

# WARRIORS



**Youth Triumph in  
Pre-Apprenticeship Program**

Ask about our  
extended stays



Just a Few of our Amenities

Executive Suites

Kitchenettes

(in selected rooms)



Wireless Internet • Shuttle Service • Cable TV • Fitness Center  
(Airport & Rail)

907.459.2700 95 Tenth Ave. Fairbanks  
[www.RegencyFairbanksHotel.com](http://www.RegencyFairbanksHotel.com)



SLOW ROASTED  
HICKORY SMOKED  
**BARBEQUE**  
BEEF, PORK & CHICKEN

Gourmet Burgers  
Signature Sandwiches  
Soups & Salads



**FOR LUNCH & DINNER**

907.452.5222 95 Tenth Ave. Fairbanks  
**INSIDE THE REGENCY FAIRBANKS HOTEL**



**Gov. Bill Walker**  
Commander in Chief



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

**CONTRIBUTORS**

**Kalei Rupp**  
Managing Editor, DMVA Public Affairs

**Bob Doehl**  
Deputy Commissioner, DMVA

**Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead**  
Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel

**Sgt. Marisa Lindsay**  
Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**Ron Clarke**  
**Timothy Shaw**  
Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

**Sgt. David Bedard**  
134th Public Affairs Detachment

**Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla**  
**Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton**  
176th Wing Public Affairs

**Tech. Sgt. Laurel Foster**  
**Senior Airman Zac Heinen**  
176th Wing

**Col. Marvin Ee**  
**Master Sgt. Cornelius Mingo**  
168th Wing

**Jeremy Zidek**  
**Julie Baker**  
Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

**Verdie Bowen**  
Veterans Affairs

**Dr. James Jones**  
**Roman Schara**  
Alaska Military Youth Academy

**Chaplain (Col.) Rick Koch**  
**Chief Warrant Officer 4 Pamela Vitt**  
Alaska Army National Guard

**Staff Sgt. Steve Cortez**  
U.S. Army

**Peter Naoroz**  
Office of Sen. Dennis Egan

# WARRIORS

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs



## FEATURES

168th Wing Redesignation Showcases Mission Set..... 11  
 Building Resiliency in Rural Alaska ..... 14  
 7.1 Earthquake A Wake-up Call for Many ..... 17  
 Army Guard Members Engage in Rural Alaska ..... 20  
 Arctic Terns Fly South for Winter ..... 22  
 Air Guard Civil Engineers Return from Middle East..... 29  
 Connecting Veterans with Energy Jobs..... 33  
 Command Chief Warrant Officer Puts Soldiers First..... 36

## SECTIONS

Governor's Message..... 4  
 The Adjutant General ..... 5  
 Deputy Commissioner ..... 7  
 Where in the World..... 12  
 Alaska State Defense Force ..... 15  
 Chaplain's Corner..... 16  
 Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management ..... 18  
 Missile Defense ..... 24  
 Historical Highlight ..... 26  
 Hats We Wear..... 27  
 Veterans..... 28  
 Alaska Military Youth Academy ..... 30  
 Warrior and Family Services ..... 32  
 Message to the Force..... 34  
 Who We Are..... 37  
 Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve ..... 38  
 Awards and Decorations..... 39  
 Promotions, Retirements, Changes of Command ..... 40  
 Status of Discipline Actions ..... 41  
 Start of the Trail..... 42  
 Warriors Training Schedule ..... 42



**Cover.** Alaska Military Youth Academy graduate and Anchorage resident Adrienne Tauili'iili uses an acetylene torch to cut a piece of steel to later weld during the construction trade portion of the pre-apprenticeship program at the Iron Workers Training Center in March. Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy



**Teaching Technology.** Alaska Military Youth Academy Class 2016-1 graduates (from left) Isaac Snider, Alexis Creech and Justin Bushke work on repairs to a PC as part of the information technology portion of the AMYA pre-apprenticeship program in March. Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy

<http://dmva.alaska.gov>



**MARCOA Publishing, Inc.**  
Matt Benedict, **President, CEO**  
Jamie Rogers, **Editor**  
Kristina Christian, **Graphic Designer**  
Matt Gerber, **Advertising Sales**

**MBG** Toll Free: 866-562-9300  
www.MyBaseGuide.com  
www.AQPpublishing.com

NationalGuardSales@AQPpublishing.com

Warriors is a commercial enterprise publication, produced in partnership, quarterly, by the State of Alaska, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, P.O. Box 5800, Camp Denali, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska 99505-5800, phone 907-428-6031, fax 428-6035; and MARCOA Publishing, Inc., 341 W. Tudor Road, Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. 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>.

**HOW TO REACH US**

**Letters:** Letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and mailing address. Letters should be brief and are subject to editing.

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

Warriors Magazine

Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs  
Office of Public Affairs  
P.O. Box 5800, Camp Denali  
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK 99505-5800  
907-428-6031/Fax 428-6035



Visit us on Facebook



# Governor's Message

Gov. Bill Walker  
Commander in Chief

On behalf of all Alaskans, I want to express my profound appreciation of the Soldiers and Airmen of the Alaska National Guard and the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs for their service to Alaska. The state is facing a daunting fiscal situation, and DMVA has been increasing its efficiency in the past few years to prepare for leaner times, while still serving Alaskans statewide. DMVA personnel continue to positively impact Alaskans in several ways.

The lives of at-risk youth are enhanced and developed through the Alaska Military Youth Academy. A new pre-apprenticeship program began after the graduation of 118 cadets of the Alaska Military Youth Academy Class 2016-1 in February. Forty-two cadets returned to the Academy to take part in four-week vocational training courses, which focused on construction, culinary arts and information technology. This pre-apprenticeship program provided cadets with hands-on training, certifications and connections to potential entry-level jobs or other apprenticeship programs that will benefit both them and our state in the future.

The Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management helps Alaska communities plan, train and exercise their abilities to respond to disasters and emergencies. In January, I sent a team to Kivalina to reinvigorate the community's emergency response planning efforts in light of coastal erosion threatening the community. Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott joined the commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, and others to revitalize Kivalina's existing emergency response plans.

The initial steps to improve Kivalina's disaster response capabilities are part of a long-term plan to prepare the community for its self-proposed relocation to a nearby site that will provide shelter from storm surges and other types of disasters. The State of Alaska hopes that the Kivalina relocation will serve as a model for other Alaska communities that may consider a move in the future.

On Jan. 24, an earthquake of 7.1 in magnitude struck Iniskin, causing only minimal damage. I join DHS&EM in recommending that Alaskans see this incident as an

opportunity to conduct non-structural seismic mitigation. Securing heavy furniture, flat screen televisions and other items can prevent damage, injury or even death in the event of an earthquake. All Alaskans should build a seven-day emergency kit, establish a family communication plan and learn other actions to take before an earthquake or other emergency occurs.

The Alaska State Defense Force's newest unit, the 2nd Signal Detachment, was activated during a ceremony at the Alaska Army National Guard armory in Bethel in mid-January. The new unit will provide satellite communications from Bethel to the Joint

Operations Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. This unit will also enlarge the footprint of military service in the region and afford more opportunities for rural residents.

I am grateful to Alaska's Department of Military & Veterans Affairs and the Alaska National Guard for their dedicated service and encourage all Alaskans to acknowledge the efforts of our dedicated servicemen and women.

Sincerely,



**Chief of Staff Visits Alaska.** Gov. Bill Walker, right, meets with U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, center, and U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan at the Alaska National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in February. Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, hosted the meeting and later led a briefing where Alaska National Guard members informed Milley about the state of the Guard in the Last Frontier. Photo: Staff Sgt. Steve Cortez, U.S. Army



# The Adjutant General

**Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel**  
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard  
Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

## It's Not a One Way Street

The late journalist Sydney J. Harris said, "The two words *information* and *communication* are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through." I am sure that one common experience we all have is at one time working for or with someone who did not understand the difference.

As your commissioner and adjutant general, I remain committed to communicating with this organization. In my previous *Warriors* column, I stressed the importance of developing a learning organization. I know that one person is not as strong or intelligent as the group and that we increase productivity by encouraging everyone to lean in together through teamwork to continually improve DMVA. To that end, I would like to take this time to review some of the communications methods I've used so far, why I use them and to request your assistance with improving them.

One communication method I use is messages to the force. This is my fourth message to you with the past three covering the roles and functions of the joint staff and the selection of the director of joint staff; ethical fitness and the status of discipline; and the announcement of key non-commissioned officer position selections. The aim of these messages is to communicate with minimal filtering through second- and third-hand transmission errors (everyone has played the telephone game) with the overall intent to increase transparency of actions. My messages to the force should be displayed on every unit's bulletin board and emailed to every DMVA member. If you have not seen these, I encourage you to ask your supervisor.

Recently, I had the pleasure of having lunch with a number of Soldiers from 38th Troop Command. This was a chance for these junior Soldiers and non-commissioned officers to talk freely and openly without other senior leaders in the room and let me see from their perspective the challenges they face. They also provided great

recommendations on how to improve processes throughout the organization. It was truly bottom up refinement. Another way I receive feedback is through visiting you at your place of work. Opportunities like these are a couple of the great benefits of being the commissioner and adjutant general, and I would love to do it more often. I recently met an NCO in line at Subway who asked me to visit his Soldiers. In these cases, I'll say, yes, every time. Please let me know when and where, and I will be there!

One small, seemingly minor improvement we are undertaking is the revision of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs website. In this digital age, distributed communications are more important than ever, and my goal is to have a first-class webpage for our employees and the citizens of Alaska. We do so many great things on a daily basis and have so many programs to offer that I want a website that highlights all of our opportunities. Please visit the new website at [dmva.alaska.gov](http://dmva.alaska.gov) and let me know your thoughts.

On Feb. 5, we had an "all-call" on the drill hall floor. We broadcast it to all the remote stations, again trying to increase the opportunity to communicate directly. I discussed our current initiatives, recognized a few of our outstanding employees and answered

your questions. I had a similar all-call in Juneau later in the month. This is something I look to do more regularly. I have reached out to each of the division directors for their input, but if you have a way to make these events more beneficial, please speak up.

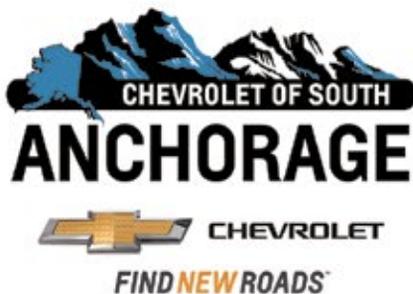
I dislike the idea of *information* as presented by Harris, and I remain committed to *communicating* with you. As I have said before, the sum of DMVA is greater than its individual parts. We now have a DMVA mission, a vision, core values, and we're almost complete on the first DMVA Integrated Strategy. Getting out of our silos and communicating with one another is critical to accomplishing our common goals. People who work with me every day are used to hearing me say "it's hard to over-communicate." Most of our misunderstandings and dropped balls occur because we under- not over-communicated. I often ask myself "who else needs to know what I know about this to be successful." I urge everyone to communicate unselfishly for the benefit of us all.

Please stop me in the hall, send me an email or use any other method to communicate with me about how I can better convey the great things we are doing and undertaking. And as always, thank you for what you do for Alaska and our nation.

Your teammate,



**Town Hall.** Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, marks a full year at the helm of DMVA by hosting a town hall session in February. She used the open-forum meeting to thank the DMVA family for their hard work, acknowledge and celebrate positive progress in the organization and discuss strategic plans for the future. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



AT CHEVROLET OF SOUTH ANCHORAGE  
**WE'RE PROUD TO OFFER OUR  
MILITARY PURCHASE PROGRAM**

**PRE-OWNED**

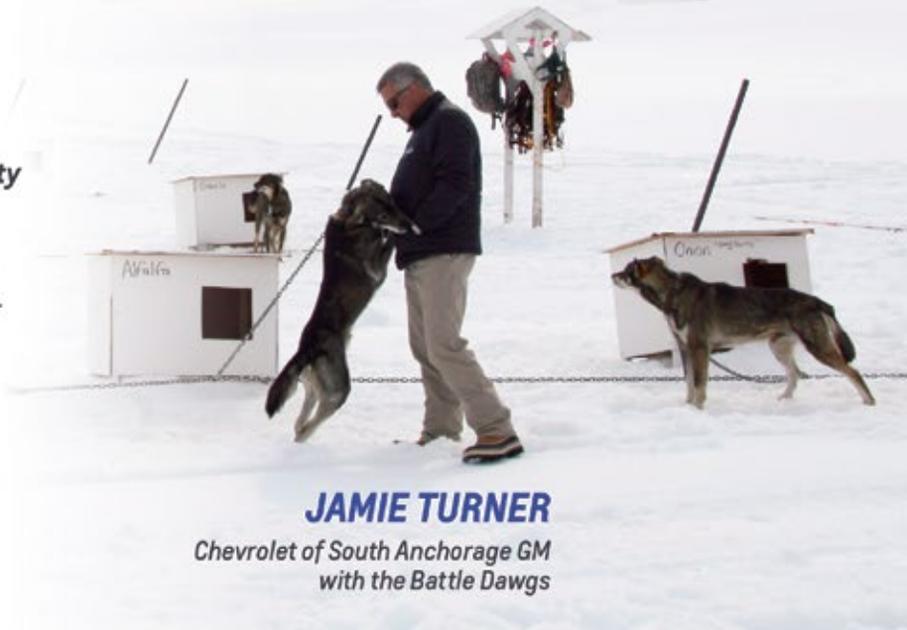
- Certified Pre-Owned with 100K mile warranty
- Assured vehicles with warranty

**EASY FINANCING TERMS**

- First-Time Buyer Program
- Approvals beginning at E1
- Low interest rates & easy terms

**SERVICE & PARTS**

- Military discounts
- Express maintenance



**NEW CHEVYS**

- Special military pricing, not just an added rebate.
- Huge selection of over 600 new Chevy cars, trucks & SUVs.
- No cost 2-year / 24,000 mile maintenance.

**TEST DRIVE A NEW CHEVY TODAY!**

**AnchorageChevrolet.com**

9100 Old Seward Hwy just south of the Dimond Center



# Deputy Commissioner

Bob Doehl  
Deputy Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

## DMVA: By the Number\$

Alaska is facing one of its greatest fiscal challenges in history. The primary source of state revenue to provide services to Alaskans is from oil production. As such, the Alaska state budget is subject to the volatility of the price of oil. Oil is now being sold for less than one-third of what it was selling for two years ago.

The scenario is challenging. Alaska is projected to run a \$3.7 billion deficit on a \$5 billion annual budget for 2016. We cannot avoid the deficit with cuts. If EVERY state employee was laid off for the entire year, it would only reduce our deficit by about \$1.2 billion, i.e., we would still be \$2.5 billion in the red. Nonetheless, finding every possible cost savings must be part of the solution. Amid this discussion, we should look at how well our own Department of Military & Veterans Affairs has performed in this regard.

DMVA has been fiscally ruthless for more than a decade to assure that we are maximizing the services we provide for Alaskans and finding those cost savings. There are five aspects that point out the incredible fiscal responsibility, dedication and hard work DMVA members, both uniformed and non-uniformed, have provided to Alaskans throughout the past decade.

and their communities each year with curveballs thrown by Mother Nature. Despite the department thus touching the lives of well over one-third of the state population of 738,000 each year, DMVA has the smallest budget of any department, comprising just 0.6 percent of the state budget.

The third aspect is the high level of federal money that DMVA brings in with this budget. Simply stated, for a total state operating budget of under \$18 million, DMVA will bring in an estimated \$500 million in federal funds this year. Overall, the return on investment is about 28:1.

By division, this looks like:

- Air Guard: \$2.986 million state funding produces \$3.503 million in federal receipts paid to the state and \$163.185 million in direct federal payments. In other words, the return on investment is about 48:1.
- Army Guard: \$4.771 million state funding produces \$6.536 million in federal receipts and \$51.165 million in direct federal payments. In other words, the return on investment is about 9:1.

*“We have run out of money.  
Now we have to think!”*

Winston Churchill

The first perspective is the DMVA budget over time. This year, the DMVA general fund operating budget is \$15.611 million. By comparison, our budget for all programs in 2007, 11 years ago, was \$17.447 million. In other words, our budget has shrunk by more than \$1 million over the past 11 years. Had our budget grown as fast as the inflation rate, it would be \$5 million more at \$20.911 million.

