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# Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



## Annual Report 2019

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# WHO WE ARE

## Mission

The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs provides highly motivated, effective professionals to execute global, theater, and state operations. We are always prepared to respond to and assist in the recovery from domestic disasters and emergencies; we serve and support Alaska's veterans; educate Alaska teens in disciplined, structured environments; and cultivate ethically driven members into strong, capable, and innovative leaders.



# HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## **Mission**

The mission of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) is to lead the way in homeland security and emergency management to foster a prepared, resilient Alaska capable of meeting the needs of its communities and citizens in response to all-hazards events.

## **Operations**

DHS&EM's Response section and State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) continue to manage a wide variety of community emergencies and disasters. Two major incidents this year were the response to the November 30, 2018 earthquake, the most destructive disaster to hit Alaska in more than fifty years, and the summer urban interface wildland fires, both of which were declared state disasters. Other incidents included riverine and coastal flooding, unusually strong sea storms, windstorms, major building fires, volcanic eruptions, power outages, community water and sewer system failures, and fuel shortages. The SEOC has addressed over 50 separate requests for technical, logistical, or financial support or interagency coordination this year. This year Operations focused special attention on improving Alaska's catastrophic incident response by supporting an extensive multiagency disaster transportation study using lessons learned from the Hurricane Maria Puerto Rico response.

## **Mitigation**

The Mitigation team successfully prioritized and managed \$39.9M in state and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding for seismic, flood risk reduction, planning, and wildfire mitigation projects, and \$992K in NOAA funding for mitigation projects statewide. The team conducted its annual Tsunami Operations Workshop in Kodiak, hosting eight remote communities. The Mitigation team also completed 53 new and updated FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.

## **Community Planning**

The Community Planning team completed or updated 24 Small Community Emergency Response Plans. They managed the travel, attendance, agenda, and administrative support for the spring and fall Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)/State Emergency Response Commission meetings. Community Planning also managed and provided technical assistance to the facilities that report their chemical storage for the Tier II reporting database. The team completed the 2018 Threat Hazard Risk Analysis/Stakeholder Preparedness Review. The team provided project management for the LEPC Grant (state funded), Emergency Management Performance Grant (federal), and the Federal Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant (HMEP). The HMEP Grant supported initial training/certification for 26 Hazardous Material Technicians. Emergency Management Performance Grant funds were utilized to fund emergency management planning at the state level and 12 jurisdictions across the state.

## **All-Hazards Resiliency Team**

The All-Hazards Resiliency team conducted two Rural Resiliency Workshops (RRW). The first was the Yukon-Tanana-Koyukuk RRW, co-hosted along with the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) in Fairbanks, hosting 37 communities around the TCC region. The second workshop occurred in Craig on Prince of Wales Island (POWI), in partnership with the POWI Local Emergency Planning Committee. The workshop was held at the Craig Tribal Association, hosting 14 communities on POWI and the surrounding region. The All-Hazards Resiliency team also conducted numerous community visits and tribal engagement meetings throughout the state. The team co-chairs the Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection (APIP) which activated in response to the November 30 Cook Inlet Earthquake, ensuring close coordination between public and private response efforts and the swift assessment and recovery of the state's critical infrastructure.

## **Training**

The Training team provided training to 1,704 personnel belonging to state, local and tribal entities. Training coordinated a total of 87 specialized training events in the state and approved 155 individuals to attend training offered by national training partners. Training also coordinated with the DHS&EM Exercise section to update the Alaska Training and Exercise Planning process.

## **Outreach**

Participated in 44 major outreach events, of which 18 saw the use of the Earthquake Simulator, and had direct contact with almost 7,000 people statewide. 11 teenage students from Alaska completed FEMA Region 10's inaugural Youth Preparedness Camp in Stanwood, Washington. The weeklong event, staffed by camp and emergency management professionals, including the outreach team lead, taught the campers how to safely assist in the immediate aftermath of a disaster when a professional response may be delayed or limited. Alaska also saw Madeline Ortiz from Palmer, Alaska as one of the 15 selectees for FEMA's national Youth Preparedness Council (YPC).

