



# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs





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The DMVA Annual Report is a special project of **Warriors Magazine**. It is published, as required by State statute, to explain the annual missions and activities of the employees and military members of the Department of Defense, Alaska National Guard, and State of Alaska that are assigned within the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs.

The DMVA Annual Report is a commercial enterprise publication, produced in partnership with the State of Alaska, Alaska National Guard, Department of Defense, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, PO Box 5800, Camp Denali, Ft. Richardson, Alaska 99505-0800, phone number (907) 428-6031, fax 428-6949; and, AQP Publishing, Inc., 8537 Corbin Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99507. All photos are credited to the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs unless otherwise identified.

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# DMVA 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

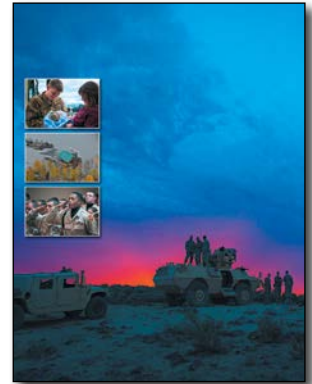
**Sunrise To Sunset.** The Forward Observer team from 1-297th Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Alaska Army National Guard, works through sunset while calling in simulated airstrikes from an AH-64 Apache. The Battlefield Surveillance Brigade from the Alaska Army Guard was training at Orchard Combat Training Center, near Gowen Field, Idaho, as part of their annual training. Photo: First Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

**Love At First Sight.** Technical Sergeant Temujin Ching, with the 144th Airlift Squadron of the Alaska Air National Guard, is greeted by his wife, Jennifer, and meets his 10-day-old son, Marcus, for the first time at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Sept. 9. Ching, along with 25 other Airmen, returned from a two-month deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

**Washed Away.** The September 2012 floods impacted homes and infrastructure across the state. An atmospheric river unleashed heavy rains and high winds for an extended period of time.

Photo: Courtesy of the Governor's Office

**Present Arms.** Cadet Malcolm T. Belcher and his fellow cadets from the Alaska Military Youth Academy, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, salute the flag during the playing of the national anthem at their graduation ceremony at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage Aug. 30. The academy graduated 165 cadets after 22 weeks of residential instruction in a quasi-military environment. The program is designed to provide the cadets with training in academic studies, vocational instruction, life skills, military skills and self-discipline. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs



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Scan the QR code above to head straight to our YouTube page and view the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs 2013 Year in Review.

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# For the People



**Governor Sean Parnell**  
Commander in Chief

**Sandy Parnell**  
Alaska's First Lady

## Alaskans Working Together for a Better State and Nation

Alaskans can be proud of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs as we reflect on their accomplishments during 2013.

Over the last 12 months, we have seen Alaska National Guardsmen deployed to the Middle East and Cuba; 309 cadets have graduated from the Alaska Military Youth Academy; and DMVA has provided service to more than 30,000 veterans and family members. When tragedy struck in the Philippines, DMVA was quick to support the relief efforts; and when tragedy struck at home, Alaskan lives and property were saved by the swift response to those disasters.

Alaska's military presence is crucial to the fabric of our state and to the security of our country. The F-16 Aggressor Squadron will remain at Eielson Air Force Base, thanks in part to a concerted advocacy effort of our administration and others. We will continue our joint efforts to ensure that Eielson Air Force Base and other military installations in Alaska remain active and healthy.

Looking forward, our Arctic identity will shape the military future of our state. We'll continue our work for a deepwater Arctic port and multi-year heavy ice breakers stationed in Alaska. We'll build on strong partnerships with Alaskans and the United States Coast Guard in this effort, and we'll continue to work to see the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter stationed in Alaska.

Sandy and I give thanks for our military service members and their families. We especially remember those currently deployed



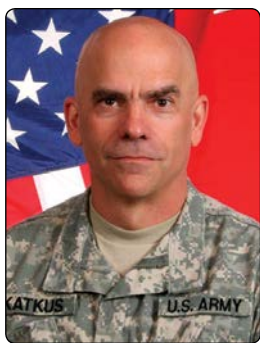
**F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.** U.S. Air Force F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters from the 58th Fighter Squadron, 33rd Fighter Wing, Eglin AFB, Fla., fly in formation off the right wing of a KC-135R Stratotanker from the 336th Air Refueling Squadron, March ARB, Calif., following an aerial refueling mission, May 13, off the coast of Northwest Florida. The Air Force is expected to choose the home of the first F-35A squadron outside of the continental United States this year. Democratic Senator Mark Begich and Republicans Senator Lisa Murkowski and Representative Don Young are petitioning to have Eielson Air Force Base chosen to house the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter in the Asia-Pacific Theater.

Photo: Master Sergeant John R. Nimmo Sr., U.S. Air Force

and their families. We are deeply grateful for your service, sacrifice, and heart for Alaska and our nation. Thank you to all members of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs for taking care of Alaskans, serving our veterans and making Alaska a better place to live.



**Honoring Veterans.** Governor Sean Parnell thanks Vietnam veterans for their service after signing legislation that dedicates March 29 each year as Vietnam Veterans Day in Alaska to commemorate the military service of American men and women in Vietnam. Photo: Courtesy Office of the Governor



# The Adjutant General



**Major General Thomas H. Katkus**  
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard  
& Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

## Serving and Saving – Within the State and Around the World

It continues to be an exceptional honor and privilege to serve as commissioner and adjutant general for the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. The phenomenal men and women that comprise this organization provide incredible service to all those living in this great state. Our members daily meet and exceed federal and state requirements and volunteer throughout our many communities serving as role models for follow-on generations of Alaskans to emulate. We have had incredible success in support of the governor’s imperatives of living within our means, addressing constitutional priorities, fixing what we have and finishing what we start.

In living within our means, we navigated the challenges of the federal government shutdown better than any other state or territory. The DMVA maintained its state work force throughout the closure, remained operationally engaged, and continued to respond to the many requests for service within established rules and guidelines.

The late arrival of spring along with ensuing massive ice jam flooding in areas surrounding Galena required a magnitude of response management and recovery efforts that Alaska has not seen in many years. The complicated and intricate application of both state and federal resources demonstrated both tremendous capacity and opportunity to learn and improve.

Our uniformed members were successful in their deployments to Afghanistan, Kuwait, Guantanamo, Mongolia and many other locations around the world. New equipment and changing force structure continued to ensure our National Guard’s relevancy and critical need. Without argument, our Alaska National Guard, both Air and Army, has the most operational application in the nation. Of particular note, the Rescue Coordination Center (manned by Alaska Air Guard personnel) coordinated their 5,000th mission and 2,000th save in 2013. The Alaska Air National Guard’s rescue squadrons have performed 69 percent of the 2,063 saves to date. In special recognition, history will be set with the January dedication and unveiling of a National Guard Bureau heritage print commemorating 20 years of service and recognizing their heroic efforts to assist survivors from the tragic Dillingham air crash in which former Senator Ted Stevens perished.

Our small reorganized Veterans Affairs staff supported 32,033 veterans during 2013. This is the largest number of clients served since the origination of the office. These services included disability/compensation, medical, education, vocational education, housing, burial and numerous other items our clients requested to receive either through the federal VA or with state of Alaska veteran benefits. One-time payments to veterans and their families for funds owed due to a claim settlement totaled nearly \$50.5 million. One can hardly grasp the tremendously positive impact on the families and communities that received these payments.

The final support beam for the mile-long new bridge across the Tanana River was placed ahead of schedule and under budget. This engineering marvel will open the vast ground maneuver training area within the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex to year-round

military access and simultaneously remove a major barrier to further railroad development for our state’s interior.

This past year has truly been exceptional. Our crowning achievement approaches as we place finishing touches on the new state-funded addition to Building 49000. This project secures the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Anchorage, the State Emergency Operation Center and the Alaska Army National Guard’s Joint Operation Center into one facility strategically located on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. This partnership will establish new meaning to cooperation and coordination as federal, state and local resources come together in an entirely new approach for addressing the safety and security of our fellow Alaskans in their most dire times.

Every DMVA employee, from the Alaska Aerospace Corporation to the Youth Academy, and everyone in between, should look back on 2013 with exceptional pride. They will recognize that our many great accomplishments were the result of the dedication, effort and sacrifice of every single member. Every individual contributed and had a part in our organization’s success. I am incredibly proud of you all. Further, I am humbled and awestruck as I watch you move forward in addressing the challenges of 2014 with unparalleled enthusiasm and dedication. Thank you all for your tireless service.

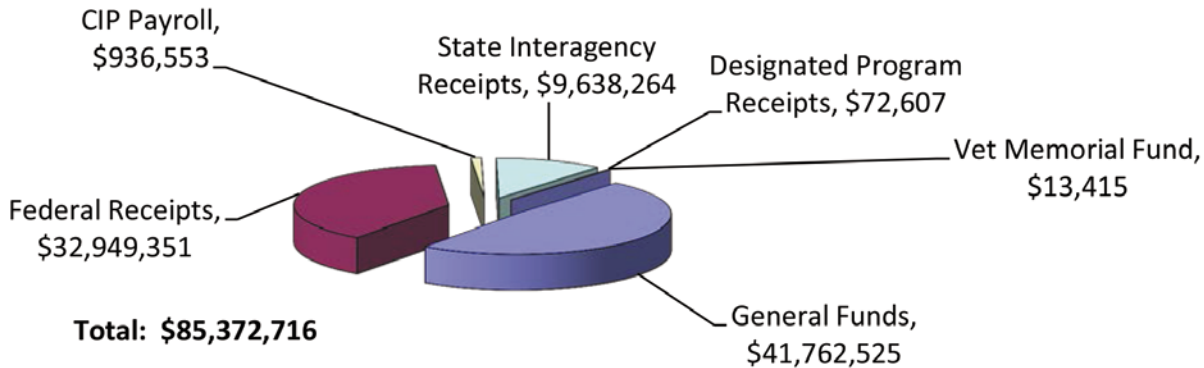


**Welcome Home.** Governor Sean Parnell and Major General Thomas Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska Army National Guard, welcome home the Soldiers of B Company, 1-143rd Infantry Airborne Regiment during a ceremony at the Dena’ina Convention Center in Anchorage Jan. 13, 2013. More than 120 Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers had recently returned to Alaska following a one-year deployment to Afghanistan.

