million over the past decade in teacher development programs. Let's invest in our teachers so they can inspire our students. Let's solve this.℠

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Prom, Strongest Man, Veterans, Ambassador Highlight AMYA Activities

By James Jones, AMYA

CAMP CARROLL, Alaska … The Alaska Military Youth Academy staff continues to go above and beyond to meet the mission – "Helping to reclaim and intervene in the lives of at-risk youth…" – while making a difference in the community and across the nation.

First Prom

AMYA staff joined with community stakeholders to host the first-ever prom for the 165 students enrolled in the summer cycle. Ariel Talen-Keller, Ms. Petite United America, and AMYA's own Deborah Morton, Mrs. Alaska Classic, teamed up with RPM coordinator Camai Cassey and other AMYA staff to receive 20 donated formal gowns and makeup for the female cadets. They collaborated on hair and makeup application in addition to holding classes in formal wear etiquette to provide that extra touch. The event was held just prior to graduation at Hangar #1, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. There were decorations, a dance floor and a DJ. For most of the cadets, this was their first formal event of its type in their high school experience.

Strongest Man

The cadets received a surprise visit from William "Bill" Kazmaier, three-time title holder as the World's Strongest Man during 1980-1982. Kazmaier shared his inspiring life story to encourage and motivate the cadets with the philosophy: Conceive, Believe and Achieve. He spoke about how his upbringing and choices could have led him down many paths, but it was a former university professor who gave him an opportunity to hone his natural strength ability that opened other doors. He spoke of the importance of having a dream, working to achieve it and keeping the right people in your life. Kazmaier ended his presentation by bending a skillet with his bare hands.

Veterans Day

At the annual Veterans Day observance, Cadet Corps First Sergeant Jennifer Ohlund laid a commemorative wreath to honor the memory of AMYA graduates who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Veterans Day. Cadet Corps First Sergeant Jennifer Ohlund lays a commemorative wreath sponsored by the Alaska Military Youth Academy during the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Alaska National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Nov. 11. Photo:Roman Schara, AMYA

The cadets from second and fifth platoons posted the 50 state flags, served as the honor guard and joined with the Adjutant General Major General Thomas Katkus and other state and federal dignitaries and community leaders

Challe*NG*e Ambassador

AMYA graduate Lena Illig, Class 2010-01, was one of six National Guard Youth Challe*NG*e Program graduates across the nation to be selected as a 2014 National Guard Youth Foundation Challe*NG*e ambassador. To be eligible, Illig had to make a one-year commitment and be able to travel to the annual Washington, D.C., gala. She will get to share her story and inspire thousands of National Guard Youth Challe*NG*e Program cadets. Illig is a second-year student at the University of Alaska Anchorage majoring in criminal justice. ■

AMYA Prom. From left, cadets Val Mulifai, Siosianaofa Tuikolongahau, Kisa Sims, Erika Maka and Shamila Vahaakolo pose at the AMYA's Class 2013-02 Prom. The first-ever prom for the 165 students enrolled in the cycle was held at a hangar on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Photo:Roman Schara, AMYA

Strongest Man. Brandon Stack and Iraeroy Saunoa, peer mentors for Class 2013-02, receive a signed frying pan that had been curled up by the strength of William "Bill" Kazmaier, three-time title holder as the World's Strongest Man, during a surprise visit on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Photo:Roman Schara, AMYA

Who We Are...

My goal for 2014 is to:

Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Schell
1-207th Aviation

"Compete in my first biathlon with the Alaska National Guard team."

Chief Master Sergeant Steven Calvin
Alaska Air National Guard

"Ensure every enlisted member of the Alaska Air National Guard has the professional opportunities he or she deserves."

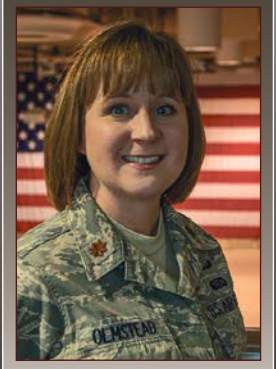
Tiara Lizama
Family Readiness Group

"Start my master's program in counseling."