The second aspect is a comparison of the DMVA budget with the other departments of state. The state of Alaska has the most veterans per capita with about 75,000 and growing 5 percent per year, as well as more than 120,000 veteran dependents. DMVA's Office of Veterans Affairs is crucial to getting these Alaskans connected with the federal benefits they earned.

DMVA also has more than 4,000 uniformed service members. The Alaska Military Youth Academy provides a life-changing path for more than 250 Alaska youth each year. The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management assists thousands of Alaskans

- AMYA: \$5.114 million in state funding produces \$3.636 million in federal receipts.
- DHS&EM: \$3.602 million in state funding produces \$4.143 million in federal receipts.
- Office of Veterans Affairs: \$1.941 million in state funding produces \$158,300 in federal receipts and enables \$267.333 million in direct federal payments. In other words, the return on investment is about 280:1.

The fourth aspect is the outstanding quality programs that DMVA has developed. The Office of Veterans Affairs is an excellent example but far from the only center of excellence in the department. While DMVA reduced its budget by more than 25 percent over 11 years, it has put in place a grant program for 17 veterans service officers on top of four state employees who provide statewide service to our veterans. Their accomplishments last year include:

*continued on page 8*

- Assisted 57,989 Alaskans with state and federal VA benefits requests. This is an increase of more than 10,000 from state fiscal year 2014 and reflects a workload of 7.5 clients per day for each member of the Veterans Affairs staff and veterans service officers.
- Assisted Alaska veterans in receiving more than \$222 million in federally funded medical care.
- Assisted Alaska veterans in receiving disability compensation payments totaling \$244 million in direct federal funds.
- Assisted 4,605 students (veterans and eligible family members) to receive \$74 million in federally funded education/vocational rehabilitation benefits.
- Assisted 5,208 veterans in obtaining home loan certificates resulting in more than \$1.4 billion in guaranteed loans. This is the first time the VA

Home Loan program passed \$1 billion in Alaska.

While accomplishing these tasks, the state Office of Veterans Affairs received the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award for its role in facilitating agreements between the VA and Alaska Native tribal clinics as an innovative solution to provide healthcare for rural veterans. Additionally, the Office of Veterans Affairs has continued to facilitate growth in the tribal veterans representative program, which now boasts more than 200 volunteers across Alaska to assist veterans in obtaining benefits, particularly healthcare.

Last, but not least, is the aspect that reflects the intangible value DMVA programs bring to Alaskans. From providing a vector change for a teenager otherwise headed downhill to getting a veteran the assistance earned, DMVA provides credible hope to Alaskans to overcome curveballs that life has thrown at them. We prepare Alaskan patriots

in military service to excel in combat. When a community has lost everything, we offer the assurance and path forward to recovery and return to normalcy. Every day, we make a difference in countless lives across Alaska.

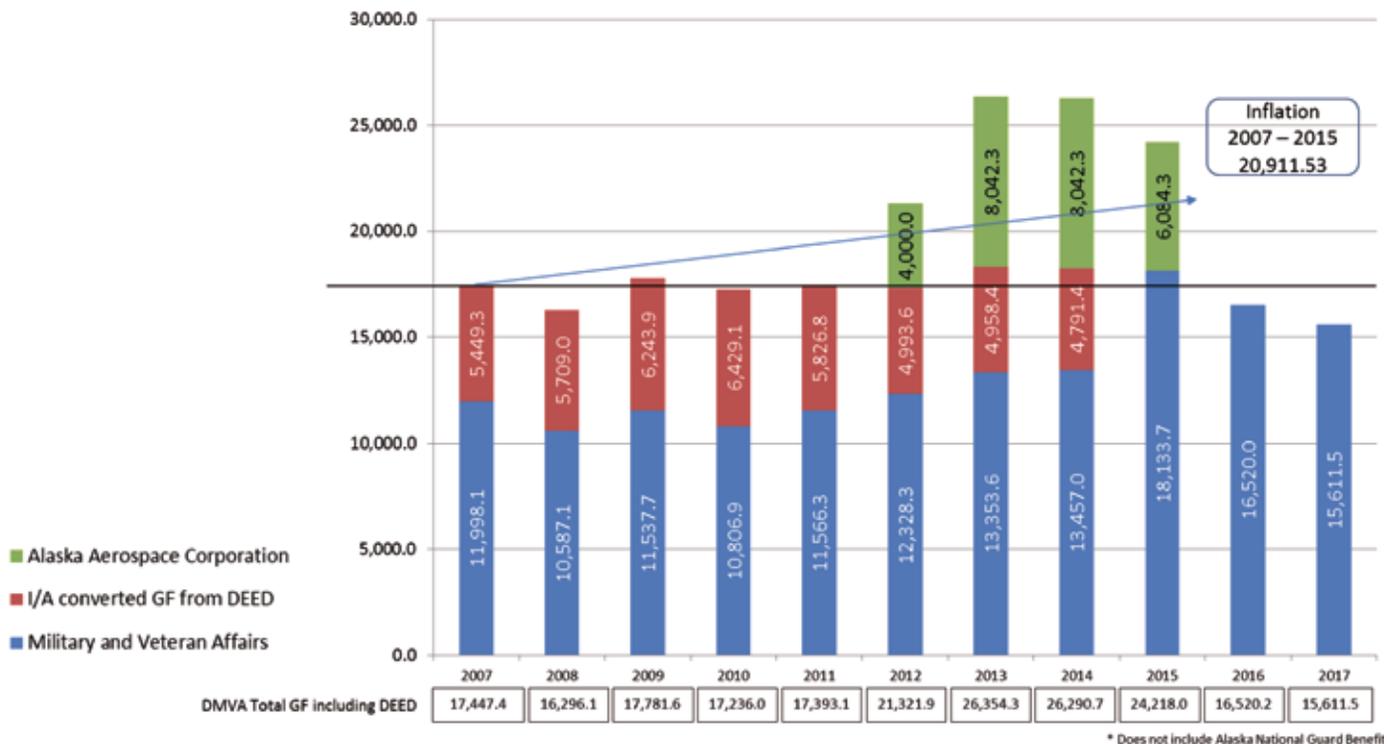
Truly, Alaska is facing a daunting challenge. There is no silver bullet or easy solution. DMVA has been reducing the services it provides commensurate with its budget shrinkage. Although our department cannot single-handedly get the fiscal boat moving, we will not hesitate to row together with the rest of Alaska to get there.

It is an honor serving in an organization whose members give so much to their fellow Alaskans. It is also an honor to serve with a team that did not wait until we had run out of money to start thinking.

*Robert A. H. Pochl*

## State Funding Remains Flat

DMVA normalized data to show Department of Early Education and Development (DEED) I/A converted to GF and its impact to the department and a comparison to the total state GF Budgets



# State General Fund Dollars Spent \$18,414,100

AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
\$2,986,250

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
\$4,771,850

ALASKA MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY  
\$5,113,700

VETERANS SERVICES  
\$1,940,500

HOMELAND SECURITY &  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
\$3,601,800

AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
\$5,505,100 STATE BUDGET FEDERAL DOLLARS  
\$163,185,206 DIRECT FEDERAL DOLLARS  
\$166,688,306 TOTAL FEDERAL DOLLARS

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
\$6,536,800 STATE BUDGET FEDERAL DOLLARS  
\$51,165,550 DIRECT FEDERAL DOLLARS  
\$57,702,350 TOTAL FEDERAL DOLLARS

ALASKA MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY  
\$3,635,900 STATE BUDGET FEDERAL DOLLARS

VETERANS SERVICES  
\$158,300 STATE BUDGET FEDERAL DOLLARS  
\$267,333,333 DIRECT FEDERAL DOLLARS  
\$267,491,633 TOTAL FEDERAL DOLLARS

HOMELAND SECURITY &  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
\$4,143,300 STATE BUDGET FEDERAL DOLLARS

## Federal Dollars Received \$499,634,756



# BE A PET'S HERO

---

A promise to guard the home front and a pledge to await your return. A promise to be not just a pet, but a companion. Pets for Patriots connects last-chance dogs and cats with military members and their families. What are you waiting for? [Petsforpatriots.org](http://Petsforpatriots.org)



# 168th Wing Redesignation Showcases Mission Set

By Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — The 168th Air Refueling Wing was redesignated as the 168th Wing in a ceremony at the Operations Group Theater on Eielson Air Force Base in February.

The redesignation indicates and properly recognizes the 168th Wing's two missions: the early ballistic missile warning system mission at Clear Air Force Station and the KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refueling mission at Eielson AFB.

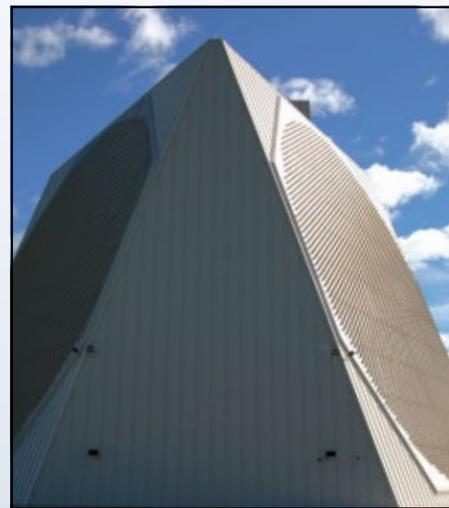
"In 2006, the 213th Space Warning Squadron stood up and was assigned to our operations group," said Col. Torrence Saxe, acting commander of the 168th Wing, while presiding over the ceremony. "This squadron is charged with missile warning and space surveillance, and a part of today

and this redesignation is recognizing this relationship."

In 1986, the northern-most Air National Guard unit was activated as the 168th Air Refueling Squadron. With its unique arctic refueling capabilities, its importance to Alaska and the federal mission continued to increase. As the operational mission grew, so did the umbrella of responsibility and the necessity for subordinate support units. The 168th officially became an air refueling wing in 2002.

The 168th ARW further expanded its role in 2006 by undertaking the 213th Space Warning Squadron.

"Our wing has had quite the history," Saxe said. "We have gone from flying bombers to fighters to a couple versions of the tanker,



**Scanning the Skies.** The Alaska Air National Guard's 213th Space Warning Squadron, of the 168th Wing, operates the early warning missile detection system, known as PAVE PAWS, at Clear Air Force Station, located approximately 80 miles southwest of Fairbanks. Recognition of this mission was a key factor in redesignating the wing.

Photo: Courtesy Alaska Air National Guard



**New Wing Flag.** 168th Wing Command Chief Master Sgt. Phillip Hunt unfurls the new 168th Wing flag during a redesignation ceremony at the Operations Group Theater on Eielson Air Force Base in February. Photo: Master Sgt. Cornelius Mingo, 168th Wing

refueling and now expanding that to the space and warning mission."

Saxe recognizes the importance and value that every Airman brings to the wing, and he chose the redesignation ceremony as an opportunity to thank them.

The missions will change from time to time as the organization grows, he said. "What has been the continuing thread through all of that? ... It's the people; it's the Airmen like you."

Currently, 622 Alaska Air Guard members comprise the "Guardians of the Last Frontier."

The 168th Wing is the only Arctic region refueling unit for all of Pacific Air Forces. Nine KC-135R refueling tanker aircraft deliver approximately 18 million pounds of fuel to active-duty and Reserve component aircraft annually. Maintenance and aircrews generate and fly on average 657 sorties annually.

The 213th Space Warning Squadron at Clear AFS, 80 miles southwest of Fairbanks, provides early warning of intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles to the Missile Correlation Center of North American Aerospace Defense Command. It also provides space surveillance data on orbiting objects to NORAD's Space Control Center. Alaska Air Guard personnel operate PAVE PAWS, which scans the Arctic and Pacific regions for intercontinental ballistic missiles and satellites. ■

## Air Guard Members Back from Deployment to Guam

By Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — More than 120 Airmen and four aircraft assigned to the 168th Wing returned to the frozen tundra in February after a one-month deployment to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, in support of the Pacific Command Theater mission.

The unit was assigned to the 506th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron to provide aerial refueling to aircraft flying over the Western Pacific as part of the continuing U.S. air power mission in the region.

“This was an excellent deployment for the 168th; the entire operation was executed flawlessly and validated our ability to deploy and operate as an air mobility unit as it specifically exercised the unit for its mission,” said Lt. Col. “Buck” Smith, 168th Air Refueling Squadron commander.

The support package included four Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker air refueling aircraft; six aircrews; support staff; medical, supply and communications specialists; as well as aircraft maintainers who kept the Truman-era aircraft performing the mission with a 100 percent reliability rate.

The 168th Guard members executed a total of 36 sorties, flew nearly 190 hours and offloaded more than 300,000 pounds of fuel to B-52 Bombers, F-16 and F-22 fighters and E-3 AWACS aircraft.

“In recent years, we have annually deployed in support of this particular mission on Andersen Air Force Base; however, this is the first year where we’ve had a lead role versus support role,” Smith explained. “We were able to support several high profile missions in-country while seamlessly maintaining our commitment and duty in Alaska.”

“This deployment proved that our Airmen are able and capable of deploying in any area of responsibility,” said Lt. Col. Jhonny Polanco, detachment commander in Guam. “Our Airmen once again stepped up to the challenge specifically during the high ops tempo we encounter in Guam. I am very proud of our Airmen and all of their accomplishments during this deployment.” ■



**Successful Deployment.** Alaska Air Guard members with the 168th Maintenance Support Group show off coins that were awarded to them by Gen. Frank J. Grass, chief of the National Guard Bureau, during his visit to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, in January. More than 120 Airmen and four aircraft assigned to the 168th Wing were deployed to Guam to provide assistance to the Theater Support Package in the Western Pacific.

Photo: Courtesy Col. Marvin Ee, 168th Wing



**Historical Sighting.** Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott looks through a historic telescope that was originally used during the Cold War to monitor Soviet military activity on Big Diomed Island from Little Diomed. The Department of Military & Veterans Affairs set up the telescope in March near the state Capitol in Juneau to communicate the history behind the telescope and the impact the Alaska National Guard had during that time. The sign on the tripod reads, “During the Cold War, you could ...” and in bigger letters, “SEE RUSSIA FROM HERE.” Photo: Peter Naoroz, Office of Sen. Dennis Egan



**Engaging in Rural Alaska.** Sgt. Maj. Richard Hildreth, Alaska National Guard liaison to tribes and rural communities, sits with a student from Tuluksak School during a visit to the village in December. Hildreth is focusing on the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Rural Engagement Initiative to expand the Alaska State Defense Force and to improve conditions for National Guard membership in rural Alaska. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

## Director of the Army Guard Visits Alaska

By Sgt. David Bedard, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Director of the Army National Guard Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy visited Alaska National Guard units and Alaska communities across the state in January with stops at JBER, Fort Greely, Bethel and Napaskiak.

As director, Kadavy guides all programs and policies affecting the Army National Guard — a force of more than 350,000 Soldiers in the 54 states and territories, and the District of Columbia.

During visits to remote sites, Kadavy witnessed the ongoing implementation of the rural engagement plan, an initiative directed by Gov. Bill Walker and Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. The rural engagement plan is a statewide effort to restore and enhance the presence of the National Guard in rural Alaska.