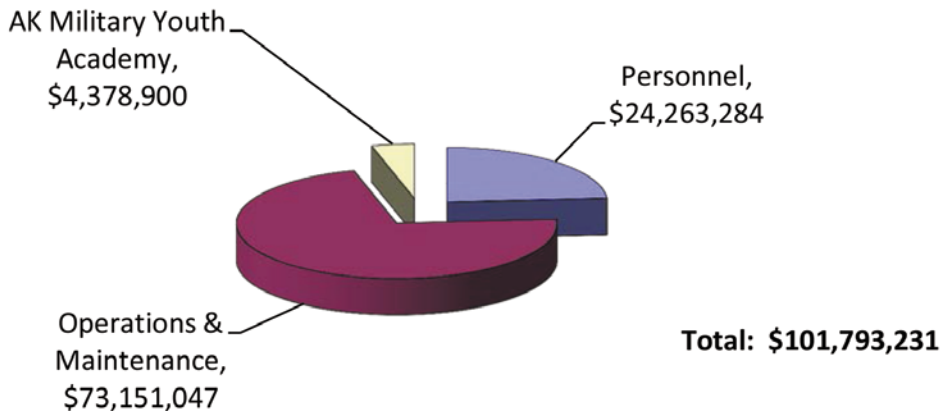
Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Guy Hayes, 176th Wing

# DMVA...By the Numbers

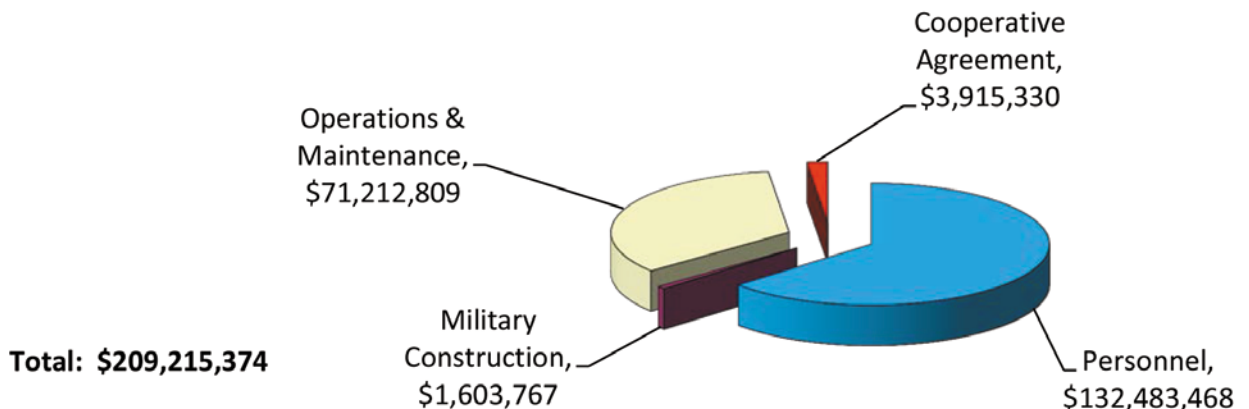
## DMVA SFY2013 State Operating & Capital Actual Expenditures

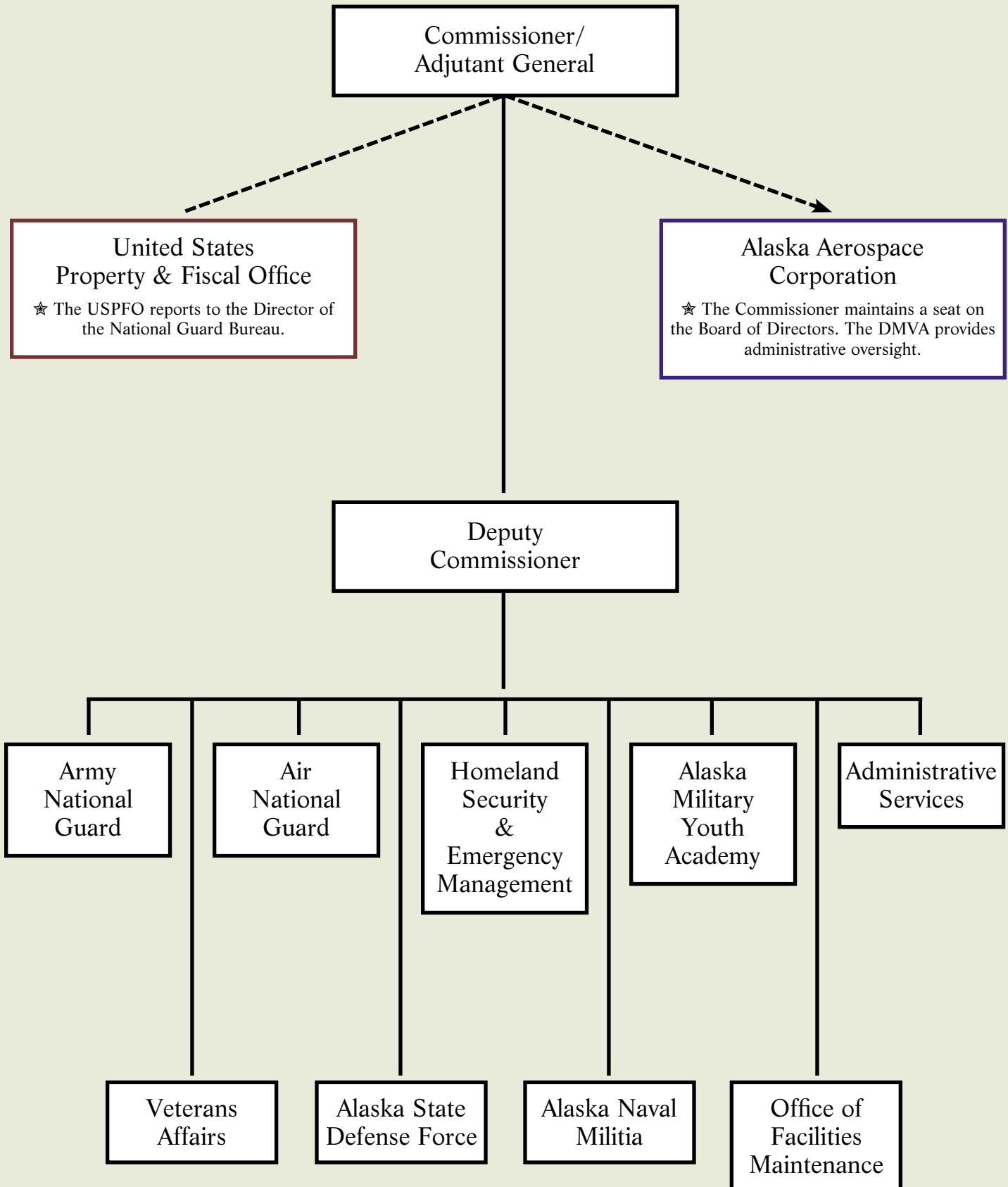


## Army Guard Funding in Alaska - FFY13



## Air Guard Funding in Alaska - FFY13







# Veterans



2013 was an outstanding year for the veterans of Alaska. The Office of Veterans Affairs moved from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to a central Anchorage location. We continued our efforts to award all Alaska Territorial Guard veterans who served in WWII their honorable discharges from the U.S. Army. We continued to increase our travel efforts all across Alaska and enhanced our partnerships with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the areas of medical care, disability/pensions compensations and rural outreach. We also exceeded all 2013 goals while providing stellar support to our 230,000 eligible Alaskans. We accomplished all by following the Office of Veterans Affairs motto: "Serving Alaska, One Veteran at a Time."

## Alaska Territorial Guard

In 2013, we continued all our efforts developed in 2012. We increased efforts to ensure that every veteran who served has a discharge document on file in the National Archives reflecting their honorable service. The exciting part about this research and effort is that we are still finding living ATG members. We had the honor to present Henry Neligan of Ketchikan his U.S. Army honorable discharge; he is the oldest living ATG member to have been presented a discharge. Neligan celebrated his 101st birthday a few days after the presentation.

Mercedes Angerman, our ATG Task Force chief and deputy director of Veterans Affairs, is still working hard to ensure all



**Alaska Territorial Guard.** Henry Neligan, Craig ATG unit, receives his honorable discharge certificate from Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, during a ceremony in Ketchikan March 5. Neligan was then 100 years old and celebrated his 101st birthday in May. He is the oldest living ATG veteran to have received his honorable discharge certificate. Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

receive this honor. She continues to hone our authoritative ATG list through her research. This list allows the U.S. Army the ability to expedite the discharge requests we send to them. In 2013, we received 232 discharges after submitting 232 requests. This is a reflection of the hard work of this team and the fact that the authoritative list is working well.

Our ultimate goal is to have all the ATG honorable discharges on file before families request them. This was a change to our program in 2012 and will allow us to one day hit our goal of 100 percent of doing all we can to correct this oversight of the past so that future generations will have access to their ancestors' honorable service records.

## Veteran Service Officer Grant Management

In order to give the best service to our veterans, we employ 17 veteran service officers across the state. They provide services to veterans free of charge. Some states deliver these services through state employees who sit in a sedentary office without outreach efforts. In Alaska, we use a grant through 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 of our service officers are nationally certified and are tested annually to keep these certifications current.

