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PRESS RELEASE

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By David Bedard/176th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Air Guardsmen rescue pilot, passenger near McArthur River

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons rescued a pilot and passenger of a crashed Stinson 108 single-engine aircraft seven miles northwest of the mouth of McArthur River, late last night, Sept. 25.

According to Alaska Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Evan Budd, Alaska Rescue Coordination Center superintendent, the mission opened following a request for assistance from the Alaska State Troopers. The pilot of the crashed aircraft notified AST of the crash using a satellite phone.

Upon notification of the mission, an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter with the 210th RQS diverted from training in vicinity of Homer Airport with two Pararescuemen (PJs) from the 212th RQS on board. Additionally, an HC-130J Combat King II with the 211th RQS, launched from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

The helicopter was signaled by flashlights from the survivors when overhead. Shortly thereafter, two PJs were hoisted in and made contact with the pair. The PJs assessed, stabilized and transported the survivors aboard the Pave Hawk from the McArthur River area to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage where the injured individuals were released to medical providers.

Budd commended the pilot for carrying a satellite phone.

"Chances are good when pilots run into trouble, they're going to be out of cell phone range," Budd said. "The pilot's use of a sat-phone ensured our controllers received critical details about the survivors' condition and ground situation. Sat-phones also allow our controllers to pass real-time recovery effort updates directly to the survivors."

Additionally, Budd urges pilots to use state-of-the-art 406 emergency-locator transmitters, register them and keep their registration information up to date to ensure rapid response regardless of the pilot's ability to communicate.

For this mission, the AKRCC, the 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were awarded two saves.

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