## **Exercise**

Exercise worked with the Resilience team to develop table top exercises for the RRW in Fairbanks and Prince of Wales Island. The division exercise planners continue to work with the Planning section on Denali Commission-funded Small Community Emergency Response Plan table top exercises (TTX) including a completed TTX in Newtok/Mertarvik, and a planned delivery for Akiak. The exercise team conducted the Alaska Shield 2019 full-scale exercise which involved partnership with over a dozen federal agencies, five state departments and multiple communities across Alaska. The team supported individual exercises in seven local communities, and provided technical assistance and support to local jurisdictions partnering with other state and federal agencies on exercises. The team also revamped the Alaska training and exercise planning process to bring it in line with national standards, and began working with internal DMVA exercise planners to develop an active shooter response exercise for department staff.

## **Grants**

DHS&EM received a new National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Grant Award for \$48,584. All other grants remain at historic levels of funding. The 2019 State Homeland Security Program awarded grants to 18 communities. The 2019 Emergency Management Performance Grant was awarded to 13 communities.

## **Disaster Assistance**

The Disaster Assistance (DA) section responded to two new State-declared disasters, three new federal disasters and monitored progress on projects associated with 12

currently active state and 11 federally declared disasters. This represents 194 ongoing projects providing approximately \$181M in state and federal assistance for impacted communities across the state.

DA staff are working with communities and FEMA on project development for damages caused by the November 2018 Cook Inlet Earthquake. It is anticipated the earthquake will result in approximately 500 restoration projects valued at nearly \$500 million. The State Individual Assistance program is assisting survivors with remaining needs after federal assistance is exhausted. They are also working with the communities affected by the 2019 August Southern Wildfires. 52 residences and numerous other structures were destroyed and families displaced. DA staff operated two Disaster Assistance Centers in the affected areas to accommodate survivors wishing to apply to the state for assistance with home damage, personal property loss and temporary housing needs.

# AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## Mission

The Alaska Air National Guard (AKANG) provides mission-ready forces and combat capability to the nation to secure the homeland. Additionally, the AKANG protects the citizens of Alaska and local communities through medical, civil engineering, security, and communications support to civil authorities during emergencies and natural disasters. Over 2,100 trained and ready AKANG Airmen proudly serve in the 168th Wing at both Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) and Clear Air Force Station (AFS), and at the 176th Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

The AKANG maintained a high operational tempo and deployment pace in 2019, enabling global mobility, airlifting over 354,000 tons of cargo, and 1,067 passengers, and 26 Pararescue Jumpers dropped, transferring over 14 million pounds of fuel to over 1,600 receivers, and flying more than 813 sorties. Airmen provided 24/7 year-round support to North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), National Missile Warning and Space Surveillance, Search and Rescue, and C-17 strategic airlift tasking. Guardsmen of the Air Defense Squadron scrambled F-22 Alert Fighters, E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, and KC-135 refueling aircraft on 20 occasions to battle manage 33 Homeland Air Sovereignty missions, resulting in five intercepts of a total of 10 Russian Long Range Aviation aircraft.

## 168<sup>th</sup> Wing

The 168th Wing's "Guardians of the Last Frontier" operate and maintain nine KC-135R Stratotankers at Eielson Air Force Base and operate, secure, and support the AN/FPS-123 Ballistic Missile Early Warning Radar (EWR) at Clear AFS.

The 168th Wing provides 24/7 tanker access for Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Command and Air Mobility Command, and is also postured to support 24/7 Missile Warning and Defense and Space Domain Awareness in support of the US Space Command strategic objectives. The 168th Wing continues to excel at maintaining both high availability and reliability rates – equal to that of annual Middle East deployments – due to Eielson's strategic location, demand for tanker support to Alaska-based receivers, proximity to Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, and PACAF's use of 168th Wing Tankers for missions throughout the Pacific Theater. The 168th Wing also conducted Space Object Identification, monitoring over 6,200 tracks, and collecting 7.8 million Space Object Identification observation data.