Sergeant Matthew Sanders
1-297th Reconnaissance & Surveillance Squadron

"Learn something new every day and remember what I've learned!"

Major Candis Olmstead
Joint Public Affairs Office



"Use fewer Post-it® notes."

The mission of the National Guard Alaska Military Youth Academy 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. Over 80% of the Program's graduates go on to become successful citizens by joining the work force, the military or by continuing their education.

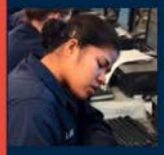
Dream, Believe, Achieve

AMYA Anchorage Office:
(907) 375-5556
(907) 375-5554

AMYA Fairbanks Office:
(907) 374-7960
FAX: (907) 374-7969

Toll Free: 1-877-242-7960

www.ngycp.org/site/state/ak/



Alaska Military Youth Academy

The Alaska Military Youth Academy's ChalleNGe Program is designed to provide life coping skills and meet the educational needs of 16- to 18-year-old Alaskans. The Youth ChalleNGe Program is a 22-week residential school with a 12-month post-residential aftercare follow-up phase.

Challenging The Future
ALASKA Military Youth Academy

Free Tuition

We want to assist you in completing your High School Education or achieve your GED.

"We are making a difference one life at a time."

Tools and Pride.
The 168th Maintenance Squadron Repair and Reclamation shop tool box stands in one of the wing's hangars.

Nose to Tail, Wing Tip to Wing Tip

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

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska … The minute hand steadily clicks past taped-up pictures of hammers and wrenches on the clock in the 168th Maintenance Squadron Repair and Reclamation shop. Airmen mill about performing computer-based training and other administrative tasks, awaiting the call that will set their day in motion.

A cackle lights up the speaker over the airway.

"Dispatch R and R for a red ball," calls the maintenance operations center expediter over the radio. "The rudder's stuck. Won't go to the right."

Before the radio transmission can finish, Airmen quickly don their safety gear and are out of the shop. By the time the minute hand strides past the hammer, the room is empty.

Tucked away in Hangar 1140, or "Thunderdome," the 168th R and R shop plays an important role in the 168th Air Refueling Wing's mission.

That mission is to train Alaska Guardsmen to provide a constant Air Force capability of global reach and vigilance with the KC-135 aircraft and early warning space systems in order to stand ready to protect American resources and Alaska communities.

Accomplishing that enterprise, 168th ARW aircraft transfer more fuel than any other Air National Guard tanker wing. With so many tankers in the air, it's important that 168th ARW aircraft are in gear and ready to go.

"We're the ones that go from nose to tail, wing tip to wing tip; we touch everything on the jet," said Staff Sergeant Bill Smith, 168th Maintenance Squadron aerospace maintenance technician.

R and R is responsible for checking cable tension, or rigging, and maintaining landing gear, flight controls, windows, wheels and tires. They also play a part in crash recovery as well as maintaining the six tripod jacks used to lift a KC-135.

"If you want the planes to fly straight and level and you want them to land, you need R and R," said Technical Sergeant Pete Smith, 168th MXS aerospace maintenance technician.

R and R Airmen go to the same technical school as crew chiefs do, but they learn specialized skills in their home unit. In fact, crew chiefs, the isochronal inspection shop and R and R all have the same Air Force specialty code.

"It makes our job unique," said Master Sergeant George Bender, 168th MXS R and R shop chief. "There is no tech school for our craft. We learn through trial by fire. We have to pass down our knowledge to the next generation of Airmen."

Knowledgeable in a handful of skill sets, aerospace maintenance technicians work on parts both big and small.

According to Senior Airman Torre Jackson, 168th MXS aerospace maintenance technician, the R and R shop uses a bead breaker to break down and build tires.

"We take the inner ring apart from the tire and send the tire in to be inspected for cracks," Jackson said. "Then we reconstruct the tire when we receive the new parts."

Six tripod jacks are needed to lift the KC-135 in order to remove the landing gear, Jackson said. Together, eight Airmen lift

the aircraft, ensuring that the pressure gauge on each tripod does not exceed 20,000 tons. One Airman stands on a ladder and watches a ruler's yellow level that shows whether the aircraft is balanced. Along with a supervisor, he tells his wingmen to raise or lower tripod jacks in order to balance the tanker.