“I think (the Rural Engagement Plan) is a commitment that the Alaska Army National Guard needs to make to the citizens of Alaska, and I think General Hummel — in how she

# Security Forces Return from Kuwait

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



**Leadership Visit.** Representatives from Alaska's military join the co-chairs of the Joint Armed Services Committee in the state legislature in February. From left: Col. Joseph Streff, land component commander, AKARNG; Capt. Walter Hotch-Hill, commander, B Co., 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne), AKARNG; Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Petersen, state command sergeant major, AKARNG; Capt. Greg Vanison, judge advocate, AKARNG; Tech. Sgt. Junnale Courtright, 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron, AKANG; Lt. Col. Alex Elmore, executive officer to the adjutant general, AKNG; Capt. Yutashea Zirkle, 176th LRS, AKANG; Brig. Gen. Karen Mansfield, assistant adjutant general – AKANG; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, (R) Anchorage - Elmendorf; Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel, adjutant general, AKNG; Lt. Col. Chris Weaver, state judge advocate, AKNG; Rear Admiral Daniel Abel, commander, 17th Coast Guard District; Sen. John Coghill, (R) Fairbanks; Maj. Gen. Bryan Owens, commander, U.S. Army Alaska; Lt. Gen. Russell Handy, commander, Alaskan Command, 11th Air Force and Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Region; Sgt. 1st Class James Corbin, Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson, senior enlisted leader, AKNG. Photo: Courtesy Alaska National Guard



**Rural Alaska Visit.** Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, director of the Army National Guard, engages with Alaska Army National Guard members during a tour of Napaskiak, a village 7 miles downriver from Bethel, after visiting with students at the ZJ Williams Memorial School in January. Kadavy's trip to Alaska also included stops in Anchorage, Fort Greely and Bethel. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

wants to implement it — is on the right track,” Kadavy said. “[The Army National Guard directorate is] doing everything we can to provide the capacity and the capability to assist her in what she wants to do.”

Hummel placed the director's visit in context. “We thank General Kadavy for visiting Alaska and Gov. Walker for helping to bring another national-level leader to our state,” Hummel said. “It's important the head of the entire Army National Guard understands Alaska — especially rural Alaska — with its unique challenges and impressive capabilities of the men and women who fulfill the Guard's missions here. Alaskans are the unquestioned subject matter experts on arctic operations, and Alaska is vital

to our nation's success as the entire world turns its attention to the Arctic.”

After meeting with Guard members, veterans and residents in rural Alaska, Kadavy said he was impressed with the people he encountered.

“I learned about the patriotism of the community that resides here in Alaska,” he said. “They care very much about their families, their state and the nation.”

During his visit, Kadavy also addressed the Army National Guard's importance and interoperability in the Army's total force, and he spoke candidly about defense budget cuts, modernization and professionalism. ■

## JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-

**RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Thirteen security forces defenders from the 176th Security Forces Squadron returned to Alaska in January after a six-month deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Their overall mission was to provide security for the air base, ensuring the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing's role to resupply missions and provide combat service support to land component forces went unhindered. The Alaskans integrated into several positions including base patrol, security intelligence, Pass and Identification office and fly away security team.

“We had people all over the place, not necessarily performing missions they'd ever done before,” said Senior Master Sgt. Bryan Morberg, the 176th SFS troop lead. “This was a great place to take (the first-time deployers). Learning base security operations in an expeditionary environment is definitely a different world than performing security back here.”

Airman 1st Class Richard Stack III and few of his comrades were deployed for the first time. Stack was assigned to the fly away security team, a position requiring him to escort and guard aircraft at locations with insufficient security.

“In my opinion, (FAST) was one of the best missions you could get,” Stack said. “You really get to see the Air Force mission first hand, and that's pretty cool.”

Morberg explained that though this deployment took the troops overseas during three major holidays, their morale was helped by community support.

“They all performed really well throughout all that,” he said. “We got a lot of support from back home, especially over the holiday season, some from groups that we didn't have any personal affiliation with. A lot of those made a world of difference.” ■



**Welcome Home.** Thirteen Alaska Air National Guard defenders from the 176th Security Forces Squadron meet loved ones at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport in January. The group returned from a six-month deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photo: Tech. Sgt. Laurel Foster, 176th Wing

# Building Resiliency in Rural Alaska

By Julie Baker, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Emergencies happen every day in small Alaska communities, but when those incidents exceed the capabilities of local response agencies and health-care facilities, they can quickly become disasters.

The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management helps communities with fewer than 2,000 people build individual Small Community Emergency Response Plans. These plans increase a community's ability to effectively manage larger-scale emergencies by undertaking initiatives to prepare and plan for emergencies before they happen.

"Successful management of a disaster begins at the local level, and when a community is prepared to deal with a disaster, the impact can be minimized," said Kim Weibl, DHS&EM state lead planner. "The SCERP is an essential tool that provides step-by-step actions to take within the first four, 12, 24, 48 and 72 hours of an incident. We ensure the community has access to, and awareness of, local, regional, and state resources that may be available to support a local response and that they

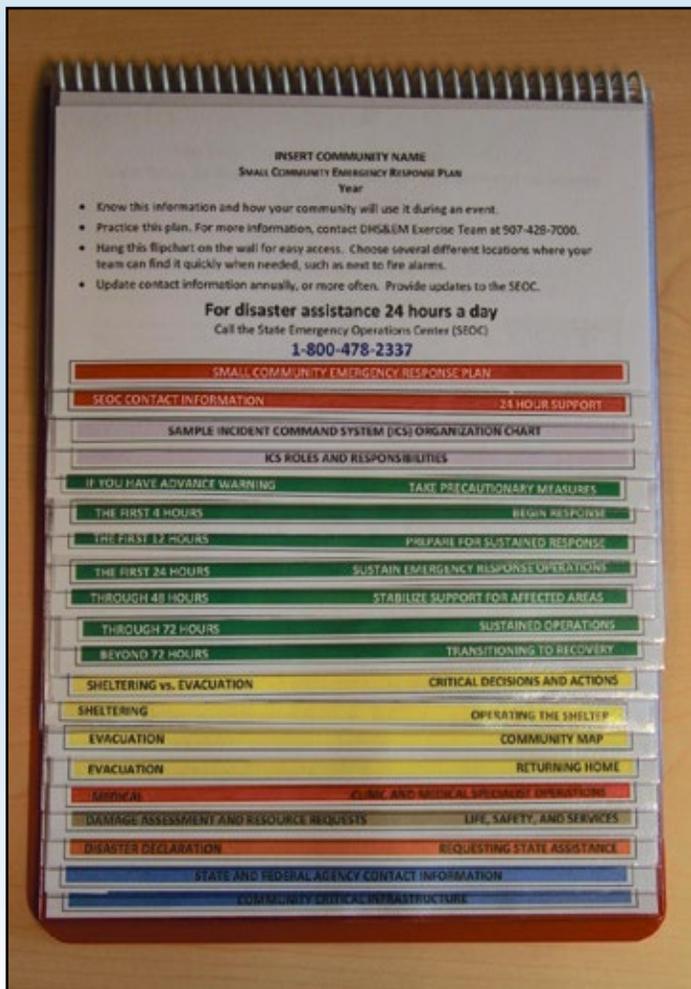
are ready to sustain response operations if regional or state support is not immediately available."

"Rural Alaska communities face challenges of remoteness, limited funding, low population density, communications issues and resource limitations," said Paul Valley, DHS&EM planning program manager. "While we provide the format and guidance, a SCERP empowers local action, allowing members of the community to lead in identifying priorities, organizing support, implementing programs and evaluating outcomes. Community ownership of a SCERP provides a powerful incentive for sustaining action and involvement — for both incorporated and unincorporated communities."

An incorporated community is defined as a community with an established government and is legally incorporated. This may be a city government, tribal government, or both, with legal power to make decisions and utilize resources. An unincorporated community is a community which has no governing body with legal authority. DHS&EM has SCERP toolkits for both incorporated and unincorporated communities to guide local planning.

"We are regularly reaching out to communities and presenting at conferences and workshops to raise awareness of the need for emergency response planning," said Alex Fonteyn, DHS&EM SCERP coordinator. "In just the first four months of 2016, we presented SCERP information to the Alaska Governor's Health and Safety Conference, the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fairbanks, the Bristol Bay School District, the Southwest Region School District, the Lake and Peninsula School District, the Village of Kivalina and Indian General Assistance Program training sessions in Dillingham. The SCERP toolkit is available online, but the division also has staff designated to assist communities throughout the planning process."

More information about the SCERP is available at <https://ready.alaska.gov/Plans/SCERP>. ■



**Pocketbook Plans.** A Small Community Emergency Response Plan is a customized flip book-style guide with essential, community-specific information and actionable items to be used in response to a disaster. Photo: Courtesy Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

## As of February 2016, these 54 Alaska communities have completed SCERPs.

|                           |               |                   |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Akiok                     | Glennallen    | Nightmute         |
| Akiachak                  | Golovin       | Noatak            |
| Alakanuk                  | Hollis        | Noorvik           |
| Ambler                    | Hooper Bay    | Old Harbor        |
| Atka                      | Hydaburg      | Ruby              |
| Atmautluak                | Hyder         | Selawik           |
| Buckland                  | Iliamna       | Seldovia          |
| Chalkyitsik               | Kasaan        | Shungnak          |
| Chevak                    | Kiana         | Skagway           |
| Chickaloon Native Village | King Cove     | St. George Island |
| Craig Tribal Association  | Klawock Tribe | Tanacross         |
| Deering                   | Kluti Kaah    | Tanana            |
| Delta Junction            | Kobuk         | Tazlina           |
| Eagle                     | Kokhanok      | Thorne Bay        |
| False Pass                | Kotlik        | Tyonek            |
| Fort Yukon                | Larsen Bay    | Umkumiut          |
| Gakona                    | Naukatik Bay  | Whale Pass        |
| Galena                    | Nelson Lagoon | White Mountain    |

## Activates Signal Detachment in Bethel

By Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



**State Defense Force in Bethel.** Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Roger Holl, commander of the Alaska State Defense Force, speaks at an activation ceremony establishing the Bethel-based ASDF unit during an open house event at the Bethel army in January. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**BETHEL, Alaska** — Service members from the Alaska Army National Guard gathered alongside community members to witness the activation of the Alaska State Defense Force's newest unit, the 2nd Signal Detachment, at a ceremony at the AKARNG armory mid-January in Bethel.

Under the 49th Brigade, the 2nd Signal Detachment will provide satellite communications from Bethel to the Joint Operations Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

"The Walker-Mallott administration has done a great thing by opening up rural Alaska to the Alaska State Defense Force," said Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Roger Holl, commander of the ASDF. "We can augment the Alaska National Guard in their mission and provide education, training and personal fulfillment through military service for the local residents."

Since 1984, the primary role of the all-volunteer state defense force has been to augment and support the Alaska National Guard.

"Even if the National Guard is mobilized, there would be someone here, always," Holl said.

Holl explained that this new unit will enlarge the footprint of military service in the region and give its people the chance to serve and protect their area.

The National Guard armory is home to the Bethel-based unit, B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

"We are opening our doors and welcoming another unit to share this facility with us," said Capt. Walter Hotch-Hill, commander of B Co., 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne). "We are happy to have them here and look forward to working together in our future endeavors to support Bethel, western Alaska and the state of Alaska."

At the conclusion of the event, former Guard members, veterans and community members with no military affiliation took applications and were interested in joining the ASDF.

"There is a synergy going here among the people of Bethel to join the Alaska State Defense Force," Holl said. "I hope this new unit will add to and help maintain the great military tradition of western Alaska and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region." ■



## Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain (Col.) Rick Koch  
State Command Chaplain

# Rescue and Relentless Hope

All of us throughout the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs can be honored being imitators of God's divine plan because, to a great degree, our purpose embodies a team of rescuers. We are trained, ready, persistent, and dedicated professionals who help people and communities find a way out when none seems possible. It denotes a noble mission that represents hope. We deliver hope, and we give people a new way where there seemed to be no way moments before. What a wonderful blessing to be a part of something good and Godly, representing rescue and restoration.

A little more than five years ago, humanity witnessed one of the most dramatic rescues in all of history. On Aug. 5, 2010, 33 miners were trapped a half-mile below the earth's surface in Chile's San Jose Mine. Rescuers did not give up. A potential escape shaft was dug but collapsed creating further setbacks.

Seventeen days after they were first trapped, a 5-inch diameter hole targeted to an underground shelter allowed rescuers to happily discover the miners alive who sent up this note written in red ink: "We are fine in the shelter, the 33 of us." Until then, the miners survived on meager supplies of food and water stored in the shelter. More supplies were lowered to the miners, but they were far from rescued.

The trick for the rescuers was how to bore through a half-mile of earth and rock and create an opening wide enough to lift the miners to safety. It would take a long time. Special equipment was flown to Chile. Drilling a hole wide enough for the rescue would take two phases.

The first drill bore a hole 12 inches wide, then a second drill made the aperture wide enough for an escape capsule. Early estimates of reaching the miners by Christmas were predicted, but hope for a timelier rescue emerged when the first-phase foot-wide hole broke through the roof of the mine Sept.

17. Work to widen the hole began immediately, yet it wasn't until almost four weeks later on Oct. 13 — 69 days after the initial collapse — that rescuers could lift the miners out one by one, a process that took more than 22 hours.

Distress hits everyone. Thankfully for us, we will likely never be trapped a half mile underground for 69 days. Yet, we may encounter situations in life that make us feel there is no way out. Truly, there are troubling times that force us to realize we can never go back to the way life once was and will have to move forward into something different — from utter despair to the fresh dawn of hope.

Sometimes we find ourselves afflicted by a worsening medical condition or the news

that a loved one has died or maybe a friend betrayed our trust. Or we receive bad news from which we find it difficult to recover. At such times, we feel the need to be rescued from the clutches of anguish, to be embraced by the arms of hope.

Now and again we make mistakes that mess up our lives, and no matter how hard we try, we can't put all the pieces back together and make things right. Perhaps we've broken a bond in a relationship or hurt someone's feelings badly. At such times, we feel the need to be rescued from the grip of desolation to welcome the joy of new hope.

God plans a rescue for us, and that is the good news of relentless hope. "The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble" (Psalm 37:39). God is persistent in rescue. Sometimes relief from trouble comes quickly, but sometimes it takes a while, needing planning and patience. God is always with us providing rescue, leadership and perseverance. God's rescue occurs not only in this world, like with the miners in San Jose, but everywhere and in every situation. Even in the hours of death, God helps us find a way out of the darkness into the light of life eternal. God is our rescuer. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). ■

*We deliver hope, and we give people a new way  
where there seemed to be no way moments before.*

*What a wonderful blessing to be a part of something good and Godly,  
representing rescue and restoration.*

# 7.1 Earthquake A Wake-up Call for Many

By Julie Baker, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — While the magnitude-7.1 Iniskin earthquake woke up most of Southcentral Alaska on Jan. 24 when it struck at 1:30 a.m., the shaking caused minimal damage. However, the Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission and the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management urge Alaskans not to be lulled into a false sense of security that they “survived a magnitude-7.1 earthquake.”

ASHSC members emphasize that damages and injuries could have been significantly greater if conditions were slightly different. For instance, if the epicenter was 50 miles closer to a population center, if it was a shallow earthquake, or if it was just 0.1 magnitude greater, Southcentral residents would have likely experienced significant damage to homes, power outages, loss of water and sewer services, impassable roads and personal injuries.

“If the circumstances had been different, residents could have needed to utilize earthquake insurance, family communication and preparedness plans or go kits,” said Mike O’Hare, director of the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. “Thankfully most of what we experienced was falling items from shelves, broken picture frames and a good scare.”

DHS&EM recommends that residents take this wake-up call as an opportunity to conduct non-structural seismic mitigation such as securing heavy furniture, flat screen televisions and other items to prevent breakage, injury or even death during future earthquakes. Residents are encouraged to build a seven-day emergency kit, establish a family communication plan and learn about what actions to take during the next earthquake.

Federal, state, and local emergency management experts all agree that “Drop, Cover and Hold On” is the appropriate action to reduce injury and death during earthquakes.

“You cannot tell from the initial shaking if an earthquake will suddenly become intense,” O’Hare said. “Always ‘Drop, Cover and Hold

On’ immediately. Trying to move during shaking puts you at risk. It is best to drop before the earthquake drops you and find nearby shelter or use your arms and hands to protect your head and neck. The greatest danger we face is from falling and flying objects. Studies have shown that injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes over the last few decades indicate that you are much more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects than to die in a collapsed building.”

During the Iniskin earthquake, the State Emergency Operations Center immediately moved to Level 2 activation, mobilized staff to provide situational awareness on area-wide damages, contacted various partners and set about identifying any needs for state emergency assistance.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough had damages to roads and homes as a result of the earthquake. Additionally, the borough also dealt with secondary fires in the area of an underground natural gas leak resulting from the quake. The community opened the Kenai Alaska National Guard armory to provide an evacuation shelter in the area of the gas leak. Alaska Red Cross and Salvation Army coordinated feeding, shelter management personnel and other resources for residents.

