

MEDIA UPDATE: Feb. 13

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—ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD IN THE NEWS—

1. Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers conduct water immersion training

U.S.Army/Feb. 12

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska -- Soldiers of the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Engineer Utilities Detachment implemented new cold-water immersion training at Gwen Lake Feb. 8.

The training is to ensure Soldiers are aware and capable of the self-rescue and buddy-rescue processes when there is a risk of falling through the ice.

The 207th EUD also conducted ice bridge training. The cold water immersion portion was developed to address the risk associated with the 207th EUD ice bridging project, which they have conducted four times.

"Many of us think that we're prepared, but unless you've actually entered into the water, it's hard to tell," said Sgt. 1st Class Jack Carlson, the readiness noncommissioned officer and detachment sergeant for 207th EUD and 208th Construction Management Team.

All Soldiers that took part in the drill weekend event were screened to ensure medical readiness and participated in a cold-weather indoctrination course to learn how cold affects the body.

"When you enter into the water, that first minute there's a shock that happens right away," said Carlson. "Your breath is just taken out of you."

Immersed Soldiers would talk to their buddies who were there to help control their breathing and to ensure they were coherent and could rest in the water for 3 minutes without complications.

"As a safety, it helps me to be able to see their reactions as they're talking to me," said Carlson. "Whether or not they can catch their breath, whether or not they know their name, so that's why we actually have the conversations."

Carlson said he hopes that more Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers are trained to handle hazardous cold weather situations.

"This is great training, and I think that other units could really benefit from training like this," he said. "With the proper planning and safety in place, this could be utilized all over our state."

Some individuals from other Army National Guard units helped organize the training and participated in the cold water immersion.

"I really appreciate the support we've gotten from the rest of the Army National Guard," Carlson said. "The engineers couldn't go around and do great stuff for our state without everybody who helps us keep our mission going."

More: https://www.army.mil/article/232668/alaska_army_national_guard_soldiers_conduct_water_immersion_training

2. Alaska National Guardsmen return home after 4 months in Iraq

ADN/Feb. 9

A few dozen Air National Guardsmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron and supporting airmen from other 176th Wing units returned home Friday, a month after the airbase where they were stationed in Iraq came under an Iranian ballistic missile attack, which caused damage to the base but did not kill any American service members.

The service members arrived at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in two HC-130J aircraft and were greeted by family on the tarmac. "It's great to be home," said Lt. Col. Joshua Armstrong, the deployed squadron commander, who added that most of the Alaska Guardsmen were born and raised in Alaska.

Joe Brewer walked out to greet his son, HC-130 pilot Maj. Jeremy Brewer, and carried a hand-drawn sign with the American flag and the words "Welcome Home Son" written on it. With Joe was his wife, Angie; daughter-in-law Christy; granddaughters Brynlee, 1, Ashtyn, 4, Isabella, 5; and the family's au pair Jennifer Rauch.

Although it had been four months since Maj. Brewer had seen his daughters, it wasn't quite that long since he had seen his wife, Lt. Col. Christy Brewer. Her deployment to Al Asad, as the 176th Operations Support Squadron Commander, ended four days after he arrived. "We high-fived in Iraq," she said.

More: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/military/2020/02/09/alaska-national-guardsmen-return-home-after-4-months-in-iraq/>

3. Air guardsmen, support arrive to JBER after months-long Iraq deployment

KTUU/Feb. 8

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) — Dozens of Alaska Air National Guardsmen are back home in Alaska after a months-long deployment to Iraq, an assignment that took place during some of the tensest moments we've seen overseas in months.

"We usually stick to the basics," said Patty Smith, who was welcoming her son Trevor back to Alaska. "'I miss you,'

'I love you,' just happy to see his face every once in a while.

"We're really proud," Smith said, "glad to have him back, and we just can't wait to see him again."

More than 120 days after their departures, the time came Friday for the service members to reunite with friends and family. The group was based at Al-Asad, the target of an Iranian missile attack just last month.