Our service officers and staff at Veterans Affairs were very successful this year. They assisted our veterans by paying more than \$50 million in past payments owed to veterans or their dependents; assisted more than 31,000 with claims processing and benefits questions; and traveled to more than 100 communities around the state.

The continued success of this program is also measured through state veterans who receive annual compensation and pension payments. This year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs sent more than \$178 million for disability compensation and pensions to veterans and their families in Alaska.

Veterans Affairs and our VSO staff also assisted veterans in receiving needed medical care at five federal VA clinics and local health care facilities in Alaska communities. We currently have more than 31,000 veterans enrolled in VA medical programs, and out of those, the federal VA treats



**Humble Hero.** Arthur W. Owens smiles during an awards ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Sept. 19. Owens, a veteran of World War II who left the U.S. Army with the rank of technical sergeant, was awarded the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and five other awards for his heroic actions on Mar. 23, 1945. Owens was authorized the awards during the war, but never received them. With help of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, chapter 593, Owens was finally able to receive his awards after Secretary of the Army John McHugh officially signed them on Aug. 13.

Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

16,336 patients annually with managed care that costs \$166 million annually. We still have a long way to go to have every eligible veteran treated and their care paid for by the federal VA, but what has occurred so far for our veterans is outstanding.

## Memorial Grant Management

Through the state of Alaska and the Memorial Grant Program, we are pleased to report the issuance of three grants. The grants are for the purpose of maintenance, repair, replacement and enhancement to veteran memorials or monuments to the military or for the development of new monuments or memorials. One new memorial is being developed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks to honor all former students who died in battle. It is to be named the Captain Donald R. Robison Veterans Memorial. Robison was a UAF ROTC graduate who posthumously received the Distinguished Service Cross for valorous action during the Vietnam War. Haines Memorial Park is another new memorial to recognize veterans in the area for their valuable service. The park in Haines will be adjacent to the Soboleff-McRae Veterans Village currently under construction. Lastly, a grant was issued for expansion and maintenance of the existing Monterey Lake Memorial Park at Fort Wainwright.



## ***Moving the Office of Veterans Affairs***

The largest significant event this year was the relocation of Veterans Affairs from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to 4600 Debarr Road in Anchorage. The prime location has increased our daily work load significantly. Having our office located in the same building as the state of Alaska's Vocational Rehabilitation Center has proved to be a huge asset as well. Not only are we able to work jointly in the delivery of services, we are able to help eligible members receive medical coverage as well as job placement. Also, this move has placed us directly on the Municipality of Anchorage transit path. We now see clients every day who are frequent bus riders. Lastly, this move could not have occurred without the direct support of Governor Sean Parnell and all our state legislators along with assistance from our commissioner. This new office will go a long way to serve and honor all who have served.

## ***Veterans Education Programs***

This year has been another challenging and stressful year for our veterans, active duty, Guard/reserve and their dependents seeking higher education. We had a period of time when the active duty members lost their tuition assistance because of budget cuts. This caused some difficulties for each person it affected, but in the end, we were able to assist each member in completing their education goals.

We continued our support of the Veterans Retraining and Assistance Program. This program allows unemployed veterans between the ages of 30 and 60 to apply for a monthly stipend at the Montgomery GI Bill rate to attend school. Last year, they were unable to participate in this program because of a glitch in our junior college programs, but now they can compete with all for these funds.

In 2013, we placed two full-time service officers in the University of Alaska system – one at University of Alaska Southeast and one at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. This in itself has proved a great help to the students and cut the distress calls down to a couple per month.

In 2013, the VA placed a full-time Vet to Success employee at no cost to the state of Alaska. The employee provides service similar to our VSOs. The program was extended another year because of its success, and it looks promising that we might even receive VA grant funds to help this individual accomplish outreach as well. We currently have more than 6,200 students who receive monthly VA education benefits while attending an Alaska university. The total funds paid to in-state Alaska institutions

and to the eligible members for FY 2013 came to more than \$53 million. Working with all our Alaskans who are eligible for these benefits, we ensure the future is brighter not only for them and their families but for our state as well.

## ***Statewide Stand Down***

Stand Down is an annual program to provide "Veterans In Need" with various types of assistance: medical and dental screening, housing assistance, employment assistance and financial assistance among others. After last year's success in Barrow and Juneau, we selected yet another community off the road system to receive assistance. This year we selected Dillingham. This community proved to be a very challenging location, but in the end, we hit another home run, and combining our efforts with Anchorage and Fairbanks Stand Downs, we served another 1,400 veterans in 2013 through 60 social service agencies including federal, state, local government and faith-based programs. These events are critical because we are able to bring the key staffs together who have the ability to move fast to assist our veterans in need. This is another great way our community comes together to honor our veterans in Alaska.

## ***Other Significant Accomplishments***

As part of a joint outreach, the Office of Veterans Affairs partnered with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and sponsored several rural outreach trips in Alaska. These outreach efforts assisted our veterans greatly by providing services in their home communities. Participating in these teams were 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 we traveled to the following communities: Anchor Point, Anchorage, Barrow, Bethel, Cold Bay, Cordova, Craig, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Dutch Harbor, Eagle, Eielson Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Fort Greely, Fort Wainwright, Fort Yukon, Galena, Glennallen, Haines, Homer, Hoonah, Huslia, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Klawock, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Mentasta, Nenana, Nome, North Pole, Northway, Petersburg, Prince of Wales, Ruby, Seldovia, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Stevens Village, Tok, Valdez, Wasilla, White Mountain and Wrangell. Some of these communities received several follow-up visits as requested by the community. On these visits, our teams provided services in the area of claims processing, education information, medical



**Honorable Service Recognized.** Verdrie Bowen, state Veterans Affairs director, and Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska Army National Guard, place a wreath during the Remembrance Day Ceremony at Fort Richardson National Cemetery on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Nov. 11. Veterans from the U.S. Armed Forces and Canadian Forces gathered for the ceremony after attending the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Alaska National Guard armory on Camp Denali.

Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

needs, vocational rehabilitation, and direct federal and state programs to increase their quality of life.

We partnered with the VA in training Tribal Veterans Representatives. These are key community leaders who live all across Alaska. This year we had the largest graduating class of TVRs in Fairbanks – 70 new TVRs. We now have 170 TVRs trained and providing basic veterans outreach in each of their communities. This is the largest veterans volunteer corps in the nation. This model is now being shared with several states and is proving to be a great way to reach our veterans who live off the road system. Our goal is to one day have a TVR in every community in Alaska.

The state of Alaska Veterans Cemetery is back on track. The Department of Natural Resources has found us suitable land, and with the funds provided by the state of Alaska in our last budget, we will be able to move forward. We are placed back on the federal funds priority list and are waiting for the budget to be approved to start the development of the land.

Throughout the past four years, Alaska has moved into a new era in regard to veteran services. We have seen the development of a new VA medical facility, veterans being provided the choice of local care versus health care out of state, a partnership with the Alaska Native health care programs, an explosion in the delivery of education funds, rising VA home loans, and access to assistance increasing daily. Our Alaska programs continue to break national records. We are first in the nation on alternative health care, first in the nation on trained TVRs, and we are second in the nation for fully developed claims. We promise to continue "Serving Alaska, One Veteran at a Time."

# Alaska Army National Guard



## Readiness

Readiness continues to be a top priority for the Alaska Army National Guard. Medical readiness has been at the forefront in 2013 and is now at an all-time high. This is a direct reflection on the Medical Detachment's continued mission support for medical and dental readiness. The MEDDET provided resources and support to almost 1,900 Soldiers – ensuring their medical and dental readiness requirements were met – while providing periodic health assessments, dental exams and other annual medical readiness requirements. The MEDDET also provided support for completing physicals to more than 100 aviators, ensuring that they remain qualified through stringent aviation medical flight requirements. MEDDET providers, medics and support staff are a vital asset to their local communities by providing support for the AKARNG outside of normal duty weekends through volunteering at local events, emergency medical services support, local hospitals and many other community events.

Seven members of the AKARNG were part of a 35-member medical team that also included U.S. Marines, Mongolian, Korean, Indian, Vietnamese and Canadian Armed Forces that treated more than 3,200 patients in the Nalaikh and Golomt District of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, during Khaan Quest 2013. A subject matter expert exchange provided an environmental analysis of health-related safety programs within the mining industry, women's health education, enhancement of clinical knowledge, experience for all medical exercise participants, and overall health awareness in the

local civilian population. Khaan Quest helped support a multinational cooperative health engagement advancing coordination and capacity directed at the host nation disease burden and health gaps.

MEDDET Soldiers also participated in Tropic Care, an individual readiness training exercise located in the remote regions of Hawaii. MEDDET Soldiers provided medical and dental services to more than 1,700 medically underserved locals through promotion of health and wellness and disease prevention, including implementation of aqua therapy in the local community.

## Facilities

Over the past several years, the Alaska Army National Guard has made significant strides in improving our facilities program to meet Governor Parnell's priorities, including expanding Alaska's economy through responsible development of facilities. Most of AKARNG's facilities were built during the Cold War and no longer meet the needs of the state or nation. These facilities are not energy efficient and their continued operational costs place a heavy burden on the state and federal governments. The AKARNG has been working closely with National Guard Bureau to increase our facilities budget to allow for replacement, modernization, and divestiture of inefficient and ineffective facilities.

The AKARNG has identified more than \$450 million worth of sustainment, modernization, and military construction projects. We built an executable way forward using the capital investment strategy. This includes an increase in the annual operating

budget from NGB and maintaining the ability to capture funds not used by other states at the end of the year. From 2009 to present, the AKARNG's programmed operations and maintenance budget increased 120 percent.

