

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe

Commissioner & Adjutant General

www.DMVA.Alaska.Gov



Alaska National Guard

*Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs*

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

#MvaWeb

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20-023

March 20, 2021

By Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead

Joint Force Headquarters

Alaska Air National Guard to receive four additional KC-135 Stratotankers at Eielson AFB

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Four KC-135 Stratotankers and more than two hundred active duty U.S. Air Force personnel will join the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Wing, Guardians of the Last Frontier, to provide aerial refueling capability for the United States Air Force in the Arctic region and around the world. Acting Secretary of the Air Force John P. Roth approved Eielson Air Force Base as the preferred location to redistribute four active duty KC-135 aircraft to the Air National Guard from a mix of active duty locations, March 18. The aircraft are expected to arrive in 2023.

The Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Wing at Eielson AFB is the only Arctic region air refueling unit in the United States, and their squadron of eight tankers transfers more fuel than any other Air National Guard tanker wing. Most aircraft they refuel are active duty assets, many of which are on federal operational missions. They also provide aerial refueling support to military aircraft for training missions and in support of exercises.

"The Alaska Air National Guard does an incredible job working with our mission partners in an existing association with shared aircraft and active duty personnel at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, and we will expand that healthy partnership up north at Eielson Air Force Base," said Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner for the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. "The additional KC-135s and personnel underscore the growing importance of the Arctic and our mission to protect and defend our state and nation."

The expansion of the tanker force in Alaska supports the 2019 Department of Defense Arctic Strategy by addressing the new and emerging threats in the Asia-Pacific region.

According to a USAF press release, the 2019 DoD Arctic Strategy outlines the department's role and efforts to optimize Air and Space Force capabilities throughout the region in support of the National Defense Strategy by defending the homeland, competing when necessary to maintain favorable regional balances of power, and ensuring common domains remain free and open.

###

PHOTOS

DVIDS link includes selected full-resolution photos. (Accessible from military computers.)

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/391914/alaska-air-national-guard-receive-four-additional-kc-135-stratotankers-eielson-afb>

- more -



A new F-35A Lightning II refuels mid-air by a 168th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, KC-135R Stratotanker, enroute from the Lockheed Martin factory in Fort Worth, Texas, to the 354th Fighter Wing, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, April 21, 2020. The F-35As assigned to Eielson will join a team of joint and international partners in the Indo-Pacific theater, modernizing defense capabilities in the region and enabling international interoperability. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Keele)



A 168th Air Refueling Squadron KC-135 Stratotanker returns to home base Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, after refueling aircraft in the vital arctic region, March 2, 2021. The 168th Wing tankers refuel the force and are integral to global reach capabilities . (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Julie Avey)