

Brig. Gen. Torrence Saxe

Commissioner & Adjutant General

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Alaska National Guard

*Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs*

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STATE OF ALASKA

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Alaska Army National Guard Black Hawk crews and Military Police respond to wildfires
Assisting local authorities with fire suppression efforts and traffic control points

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska National Guard is assisting local and state authorities with response to three fires in Alaska today, including the Shovel Creek Fire near Fairbanks, the lower hillside Anchorage wildfire, and the Montana Creek area fire south of Talkeetna.

“Providing emergency response to natural disasters is one of the key missions that we train for,” said Brig. Gen. Torrence Saxe, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. “We have the equipment, people, and experience, and we are ready to assist as needed when called upon.”

Two Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and aircrew from 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation are performing Bambi bucket water drops over the Montana Creek Fire today and the unit is prepping crews on-call for additional response in Anchorage, as the fire there may need additional suppression reinforcement.

Twenty-two Soldiers from the Army Guard’s 297th Military Police Company, Rear Detachment, and five high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles are providing traffic management and access control for the Shovel Creek Fire. They began operations July 1 to support evacuation and fire suppression efforts 20 miles northwest of Fairbanks in the vicinity of Murphy Dome.

“Soldiers are manning traffic control positions 24/7,” said Capt. Ralph Harris, 297th MP CO commander. “Some folks were asked to leave their homes, but had to return to their homes first to prepare; so our MPs check them in and out for accountability and to ensure people are aware of the unsafe roads for travel.”

Two Black Hawks dropped 74 buckets of water—about 66 thousand gallons—over the Anchorage fire on July 2 in less than two hours. They also worked the Montana Creek fire last night, helping to save structures and property.

“‘This we’ll defend’ is a motto I adhere to as a great way to describe our federal, state and domestic response operations,” said Saxe. “And it couldn’t feel more true than on Independence Day, helping our neighbors and citizens as we celebrate our freedom.”

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Video links and photos, next page. Reporters, please contact Candis Olmstead for high quality photos.

VIDEOS

Please click links to access videos in Google docs

Videos courtesy of Spec. Michael Pearson, 1/207th Army Aviation:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13emAkLgxnPO5Qt1A874MTWG4Whyt7iaP/view?usp=drivesdk>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/122EmRqnlQhX6FMUZPKtM9edbsqTrqdGw/view?usp=drivesdk>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/117biYZbcNxVbkJBzi5oFszANsIGDPyz/view?usp=drivesdk>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/133SyOz2C2zlcHI1VhcZa99eRc6FQ3vy7/view?usp=drivesdk>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/135nKmrUEm1hiOKzq8EhF5dwU7ijYkX2i/view?usp=drivesdk>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12zZOACNIBsUNEVeO53_v8N63SqB0f5gE/view?usp=drivesdk

Videos courtesy of Spec. Michael Risinger, 134th Public Affairs Detachment:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/103Uck-Q1jiPuNZq2RvkiOJAQx1tmeZ_6

PHOTOS



Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers from the 297th Military Police Company receive a shift change brief from the off-going shift. The Alaskan Soldiers were mobilized on State Active Duty orders to assist in the evacuation efforts by conducting traffic control operations in support of the Shovel Creek Fire, July 4, 2019. These Soldiers are from both the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas. (U.S. Army National Guard photo courtesy of Sgt. First Duane Ostrowski)

- more photos, next -



(From left) Spec. Kyle Johnson, Spec. Chavous Levao, Spec. Michael Olsen, Pvt. 1st Class Ruth Edquid, Pvt. 2nd Class Jacob Barton, and Spec. Mackay Kim, Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers from the 297th Military Police Company, stand ready to assist with evacuation efforts for the Shovel Creek Fire, July 4, 2019. The Alaskan Soldiers were mobilized to assist civil authorities and residents of the area, about 20 miles northwest of Fairbanks. (U.S. Army National Guard photo courtesy of Sgt. First Class Duane Ostrowski)



Alaska Army National Guard Spec. Kyle Johnson and Spec. Chavous Levao, 297th Military Police Company, review the information board explaining the Shovel Creek Fire. Members of the unit were mobilized to support evacuation efforts in the area, about 20 miles northwest of Fairbanks. (U.S. Army National Guard photo courtesy of Sgt. First Class Duane Ostrowski)



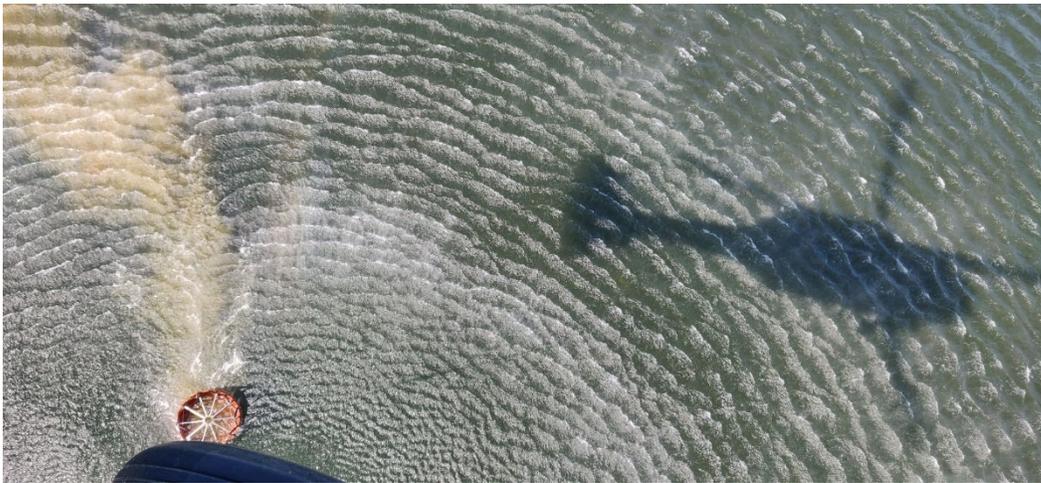
Members of the Alaska Army National Guard, 297th Military Police Company, take a moment to speak with firefighters. The Alaska Soldiers have been mobilized to conduct traffic control operations in support of the Shovel Creek fire and evacuation. Soldiers pictured left to right: Spec. Jayvee Buendia, Pvt Merlyn Shandley, and Pvt. 1st Class Kyle Quincy. (U.S. Army National Guard photo courtesy of Sgt. First Class Duane Ostrowski)

- more photos, next -

Two Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and aircrew from 1st Battalion, 297th Aviation perform Bambi bucket water drops over the Montana Creek Fire, July 4, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by Spec. Michael Risinger)



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