We recognize the need to protect Alaska's natural resources. The environmental section completed 18 records of decision for Defense Environmental Restoration Program sites. We administratively closed a site and received a determination of no further action. The AKARNG awarded a \$5.3 million contract in federal funds, for seven DERP sites that will be carried out in FY14 in the Bethel region. The AKARNG is also preparing remediation contracts for six sites across the state to be executed in FY14 and FY15.

The AKARNG recognizes the persistent budget crisis in Washington and realizes the need for national fiscal responsibility. To that end, our facility investment strategy revolves around energy efficient, cost effective and environmentally sound facilities. Through realized efficiencies and reduction of our facilities footprint, the AKARNG will be able to operate efficiently in a fiscally constrained environment.

## Information Management

The Directorate of Information Management improved the state's garrison and emergency communications positions by assuming ownership and management of the AKARNG's Alaska Land Mobile Radio System assets, iridium satellite phones, and high frequency radio systems. Emergency communication capabilities were increased by adding four new mobile satellite systems. The Data Management and Systems Integration Division continued to virtualize servers and increase utilization of the cloud computing environment. DOIM and DMSID leveraged their skill sets to begin work on converging voice, data and video systems onto a single IP-based network covering all the armories in Alaska.

## Logistics

AKARNG logistics improved dramatically through implementation of the Campaign on Property Accountability and Operation Clean Sweep. Logistics success is reflected in the outstanding results during the recent NGB combined logistics review team inspection. The state was awarded the highest rating in the nation and will not receive another inspection for four years. Our success is attributed to the combined



**Fire Away.** Soldiers with the Alaska Army National Guard prepare to fire the MK-19 automatic grenade launcher on a range during the infantry advanced leaders course on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in May.

Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

efforts of unit supply NCOs, maintenance personnel, and “Tiger Team” assistance. Our Soldiers and employees contributed long hours, extreme attention to detail and eliminated repeat findings from previous inspections. They reorganized and prepared the motor pool, consisting of more than 400 pieces of rolling stock, processed more than 250 maintenance work orders, performed preventive maintenance checks and services on nearly 600 weapons and 500 protective masks, and improved countless clothing and equipment records.

The logistics staff supported the annual training deployment of the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade to Gowen Field, Idaho, for their exportable Combat Training Center exercise. In addition, sustainment support was provided to facilitate the mobilizations of the 761st Military Police Battalion to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Surface Maintenance led the way with the Combined Support Maintenance shop receiving the prestigious Army Award for Maintenance Excellence. Mechanics were sent to Red River Army Depot and given subject matter expertise to jump-start the Small Unit Support Vehicle rebuild program sustaining the vehicle nationally. The AKARNG worked with the NATO support agency BV206 SUSV user group and user nations and developed networking relationships to solve parts and system sustainment issues. The AKARNG continues to meet both state and federal mission demands, develop logistics professionals, ensure regulatory



**Team Building.** Warriors in the Alaska Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program work together in a team building exercise on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in August. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eageron, DMVA Public Affairs



**9/11 Re-enlistment.** Alaska Army National Guardsmen assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, recite the re-enlistment oath while aboard the USS Monterey (CG-61) in the Persian Gulf, Sept. 11. Reciting the oath are, from left, Sergeant First Class George Koval, Sergeant First Class Julie Small and Sergeant Amber Hillman.

Photo: Sergeant Marck Scovell, U.S. Army

compliance, and maintain accountability standards for AKARNG equipment.

### *Recruiting and Retention*

The strength of the Alaska Army National Guard is our Citizen-Soldier. The ability to successfully accomplish our assigned missions is contingent on filling our formations with competent, qualified men and women. Fully manning our units is still one of the command’s top three priorities. Maintaining a ready organization of personnel is known as strength maintenance – the focal point for force structure allowances, equipping, funding and dealing with other critical resources that affect the AKARNG’s operational capabilities. The mission of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion is to recruit new Soldiers into the AKARNG, assist units with the retention of the Soldiers who have fulfilled their terms of service and attrition management – aiding in the recovery of Soldiers experiencing challenges in fulfilling their service obligations.

The AKARNG realized some modest personnel gains in fiscal year 2013. We added more than 330 new Soldiers to our rolls and renewed the contracts of almost 300 more. A robust retention program, a fully manned recruiter force, and sufficient marketing resources were instrumental in that success. The lessons and successes of FY-13 are being reviewed and implemented into our strength maintenance programs for FY-14 in order to make the most of our new experience. As nearly 50,000 active component service members come off active duty over the next few years, the AKARNG is poised to provide continued service opportunities as those stationed in Alaska take up permanent residence and those outside the state return home.

Achieving strength maintenance gains

in FY-14 is contingent on our ability to articulate why membership in the AKARNG is so beneficial to the individual and valuable to the state and nation. As an organization, we are fortunate to have both federal and state compensation incentives, skills training, and leadership opportunities that many other organizations lack. Sharing those benefits with our young men and women who are eligible to serve, and convincing them that staying in Alaska as National Guard members will help them satisfy their needs and achieve their goals, is the single greatest challenge for our recruiters.

### *38th Troop Command*

In 2013, the 38th Troop Command was called to serve both the state and nation in domestic response operations and in combat deployments.

Alaska National Guardsmen from the 38th Troop Command responded to devastating flooding on the Seward Peninsula, forest fires threatening residents in Interior Alaska and a major structural fire in the state capital. The unit moved troops and equipment to the affected areas with unprecedented coordination by both state and federal agencies to protect life and property.

The 38th TC also successfully deployed 60 aviation Soldiers to Kuwait, 83 military police Soldiers to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and individual augmentees in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to Afghanistan. They continue to perform their required missions.

The 38th TC worked diligently on the home front focusing on providing support to the families and employers left behind. That commitment was shown through many outreach activities stretching across Alaska such as the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, DMVA, Anchorage Chamber

of Commerce Business After Hours event, Eagle River High School JROTC Cadet Training, University of Alaska Anchorage ROTC program, and Dimond-Bethel High School JROTC Summer Camp.

The 38th TC is constantly training to be prepared for any situation requiring Soldiers to support our state and federal missions. We continue to provide the state of Alaska with National Guardsmen prepared for domestic response as well as warfighters ready to perform their mission in support of our national responsibilities.

### **49th Missile Defense Battalion**

The 49th Ground Missile Defense Battalion provides defense against incoming ballistic missile threats and continuous critical site security at the Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely, Alaska. From Dec. 4, 2012, to May 28, 2013, the 49th Missile Defense Battalion was ordered to federal service by the Secretary of the Army for the North Korean space launch activity.

The 49th GMDB participated in several major exercises this year. In May, Global Lightning 13 involved elements from the Space & Missile Defense Command and the 100th Missile Defense Brigade in evaluating mission command capabilities and the interaction of a quick reaction force provided by regular Army units assigned to the U.S. Army, Alaska. Additionally, our fire direction crews successfully completed two operational readiness evaluations in which the 100th Missile Defense Brigade evaluated the crews on specific training scenarios and tactics.

Members of the 49th GMDB also competed in the 2013 Alaska National Guard Adjutant General's Match with two separate teams and eight individuals. In the team category, the HHB machine gun team tied for first place while our A Company team

placed second. HHB placed first for the rifle competition and placed second overall as a team. Six of the top 10 individual competitors came from within the battalion.

Another key engagement for the Space & Missile Defense Command and the 49th GMDB was the Fox Files media visit in November. For only the second time in 10 years, a major media visit was allowed onto the Missile Defense Complex for an inside view of our unique mission and life on Fort Greely.

### **Alaska Army National Guard Aviation**

Alaska Army National Guard aviation units continue to play a vital role in providing for the safety and security of citizens of Alaska and the nation. Alaska Army National Guard aviators from Alpha Company, 1-207th Aviation, deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in January 2013. They deployed with 10 UH-60 helicopters and 60 Soldiers from Alaska to support the ongoing stability missions in the Middle East. Alpha Company returned home in late December wrapping up another successful deployment for aviation.

Here at home, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, C-23 Sherpa and C-12 Huron airplanes provide continuous aviation support for Alaska from units stationed in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Bethel and Nome. Remote areas of Alaska continue to be served by UH-60 helicopters. They are primarily used to provide training support to AKARNG members in rural Alaska. The helicopters and aircrews provide medical evacuation and rescue support when state and civilian agencies are unable to do so. With support from the Nebraska Army National Guard, UH-60 and C-23 aircrews flew more than 300 hours in support of Arctic Care 2013. AKARNG aircraft transported more than 80,000 pounds of medical and dental supplies during Arctic Care. In 2013, AKARNG C-23 and UH-60 aircraft flew more than 3,000 Army paratroopers on missions in support of the active Army in Alaska. These missions help the active Army maintain proficiency in critical skills the Soldiers need to perform their missions overseas. Additionally UH-60s and crews flew in support of firefighting missions from June 27 to July 10 in Fairbanks and Talkeetna areas. In September 2013, the C-23s were retired, and crews flew them to Fort Sill, Okla.

Bryant Army Airfield is one of the AKARNG's primary facilities. Full-time air traffic controllers continued to provide air traffic advisories from BAAF throughout the year. With recent approval for controlled airspace around BAAF, it will begin operating

as a control tower to improve aviation safety in the Anchorage area. In October, the CMFO updated the BAAF area development plan, coordinating future construction to continue the progress made in recent years.

### **297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade**

2013 was an exceptional year of training for the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade's Soldiers who trained in Gowen Field, Idaho, throughout Alaska and overseas in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The brigade emphasizes the importance of creating a realistic joint/combined operating environment for its units and ensuring that leaders are skilled in coordinating combined arms maneuvers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. In addition, the BFSB is prepared to conduct domestic response operations in support of the state of Alaska. Brigade and squadron headquarters elements received new tactical command post systems this year; they trained and validated using this new equipment that support both federal and state missions. In June, the brigade performed a consolidated annual training at Gowen Field, Idaho.