"The attack that happened, it doesn't interrupt what we do," said Lt. Col. Josh Armstrong, who returned with the crew Friday. "We were able to not be there when it happened and went back and picked up operations." Friends and family were breathing a little easier with the arrival of the group, which included Air National Guardsmen from the 211th rescue squadron, and supporting airmen from other 176th Wing units.

"I'm excited, I'm relieved," said a parent. "It's good to have him home."

Smith said after her son Trevor's arrival that an overseas deployment is a whole other animal compared to watching him leave for training.

"It's one thing to have a son in the military out training," she said, "than having a son overseas in a dangerous situation."

The main mission of the group was to support Operation Inherent Resolve, in which the group stood ready for search and rescue operations - both of U.S. personnel and allies - throughout the dangerous region.

"Sixty-four Alaskan citizens that support our nation and state," said Gen. Scott Howard, Commander of the Alaska Air National Guard, "so it's truly a fantastic day to have them back."

More: <https://www.ktuu.com/content/news/Air-guardsmen-support-arrive-to-JBER-after-months-long-Iraq-deployment-567694141.html>

4. Airmen stationed at Al Assad Air Base in Iraq return to Alaska

KTVA/Feb. 8

Airmen stationed at Al Assad Air Base in Iraq returned to Anchorage Friday.

The base is one of the two hit by an Iranian air strike in January.

The approximately 60 airmen from the 176th Wing of the Alaska Air National Guard had a warm welcome from families.

They were deployed to the air base "in support of Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve, an effort that continues to work by, with and through regional partners to military defeat [ISIS]," a release from the Alaska National Guard said. The troops' goal was to increase stability in that region.

Kayla Hopkins and her daughter Mera held a "welcome home" sign, anticipating the return of father, husband and aircraft electrician Scott. He hasn't been home since late September 2019.

Kayla wasn't sure if this was her husband's fifth or sixth deployment.

"Every time he leaves it is hard," she said. "It doesn't really get easier."

She said the hardest part is the worrying. "We get really excited when he's able to to call. When he doesn't get to call, your mind's not working."

Referring to the early January air strike on the Al Assad Air Base, Kayla said this last deployment was very scary for her and her daughter.

"Thank God they were able to evacuate safely," she said.

Her husband tried to contact her by text after the air strike to see if she had seen the news. She was at work at the time. It was a few days later before she was able to talk on the phone with him and confirm that everything was OK.

Some of the service members were deployed for 60 days and others for 120, Lt. Col. Joshua Armstrong, deployed squadron commander, said.

Armstrong is happy to be home, but explained what he likes about being deployed.

"It's great over there because we spend a lot of time training to be ready to perform the mission and that's when you actually get to use the skills we practice for," he said.

"It could have been a lot worse, but thank goodness it wasn't what was going thorough our minds," Kayla said.

She said she is beside herself to have her husband home. They are going to enjoy the weekend and family time.

More: <https://www.ktva.com/story/41676107/airmen-stationed-at-al-assad-air-base-in-iraq-return-to-alaska>

5. State of Alaska will pay \$550,000 to family of Iraq War veteran who died in prison of heart attack

ADN/Feb. 9

JUNEAU — The state of Alaska has agreed to pay \$550,000 to the family of a man who died in 2015 in Juneau's Lemon Creek Correctional Center, settling negligence claims related to his death. The settlement was revealed in court documents filed Friday.

After Joseph Murphy suffered a fatal heart attack, his case garnered statewide attention when it became part of a major state investigation into a series of prison deaths across Alaska.

According to the investigation, Murphy had a heart condition but was denied medication by prison guards, one of whom said, "I don't care, you could die right now and I don't care."

Within an hour and a half, Murphy died of a heart attack.

At the time, Murphy had not been charged with a crime. Instead, he was taken into a "protective hold" with a blood-alcohol level of 0.16 percent, twice the legal limit.

State law permits police to detain people for up to 12 hours if they can't care for themselves. Murphy was admitted about 7 p.m. but was detained for longer than 12 hours, the investigation found.

After the investigation, then-Gov. Bill Walker fired the state's corrections commissioner and replaced him with one of the men who conducted the investigation.

