



2016 Annual Report

Alaska Department of Military And Veterans' Affairs





GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

Governor Bill Walker
Commander in Chief



Being your Governor imparts important responsibilities to serve my fellow Alaskans. As the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Alaska and the Commander-in-Chief of its organized militia, one of my highest priorities is to assure assistance when things are at their worst. This past year, the Alaskans serving in the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs have consistently been at their best when needed most.

Some of the most personally satisfying moments of my job as governor come from being the commander-in-chief of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Alaska State Defense Force, and Alaska Naval Militia. The Alaskans who serve in these organizations are dedicated to public service like no others. All were busy last year.

The Alaska Army National Guard, the Alaska Air National Guard and the Alaska Naval Militia all receive federal funding to organize, train, and equip to perform missions defending our nation. All deployed members to do just that in Afghanistan and other places around the globe. Simultaneously, the Alaska Air and Army National Guard protected Alaska while "deployed in place." The Air National Guard guided and refueled fighter aircraft to intercept foreign aircraft testing our defenses. The Air National Guard watched our skies for those incursions and space for missile attacks while the Army National Guard stood ready to intercept them.

Our organized militia has stepped forward to assist Alaskans in great need as well. With the combined efforts of the Alaska Air and Army National Guard, over sixty lives were saved in 2016. The Army National Guard also used helicopters to fight a fire on the southern outskirts of Anchorage, protecting two subdivisions at grave risk. The Air National Guard deployed a ground team to combat a late-season wildland fire near Sutton where there were very few resources available. The Alaska State Defense Force has continued on a path of increasing the opportunity to serve more Alaskans and stood up a new signal detachment in Bethel. The Alaska Naval Militia, through its training plan, is now more prepared than ever to assist in the Alaska National Guard Joint Operations Center or the State Emergency Operations Center in the event of mass disaster.

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is on duty 24 hours a day, planning for emergencies,

helping communities prepare in for disasters, coordinating responses to critical situations, and helping Alaskans recover after the worst happens. They conducted statewide preparedness conferences and numerous local training events to help Alaska communities make themselves more resilient. In communities where disaster struck, they assured timely emergency assistance when requested and facilitated access to federal and state funds for recovery afterwards.

With the highest *per capita* population of veterans of any state, DMVA's Office of Veterans Affairs serves a huge and growing group of men and women. They work every day to make sure our vets receive the benefits they earned through serving our Nation. This incredible team of 4 state employees and 17 contractor Veteran Service Officers assisted a record number of Alaskans last year, over 60,000, with the full range of benefits from medical care to disability benefits to funeral honors.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy – also known as "the governor's high school" changes lives. Every year, hundreds of young Alaskans who have left or are in danger of dropping out of high school turn their lives around through a combination of academic rigor and military structure. Last year, this innovative program obtained federal grant money to start pre-apprentice training so graduates are prepared to enter vocational careers. In this way, the construction projects that define Alaska for the future will be built by Alaskans, not out-of-state workers.

The Alaska Aerospace Corporation is a public corporation over which the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has administrative oversight. Its primary business is to provide rocket launch services. Two years ago, I removed state funds subsidizing this business. With now over \$14 million in contracts with federal government and private entities, the corporation is self-sustaining its current operation, and developing for more robust operations in the future.

There is also a cadre of smart and dedicated civilians in the department's Division of Administrative Services who help DMVA run smoothly. These highly skilled state workers are vital to the organization. To enable the department to excel, they must navigate both state guidelines and the rules of several federal agencies for budget, fiscal, human resources, procurement, and information technology services. They have my lasting appreciation and support.

The pages that follow demonstrate the success possible when Alaskans pull together. I am proud of the DMVA team and fully expect impressive forward strides in the years ahead.



THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

MAJ. Gen. Laurie Hummel
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard
& Commissioner of DMVA



Welcome to a summary of this year's activities of the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs. Ours is a diverse team with wide-ranging missions, and these dedicated Alaskans execute them efficiently and economically. I am honored to lead such an accomplished group of professionals and proud to share this snapshot of our work in 2016.

DMVA's vision for the future encompasses these four major lines of effort:

1. Serving our federal mission. Everything we do comes back to the fact that the men and women who serve in the National Guard can be called to federal service. Our soldiers and airmen must be fit, trained, ready, and equipped to step into their warfighting roles.
2. Creating and executing a viable Arctic strategy. As our Nation's only Arctic state, and as the entire world shifts its attention northward, we must plan for the increasing military, commercial, industrial, and recreational use of the circumpolar north. The Nation is looking to Alaska to lead the way.
3. Engaging Alaska communities. Whether for emergency planning, natural disaster mitigation, or working to restore the positive influence of military service in rural Alaska, we look forward to working hand in hand with communities large and small. We strengthen each other through partnership and cooperation.
4. Expanding emergency management capacity. Even as sea ice diminishes, water levels rise, storms intensify, and wildfires become more severe, we look to the future with confidence in our ability to plan for and respond to disasters and emergencies. The National Guard motto "Always Ready, Always There" applies to our community service responsibility.

DMVA consists of a relatively small but highly trained team of people who strive every day to make our vision reality. We are continually building and refining sound processes, constantly striving to serve our customers, and always seeking to act in a transparent fashion. Importantly, we are working together, constantly mindful of performing our duties in a legal, moral, and ethical fashion. Our new Alaska Code of Military Justice provides clear direction to our uniformed forces and will prove a useful tool in ensuring the good order and discipline so vital to our organization.

We've created other tools to facilitate positive progress. We

now have a full Joint Staff to serve key roles such as helping coordinate Defense Support of Civil Authorities, a critical aspect of our service to Alaska communities, and engaging with other military and international partners.

And I'm happy to report, for the first time in its history, DMVA has established a strategic plan. This document will guide our projects and measure our progress to maximize benefits to Alaskans and make optimal use of the resources available to us.

Speaking of resources, inescapable fiscal reality means resources have been dwindling. We'll surely continue to face fiscal constraints, but we'll handle them. I'm proud of my team – in 2016, they reduced this department's budget by 40%, yet maintained and in some areas even increased the level of service to the public. This is a thoughtful, innovative group. They're up to the task.

Our four-part vision is necessarily broad-based, but the specific projects we are pursuing to fulfill that vision are precise and practical.

For example, we're already seeing progress with our Rural Engagement Initiative, designed to encourage and enable state militia service in rural communities. From its roots in the Alaska Territorial Guard, for a long time the state military fostered public service, developed local leaders, and strengthened villages and small towns. We want to renew and expand that proud tradition, both to increase capacity and resilience across the state, and to make our State Defense Force and National Guard stronger and more reflective of the people we serve. With the Rural Engagement Initiative, Governor Walker and Lt. Governor Mallott are helping us lead what we hope will be a steady resurgence of the Alaska National Guard and the Alaska State Defense Force across rural Alaska. We've worked hard to inspire national-level military leaders to recognize not only Alaska's unique challenges but also the positive state and federal implications of military service here, and they have become stronger partners in our efforts. Resources will be a continuing challenge, but our resolve is solid and our cooperative work with rural partners is increasing. I see good things coming as we deliberately reach out to serve all Alaskans.

Actually, I see good things ahead for our entire organization. My confidence lays squarely at the feet of the men and women on the DMVA team. They are an admirable group and it is my privilege to lead them. They are "Always Ready, Always There" for you.



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Cover Photo: Composite image. Photos by U.S. Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton

DMVA VISION AND CORE VALUES

Vision: Through constant collaboration internally and with external partners, DMVA implements a viable Arctic strategy, increases emergency management capacity, and expands engagement with Alaska communities, all while achieving federal mission assurance.

Core Values

- Professionalism “Be the real deal”
- Commitment “All oars in the water”
- Teamwork “...rowing in the same direction”

We rely on

- Adherence to Doctrine
- Sound Processes
- Customer Focus
- Moral, Legal, Ethical Actions
- Transparency



Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget Impact

State General Fund Dollars Spent \$16,262,550

Air National Guard \$2,465,700	Alaska Military Youth Academy \$5,016,900
Army National Guard \$3,566,450	Homeland Security & Emergency Management \$3,252,700
Veterans Services \$1,960,800	

Air National Guard
\$3,381,900 State Budget Federal dollars
\$194,321,460 Federal dollars
\$197,703,360 Total Federal dollars

Army National Guard
\$6,729,000 State Budget Federal dollars
\$67,645,833 Federal dollars
\$74,374,833 Total Federal dollars

Alaska Military Youth Academy
\$2,977,700 State Budget Federal dollars

Veterans Services
\$225,500 State Budget Federal dollars
\$339,125,000 Federal dollars
\$339,350,500 Total Federal dollars

Homeland Security &
Emergency Management
\$4,163,500 State Budget Federal dollars

Federal Dollars Received
\$618,569,893

ALASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



Alaska Army National Guard

After years of planning and preparation, the Alaska Army National Guard completed a major force structure reorganization in September 2016. The reorganization was due to an Army-wide deactivation of all Battlefield Surveillance units from the Army. The 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade (BFSB) deactivated in a ceremony at the Delaney Park Strip in Anchorage in August 2016. At the same time, the 297th Regional Support Group and the 1-297th Infantry Battalion replaced the BFSB in an activation ceremony. The 297th Regional Support Group, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Peter Mondelli, consists of military police, engineer, network support, public affairs, and personnel theater gateway units.