### **Defense Support to Civilian Authorities Training**

From Feb. 6-10, C Company, 1-297th Long Range Surveillance Squadron, and other BFSB personnel joined the AKANG's 212th Rescue Squadron for an arctic search and rescue exercise near Bethel, Alaska. The purpose of the exercise was to test the Arctic Care package, a concept in which a joint Air/Army element responded rapidly to a mass casualty scenario in a remote arctic environment. LRS Soldiers and Air Guard pararescuemen used parachutes to reach a simulated-downed airliner outside of Bethel. After an initial pathfinder team of LRS and pararescuemen set up a landing zone, a C-17 dropped snow machines, tents and other critical survival equipment. Once all personnel and equipment were on site, LRS Soldiers assisted the pararescuemen by running emergency operations and providing communications and logistics support. The exercise demonstrated that Army and Air Guard assets could rapidly mobilize and respond to disasters in remote parts of the state, providing Alaska residents with a critical and unique capability.

In October, C Company, 1-297th LRS, conducted search and rescue training with multiple Southeast Alaska community organizations in Sitka. C Company demonstrated their long range communication capabilities as well as integrating with the SAR community to support disaster response in Alaska.



**Weapons of Mass Destruction.** Soldiers Technical Sergeant Melissa Sullivan, left, and Captain Bernie Smith aid fellow Guardsmen from the 103rd Civil Support Team-Weapons of Mass Destruction to don level A suits as they prepare to make a downrange entry during Exercise Konfitema 13 in Saipan in May.

Photo: Courtesy 103rd Civil Support Team

## Exportable Combat Training Capability

In June, the 297th BFSB deployed to Gowen Field, Idaho, and Orchard Training Area, Idaho, for Annual Training June 1-15 to conduct command post and combat field training in a stability operations environment. Brigade and squadron staffs trained and used the newly fielded tactical mission command systems and standardized integrated command post system to execute mission command for maneuver forces operating in the field.

## Khaan Quest 2013 Peacekeeping Exercise in Mongolia

The 297th BFSB took a commanding lead of all U.S. forces in August at Exercise Khaan Quest 2013. Joint multinational training in Mongolia with our state partners – the men and women of the Mongolian Armed Forces, as well as 12 other participating nations: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Tajikistan, Britain, Nepal and Vietnam – was a fantastic experience for our Alaska Guardsmen. KQ13 highlights included a command post exercise, field training exercise, an engineer subject matter exchange, and medical outreach to the civilian population of Ulaanbaatar. KQ13 demonstrates the continuing effort of the United States to strengthen ties and cooperation among nations in the region under the U. S. Pacific Command Theater Security Cooperation Program. Peacekeeping operations are intended to improve interoperability among our forces to provide security and build the capacity to deter hostile threats affecting populations around the world. The state of Alaska enjoys the unique benefit of partnering with Mongolia through the highly successful National Guard state partnership program where unique cultural exchanges occur. Alaska's participation in KQ annually provides the ways and means to build on those relationships.

## State Partnership Program

The Alaska Mongolia State Partnership Program continues to mature and provide real change, influencing the defense reform efforts of the Mongolian Armed Forces. Fiscal year 2013 was a challenging year with implementation of new budget and funding guidance that affected all partnership programs across the country and our ability to execute exchanges. In spite of these fiscal challenges, the AKARNG executed quality exchanges with the National Emergency Management Agency and Mongolian Armed Forces. These exchanges helped build capacity within each of the respective



**Medical Detachment.** Colonel James Arnesen, a dentist with the Alaska Army National Guard's Medical Detachment, demonstrates different techniques to a Mongolian dental student during exercise Khaan Quest's Cooperative Health Engagement, Aug. 9, 2013. Khaan Quest is a peacekeeping operations-focused, combined training event between U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, U.S. Army Pacific and the Mongolian Armed Forces. MARFORPAC and USARPAC have conducted similar training with the MAF since 2003, and this year marks the 11th iteration of the exercise.

Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

organizations and further strengthened our mutual commitment to our partnership.

With this commitment and enduring relationship, we have deployed Soldiers to stand by our Mongolian partners in Afghanistan and previously Iraq; and we have shared burdens and hazards of serving in an active combat theater. To date we have deployed 14 officers and noncommissioned officers to serve with Mongolians in Afghanistan. This shared experience and implicit trust has taken our relationship to the next level and solidified our mutual commitment to our partnership.

## 103rd Civil Support Team- Weapons of Mass Destruction

Members of the 103rd Civil Support Team-Weapons of Mass Destruction provide assessment and assistance to first responders, emergency managers, industry and the military in response to potentially hazardous material releases of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear nature. In February 2013, the 103rd CST attended the Defense Nuclear Weapons School in Albuquerque, N.M., DoD's premier institution for nuclear and radiation operations. At the school, the 103rd CST interacted with quality radiation sources and toured the Nuclear Weapons Museum. This past winter the 103rd CST supported the FBI and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation by responding to four "white powder letters" mailed across the state. In July, the team deployed to Muscatatuck, Ind., for the annual nuclear-radiation disaster VIBRANT RESPONSE Exercise. The

103rd validated tactical transport via military aircraft, integration with our Region 10 Homeland Response Force partners and validated radiation response operations.

## Chaplains

The Chaplain Corps of the Alaska National Guard remains a vibrant force providing spiritual care and support for our Soldiers, Airmen, their families, and DA civilians. The Strong Bonds program continued to strengthen and provide relationship skills to single Soldiers and Airmen, couples and families. This program has remained strong in the face of continued deployments for both branches. In fiscal year 2013, we held seven couples events which trained a total of 140 couples; four family events that trained 210 people from 47 different families; and six singles events that trained 70 single Soldiers and Airmen. The 10 traditional chaplains (an increase of two in 2013) and three full-time chaplains in the Army and Air National Guard have done an outstanding job of ministering to our service members and their loved ones in every region of Alaska. Ministry opportunities include Strong Bonds events; pre-, mid-, and post-deployment Yellow Ribbon events; suicide prevention training, chapel services during drill weekends; multiple military ceremonies; countless hours of counseling; as well as numerous community events. All these have helped make 2013 one of the most dynamic years in terms of religious support and has resulted in developing a highly resilient force ready to meet any challenge.

# Alaska Air National Guard



The mission of the Alaska Air National Guard is to protect the citizens of Alaska by providing support to local communities and civil authorities during emergencies and natural disasters while also providing mission-ready forces and combat capability to the nation. Highly trained and motivated Guardsmen accomplish that mission daily through training, homeland security, and defense missions and with rescue forces on continual alert to protect life and property. Alaska Air National Guardsmen answer the call to defend not only Alaska but the United States with the right people and the right equipment in the right place at the right time while supporting wartime, humanitarian and good will missions around the world.

## Mission Success

In 2013, Alaska Air National Guardsmen serving throughout the globe were tried, tested and found exceptionally worthy of that mission by executing an extremely high operational tempo, deployment pace and inspection program – this while achieving high levels of recognition for both individuals and units.

The Alaska Air National Guard also saw senior leadership changes in 2013. Colonel Timothy O'Brien assumed command of the

entire Alaska Air National Guard and the position of Assistant Adjutant General Air after passing command of the 168th Air Refueling Wing to Colonel Mark Hedlund. Alaska State Command Chief Master

*"The Guardians of the Midnight Sun and Last Frontier continue a distinguished tradition of service to state and nation. Our highly trained professionals executed the missions of Tactical and Strategic Airlift, Air Defense, Rescue, Space Warning and Surveillance, and Global Reach via Air Refueling. We have responded to a full range of missions around the world and at home. Just as important, we gave back at every opportunity to our communities via volunteerism or by responding to Alaskans in distress. It is a humbling experience to lead and serve with the amazingly talented men and women of the Alaska Air National Guard. Alaskans can and will sleep easier in 2014 knowing that Citizen Airmen of Alaska will be there when and wherever needed."*

—Colonel Timothy O'Brien, Alaska Air National Guard commander

Sergeant Timothy Delph retired after 27 years of honored service. In keeping with the enlisted tradition, Chief Master Sergeant Steven Calvin stepped up, moved into the position of state command chief and senior enlisted leader and ensured no gap in advocacy for the Airmen of the Alaska Air National Guard.

## 168th Air Refueling Wing

The 168th Air Refueling Wing, home to the KC-135 Stratotanker and based in interior Alaska at Eielson Air Force Base, continually maintains one of the highest operations tempos of any KC-135 aerial refueling wing. More than 130 168th ARW Airmen deployed in support of federal and wartime missions during the year, maintaining a constant presence in the Central Command area of responsibility. The Guardians of the Last Frontier flew 2,545 mishap-free hours and delivered more than 12.5 million pounds of fuel to 750 receivers while providing global reach and vigilance in support of state and national objectives.

Wing members received numerous accolades throughout the year, including an "EXCELLENT" rating for superior performance in all major graded areas of the Pacific Air Forces Consolidated Unit Phase Two Inspection in September. Always willing to support and collaborate with their active-duty counterparts on Eielson, the 168th ARW was actively involved in the 354th Fighter Wing's two-week Phase I and Consolidated



**Multinational Exercise Support.** Alaska and Washington National Guard members board an Alaska Air National Guard C-17 Globemaster III at Osan Air Force Base, Korea, en route to Mongolia to participate in Khaan Quest 2013. The multinational exercise is hosted and sponsored by the Mongolian Armed Forces with a co-sponsorship alternating between U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, and U.S. Army Pacific. MARFORPAC was the executive agent for this year's exercise held in the vicinity of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 3-14. Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

Unit Inspection, helping that Wing achieve an “EXCELLENT” score as well. Security forces defenders participated in a Commando Warrior exercise on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, winning five of seven awards and earning praise as the best team seen to date by Pacific Air Forces inspectors.