The R and R shop also maintains cables and checks cable tension.

"Changing cables is not hard; it's tedious," Jackson said. "We change them if they corrode or if you see wear."

According to Bill Smith, the best part of his job is working on the landing gear.

"It's the most fun, but the most time consuming," he said. "You go out there and spend a couple days doing it, but we're out there swinging 36-pound brass hammers and gigantic pins to hold this thing in there."

Many Airmen said it is the challenge that makes working in R and R the best job in the wing.

"We don't do the same thing every day," Jackson said. "We get challenged in a way because we get stuff that makes us go into our books and really research."

Some equipment that R and R Airmen service rarely breaks or needs replacing.

"We get to work on pieces that, in a 16-year span, have been worked on by three people," said Bill Smith of a stabilizer trim actuator they replaced in September.

The 127-pound horizontal threaded rod moves the tail up and down. But to get to it, R and R Airmen must climb through a tail compartment access door, roughly the size of an average car window with space inside enough for three people.

"You can stand up straight, but you're between cables and other little greasy things," Jackson said. "It's dark up there with no air flow, and that's why they call it the hell hole."

"When it's outside and it's summer time and you're up there, it gets up into the 90s, 100 degrees," Bill Smith said. "Unless we're making noise or our feet are dangling out, you don't even know that we're up there."

Keeping Aircraft Flying. Senior Airman Torre Jackson, left, and Technical Sergeant Pete Smith, both of the 168th Maintenance Squadron Repair and Reclamation shop, work on a KC-135 at Eielson Air Force Base.

"And then we look kind of like clowns coming out," Jackson said. "It's like, 'How many people are going to come out there?'"

The 168th ARW provides the opportunity to flex different muscles and learn new skills – the R & R shop is a closely knit group.

"We're goofballs," Jackson said. "We just get along like we're a family and we look out for each other. It's a fun job."

While the shop may be a little farther down the flight line, tucked away in the Thunderdome, its importance to the wing cannot be overlooked. ■

New Military Security Studies Minor in HSEM Program Now at UAF

FAIRBANKS, Alaska … The Homeland Security and Emergency Management Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has introduced a Military Security Studies minor to assist military members and veterans in earning a bachelor's degree. The minor will accept up to 10 credits from a military transcript toward completion of a 16-credit minor, requiring those with the requisite military experience to take only two classes to round out the minor.

"We know service members gain valuable expertise and insight through military schools and training, and we want them to know we honor that," said Cameron Carlson HSEM Program director and retired Army lieutenant colonel.

The HSEM Program builds upon an individual's technical capabilities derived from education, training and experience in fire, law enforcement or military combined with curricula of business administration, emergency management and homeland security instruction. This training prepares students to lead organizations during a crisis response. The degree also provides those at the responder level with an opportunity to further their education and increase their competitive advantage for promotion.

In addition to the Military Security Studies minor, the HSEM Program has recently unveiled the new Center for the Study of Science, Hazards, Response, and Preparedness, which partners capabilities from the UAF School of Management, the Geophysical Institute, the International Arctic Research Center, and the College of Natural Science and Mathematics to create new technologies and operational procedures to respond to and mitigate global disasters.

To learn more about what the HSEM Program has to offer, visit the new HSEM site at www.uaf.edu/som/degrees/undergraduate/bem/. ■