The SEOC coordinated with local jurisdictions, volunteer organizations, other state agencies, the National Tsunami Warning Center, and the Alaska Earthquake Center to determine the impact and response within affected communities and to deal with any subsequent aftershocks.

The Department of Military & Veterans Affairs conducts a state-wide earthquake preparedness drill, The Great Alaska ShakeOut, in October each year. To register to participate in the 2016 Great Alaska ShakeOut, please visit [www.shakeout.org/Alaska](http://www.shakeout.org/Alaska).

For more information about how to build a seven-day emergency kit over a 12-week period and what to do during an earthquake if you are in bed, in a high-rise, outdoors, driving or near the shore, please visit the DHS&EM website at [www.ready.alaska.gov](http://www.ready.alaska.gov). ■

**Emergency Kit.** Items to have in an emergency kit include water, food, a first-aid kit, light source, heating element and sleeping bag. The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management has information on its website on how to build a seven-day emergency kit and how to prepare for a major disaster. Photo: Courtesy Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management



## Kivalina: A Few Steps from the Sea

Story and Photos by Jeremy Zidek, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Naturally occurring barriers used to serve as protection to Kivalina, a coastal village atop 2 square miles at the southern tip of a narrow, 8-mile-long barrier reef in the Chuckchi Sea.

Historically, sea ice has shielded the village from winter sea storm surges, but recent years have seen ice forming later and melting sooner, causing erosion to the barrier reef around the village. Warm winter temperatures have also affected transportation and subsistence hunting, a way of life in Kivalina. Gov. Bill Walker has said that Kivalina faces significant challenges and will require the state's assistance to find solutions.

In January, Walker sent a team to Kivalina to reinvigorate the community's emergency response planning efforts. Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Commissioner

Laurie Hummel, DMVA Deputy Commissioner Bob Doehl and Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management Director Mike O'Hare met with community leaders, Kivalina's planning team and residents to outline a strategy to revitalize Kivalina's existing emergency response plans. They were joined by the governor's special assistant for Rural Affairs and personnel from DHS&EM, Northwest Arctic Borough Emergency Management, Department of Community and Regional Development and the Alaska National Guard. Kivalina's planning team includes representatives from the City of Kivalina, the Kivalina Tribal Council, the Northwest Arctic Borough, the Northwest Arctic School District, DHS&EM and other regional partners.

"Kivalina is remote and on the edge of the sea, so when conditions begin to deteriorate they need to act quickly," O'Hare said. "A good suite of emergency response plans will not only aid Kivalina's efforts, it will help the various regional and statewide emergency response resources that may be called upon during an event in the community. This is going to take a group effort. Thankfully, we have the desire within the community and the partners who have stepped up to ensure the community has the tools to stay safe."

The cornerstone of Kivalina's emergency response strategy consists of four plans: an Emergency Operations Plan a Continuity of Operations Plan, an Emergency Evacuation Plan and a Small Community Emergency Response Plan. The EOP addresses operational response activities and will facilitate response and short-term recovery activities in a scalable manner. The COOP will develop strategies and prepare Kivalina for events that could interrupt or potentially destroy its ability to effectively perform essential community functions. The Emergency Evacuation Plan will layout the triggers for evacuation, resources and organizations needed to move community members to a safe location. The SCERP is a customized flip-book-style guide with essential, community-specific actions to take when responding to a disaster.

"Once we have a solid suite of emergency plans, we will train residents in the response skills necessary during an emergency," O'Hare said. "Those skills can then be practiced during local and regional drills and exercises. The goal is to give the community the knowledge, skills and experience to effectively plan for, respond to, and recover from a disaster."

DHS&EM provides assistance to Alaska communities as they plan, train and exercise their abilities to respond to disasters. The initial steps to improve Kivalina's disaster response capabilities are the first in a long-term plan to prepare the community for their self-proposed relocation to a nearby site that will provide shelter from storm surges and other types of disasters. The State of Alaska hopes that the Kivalina relocation will serve as a model for other Alaska communities that may be moved in the future. ■



**Sea Ice out at Sea.** The community of Kivalina is vulnerable to sea storm surges. Here in early January, solid shore-fast sea ice had not formed along Kivalina's coast, exposing the barrier reef around the village to erosion.

**A Spit of Land in the Chuckchi Sea.** Without in-place shore-fast ice, Kivalina's sea wall is all that stands between the entire community and the sea. With no high ground, the entire community is susceptible to strong sea storm surges.



**Vulnerable Village.** A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the Alaska Army National Guard flies above the coastal village of Kivalina. The village sits at the southern tip of a barrier reef in the Chuckchi Sea and is vulnerable to sea storm surges that erode the coastline.



**Emergency Planning.** Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott and Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Laurie Hummel stand with community leaders who are working to reinvigorate Kivalina's suite of emergency plans. From left: Brad Reich, Northwest Arctic Borough director of Public Services; Carl Weisner, NWAB Risk Management and assemblyman; Austin Swan Sr., Kivalina mayor; Lt. Gov. Mallott; Millie Hawley, Kivalina IRA Council president; Brig. Gen. (Alaska) Hummel, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs commissioner and Alaska National Guard adjutant general; and Clement Richards Sr., NWAB mayor.

# ARMY GUARD MEMBERS Engage in Rural Alaska

By Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel and Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers conducted airborne and arctic training operations, as well as community engagement events, during an extended drill weekend in western Alaska in January.

The training events commenced when an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft departed Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson for Bethel, carrying 38 infantry airborne Soldiers belonging to B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

The Soldiers had intended to conduct airborne operations into a drop zone in the outskirts of Bethel, where their unit is based, but high winds forced the drop zone safety officer to cancel the jump.

“Of course, myself and our paratroopers were disappointed; we all wanted to jump,” said Capt. Walter Hotch-Hill, B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) commander. “However, there’s still training value in the preparation and planning that leadership and the Soldiers go through right up to jumping out the door.”

Arctic training and community engagements continued as more than 80 Soldiers from the airborne unit and 1-297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance Cavalry Squadron, as well as support personnel from the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, flew into the western community from all across the state.

The National Guard armory in Bethel opened its doors to local residents, offering a barbecue and informative service booths on family and veterans programs.

During the open house, Guard members had the opportunity to witness the activation of the Alaska State Defense Force’s newest unit, the 2nd Signal Battalion. The Bethel-based unit will collocate with the AKARNG in the armory.

“Having an Alaska State Defense Force unit here is going to be very viable for western Alaska,” said 1st Sgt. Rodger Morrison with B Co., 1-143rd Inf. (ABN).

“It will be good to have a team out here that is well versed with experience and that the

community knows well because they are local.”

At the conclusion of the open house, northern winds carried arctic temperatures into the region, with wind chill temperatures plummeting to more than 30 degrees below zero.

The rapid drop in temperatures created ideal arctic skills training conditions, providing training designed to mentally and physically prepare Soldiers to operate safely and effectively in arctic environments.

“Some of our Soldiers had never experienced the cold weather that we had over the training event, especially those traveling from southeast Alaska,” Hotch-Hill said. “We went over the proper use of our cold weather gear and established campsites using akhio groups, which has the equipment

needed to sustain a 10-person squad in arctic conditions.”

The akhio group is a 200-pound capacity sled used for transporting equipment in the winter.

Amid training, Guard members had the opportunity to support a defense-to-civil-authorities mission by performing check point and stability operations during the Kuskokwim 300 and Bogus Creek 150 sled dog races.

“This was a great opportunity to not only conduct arctic survival skills and training, but engage with the community and let them know that the Alaska National Guard is still a presence in western Alaska,” Morrison said.

Guard members were transported by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation, and dropped



**Winter Campsite.** Alaska Army National Guard members with B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) build a campsite in Tuluksak during cold weather training in January. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



**Support to the Community.** Alaska Army National Guard members cheer on and support dogsled racers during the 37th Annual Kuskokwim 300 in Bethel in January. Guards members conducted arctic skills training in Bethel in conjunction with supporting the race.

Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

off along the Kuskokwim River near the Bogus Creek checkpoint. They also traveled by snow machine and small unit support vehicles across blankets of ice and snow to the village of Tuluksak, 50 miles from Bethel, to a Kuskokwim 300 checkpoint.

Support included verification of check-in and departure times, identifying the number of dogs in each team and checking racers' supply inventory, which is required by race regulations. Soldiers also helped with moving straw and feeding and dropping dogs at designated areas.

Guard members proved to be an invaluable asset when a Bogus Creek 150 musher, Victoria Hardwick, hit a bump and fell off her sled during the race. Her dogs kept racing onward, leaving her behind, but she was able to meet up with Guard members who were able to assist her.

"After a risk analysis, we geared up, loaded her on the back of the snow machine and set off into the middle of the night," said Sgt. 1st Class Todd Patnode, B Co., 1-143rd Inf. (ABN). "We found her team 15 miles down the creek, and because we brought the musher back to her team, she was able to finish the race. This reinforced the desire to have some kind of Guard presence assisting in the race in the future."

From Bethel to Tuluksak, Morrison said they received accolades from everyone they connected with.

"They were glad that the National Guard was here," Morrison said. "Our presence was felt, and it was appreciated everywhere we went."

"These Guard members right here are the best; they braved the elements with smiles on their faces," Morrison added. "This type of rural training and engagement is the way forward for the Alaska Army National Guard in terms of getting back to arctic survival and western Alaska." ■



**Remote Operations.** A small unit support vehicle sits idle on the snow-topped tundra while Alaska Army National Guard members prepare a drop zone for an airborne operation. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



**Fun in the Snow.** 1st Lt. Brehan Heeren, a chaplain with 1-297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance Cavalry Squadron, is pulled on a snow sled by children in Tuluksak during a visit to the village over a January training weekend.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



**Flight over Frozen Tundra.** Chief Warrant Officer Two Josh Claeyes, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot with B Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, flies across the Bethel tundra during a training mission in western Alaska in January.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

# Arctic Terns Fly South for Winter

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

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** —The Arctic tern is a seabird native to both Arctic and subarctic regions. The tern is known for — among its many traits — its long-range migratory patterns. Here, there is another flock of terns that frequent the skies: the 249th Airlift Squadron of the Alaska Air National Guard. This year, it migrated south on board a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft to Gulfport, Mississippi, on a simulated deployment for a two-week annual training in January.

Exercise Tern Migration was an opportunity for the Terns, as the 249th AS is known, to practice a squadron-wide deployment, said Lt. Col. Ken Radford, director of operations, 249th AS.

“We typically don’t get to deploy as a squadron,” Radford said. “Typically, we send one crew at a time. We wanted to exercise the scenario of our whole squadron deploying together to see if we could meet that capability in the event we got that call.”

Based out of the Mississippi Air National Guard-operated Combat Readiness Training Center at the Gulfport International Airport, the Terns and their support crew from the 176th Maintenance Group and the 176th Operations Support Squadron were busy training on a host of missions including assault zone training, low level training, approach at unfamiliar airports, as well as a simulated astronaut rescue mission in the Atlantic Ocean.

The rescue mission was a joint effort between the 920th Rescue Wing; Detachment 3, 45th Operations Group; and the 45th Space Wing, all based out of Patrick Air Force Base, Florida; along with NASA and the Alaska Air National Guard.

Speaking of the astronaut rescue mission, Tim O’Brien, with NASA’s Ground and Mission Operations office, explained the importance of working with Department of Defense assets.

“Exercises like this are extremely important to the development of tactics, techniques and procedures for the DOD forces as well as practicing and refining communication protocols between the flight crew and ground support teams, both NASA and DoD,” he



**Jump.** Guardian Angels from the 304th and 308th Rescue Squadrons jumped from C-17 Globemaster III aircraft from the 249th Airlift Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, over the Atlantic Ocean near Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, during a simulated astronaut rescue mission. Photo: Senior Airman Zac Heinen, 176th Wing

said. “While Air Force pararescuemen jumped from the C-17 aircraft and practiced their hands-on skills, real-time coordination took place between those rescue forces, a simulated flight crew, the aircraft and NASA/DoD command centers in order to execute a safe rescue scenario. Every time we conduct an exercise like this, we learn and improve our processes.”

The 249th AS is no stranger to working with pararescue assets. The Terns are colocated with the 210th, 211th, and 212th Rescue Squadrons of the Alaska Air National Guard and have been developing long-range search-and-rescue tactics, techniques and procedures to support their rescue missions. Typically, C-17s perform strategic airlift missions, and this developing capability contributed to the 249th AS being selected to support the astronaut rescue exercise.

“From my understanding, this was the first simulated astronaut rescue mission out of a C-17,” Radford said.

Aside from dropping the Guardian Angel teams (made up of pararescuemen and combat rescue officers) and their equipment at the astronaut’s location, they also tested the ability to communicate directly with ground units during the mission.

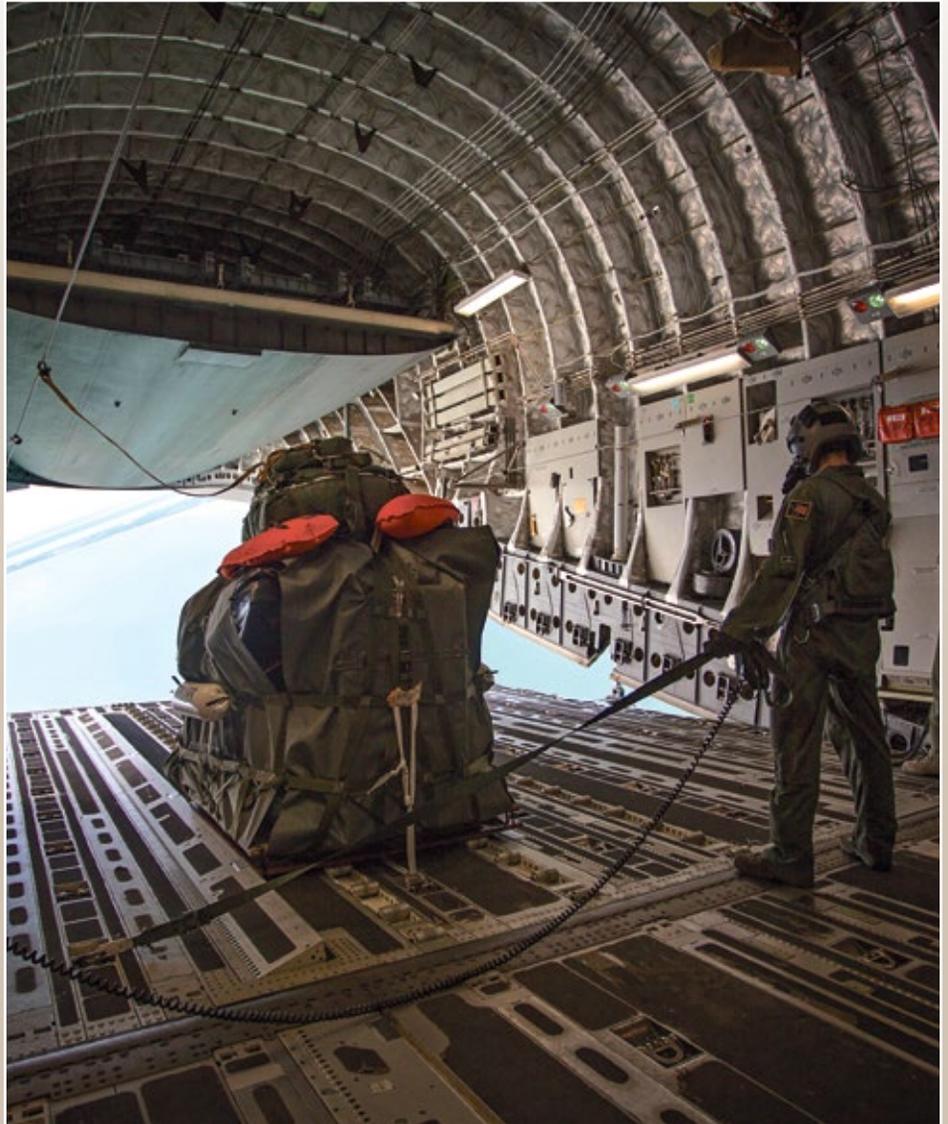
“We tested the pararescuemen’s portable radios by connecting them to aircraft antennas,” Radford said. “This helps turn any aircraft into a combat search-and-rescue aircraft and allows us to talk directly to the survivor, ascertaining important information such as their status, position, threats and extraction information. Even if the survivor is unable to talk, you can still extract information from their radio. We were able to establish communication with the survivor from over 45 miles.”