Despite having the smallest number of assigned personnel in the Air National Guard, the 168th Medical Group earned four Air National Guard Medical Service Awards in the dental, laboratory, health services and aerospace medicine categories. The Logistics Readiness Squadron was also recognized by Governor Sean Parnell for outstanding performance and received the Alaska Governor’s Distinguished Unit Citation.

The 168th Communications Flight facility is undergoing major upgrades with a \$3.5-million renovation project designed to completely remodel the building’s interior and add 3,650 square feet of much-needed storage and office space. The construction was scheduled for completion in December 2013 with a ribbon cutting ceremony in January 2014.

The Alaska Air National Guard’s 213th Space Warning Squadron, a remote, geographically separated unit of the 168th ARW, continues to stand watch at Clear Air Force Station near Anderson. The unit achieved a 99 percent mission capable rate while tracking 500,000 space objects and recording more than 900,000 metric observations. The Frontier Sentinels also received an “EXCELLENT” rating for their participation with the 13th Space Warning Squadron’s Combined Unit Inspection. In addition to their exemplary space warning capability, 213th SWS members flawlessly coordinated site entry for more than 125 Department of Forestry personnel responding to a wildfire that threatened critical assets on Clear AFS.

168th ARW maintenance and operations personnel supported humanitarian causes with their participation in Operation Pacific Angel, a coordinated effort offering medical and engineering services to underprivileged communities in Sri Lanka. The efforts of the 168th ARW contributed to the deployment of 68 volunteers who provided health exams, women’s health care, and optometry and dental services. The volunteers also renovated two local schools and one clinic.

## 176th Wing

The 176th Wing’s “Midnight Sun Guardians” maintained an equally grueling deployment, training and homeland security operations tempo in 2013, resulting in many significant accomplishments and support to



**Urban Warfare.** Airman First Class Tupou Ainuu, 168th Security Forces Squadron fire team member from Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, secures the flank with an M-249 light machine gun during an urban warfare scenario as part of the basic security operations course at Andersen South, Guam, May 17. The Pacific Regional Training Center trains frontline defenders from all bases assigned to Pacific Air Forces on U.S. Central Command and regional training requirements so they can deploy as well as utilize trained skills at their home stations. Photo: Staff Sergeant Benjamin Wiseman, U.S. Air Force

the citizens of Alaska. Responding to Alaskans in need, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management called on the “Midnight Sun Guardians” to assist the residents of Galena when the Yukon River overflowed during the breakup of winter ice in May. The 176th Wing sent multiple aircraft and rescue personnel to the rural Alaska village to assist with rescue efforts, ultimately transporting residents on



**Eye Exam.** Major Andrew Adamich, an optometrist from the 176th Medical Group, mentors Staff Sergeant Katherine Burrows, an optometry technician from the 151st Medical Group, June 5. Forty-five Alaska military personnel from Air and Army National Guard and active duty Air Force traveled to set up and run medical clinics for medically underserved Hawaiians on the islands of Lanai and Maui as part of an Innovative Readiness Training project June 2-14. The group joined about 500 other military personnel from multiple components of the Air Force, Army and Navy on four Hawaiian Islands at six sites as a joint training mission called TROPIC CARE 2013 – the largest IRT mission since the program began. Photo: Staff Sergeant N. Alicia Goldberger, 176th

Wing Public Affairs

a C-130 Hercules to Fairbanks to wait for the water levels to subside.

Supporting our nation’s mission overseas, nearly 100 Alaska Air National Guard members from the 176th Wing deployed in June and September to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The deployers, primarily from the 176th Wing’s 144th Airlift Squadron and 176th Maintenance Group, supported the movement of cargo and personnel while flying the C-130 Hercules. They performed admirably and returned home to Alaska in November.

The 176th Air Control Squadron was re-designated as the 176th Air Defense Squadron and ceremonially recognized during a ceremony in August. The name change aligns the 176th Air Defense Squadron with its counterparts in the rest of the country and represents the squadron’s true warfighting capability.

With approximately 150 Alaska Air National Guardsmen assigned to the 176th Air Defense Squadron, members perform a daily air sovereignty mission in support of the Alaskan Regional Air Operations Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Created to defend against potential bomber attacks from now-former Cold War foes, the Air Defense Squadron today keeps tabs not only on continued probing by the Russians, it also identifies and directs response to incursions of other unknown aircraft into Alaska airspace. In 2013, they maintained watch throughout Northern Sovereignty missions as they directed intercepts of Russian military aircraft approaching Alaska’s borders.

In August, the Air Defense Squadron also provided direct support for the



**Practice Exercise for Search and Rescue.** Alaska Air National Guard Staff Sergeant Cody Inman, pararescueman with the 212th Rescue Squadron, coordinates the extraction of a group of simulated survivors via UH-60 Black Hawk during a search-and-rescue exercise held northeast of Bethel, Feb. 8. The exercise was designed to simulate a crashed 737 airliner with multiple casualties in a remote, arctic environment. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

Tri-National level exercise, Vigilant Eagle 13. This was the fifth in a series of cooperative exercises between the United States, Canada and Russia that provides an extraordinary opportunity for NORAD and the Russian Federation Air Force to coordinate and respond to a simulated hijacking event.

In June, the 176th Wing supported the largest Innovative Readiness Training operation in the nation since the program began travelling to Hawaii for Operation Tropic Care. “Midnight Sun Guardians” provided medical care for medically underserved Hawaiians on the islands of Lanai, Molokai and Maui. The Alaskans joined about 500 other military personnel from multiple components of the Air Force, Army

and Navy at six sites across four Hawaiian islands and provided optometry, dentistry, physical exams, public health assessments, medical equipment repair and grief counseling.

Search and rescue missions, which are coordinated by Alaska Air National Guardsmen in the 11th Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, were also in full swing in 2013. The Rescue Coordination Center, on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, completed its 5,000th mission (since July 1, 1994) in March when it coordinated the Alaska Air National Guard’s successful recovery of a pilot who crashed a Super Cub aircraft near the Bering River northeast of Cordova. They also were credited in July with 2,000 lives saved, following a rescue

from a separate small propeller plane crash outside of Talkeetna.

The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center has been operating in Alaska since 1961, but beginning July 1, 1994, the Rescue Coordination Center became manned solely by Alaska Air National Guardsmen under the operational active duty commander of the 11th Air Force. Since that time, the men and women of the Alaska Air National Guard have been keeping watch 24 hours a day, seven days a week, coordinating an average of more than five missions a week for nearly 19 years.

To conduct these rescues, the Rescue Coordination Center often calls on the 176th Wing’s 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons and their expertise in flying HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and HC-130 King aircraft specially equipped for aerial refueling and search and rescue missions, as well as the expertise of the famed “Guardian Angels,” elite rescuers trained in combat medicine, marksmanship, special tactics, mountaineering, scuba diving and a wide variety of wilderness survival skills.

### *Awards and Recognition*

Alaska Air National Guardsmen with the 176th Wing were awarded one Silver Star and seven Bronze Star medals at decoration ceremonies on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in 2013.

The Silver Star Medal was awarded to Staff Sergeant William “Bill” Cenna for his actions while deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 and is the third highest military decoration that can be awarded to U.S. military personnel for gallantry in action



**Heroic Actions.** One Silver Star and six Bronze Stars are displayed during a ceremony in which they were awarded to five Alaska Air National Guardsmen on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson May 18 for their heroic actions while deployed to Afghanistan. Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Guy Hayes, 176th Wing





**Farewell Salute.** Staff Sergeant David Hancock, a crew chief with the 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, salutes the crew of a C-130 Hercules as they depart for Kuwait from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Aug. 27. The C-130 was loaded with approximately 30 Airmen and their equipment, all headed to Kuwait for a scheduled two-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

against an enemy of the United States. Cenna also received two Bronze Star medals, the fourth-highest combat award presented in the United States, for actions in combat during the Alaska Air National Guard's deployment to Afghanistan in 2012.

Captain Chris Keen, Master Sergeant Chad Moore, Technical Sergeant Chris Harding and Staff Sergeant Nic Watson also each received the Bronze Star Medal for actions in combat during the Alaska Air National Guard's deployment to Afghanistan in 2012. The efforts of all five Alaska Air National Guardsmen helped save American lives as they performed valiantly under fire in service to their state and nation.

Lieutenant Colonel Ed Soto was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his exceptionally distinguished performance while deployed to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in 2012 where he served as the S5 director for the 777th Expeditionary Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force (Prime BEEF) Squadron. In Afghanistan, Soto oversaw the programing, design and over-the-horizon troop labor execution for 215 construction and life-health-safety requirements valued at more than \$73 million, 116 designs supporting \$43 million in awarded engineering contracts and inspection of 75 Afghan National Security Forces construction projects. He also oversaw the Southwest Expansion Area construction program at Camp Marmal-United States Forces, Afghanistan's number

one construction priority in the theater, valued at more than \$92 million.

Finally, the 176th Wing was also recognized nationally earning the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the 2013 National Guard Association of the United States

Spaatz Trophy and the 2013 Air Force Association Outstanding Flying Unit. Alaska Air National Guardsmen continue to set the standard and live the core values of integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do!



**Deployed Cargo Mission.** Major Erin Kelley, 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130H Hercules pilot, looks out over rural Baghdad during a cargo mission to Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, Oct. 28. The 737th EAS is assigned to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing and is a tactical airlift hub responsible for transporting passengers and cargo across U.S. Central Command. Kelley, a Kalamazoo, Mich., native, is deployed from the 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard.

Photo: Master Sergeant Ben Bloker, U.S. Air Force

# Homeland Security & Emergency Management



## Operations

The state's Mobile Emergency Operations Center was deployed Aug. 3-10 to support Operation Nanook 2013 in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. Operation Nanook is Canada's national level exercise with many territories and organizations participating. The MEOC was used as a field command post during simulated evacuation of two major residential areas. This was the first time Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management had participated in a cross-border exercise.