In September 2016, the 38th Troop Command, consisting of the missile defense, aviation, and infantry battalions, conducted a change of command ceremony where Colonel Jeffery Roach relinquished his command to Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Don.

To commemorate the events, the Alaska Army National Guard hosted a community day at the park strip and invited the public to the ceremonies, barbeque, family activities, military displays, and live infantry demonstrations. Governor Bill Walker was in



The AKARNG participates in a ceremonial deactivation of the 297th BFSB and activation of the 297th RSG at the Delaney Park Strip located in downtown Anchorage, Aug. 6. Photo: Balinda O'Neal Dresel, DMVA Public Affairs

attendance and signed into law the new Alaska Code of Military Justice. Other distinguished guests included State Senator Bill Wielechowski (D-Anchorage), Representative Gabrielle LeDoux (R – Anchorage), and Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz.

The force structure reorganization reduced the size of the Alaska Army National Guard from 1,986 Soldiers in 2015 to 1,755 Soldiers by the end of fiscal year 2017. The personnel strength reduction was also due to the nationwide National Guard force structure allowance reductions.

The Army Guard's 2015 Congressionally mandated end strength of 350,200 Soldiers dropped to 342,000 Soldiers in September 2016. Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers were reassigned, and equipment was laterally transferred to the other units or other disposition methods.

Throughout 2016, the Alaska Army National Guard remained focused on four established lines of effort: provide a relevant, ready, and available force; continually improve AKARNG professionalism; maintain subject matter expertise in the Arctic domain; and partner and align with appropriate agencies. The AKARNG continued to work diligently in 2016 in support of the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs strategy and The Adjutant General's vision: an integrated Arctic strategy that supports Alaska's Arctic policy; emergency management capacity; community engagement; and federal and state mission assurance.

38th Troop Command

With 1,152 authorized Soldiers, the 38th Troop Command and its subordinate battalions comprise the largest brigade in the Alaska Army National Guard. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Wayne Don, the 38th Troop Command consists of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (MDB) (Ground-based Midcourse Defense - GMD), 1-207th Aviation Regiment, and 1-297th Infantry Regiment. Trained and ready Soldiers are critical to the Alaska Army National Guard's state and federal missions. Over 200 Alaska Army National Guard full-time Soldiers, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Tim Brower, are assigned to the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (GMD) at Fort Greely. They are part of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade's 300 Soldiers tasked with defending 300 million Americans from the threat of ballistic missile attack. In November 2016, the 49th MDB completed their external evaluation and certified all Fire Direction Center crews. The battalion also participated in Vigilant Shield and Global Thunder 17 in November 2016. Alaska Shield Exercise 2016 conducted in April was a State of Alaska-led command post exercise/field training exercise (CPX/FTX) that focused on anti-terrorism, cyber defense, and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA). Global Thunder 17 is an annual U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) command post and field training exercise that provided opportunities to exercise our ability to deliver synchronized space effects in coordination with other U.S. and partner nation government agencies.

Alaska Army National Guard Aviation, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Britt Reed and State Army Aviation Officer Lieutenant Colonel Bob Kurtz, experienced another busy year of supporting state civil authorities in emergency management. In July 2016, two Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and aircrews from the 1-207th Aviation Regiment performed water bucket operations in support of wildfire suppression efforts for the McHugh Creek fire. They provided almost thirty flight hours and dropped 296,100 gallons of water

that assisted in the containment of the wildfire away from residential areas.

The Alaska Army National Guard Aviation was credited with five saves in 2016. They conducted their first live hoist search and rescue (SAR) mission since 2004 with the Alaska Air National Guard Guardian Angels at Ptarmigan Peak last winter for a female skier with a broken leg. Army Aviation was awarded one save, and this mission re-established the importance of joint SAR relationships and emphasized the need for periodic hoist training with the 212th Rescue Squadron to share tactics, techniques, and procedures and valuable lessons learned. Two saves were missions out of the Bethel Army Aviation Operating Facility (AAOF) for a medical emergency medevac from Pilot Station and an airplane crash in the vicinity of Goodnews Bay.

In December 2016, the Alaska Army National Guard 1-207th Aviation Regiment, rescued two men approximately 40 miles east of Nome. The men were reported as overdue during their planned trip from White Mountain to Nome on a single all-terrain vehicle. At the request of the Alaska State Troopers, an Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter was deployed out of the Nome AAOF. The crew rescued the men and transported them to the Nome Fire Department for medical evaluation. For this mission, 1-207th Aviation was credited with two saves. Throughout 2016, Alaska Army National Guard Aviation maintained an operational readiness rate of 7th best in the nation while flying over 3200 flight hours.



An Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter fills a "Bambi Bucket" in the Cook Inlet before dumping more than 296,100 gallons of water onto the McHugh Creek fire in July. Photo: Balinda O'Neal Dresel, DMVA Public Affairs

In February 2016, Alaska Army and Air Guardmembers assisted the Alaska Incident Management Team for Search and Rescue (AIMT-SAR), the Alaska State Troopers, and multiple city and state agencies in the search for missing Army Guard Soldier Specialist Nephi Soper. Specialist Soper went missing while trying to hike from the Prospect Heights trailhead to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in February. Sadly, Specialist Soper's body was found later in June during a search involving multiple agencies.

As a part of the force structure reorganization, Alaska Army National Guard members assigned to Bravo Company, 1-143rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) conducted their last airborne operation at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Malamute drop zone in August 2016. The airborne event included more than 25 paratroopers flown in iterations using a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. This was the final airborne operation conducted by Alaska Army National Guard members, as 1-297th Infantry Regiment was activated in September 2016 without an airborne mission.

The 1-297th Infantry Regiment will have detachments in fifteen armories throughout Alaska: Fairbanks, Nome, Hooper Bay, Kipnuk, Quinhagak, Valdez, Bethel, Kwethluk, Kenai, Kodiak, Wasilla, Sitka, Klawock, Juneau, and Kotzebue.



Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers with B Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment, jump out of a UH-60 Black Hawk for the unit's final jump before they retire their airborne status. Photo: Senior Airmen James Richardson, ASAF

297th Regional Support Group

The 297th Regional Support Group, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Peter Mondelli, activated in September 2016 and is authorized 365 Soldiers. The brigade consists of the 208th Construction Management Team, 207th Engineer Utilities Detachment, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, 297th Military Police Company, 297th Network Signal Company, and the 49th Personnel Detachment (Theater Gateway).

After two years of processing through the U.S. Army Human Resources Command, the Army Superior Unit Award was awarded in December 2016 to Detachment 1, 297th MP CO for outstanding meritorious service while deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in support of Joint Task Force - Guantanamo during the period 7 October 2013 to 3 July 2014. Thirty Soldiers from the 297th MP CO, under the leadership of 1LT Ralph Harris, were assigned to the active duty 93d Military Police Battalion. The Soldiers skillfully performed high value detention and critical site security operations during their deployment.

In 2016, Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment conducted avalanche beacon training in Snowhawk Valley. During the drill weekend, more than 30 Soldiers trained on identifying avalanche dangers, rescue equipment, and arctic survival.

Prior to the deactivation of the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Soldiers from the 297th conducted annual training (AT) 2016 in Utqiagvik (Barrow) in frigid April temperatures. The 297th BFSB focused on Arctic cold weather training and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions by partnering with the North Slope Borough Risk Management Team in support of exercise Alaska Shield. This training event also served as an opportunity for the AKARNG to continue to build on its relationships with Alaskan communities.



Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment conduct avalanche beacon training in Snowhawk Valley. During the drill weekend, more than 30 Soldiers trained on identifying avalanche dangers, rescue equipment, and arctic survival. Photo courtesy 207th, Army Guard.

On the last day of annual training in Utqiagvik, Soldiers and community members attended a cultural exchange at the Inupiat Heritage Center. The cultural event included a traditional dance demonstration, oral histories from Alaska Territorial Guard members, a tour of the museum, Native craft demonstrations, and traditional foods samples. The 297th BFSB hosted a community appreciation barbeque at the Heritage Center, which included equipment and historical displays. Last year, the BFSB conducted its annual training event in Bethel.



