

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

WINTER 2011/2012

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WARRIORS

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Cover. The TacSat-4 mobile communications satellite rises into a highly elliptical orbit in September. The communications satellite was launched on an Air Force Minotaur 4 rocket from the Kodiak Launch Complex, owned by the Alaska Aerospace Corporation.

Photos: Courtesy of Alaska Aerospace Corporation



Winner. Alaska Army National Guard Sergeant First Class Samuel Ethridge sits on his new 2012 Harley Davidson Sportster 48 XL1200X while his son, Trevor, sits on a new toy sled snowmachine provided by 7Up of Alaska. Ethridge, while shopping at the commissary on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, entered to win a new Harley last summer and won. Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

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veterans and families are invited and encouraged. Please send articles and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, complete mailing address and comments to:

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For the People

Governor Sean Parnell
Commander in Chief



New Year Prioritizes Preparedness

Happy New Year! I commend each of you for a job well done throughout this past year. We have much to be grateful for here in Alaska – with many thanks going to our troops who are at home and abroad protecting our freedoms and assisting those in need across our world. I am proud of your extraordinary efforts and also thank your family members for their sacrifices throughout the year.

The Alaska National Guard successfully completed several overseas deployments last year, and I was happy to welcome home many of our Guard members. Most recently, I had the privilege of welcoming home Airmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Airlift Squadron when they returned from Afghanistan. This was the largest deployment in the 144th Airlift Squadron's history, and our Guard members were successful in providing tactical airlift and air drop support.

More than 120 Soldiers from the Alaska Army National Guard's B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment will be deploying to Afghanistan in February. They have completed final training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., and will be in Afghanistan through the end of the year. While they are deployed, these Soldiers will be providing much needed security to Provincial Reconstruction Teams – those who are rebuilding Afghanistan's infrastructure and agricultural platforms. These teams work in potentially dangerous areas and will rely on our Alaska Army National Guardsmen to keep them safe. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with all of our deployed Soldiers and their families at home.

This is also the time of year when harsh weather can strike with little warning. The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and our Guard

members have been active in helping communities prepare for and meet disasters in order to keep Alaskans safe and minimize damage. I deeply appreciate your meeting Alaskans' needs at these points of vulnerability. I am encouraging all Alaskans to be prepared to keep their families safe in case of emergency or disaster, and we have prioritized disaster preparedness in our proposed 2013 budget.

Sandy and I extend our warm wishes for the New Year to each of you.

Sean Parnell
Governor



Meet and Greet. Governor Sean Parnell talks with Lieutenant Colonel Blake Gettys, 176th Operations Group commander, Alaska Air National Guard, while walking to the flight line to greet Alaska Air National Guard members returning to Alaska after a three-month deployment to Afghanistan. Photo: Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs



The Adjutant General

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



Making a Difference

With the nation focused on Alaska this winter, a storm of “epic” proportions threatened communities in western Alaska, record snowfalls pounded Cordova and the Coast Guard led an ice breaker to help deliver fuel to Nome. Amidst international media attention, Alaskans proved that preparation and readiness are key to mitigating the potential damage and loss of life during these events. Without a doubt, these efforts are a true credit to the members of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs.

Leading the charge, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management synchronized efforts with private, local, state and federal agencies while executing the state’s emergency response plans. Quick to respond, their coordination in the State Emergency Operations Center demonstrated that the continued efforts of DMVA in training, planning, and building relationships ensured the individuals, families and communities were prepared.

Members of the Alaska Army National Guard were also pivotal to providing support to the residents of the Kenai Peninsula Borough when high winds left thousands of home and business without power. The Alaska Army National Guard opened the armory to provide a shelter for local citizens, working closely with the borough, Red Cross and community emergency response team members to support civilian authorities. This is a true testament to what it means to be a citizen-Soldier prepared to assist in any domestic emergency.

In support of our national defense, 126 Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers of B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment, departed for Camp Atterbury, Ind., in November for their final pre-mobilization and validation training before leaving the United States for Afghanistan this February. In Afghanistan, the Soldiers will provide Security Forces Operations for Provincial Reconstruction Teams in potentially dangerous areas. This is a significant mission that our Soldiers have been preparing for over the last year.

