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Commissioner & Adjutant General

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Alaska National Guard

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Staff report

Joint Force Headquarters

Alaska Air Guardsmen return from deployment to Iraq

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — A few dozen Air National Guardsmen returned home from a deployment to Iraq Feb. 7, where they were assigned to Al Asad Airbase in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, providing combat search and rescue operations.

"Aircrew from the 211th Rescue Squadron, aircraft maintainers from the 176th Maintenance Group, and support personnel from other wing units comprised the 64 Airmen from Alaska deployed to the Middle East," said Brig. Gen. Scott Howard, commander of the Alaska Air National Guard. "Alaskan citizens that support our nation and state, so it's truly a fantastic day to have them back."

The Guardsmen arrived at JBER in two HC-130J Combat King II combat search and rescue aircraft, and were met by their families, headquarters and wing leadership, and other personnel.

The 211th RQS operates the HC-130J, and during their deployment, they partnered with other CSAR Airmen, prepared and ready to search for and rescue isolated U.S. and allied personnel throughout the region.

"The HC-130J is the only dedicated fixed-wing personnel-recovery platform in the Air Force inventory," said Lt. Col. Joshua Armstrong, the deployed squadron commander.

The aircraft's mission is to rapidly deploy to execute combatant commander-directed recovery operations to austere airfields and denied territory for expeditionary, all-weather personnel recovery operations to include airdrop, airland, helicopter air-to-air refueling, and forward-area ground refueling missions.

The Alaskans were at Al Asad when they became aware that the base may be under attack, and were able to evacuate the aircraft, several helicopters and more than 100 personnel in partner units prior to a bombing Jan. 8, which resulted in zero fatalities.

"The attack that happened, it doesn't interrupt what we do," said Armstrong. "We were able to not be there when it happened and went back and picked up operations."

Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve works with regional partners to militarily defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, in order to enable coalition governmental actions to increase regional stability.

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Photos, next page

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/arcticwarrior/albums/72157713071472001>

3. **DVIDS link** includes selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6089224/alaska-national-guardsmen-return-iraq-jber>



The Brewer family pauses for a photograph after reuniting at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Feb. 7, 2020. Alaska Air National Guard Lt. Col. Christen Brewer, assigned to the 176th Operations Support Squadron, and daughters Brynlee, 1, Ashtyn, 4, and Isabella, 5, welcomed back Maj. Jeremiah Brewer, a HC-130J Combat King II pilot assigned to the 211th Rescue Squadron. Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron and supporting Airmen from other 176th Wing units returned to JBER after deploying to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)



Friends, family, and loved ones wait for Alaska Air National Guardsmen assigned to various 176th Wing units to arrive at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Feb. 7, 2020. Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron and supporting Airmen from other 176th Wing units returned to JBER after deploying to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)

Alaska Air National Guard Maj. Daniel Kelley, a combat systems officer assigned to the 211th Rescue Squadron, embraces his daughter Susannah, 5, after reuniting at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Feb. 7, 2020. Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 211th Rescue Squadron and supporting Airmen from other 176th Wing units returned to JBER after deploying to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)