All in all, he explained, the exercise was a success. This sentiment was consistent with the entire annual training, which he described as being extremely busy.

“It was excellent training,” Radford said. “We flew more sorties in seven days than we would at our home station. We executed 15 missions. With only two aircraft and a limited number of maintenance support personnel, that’s a pretty good undertaking.”

Other missions included flying to Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina, picking up Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division and performing joint airborne air transportability training. They also flew to Oklahoma to perform medical evacuation training and performed seven air refueling missions with four different air refueling units over the course of Exercise Tern Migration.

“It was a monumental time,” Radford added. “It was really good to see all of us come together to deploy as a squadron.” ■



**Ready to Drop.** Loadmasters from the 249th Airlift Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, prepare to drop an equipment package from a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft during a simulated astronaut rescue mission. Photo: Senior Airman Zac Heinen, 176th Wing



**Loading Up.** A team from the 920th Rescue Wing loads a Rigging Alternate Method Zodiac package onto a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft from the 249th Airlift Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, in January. The equipment was packaged for an airdrop during a simulated astronaut recovery mission. Photo: Senior Airman Zac Heinen, 176th Wing

## Fort Greely: Alaska's Backyard and the Army's Best-kept Secret

By Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**FORT GREELY, Alaska** — Stepping off of the airplane after landing on the remote airstrip at Fort Greely, it is cold, quiet and windy. The ceiling is low, and the sun shines a blur of bright white through the clouds.

Lt. Col. Tim Brower, commander of the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion, greets visitors with a solid handshake and friendly smile.

"I wish the sky was clear so you could see the mountains," he said with a genuine welcome to the post he calls home.

Brower is on his second tour at Fort Greely, an Army installation about 100 miles south of Fairbanks and 5 miles from Delta Junction, a small town of not quite 1,000. It is at this remote location where the 49th Soldiers call home.

"We love it here," he said, as he described the simple life and slower pace of a small town. "You can get lost at larger bases, but here, you have more opportunities to build relationships, and wherever you go, you know someone."

But the slower pace doesn't translate to the duty day. The 200 Soldiers assigned to the 49th work long, sometimes tedious hours to meet their crucial national security mission. The Missile Defense Battalion operates and secures the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System in order to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles with high-tech interceptors.

The ground-based interceptor missile is a multi-stage, solid fuel booster with an exo-atmospheric kill vehicle — a sensor-propulsion package that uses kinetic energy from a direct hit to the incoming ICBM to destroy it.

Fire direction crews — Soldiers in the 49th MDB Headquarters and Headquarters Battery — operate the ground-based missile defense system from facilities near the missile field at Fort Greely.

"Each crew contains five highly trained Soldiers who operate the system, around the clock, year-round" Brower said. "Utilizing sea-, land- and space-based sensors, crews are able to detect the launch of an ICBM and determine its impact location."

If they determine a threat to the United States, crews may launch ground-based interceptors to extinguish the threat of an ICBM launched by aggressors.

"The 49th controls launch capability for 26 missile interceptors at Fort Greely and four missile interceptors at Vandenburg Air Force Base, California, to defend the United States and other designated areas," said Staff Sgt. Jason Schlegel, a former military police squad leader for A Company, the MP unit assigned to the 49th.

The Alaska Guard members also work in conjunction with crews at their operational headquarters, the 100th Missile Defense Brigade in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where fire control, battle management, planning, tasking and threat analysis also take place.



**Ready for Duty.** Sgt. Trevor Martin, a military policeman with the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, collects his ammunition in preparation for shift change. The military policemen assigned to the 49th MDB make up a large portion of the military population on Fort Greely, providing round-the-clock security for the post. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



**Fort Greely Tour.** Lt. Col. Timothy Brower, commander of the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greely, participates in an interview with a film crew in March. Brower is on his second tour at Fort Greely and lives there with his wife and six children. Photo: Courtesy Alaska Army National Guard

Schlegel was a drill-status Guardsman, training one weekend a month, seeking a full-time employment opportunity with the National Guard when he was selected for a tour at Fort Greely.

"I fell in love with the military and its lifestyle and its discipline, and I wanted to do that every day," said Schlegel, who recently returned to Anchorage to join his wife after a three-year tour at Fort Greely. "I really liked working with the Soldiers up north, in a small unit with fantastic camaraderie."

A small, remote Army base in the middle of nowhere, Alaska, where temperatures are frigid and restaurants are few, Fort Greely doesn't seem to be where most people would envision "the good life."

But Brower and his wife, Melanie, love their life in Fort Greely. "It's simpler here," said the busy mom of six young children. "Something about it is just peaceful and less hurried."

The installation guide describes for new residents and visitors an emphasis on the importance of workplace morale, welfare and recreation, housing, health services, child development, faith-based services and support to the local school system.

Fort Greely's beautiful new 3,000-square-foot Aurora Community Activity Center is warm and welcoming. With a large, towering stone fireplace in the center of the main room, furniture that provides the comfort of your own living room, and the bustle and character of a ski lodge, including a bar and grill, this is the hub of recreation for residents and families in the isolated community. The CAC houses a small bowling alley, an arcade and game room, a dance studio and computer lab. It also has rooms that can be reserved for birthday parties or group movie nights.

The installation housing for military members was surprisingly impressive and quaint. The family homes look new, their lot sizes are enviable to a city-dweller and, Schlegel said, Alaska is their playground.

"You're in the backyard of the state, and this is a prime opportunity for Soldiers to experience what Alaska has to offer in its entirety," Schlegel said. "It's secluded and remote."

Remote indeed. During a tour of the missile field, with proper security escort and after passing through a vehicle check-point facility, the wide-open space and eerie silence offered a surreal moment of reflection. Surrounded by a few small, practical operational facilities and viewing the expanse of land that houses 26 of our nation's most critical defense mechanisms, it felt like a scene from a movie — the calm before chaos ensues. One might envision an epic "Transformers" battle between the Autobots and Decepticons in a race to dislodge interceptors for destruction or defense.

But no chaos ensued, and it remained quiet enough to hear snow crunch underfoot while entering the military police weapons storage facility.

The relatively empty and quiet facility soon became a bustle of activity and began to fill with Soldiers armed with guns and decked out in flack vests as A Co., 49th MDB military police officers prepared for their shift.

The MPs are tasked with the security and defense of the missile defense complex, and they do not take the mission lightly. They are trained to detect and deter threats. They are disciplined and focused.

"We have very long shifts, so it makes us experts on the piece of land that we occupy here; we'll know right away if something's out of place or askew," Schlegel said. "We know the faces of every single contractor out here every day. We would recognize if something was off or if there were any key indicators."

The MPs run drills on a regular basis with different threat scenarios, he said, which can keep work interesting.

"We are the primary fighting force that allows the crew members in HHB to accomplish their mission: Failure is not an option. We defend the site in support of their mission," Schlegel said.

When they're not at work, Soldiers of the 49th spend a lot of time together. Those who have families at Fort Greely with them also spend time with those who are on post alone. Many of them say it's like a big family.

"You get to know people well, build relationships, not just with Soldiers, but with contractors and other people in the community," Brower said.

"It's very fulfilling to just be there for Soldiers and their families," Brower said. "It's fulfilling to see them thrive, because living in Ft. Greely isn't about how you survive, it's about how you thrive."

"We are performing a real-world mission — 300 of us from the 49th, the 100th and at Vandenburg, working together," he added. "Three hundred Soldiers defending 300 million Americans from the threat of ballistic missile attack."

Asked what he wants people to know about Fort Greely, Brower did not hesitate.

"It's the best kept secret in the United States Army." ■



**Site Security.** Spc. Erick M. Bacod, a military policeman with the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, waits for shift change with fellow Soldiers on Fort Greely. Soldiers of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion provide the 24/7/365-mission that gives the United States a defense against limited intercontinental ballistic missile threats.

Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

## ‘Eye to Eye with Ivan’ in the Bering Strait

By Ron Clarke, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

**JUNEAU, Alaska** — We can see Russia from here. No, really. Well, maybe not from Juneau. But from Little Diomede Island, it’s hard to miss Big Diomede. Russia’s easternmost point is only 2 ½ miles away across the International Date Line and the cold waters of the Bering Strait.

During World War II, the Soviet Union evicted the Inupiaq residents and turned Big Diomede into a military outpost. When Cold War suspicions escalated in the 1950s, Guard members of the 1-297th Scout Battalion in Little Diomede kept a 24-hour watch. They built a one-story, 10-by-10-foot tower on the existing Federal Scout Readiness Center and mounted a powerful spotting scope on a tripod in the small observation gallery upstairs. The Soviets looked back through their own scopes.

We were “eye to eye with Ivan.”

Not a lot happened, as shown by a few entries in the Little Diomede log book:

- Today, one Russian was seen to go out to the weather station. Decision: To take weather observation.
- One unknown two-motored aircraft heard flying over Bering Strait. Decision: Soviet patrol mission.
- Saw one Russian go out from shelter. Pretty soon he came back. Decision: No inside plumbing.

Eventually, civilians were allowed to return to Big Diomede, but centuries-long family connections remained blocked by international politics. People on the two islands led parallel but different lives. Karl Marx looked down on schoolrooms on the Russian side, while portraits of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington hung on the



**Vantage Point.** Looking out to the west, Big Diomede is visible on the horizon. The remains of the Federal Scout Readiness Center (green building) shows the perspective Guard members had when tasked to watch the activity of the Russians on Big Diomede.

Photo: Timothy Shaw, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

American walls. Villagers in Little Diomede gathered to watch Warner Brothers films; on Big Diomede, movie night came courtesy of “Len-film.” Soviet propaganda urged Little Diomeders to “Come across the water. Here the Eskimos are allowed to lubricate machines, cure the sick, write letters, live with Russian women, spit on merchants, go to Moscow, become captains!”

No records indicate a flood of Americans rushing westward to join in the glories of machine lubrication, but in 1989, two Russians went the other direction. As the “Ice Curtain” thawed, officials in both countries planned a dogsled and skiing trek to promote good will. A team would travel from Anadyr, Siberia, past the Diomedes, and on to Kotzebue, making the first official border crossing since the 1940s.

In Little Diomede, two young journalists approached a National Guardsman. They wanted to defect. After two tense days in the federal scout readiness center, the weather lifted and the two defectors were flown to Anchorage.

A heavy snowfall collapsed much of the readiness center’s roof in 2009. The two ends of the center and the tower remain, but the telescope went to Anchorage for safe storage. ■

**Historical Perspective.** Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy, director of the Army National Guard, scans the peaks of the Chugach Range with the telescope formerly used during the Cold War to monitor Soviet military activity on Big Diomede Island from the Federal Scout Readiness Center on Little Diomede Island, Alaska.

Photo: Ron Clarke, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

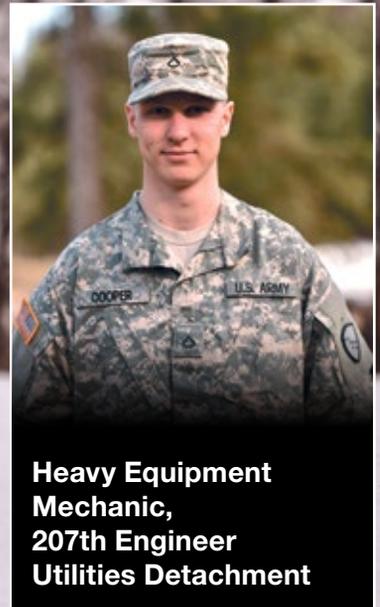
# Hats We Wear

The more than 4,000 men and women of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs are a diverse group, bringing many strengths and experiences to the workplace. Their on-duty missions are varied, their personal talents are numerous and their interests are great. These are just some of the “Hats We Wear.”



**Private First Class Travis Cooper**

National Guard Biathlon Development Team Member  
World Junior Championships Qualifier



**Heavy Equipment  
Mechanic,  
207th Engineer  
Utilities Detachment**



**Lt. Col. Jennifer Casillo**

Battle Dawgs Racing  
Co-Owner and Operator



**Commander, 176th  
Maintenance Squadron**

## Changing the Epidemic of Veterans Suicide

By Verdie Bowen, Veterans Affairs

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** — Did you know that veterans are three times more likely to commit suicide than the average citizen? Today, we lose one veteran to this epidemic every 80 minutes; this equals about 22 veterans a day.

In Alaska, most people claim higher suicide rates are caused by the long winter months, but this is not true. More suicides occur during spring and summer, making suicide awareness even more daunting.

The best way to reverse these tragic numbers is through knowledge. You have to be aware of the risk factors for someone who may be contemplating suicide, know who you can contact and be armed with resources to assist a veteran in need.

Common risk factors:

- Unable to adjust into the community or find work. Not getting along with life-long friends and family members, lacking the desire to enjoy previous hobbies or maintain permanent employment.
- Sleeping issues. Cannot sleep at night. The veteran has to self-medicate to sleep.
- Lack of motivation and energy. Functioning requires drugs, copious amounts of caffeine, nicotine or amphetamines.
- Traumatic Brain Injury/Post-Traumatic Stress Injury. Any traumatic brain injury and post traumatic issues whether diagnosed or not.
- Depression. Sad, lethargic, lacking energy to communicate or function normally.

- Substance abuse. This is also known as self-medication. Alcohol is needed to sleep. To awaken requires excessive caffeine and/or illegal drugs, etc. One-third of all suicides occurred when the veteran had been drinking or doing drugs.
- Major life stressor. Most suicide attempts in the veteran community occurred roughly within two weeks after a major life stressor occurred. For instance, loss of a family member, home, marriage or job. The majority of suicides center around financial or relationship issues.



One of the best ways to help a veteran is to listen. It may be hard to just listen without providing guidance, but in reality, being heard helps lessen the tensions of life. Next, reach out to old buddies. Your encouraging words or simply letting a veteran know you are there could impact his or her life decisions. Remember, this epidemic is not going to get better until we all take an active role.

In the end, please reach out either with your friend or for your friend. The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis, their families and friends with qualified, caring U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs staff through a confidential, toll-free hotline at via 800-273-8255 (press 1) or text 838255. In addition, everyone is welcome to stop by the State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs. For directions to the office or if you just want to talk, call 907-334-0874 or toll-free 888-248-3682. ■



**Workout to End Veteran Suicide.** Athletes gather at the Alaska National Guard's CrossFit affiliate, 907 CrossFit, in February to complete a workout for suicide awareness. "22 WOD to End Veteran Suicide" is an annual nationwide CrossFit event that raises awareness about the 22 veterans who die by suicide every day. Photo: Courtesy Alaska National Guard



**Welcome Home.** Chief Master Sgt. Keith Wilson, left, superintendent of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Civil Engineer Squadron, gets a welcome-home handshake from Brig. Gen. Karen Mansfield, commander of the Alaska Air National Guard, at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport in January. At right, Master Sgt. Bonnie Gardino, 176th CES utilities supervisor, gets a hug from former 176th CES Fire Chief Mark Brauneis. Photo: Capt. John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs

# Air Guard Civil Engineers Return from Middle East

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

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Civil Engineer Squadron returned to Alaska from a six-month deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in January.

About 25 Guard members deployed with the 176th CES to support U.S. Central Command with minor construction projects in their area of operations, said Lt. Col. Jack Evans, commander of the 176th CES.

The 176th CES combined with 16 other units from the active duty, Reserves and the Air National Guard to form the 577th Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron, based out of Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Evans was the commander of the collective unit while deployed.

Fifty-nine percent were Guard members, 28 percent Reservists and 13 percent active duty.

According to Evans, the expeditionary civil engineer unit completed approximately \$6 million in projects in eight countries in the region, including Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan.

"This deployment was so much different than normal for a CES squadron," he said. "Normally we'd be tasked to just perform maintenance at one airfield. This time we were all over the place and doing all construction. Our guys were very busy. And you know, as engineers, that's what we like: to build things and make a difference."