## 176th Wing

The 176th Wing's "Midnight Sun Guardians" are an elite force of well-trained professional Airmen who integrate seamlessly into all DOD, Active Component, Air Reserve Component (ARC), and Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) operations. The 176th Wing operates and maintains eight C-17 Globemaster III, four HC-130J Combat King II, and seven HH-60 Pave Hawk aircraft, and an Air Defense Squadron. The wing conducts federal missions of Strategic and Tactical Airlift, Combat Search and Rescue, and Agile Combat Support for Air Expeditionary Force taskings, and provides 24/7 battle management, command and control (BMC2) for the Alaska NORAD Region. This year the 176th Wing had multiple successful deployments -25 mobilizations, 332 personnel, and 98 cargo increments deployed around the world, and re-emerged as primary participants in Exercise RED FLAG-ALASKA.

This year the 211th Rescue Squadron deployed in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE. While deployed, the 211th Rescue Squadron executed multi-unit movement with minimum warning before an Iran Theater Ballistic Missile Attack, saving 257 lives with a record breaking 100 passenger movement at once, providing over watch and refuel for armed response efforts, enabling post-attack airfield reconnaissance.

The 176th Wing is poised to expand into new missions and continues to forecast and prepare for upcoming deployments around the world. The Midnight Sun Guardians proactively seek opportunities to establish and maintain healthy, mutually beneficial relationships with total force and mission partners, community, state, and federal leaders, agencies, and offices.

## Mission Assurance

On any given day, the AKANG had Airmen deployed worldwide in support of the federal mission with no degradation of service to the State of Alaska. AKANG members performed superbly in multiple world-wide deployments, operations, and international/national/state-level exercises throughout the year. Airmen provided direct support to the US President, RESOLUTE SHIELD, INHERENT RESOLVE, FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, ARCTIC EAGLE, ICEX, DEEP FREEZE (Antarctica), and NOBLE EAGLE, Exercise RED FLAG-ALASKA, and the NASA Manned Spaceflight Program. Additionally, AKANG members provided security, operations, and support across the globe for Exercises Judicious Response, Key Resolve, Ulchi Focus Guardian, Pacific Sentry, and Pacific Aloha.

Preserving expeditionary capabilities is equally important to the AKANG. Civil Engineer Squadron members piloted a \$3.5 billion host nation development program at

Al Udeid Air Base, planning 370 projects to replace expeditionary buildings and sustain operations through the next 20 years. AKANG Security Forces members provided over 5000 days of support for the construction of a \$3 billion Long Range Discrimination Radar.

### **Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) and Emergency Management**

The Alaska Air National Guard's search-and-rescue (SAR) Mission continues to play a critical role across Alaska. The Alaska Command (ALCOM) Alaska Rescue Coordination Center (AKRCC) is manned 24/7 by 12 members of the 176th Wing. For fiscal year 2019, the men and women of AKRCC coordinated 153 SAR Missions across six Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components, and multiple Good Samaritan volunteer agencies resulting in 107 lives saved year to date. These efforts helped the AKRCC reach its 5,811th SAR Mission and an incredible MILESTONE 2,500th life saved since July 1, 1994.

Additionally, the AKANG personnel supported two declared wildfires “Disaster Emergencies” for over nine days, establishing a command post, providing 14 checkpoint volunteers, and two additional members manning the Joint Operations Center.

### **Community Engagements**

AKANG members volunteered and served local communities, organizations, and remote Alaska villages, supporting hundreds of events throughout the state. This year, AKANG members participated in five domestic operations and trauma training platforms, including Patriot North, Patriot South, Artic Eagle, Fairbank’s Veterans’ Stand Down, and RUSH Trauma Training.

The AKANG continued the 63-year tradition generating two Operation Santa missions, ferrying over 6,000 pounds of donations to two rural Alaska villages. Additionally, the AKANG established a recruiting presence in Juneau, providing greater opportunity for Alaskans to join.