According to his obituary, Murphy had worked for the National Park Service in Kotzebue and had also served in the Alaska Army National Guard with a deployment to Iraq in 2005 as a machine gunner.

Murphy's family filed a wrongful death lawsuit in 2017 in federal court, naming the state, corrections officers and a nurse as defendants. The settlement announced Friday resolves the claims against all but the nurse, Jill Robinson. Attorney Mark Choate of Juneau represented Murphy's family.

He said the documents released Friday were "a negotiated resolution with the state that allows us to continue with what we think is the most significant claim, against the nurse."

It was the nurse's failure to render aid, he said, that was the most egregious example of neglect on the day Murphy died.

Asked for comment, Department of Corrections public information officer Sarah Gallagher said, "The department's main concern is always ensuring the safety and well-being of all inmates and staff. We deal with a very high-risk population, and we do everything we can to try and prevent tragic events like this from occurring."

More: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/02/08/state-of-alaska-will-pay-550000-to-family-of-iraq-war-veteran-who-died-in-prison-of-heart-attack/>

6. UPDATE: Pilot identified in deadly plane crash near Tuntutuliak

KTUU/Feb. 6

ANCHORAGE (KTUU) — UPDATE — An official with Yute Air Commuter confirmed with Channel 2 Friday the name of the pilot involved in the deadly plane crash near Tuntutuliak.

Yute's general manager, Nathan McCabe, told Channel 2 the pilot was Tony Matthews.

Original Story

Five people are dead after a commuter aircraft crashed near Tuntutuliak in Southwest Alaska.

Alaska State Troopers say the Yute Commuter plane, traveling from Bethel to Kipnuk, was reported missing at 1:45 p.m. Thursday. Four passengers and a pilot were on board.

The plane was found within minutes, according to officials, in a location about 12 miles south of Tuntutuliak. All five people on board were confirmed deceased, AST said.

Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead with the Alaska National Guard said a Blackhawk Helicopter with AK Army National Guard arrived to the scene south of Bethel, near Tuntutuliak, at about 4 p.m. and returned to Bethel within the hour.

AST Spokesperson Tim DeSpain added Thursday evening that conditions in and around the crash site may make it especially difficult for an investigative and rescue or recovery effort to be executed, particularly with the rural nature of the crash location.

"It was relatively quick that the site was located," DeSpain said, "but the challenges can definitely come in with the difficulty of getting to the site and actually having boots on the ground."

DeSpain said attempts will be made Friday to get back into the site, weather permitting, and will likely include Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and the Bethel Fire Department. Alaska's National Transportation Safety Board chief, Clint Johnson, said an investigator was en route to the site as of Thursday, though he could not say whether or not that individual had already made it to Bethel.

When contacted by phone for a request for comment, a Yute Commuter representative simply said, "No comment." The company's Facebook page administrator posted a note around 3:30 p.m. that all flights for Friday, Feb. 7, had been cancelled, following a prior post stating that Thursday morning flights had been put on hold because of a low ceiling in Bethel.

Authorities are also working to notify the families of the victims and officials say their names cannot be released until that procedure is considered complete.

More: <https://www.ktuu.com/content/news/Troopers-investigate-plane-crash-near-Tuntutuliak-567641841.html>

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/rural-alaska/2020/02/11/plane-crash-responders-tell-of-snowmachining-through-frigid-wind-chills-to-site-near-tuntutuliak/>

<https://www.kyuk.org/post/recovering-deceased-yute-commuter-service-plane-crash>

<https://www.alaskapublic.org/2020/02/10/for-rescuers-retrieving-passengers-from-y-k-crash-site-the-task-was-grim-and-cold/>

7. 4 children are missing in an Alaska blizzard after going out on a snowmobile ride

CNN/Feb. 3

The Army National Guard and the US Coast Guard are helping villagers search for four children — the youngest just 2 years old — missing in a blizzard in Alaska.

Alaska State Troopers received a report Sunday at 6:25 p.m. local time that the children hadn't returned from a snowmobile ride near the remote, rural village of Nunam Iqua, on Alaska's west coast.