1LT James Tollefson, 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, digs a snow shelter while braving blowing snow and frigid temperatures outside of Utqiagvik. Guardmembers trained in arctic operations with ambient temperatures of 5 below combined with 35 mph winds and 50 mph gusts. Photo: Sgt. David Bedard, Alaska Army Guard

In addition to drills and annual training, the AKARNG participated in numerous training exercises throughout Alaska. Arctic Anvil 2016 was a Pacific pathways multi-component exercise conducted at Fort Greely with U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK). USARAK, in coordination with 196th Infantry Brigade, I Corps and U.S. Army Pacific, executed a Brigade-level home station combat training center operations, with a culminating training event to prepare 1/25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team for a National Training Center rotation in 2017 and the 1-52 General Support Aviation Battalion for future operations.

Several units, including the 49th MDB, participated in Alaska Shield Exercise 2016 conducted in April. The exercise was an Alaska state-led command post exercise/field training exercise (CPX/FTX) that focused on anti-terrorism, cyber defense, and DSCA. Exercise scenarios, including multiple active shooter incidents and cyber-attacks, were developed and executed across the state with federal and state agencies. Exercise Arctic Care was a two-week humanitarian assistance exercise to assist Alaskan communities in response to a crisis.

Overseas Deployments

The Alaska Army National Guard continues to train for deployments around the world. The Alaska Army National Guard currently has 13 Soldiers mobilized. Charlie Company 2-641st Aviation Regiment is deployed to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti for a year-long deployment in support of Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa. Two rotations of liaison teams deployed with the Mongolian Armed Forces to Afghanistan as leadership and training mentors for a Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force. The Alaska Army National Guard and Mongolia have continued this combat mission partnership since 2004. The 49th Personnel Detachment (Theater Gateway) is preparing to deploy to Kuwait in 2017.

Rural Engagement Initiatives

The AKARNG continued to work diligently to increase AKARNG participation in rural Alaska. Throughout the year, Army Guard hosted key leaders from the National Guard Bureau, to include the Director of the Army National Guard, to gain their support of numerous rural engagement initiatives. Human resources, aviation, medical, and recruiting personnel from National Guard Bureau visited Fort Greely, Fairbanks, Bethel, and Napskiak to gain a better understanding of the challenges of distance and weather in Alaska as they affect training and readiness. The Alaska Army National Guard's rural engagement efforts included specific requests to National Guard Bureau in the critical areas of recruiting and funding. In May 2016, AKARNG Guard senior leaders delivered a State of the State brief to the Director of the Army National Guard. The brief emphasized Alaska's request for dedicated drill travel funding, Soldier-reimbursed travel from home to drill location, and a recruiting pilot program for rural Alaska.

In September 2016, the Alaska Army National Guard successfully received authorization from National Guard Bureau for a three-year pilot program to assist with recruiting efforts of rural Alaska Natives who meet specific requirements under the program.

In addition to these initiatives, the Army Guard committed to hire full-time Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers in armories in Bethel, Kodiak, Kenai, Fairbanks, Ketchikan, and Juneau to continue to ensure part-time drilling Soldiers have access to full-time administrative, logistics, and training support.

Facilities Management

The Construction and Facilities Management Office (CFMO) focused on numerous critical projects in 2016. The CFMO submitted a funding request for The Adjutant General's number one priority construction project, the Camp Carroll Readiness Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The Camp Carroll Readiness Center will greatly enhance mission readiness by providing a training center that will serve future generations of Alaskan Soldiers. Future construction of the Camp Carroll and Wasilla Readiness Centers and the Utqiagvik barracks completion addressed the Army National Guard's lack of authorized space for training, administration, and warm storage. These facility shortfalls stem from changes in force structure caused by the transformation and modernization of the Army in the last decade. The shortfall of authorized space resulted in degraded readiness and created challenges in training, recruiting, and retention of qualified Soldiers. The 40-person Utqiagvik barracks construction project was completed in 2016 and the ribbon cutting ceremony held in January 2017.

The CFMO continued to maintain the eighteen active armories throughout the state and continued to prepare 67 armories for divestiture and repurposing. The eighteen active armories identified in the current stationing plan include: JBER, Wasilla, Kenai, Valdez, Kodiak, Fairbanks, Fort Greely, Barrow, Nome, Bethel, Hooper Bay, Kipnuk, Quinhagak, Kwethluk, Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, and Klawock. The Alaska Army National Guard plans to include Kotzebue as an active armory in the fiscal year 2017 stationing plan.

The CFMO completed the following armory improvement projects: repairs to the Juneau armory roof and Kodiak armory showers; boiler replacement in the Ketchikan and Sitka armories; Nome hangar door repairs; Kipnuk armory sustainment; and the Fairbanks armory heating fuel tank replacement. The Alcantra armory in Wasilla received several improvements, such as the dining facility boiler replacement, a back-up generator system, septic system upgrades, and the service road project to provide access off the new Seward Meridian Highway. The CFMO also completed the Little Diomedea armory demolition project.

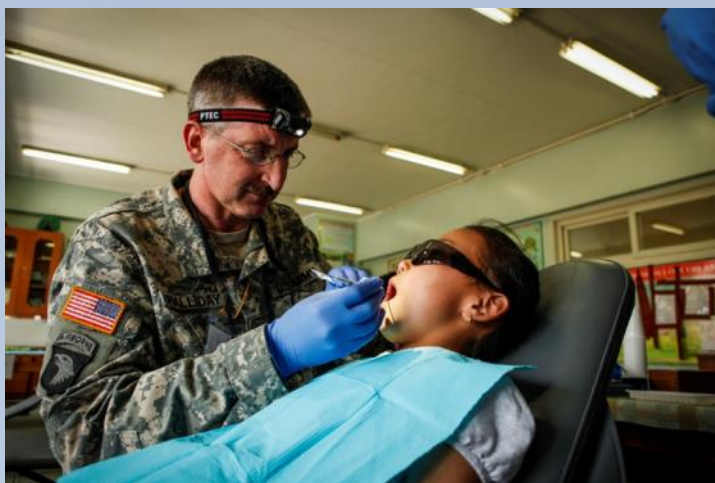
The three Army National Guard enclaves located on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson - Camp Denali, Camp Carroll and Bryant Army Airfield - were all sustained through a multitude of construction projects, to include building sustainment and roof replacement, Bryant Army Airfield weather station replacement, and the Alaska Military Youth Academy surveillance project.

Alaska/Mongolia State Partnership Program Update

In 2016, the Alaska State Partnership program saw an overall increase in engagements with our partner nation, Mongolia. The Alaska National Guard participated in seventeen engagements in 2016, up twelve from five engagements in 2015. Seven Alaska National Guard personnel participated in the Disaster Response

Exercise Gobi Wolf hosted by the Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency. The exercise simulated an earthquake in Mongolia's largest city, Ulaanbaatar, and resembled Alaska's Vigilant Guard exercise. During the Alaska Shield 2016 exercise, the Alaska National Guard hosted two senior Mongolian Armed Forces officers and two emergency response professionals from the National Emergency Management Agency.

Military-to-military exchanges included training in cold weather operations with Alaska Army National Guard non-commissioned officers, search and rescue operations with the Alaska Air National Guard 212th Rescue Squadron, and defense professionalization engagements with Alaska National Guard senior leaders. Mongolia has recently taken steps towards establishing an independent Air Force within its Armed Forces. As a result, the Alaska Air National Guard has a newly established role with the Alaska State Partnership program. The Air Guard participated in five



Alaska Army National Guard COL James Halliday, state dental officer assigned to the Alaska Medical Detachment, conducted basic dental exams during Khaan Quest 2016 as part of the Health Services Support Engagement (HSSE) at a local school in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in May. Photo: Cpl. Hilda M. Becerra, USMC

engagements with Mongolia in 2016.

Soldiers from the 38th Troop Command and the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade conducted overseas deployment training in Mongolia, participating in Khaan Quest 2016, a multinational exercise hosted annually by Mongolian Armed Forces, co-sponsored by U.S. Pacific Command, and supported by U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific. Alaska Soldiers have participated in the Khaan Quest exercise for nine consecutive years, and this year, Alaska Soldiers performed as the exercise director, operations center liaisons, lanes instructors, and military police forces. Khaan Quest is a Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) Capstone training event.

ALASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD



168th Wing

The 168th Wing is a benchmark wing with one of the highest operational tempos in the Air National Guard. It is home to 9 KC-135 Stratotankers based in Interior Alaska at Eielson Air Force Base. The Wing flew 2,623 mishap-free hours, delivering and flawlessly accounting for nearly 9.5 million pounds of fuel to 1077 receivers during 599 generated sorties. The 168th Wing is also responsible for operating and securing the Perimeter Acquisition Vehicle Entry Phased Array Warning System Radar for Air Force Space Command at Clear Air Force Station. As the force provider for Air Force Space Command, the 213th Space Warning Squadron stood alert 24/7, as a vigilant and credible deterrent against ballistic missile attack for North America. Our Guardsmen, as a total force partner, tracked over 279,000 space objects and recorded over 4.7 million measurable observations to support United States Strategic Command and the Joint Space Operations Center Space Situational Awareness.

More than 351 168th Wing Airmen deployed in support of federal and wartime missions during the year, maintaining a constant presence in the Central Command and Pacific Command areas of responsibility as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization support missions. The Guardians of the Last Frontier flew 301.4 combat hours and delivered more than 2.93 million pounds of fuel and 25 short tons of cargo, executing almost 300 combat sorties providing global reach to support state and national objectives. The real-world operational tempo of the 168th Wing kept our Airmen's technical skills razor sharp.

168th Wing leadership emphasized a "Year of the Enlisted" theme in its weekly Wing-level meetings and on signage throughout the campus on Eielson AFB. The focus provided an opportunity for Airmen to "tell their story" while sharing what motivated them to join and remain a part of the Alaska Air National Guard. The spotlight on our Enlisted was a highlight that energized the Wing prior to regular scheduled drill weekends, ensuring enthusiastic training for our traditional guard members. Another visible emphasis on enlisted personnel was the inclusion of the Chiefs and Senior Enlisted Non-Commissioned Officers names on Wing signage – recognizing the invaluable contributions of the Enlisted cadre to the leadership team.

All Alaska Guardsmen strive to add value to their communities, and the 168th members excel. Wing members received numerous accolades throughout the year, to include the Alaska Humanitarian Service Medal and the Adjutant General's Marksmanship Proficiency Award. Trained, capable and embedded in the community – a combination that ensures positive results. Three Wing members helped pull a snowmobiler out of a crevasse in the Alaska Range, ultimately saving the snowmobiler's life.

Members of Clear Air Force Station Security Forces administered CPR to a heart attack victim, resulting in another life saved.

Reflective of ongoing community partnership efforts, Clear Security Forces developed a training "shoot house" to evaluate their response effectiveness in numerous scenarios, and offered the facility to the Alaska State Troopers for their training use.



Col. Bryan White and Lt. Col. Jhonny Polanco, help Airmen of the 168th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, load their gear and luggage onto a KC-135R at Eielson AFB, as the Airmen prepare to deploy in support of operations in Southwest Asia. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Mae S. Olson)

Recruiting and Retention

The Commander focused wing-wide efforts on recruiting and retention initiatives throughout the community and state. A Recruiting Summit was held at the Fairbanks recruiting storefront in November to align the efforts of the recruiting team with the Strategic Plan of the 168th Wing. Members from the Joint Force Headquarters and commanders from within the wing came together with a sole focus, to synergize the goals and way-forward. The team developed a detailed, innovative plan to maximize effort, driving toward increased end strength -- the desired goal in 2017. The team identified "hard to fill" career fields, and then brainstormed how best to access those capabilities in the local community. Additionally, nesting into The Adjutant General's Rural Engagement initiative, the wing is developing plans to deploy a diverse team of Wing representatives to rural areas and remote communities. The Wing is committed to developing relationships with all Alaskan communities (education, business, remote, urban, cultural, and civic), with the intent to ensure positive support/engagement and to facilitate awareness of opportunities in the Alaska National Guard. In a resource constrained environment, the Wing continues to push for more efficacy and improved methods.



Maintenance Airmen from the 168th Maintenance Group had the opportunity to replace an engine from one of the KC-135R Stratotankers assigned to the Interior-Alaska unit. The entire process takes several days and involves Airmen from multiple shops within the maintenance group. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Mae S. Olson)

Clear Air Force Station and 10-year Anniversary of 213th Space Warning Squadron

August 30, 2006 is the official date that the 213th Space Warning Squadron, Clear Air Force Station, activated as a fulltime Air National Guard unit. The unit sponsored a formal dinner event, where almost 100 family, co-workers, and friends gathered to observe this historic milestone. The 213th Space Warning Squadron, in partnership with the 13th Space Warning Squadron, provides early warning of sea-launched and intercontinental ballistic missiles to the North American Aerospace Defense Command's Missile Correlation Center, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Colorado. It also provides space surveillance data on orbiting objects to the United States Strategic Command's Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. Located about 80 miles southwest of Fairbanks, Clear Air Force Station and the Airmen assigned there stand as the oldest missile warning site in North America.

Practical Training

As a valuable addition to the Alaska National Guard's domestic response capacity, the 168th Civil Engineer Squadron was activated December 2015. The unit is currently 50% manned with the goal of being 90% in 2017. 168th Civil Engineer Squadron is actively recruiting Drill Status Guardsmen positions in nearly every Civil Engineering career field. The unit recently traveled south of the range to Clear Air Force Station to conduct their annual Home Station Training. This training and real-world tasking marked the first time members executed as a unit to gain valuable new skills and expertise. Operating in a Joint Environment, Land Navigation, Radio Communications, Individual Movement Techniques, and Defensive Fighting Positions were a few of the training components. While at Clear Air Force Station, the unit completed two major projects -- brush clearing with debris removal for an old landing airstrip and road repair. Two newly-acquired Kubota skid-steer tractors provided critical training on debris-clearance equipment. The unit looks forward to being fully manned and equipped in 2017, realizing a full federal and state emergency/domestic response capacity.

176th Wing

249th Airlift Squadron

The 249th Airlift Squadron, the "Terns", participated in several deployments, exercises, and events in 2016. Eight members of the 249th Airlift Squadron volunteered to deploy in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE and Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL. Significant missions include airlifting the 33rd Rescue Squadron from Kadena Air Base, Japan to support operations in US Africa Command (three pallets, two helicopters, 46 airmen, 45.8 hours, 54.6K pounds of cargo), redeployed Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha members of Maryland Guard after 45 days "joint combined exchange training (JCET)" with Dominican forces, and supported the 4th Marine Regiment Rotational Force Darwin movement into Darwin, Australia. Exercise participation was also robust and included SABER STRIKE – where the unit supported the Pennsylvania Army Guard's Deployment to Lithuania (85.4K pounds of Cargo). This past year afforded several unique Arctic training opportunities, to include ICE EX, where the 249th Airlift Squadron airdropped eight cargo bundles, 13 Parajumpers and two Army personnel on the Arctic icecap (21.5K pounds of Cargo). ICE EX is a joint-force exercise which allows multiple military branches to assess readiness, increase operation experience in the region, develop partnerships and collaborative efforts, and advance understanding of the Arctic environment. Other training events included Exercise ARCTIC CHINOOK where the squadron transported Department of Homeland Security officials and equipment and airdropped two Rescue platforms and seven personnel into a remote region of the Seward Peninsula, and Exercise ARCTIC SHIELD in which the squadron moved the 4-25 Brigade and 501st Battalion vehicles and personnel. The 249th Airlift Squadron also deployed to Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center in January to exercise squadron mobility readiness, to train and exercise 249th lift Squadron core competencies in an unfamiliar environment, and to enhance Squadron morale and esprit de corps. Of note, the 249th Airlift Squadron worked with NASA rescue units, the 308th and 304th Rescue Squadrons dropping 18 jumpers and four rescue vessels to demonstrate long-range oceanic rescue for astronaut recovery. In July, the 249th Airlift Squadron participated in the JBER Arctic Thunder Open House and the Great Alaska Aviation Gathering at the Ted Stevens International Airport, putting the C-17A Globemaster III on display. Our aviation experts provided tours to increase public awareness of the Alaska Air National Guard, the machines we fly, and the missions we accomplish.

Alaska Rescue Coordination Center

The Alaska Air National Guard's search-and-rescue mission continues to play a critical role across Alaska. At the end of November 2016, The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, manned by members of the Alaska Air Guard, reached its 5,418th mission and 2,283rd save since July, 1 1994, with 51 lives saved year to date.

