

## **MEDIA UPDATE: December 5**

*If links are broken in the body of the email, please see the attached pdf for links.*

### **--Alaska National Guard in the News--**

#### **Coast Guard, Navy boat collide in Alaska; 9 injured**

*The News Tribune/Dec. 5*

Nine people were hurt, including one critically, when a U.S. Coast Guard vessel collided with a U.S. Navy boat off Alaska's Kodiak Island.

The accident occurred Wednesday evening in Women's Bay near Kodiak's Coast Guard base, said Lt. Comm. Scott McCann, a Coast Guard Alaska District spokesman in Juneau. Details of the collision have not been released and will be the subject of an investigation.

Both boats were damaged but able to return to port.

All nine of the injured were taken to a Kodiak hospital. The six injured Coast Guardsmen were treated and released. Two of the Navy personnel were discharged but one with serious injuries was flown to Anchorage for additional treatment.

**More:** <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/politics-government/national-politics/article238090419.html>

#### **National Guard brings holiday cheer to Napakiak for 63rd annual Operation Santa**

*KTUU/Dec. 4*

The Alaska National Guard is carrying out a tradition 63 years strong, bringing Christmas cheer to a remote community. This year the team took Operation Santa to Napakiak.

It's not a traditional sleigh but a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter worked just as well to bring Santa to the small town. The National Guard teamed up with the Salvation Army to bring along gifts, toys, school supplies to Napakiak.

"We're part of Alaska, we want to get out there and make sure that we're being part of rural Alaska and bringing to rural Alaska what we can. Just to see Santa when he walked in the room, and all the kids lighting up. That made my day," said Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe.

Tasty Freeze was on hand as well serving up ice cream sundaes as the kids sang Christmas carols and took pictures with Santa.

"To see the smiles on their faces, even some of the younger ones, being a little afraid of Santa, it's just a great experience, and it's one that I know lies in the memories of the individuals that live in these villages for many many years to come," said Major John Brackenbury with the Salvation Army Alaska Division.

Operation Santa Claus began in 1956 after spring floods and later a drought-impacted subsistence fishing and hunting required St. Mary's Mission to purchase food. They had no additional money for Christmas gifts for the children, so the Air National Guard flew in gifts and supplies donated by the community.

The National Guard typically picks two communities to visit each year. Last month they brought the celebration to Tuntutuliak on November 18th. The last time that Operation Santa was in Napakiak and Tuntutuliak was in 2000.

In the last five years, Op Santa has also visited Akiachak, Akiak, Emmonak, Kipnuk, Kongiganak, Kwigillingok, Savoonga, St. Mary's, St. Michael, Togiak, and Tuluksak.

**Alaska Coverage:**

<https://www.ktva.com/story/41408926/inside-the-gates-operation-santa-visits-napakiak>

<https://www.ktuu.com/content/news/National-Guard-brings-holiday-cheer-to-Napakiak-for-63rd-annual-Operation-Santa-565808841.html>

**National Coverage:** <https://www.nbc12.com/video/2019/12/05/national-guard-brings-holiday-cheer-napakiak/>

<https://www.cleveland19.com/2019/12/05/national-guard-brings-holiday-cheer-western-alaska-rd-annual-operation-santa/>

<https://www.wdam.com/2019/12/05/national-guard-brings-holiday-cheer-western-alaska-rd-annual-operation-santa/>

<https://www.wnnytv.com/2019/12/05/national-guard-brings-holiday-cheer-western-alaska-rd-annual-operation-santa/>

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/video/2019/12/05/national-guard-brings-holiday-cheer-napakiak/>

<https://www.wlox.com/2019/12/05/national-guard-brings-holiday-cheer-western-alaska-rd-annual-operation-santa/>

**Skiway teams make landing in the Arctic more accessible**

*DVIDS/Dec. 4*

The specialty of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing is landing massive, ski-equipped LC-130s on snow or ice at the top or bottom of the world.

But before the pilot can put that plane down, a team of 109th engineers has to go in first and build a snow runway, called a skiway, for that aircraft to land on.

The ability to build a skiway and land an LC-130 in a remote area will come into play when the 109th Airlift Wing participates in Arctic Edge 2020 [and Arctic Eagle 2020] in Alaska in February 2020, according to Caldwell.

Another example in which a skiway would be needed is if a traditional wheeled runway becomes unusable due to natural disaster in a remote part of Alaska, Slosek said. A skiway team could be dropped, build a runway, and allow an LC-130 to come in with needed supplies, equipment and transport.

**More:** <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/354288/skiway-teams-make-landing-arctic-more-accessible>

**GALLERY: Medics train with Alaska National Guard Aviators**

*AirMed&Rescue/Dec. 2*

Alaska Army National Guard aviators honed their life-saving skills and medevac hoist skills for the paratroopers' upcoming rotation to the Joint Readiness Center at Fort Polk, La.

During the training event, the Alaska Army National Guard did, among other tasks, hoist a simulated casualty with a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on Neibhur Drop Zone, while assisting Soldiers from the 6th Brigade Engineer Battalion (Airborne), 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), and 25th Infantry Division, US Army Alaska.

**More:** <https://www.airmedandrescue.com/latest/news/gallery-medics-train-alaska-national-guard-aviators>

**Also:** <https://www.pacaf.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2029999/medics-train-hoist-muscles-with-alaska-national-guard-aviators/>

### **168th Airman Head South for the Winter**

*Alaska Native News/Nov.19*

19 Airmen assigned to the 168th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, ventured out of Alaska's below freezing temperatures en route to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, and its 80-degree days.

Each year, Airmen from the 168th Wing deploy to Guam in support of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's Theater Security Package and Continuous Bomber Presence, supporting daily KC-135R Stratotanker refueling and maintenance operations.

Over the next six months, more than 70 aircrew, maintenance, and support personnel from the wing will spend time in the U.S. territory, often forward deploying to other countries in the region.

**More:** <https://alaska-native-news.com/168th-airmen-head-south-for-the-winter/45876/>

### **-- Tags and Hashtags--**

William Miller Memorial/Dec. 3

What an amazing day! Operation Santa was a wonderful success! Thanks to the [Alaska National Guard](#), [The Salvation Army Alaska Division](#), and [Jewel Lake Tastee-Freez](#) for your generosity. Thanks to the community for giving them such a warm welcome. We hope the kids enjoy their gifts, the time with Santa, and the delicious ice cream as we roll into the final school days of the fall semester.

U.S. Army Alaska/Dec 2.

Medics from the [6th Brigade Engineer Battalion - Airborne](#), train with aviators from the [Alaska National Guard](#) at Neibhur Drop Zone.

[#AmericasArcticWarriors](#) hone their life-saving and Medevac hoist skills for the paratroopers' upcoming rotation to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, LA.

[#ArcticTough](#) [#ArcticReady](#)

The National Guard/Dec. 2

Photo of the Day: Brig. Gen. Scott Howard, of the [Alaska National Guard](#), serves sundaes to children in Tuntutuliak during Operation Santa Claus 2019, an annual community outreach program to children and families in rural communities.

*\*If you find Alaska National Guard news that was not included, please forward the link so it may be added to the next update.*

*\*This is a product for internal use. It is a snap shot of media coverage (favorable, unfavorable, true, false) and not a validation by the PA office.*