Senior Airman Amado Cordero, a heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration specialist, was one of the 176th CES members on this deployment. Like many Guard members, Cordero works full time in the civilian workforce and performs his part-time Air National Guard career one weekend per month and two weeks per year.

"I think the deployment went really well," Cordero said. "On the civilian side, I do construction. That's why HVAC works well for me, because I do a little bit of everything. I do plumbing, insulation, heavy-equipment operation, and structural and electrical work. This is all pretty familiar to me."

Cordero said that what he most appreciated about this deployment, his second, was the connections he made with other service members.

"The highlight for me was the bonds you make with the people you meet there," he explained. "You get to know them and get to learn about their lives and experiences. Then you become great friends, and they pass on their experiences to you. For instance, I met an individual who was from the Puerto Rico Guard who was in HVAC outside the military, and some of the things he knows, he passed on to me, so I have a better understanding of some things in my career field that I wasn't as strong at before."

Now that he is back, Cordero said he hopes to pursue a full-time job with the Air National Guard and hopes to put on his sergeant's stripes. He said he thinks this deployment helped him learn new mentorship skills, a priority of noncommissioned officers.

"This deployment was a little different this time, but a lot of it was the same," he said. "Having that prior experience helped me to pass on some of that knowledge to other Airmen who were on their first deployment."

"I really appreciate the great job everyone did," Evans said. "Everyone had great attitudes and was really engaged. I'm very proud of our guys." ■

# Alaska Military Youth Academy

## Cadets Pursue Career Opportunities

By Dr. James Jones, Alaska Military Youth Academy

**CAMP CARROLL, Alaska** — The Alaska Military Youth Academy leads the way as the only quasi-military accredited residential secondary educational institution in the state whose mission is “to help intervene in and reclaim the lives of Alaska’s at-risk youth and produce graduates with the values, skills, education and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.”

Cadets enrolled in the 22-week residential phase during the fall/winter cycle of Class 2016-1 continued the academy’s tradition of making positive contributions to the community through various projects. They assisted with Police Navidad, a holiday community outreach event; participated in the Anchorage Veterans Day parade, the first for the city; and helped the Iditarod Trail Committee pack bags and food for delivery to checkpoints along the 1,000-mile sled dog race trail. In all, the cadets performed more

than 6,750 hours of service to the community valued at \$179,482.50.

The AMYA Recruiting, Placement and Mentoring staff hosted an Opportunities Fair featuring 51 vendors in five categories: educational, apprenticeship, employment, military services and volunteerism. The event was primarily for the cadets but was also open to the community and yielded potential employment opportunities for 24 or more cadets upon graduation. The cadets also made tremendous strides toward completing the requirements for high school credentials. AMYA leads the state with the number of GED high school diplomas by examination among agencies authorized to administer the test.

A new pre-apprenticeship program began after the graduation of Class 2016-1 in February. Forty-two

cadets returned to the academy for a four-week vocational training course. This Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a Title I Youth Program, is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and passed through the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. It focuses on three areas: construction (including carpentry, electrical, labor, and ironworking and welding), culinary arts and information technology. Cadets also worked to earn a North Slope Training Certification and Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10 certificate. Cadets finished the pre-apprenticeship program with hands-on training, certifications and connections to potential entry-level jobs or apprenticeship programs. ■



**Community Involvement.** Cadet Jannaya Christopher-Smith of Anchorage colors with kids at the Xmas Extravaganza held at Mountain View Community Center.

Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy



**Career Opportunities.** Cadets Nica Niles of Sutton and Mariah Jimenez-Lopez of Anchorage talk with Tech. Sgt. Melissa Sullivan, 176th Wing, Air National Guard recruiter, during a career fair in February. Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy

# ChalleNGe Program Sees Newest Grads

By Kalei Rupp, DMVA Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — The Alaska Military Youth Academy graduated 118 cadets of Class 2016-1 from its ChalleNGe program in February.

These graduates joined the 4,665 previous graduates since 1994.

The graduation ceremony, held at the Dena'ina Center in downtown Anchorage, featured Class of 1997-2 graduate Jon Tuttle, E&I field engineer with CH2M Hill, as the keynote speaker. Gov. Bill Walker also addressed the graduates, and video messages from members of the Alaska congressional delegation were shown.

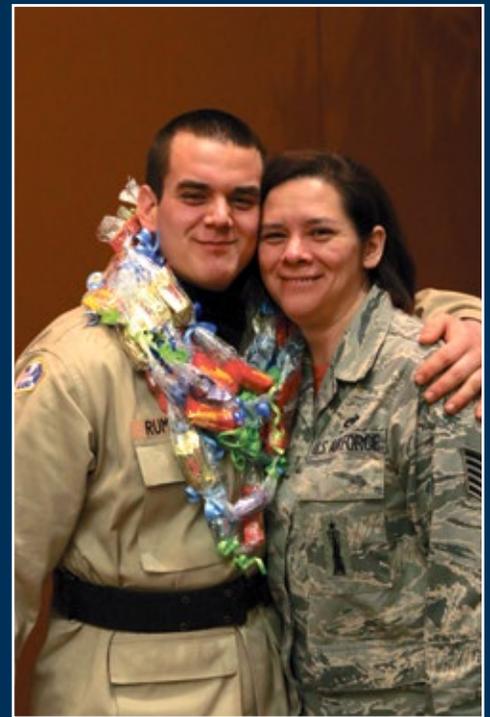
During the 22-week residential phase at the AMYA ChalleNGe program, the corps of cadets focused on academic excellence, leadership and followership, physical fitness, life-coping skills, responsible citizenship, vocational training and service to the community. From the Class of 2016-1, 81 cadets earned their high school credentials; others earned 7.0 transferrable credits each. Overall, this class's grade-level average increased by 1.6 years.

All cadets take part in the yearlong Post-Residential phase where graduates return to

their communities to use the life skills principles they received and continue their education (high school, college or vocational schools), enter the workplace or enter the military. The goal of this phase is for graduates to sustain and build on the gains made during the residential phase while serving as a productive member of society.

New this year was a four-week vocational training course that began after graduation.

“What happens so many times with cadets is that when they come to AMYA, it's a life-changing event for them, but without moving into a job or have something to sustain that change that they have made in their life, they have a tendency to fall back into the old patterns,” said Bob Roses, AMYA director. “The importance of this [program] is to give them a chance to be able to move forward and be able to support themselves and sustain the life-changing events taking place at the academy.” ■



**Congratulations.** Cadet Michael Rumbaugh, of Anchorage, shares a smile and hug with his mother, Tech. Sgt. Geneva Kalmar, after his graduation from the Alaska Military Youth Academy in February. Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy



**Graduates.** Cadets from Class 2016-1 toss their berets after the completion of the graduation ceremony in February. Photo: Sgt. Marisa Lindsay, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

## Alaska National Guard Volunteers Recognized

By Lt. Col. Kay Spear-Budd, Warrior and Family Services

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Martin Luther King Jr. said it well, “Life’s most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” Our Alaska National Guard volunteers are doing a lot for others, and the nation has noticed.

Alaska brought home two of the seven National Guard Bureau volunteer awards, as well as the Armed Forces Insurance 2016 Military Spouse of the Year award, validating the efforts our volunteers put into supporting Alaska’s service members and families.

Shannon Geese was named the National Guard Region 10 Volunteer of the Year. She is the wife of Maj. Kevin Geese, 168th Communications Flight commander, and was nominated by her husband’s group commander, Col. Scott Howard.

“Mrs. Geese is a dynamic volunteer with the 168th Wing; she is actively involved as a Wing Key Volunteer Network member, providing meaningful connection and care of Airmen and their families,” Howard said. “Additionally, Mrs. Geese represents wing families at various events to include the Alaska National Guard Volunteer Workshop and the National Volunteer Workshop. She was absolutely vital in the establishment of the 168th Wing Family Group, which links

volunteers across the wing together with a common purpose. Mrs. Geese specializes in providing timely and consistent leadership within the 168th Family Group as they collectively execute family focused and constructive endeavors.”

Taylor Smart won the Youth Volunteer Award for the entire National Guard. She is the daughter of Master Sgt. Saroya Porche, assigned to the 176th Force Support Flight, and was nominated by Melissa Williams, Warrior and Family Services Child and Youth coordinator. Smart was instrumental in developing the Teen Council into a program that provides a positive learning experience for our teens. Upon her return from the Region 10 symposium she took an active role in bringing some of her learned experiences to Alaska’s program.

Smart is also part of a group of teens who participated in our pilot resiliency and leadership training in areas such as 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, RAD Women’s and radKIDS. As a result of this exceptional training, she worked to mentor her counterparts and our younger youth as a camp counselor and the Council Elite chairwoman. Most importantly, Smart has learned to use her voice to advocate for all military

teens. Smart’s volunteer efforts resulted in 483 hours during 2015.

For the second year in a row, Jenifer Burris, wife of Chief Master Sgt. Steve Burris with the 176th Air Defense Squadron, was named the Armed Forces Insurance 2016 Military Spouse of the Year. She continues her outstanding volunteer service advocating for our service members and their families through her work with the Chris Kyle Patriots Hospital and the Alaska-Forget Me Not Coalition.

The mission of Warrior and Family Services is to “provide effective programming to meet the needs of our members, supporting the enhancement of a ready, relevant and reliable force.” This couldn’t happen without the dedicated volunteers who commit their time supporting our service members and their families.

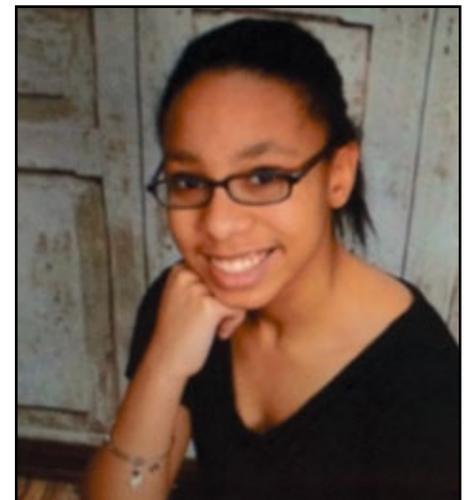
If you’d like to be part of something big and share your talents, whether it’s working with our youth or supporting our service members and their families behind the scenes please contact Lt. Col. Kay Spear-Budd, State Family Program director, at [kay.l.spearbudd.mil@mail.mil](mailto:kay.l.spearbudd.mil@mail.mil) or Sonya Steinbrecher at [sonya.y.stenbrecher.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:sonya.y.stenbrecher.ctr@mail.mil). ■



**Jenifer Burris.** Armed Forces Insurance 2016 Military Spouse of the Year. Photo: Courtesy Jennifer Burris



**Shannon Geese.** National Guard Region 10 Volunteer of the Year. Photo: Courtesy Shannon Geese



**Taylor Smart.** Youth Volunteer Award. Photo: Courtesy Master Sgt. Saroya Porche, 176th Force Support Flight

# Connecting Veterans with Energy Jobs

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** – A new website, [veteransenergypipeline.com](http://veteransenergypipeline.com), was recently launched by the American Petroleum Institute to help veterans find private sector jobs. Simply put, the website translates military job titles to their equivalent in the oil and gas industry and vice versa.

A key element in achieving a growing level of veterans to fill oil and gas industry jobs is to relate those skills they have developed to the skills needed in industry. The challenge of translating military skills to civilian occupations can be daunting for both veterans and hiring managers. The Veterans Energy Pipeline is an online tool for veterans and civilians that highlights the links between military occupations and top oil and gas jobs. The tool also shows where there may be gaps in needed skills; it is vital to connect veterans with ways to supplement their skills with additional education and training that may be required for available positions.

It is estimated that half of the oil and natural gas industry's skilled workforce will retire in the next five to 10 years. Replacing this pool of talent has become a priority for the industry.

The goal is to build on the successes of America's energy revolution and help those serving our country, as well as veterans, transition into careers in the oil and gas industry. This unique forum will provide important information about the industry, the outlook for job opportunities and useful job-hunting tools and resources.

The technical and non-technical skills, such as teamwork, dedication, and leadership that veterans gained through military service make them ideal candidates for positions in the oil and natural gas industry. ■



**YOU VALUE SOLUTIONS. WE VALUE LEADERS.**

Start Strong in life. Enroll in an Army ROTC program, the college elective that provides unrivalled leadership and management training and the resilience to help you overcome and succeed in any career field. Available at more than 1,100 colleges and universities nationwide. There's strong. Then there's Army Strong.

For more information, please call (907) 474-6852 or visit [goarmy.com/rotc/ev52](http://goarmy.com/rotc/ev52)

   
U.S. ARMY **ARMY ROTC**

© 2015. Paid for by the United States Army. All rights reserved.

# Message to the Force

*No barriers. No filters. Straight from the top.*

**SUBJECT: Ethical Fitness and Status of Discipline**

**January 1, 2016**

1. Since the release of the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations report and, more recently, that of Alaska Gov. Bill Walker's independent investigator, retired Judge Patricia Collins, the Alaska National Guard has zealously sought justice and reforms to ensure good order and discipline within our force. Those among us who behave contrary to law and regulation sully our ranks and impugn our good name. Taking adverse action in these cases is a necessary component of preserving fitness in our organization.

2. Below is a review of recent personnel actions resulting from external investigations and completed for the purpose of standards enforcement. Other cases are pending.

| Current Grade              | Previous Grade | Discharge Type           | Discharge Date                  | Notes   |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| O6                         | O6             | Honorable                | 31-Jul-11                       | Retired. State and Federal LOMs revoked. Referred to service Discharge Review Board.  |
| O5                         | O5             | Other Than Honorable     | 28-Feb-15<br>(Retired Reserves) | Separation and retirement in lieu of withdrawal of Federal Recognition. Awaiting final grade determination and characterization of service. |
| O3                         | O3             | Other Than Honorable     | 12-Aug-15                       | Loss Code: Moral or professional dereliction  |
| O3                         | O3             | Other Than Honorable     | 23-Sep-15                       | Loss Code: Moral or professional dereliction  |
| E9                         | E9             | Retired                  | 31-Oct-14                       | Retired Loss Code: Qualified for retired pay  |
| E8                         | N/A            | General                  | 22-Oct-15                       | Discharged from the Guard and Reserves per Service Secretary order  |
| E7<br>(medical retirement) | E9             | Honorable                | 6-Oct-14                        | Negotiated for swift departure of SM with E7 and honorable discharge  |
| E7                         | E7             | General                  | 9-Sep-15                        | Loss Code: Misconduct   |
| E7                         | E7             | General                  | 1-Nov-15                        | Loss Code: Misconduct   |
| E1<br>(retired AGR)        | E7             | Other Than Honorable     | 30-Nov-14                       | Loss Code: Misconduct   |
| E1<br>(retired AGR)        | E8             | Other Than Honorable     | 31-Oct-14                       | Loss Code: Misconduct   |
| E6                         | N/A            | Retained in drill status | 90 days from 1-Dec-15           | Removed from Active Guard Reserve   |
| E5                         | N/A            | Retained in drill status | 90 days from 1-Dec-15           | Removed from Active Guard Reserve   |

3. The OCI report also recommended strengthening the Alaska National Guard's ability to respond to inappropriate behavior by corrective action beyond administrative measures. As I'm sure you are aware, our organization lacks a functioning code of military justice, which, along with ethical fitness and engaged leadership, is an essential component of ensuring good order and discipline. We are working closely with the Alaska State Legislature to enact an updated Alaska Code of Military Justice, which can serve as a fair and transparent mechanism to discourage conduct inconsistent with our organization's ethos. Soldiers and Airmen from each brigade and wing have been part of the effort to create an ACMJ that works well for us. We expect final passage in the upcoming legislative session.

4. At all times, our overarching goal remains to foster a professional culture that values and engenders respectful behavior. Promotion of best practices and prevention of improper behavior is paramount. Failing that, appropriate and timely response is imperative. When lapses occur, our priorities are to 1) help victims of improper behavior; 2) bring offenders to justice; and 3) create more effective preventative measures and offer comprehensive training to mitigate improper behavior. We have seen solid progress, but we can never let up. The Alaska National Guard's multi-layered approach to good order and discipline is based on all military and civilian personnel exhibiting the highest standards of conduct. Each of us, every day, must work to promote an ethically fit organization. Our membership and those we serve deserve no less. Your chain of command is committed to remaining vigilant and willing to tackle the difficult situations.

