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Alaska National Guard

*Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs*

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

019-082

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 1, 2019

By David Bedard/176th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Air Guardsmen rescue pilot, passenger near Tyonek

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons rescued the pilot of a PA-18 aircraft and a passenger Sept. 1 after the plane crashed in vicinity of the Beluga bench about 28 miles northwest of Tyonek.

According to Alaska Air National Guard Capt. Wes Ladd, Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, the mission was opened following a receipt of the 406 Emergency Locator Transmitter beacon signal from a previously destroyed Cessna 207. Despite the confusion, the AKRCC tasked the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons to respond.

An HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter with the 210th RQS launched from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson with two 212th RQS Pararescuemen (PJs). The crew of the Pave Hawk honed in on the 406 ELT signal and found a damage Piper PA-18 and the two occupants sheltered nearby.

The helicopter landed and made contact with the pilot and passenger. After the PJs ensured there were no injuries, they were taken to the Wasilla Airport and released to the Alaska State Troopers.

Ladd would like to remind the aviation community that incorrect information in the 406 ELT database could have made the search effort a longer process. He said users and their maintenance personnel should ensure correct current information is maintained in the database to ensure rapid response and coordination with family or friends.

"Despite the confusion due to the information correlated to a destroyed aircraft, we couldn't rule it out as non-distress," Ladd said. "We are always obligated to search and effect rescue if needed."

For this mission, the AKRCC, the 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were awarded two saves.

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POC for this release is 176th Wing PA, 907-552-3959