The AKANG’s culture is one of respect, empowerment, safety, and compliance with DOD, Air Force, National Guard Bureau, and The Adjutant General’s policy directives. The establishment of the Joint Diversity Executive Council furthers the AKANG goal of inclusion and diversity within our workforce. The Alaska Air National Guard is committed to providing ready and lethal forces to execute global, theatre, and state operations. Airmen are committed to serving the communities in which they work and live. The AKANG will continue to provide combat-ready, adaptable airmen, able to respond to the state’s and nation’s call.

# ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

## **Mission**

The Alaska Army National Guard builds and maintains ready units and Soldiers that are prepared to support the Governor and fellow Alaskans for domestic operations and deploy worldwide in support of US National Strategy.

The Alaska Army National Guard (AKARNG) faced both challenges and opportunities in 2019. Changes to force structure, the demands of deployments, and commitments to mission and community partners tested the limits of the AKARNG organizations and Soldiers. The summary below highlights just a few accomplishments and reaffirms the perennial professional excellence, selfless service, and outstanding technical competence of Alaska's Army National Guard Citizen-Soldiers.

## **Force Structure and Modernization**

The AKARNG continued managing changes to units and facilities in a way that best supports training, mission requirements, and the stationing of units and Soldiers in Alaska's communities. Army force structure adjustments at the national level precipitated significant changes for AKARNG units, personnel, and equipment. Specifically, a reduction of authorized personnel from 1741 to 1624 and major changes to the aviation unit resulted in a more diverse inventory of helicopters and an additional airplane for a total of 24 aircraft. Despite the changes, the AKARNG possesses the capability and capacity to execute its federal and state missions.

The AKARNG Construction and Facilities Maintenance Office (CFMO) made great strides in "right-sizing" the facilities footprint by executing facility improvement projects and divesting excess land, buildings, and property across Alaska. Construction began on the \$21.5 million United States Property and Fiscal Office on Camp Denali and CFMO executed \$7.18 million in facility improvement projects. Additionally, 11 armories were divested which reduced overhead costs and directed critical manpower and funding towards active armories and other projects.

## **Mission Assurance**

Once again, the organization demonstrated it is an operational force capable of mobilizing, deploying, and successfully operating anywhere in the world when called

to active duty. AKARNG units supported multiple regional exercises in Asia and Europe in addition to contingency operations in the Middle East.

The 1-297 Infantry Battalion deployed to Kosovo for a year-long mission to ensure a safe and secure environment in the Balkans. The 297<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company deployed to Kuwait for a year to provide base and personal security. The 49<sup>th</sup> Personnel Detachment redeployed from Kuwait after a year-long mission providing personnel accountability support for the theater. The 208th Construction Management Team also redeployed from Jordan where they managed construction projects for a year. The AKARNG continued support of its Mongolian partners in Afghanistan with two liaison teams as leadership and training mentors. Alaska's state partnership with Mongolia began in 2003, and the AKARNG has continued the combat mission partnership since 2004. Additionally, the AKARNG had five individual augmenters that mobilized in support of missions in Kuwait, Afghanistan, Djibouti, and Mongolia.

In addition to contingency operations, Alaska Army Guard units conducted overseas deployment training and exercises in Mongolia, Romania, and Germany.

### **Arctic Expertise**

In 2019, the AKARNG continued Arctic skills training with the goal of increasing Soldier survivability and unit performance in extreme cold weather operations. The 1-297<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion conducted annual training at the Yukon Training Area in conjunction with Exercise Arctic Eagle. The AKARNG Soldiers training focused on conducting the cold weather indoctrination course and an Arctic Skills Field Problem. With temperatures as low as -30F, the Arctic skills training challenged participants and tested field-craft skills, remote communications capabilities, and ground transportation capabilities in extreme cold weather and high latitude environments. Observers from the Mongolian Armed Forces and the Canadian 39<sup>th</sup> CBG also attended the event.

In June, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crews conducted recovery operations in support of Operation Colony Glacier, flying 93 hours in support of the mission. AKARNG aviators have supported this operation since 2012 when an AKARNG Blackhawk crew on a routine training flight discovered a C-124 Globemaster cargo plane that crashed in November 1952.