210th Rescue Squadron

The 210th Rescue Squadron, while maintaining 24/7 Rescue alert for the State of Alaska, participated in several goodwill missions throughout the Pacific theater to support U.S. military



Loadmasters from the 249th Airlift Squadron deploy an Arctic sustainment package from the 212th Rescue Squadron out the back of a C-17 Globemaster III to U.S. Navy Ice Camp Sargo in the Arctic Circle in support of Ice Exercise 2016 March 15. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Wes Wright)

partner nations. They sent rescue subject matter experts to Mongolia, Taiwan, and Vietnam to enhance worldwide rescue capabilities. The 210th Rescue Squadron also trained to enhance their own Combat Search and Rescue capabilities by supporting Exercises RED FLAG-ALASKA, RED FLAG-NELLIS, SOUTHERN STRIKE, and a USAF Weapon School Terminal Employment exercise in Idaho. In the state, the 210th prosecuted 25 Alaska RCC directed missions, with 57 sorties and 99.4 hours resulting in 23 lives saved.

211th Rescue Squadron

The 211th Rescue Squadron operates the HC-130H, providing refueling support to the HH-60 rescue helicopters. In 2016, the squadron received the Air Force Association Outstanding Air National Guard Unit of the Year award, the 176th Wing Commander's Award for Organization Excellence, the Governor's Trophy, and the Jolly Green Association "Rescue Mission of the Year" Award. Within the unit, SMSgt Andy Reynolds was awarded both the Alaska Air National Guard Senior Non-commissioned Officer of the Year and the Air National Guard Red Erwin Award, Outstanding Enlisted Aircrew Member of the Year, in the senior non-commissioned officer category. The 211th is also the lead Air Reserve Component unit for HC-130J conversion and led development of new HC-130J transition course benefiting the entire ARC. The first aircraft is due to arrive May 2017.

176th Operations Support Squadron

In 2016, 176th Operations Support Squadron personnel deployed supporting the full range of 176th Wing combat operations including Operation FREEDOM'S SHIELD and Operation INHERENT RESOLVE. Further, the 176th Operations Support Squadron provided personnel allowing 176th Operations Group participation in numerous exercises and training events, including Exercise ARCTIC CHINOOK, Exercise ARCTIC SHIELD, Tern Migration, RED FLAG-ALASKA, RED FLAG-NELLIS. 176th Operations Support Squadron personnel cultivated the Total Force by participation in numerous technical working groups, training review boards, and tactics rewrites, up channeling lessons learned by the Alaska Air National Guard to the wider Department of Defense.



An HC-130 "King" aircraft from the 211th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard refuels an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter from the 210th Rescue Squadron, over the arctic ice during Ice Exercise 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton)

212th Rescue Squadron

The 212th Rescue Squadron participated in numerous search and rescue missions and search and rescue related exercises in 2016. Altogether the unit accomplished 28 Missions (including 12 hoist missions), 34 saves, and eight recoveries. Members of the unit took the lead for the Guardian Angel Android Tactical Assault Kit operational unit evaluation thereby validating the system's situational awareness integration and ultimately garnering \$225K in Air National Guard-wide procurement. The 212th also deployed the Arctic Sustainment Package two times in support of the 2016 ICE Exercise and Exercise ARCTIC CHINOOK, and successfully validated arctic search and rescue tactics, techniques and procedures while demonstrating a long-range arctic search and rescue capability. TSgt Cody Inman was also awarded the Angel of the Battlefield award for the USAF.

144th Airlift Squadron

The 144th Airlift Squadron completed a 120+ day, combat deployment to Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait during 2016. Over 100 airmen were deployed to operations in direct support of national security objectives in the Iraq and Afghanistan regions. The squadron supported both Operations FREEDOM SENTINEL and INHERENT RESOLVE. Airmen directly contributed to the coalition's effort to rid the region of ISIS. Crewmembers flew the mighty C-130 Hercules for 1,122 sorties and 1,636 flight hours. This Herculean effort delivered 3,285 Tons of cargo and 6,689 passengers to the frontlines of the war on terror. The Wolfpack returned in time to lend their hand to the annual Operation SANTA CLAUS. Over 90 personnel and six Tons of cargo were delivered to the communities of Togiak and Akiachak in order to spread Christmas cheer and communal goodwill.

176th Air Defense Squadron

The 176th Air Defense Squadron (ABS) garnered another highest "Mission Ready" award during the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Region Alert Force Evaluation cycle. The ADS supported active and reserve F-22 training with exemplary air control throughout the year, and supported NORAD Command training objectives during numerous

AMALGAM exercises and NORAD Command's culminating annual wartime exercise VIGILANT SHIELD. 176th Air Defense Squadron Airmen supported Exercises RED FLAG in Alaska and at Nellis AFB, NV. Finally, 176th Air Defense Squadron personnel supported NORAD Command, United States Northern Command, Pacific Air Forces and Air Combat Command with critical Subject Matter Expertise to improve the Air Defense enterprise at large, impacting operations from the National Capital Region Integrated Air Defense system to the Hawaiian Area of Responsibility.

176th Communications Flight

The 176th Communications Flight deployed one member in support of FREEDOM SENTINEL for four months. Eight members of the flight participated at a training event in Hilo, HI enhancing their Cyber Support wartime tasking proficiencies. In 2016, they managed over 500 Information Technology assets with a value in excess of \$3.3 million to ensure success of the 176th Wing's diverse mission set.



Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Johnston from the 176th Air Defense Squadron, monitors the airspace at the Alaskan NORAD Region Air Operations Center on JBER, Alaska. As a Command and Control Battle Management Operator Sgt. Johnston helps to help defend against incursions into Alaskan airspace by foreign military aircraft and other airborne threats. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff SSgt. Edward Eagerton)

176th Security Forces Squadron

Nine 176th Security Force Squadron personnel backfilled the active duty security cadre, bolstering the JBER Force Protection Mission; providing security and law enforcement duties on the installation. They are directly responsible for securing resources vital to national security and personnel. The 176 SFS supported Arctic Thunder 2016 Open House and Airshow with a quick reaction force, traffic control, and crowd control, allowing over 283K personnel to visit the installation without incident. They led a security unit for the Great Alaska Aviation Tradeshow, providing protection of an Air Force Reserve F-22 and Active Duty C-17, and ensured there were no incidents for 23K+ participants and spectators. Additionally, ten personnel volunteered to support base security operations at Clear Air Force Station, thus enabling daily missile warning and space surveillance.

176th Civil Engineer Squadron

Twenty six members of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron returned from a six-month Central Command deployment. They functioned as the lead team on Central Command's only Prime Base Engineer

Emergency Force squadron where they led 41 construction projects totaling \$5.8M. At home station, the 176th Civil Engineer



Members of the 176th Communications Flight prepare to mount an antenna on top of a building on JBER, Alaska May 26. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton)

Squadron executed over \$8M in construction projects, making it one of the most productive years since moving to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in 2011. This included various mission, safety, and quality of life projects that enabled a solid platform from which the 176th Wing could launch its operations. Additionally, six firefighters, all of them Drill Status Guardsmen from the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron mobilized in a record 3 hours to the State's call for assistance with the 300-acre Moose Creek wildfire. In October 2016, the 176th Fire Emergency Services flight orchestrated and carried out a joint training opportunity where 30 firefighters from three departments participated in multiple live fire evolutions, executing fire ground strategies and tasks to include, but not limited to command and control, fire ground safety, rescue, fire containment, ventilation, fire suppression, and salvage & overhaul.

176th Logistics Readiness Squadron

During 2016, the 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron received, processed, and distributed assets from 6,000 orders totaling 1.2 billion dollars, generating 139 sorties, 68 rescue missions, and 51 lives saved. The unit's Airmen fueled 460 aircraft with 2.8 million gallons of jet fuel and managed a fleet of 117 vehicles while maintaining a 96% in-commission rate. The 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron also coordinated every aspect of the aircraft upload, download, and passenger manifesting for Operation SANTA CLAUS, a 59-year community outreach tradition which delivers the utmost in morale for remote Alaskans. The 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Loyal - Ready - Strong, Airmen coordinated the deployment and redeployment of 478 personnel and 490 tons of cargo while supporting 21 named operations and deploying seven of their own to various locations around the globe.



Members of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron's Fire Emergency Services train on fire suppression techniques on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska August 16. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton)



HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Response

After a very busy 2015, the DHS&EM Operations Section and State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) handled a more normal assortment of community emergencies and disasters, to include riverine and coastal flooding, strong sea storms and surges, windstorms, community structure and urban interface fires, volcanic eruptions, power outages, water and fuel shortages, etc. For the year, the SEOC responded to nearly 60 requests for technical, logistical, or financial emergency and/or disaster support or agency coordination.



Kotlik Fire. A fire in Kotlik destroyed the old school and several nearby structures. In a small community, the loss of a few critical buildings can have a very large impact on the entire population. Photo by Lower Yukon School District

In late December of 2015, separate storms impacted St. George and Togiak. While these disaster relief and technical assistance activities were underway, the SEOC was activated in response to the strong M7.1 Iniskin Earthquake that struck Southcentral Alaska on January 24, 2016.