Finally, more than 30 Alaska Air National Guard Security Forces members from the 168th Air Refueling Wing were welcomed home from Iraq in late December. These Alaska Guard members provided security near Baghdad International Airport and were pivotal to the departure of the final American troops. Their dedication led to the successful transition during the final days of U.S. ownership and ensured the continued safety of American service men and women before departing Iraq for the last time.

I would encourage all members of DMVA to take a moment and reflect on their tremendous accomplishments. They can take pride in knowing they have made a difference. Alaska is a far safer place as a direct result of the dedication, professionalism, and commitment of the men and women of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. ■



Importance of the Guard. Governor Sean Parnell, left, and Major General Thomas Katkus, right, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, visit with the chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Craig McKinley, in October to discuss issues of concern to the National Guard at the state level and to ask how best they can help McKinley get his message heard about the importance of the Guard. Photo: Courtesy of National Guard Bureau



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Dispatches from the Front...

Airmen return from Afghanistan

By Captain John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs



JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska ...

Participants in the largest deployment in the history of the Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Airlift Squadron returned to Alaska in late August and early September after a 90-day tour of duty in Afghanistan.

The 125 members of the 176th Wing were stationed at Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Most of those returning are members of the wing's 144th Airlift Squadron. Operating C-130 tactical airlift airplanes, these men and women supported United States efforts throughout the region with intratheater airlift and airdrops of men, supplies and equipment.

The mission also included a significant number of deployers from the



wing's two maintenance squadrons – the 176th Maintenance Squadron and the 176th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron – plus a handful of support personnel from other wing units.

"Our Airmen performed superbly, and we are very proud of their service in Afghanistan," said Brigadier General Chuck Foster, then-176th Wing commander. "We are very happy to have them back in Alaska with their families, friends and loved ones." ■

Welcome Home, Mom.

Technical Sergeant Stephanie Carrier, 176th aviation resource management, is greeted by her son after returning from a 90-day deployment to Afghanistan. She was one of 125 members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing who deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs



Hugs. Captain Scott Dickerson, 144th Airlift Squadron navigator, is welcomed home with hugs from his two daughters. Dickerson was part of the 144th Airlift Squadron's largest deployment last fall and spent 90 days providing airlift support in Afghanistan.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs



Anticipation. Family members and coworkers eagerly await Alaska Air National Guard 176th Wing members to step off the C-130 Hercules after landing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The Guard members were deployed to Afghanistan for three months and stationed at Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

Where in the World

Air Guard provides security in Baghdad

By Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale,
DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... More than 30 Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing, based out of Eielson Air Force Base, provided security near Baghdad International Airport from October to December.

The Guard members from the 168th Security Forces joined with 25 other security forces squadrons to provide security, law and order and ensure a successful transition during the U.S. military drawdown, according to Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Elliot, 168th Security Forces commander who also assumed command of the 447th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron upon deployment to Iraq.

"This is no small feat, given the scope and scale of all the things that must be done to make the transfer of ownership not just successful, but safe," Elliot said. "And these defenders have risen to the challenge by going above and beyond what has been asked of them."

While deployed, members from the 168th Security Forces also participated in a monthly "Good Neighbor Program," which takes donated food and clothing from the air base and distributes them to local Iraqi children and families.

"They put their lives on the line every day," Elliot said. "We are safe and sleep well because these defenders are willing to give of themselves to protect others." ■

Mongolia

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Fort Leavenworth •
Arizona



Back Home. 168th Security Forces members are greeted by friends and family at the Fairbanks International Airport after returning in December from a three-month deployment to Iraq. The Guard members from the 168th Security Forces joined with 25 other Security Forces Squadrons to provide security, law and order and ensure a successful transition during the U.S. military drawdown. Photo: Technical Sergeant Cornelius Mingo, 168th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs



Securing Iraq. 168th Security Forces members gather together at Sather Air Base in Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq. More than 30 Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing, based out of Eielson Air Force Base, provided security near Baghdad International Airport for nearly three months. Photo: Courtesy of 168th Security Forces

Angel Thunder 2011 Trains Rescuers

By Staff Sergeant Karima Turner,
DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... More than 70 Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 176th Wing participated in a search and rescue exercise in Arizona in October.

Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons and support personnel from the 176th Operational Support Squadron took part in Angel Thunder 2011.

Angel Thunder, which hosts both national and international search and rescue entities, is dedicated to saving lives and is considered the largest exercise of its kind in the world.