### **Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) and Emergency Management**

The Alaska Army Guard improved its record of working with local, state, and federal partners. At the local level, units participated in emergency management planning events with local community law enforcement, search and rescue groups, and local emergency planning committees. At the state and federal level, we partnered with the

Alaska Department of Public Safety, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Interior, the Alaska Division of Forestry, and other agencies in an effort to increase overall emergency management response capacity for Alaska.

Not only did the AKARNG prepare, it responded. In 2019, the AKARNG supported the AK Division of Forestry wildland fire fighting efforts throughout the state with personnel and aviation assets. Additionally, Army Guard aviation assets located in Bethel, Fairbanks, Juneau, Nome, and on JBER responded to emergency and search and rescue missions across the state. The Aviation team flew over 155 hours in support of wildland fires, search and rescue missions, and medevac missions.

The AKARNG Aviation Battalion supported Operation Guardian Support (OGS), assisting U.S. Customs and Border Protection starting in April 2019. Throughout the year Aviation had over 20 Soldiers support the mission from anywhere to two weeks to several months. The unit provided much needed UH60 Blackhawk maintenance, pilot, and operations support to the Arizona National Guard.

Additionally, AKARNG Aviation flew 19 hours in support of the Innovative Readiness Training project facilitating the relocation of the village of Newtok to Mertarvik from 10 Jun-31 Aug 2019.

## **Community Engagements**

Throughout the state, the AKARNG supported and participated in hundreds of events with schools, community organizations, Native corporations, tribal organizations, and Chambers of Commerce, educating fellow Alaskans about career opportunities, organizational services, and the benefits of Army Guard service. The AKARNG conducted community-level key leader engagements throughout rural Alaska and hosted open houses, showcasing Soldiers, equipment, and available career paths to Alaskans. These open houses provided participants direct interaction with Alaska Guard members who shared their service experiences, and the events afforded the opportunity for citizens to see and handle military equipment and ask questions. The AKARNG maintained its full-time recruiting force in Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna, Fairbanks, Juneau, Bethel, and Sitka and further expanded to Nome in 2019 with the intent of increasing enlistments and, ultimately, Army Guard participation in rural Alaska.

Recruiting engagements revealed an opportunity to partner with schools and youth programs to share military programs and expertise useful for increasing Alaska youth resiliency. Military resiliency programs teach coping skills, health and fitness, anti-bullying, suicide awareness, and many other skills designed to help youth face and

overcome difficult challenges. The partnerships are investments in Alaska's youth, communities, and future.

The Alaska Army National Guard remains committed to its local, state, and federal partners. As shown above, Soldiers and units are ready to deploy and operate anywhere in or outside of Alaska when called. Citizen-Soldiers are dedicated to building relationships that strengthen Alaska communities and improve response capabilities. By achieving the Army's number one priority of readiness, mission-ready Guard members will continue providing the services and results Alaska and AKARNG partners have come to expect.

Always ready, always there!

# VETERANS AFFAIRS

## Mission

The Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs serves as the primary advocate for Alaska's veterans and strives to help our veterans and their families improve their lives. From helping veterans to file claims for education, medical or other benefits to assisting them in obtaining earned military awards, the Office of Veterans Affairs is here to serve you.

## Major Accomplishments

The Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA) establishes and sustains comprehensive advocacy programs for all of Alaska's Veterans, Active Duty, National Guard/Reserves and dependents. The Office of Veterans' Affairs works to:

- Identify and resolve issues that face Alaska's 68,891 veterans and their 151,560 dependents, survivors, and extended families in 348 communities across Alaska;
- Represent the State of Alaska to federal and state agencies and nationally recognized veteran service organizations;
- Build connections between military and veteran populations, veteran groups and service organizations, and local, state and federal government agencies;
- Provide Alaska's veterans with direct services, outreach, and advocacy.