Awards • Decorations • Promotions

Meritorious Service Medal

SSG Jay E. Baldwin. . . . . R&R
SFC Betty A. Bell. . . . . 1-207th AVN
SSG Mark A. Thomas . . . . . 1-207th AVN
SFC Stephen J. Moulfair . . . . . 1-207th AVN
MSG David L. Gresham. . . . . .207th BSC
LTC Stephan Wilson . . . . . .103rd CST
MSG Donald Ramey . . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)
SFC Ernest J. Carrillo . . . . . .297th MP
SFC Randall C. Lemieux . . . . . .297th MP
SSG Dennis C. Dillon. . . . . .297th MP
Lt Col Thomas Bolin . . . . . .210th RQS
CMSgt Steven Calvin. . . . . JFHQ-AK (Air)
Michelle Davidson. . . . . .176th OSS
Paul Fruend. . . . . 176th MSG
MSgt Brandon Stuemke. . . . . .212th RQS
MSgt Claudia Walton. . . . . 176th FSF
Capt Aaron Zamora . . . . . .212th RQS
MSgt Michael B. Malatek. . . . . .168th MXS
MSgt Brandon M. Grisham . . . . . 168th OSF
Maj Matthew M. McClurg . . . . . 213th SWS
SMSgt Sharon L. Blair. . . . . 168th ARW
SMSgt Christy L. Blaum . . . . . 168th FSF

Army Commendation Medal

SSG Aracelis E. Ovalles. . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)
SSG Michael D. Dean . . . . . 38th TC
MSG Michael W. Haltom . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)

Air Force Commendation Medal

TSgt Shane Hargis . . . . . .212th RQS
MSgt Charles H. Hixon . . . . . 168th CF
MSgt Christian D. Willey . . . . . .168th ARS
MSgt Gary L. Critchfield . . . . . .168th MXS

Army Achievement Medal

CW3 Curtis W. Cain . . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)

Air Force Achievement Medal

Kylie Lippert . . . . . .176th OSS
TSgt Keith M. Rowan. . . . . .168th ARS
SrA Britany L. Sprague . . . . . .168th LRS

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

CW2 Jeffery A. Arnold . . . . . .207th BSC

Alaska Distinguished Service Medal

SFC Stephen J. Moulfair . . . . . 1-207th AVN
SSG Mark A. Thomas . . . . . .1-207th AVN CO

Alaska Commendation Medal

SSG Michael D. Dean . . . . . 38th TC
SSG John T. Vojtasek . . . . . 49th GMD
PFC Tadhg M. Nakada. . . . . 1-207th AVN
SFC Dennis Dillon . . . . . .297th MP
SFC Ernest J. Carrillo . . . . . .297th MP
SFC Randall C. Lemieux . . . . . .297th MP
SGT Damion D. Minchaca . . . . . .207th MFTR
SFC Betty A. Bell. . . . . 1-207th AVN
SSG Jay E. Baldwin. . . . . R&R
MSG Regina M. McDonald . . . . . .NGB

Alaska State Service Medal

SSG Angela Carelock . . . . . .207th MFTR

Congratulations to all!

RETIREMENTS

SGT Dennis Tommy . . . . . 1-143rd IN (ABN)
SFC Kendre Jones. . . . . MED DET
SFC Gordon Reid . . . . . .JFHQ-AK (Army)
MSgt Trojan L. Smith . . . . . .213th SWS
TSgt Joseph Brunsvold . . . . . .213th SWS
TSgt Derek Mills . . . . . .168th MXS
Lt Col Douglas Beam . . . . . 168th OSF
CMSgt Timothy L. Carrier . . . . . .168th MXS
TSgt Mark D. Donica. . . . . .168th MXS
Arthur Clark . . . . . 176th ACS
Ronald Sekula. . . . . 176th ACS
Linda Dunegan . . . . . .176th MDG
Donald Hoover . . . . . 144th AS
Tadd McCauley . . . . . 176th LRS
James Martinez . . . . . 176th LRS
Thomas Cobaugh . . . . . .176th MSG
MSgt Claudia Walton. . . . . .176th FSF
Thomas McRae. . . . . 176th MOF
Scotty Meek . . . . . .176th WG
Amy Schwalber. . . . . .176th AMXS
Rawley Langvardt . . . . . .176th AMXS
Scott Nelsen . . . . . 211th RQS
Michael Matlock . . . . . 176th MXS
Timothy Delph. . . . . .JFHQ-AK (Air)
Ralph Taylor . . . . . .176th SFS

PROMOTIONS

Colonel
Dan E. Collins . . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)
James W. Halliday Jr. . . . . .MED DET
Chad J. Parker . . . . . 297th BfSB
Jeffery A. Roach . . . . . JFHQ-Ak (Army)