5. When it comes to doing what is right, in the Alaska National Guard we are all leaders. Any member observing behavior prejudicial to order and discipline must report it to his/her chain of command. If the chain of command is unresponsive, bring the issue directly to me or call the governor's hot line at 855-761-5690.



Laurel J. Hummel  
Brigadier General (AK), AKNG  
The Adjutant General

**SUBJECT: Announcement of Key NCO Position Selections**

Feb., 1, 2016

1. Non-Commissioned Officers are the backbone of our military. They provide experience, leadership, technical acumen and valuable counsel on issues of importance to our Soldiers and Airmen. Strong, grounded NCOs have provided me guidance throughout my military career, indeed — as the daughter of an NCO — for a lifetime. While I am your Adjutant General, the Alaska National Guard will always have a Senior Enlisted Leader as my Battlebuddy/ Wingman.

2. CSM Richard Hildreth has served ably as AKNG's first SEL. He will now transition to become the first AKNG Liaison to Tribes and Rural Communities. CSM Hildreth's knowledge of and experience in rural Alaska will be critical to the success of our Rural Engagement Initiative to expand the Alaska State Defense Force and work toward improving conditions for National Guard membership in rural Alaska. CSM Hildreth's efforts will be focused on this aspect of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan.

3. I have selected CMSgt Paul Nelson, currently 176th Wing Command Chief, as your next Senior Enlisted Leader. CMSgt Nelson has had a unique variety of professional experiences over 28 years that have positioned him for success in this important leadership role. I know he will be a true command team partner to me and that he will advocate strongly for the best interest of our Soldiers and Airmen.

4. The change of Senior Enlisted Leader position from CSM Hildreth to CMSgt Nelson is effective as of Friday, Feb. 5. A Change of Responsibility Ceremony will occur on Sunday, March 6: time and place will be widely communicated. Please join us as we affirm the value of the NCO to our force.

Laurel J. Hummel  
Brigadier General (AK), AKNG  
The Adjutant General



HOW SIMPLE THREAD CAN BECOME  
THE FABRIC OF A NATION.

CELEBRATING MORE THAN 125 YEARS.



1-800-RED CROSS  
WWW.REDCROSS.ORG



# ALASKA MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

Challenging the Future



TUITION FREE  
GED TESTING  
EARN UP TO 7 CREDITS  
Youth ages  
16-18

Military Youth Academy

Alaska  
Military Youth Academy

find us on facebook



[www.akmya.org](http://www.akmya.org)  
toll free 877.242.5643  
[goamya@alaska.gov](mailto:goamya@alaska.gov)



AMYA campus is located on JBER (Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson)

# Command Chief Warrant Officer Puts Soldiers First

By Staff Sgt. Balinda Dresel, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Chief Warrant Officer 4 Pamela Vitt was appointed as the state command chief warrant officer for the Alaska Army National Guard last fall, bringing her vast experience and 25 years of military service to the role.

As the command chief warrant officer, Vitt's duties consist of everything from interviewing and boarding new warrant officer candidates and accepting interstate and active-duty transfers to mentoring and continually educating all Alaska Army National Guard warrant officers.

Learning the administrative portion and making tough decisions that will not please everyone all the time are a few trials Vitt has already identified that will need to be overcome.

"There are other challenges that I have yet to learn about; I'm sure there will be many," she said.

Vitt brings a wealth of knowledge and experience into the new position. She commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in 1990 after graduating from Colorado State University with a bachelor of science degree in natural resource management. During her six years of active-duty service she was a platoon leader and an executive officer for U.S. Army

Alaska's 23rd Aviation Intermediate Maintenance at Fort Wainwright.

Vitt transferred to the Alaska Army National Guard, converting to a chief warrant officer two in 1997.

"I joined the Guard because I was leaving active duty to remain in Alaska and wanted to continue my military career," Vitt explained. "I switched to warrant officer because I wanted to continue flying an aircraft, not sit at a desk."

She began her National Guard career by flying the UH-1 Huey helicopter as a maintenance pilot, switching to the UH-60 Black Hawk in 1998. Notably, Vitt served as both company and battalion aviation safety officer for the past seven years and deployed to Kosovo in 2003 and 2008 supporting peace keeping and peace enforcement missions.

"No matter what job I was assigned, I've always given my all to it," she said, "even when it wasn't the most pleasant or recognized position."

Vitt served as the rear detachment officer for B Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment during a time of great sadness, when four Alaska Guard members were killed in a UH-60 Black Hawk crash in 2006 while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The deaths were the first Alaska Army National Guard combat deaths since World War II.

"My duty as the rear detachment officer for B Company reiterated how absolutely important it was to make taking care of Soldiers the No. 1 priority, always, no matter what," she said. "That was a tough deployment for them in Iraq, as well as for their families here at home, and I tried my best to assist both."

Vitt's priorities tie into her family's strong military ties. Her brother is an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 Hercules pilot, and she recently had the opportunity to enlist her son into the U.S. Army as an M-1 armor crewman in May 2015.

She supports whatever avenue her three children want to pursue, military or not. When not in the office, Vitt can be found enjoying the great outdoors of Alaska — camping, canoeing, biking and hiking — with her daughter, Theresa, or dabbling in science competitions with her son Ian.

Vitt is most looking forward to learning the jobs of other technical warrants and personally getting to know the individuals and how they can all benefit each other as warrants.

"I am very honored to be chosen for this role and thankful for the opportunity," Vitt said. "I have been enjoying serving my fellow warrants and representing the great state of Alaska." ■

**Aviation Roots.** Chief Warrant Officer 4 Pamela Vitt, the command chief warrant officer for the Alaska Army National Guard, stands in front of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter near Colony Glacier while supporting a wreckage recovery mission in 2015. Photo: Courtesy Chief Warrant Officer 4 Pamela Vitt, Alaska Army National Guard



# Who We Are

*What are you looking forward to most this summer?*

**Capt. Brian Nosich**  
176th Wing Operational Support Squadron



*"Being able to spend time with my family in cabins."*

**Deborah Morton**  
Alaska Military Youth Academy



*"Spending time camping with my husband and kiddos this summer."*

**Spc. Randell Andrew**  
1-143rd Infantry (Airborne)



*"Subsistence fishing, berry picking and camping."*

**Tech Sgt. Karen Peterson**  
176th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron



*"I can't wait for hikes in the beautiful Alaska outdoors with my family."*

**Capt. Collin Welch**  
1-297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance Squadron



*"Working with the Mongolian Armed Forces in contingency operations during my deployment to Afghanistan."*

## SERVING NATIONAL GUARD FAMILIES

**THANK YOU** for your commitment to our country!



**Call Today!**

**907.562.2820**

*~ Convenient midtown location ~*

4050 Lake Otis Parkway • Suite 200 • Anchorage, AK 99508

[www.FamilyFirstDentistry.com](http://www.FamilyFirstDentistry.com)



**Walk in and Emergencies Welcome!**  
Quality, compassionate care for you and your family. Wisdom teeth extractions,  **invisalign**® (invisible braces), Orthodontics, IV and Oral Sedation, Implants, & General Dentistry for families!  
Same day crowns.



Braces

 **invisalign**®

## Two Alaska Employers Named Semifinalists for Top Award

By Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Staff

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** — Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office, announced that two Alaska employers of current serving Alaska National Guard and Reserve employees are among the 139 semifinalists for the 2016 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

The Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the Department of Defense to employers for their support of National Guard and Reserve members. On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, ESGR organizes the annual award program, which has presented the honor to 220 employers since 1996. Each year, up to 15 awards are

presented to employers in the three categories: large (500 or more employees), small (fewer than 500 employees) and public sector.

This year's semifinalist group consists of 48 large employers, 46 small employers and 45 public sector employers. The two Alaska employers nominated for the 2016 Freedom Award are the Alaska Department of Public Safety (Alaska State Troopers) and Alaska Airlines.

Almost half of the U.S. military is made up of National Guard and Reserve members, many of whom also hold jobs with civilian employers. The Freedom Award recognizes those employers that provide the most

outstanding support for these citizen warriors. As many as 15 employers will be selected for this year's award and honored at the Pentagon in an official ceremony in August.

"Each of these 139 semifinalists have given great support to our citizen warriors," said ESGR Director of Outreach Navy Capt. Steve Knight. "They play a key role in maintaining the strength of the National Guard and Reserve, as they help take care of our troops and their families."

ESGR received 2,424 nominations for employers in all 50 states, Guam-Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. ■

## Top Forty Under 40 Honors ESGR Members

By Kalei Rupp, DMVA Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Two members of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve have been named to the Alaska Journal of Commerce's 2016 Top Forty Under 40.

Jamie Abordonado, 39, program support technician for ESGR, and Bill Bailey, 39, employer outreach representative for the ESGR north committee, were both recognized for their achievements.

"This recognition is such an honor," said Abordonado, who is also a master sergeant in the Alaska Air National Guard serving as a chaplain assistant and superintendent in the 176th Wing's chaplain office. "I have the privilege of working with employers all across the state and see firsthand their tremendous support of service members while also having the opportunity to serve my state and country in uniform."

Abordonado has been with ESGR since 2007. Bailey came onboard with ESGR in 2013. In addition to his volunteer work with ESGR, he is also the Fairbanks Community and Communications manager for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

This year's class of 40 honorees was selected by Journal management out of nearly 130 nominations, representing the communities

of Anchorage, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Juneau, Kenai, Seward and North Pole.

"We have a tremendous class once again representing the best of Alaska from the private,

public and nonprofit sectors featuring diverse backgrounds around the state," said Journal managing editor Andrew Jensen. "It's an honor to recognize the people who will be leading influences in the future of Alaska." ■



**High Honor.** Bill Bailey, employer outreach representative for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve north committee, is named to the 2016 Alaska Journal of Commerce's Top Forty Under 40 class. Bailey is also the Fairbanks Community and Communications manager for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Photo: Courtesy Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve



**Top Forty.** Master Sgt. Jamie Abordonado, chaplain assistant, 176th Wing, is part of the 2016 Alaska Journal of Commerce's Top Forty Under 40. She is also the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program support technician. Photo: Courtesy Alaska Air National Guard

# Awards and Decorations



## Meritorious Service Medal

MSgt Sarah A. Felton ..... 168th MDG  
 Lt Col Kelly J. Mellard ..... 168th FSF  
 COL Michael A. Thompson...JFHQ (Army)  
 MAJ Timothy J. Straub ..... JFHQ (Army)



## Air Force Commendation Medal

SSgt Shamika S. Bertero... 168th MDG  
 SrA Desirae D. Trotter..... 168th MDG



## Air Force Reserve Meritorious Service Medal

MSgt Kristopher Abel ..... 212th RQS  
 MSgt David Alborn ..... 176th OG  
 MSgt Seth Bowen ..... 176th SFS  
 SMSgt Thomas Cubit ..... 176th AMXS  
 SSgt Brian Danter ..... 176th CES  
 SMSgt Thomas Dietrich ..... 176th OG  
 1Lt Casey Dockstader ..... 211th RQS  
 MSgt Kevin Johnson ..... 176th LRS  
 TSgt Donna Judkins..... 176th WG  
 MSgt Edward Kenna III..... 176th MXS  
 TSgt Christian Leamy..... 176th OSS  
 TSgt Matthew Lucas ..... 176th ADS  
 MSgt Andre Marron..... 210th RQS  
 TSgt Matthew Nemeth ..... 249th AS  
 SMSgt Robert Schnell ..... 211th RQS  
 MSgt Cheryl Stocks ..... 176th LRS



## Afghanistan Campaign Medal

Lt Col Kenneth Radford Jr..... 249th AS



## Iraq Campaign Medal

Lt Col Kenneth Radford Jr..... 249th AS  
 SSgt David Curtis..... 176th LRS



## Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal

MSgt Troy Freeman..... 176th MXS  
 A1C Alexander Mannion..... 176th CES



## Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

SSgt McKay Asay ..... 176th OSS  
 A1C Kaelan Byrd..... 176th OSS  
 A1C Tasha Hood..... 176th OSS  
 SrA Cammeron Hull ..... 176th SFS  
 SSgt Tony Jager..... 176th SFS



## Korean Defense Service Medal

SrA Cammeron Hull ..... 176th SFS



## Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device

Maj Scott Altenburg ..... 249th AS  
 TSgt Christina Cordes ..... 176th OSS  
 MSgt Warren Hollcraft..... 176th LRS  
 TSgt Christian Leamy..... 176th OSS  
 SSgt Shaun Wehe ..... 176th OSS  
 MSgt Troy Freeman..... 176th MXS  
 SrA Tyler Hoskins..... 211th RQS  
 TSgt Christian Leamy..... 176th OSS



## Air Force Combat Readiness Medal

CMS John R. Duhaime ..... 168th ARS  
 MSG James W. Hudnall ..... 168th ARS  
 TSG Jonathan F. Legan ..... 168th ARS  
 SSG Christian K. Armour ..... 168th ARS  
 TSG Jonathan F. Legan ..... 168th ARS

MAJ David G. Roller ..... 168th ARS  
 MAJ Erik W. Fitzstephens .... 168th ARS  
 CPT Brian D. Binkley ..... 168th ARS  
 MAJ Brandon J. Stephens... 168th ARS  
 CPT Brian D. Binkley ..... 168th ARS  
 SSG Rachel J. Cook ..... 168th AMXS  
 SMS Richard M. Smith ..... 168th OG  
 MSG Christian D. Willey..... 168th OSS  
 MSG Tracy E. Purdy..... 168th OSS  
 MSG Keith M. Rowan ..... 168th OSS  
 TSG Peter R. Gardella..... 168th OSS  
 CPT Dean U. Thibodeau..... 168th OSS  
 MAJ Benjamin A. Doyle..... 168th OSS



## Alaska Community Service Medal

SSG Charles L. McGonigal.... 297th MP  
 SSG Joyce Dean ..... 297th MP  
 SGT Eric R. Carter ..... 297th MP  
 SGT Michael J. Pitaro..... 297th MP  
 SPC Christopher Johnson..... 297th MP



## Alaska State Partnership Program Ribbon

CPT Jennifer L. King ..... JFHQ (Army)  
 CPT Gregory E. Vanison.... JFHQ (Army)

## Master Aviation Badge

1SG Todd A. Kochte..... 1-207th AVN

## Senior Aviation Badge

SSG Karen L. Denton..... 1-207th AVN  
 SSG Nicholas S. Lime..... 1-207th AVN  
 SGT Timothy M. McCormick  
 ..... 1-207th AVN  
 SGT Bradley A. McKenzie... 1-207th AVN

## Basic Aviation Badge

SGT Veronica L. Rivera .... 1-207th AVN

## Senior Recruiting Badge

James E. Kempner..... R&R



## Alaska Distinguished Service Medal

CW4 Tammy L. Kostoff ..... JFHQ (Army)



## Alaska Commendation Medal

CPT Arthur M. Meyer..... 297th BfSB  
 1SG Rodger Morrison.. 1-143rd IN ABN  
 MSG Maureen Meehan .... JFHQ (Army)



# Promotions

## Colonel

Brian Demers.....JFHQ (Army)