Officials were called after the children, who range in age from 2 to 14, were more than five hours late in returning home.

“At least three were appropriately dressed for the weather,” said state patrol spokesperson Megan Peters. “There’s concern for their safety.”

The four children are identified as Christopher Johnson, 14, Frank Johnson, 8, Ethan Camille, 7, and Trey Camille, 2.

Army National Guard and USCG helicopters were called in Sunday to assist, but a blizzard is hampering visibility.

“They have every asset possible participating in the search,” Peters said. “They even have searchers from surrounding villages.”

The National Weather Service has issued a winter storm warning for the area until 6 a.m. Tuesday, with up to 6 inches of snow expected.

Nunam Iqua has an estimated population of about 200 people, according to the US Census Bureau.

More: <https://kdvr.com/news/nationalworld-news/4-children-are-missing-in-an-alaska-blizzard-after-going-out-on-a-snowmobile-ride/>

<https://ktla.com/2020/02/04/4-children-found-alive-after-spending-night-missing-in-rural-alaska-blizzard/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/02/04/alaska-blizzard-missing-children/>

<https://www.kyuk.org/post/scammon-bay-searchers-found-missing-nunam-iqua-children-huddled-together-snow>

8. In the wild, Alaska-based soldiers have your back

Alaska Pulse/Jan. 10

In the spring of 2015, Fairbanks snowmachiner Bob McClintock was stuck on a ledge, 73 feet below a glacier, recording a farewell video to his wife. He had been snowmachining with friends when he hit a crevasse on Eureka Glacier at 30 mph. His SkiDoo Summit 800 made it to the other side of the crevasse, but he ended up at the bottom of the hole.

“It happened so quickly. It’s not like a ‘time stands still’ kind of scenario,” he said in an interview in 2015. “I felt myself get slammed, but I don’t remember anything until I was getting up on my hands and knees in the hole.”

While the fall left him without any broken bones, McClintock was doubtful over his chances of survival.

He was fortunate. While he spent the next nine hours moving about and trying to keep warm, a friend of his on the glacier’s surface had called Alaska State Troopers on a satellite phone. That led to a rescue effort by Anchorage-based personnel of the Alaska Air National Guard, which responded with a C-130 cargo plane and a Pave Hawk helicopter.

When you’re hiking, biking, camping, skiing or doing whatever in the great Alaska outdoors, you may not be aware that a group of well-trained people have your back. If you’re lost or in medical distress in the wilderness, like Bob McClintock was, you might find that medically trained Guard and military personnel come to the rescue.

Always at the ready

In Alaska, a plethora of agencies carry out search and rescue operations. While this is primarily a task for the Alaska State Troopers and National Park Service, the list of agencies includes the Alaska National Guard, Coast Guard and active-duty Army assets. These efforts are coordinated by the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, a unit of Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Wing.

The center, located on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, is staffed by Guard members who work in shifts around the clock, every day of the year. Capt. Bryant Davis, a spokesman for the U.S. Alaskan Command, explained that,

while the Lower 48 has one rescue center that operates across the entire of the contiguous US, Alaska's size and location means it has its own dedicated center.

"In the Lower 48, if there's a rescue that's going on the center will take it and then hand it off to local agencies," he said. "Here, the rescue center does stuff from cradle to grave — from start to finish."

The center's primary mission is to locate and recover downed military and civilian aircrew personnel as quickly and safely as possible. But a secondary responsibility is to provide search and rescue assistance to state and federal agencies responsible for conducting ground searches for distressed individuals out in the wild.

The center can task Guard members with rescue missions. With other agencies, like U.S. Army Alaska or the Coast Guard, it's "more an ask, than a task." If assets are available, they'll join the rescue mission. And this system is as much a benefit to the Guard and military personnel as it is to the public.

"The reason why the 176th Wing is able to be tasked to do this is: It is training," Davis said. "To prepare, they have regular training events — but they also use the civilian rescues as opportunities to gain experience. That experience that they get makes them good at what they do. It kind of sets them aside from their active-duty colleagues down in Georgia."