Lieutenant Colonel
Kevin T. Clifford . . . . . 176th WG
Gregory J. Yoschak . . . . . 176th WG
Eric D. Budd . . . . . 176th WG
James P. Bodolosky . . . . . 176th WG

Major
Patrick E. Ballard . . . . . .MED DET
Randall K. Russell . . . . . 297th BfSB
Samuel D. Scott . . . . . .1-297th R&S
Albert E. Wall . . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)
Paul M. Kavanaugh . . . . . 176th WG
Brian D. Yeargan . . . . . 176th WG
Benjamin J. Webber . . . . . 176th WG

Captain
Gilberto Ortizsegarra . . . . . 49th GMD
Troy H. Townsend . . . . . .MED DET
Traci R. Reeves . . . . . 176th WG
Daniel P. Kozak . . . . . 176th WG

Chief Warrant Officer Four
Marcia L. Harrison . . . . . 297th BfSB
Wayne F. Horton . . . . . DET 54
Katheren Sanders . . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)

Chief Warrant Officer Three
Brian P. Baranek . . . . . 1-207th AVN

Chief Master Sergeant
Kimberly H. Mortrud . . . . . 168th ARW

Master Sergeant (Army)
Robert D. Carson . . . . . 49th GMD
Kendre A. Jones . . . . . .MED DET
Ryan J. Weimer. . . . . .103rd CST

Senior Master Sergeant
Richard Beal . . . . . .176th CE
Tiffany Gregory . . . . . 176th MDG
Anthony Liberty . . . . . .176th CE
Stacy L. Pfau . . . . . 168th MSG
Scott D. Stewart . . . . . 168th MSG

Sergeant First Class
Christian D. Cederberg . . . . . .761st MP
Brian R. Christman . . . . . 1-207th AVN
Ivan G. Cuevasruiz . . . . . R&R
Douglas W. McKee . . . . . JFHQ-Ak (Army)
Kenneth C. Nydam . . . . . 1-297th CAV
Sheila J. Tadina . . . . . 1-207th AVN
Joseluis Villasenor . . . . . .207th CS
Joseph D. Yeager Jr . . . . . R&R
Joseph W. Zimmerman . . . . . .207th MFTR

Master Sergeant (Air)
Kristofer Abel . . . . . .212th RQS
Steven Cherry . . . . . 176th MXG
Samuel Cooper . . . . . .176th OSS
Devin Dinardo . . . . . .176th LRS
Daniel Green . . . . . .210th RQS
Kristine Laughlinhall . . . . . .176th ADS
Lucy Nagel . . . . . 176th WG
Jason Phillips . . . . . .176th ADS
Amy Robinson . . . . . 176th SFS
Bryan Spake . . . . . 176th CE
Brian T. Zeisel . . . . . 168th SFS

Staff Sergeant (Army)
James M. Breton. . . . . 297th BfSB
Wayne H. Chaput . . . . . .761st MP
Joey Hubert Emon Lewis . . . . . 1-207th AVN
Jacob M. Lingnau . . . . . .297th MP
Jason Rafael . . . . . JFHQ-AK (Army)
John F. Tugatuk . . . . . .1-143rd IN (ABN)
John M. Wimberly . . . . . .103rd CST

Technical Sergeant
Andre Debrito . . . . . .176th ADS
Franz Deters . . . . . 176th WG
Kim Matthews. . . . . .176th LRS
Cory Schaefers . . . . . .176th OG
Nathan Skains. . . . . 176th AMXS
Kevin Sumner . . . . . .176th ACS
Jason S. Mills . . . . . 168th SFS
Rodney A. Phillips. . . . . 168th SFS
Justin M. Freling . . . . . 168th AMXS
Fredrick W. Smith . . . . . .168th MXS
Jamie L. Garcia. . . . . .168th OG

