

**Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe**

*Commissioner & Adjutant General*

[www.DMVA.Alaska.Gov](http://www.DMVA.Alaska.Gov)



**Alaska National Guard**

*Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs*

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR April 4, 2020**

020-023

*Alaska National Guard Public Affairs*

## **Alaska National Guard Infantrymen to return from deployment, integrate back into local and rural communities**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — The state of Alaska will welcome back more than 150 Soldiers from the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, returning from deployment on Saturday, April 4. The 297th IN BN Soldiers were deployed to the country of Kosovo for a NATO peacekeeping mission and were out of the country for nearly nine months.

The Soldiers have recently demobilized from deployment and for the last 14 days, the 297th IN BN has been quarantined on U.S. Army base Ft. Bliss located in El Paso, Texas amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Soldiers have followed all federally mandated COVID-19 health and safety precautions during their travels and time spent in Texas.

After returning to Anchorage on Saturday, local Soldiers will be released to their families and places of residence to begin an additional 14 days of self quarantine per state mandate. Soldiers returning to rural Alaska communities will be quarantined in barracks on JBER and depart the following day.

Ten Soldiers will be flown to Bethel, a coastal, western Alaskan rural hub on Sunday, Apr. 5 via an Alaskan Army National Guard C-12 Huron. An Army Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter will then fly them to their home villages of Aniak, Chevak, Kasigluk, Kwigillingok, and Tuluksak. The Soldiers arriving in the rural areas will follow the same 14-day quarantine protocol to mitigate their risk of contracting COVID-19.

Guardsmen in Alaska, assigned at JBER, Eielson AFB, Clear AFS, Ft. Greely, Ft. Wainwright and rural areas are following all state and local mandates and advisories, ensuring social distancing and contacting their medical provider if they or a family member has symptoms. The health and safety of Guardsmen and their communities is of highest priority, as a healthy force is there to provide assistance when called. Currently, many full-time Guardsmen are teleworking, and base access work is limited to mission critical and mission essential personnel.

###

### **Details:**

**What:** 297th Infantry Battalion returns from Kosovo Deployment

**When:** March 4 Arrival in Anchorage and March 5 arrival in Bethel and outlying villages

**Where:** Anchorage, AK

**Note:** Due to COVID-19 isolation measures, there will not be a media opportunity upon the return, however images and video B-roll will be released on Monday, April 6 by the Alaska National Guard Public Affairs team.