## Lieutenant Colonel

David Breun..... 176th WG

Carrie Howard.....176th ADS

Jeffrey Meinel..... 176th OG

Krista Staff.....249th AS

## Major

Jay Randall..... 210th RQS

## Captain

Holly Demmert..... 144th AS

Mellkart Hawi .....103rd CST

Vanessa Noble ..... 176th OSS

Heather Pollard.....MED DET

Matthew Prieksat.....176th WG

Anthony Rivas..... 1-207th AVN

## First Lieutenant

Esteban Acevedo .....176th CES

## Chief Warrant Officer

### Three

Arthur McLaren.....49th MDB

Michael Williams..... 1-207th AVN

Ross Wise..... 641st AVN

## Senior Master Sergeant

### (E-8 Air)

SMSgt Jeffery A. Ling ..... 168th SFS

## Sergeant First Class

### (E-7 Army)

Aren Callahan .....1-297th CAV

Zachary Carbaugh .....1-207th AVN

Jeremy Dellabalma..1-297th R&S LRS

Eti Faaaliga.....R&R

Thomas Lee..... 103rd CST

Nicholas Mikos .....1-207th AVN

Nicholas Power Jr. ....207th BSC

Scotty Rodgers .....R&R

Michael Wright.....R&R

## Master Sergeant

### (E-7 Air)

Chadwick O. Petrie..... 213th SWS

Jennifer R. Webster..... 168th MOF

Sandra C. Murphy ..... 168th CPR FT

Jennifer L. Beckley .....168th OSS

Rodney Phillips ..... 168th FSF

Jose A. Abdelnoor ..... 213th SWS

Michael J. Copeland..... 168th WG

Thomas Andrukiewicz..... 176th LRS

Sean Mitchell.....176th OG

Darick Butman..... 176th AMXS

Jamie Abordonado ..... 176th WG

Christine McCulloch..... 176th FSF

## Staff Sergeant

### (E-6 Army)

Flaniry Briones.....297th BfSB

Michael Guzman.....49th MDB

Aaron Johnson.....207th CSC

Bradley McKenzie .....1-207th AVN

Tosha Polsky.....MED DET

## Technical Sergeant

### (E-6 Air)

Peter C. Bernheim..... 168th MXG

Seth T. Swearingen ..... 168th CE

Michael C. Pablo ..... 168th MXS

James A. Quenga..... 168th MXS

William J. Mallula..... 168th MXS

James A. Roberto..... 168th MXS

Rosendo Perez..... 168th FSF

William Wilson .....212th RQS

Nicole Rahmer.....176th MSG

Karen Peterson ..... 176th AMXS

Thomas Fisher..... 176th SFS

Nathan Namauu..... 176th SFS

Jennifer Johnston ..... 176th ADS

Jheren-Michel Svoboda .....210th RQS

Lindsey Medinas..... 176th ADS

Jimmy McCombs..... 176th LRS

Arlton Abordonado ..... 176th LRS

Daniel Reed ..... 176th MXG

Scott Toms..... 176th MXG

Dayton Osborn..... 176th AMXS

Stanley Montgomery..... 176th MXS

Stewart Andringa ..... 176th MXS

John Carter..... 176th MXS

## Sergeant

### (E-5 Army)

Jose Apontecolon.....49th MDB

Allison Booshu .....MED DET

Patrick Brown ..... 297th MP

Benisan Correacarrasquillo ..49th MDB

Christine Gruber.....761st MP

Justin Hartle ..... 1-143rd IN ABN

Stephen McDowell.....207th EQP

Edgar Perez .....49th MDB

Kin Yung Shaw Jr. ....207th BSC

Sirithone Sourivong.....1-207th AVN

## Staff Sergeant

### (E-5 Air)

Trevor J. Auton..... 168th SFS

Thompson D. Jordon..... 168th SFS

Tyler Duncan ..... 144th AS

Melina Arciniega .....210th RQS

Chad Cole ..... 176th LRS

Christopher Khamphady..... 176th CES

Brooke Morin ..... 176th CF

Christina Nakea ..... 176th ADS

Christopher Wolford ..... 176th WG

Scott Henscheid..... 176th CF

Kristen Hall .....176th OSS

Danielle Johnson ..... 176th AMXS

Eugene Espejo ..... 176th LRS

## Retirements

CW3 Ralph Benjamin Baklarz

..... Det 54 OSACOM

SSG Karen Lynn Denton .. JFHQ (Army)

MAJ Mark Alexander Binggeli

..... JFHQ (Army)

CPT Marvell Eugene Hawkins

.....761st MP

COL Michael Thompson... JFHQ (Army)

SGT Henry Pagan ...AKARNG MED DET

SSG John Edwards Augustine

..... 1-207th AVN

SSG Kline Travis Christian.....38th TC

MSG Rhame Lee Grubbs ..JFHQ (Army)

CW4 Tammy Lynn Kostoff

..... JFHQ (Army)

CW3 Jonathon Lynn Goodwin

..... DET 54 OSACOM

Col Mark A. Hedlund..... 168th WG

MSgt Gregory Schmidt ..... 168th SWS

CMSgt Kenneth Latham .....168th MDG

TSgt Lonnie A. Young..... 168th LRS

Lt Col James Fowler.....168th OSS

TSgt Kelly Repnow ..... 168th WG

SMSgt Kevin Combs..... 176th MXS

Lt Col Charles Sims ..... 144th AS

CMSgt Paul Verrier ..... 176th MOF

MSgt Ronald Avellaneda.....176th MDG

TSgt Vernon Osborn..... 176th MXG

SMSgt Carla Terrazas ..... 176th WG

TSgt Shaquita Long Rodgers

..... 176th LRS

SMSgt James Assenmacher

..... 176th CF

## Changes of Command and Responsibility

Lt Col Jennifer Casillo.....176th MXS

CPT Todd Anderson .....JFHQ (Army)

CPT Anthony Rivas .....HHC, 1-207th AVN

CMSgt Paul Nelson.....Senior Enlisted Leader, AKNG

CMSgt David Garganta ..... 176th WG

1SG Todd Cooper .....B Company, 1-207th AVN

1SG George Koval .....D Company, 1-207th AVN

# Status of Discipline Actions

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

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
| Senior NCO | Misconduct – Inappropriate Professional and Personal Conduct                     | Separated with General Discharge in lieu of discharge proceedings                      |
| Junior NCO | Misconduct – Misuse of Government Travel Card                                    | Separated from Active Guard Reserve program in lieu of discharge proceedings           |
| Enlisted   | Misconduct – Two Driving Under the Influence/Driving While Intoxicated in Career | Separated  |
| Enlisted   | Misconduct – Reckless Driving  | One grade reduction for civil conviction   |
| Enlisted   | Civil Confinement for six months or more   | Dropped From Rolls of Army with reduction to Private                                   |
| Enlisted   | Misconduct – Driving Under the Influence   | Battalion Letter of Reprimand and dropped from Promotion Recommended List for one year |
| Enlisted   | Misconduct – Driving Under the Influence   | Reduction of one grade   |

In the interest of transparency, these are the actions the Alaska Air National Guard has taken from Oct. 1, 2015, through Feb. 29, 2016.

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Lt Col               | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Four                         | Recommendation for Discharge   |
| Lt Col               | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Three                        | Letter of Reprimand  |
| Capt                 | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Three                        | Letter of Reprimand  |
| Capt                 | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| CMSgt                | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| SMSgt                | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards (Overdue Fitness Assessment)   | Letter of Reprimand  |
| SMSgt                | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| MSgt                 | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Four                         | Letter of Reprimand and Denied Re-enlistment                               |
| MSgt (6 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Three                        | Letter of Reprimand  |
| MSgt                 | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards (Overdue Fitness Assessment)   | Letter of Reprimand  |
| MSgt                 | Failure to Maintain Professional Standards                           | Letter of Reprimand  |
| MSgt (2 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Standards for Individual Medical Readiness       | Letter of Counseling   |
| MSgt (5 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| MSgt                 | Non-Participation  | Discharge Recommendation (Pending Approval)                                |
| TSgt (2 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Three                        | Letter of Reprimand  |
| TSgt (4 Individuals) | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt (2 individuals) | Failure to Report to Appointment                                     | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt                 | Failure to Maintain Professional Standards                           | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt                 | Failure to Maintain Professional Standards                           | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt                 | Making Inappropriate Comments  | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt (2 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Standards for Individual Medical Readiness       | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt                 | Lying to an Officer  | Letter of Reprimand  |
| TSgt                 | Late Reporting   | Letter of Counseling   |
| TSgt                 | Failure to Obey Order or Regulation                                  | Letter of Reprimand  |
| SSgt                 | Misuse of Government Property  | Letter of Counseling   |
| SSgt                 | Conduct Not Conducive to Good Order and Discipline                   | Letter of Reprimand  |
| SSgt                 | Non-Participation  | Discharge Recommendation (Pending Approval)                                |
| SSgt                 | Failure to Meet Financial Obligations (Government Travel Card)       | Letter of Counseling   |
| SSgt                 | Substance Abuse  | Discharge  |
| SSgt                 | Late Reporting   | Letter of Counseling   |
| SSgt (4 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Three                        | Letter of Reprimand  |
| SSgt (3 individuals) | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| SSgt                 | Conduct Not Conducive to Good Order and Discipline                   | Letter of Counseling   |
| SSgt                 | Failure to Obey Order or Regulation (Adultery)                       | Demotion to Senior Airman  |
| SrA (2 individuals)  | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Four                         | Recommendation for Demotion (Pending Commander's Retention Recommendation) |
| SrA                  | Substance Abuse  | Discharge  |
| SrA                  | Conduct Not Conducive to Good Order and Discipline                   | Letter of Reprimand  |
| SrA (2 individuals)  | Failure to Maintain Standards for Individual Medical Readiness       | Letter of Counseling   |
| SrA                  | Failure to Go, Repeat Offense  | Letter of Reprimand  |
| SrA (3 individuals)  | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| SrA (3 individuals)  | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| SrA                  | Insubordination and Conduct Prejudicial to Good Order and Discipline | Letter of Counseling   |
| SrA                  | Failure to Go  | Letter of Counseling   |
| A1C (4 individuals)  | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Two                          | Letter of Counseling   |
| A1C                  | Failure to Maintain Fitness Standards x Four                         | Discharge  |
| A1C (2 individuals)  | Late Reporting   | Letter of Counseling   |
| A1C                  | Failure to Maintain Standards for Individual Medical Readiness       | Letter of Counseling   |

# Start of the Trail

## Welcome to our newest members and employees

### 761st Military Police Battalion

Allan D. Emperador  
Austin J. McIlrath

### 297th Military Police Company

Kyle S. Martin  
Michael L. Olsen  
Michael Kunder  
Jean Aguerre

### 1-297th Reconnaissance & Surveillance

Matthew Richardson  
Dartanian Chavira  
Joshua Gologergen

### 1-297th R&S Long Range Surveillance

Jonathan J. Teve  
Kalen Willis

### 297th Signal Company

Kayla D. Long

### Joint Forces Headquarters (Army)

Brian Demers

### 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne)

Brandon W. Pickett  
Jacob Bloodgood  
Ricky John Credito  
John Deleon  
Blake Romero

### 1-207th Aviation

Joseph E. Juguilon  
Varsha P. Chhabria  
Matthew Symons  
Robert Christensen

Lucille Anaruk  
Rosemary Vinoya  
James Foster

### 49th Missile Defense Battalion

David Lemly

### 207th Equipment Support Platoon

Aldia M. Montilla  
Alayna Krabill

### 297th Support Battalion

Lawrence S. Gust  
Thompson W. Marques  
Sonja R. Hood  
Katharine Curra-Spurger  
Jason Isley  
Cris Montero

### 1-297th Cavalry

Carlos S. Camachotorres  
Christopher W. Agustines  
Stephen M. Van Alstyne

### 207th Combat Support Company

Grape R. Tuifatu  
Tyler Hadley

### 134th Public Affairs Detachment

David Bedard  
Michael W. Risinger

### 49th Theater Gateway Team

Melissa Skaw

### 176th Wing

Kelly Willett

### 176th Medical Group

Bryan Farthing  
Nikolaus Bruce  
Angelo Romano

### 176th Comptroller Flight

Tony Jager  
Robert Meade  
Brandon Baldwin

### 176th Force Support Flight

Hunter Kautz  
Kua Xiong  
Jacob Stueben

### 176th Security Forces Squadron

Makayla Conant  
John Howell

### Joint Forces Headquarters (Air)

Caleb Jordan

### 176th Maintenance Group

Michael Odom  
Kellan Ford  
Aaron Ralston  
Cameron Hull

### 176th Operational Support Squadron

Brian Lynch  
Eva McElroy  
Aaron Hamilton

### 176th Air Defense Squadron

Cassady Valenta

### 210th Rescue Squadron

David Dunning  
Erin Phillips

### 212th Rescue Squadron

Sara Warren  
Adam Brister

### 168th Maintenance Squadron

David Berger  
Paul Rieff  
Dylan Latham  
Devan Downey

### 168th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Treana Briggs  
Isiah Todd

### 168th Air Refueling Squadron

Ronald Oliver  
Trevor Keeney  
Steven Billa

### 213th Space Warning Squadron

Gersom Rivera  
Joshua Marugg  
Meut Chantha  
Sean Milafsky  
Omar Perez Torres

### 168th Medical Group

Anthony Robinson  
Debra Triplehorn

### 168th Wing

Mae Olson

### 168th Maintenance Operations Flight

Zachary McGhee

## 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                  | JUNE | JULY           | AUGUST                           |
|--|------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Joint Forces Headquarters (Air)        | 4-5  | 9-10 (make-up) | 6-7                              |
| Joint Forces Headquarters (Army)       | 4-5  | No Drill       | 6-7                              |
| ALASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD             |      |                |                                  |
| 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade | 3-5  | No Drill       | 13                               |
| 38th Troop Command                     | 3-5  | No Drill       | 6-7                              |
| ALASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD              |      |                |                                  |
| 168th Wing                             | 4-5  | 9-10 (make-up) | 6-7                              |
| 176th Wing                             | 4-5  | 9-10 (make-up) | 4-7 (MSG/MDG)<br>6-7 (MXG/OG/WG) |
| ALASKA STATE DEFENSE FORCE             |      |                |                                  |
| Headquarters                           | 4-5  | 16-17          | 20-21                            |



- COAST-TO-COAST MILITARY DISCOUNT PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE
- BLIZZAK SNOW TIRES AVAILABLE FOR ALL MAKES AND MODELS
- ALL VEHICLES FULLY WINTERIZED
- AMAZING SELECTION
- FINANCING EXPERTS
- ASSURED SERVICE
- NO SALES TAX

**TEST DRIVE A NEW VEHICLE TODAY!**

**CHEVROLET BUICK GMC OF FAIRBANKS**  
 3300 S CUSHMAN ST, FAIRBANKS • (855) 407-1986 • FAIRBANKSCHEVY.COM



Reaching  
 Across Alaska,  
 Helping  
 Children,  
 Supporting  
 Families, &  
 Touching Lives



**MASTERS LEVEL CLINICIAN AVAILABLE 24/7**  
**FOR A NO COST ASSESSMENT**  
**CALL US TODAY!**  
**(907) 258-7575 OR 1 (800) 478-7575**



(907) 258-7575 or  
 (800) 478-7575  
 northstarbehavioral.com

Acute Hospital & Residential  
 Treatment Centers Debarr RPTC  
 TRICARE® approved facility



**CHRIS KYLE**  
**PATRIOTS HOSPITAL**  
A part of North Star Behavioral Health

**MISSION STRENGTH,  
 RESILIENCY & HEALING**

An Inpatient Treatment Program for  
 Service Members and Veterans

Our program is an intensive dual  
 track treatment program for military  
 service members and veterans  
 who have experienced trauma, are  
 in need of detoxification, and/or  
 rehabilitation for substance abuse.



1650 S. Bragaw Anchorage, AK 99508  
 (907) 258-7575 or 1(800) 478-7575  
 chrisKylepatriotshospital.com | TRICARE® approved facility

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ANCHORAGE, AK  
PERMIT #537

*The children of our servicemen and women serve our nation in their own special way. You have the opportunity to thank and encourage these courageous kids with our newest program.*



## Battalion Buddy



*We provide cuddly animals to serve as a "Battalion Buddy" to the military children who are about to say "Good-bye" to a parent who is deploying. These stuffed toys serve as comfort during a difficult time.*

**There are two ways to donate!**

### Donate Stuffed Toys!

- Send new 14"-16" plush toys please.
- Consider holding a toy drive at your school, church, or other organization!



### Make a Contribution

- Visit our website and make a donation instantly online.
- Mail your check made payable and addressed to:  
**Operation Gratitude  
16444 Refugio Road  
Encino, CA 91436**

Send all donations of brand-new stuffed toys to:  
**OPERATION GRATITUDE**  
17330 Victory Boulevard, Van Nuys, CA 91406  
ATTN: Battalion Buddy Program

For more information visit us on the web at [www.OperationGratitude.com](http://www.OperationGratitude.com)  
on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/OperationGratitude](http://www.facebook.com/OperationGratitude)  
or send an email to [OpGrat@gmail.com](mailto:OpGrat@gmail.com)