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*Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs*

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska Army Guardsmen save two hunters after falling through Yukon River ice

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Soldiers with the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Aviation Battalion saved two hunters after they broke through Yukon River ice while traveling on their snowmachines early this morning in western Alaska.

Alaska State Troopers contacted the Rescue Coordination Center at about 2:30 a.m. to request a search and rescue mission out of Bethel, where an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk and aircrew are stationed full-time.

"There were four hunters who were traveling in a group, each on a snowmachine, over the Yukon River," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Cody Bjorklund, the Black Hawk command pilot on the mission. "Three of them went through the ice and two of them lost their snowmachines," he said.

The men made their way to a small island sandbar in the river, about seven miles east of Mountain Village, which was their destination. Two of them were stranded, cold and wet, and due to the soft areas of ice, could not ride out as a passenger on one of the other snowmachines.

"We left Bethel within the hour and found them right away," said Bjorklund. "It was dark out and they had a fire going, so it helped us find them more quickly."

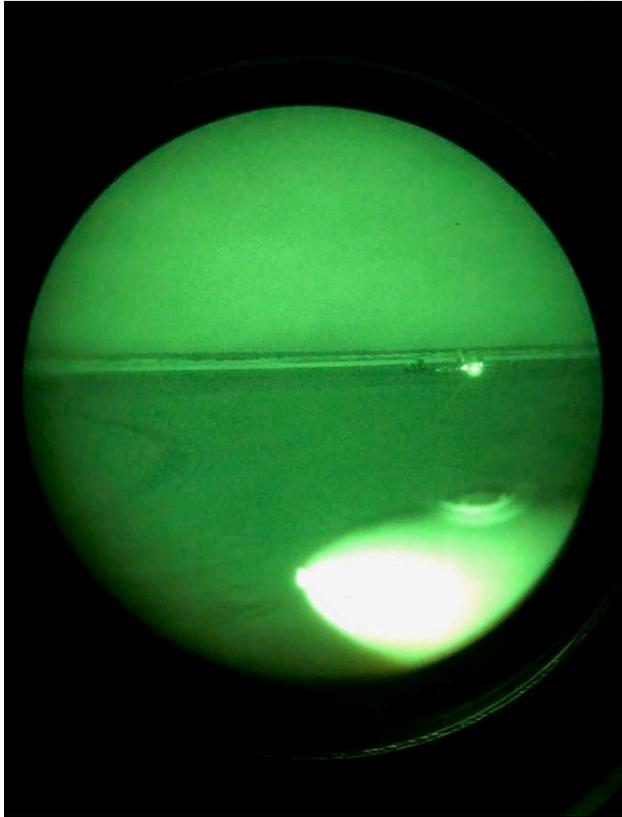
Two of the four hunters were transported via Black Hawk helicopter to Mountain Village, a coastal community in western Alaska that sits along the Yukon River. They arrived at about 5 a.m.

Pilot, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Miller and crew chief, Spc. Jeff Hartmann were the other aircrew on the mission, and the 207th Aviation Battalion was awarded two saves.

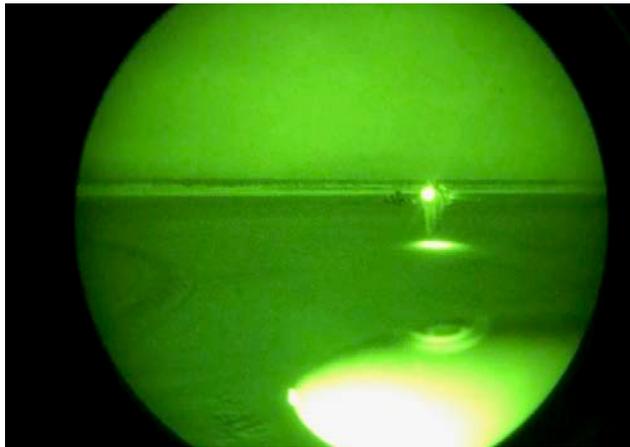
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Seen through night vision goggles, a hunting party gathers by their campfire on a small island sandbar on the Yukon River in Alaska, May 1, 2019. Two of them broke through the ice at about 2 a.m. while traveling over the river on snowmachines, and lost their transportation and all of their gear. They were stranded, wet and cold as they awaited rescue. Soldiers with the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Aviation transported two of the hunters via Black Hawk helicopter to Mountain Village, a coastal community in western Alaska that sits along the Yukon River. Alaska State Troopers contacted the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center to request a search and rescue mission out of Bethel, where an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk and aircrew are stationed full-time. (Courtesy photos)



Seen through night vision goggles, Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief, Spc. Jeff Hartmann approaches a hunting party gathered by their campfire on a small island sandbar on the Yukon River in Alaska, May 1, 2019. Two of the hunters broke through the ice at about 2 a.m. while traveling over the river on snowmachines, and lost their transportation and all of their gear. They were stranded, wet and cold as they awaited rescue. Soldiers with the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Aviation transported the two hunters via Black Hawk helicopter to Mountain Village, a coastal community in western Alaska that sits along the Yukon River. Alaska State Troopers contacted the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center to request a search and rescue mission out of Bethel, where an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk and aircrew are stationed full-time. (Courtesy photos)