In FY2019, the Office of Veterans' Affairs had four full-time staff who maintained and managed several advocacy programs for Alaska's veterans including: Alaska Veterans Advisory Council (13 members), State Veterans Cemetery planning consultants, Alaska Territorial Guard task force, volunteer Tribal Veteran Representatives, Veterans town hall meetings, Funeral Honors, Veterans Memorial Grant Funds, Veteran Service Officer grants, and the Rural Veteran Outreach Program. Staff members also partnered with other veteran organizations and agencies to prevent homelessness, provide services, reduces suicide, and build connections that serve Veterans and their dependents throughout Alaska.

The economic impact of Alaska Veteran Benefits is significant, averaging just over \$600 million annually over the past nine years. As such, OVA remains keenly focused on connecting Veterans with benefits earned as a result of their service. In 2019, the combined OVA team assisted 78,872 Veterans, active duty, reserve component members, and family members, with federal and state benefits/claims questions and processing. Representatives completed 309 visits around the state, again reaching many veterans for the first time. As a result of these efforts:

- The Veterans Affairs (VA) Mortgage Servicing Assistance program insured issuance of Certificates of Eligibility to 3,137 Veterans, resulting in over \$972 million in home loans
- VA Healthcare System enrollment increased by 1,000 patients for a total of 37,000 – 21,000 Veterans received managed VA care totaling \$383 million in federal funds
- Compensation and pension increased annually \$38 million, for a total of \$333 million federal funds
- Through successfully navigation of the USDVA Appeals board, Veterans and families received over \$87.7 million in single one-time payments
- Over 3,800 veterans attended higher education/certification in Alaska, expending over \$74 M federal funds - \$1.5 million increase

Additional successes include:

- Provided guidelines for the new VA Mission Act using the Alaskan Model of Care – Veterans across the nation now are provided the same medical care as Alaskan Veterans
- Co-Sponsored the National Veterans Golden Age Games held in Anchorage – First time Alaska has seen over 1000 Veterans Athletes in our state from across the nation
- Sponsored and planned a rural claims clinic serving Palmer, Delta Junction and Fairbanks – 242 Veterans filed claims with 80% receiving benefits within 30 days
- Receipt of a \$250,000 federal transportation grant, allowing over 3,800 Veterans funded travel for healthcare – Alaska is the only state in the nation selected
- Veterans Memorial Endowment Grant started the first step for a multi- year improvement project revitalizing a local Veterans Cemetery in Seward
- Established new Veteran Service Officer in Kodiak with 100's of calls of support and now the largest Coast Guard installation in the nations has full time transition support
- Partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs resulted in 52 additional Tribal Veterans Representatives receiving VA 101 trained, increasing the state-wide volunteer pool to 420, the largest Veteran's volunteer corps in the nation
- Partnership with over 60 local service providers to deliver two Stand Down events, serving 2500 Veterans at locations in both northern and southern Alaska
- Co-sponsored a booth at the SW Alaska State Fair serving over 1800 veterans, active duty, and reserve components gain access to VA benefits
- Assisted the Veterans and Family Members Coalition establish the first Veteran Mental Health Summit – Over 500 participated in person with 42 participants via teleconference – garnered such Veterans support this venue is now an annual event

## Key Component Challenges



**Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2021**

The Alaskan VA Healthcare System initiated improvements to the Veterans appointment program by adding a consolidated care team approach and a VA Healthcare System one-stop call program; while many Alaska Veterans are still adjusting to the new program, to date all feedback is very positive. Additionally, in 2019, the Alaskan VA was authorized an additional 100 medical care professionals; most are now hired and appointment wait time is projected to reduce significantly from the current rate of “within 30 days.” In order for the Alaskan VA to keep the new care professionals they will need the ability to shift internal funds and this is currently in the works. Last, VA/Native Healthcare Agreements will continue, ensuring over half of Alaska Veterans receive care closer to home and providing medical coverage to over 96% of Veterans residing in state.

# ALASKA MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

## Mission

The Alaska Military Youth Academy's ChalleNGe Program is designed to meet the life coping skills and educational needs of 16 to 18-year olds. To intervene in and reclaim the lives of at-risk youth.

