

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe

Commissioner & Adjutant General

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By Spc. Grace Nechanicky

Joint Force Headquarters

207th Engineer Utilities Detachment implements water immersion training

Alaska Army Guardsmen take part in new cold weather training

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 here Feb. 8. The purpose of the cold water immersion 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 ice.

The 207th EUD also conducted ice bridge training as part of the same cold weather 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 now.

"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.

The unit ensured they thoroughly planned and prepared for the cold water immersion training. All Soldiers that took part in the drill weekend event were screened and interviewed to ensure medical readiness, and they 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."

To ensure safety, Soldiers would talk to their buddies who were there to help the immersed individuals control their breathing, and to ensure they were coherent and could rest in the water for a period of three 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 hopes that the cold water immersion training will be implemented throughout more of the Alaska Army National Guard in the future. Doing so will increase safety by ensuring Soldiers have proper skills to handle hazardous cold weather situations on or off duty.

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“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 assisted in organizing the training and participated in the cold water immersion as well.

“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.”

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/albums/72157713073915183>
3. **DVIDS link** includes selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/362638/207th-engineer-utilities-detachment-implements-water-immersion-training>



Alaska Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. James Nyquist, 297th Infantry Battalion, participated in cold water immersion training organized by the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment at Gwen Lake on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Feb. 8, 2020. The purpose of the cold water immersion training is to ensure Soldiers are aware and capable of the processes in self-rescue and buddy-rescue when there is a risk of falling through ice. The training was developed to address the risk associated with the 207th EUD ice bridging project. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)



Alaska Army National Guard Col. Matthew Schell, 297th Regional Support Group, participated in cold water immersion training organized by the 207th Engineer Utilities Detachment at Gwen Lake on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Feb. 8, 2020. The purpose of the cold water immersion training is to ensure Soldiers are aware and capable of the processes in self-rescue and buddy-rescue when there is a risk of falling through ice. The training was developed to address the risk associated with the 207th EUD ice bridging project. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)



Alaska Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Maureen Meehan, Joint Force Headquarters, participated in cold water immersion training organized by the 207th Engineer Utilities Detachment at Gwen Lake on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Feb. 8, 2020. The purpose of the cold water immersion training is to ensure Soldiers are aware and capable of the processes in self-rescue and buddy-rescue when there is a risk of falling through ice. The training was developed to address the risk associated with the 207th EUD ice bridging project. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)



Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Dominic Robich, 207th Engineer Utilities Detachment, participated in cold water immersion training organized by the 207th EUD at Gwen Lake on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Feb. 8, 2020. The purpose of the cold water immersion training is to ensure Soldiers are aware and capable of the processes in self-rescue and buddy-rescue when there is a risk of falling through ice. The training was developed to address the risk associated with the 207th EUD ice bridging project. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)



Alaska Army National Guard Lt. Col. Ted McGovern, Joint Force Headquarters, participated in cold water immersion training organized by the 207th Engineer Utilities Detachment at Gwen Lake on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Feb. 8, 2020. The purpose of the cold water immersion training is to ensure Soldiers are aware and capable of the processes in self-rescue and buddy-rescue when there is a risk of falling through ice. The training was developed to address the risk associated with the 207th EUD ice bridging project. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)