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By Sgt. Seth LaCount

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Alaska Air National Guardsman takes home regional Airman of the Year award

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Staff Sgt. Kailey Mills, a crew chief assigned to the 176th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, received the regional Airman of the Year Award last week for her accomplishments in 2019.

While still wearing the rank of senior airman, Mills executed 44 major inspections, completed five aircraft modifications, had a 100-percent evaluation pass rate, exceeded maintenance standards and expeditiously responded to a ground emergency to ensure mission capability. She also assisted in the completion of five aircraft modifications exceeding more than 10-million dollars. During a deployment to Al Asad, Iraq, in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, in addition to her crew chief responsibilities, Mills helped refurbish a base gym, which enhanced the safety and quality of life for nearly 200 deployed personnel.

Mills completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing last year, graduating with cum laude honors the same year she was deployed for four months. She also volunteered to assist in a medical care clinic at a local homeless shelter.

Mills' influence and high standards at work also extended beyond her military career field. She led 10 flightline tours in 2019 involving more than 120 civilians. These tours resulted in three people joining the Alaska Air National Guard and furthered the 176th Wing's recruiting goals.

Mills competed against Airmen from the eight states in Region VI and was selected for the award by the Enlisted Field Advisory Council. Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley Jr., the Alaska National Guard's senior enlisted leader who sat in on the council for the selection process, described the unanimous decision to select Mills as a "immediate and obvious choice", after reviewing her exceptional performance in 2019.

Every year, Air National Guardsmen from all 54 states and territories compete to be selected for the U.S. Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

The competition begins at the state level, where members from the two Alaska Air Guard wings compete for awards in four categories: Airman, Noncommissioned Officer, Senior NCO, and First Sergeant of the Year.

State winners from around the country then progress to the regional stage, where they compete in one

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of seven designated regions. Alaska falls into Region VI Northwest, which includes Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Regional winners compete in each of the categories at the NGB level to determine the four Airmen who will be nominated for the U.S. Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the year.

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Story link:** <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/377727/alaska-air-national-guardsman-takes-home-regional-airman-year-award#:~:text=13-Staff%20Sgt.,for%20her%20accomplishments%20in%202019.>



Staff Sgt. Kailey Mills, an HC-130 crew chief with the 176th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, accepts the regional-level Airman of the Year award from the Alaska National Guard's Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley Jr. Sept. 2, 2020. Mills competed with Airmen from eight states in the northwest region to earn the award. In her civilian life, Mills is employed as a nurse and has introduced approximately 120 civilians to Air National Guard career paths, garnering three accessions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/Released)