"This exercise primarily focused on personnel recovery," said Major Joseph Conroy, 212th Rescue Squadron commander. "The Alaska rescue triad (HH-60, HC-130 and Guardian Angels) utilized the exercise for deployment preparation."

It's important for specialized units such as the 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons to participate in exercises such as this because the scenarios

Warfighter Exercise.

More than 40 Soldiers from the Alaska Army National Guard's 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade Headquarters traveled to Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in support of the 35th Infantry Division Full Spectrum "Warfighter" Exercise in September. The exercise is one of the toughest and most demanding command post exercises Army units experience. Soldiers experienced state-of-the-art simulations, which created a virtual battlefield for commanders to maneuver division forces against a formidable enemy in a totally interactive environment. Photo: Courtesy of 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade



Welding. Private Kekoa Macloves, a 207th Combat Support Company welder, left, receives guidance on welding the floor of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle from Chief Warrant Officer Robert Stillwell, 207th CSC, unit maintenance technician. Macloves, along with 95 additional Soldiers, had the opportunity to participate in training specific to his Military Occupational Specialty during annual training in November in Camp Dodge, Iowa. Photo: Staff Sergeant Angela Horn, 207th Combat Support Company



Refuel. Private First Class Joseph Adams, a 207th Combat Support Company truck driver, refuels a palletized load system during a two-week annual training in Camp Dodge, Iowa, in November. Ninety-six Soldiers from the 207th CSC participated in the training event. Photo: First Lieutenant Jeremy Nielson, 207th Combat Support Company

Soldiers Train at Premier Site

By Staff Sergeant Karima Turner,
DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...

Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers from the 207th Combat Support Company traveled nearly 3,000 miles to Camp Dodge, Iowa, for two weeks of annual training in November.

Ninety-six Soldiers from the 207th CSC ate, slept and trained at the National Maintenance Training center, learning how to perform their jobs and operate in a combat environment.

The Soldiers' Military Occupational Specialties ranged from mechanics and fuelers to water purification specialists and specialty machine repairers.

In addition to expanding the knowledge base of their MOS, the Soldiers also worked on vehicle convoy operations using the vehicle convoy operations trainer, humvee egress assistance trainer and the engagement skills trainer.

"Having the opportunity to go to Camp Dodge is crucial to our mission because my Soldiers had the chance to hone the skills required of them both in and out of combat," said First Lieutenant Jeremy Nielson, 207th CSC, acting commander.

"The truck drivers drove approximately 100 miles each way, from Camp Dodge, in a variety of vehicles, carrying different loads so they could tie them down and haul them properly," said First Sergeant Charlie Hooper, 207th CSC.

"The fuelers learned proper paperwork procedures for fuel handling, went out to fuel our line-haulers' trucks, and learned how to set up the containment area and spill kits. Our water purification specialists even had the opportunity to set up and run different variations of the water purification systems Camp Dodge has and were only the second Guard purification specialists to actually purify and bottle their own water while they were there."

Hooper said because of the ever-changing tactics, techniques and procedures in today's combat zones, the best way to ensure that his Soldiers' training is current is to take advantage of the training Camp Dodge has to offer. ■

played out in the exercise mirror those that are actually taking place in everyday situations.

"This is great spin-up training for a potential real world natural disaster here in Alaska or wartime deployment," said Captain Brian Nosich, 176th Wing, Operational Support Squadron, intelligence officer. "No amount of research can match going and practicing in these events, and it's a great opportunity to meet personnel recovery professionals from recovery units from across the United States and other nations."

During Angel Thunder 2011 the various search and rescue entities practiced combat

search and rescue, urban search and rescue, and humanitarian search and rescue operations.

"Although Angel Thunder is a U.S. Air Force sponsored personnel recovery exercise, other Department of Defense assets also participated to help validate and refine tactics, techniques and procedures that are brought to the battlefield," said Major Eric Budd, tactics officer, 176th Wing, Operations Support Squadron. "The joint training gave the Alaska Air National Guard rescue squadrons and support units a wider knowledge base to draw from when responding to exercises or contingencies in the joint arena." ■

Launch. An Air Force Minotaur 4 rocket launches from the Kodiak Launch Complex, owned by the Alaska Aerospace Corporation, at sunrise in September.

Kodiak Launch Dedicated to Fallen Warriors

Story and photos by Alaska Aerospace Corporation

KODIAK, Alaska ... The Department of Defense, Office of Operationally Responsive Space dedicated the TacSat-4 mission, an experimental tactical communication satellite launched from the Kodiak Launch Complex in September, in memory of the 30 U.S. service members who made the ultimate sacrifice when their helicopter was shot down in Afghanistan on Aug. 6.