Sergeant
Sarah R. Almeida . . . . . 49th GMD
Aaron J. Axel. . . . . 49th GMD
Brandon M. Barnes . . . . . 1-297th R&S
Kevin T. Biscoe . . . . . .761st MP
Carol S. Cornett Jr. . . . . .1-297 CAV
Travis L. Douglas . . . . . 1-207th AVN
Philip R. Gerbin . . . . . .297th MP
Jessica M. Jefferis . . . . . 49th GMD
Jacob P. Johnson . . . . . .MED DET
Colin M. Kelley . . . . . 1-297th R&S
Bradley A. Kersbergen. . . . . 297th BfSB
Gerardo Lopez . . . . . 49th GMD
Esther F. Maka. . . . . R&R Battalion
Edwin A. Marcanogarcia . . . . . .207th CS
Christopher L. Norbert. . . . . 297th BfSB
Andy J. Ortizalverio . . . . . 49th GMD
Joel Panganmartinez. . . . . 49th GMD
Justn D. Simpson . . . . . 49th GMD
Tominiko S. Vaka Jr. . . . . 49th GMD
Justin T. Whithead . . . . . 49th GMD
Tosca M. Yeager . . . . . 297th BfSB

Staff Sergeant (Air)
Meut Chantha . . . . . 176th SFS
Jennifer Fitzpatrick . . . . . .249th AS
Marilou Llaneza. . . . . 176th SFS
Timothy Magana . . . . . .176th MXS
Lydia Stroud . . . . . .176th ADS
Andrea Valentine . . . . . 168th FSF
Tiffanni U. Sharnbroich . . . . . 168th CF

Alaska Army National Guard Promotes a Record Crop of New Colonels

By Brigadier General Mike Bridges, Alaska Army National Guard

During November, four officers received their new symbols of senior rank and pinned on their eagles: Colonel Jeff Roach, 38th Troop Command, commander; Colonel Chad Parker, 297th Battlefield Sustainment Brigade, commander; Colonel Dan Collins, Joint Forces Headquarters, staff judge advocate; and Colonel Doctor James Halliday, Medical Detachment, dental officer. All of these officers demonstrated their leadership, professionalism and success in the past to be eligible for the obligations, potential and opportunities to serve in the senior roles of the Alaska Army National Guard. The fact that all four were promoted on the same promotion list may be unprecedented in Alaska Army National Guard history and merits a special celebration of the quality of our force. ■

Start of the Trail

Welcome to our newest members & employees

212th Rescue Squadron

Christopher Blue
Aaron Zamora

176th Civil Engineer Squadron

Bernard Bautista
Daniel Smith
Alex Mannion
Brayton Johnson

176th Wing

Matthew Prieksat

176th Comptroller Flight

Clara Glynn

176th Maintenance Group

Brian Carroll

176th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Rendon Corbin
Kyle Dickerson
Kayla Shetfield
Jenifer Cerimele
Nathan Skains
Breanna Kerr
Meagan Stone

176th Air Defense Squadron

Joshua Black
Geroge Lopez
Breanna Kerr
Meagan Stone
Zachary Cherry
Issac Owens

176th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Jimmy Mccombs
Abegail Almario
Mitchell Lee
Elizabeth McJannet
Christa Budde
Kenneth Whitlock

144th Airlift Squadron

Seth Wilkinson
Jessica Caplan

176th Operations Group

Suzanne Smith

176th Operational Support Squadron

Dustin Dorshorst

176th Medical Group

Sarah Bowerfind
Marla Ochavido
John Laughlin
Michael Middleton
Madison Ginnity

168th Security Forces Squadron

Amber Still
Domonick Coleman

168th Operations Squadron

Ryan Seifert
Gustavus Smith

168th Medical Group

Zachariah Raby

168th Maintenance Squadron

William Sartin
Greg Guzman
Laura Evans

168th Air Refueling Wing Headquarters

Casey Henry

168th Communications Flight

Christopher McClure

213th Space Warning Squadron

Carlos Rosariocastro

168th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Kayla Spencer

168th Student Flight

Taylor Blair

168th Operations Support Flight

Harvey Campbell
Jarvis Johnson

168th Mission Support Flight

Melanie McManus

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	February	March	April
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	8-9	1-2	12-13
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	22-23	22-23	12-13
Alaska Army National Guard			
297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	21-23	27-30	11-13
38th Troop Command	22-23	14-16	12-13
Alaska Air National Guard			
168th Air Refueling Wing	8-9	1-2	12-13
176th Wing	8-9	1-2	12-13
Alaska State Defense Force			
Headquarters	8-9	29-30	12-13