The team

Lt. Col. Keenan Zerkel has been the director of the Alaska Air Rescue Coordination Center for about a year and a half.

"It's an honorable mission, it's a noble mission. We appreciate doing it," he said.

Zerkel outlined the jurisdiction of the Rescue Center. It doesn't handle incidents reported from Southeast Alaska or the Aleutian Islands — those areas are taken care of by the Coast Guard. Inland search and rescues often fall under the responsibility of Alaska State Troopers or the National Park Service. But the center is flexible with the assistance it provides. If it can provide help, it will.

"It really depends on what we're trying to accomplish and then we look at the most appropriate asset," Zerkel said. "If you have something like a lost hunter, that's initially owned by the state troopers. But if they decide that it exceeds their capability and whatever resources they have, they may ask for Army Guard, or National Guard."

The center coordinated roughly 160 rescues in 2019 and received almost 600 reports of incidents. The center is staffed by 12 individuals and Zerkel noted that the senior controllers all come from hands-on experience. He's been a helicopter pilot for 17 years and participated in numerous rescues.

"They pull people from a rescue background that have actually been out there doing the missions and bring us over, because we can provide a level of expertise that you wouldn't get just by coordinating and answering the phone," he said. "I've been launched out on missions where I've actually known the people we're rescuing."

"One of the unique things about the way the Rescue Coordination Center is staffed, which is using airmen from the Alaska Air National Guard: You have locals helping locals," he said. "We're not rotating in and out for a couple of years and then leaving. We're actually here, buying houses, starting families. There's an aspect of humanity there."

If you're a Fairbanks resident, for example, you could find yourself being rescued by someone you've rubbed shoulders with in the supermarket.

According to Army Alaska spokesman John Pennell, a group from the 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment — based at Fort Wainwright — assisted in at least 10 rescue situations in 2019. While Army Alaska isn't tasked with

search and rescue missions, it has a memorandum of agreement with the Rescue Coordination Center to provide emergency rescue assistance when available.

“In the past this has included flying in to remote locations to pick up sick or injured civilian hikers, climbers, mushers and just folks who live way out in the bush,” Pennell wrote in an email interview. “The same techniques are used in both military and civilian rescue applications.”

Like Davis, the spokesman for the Alaskan Command, Zerkel also emphasized the significance of these missions to the soldiers and airmen conducting them.

“There are amazing training opportunities up here because, specifically with rescues, I know what it’s like to be out there, in the dark, and somebody’s bleeding out in the back,” he said. “When they go and they deploy to combat and they’ve got an injured Marine in the back and they’re trying to race to a clinic to drop him off and save his life, training always takes over.”

Getting out of the crevasse

People like Bob McClintock have seen the force of this in real life. It took the National Guard crew and McClintock’s friends over two hours to get McClintock out of the crevasse. A Guard member climbed down into the crevasse and, due to an inoperable helicopter lift, the two men had to be hoisted out by a team of eight.

McClintock was taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and given a series of tests. He escaped the crevasse without any broken bones or internal bleeding.

“I don’t know why I’m alive,” he said in a 2015 interview. “At the hospital they said usually people leave (a fall from that height) as a quadriplegic or in a body bag.”

In a recent interview, McClintock — who used to be a helicopter pilot himself and has conducted similar rescue missions — emphasized that the crew was “incredibly well-equipped.”

“They knew exactly what they were doing,” he said. “By the time they got me out I was hypothermic. I was shaking uncontrollably. They got an IV drip in me in a shaking helicopter at 2:30 in the morning. I mean, these guys are really good.”

McClintock noted that Alaska’s abundance of outdoors enthusiasts and often harsh climate and terrain make services like this arguably more valuable than in most other states.

“This rescue situation by the (Alaska Air National) Guard is imperative for the state of Alaska to be functional. Alaska is a frontier state,” he said. “They’re really well worth supporting.”

Thanks to Air National Guard efforts McClintock’s 2015 snowmachining season didn’t end there. In fact, he was back on a snowmachine two weeks later, attending the Arctic Man race.