The 2016 wildfire season was not fully underway until mid-June with the Tetlin River Fire. On July 18, the SEOC supported local and State Department of Forestry (DOF) efforts in combating the McHugh Creek fire near Anchorage. The SEOC worked with DOF to mobilize wildland fire resources and pool up AKNG and local volunteer firefighters.

DHS&EM Operations assisted with the planning and execution of several trainings and exercises in 2016. During Alaska Shield 2016, the SEOC was fully operational and fully staffed for the first two days of the simulated homeland security/active

shooter exercise from April 1 – 2. In April, DHS&EM Operations staff provided exercise support to statewide exercises such as the Arctic Chinnok Exercise near Nome.

Plans

Mitigation

Mitigation successfully prioritized \$8M of State/Federal Emergency Management Agency Mitigation funding for seismic, flood risk reduction, planning, and wildfire mitigation projects. The team also managed an additional \$19.4M in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, FEMA and State funding for mitigation projects statewide. Mitigation conducted its annual Tsunami Operations Workshop in Dutch Harbor with 27 attendees from seven remote at-risk communities. Nine local hazard mitigation plans were completed for 10 communities.

Community Planning

A revised State Emergency Operations Plan was completed in September 2016. The Community Planning Team completed 13 new Small Community Emergency Operations Plans (SCERP), bringing the total number of completed SCERPs to 69. DHS&EM visited 13 Local Emergency Planning Committees in 2016, participating in meetings and assisting with various emergency management preparedness and planning events and issues. The team facilitated several Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness technician courses, workshops and tabletop exercises to increase communities' ability to deal with hazardous materials events.



All-Hazards Resiliency Team

DHS&EM added an All-Hazards Resiliency Team in 2016. The purpose of the team is to collaboratively engage rural communities and other agencies/partners to improve communities' emergency management capabilities and help provide the means for communities to prepare for, effectively mitigate, and quickly recover from all-hazards events. DHS&EM's All-Hazards Resiliency team members led and participated in

DHS&EM Planner Alex Fonteyn, top left, helps community members in Shishmaref develop their SCERP. Increasing rural resiliency is a cornerstone of DHS&EM's mission. Photo by DHSEM staff.

interagency meetings for 12 jurisdictions. Team members presented emergency response, preparedness and mitigation conferences and workshops and trainings in nine jurisdictions.

DHS&EM's new All-Hazards Resiliency Team assumed co-chair responsibilities for the Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection (APIP)



St. George Island Seawall. Repairs to the seawall began this summer and will conclude in 2017. Photo courtesy Brice Construction.

Disaster Assistance

In 2016, the State Disaster Assistance (DA) Section, responded to several new state and federally declared disasters assessing damages and developing and managing recovery projects. DA staff also provided programmatic guidance and funding for on-going projects associated with disasters from previous years.

Disaster Assistance staff are managing 11 Federal Disasters and 17 State Disasters with 296 on-going open projects. The total number of projects (open and closed) for these disasters is 874 representing approximately \$160.4M in federal and state recovery funds available to disaster-impacted communities.

During the 2016 calendar year, three new disasters were declared triggering the Public Assistance program. The Saint George Island Seawall, Mat-Su River road erosion, and the Kotlik fire all received support and funding to return the communities to a pre-disaster condition.

Grants

The division manages a number of grants that help local communities better prepare for disasters. DHS&EM handled more than \$3.1 million in Emergency Management Performance Grant dollars to sustain and enhance state and local emergency management capabilities across the Last Frontier.

In addition, DHS&EM administers State Homeland Security Grant funding, which provided more than \$2.9 million to state and local jurisdictions to address planning, organization, equipment, training and exercise needs in acts of terrorism or other catastrophic events.

In 2016, DHS&EM provided more than \$300,000 to 21 Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) to fund activities.

LEPCs use these funds to track hazardous materials within their communities and initiate community-specific emergency preparedness activities.

Preparedness

Training

Efforts by the DHS&EM training section resulted in the training of 993 Alaskans. DHS&EM training partnered with local jurisdictions and other agencies to deliver 61 training courses with 861 people trained and approved 132 individuals to attend training offered by our national training partners.



Alaska State Museum in Juneau Hosts the Alaska Earthquake Simulator. Juneau, and other communities, leveraged the Quake Simulator visit and put on Community Emergency Preparedness Fairs. Photo by Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM

Outreach

On October 20, 2016 Alaska participated in the Great Alaska Shakeout, an earthquake safety drill designed to inspire people to practice "Drop, Cover, and Hold On," the recommended earthquake safety action. In 2016, more than 126,000 Alaskans registered for the annual drill.

Starting in August and continuing into October the Alaska Quake Simulator visited 14 Alaska communities and four Canadian communities. This was the first time that the Alaska Quake Simulator visited Southeast Alaska. More than 6000 Alaskans and 400 Canadians experienced the Quake Simulator while it was in Southeast Alaska.

Exercise

Alaska Shield 2016 was held April 1-3 in multiple locations throughout Alaska. The exercise gave emergency responders and managers with local, state, federal, and Non-Government organization (NGO) emergency management and responders the opportunity to practice their ability to respond to on-scene law enforcement, active shooter, mass search and rescue operations, cyberattacks, and chemical/biological events. 14 local jurisdictions, more than nine state agencies, 12 federal agencies, and 27 NGOs participated in the exercise.

In late August, Alaska Command, U.S. Coast Guard, DHS&EM, Alaska National Guard, state agencies, and communities in the Northwest Arctic Borough participated in ARCTIC CHINOOK 2016, the first U.S. exercise to simulate search and rescue activities associated with an in-distress cruise ship in arctic waters.



ALASKA MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

Alaska Military Youth Academy

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is a 17 ½ month program for young adults who are having difficulty succeeding in a traditional high school setting or have dropped out of high school. The Program is subject to the oversight of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs within the Department of Defense. The National Guard Bureau administers the Program nationally and the Alaska Adjutant General and Program Director manage the local site.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) formally opened its doors January 1994 as one of the original ten pilot programs, and has grown along with the national program. There are currently 40 active sites nationally in 29 states, the District of Columbia and the Territory of Puerto Rico. The Program leads, trains, and mentors 16 – 18 year old young men and women so they become productive citizens. The first AMYA class graduated 43 cadets; the most recent program class (2016-2) graduated 165 cadets.

The proven Youth ChalleNGe Program model uses a quasi-military, full-time, tuition-free residential environment to strengthen the academic and social skills of program participants in the Eight Core Components of the program while encouraging emotional growth. The 17 ½ month program includes a 5 ½ month Residential Phase followed by a 12 month Post-Residential Phase. This approach recognizes that opportunities for development are the outgrowth of positive changes in the physical, emotional, and situational elements of a young adult's life. AMYA runs two residential classes per year, one beginning in April and the other in October.



Cadet Ahmed (Anchorage) reports to the Commandant for use of the Drill Pad at the second Drill Competition during Class 2016-2. Photo taken by Roman Schara

The Residential Phase of the program is a 22-week experiential learning model conducted in Alaska National Guard facilities with separate sleeping quarters for male and female cadets. The residential phase begins with a two-week Acclimation Period,

which is an extension of the screening process. During this time, the teens are referred to as “candidates” and are assessed for their ability to handle stress and Program structure; propensity for gang activity and/or bullying activity, either as a victim or an inflictor; and desire to succeed and complete the program. During the Acclimation Period, candidates experience a caring, disciplined, tough-love environment that tests their physical, mental, and emotional commitment to the program. Focus is on group and individual discipline, structure, and goal setting, while the staff provides medical service, emotional support, meals, counseling, and instruction. The candidates who successfully complete this period earn the distinction of becoming a AMYA “cadets”.

During the remaining 20 weeks of the Residential Phase, daily activities and experiences such as academics, physical fitness, vocational

technical education, outdoor adventure training, and service to the community adds value to the transformation process. These elements build the Cadet's education level, promote healthy living, and aid in the development of employability skills while contributing to a growing sense of community involvement and commitment.