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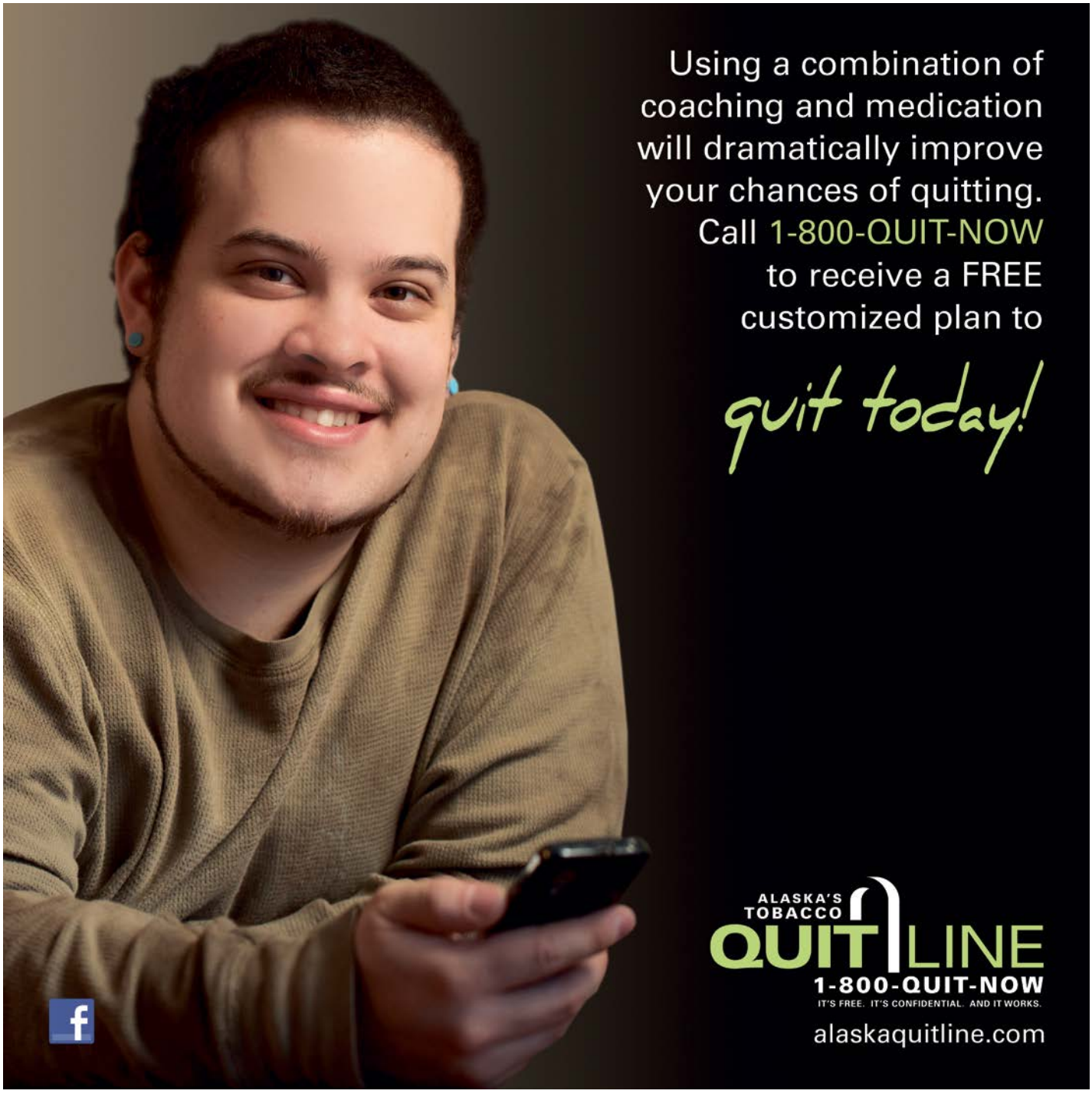
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