“Stuff happens. It’s the backcountry,” he told a reporter in 2015. “You don’t give up everything in life because you have an accident. This is Alaska and Alaska is an outdoors state.”

More: http://www.newsminer.com/extra/alaska_pulse/in-the-wild-alaska-based-soldiers-have-your-back/article_a392375a-38c3-11ea-bc22-33c4ffd87172.html?fbclid=IwAR3a1rqjgOyrnPCSmKoxy4PEZ7j0Diy1B4kEUXMcvAm7HOG4LgUaJ_XyKrs#utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social

— NATIONAL GUARD NEWS —

9. National Guard leaders say a Space Force National Guard is needed

Federal News Network/Feb. 12

WASHINGTON — Top National Guard leaders want the Pentagon to create a Space Force National Guard, which they said Wednesday was needed to ensure continuity between guard space operators and their active-duty counterparts who will soon join the new military branch.

Most of the National Guard's almost 1,500 space-focused troops would be moved into a Space Force National Guard so they can keep pace with changes certain to occur as the Space Force, established late last year, grows and develops its own culture, techniques and procedures, six National Guard generals told reporters at the Pentagon.

"Personally, I don't see how we have a Space Force without a Space Guard," said Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael Loh, the adjutant general for the Colorado National Guard. "I really don't."

Air Force Brig. Gen. Torrence Saxe, the adjutant general for the Alaska National Guard, added: "I don't think they would function very well if we didn't have a Space National Guard."

The National Guard's current space operations force is small but growing, with some 1,100 Air National Guard troops in space operations and another 300 or so Army National Guard members. It has units that conduct space missions in Colorado, California, Florida, Alaska, New York, Ohio and Arkansas, and is in the process of establishing such units in Hawaii and Guam.

Guard space operators are involved in a variety of operations, including space intelligence, homeland missions such as missile defense, and offensive electronic warfare, the generals said.

Guard planners have proposed limiting Space Force National Guard operations to those nine states and territories who already have or will soon have space capabilities. They said attempting to have a Space Force National Guard in all 50 states and four territories, which all have Army and Air National Guards, would not be cost effective to taxpayers.

"We're not looking to stand up 54 Space [Force] National Guards," said Air Force Maj. Gen. James Eifert, the adjutant general for Florida's guard. "The concern it would be creating this huge, bureaucratic overhead is really not what we envision as how it would be and operate."

The generals said officials in Defense Secretary Mark Esper's office are debating the merits or structure of a Space Force reserves component. They are required to report their plans for such an organization to Congress by late March.

Already, top generals from many of the states that have space forces have talked with lawmakers about the need to establish a Space Force National Guard.

Army Maj. Gen. David Baldwin said he hopes Pentagon officials determine on their own that they should build a space guard, but if not, he and other top guard leaders would lobby congressional lawmakers directly to add it into the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets Pentagon policy.

"It is being received very well by the members on The Hill," Baldwin said. "We are hopeful .. we don't have to [lobby Congress], but we are prepared to do that."

Pentagon leaders are in the process of building the Space Force, the first new branch of the military established since the Air Force in 1947. Gen. Jay Raymond, the chief of space operations, is now the only official member of Space Force, but officials expect it to grow to about 6,000 troops during the next year, beginning with the transfer of Air Force airmen who work on space missions. Army and Navy troops are also expected to move into the new military service.

The Space Force on Monday unveiled a \$15.5 billion budget request for fiscal year 2021, which made no mention of a National Guard or reserves component. However, Air Force senior leadership, which oversees the Space Force within the Air Force Department, has backed a Space Force National Guard publicly.

The National Guard leaders said the lack of clarity is concerning, as they are prepared to begin planning for a Space Force National Guard as soon as possible.

“We are a proven model. We feel like it’s a pretty simple solution,” Eifert said. “We’re not big fans of another yearlong study to examine the same things we have already spent some time studying. We feel like it’s a pretty simple solution, we’d like to be part of the solution, and we would like to move forward with it.”