During the winter and summer of 2016, eligible AMYA cadets successfully completed credit recovery, award of their high school diploma or GED, by examination. Through the combined efforts of the AMYA Academics Section's team of dedicated professionals, supporting staff, and adult mentors, Cadets in the winter 2016 class raised the average math and reading level by 1.9 and 1.12 grade levels, respectively, during the intense 17 weeks of instruction and assessment. Cadets in the spring/summer 2016 class raised the average math and reading level by 1.7 and 1.0 grade levels. Cadets may earn up to 7.5 credits toward their secondary education bringing them closer to the 21 credits the State of Alaska requires for graduation. This positions stu-



Class 2016-2, 3rd Platoon 'Wolfpack' stand at ease during the Memorial Day event at the Park Strip in Anchorage, Alaska. Photo taken by Roman Schara



As part of the AMYA Cadet to Work Program Cadet Taui'i'ili (Anchorage) works with a cutting torch to cut a piece of plate steel. Cadet Taui'i'ili was one of 20 Cadets participating in pre-Apprenticeship training for the fields of Carpentry, Electrical, Labor, and Steel Working. Photo taken by Roman Schara

dents returning to a secondary institution on par with their peers. As an accredited secondary education institution by AdvancED/Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), eligible students may receive an AMYA high school diploma when they meet the State standards, complete the Armed Services Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development WorkKeys Assessment. AMYA is certified to offer participants preparation and testing for the General Educational Development (GED) if they prefer this high school equivalency credential.

AMYA offers vocational technical education programs through a grant funded pre-apprenticeship training cooperative. Cadets have the opportunity to participate in construction trades training where they receive 40 hours of instruction in each of the following trades: carpentry, electrical, laborers, and iron workers/welders. Included in the training is OSHA 10 certification and North Slope Training Certification (NSTC). Other Cadets have an opportunity for Culinary Arts and barista training, which includes ServeSafe certification.

Cadets develop a Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP) beginning in Week 3 as a goal-setting process with the guidance of staff and support from their mentors to provide a point of reference, discussion, and focus when they return to their communities following graduation. Some of the goals may include completion of secondary and post-secondary education, entering the workplace, or joining the military.

Through the collaborative efforts of AMYA staff, parents, and mentors, 100 percent of the graduates of 2016-1 and 2016-2 were placed in one of these categories. The goal of the post-residential phase is for graduates to apply the strategies and learning in transition to serve as productive members of society. Additionally, graduates recognize the need to refine their method of goal attainment while building upon the mentoring relationship.

Mentors are considered to be a key element to sustaining cadet success and often one of the few healthy adult relationships in the earliest stages of the post-residential phase. AMYA has been blessed with a large number of dedicated adult community volunteers from across the State who shares the Cadet desires for long-term success.

The Academy's staff remains committed to its mission of "helping intervene and reclaim the lives of Alaska's at-risk youth and produce graduates with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults." AMYA is considered among the top ChalleNGe programs in the nation.

After more than 23 years of operation, AMYA has graduated 4,967 cadets and awarded over 3,240 high school diplomas and/or GED certificates to

deserving graduates who are demonstrating tremendous success in communities across Alaska and around the world. The Academy's track record of sustained success strategically positions it to positively impact the next generation of families of Alaska.



Cadets Nuglene-Gomez (Anchorage), Ahmed (Anchorage), Jenkins (Valdez), Butcher (Anchorage) and Gonzalez (Juneau) of AMYA Class 2016-2 enjoy the view from the top on a hike in the Chugach Mountain range as part of the Outdoor Adventure program. Photo taken by Lynn Andrews

VETERANS AFFAIRS



What an exciting year the Office of Veterans Affairs had in 2016. We continued our efforts Welcoming Home our Vietnam veterans and all veterans from all conflicts. We are still researching and documenting Alaska Territorial Guard Honorable Service; we added Welcome Home events to all our outreach efforts; increased partnerships through enhancing our travel efforts all across Alaska, while working closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, especially in the areas of medical care, disability/pensions compensations, and rural outreach. We accomplished all of this while keeping our primary mission at the forefront: to develop and sustain comprehensive statewide veterans advocacy programs. This year we completed our goals on a very high note.

Veterans Served

This year the staff, contract personnel, and volunteers managed by the Office of Veterans Affairs were successful in assisting veterans by ensuring the return of over \$105 million in single one time payments owed to the veterans/eligible family members. We also assisted over 61,000 veterans, active duty personnel, reserve component members, and family members, with federal and state benefits/claims questions and processing. We traveled to over 100 communities around the state, reaching many veterans for the first time.

The continued success of our programs is measured through eligible residents receiving annual compensation on top of a one-time payment. This year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs sent in excess of \$247 million for disability compensation and pension payments to veterans and/or their families who reside in Alaska. Veterans were also assisted in receiving medical care at five VA clinics and 122 local healthcare facilities. There are currently over 32,000 veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care System and of those members, 19,256 patients are treated annually, with a managed care cost exceeding \$254 million.

Alaska currently has over 4,000 students attending an Alaskan educational facility or an employment program who are eligible for VA education benefits. Total funds paid to in-state institutions, employment programs, and to the eligible members under the program was over \$72 million. Working with all Alaskans who are eligible for these benefits ensures the future is brighter not only for them and their families, but for the state as well.

The Office of Veterans Affairs partnered with the VA and co-sponsored several rural outreach programs in Alaska. These outreach efforts greatly assisted veterans by providing services in their home communities. Participating in these events are Veterans Service Officers, VA Benefits counselors, National Guard Benefits counselors, Alaska Veterans Advisory Council members, and staff from the Office of Veterans Affairs. This year representatives traveled to the following communities: Anchor Point; Barrow; Bethel; Cantwell; Clear; Cordova; Craig; Delta Junction; Dillingham; Gustavus; Girdwood; Glennallen; Healy; Homer; Hoonah; Hydaburg; Juneau; Kenai; Kenny Lake; Ketchikan; Klawock; Kodiak; Kotzebue; Nikiski; Nome; North Pole; Petersburg; Palmer Correctional Facility; Seward; Sitka; Soldotna; Sterling; Sutton; Talkeetna; Tenakee Springs; Tok; Valdez; Venetie; Willow; Wrangell; and the YWCA Anchorage Office.

Highly Rural Transportation Grant

This year we again received the VA Highly Rural Transportation grant in the amount of \$250,000. This grant provides transportation options to veterans residing in five boroughs who need to travel to receive healthcare services. The following boroughs received \$50,000 each to provide this service; Denali; Matanuska-Susitna; Kodiak Island; Kenai Peninsula; and Prince of Wales-Hyder. This year, more than 8,600 vet-

erans utilized the travel offered through this grant. We are pleased to report that the VA renewed the grant for FY17, so we can continue to serve our veterans in these areas.

Alaska Territorial Guard

The agreement continues with the Department of Defense to find, research and issue discharges to our Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG) members. Each year, our efforts are much more difficult due to fewer family members requesting discharges, but we continue our diligence to ensure that every ATG veteran has a discharge document on record. To date, more than 2,200 discharges have been authenticated with the Department of Defense and issued to members or their families. Our focus is on ensuring future generations will have access to their ancestor's service records by having those records on file.



Honoring Service. Governor Bill Walker greets Korean War veteran Gordon Severson at the JBER Veterans/Remembrance Day ceremony November 11, 2016. Photo by Brice Habeger, Office of the Governor

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans

The Office of Veterans Affairs continues our partnership with the Department of Defense to honor every Vietnam veteran living in Alaska. The Office of Veterans Affairs minted an Alaska Welcomes Home Honor Coin and since the first event in 2014, have honored over 5,000 veterans. This partnership will be in place until October 2017, but due to the success of the events and the impact on our veterans, we plan on continuing this program until all Vietnam Veterans are welcomed home.

Veteran Service Officer (VSO) Grant Management

For veterans to receive the best service, there are 17 Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) located across the state. They provide free services to veterans. Alaska's veterans are served through state grants with the following veteran service organizations: Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Disabled American Veterans, and Vietnam Veterans of America. All service officers are nationally certified. We currently have service officers located in Anchorage, Fair-



The late Fred "Bulldog" Becker stands in honor at the JBER Veterans/ Remembrance Day ceremony November 11, 2015. Photo by JBER Public

banks, Wasilla, Kenai, Juneau, and Ketchikan. Alaska is rated as best in the nation for quality and speed in the VA claims process.

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Statewide Stand Down

Stand Down is an annual program to provide veterans in need a hand up with various types of assistance, including, but not limited to: medical and dental screening; housing assistance; employment assistance; and financial assistance. In addition to annual events in Anchorage and Fairbanks, this year we were able to include Soldotna, Kotzebue, and Nome. Over 1,500 veterans were reached/served that we otherwise could not access.

These events are critical, because they bring key staff together who have the ability to move quickly on issues to assist veterans. For those veterans off the road system, it provides a venue for us to express that they are not forgotten and their service is important to Alaska and the nation. This is another great way communities come together to honor our veterans who served.

Other Significant Accomplishments

A continued partnership with the VA to train Tribal Veterans Representatives is critical to our success in reaching every veteran in Alaska. This year, an additional 71 volunteer TVRs were trained. Today we have over 300 TVRs statewide, providing basic veteran services in their communities. This is the largest veterans volunteer corps in the nation under this program model.