In anticipation of spring flooding, DHS&EM's operations section launched the 2013 RiverWatch program on May 14 to conduct aerial observations of river breakup conditions on the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. RiverWatch, which has been in operation for more than 30 years, is a partnership between DHS&EM, the National Weather Service River Forecast Center, and riverine communities. The RiverWatch program provides communities with timely river flooding updates and on-site emergency management prior to and during ice jam flooding events.

During spring floods, eight communities were significantly impacted by ice jam flooding. Galena was the hardest hit, with nearly all of the homes in the community damaged by flood waters. Hundreds of residents were evacuated or required extensive shelter, feeding, medical, transportation or other assistance. DHS&EM personnel began emergency management May 27 as flood waters

rose in Galena. DHS&EM staff supported Galena and other affected communities throughout the summer and continued appropriate support through winter.

One of DHS&EM's RapidCom trailers supported the Division of Forestry as they battled four wildland fires and conducted one search and rescue operation. RapidCom trailers are ground and air transportable communications systems that provide satellite phone and internet connectivity, and have radio frequency bridging capabilities. A partnership with the Division of Forestry has enhanced their communications capabilities and improved DHS&EM's ability to transport and support RapidCom operations in remote areas.

## Disaster Recovery

September 2012 storms caused major damages in Copper River Valley, the Tok area, and the Denali, Matanuska-Susitna, and Kenai Peninsula boroughs. A federal disaster declaration was approved for public assistance, and a state disaster declaration was approved for individual assistance. The state IA programs expended more than \$2.2 million in assistance for personal property, real property and transportation expenses that were a direct result of the storm event. To date, more than \$9 million was encumbered under federal public disaster assistance for repairs to critical



**Water and Ice.** Water levels exceeded previous high water marks in Galena. Nearly all of the housing in Galena was impacted making sheltering residents of the community a difficult challenge. Photo by Edward Plumb, National Weather Service

**Galena's Old Town.** The old town section of Galena was ravaged by the high waters and flowing ice. Almost all of the homes and businesses along the waterfront were damaged.

Photo: Edward Plumb, National Weather Service

infrastructure. The state and FEMA agreed to a 25 percent/75 percent cost share plan, and assistance continued into 2013.

The 2013 spring flood was one of the state's most challenging disaster events since the 1967 Fairbanks floods. Ice jams caused significant flooding in eight Alaskan communities. Starting in Eagle, near the point where the Yukon enters Alaska, to Alakanuk and Emmonak, where the Yukon meets the sea, a violent and severe breakup occurred. The community of Galena was ravaged by unprecedented high ice and water. With help from FEMA, nearly all residents were able to return to the community for the winter. Those who were not able to return received financial and technical assistance until their homes could be repaired during the next construction season. 2013 spring flood damages were estimated at \$75 million.

## Planning

To help smaller Alaskan communities prepare for disaster events, the DHS&EM planning section developed the small community emergency response plan. The SCERP is a customized flip book with essential, community-specific information for responding to a disaster. The SCERP serves as a resource template for communities to complete their local emergency plans. Alaskan communities have embraced the SCERP concept with 12 SCERPs completed, five in review, and more than 25 currently in the development stage.

The mitigation team provided technical assistance with flood plan management, flood insurance issues, damage determinations, home elevation project applications, and surveying high water marks in seven communities impacted by the 2013 spring floods. A collection of partners included FEMA, the Division of Community and Regional Affairs and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Army Corps conducted a thorough assessment of Galena's future flood vulnerability.

The security vulnerability assessments team conducted SVAs for the Kenai Peninsula Borough, including the cities of Kenai, Nikiski, Soldotna, Seldovia, Homer and Seward. These SVAs will enable the communities to address their identified vulnerabilities through potential grants and other programs.

A well-prepared private sector is essential to any emergency response and recovery effort. The Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection completed another successful session in Anchorage, and a Fairbanks group will meet in winter to discuss solutions for improving emergency response in interior Alaska's businesses.

## Grants/Grant Information

The state took possession of 24 cold weather electrical generators ranging in power between 175 kilowatts and two megawatts of electricity. The generators will be used to support critical functions during a catastrophic disaster – medical, shelter, communication, or other emergency response functions. Emergency management performance grants were awarded to 14 communities, including two new communities employing full or part-time emergency managers. Total award was \$2.9 million with pass-through to locals of \$661,000. The State Homeland Security Program awarded grants to 19 local jurisdictions for equipment, planning, training, and exercise activities and projects. Total award amount was \$3.46 million, with pass-through to locals of \$2.7 million. Funding will assist local jurisdictions with participation in the Alaska Shield exercise in 2014.

Hazardous Materials Emergency Program grant funding was used to increase state, territorial, tribal and local jurisdictions to enhance implementation of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986. This assistance is to promote effective and efficient management of hazardous materials incidents, and encourage comprehensive training for participants. The National



**Restoring Hope.** The Salvation Army and other nongovernmental agencies provided tremendous support to the state/FEMA mass care effort. Hundreds of Alaskans affected by the 2013 spring floods received shelter, food supplies, personal hygiene, medical and other support. Photo: Cory Grogan, DHS&EM

Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program grants, totaling \$250,000, provided community outreach and awareness to local communities. The state has planned to use funding for tsunami operations and to install community tsunami warning sirens. Eighteen communities shared \$300,000 in local emergency planning committee grants.

## Preparedness

The 2013 spring and fall preparedness conferences focused on preparing communities for the upcoming Alaska Shield 2014, a preparedness exercise that will be the largest thus far. The spring conference focused on professional development training opportunities for LEPC and EMPG communities. The fall conference emphasized earthquake and tsunami preparedness, featuring keynote speakers Dr. Barry Dorn from Harvard and Jon Mitchell from Christchurch, New Zealand. Dorn gave a presentation on leadership in catastrophic disasters, while Mitchell shared his experiences as the incident commander during the Christchurch earthquake.

Alaska's DHS&EM has been working with communities and museums around the state to prepare for the 50th anniversary of the 1964 earthquake. There will be a large-scale exhibit at the Anchorage Museum, including a survivor commemoration event on March 27. Additionally, Alaska residents participated for the second year in "National Shakeout," a multi-state "drop, cover, and hold on" drill that takes place annually in October. The October 2013 Shakeout was used to promote the upcoming Great Alaska Shakeout which will occur on March 27, 2014, the 50-year anniversary date of the 1964 earthquake.

DHS&EM received a new earthquake simulator in August, and it immediately hit the ground running. The simulator was hosted at events such as the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation Safety Day, the Alaska State Fair, Homer Preparedness Conference, Fairbanks Preparedness Expo, and many other events in between. It has received an overwhelmingly positive response from the public, and will be used extensively during the numerous anniversary commemoration events.

## Summary

Alaska DHS&EM teams responded to numerous catastrophic events, coordinated and administered large complex grants and funding applications, and completed intensive mitigation for several Alaskan communities. DHS&EM is tasked with many functions: preparedness, response, mitigation, planning, disaster assistance, grants and program support functions. Many of the 2013 responses and projects are long-term events and will continue well into 2014.

# Alaska Military Youth Academy



The national ChalleNGe program, administered by the Department of Defense and implemented by the National Guard Bureau, Office of Athletics and Youth Division, was established in 1993 when the nationwide high school dropout rate was identified as a potential domestic issue. The Alaska Military Youth Academy, one of the original 10 pilot programs, opened its doors in 1994 and has grown along with the national program. There are now 34 active sites nationally in 29 states, the District of Columbia and the Territory of Puerto Rico. The first AMYA class graduated 43 cadets; the most recent program class (2013-02) graduated 165 cadets.

The proven Youth ChalleNGe model uses a quasi-military, full-time, tuition-free residential environment to facilitate education and practical life skills in the Eight Core Components of the program. The full cycle is a 17½-month, tuition-free program with a 5½-month residential phase followed by a 12-month post-residential phase. This structure allows ethnically, geographically, age and gender diverse groups of cadets to strengthen their social and academic skills while encouraging emotional, physical and academic growth. AMYA runs two residential classes per year, one beginning in October and the other in April.

The residential phase of the program is a 22-week experiential model conducted in residential facilities, with separate quarters



**Graduation.** Cadet Matthew G. Rhoades, honor graduate of the Alaska Military Youth Academy's class 2013-02 speaks during the class graduation ceremony at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage Aug. 30. The academy graduated 165 cadets after 22 weeks of residential instruction in a quasi-military environment. The program is designed to provide the cadets with training in academic studies, vocational instruction, life skills, military skills and self-discipline. Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, DMVA Public Affairs

for male and female cadets. The residential phase begins with a two-week acclimation period during which candidates 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. While in the acclimation period, candidates experience a caring, disciplined, tough-love environment that challenges them to adjust to the physical, mental and social aspects of the program. Focus is on teamwork, close order drill, code of conduct, leadership/followership, and physical fitness training while staff provides medical service,