More: <https://www.stripes.com/news/us/national-guard-leaders-say-a-space-force-national-guard-is-needed-1.618504>

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/space-force/2020/02/national-guard-still-says-space-component-needed-to-complement-space-force/>

https://spacenews.com/national-guard-leaders-press-case-for-a-space-national-guard/?fbclid=IwAR3UDmeZWrmS-fPtjoQzIBRKC_Xo0NpytjcnP05pmura_uaB7gMgyAB0PQY

<https://www.airforcemag.com/pentagon-mulls-space-national-guard-options/>

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/13/national-guard-generals-america-needs-space-guard.html>

10. Adjutants General Ignore OSD & Lobby Congress For Space Guard

Breaking Defense/Feb. 12

PENTAGON: Frustrated with the slow pace of decision-making on the issue, National Guard leaders in states with space units are openly advocating in Congress for the creation of a Space Force National Guard.

“As the adjutants general, we are individually approaching our congressional delegations,” Maj. Gen. David Baldwin, adjutant general of California, told reporters at a briefing today. “We are strongly advocating for a Space National Guard, and we are being received very well by the members on the Hill.”

Baldwin’s counterpart from Colorado, Maj. Gen. Mike Loh, said the question of a Space Force Guard and Reserve component was left up in the air in its first report on Space Force organization to Congress delivered Feb. 3 by Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett. Guard leaders were expecting a positive decision to be reflected in that report: “That’s why,” he said, “I’m concerned.”

Guard leaders argue that a Space National Guard is required to keep the roughly 1,500 guardsmen who specialize in space operations for the Army and Air National Guard aligned with their active duty counterparts. If those personnel remain in their current chain of command, there could be future disconnect in training and equipment being used by active duty and guard troops.

Further, Guard leaders said, if the current organization is maintained, there will be an extra step in the chain of command for calling up guard space professionals — in that the Chief of Space Operations, currently Air Force Gen. Jay Raymond, will have to go to the Air Force and Army secretaries to get permission.

Finally, they argue, space professionals in the Guard bring a high-level of expertise into the military because they have “day jobs” in industry and academia in space specialties.

Brig. Gen. Patrick Cobb, deputy director of space operations at the National Guard Bureau headquarters, explained that DoD is still working on the issue of how to organize Guard and Reserve forces to support the new Space Force, stood up on Dec. 20 when President Donald Trump signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) into law.

“It is a work in progress,” he said, noting that Guard leaders are hopeful a request for a Space National Guard will go to the Hill with the next Space Force organizational report due March 19. But “it’s not hot jello; it’s warm jello,” he quipped.

The Office of Secretary of Defense is still “doing their due diligence” and studying all possible options for how to organize a Space Force reserve component, Baldwin explained. These include not having a reserve component at all, he said. It includes “a totally different model, where you have a one-component force that has full-time people, and part-time people — but not a reserve component, and we don’t really know what that means.” Baldwin said that within the Air Force, there is support for the Space National Guard among most senior leaders for a reserve component within the Space Force, including a separate Space Guard.

According to the Guard leaders, this is because there is an understanding that the creation of a Space Guard will not involve significant new funds, nor will it require setting up new Space Guard units in all US states and territories that would lead to massive bureaucratic bloat. Instead, the plan would be to simply shift the current space units found in eight states and one US territory: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, New York, and Ohio, plus Guam.

Hawaii boasts the newest Air National Guard Space Control Squadron, the first in the Indo-Pacom region, said Maj. Gen. Ken Hara, who took his position as Adjutant General Hawaii Dec. 19. It is expected to reach initial operational capability at the Barking Sands Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai. The unit will be undertaking both “offensive and defensive counterspace and space situational awareness” according to written talking points provided to me. In effect, Hara said, the offensive part means electronic warfare actions.

Baldwin said it is currently unclear how long Congress will wait for a decision. “When they’re going to act and whether they allow OSD to go through their process to come to the conclusion on their own that we need a Space National Guard, or we leverage Congress and have Congress just put it in the NDAA and make it happen remains to be seen.”