Since the program's inception in 2011, veterans and their families have friendly boots on the ground in communities across Alaska. The TVRs know the veterans in their community and what benefits they have earned. Because of their strength and knowledge, our goal is to one day have a TVR in every community.

We partnered with the VA Mortgage Servicing Assistance program, assisting our veterans to receive their VA Certificates of Eligibility to purchase homes under this program. The result of this effort in 2015/16 was 3,836 guaranteed loans for a total of \$1.1 billion.

The Office of Veterans Affairs sponsored the establishment of the Forget-Me-Not Coalition, providing not-for-profit services to our veterans, active duty, reserve components, and their families. Since this sponsorship, we have become the lead in moving the Coalition forward as well as developing their web site. In FY2016 a provider's fair was held for the first time in the Mat-Su Valley as a way to link service members, veterans and their families with community services and benefits.

The Office of Veterans Affairs and the VA co-hosted a veteran claims pilot program at the Kodiak Area Native Association Mill Road Clinic in Kodiak. This was the first time in Alaska that a claims clinic was offered outside the Anchorage VA medical facility. Those served included discharging service members, veterans, their families, survivors, and those who held powers of attorney for veterans. This program was unique as it allowed for filing of disability claims, submittal of evidence or additional evidence for existing claims, communication with claims processors on the spot or in Anchorage via Jabber software, consultations with healthcare providers, and, in some cases, medical examinations before leaving the clinic. This pilot was extremely successful in both monetary benefits back to the veteran and the number of veterans served. Thirty-four veterans were assisted with 11 new claims submitted. Bringing a claims clinic to people where they live allows for shorten processing times and a positive opportunity to serve those that may not have otherwise sought service.

In FY16, the Department of Defense sent notification they will only be sending veterans discharge documents (DD214) to the states for storage in an electronic format. In response, the Office of Veterans Affairs has strengthened the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs electronic data and storage systems to accommodate the change and meet federal security standards. To be proactive, the office has also procured and developed a Veterans Information System (VIS) software program. Expected to be fully functional in FY17, this system will allow storage of veterans' information from the Division of Motor Vehicles and Permanent Fund records to allow for a myriad of targeted outreach efforts. Included is the addition of identifying incarcerated veterans to reach them within 6 months of their release dates to ensure they are connected with all available federal/state veteran resources.

Throughout the past seven years, Alaska has moved into a new era in regards to veteran services. We have seen the development of two new VA medical facilities, the choice of local care over out-of-state health care provided to veterans, the explosion in the delivery of education funds, the heightened welcome-home efforts for all our veterans – all this with the access to assistance at the forefront in all we do. We went from last in the nation on disability claims processing to first. We are the VA's model for delivery of care in the most remote locations. We have a long way to go in meeting the goal of having every veteran in Alaska receiving all earned benefits, but the Office of Veterans Affairs maintains its promise that it will continue "Serving Alaska, One Veteran at a Time."

ALASKA STATE DEFENSE FORCE



What is the Alaska State Defense Force?

2016 was the 32nd year of existence for the Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF). The ASDF is authorized by United States law and created by Alaska Statutes. The mission of the Alaska State Defense Force is to provide a state volunteer military organization whose primary role is to augment and support the Alaska National Guard. Our soldiers are equipped and trained for various missions, including communications, emergency management, medical, logistical support, chaplaincy, and shelter management. Our soldiers meet for training on a monthly basis.



Military Exercises

In 2016, the Alaska State Defense Force joined with federal, state, and local agencies and exercised its military and response capabilities during Alaska Shield 2016. Participants responded to a series of hypothetical terrorism related events presenting an array of

response and support roles to be filled. By training and force development in critical mission capabilities, the ASDF is able to augment the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs.

During the Alaska Shield 2016 exercise, the ASDF provided medical personnel, chaplaincy, public affairs, and communications in support of various exercise activities. The ASDF was also able to contribute to planning and served in the Joint Operations Center. ASDF liaisons communicated conditions and needs throughout the state from Juneau to Valdez and from Kenai to Fairbanks.

Rural Initiative

During 2016 the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs initiated a program to dramatically increase the presence of the Alaska State Defense Force in rural Alaska. The Department provided instruction and support to begin the establishment of ASDF units in various communities in Western Alaska headquartered in Bethel. The goals include:

1) Creating more secure and resilient communities; 2) Providing trainers and liaisons to Alaska National Guard and Active Component service-members (stationed in and outside Alaska) for Arctic operations; and 3) Rekindling a tradition of military service.

Military Training

During 2016, the Alaska State Defense Force continued its established officer and enlisted training program with additional spe-

cial communications training. Planning for training to implement the DMVA's Rural Initiative was given priority.

Establishment of New Military Police Unit

AS 26.05.070 provides for the Alaska State Defense Force to become "an additional police force" when ordered into active state service by the governor. To fulfill that statutory requirement, a Military Police unit was established and training conducted.

Change of Command

During 2016, ASDF Commander BG (AK) Roger E. Holl, retired after over twenty years distinguished service as a United States Marine and officer in the Alaska State Defense Force. BG Holl was the third Commander of the Alaska State Defense Force and assumed command in 2008. He also served as the president of the State Guard Association of the United States. COL (AK) John C. James assumed command of the ASDF during August 2016.

Adoption of the ACMJ and New Regulations

Representatives of the Alaska State Defense Force participated in the development of the new Alaska Code of Military Justice. The new code, which became law during 2016, applies 24/7 to all Alaska State Defense Force members. Regulations providing rules for administrative punishment were also adopted during



2016. Additionally during 2016, new regulations were adopted by the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs regarding the operations and training of the ASDF.

Community Events

The ASDF provides community services to the Wounded Warriors Program, Special Olympics, and Operation Stand Down for Veterans, as well as a color guard when requested. The Alaska State Defense Force gives Alaska a modern, professional and organized state military reserve through the use of citizen soldiers.

ALASKA AEROSPACE

ALASKA
AEROSPACE

The Alaska Aerospace Corporation (AAC) experienced a dynamic year in 2016, from completing the reconstruction project of facilities damaged by a launch failure in 2014, to signing a multi-year, multi-launch contract with the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) valued at \$80.4 Million.

On August 13, 2016, Alaska Aerospace co-hosted with the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce the *Launch Facility Rededication and Return to Flight* ceremony at the Pacific Spaceport Complex – Alaska (PSCA), commemorating the completion of the reconstruction project. General contractor Davis Constructors and Engineers Inc. did an outstanding job managing this complex project. Over 95% of all contract work was completed by Alaska firms. Additionally, using a Department of Defense appropriation, the AAC invested \$2.6 Million in upgrades to PSCA capabilities designed to enhance the ability to cost-effectively support future US government and commercial launches.

Throughout 2016, AAC focused on diversifying the company by creating a distinct advantage in capturing the emerging small and ultra-small commercial launch market. Mid-year, AAC signed a \$2.2 million commercial services contract with Rocket Lab USA to support their New Zealand operations. Under this contract, AAC is providing the Range Safety and

Telemetry System services for Rocket Lab USA from their launch facility on the Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand throughout 2017. Rocket Lab USA also designated PSCA as their US polar launch site for future Electron vehicle launches, projected to start in 2017.

AAC also secured a contract with Vector Space Systems (VSS) in 2016 to support the planning and program requirements for launch of their new ultra-small launch vehicle from PSCA. Under this contract, AAC worked with VSS to develop program requirements for an initial demonstration launch from PSCA in early 2017, followed by commercial launches in late 2017. As the year came to a close, AAC signed an exciting multi-year commercial launch commitment with a third commercial company to support launches from PSCA in late 2017. While the name of the company may not be disclosed under the terms of the agreement, it has been successfully operating in the aerospace industry for years.

Clearly, AAC has diversified its services and attained financial self-sufficiency, with no further requirement for state operating funds. AAC ended the year with a net position of \$76.3 million, an increase of \$4.9 million (seven percent) over 2015.



The Pacific Spaceport Complex-Alaska celebrated the completion of repairs following a 2014 launch failure with the “Launch Facility Rededication and Return To Flight” Ceremony, August 13, 2016. Cutting the ribbon to officially reopen the facility are (l to r.) Alaska Aerospace Corporation (AAC) President and Chief Executive Officer Craig Campbell, President of the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce Lindsay Knight, Jenith Flynn of Davis Constructors & Engineers, Inc., Chairman of the AAC Board of Directors Dr. Robert McCoy, Alaska State Senator Gary Stevens, and Alaska State Representative Louise Stutes. Photo courtesy Alaska Aerospace.