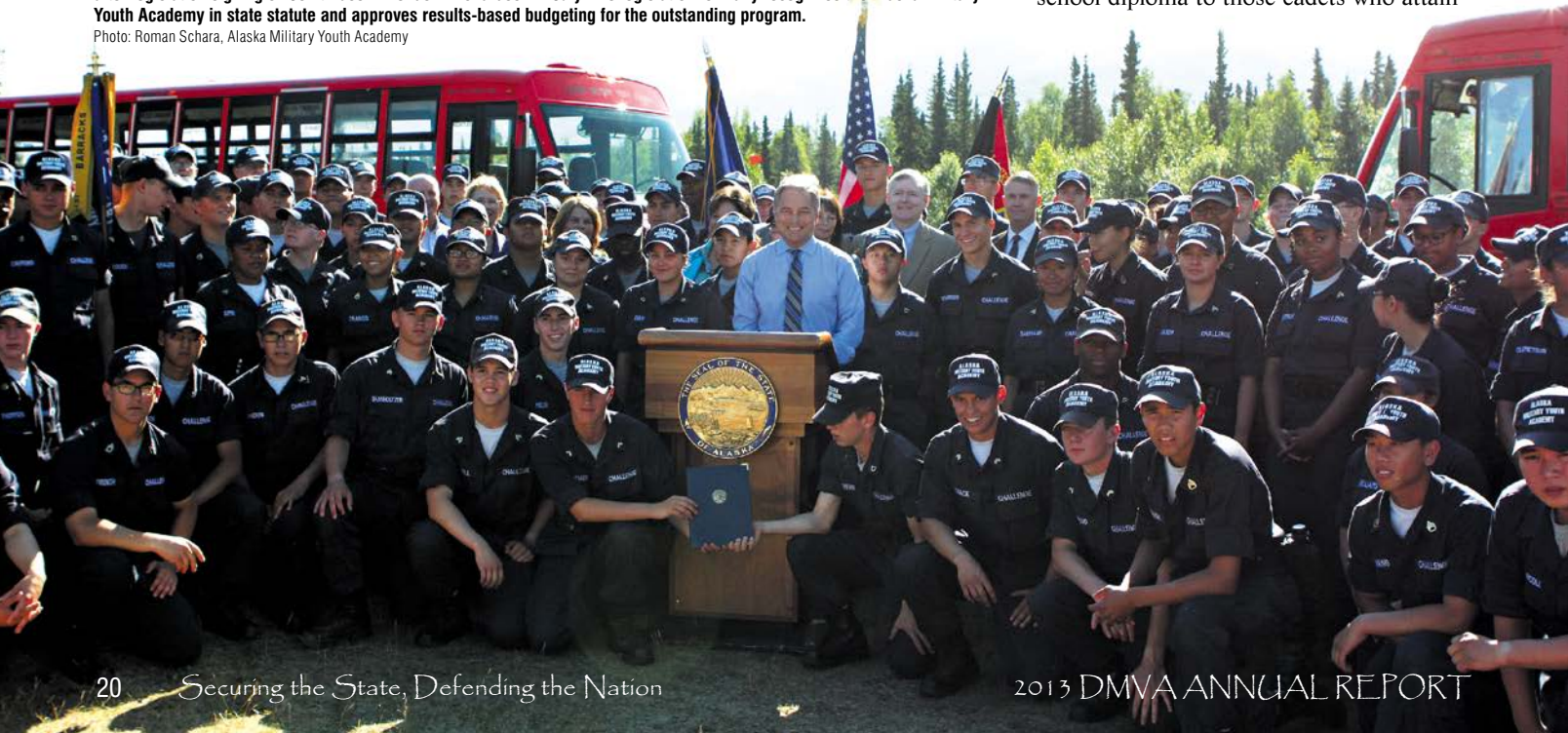
support, meals, counseling and instruction. The candidates who successfully complete this period earn the distinction of becoming a cadet of the corps.

During the remaining 20 weeks of the residential phase, daily activities and experiences such as academics, cooperative work experience, vocational technical education, outdoor adventure training, and service to the community expand on the transformation process and build the cadet's education level and employment skills while contributing to a growing sense of community involvement and commitment.

During the spring of 2013, AMYA completed an extensive self-study of its program services by a regional visiting team of the AdvancED – Northwest Accreditation Commission and received reaccreditation through 2017-2018. The AMYA Academics Section's team of dedicated professionals remains committed to increasing the educational attainment of every cadet, and in the most recent class, the team raised the average math level of the corps of cadets by 1.2 grade levels during the short but intense 17 weeks of instruction and assessment. Cadets can earn up to seven credits toward their secondary education, which brings them closer to the 21 credits required for graduation in Alaska. This typically puts students returning to high school back on track toward graduation with their peers. As an accredited secondary education institution, AMYA can award an AMYA high school diploma to those cadets who attain

**State Recognition.** Alaska Governor Sean Parnell takes a picture with the Alaska Military Youth Academy cadets after legislation signing on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in July. The legislation formally recognizes the Alaska Military Youth Academy in state statute and approves results-based budgeting for the outstanding program.

Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy



the 21 credits required and have passed the State of Alaska required High School Graduation Qualifying Exam prior to enrollment. AMYA also provides preparation and testing for the General Educational Development test for those students who prefer this high school equivalency credential or in addition to their diploma.

The Academy offers both cooperative work experience and vocational technical education programs that include small engine repair, carpentry and culinary arts. The courses introduce cadets to available entry-level career pathways, teach workplace safety, increase technical knowledge and instill the confidence for them to transition into the work force. The culinary arts program, taught by Mario Martinez, consistently demonstrates success with preparing the students to work in the food service industry. In our most recent class (2013-02) participants experienced a 100 percent pass rate on the nationally recognized ServSafe® regulatory certifications and received college credits through the UAA Career and Technical College, Tech Prep Program. On weekends, cadets are afforded the opportunity to support the community with service projects and to engage in Alaska-themed and military-style outdoor events such as rappelling, jump tower, seasonal activities and parade participation.

Cadets develop a Post-Residential Action Plan as a goal-setting process early in the residential phase with the guidance of staff



**AMYA Prom.** Cadet Marlene Evan Class of Lower Kalskag, and William Shanholtzer of Wasilla pose during the Class 2013-02 prom. This was the first time in some years that AMYA has put on a prom, which was well received by both the staff and the cadets. Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy



**Finish Line.** Cadets from 4th Platoon participate in the 2013 Alaska Run for Women in June. The annual event fosters camaraderie and raises funds for breast cancer research, support, detection, and awareness programs.

Photo: Sergeant Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs

and support from their mentors to provide a point of reference, discussion and focus when they return to their communities during the 12-month post-residential phase. Some of the goals 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 2013-02 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 a productive member of society. Additionally, graduates recognize the need to adjust their method of goal attainment while building upon the mentoring relationship. Mentors are the human connection to cadet success and may initially be the only positive or healthy relationship in the earliest stages of the post-residential phase. AMYA graduates have enjoyed the benefits of dedicated adult community volunteers from every walk of life who share their quest for long-term success.

The Academy's staff is considered to be among the best in the nation and is frequently sought out by emerging ChalleNGe programs. Thomas "Tom" Jones, food service supervisor, was honored this year with an Honorary Mention in the Leadership Individual category during the annual Governor's Denali Peak Performance Awards. Additionally, three members of the AMYA staff were selected by the ChalleNGe Program director's advisory council sub-committee to rewrite the Recruiting, Placement and Mentoring Operations Manual that establishes the measurable national standards for all current and future ChalleNGe programs during the residential and post-residential phases. In our Academic section, AMYA earned distinction as a

qualified secondary education institution to designate eligible graduates for the UA Scholars Program.

AMYA's target graduation rate is 144 graduates per class. The winter class, 2014-01, has 162 cadets on campus. After almost 20 years of operation, AMYA has graduated 4,106 cadets and awarded 2,833 high school diplomas and/or GED certificates to former high school dropouts who are demonstrating tremendous success in communities not just in Alaska, but across the nation. The Academy's proven track record of success is a testament to its generational impact for assisting the youth and families of Alaska.



**Building Confidence.** Cadet Shamila Vahaakolo successfully completes the jump tower on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Photo: Roman Schara, Alaska Military Youth Academy



# Alaska State Defense Force

## Community Events

In 2013, the Alaska State Defense Force supported a number of community events including the Fourth of July parade in Kenai, the Kenai River Wounded Warriors event and Operation Stand Down events in Anchorage and Fairbanks. The Alaska State Defense Force also supported Special Olympics.

## Chaplain's School

In June, the Alaska State Defense Force hosted the State Guard Association of the United States Chaplain's School in Soldotna. The weeklong school was held on the scenic campus of Alaska Christian College. The courses of the Chaplain's School covered topics on Introduction to Stress Management, Grief Counseling, Military Funerals, Suicide Prevention, Women's Issues, Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, Spiritual Leadership, Psychological First Aid, Drill and Ceremony, Stress Management for Caregivers, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Chaplains in the Military.

Instructors included chaplains from the National Guard and State Defense Force chaplains from four states, as well as from Alaska. The course was designed for State Defense Force chaplains and for clergy who wanted to learn how to be chaplains in the military. The Chaplain's School prepares chaplains to work with first responders, the military and victims in a disaster.

## Academy

The Alaska State Defense Force Officer Candidate School and Noncommissioned Officers Leadership Academy adds professionalism to the ranks of the Alaska Defense Force. The Academy continues to improve the quality and credentials of officers and enlisted ranks. Throughout the past two years, the Academy has instructed ASDF personnel throughout Alaska, graduating another class in 2013.

## Meritorious Unit Citation

In 2013, the ASDF was nationally recognized when the brigade received the Meritorious Unit Citation. The State Guard Association of the United States awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation to the ASDF for augmenting the National Guard in Operation Arctic Care 2012. That exercise and humanitarian operation provided medical and dental care to 15 villages in the Norton Sound area of Alaska.

## National Conference

Alaska has been selected to host the 2014 Annual Conference of the State Guard Association of the United States. The conference advocates best practices for state defense forces and provides military education for its members. The ASDF will host the conference in Anchorage in mid-September.



**Chaplain's School.** Graduates of the State Guard Association of the United States Chaplain's School pose after completing the course at the Alaska Christian College campus in Soldotna. Eleven people from the State Guard Association of the United States, Anchorage City Church, Change Point Church and the Alaska State Defense Force received certificates of completion. Photo: Brigadier General Roger Hall, ASDF

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11




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