## Major Accomplishments

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is a 17 ½ month program for teens ages 16 -18 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 30, 1994 as one of the original ten pilot programs and has grown along with the national program. There are currently 41 active sites nationally in 30 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 that they become productive citizens. The first AMYA class in 1994 graduated 43 cadets; the most recent program class (2019-2) graduated 149 cadets. Over 5,900 young men and women have completed this physically demanding and educationally stimulating Program.

The proven Youth ChalleNGe Program holistic model uses a quasi-military, 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 the young adult's life. AMYA runs two residential classes per year, one beginning in April and the other in October.

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. This begins with a two-week Acclimation Period, considered as an extension of the screening process. During this time, the applicants are referred to as “candidates” and 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. Additionally, 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 Acclimation earn the distinction of becoming an AMYA “cadet”.

In the remaining 20 weeks of the Residential Phase, daily activities and experiences like academics, physical fitness, vocational technical education, outdoor adventure training and service to the community add value to the transformation process. These elements build the Cadet’s education level, promotes 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 2019, eligible AMYA cadets successfully completed credit recovery, and 170 earned the award of their high school diploma or GED Test, by examination. Cadets earned up to 7.5 credits toward their secondary education bringing them closer to the required credits should they opt to return to public school for graduation. As a secondary education institution accredited by AdvancED/ NWAC, eligible students can receive an AMYA high school diploma when they meet the State standards, complete the Armed Services Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), 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.

One of the core components of the ChalleNGe program is job skills. AMYA offers exposure to vocational fields that are available when the Graduates enter the post-residential phase of the program. In 2019, AMYA re-established a relationship with the Department of Labor’s Job Corps in order to maximize follow on training opportunities to keep graduates on track. Also, AMYA worked directly with AVTEC in Seward for additional residential training opportunities for those interested in pursuing one of the many trade schools offered by the program. While on campus, Cadets had the

opportunity to receive certification in scaffolding and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10 safety training, and unmanned aerial vehicles (drones). Over 200 graduates completed Community Emergency Responder Training and are a potential resource to their local Emergency Response Teams should the need arise. A select number of cadets complete the Healthcare Specialties Course while other cadets had an opportunity for Culinary Arts ServeSafe® Food Handlers' certification and unmanned aerial vehicle 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 2019-1 and 2019-2 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 a productive member 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 sustained cadet successes and often one of the pivotal 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 share the cadet's desire 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.

Entering into its 27th year of operation, AMYA has graduated over 5,900 cadets from this physically demanding and educationally stimulating program. Additionally, more than 3,800 high school diplomas and/or GED certificates have been awarded 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 impact the next generation of Alaska's families.

# DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

## Mission

DMVA's Division of Administrative Services' (DAS) team of dedicated professionals leverages their unique capabilities to execute the Department's mission, consistent with our Commissioner's and Governor's intent. Our DAS team operationalized their acronym to provide focus on their strategic enabler role. Specifically, they:

1. *Deliver* critical budget, financial management, human resources, information technology, procurement, and administrative products and services;
2. *Assist* colleagues across DMVA in executing their assigned duties and responsibilities; and
3. *Serve* the state's Veteran population and the citizens of Alaska

With DMVA's budget representing just 0.36% of total General Fund in the annual Dunleavy/Meyer Administration budget, the smallest agency budget in the state, our DAS team partnered with other DMVA Divisions to bring significant federal funding to Alaska, as depicted below. In FY2019, a \$16.4M investment in State General Fund dollars was able to leverage \$842.2M in federal funding.