More: <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/02/adjutants-general-ignore-osd-lobby-congress-for-space-guard/>

— DOD NEWS HIGHLIGHTS/LOCAL/NATIONAL/WORLD NEWS —

11. Ft. Wainwright soldier dies in Parks Highway crash

KTVA/Feb. 9

A soldier stationed at Fort Wainwright was killed and two others were injured Friday following a vehicle collision along a highway that runs from Anchorage to Fairbanks in the Alaskan interior.

Spc. Cameron A. Logwood died in a head-first collision that occurred at Mile 163 near the town of Willow, Army Alaska officials said in a statement.

The 21-year-old soldier was part of a larger group traveling to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, in Anchorage, to participate in an intramural basketball tournament when the vehicle he was driving collided head-first with another, Army Alaska spokesman John Pennell said.

Logwood was pronounced dead at the scene by emergency responders at roughly 5 p.m.

Soldiers assigned to 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, take part in a 26.2-mile foot march in Denali National Park, Alaska, July 26, 2017. (John Pennell/Army)

Two other soldiers were injured in the collision. One was treated at the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center and released, the statement said. The other was transported to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage. He is currently in stable condition, the statement added.

Logwood served as an aircraft fuel handler for 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment. He was originally from Urbana, Ohio.

After joining the Army in May 2017 and training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Lee, Virginia, Logwood arrived at Fort Wainwright in November 2017.

The accident is under investigation by Alaska State Troopers. A picture of the deceased soldier was not immediately provided by Army Alaska officials.

More: <https://www.ktva.com/story/41678432/ft-wainwright-soldier-dies-in-parks-highway-crash>

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/02/10/soldier-killed-in-head-first-collision-while-heading-to-basketball-tournament/>

<https://www.ktuu.com/content/news/One-person-dies-in-fatal-Parks-Highway-mp-161-collision-567695251.html>

—TAGS AND HASHTAGS—

alaskaarmy_nationalguard/Feb. 9

The shock to the system generally results in an immediate response of a heightened rate of breathing, Visual limitations (tunnel effect), confusion, and muscle tension are common reactions. The ability of a person to regain control and composure after getting in this situation is possible. 🏠

#alaska #army #nationalguard #military #defendalaska #warrior #ak #college #freedom #usa #fly
#armynationalguard #cold #water #immersion #training #gwenlake #drill #anchorage #scuba #freezing #survive
#struggleisreal

alaskaarmy_nationalguard/Feb. 5

CONTROL THE SKY

National Guard helicopter crews fly a variety of missions, from security operations to disaster relief. They might be transporting troops or aiding medical evacuations. Every member of aviation, from pilots to crew chiefs to mechanics, is vital to accomplishing a mission. Every helicopter has its own team of mechanics to ensure it's always running efficiently.

In the event of a natural disaster, Guard pilots drop water and food and save those in harm's way. They are trained to fly in any weather and take off or land in high-risk situations. 🚁

#aviation #crewchief #crewchieflife #alaska #army #nationalguard #pilot #uh60 #ch74 #military #defendalaska
#warrior #ak #college #freedom #usa #fly #armynationalguard

Assistant Secretary of the Army-Acquisition, Logistics & Technology/Feb. 5

Army tech - the Black Hawk helicopter - assisted in rescue of 4 kids! 👍🏆 Great work @AlaskaNationalGuard, @U.S.CoastGuardAlaska & @EmmonakSearch&Rescue!

KFOR Regional Command East/Feb. 5

Brig. Gen. Charles Lee Knowles and Command Sgt. Maj. James Nyquist, senior leaders from the Alaska National Guard, visited Soldiers from 1-297th Infantry Battalion in Kosovo this week. Besides visiting the camps at which the Kinetic Battalion Soldiers live and work, the two went out on patrols with C Co. and participated in a service project in Mitrovica. Both were thrilled to see the work their Soldiers were doing to support a safe and secure environment in Kosovo through community engagement. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Dayton Will, RC-East Public Affairs, Released)

#KFOR26 #USArmyEurope #StrongEurope #WeAreNATO #KFORRCE #RCE #NATOKFOR #NATO #KFOR
#EnduringStability #USAEUR #KTRBN U.S. Army Europe Kosovo Force - KFOR #alaskanationalguard

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

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