## Major Accomplishments

In FY2019, the Division of Administrative Services' major accomplishments were:

- Provided additional procurement and administrative support to Homeland Security and Emergency Management during the 2018 Cook Inlet Earthquake to include procuring temporary homes for displaced victims
- Restructured DAS into discrete Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable units, allowing for consistent processes and dedicated concentration by task
- Provided weekly federal reports and established a monthly billing cycle, which resulted in timely, increased revenue reimbursement to the State and ability to close-out prior years Master Cooperative Agreement appendices
- Enhanced the budget projection process to increase transparency and appropriately account for expenses and revenue

# ALASKA STATE DEFENSE FORCE

## Mission

The Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF) is a volunteer organization whose role is prescribed by statute for instances when the Alaska National Guard requires augmentation to perform its state mission. Members are equipped and trained for missions including communications, emergency management, medical, logistical support, chaplaincy, and shelter management. Members meet for training on a monthly basis.

One of the primary missions of the ASDF is community involvement. During 2019, this included support to events such as parades, festivals, preparedness training, potlatches, speaking engagements at schools, assisting with training and counseling for substance abuse prevention and anger management, and working with community groups.

ASDF members interact with their local community social and governmental groups in a voluntary status, and in many communities such as in Kotzebue, Nome, Bethel, Kwethluk, Quinhagak, Kodiak, Wasilla, and Utqiagvik, they have stepped up to take a leadership role.

Additionally, ASDF members are involved and hold membership in the Red Cross, Elks, Chamber of Commerce, City and Borough Assemblies, Search and Rescue Teams, Civil Air Patrol, community advisory groups, and talking circles.

ASDF members attend a minimum of 11 drills each year, and many exceed that requirement. During the drill weekend training sessions, members train and prepare to be ready to respond to any natural or man-made disaster. All members are required to complete Incident Management System (ICS) courses and are prepared to act as Liaison Officers if needed during a local disaster or emergency.

Events the ASDF participated in during 2019:

- Assisted the AK Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) with 2018 Earthquake Recovery – 11 members assisted citizens with completing claim forms and helped them to understand the process. This required most of the members to travel and be away from home for weeks at a time. They assisted over 14,000 requests for information and/or assistance.
- Security at Kodiak Launch Facility - The Pacific Spaceport Complex (Alaska Aerospace Corporation) is located on Kodiak Island, hosting commercially

available launch support services for the Aerospace industry. During these launches, the ASDF provided communication and security support missions at no-cost to the State of Alaska. Volunteers provided over 1,000 hours of support.

- Training assistance with the Coast Guard and US Navy – Assisted the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Center in Kodiak as Role Playing Civilians (RPC) and Opposition Force (OPFOR) elements.
- Wildland Fires – Approximately two dozen ASDF members alongside other members of Alaska's organized militia provided security details for the McKinley/Deshka and Swan Lake Fires. They manned check points to control the flow of traffic in and out of the fire areas and cooperated with the Forestry and the Alaska State Troopers to apprehend impaired drivers.
- Traffic Control at Wasilla 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade and Houston Founder's Day – Participated in parades and provided traffic control (pedestrian and vehicular).
- Created 3 New Rural Detachments – Kotzebue, Sitka, Twin Hills - There are plans to establish additional detachments in the future.
- Worked with Red Cross of Alaska – Two senior members of the ASDF Staff are Executive Board members of the Red Cross of Alaska.
- Traffic Control – Kodiak Marathon - During the Kodiak Crab Festival the Alaska State Defense Force provided communications and security personnel in support of the marathon race.
- Search and Rescue (SAR) – Bethel, Kwethluk, Nome, Quinhagak – ASDF members assisted with SAR in the Y-K Delta region.
- Drills Conducted – 14 drills have been conducted that entails essential training.
- Participated in emergency planning and training in Nome.
- Assisted with youth substance abuse prevention in Kotzebue.

# RURAL OPERATIONS

## **Mission**

Systematically execute DMVA operations throughout rural Alaska, using a hub approach, to ensure a ready response capability for state declared disasters. We strive to continue a strong relationship going forward.

## **Priorities**

- (1) Cultivate relationships before declared disasters and assistance is requested
- (2) Demonstrate capability and capacity to support Alaskan communities
- (3) Conduct annual Domestic Operations Exercise at a hub location
- (4) Build federal readiness
- (5) Expand response ability through increased locally trained professionals
- (6) Rapidly provide requested assistance for declared events