The Chinook helicopter, call sign Extortion 17, was participating in a military operation supporting the International Security Assistance Force when it was shot down in the rugged Tangi Valley in Wardak province. The team aboard Extortion 17 included members of the elite U.S. Navy SEAL Team Six, U.S. Air Force combat controllers, a canine handler and his dog, and U.S. Army aviators from B Company, Task Force Knighthawk.

"There may be no tribute that fully honors what this brave team did for our country," said Dale Nash, Alaska Aerospace Corporation CEO. "The name Navy SEAL Team Six leaves an indelible image among us for their valor in America's most celebrated post-9/11 military missions. But three months after removing Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, our nation mourned the loss of 22 members of this elite team and the other heroes aboard Extortion 17. We owe them our thanks."

The selection of the Kodiak Launch Complex by the federal government for this mission demonstrates the significance of Alaska as a launch complex serving the needs of our nation. The TacSat-4 satellite will provide enhanced space-based communication to U.S. forces worldwide and increase the ability of U.S. service members to effectively communicate while on the move at higher latitudes and geographically obscured areas such as is experienced in Afghanistan. The Office of Operationally Responsive Space funded the launch; the Office of Naval Research, through the Naval Research Laboratory, sponsored development of the satellite; and the Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, through the Space Development and Test Directorate, managed the launch, with the rocket built by Orbital Sciences Corporation. ■



Rocket. A rocket built by Orbital Sciences Corporation sits at the Kodiak Launch Complex in September ready for deployment. The rocket carried a mobile communications satellite into orbit to provide space-based communication to U.S. forces worldwide.



Into Orbit. The TacSat-4 mobile communications satellite rises into a highly elliptical orbit in September. The communications satellite was launched on an Air Force Minotaur 4 rocket from the Kodiak Launch Complex, owned by the Alaska Aerospace Corporation.



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State Partnership Program Strengthened During Ambassador Visit

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The Alaska National Guard hosted the U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia in October, helping to strengthen an already positive relationship between the United States and Mongolia.

The Honorable Jonathan Addleton, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mongolia, made his first visit to Alaska to meet National Guard, community and state leaders.

"The Alaska and Mongolia partnership is regarded in the Pentagon as one of the strongest relationships," Addleton said. "It's really an inspired relationship where the initial military contacts have become the platform for something very different."

Something different indeed. Addleton, who also visited with Alaska National Guard Soldiers acting as liaisons to Mongolians in Kabul, Afghanistan, earlier this year, feels the partnership is a bridge connecting the two countries.

"The reality is that Mongolia and Alaska are similar in some respects," Addleton said. "They are physically the same size, relatively sparsely populated and have logistics requirements that are sometimes daunting. You have the mineral-driven economy in both cases, and Alaska's experience in all that offers something to Mongolia as well."

Major Wayne Don, the Alaska National Guard State Partnership Program director, feels the ambassador's visit was important because it went beyond the security aspect of the military-to-military relationship and focused on the economy and education, too.



First Visit to Alaska. From left: Major Wayne Don, Alaska National Guard State Partnership Program director; Ambassador Jonathan Addleton, U.S. ambassador to Mongolia; Governor Sean Parnell; and Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. Addleton made his first visit to Alaska to meet National Guard, community and state leaders in October. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

"It was important to look at the programs and linkages outside of a strict security relationship between Alaska and Mongolia," Don said. "We have a sister city relationship between Erdenet, Mongolia, and Fairbanks, Alaska, and an agreement with the Mongolian University of Science and Technology and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. There is also a growing number of students on both the University of Alaska Fairbanks and University of Alaska Anchorage campuses because of the relationship."

A program that began as a military-to-military relationship has now created exceptional opportunities for both countries, and according to Addleton, both sides benefit from the relationship.

"Without a doubt, in terms of the broader bilateral relationship between our two countries, the state partnership program is a positive dimension," Addleton said. "If this is sustained, it will continue to strengthen. It has already come a long way, and I suspect it will come even further in the years ahead." ■



State Partnership. Ambassador Jonathan Addleton, center with red tie, U.S. ambassador to Mongolia, met with members of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs during a working lunch in October at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. As part of the National Guard State Partnership Program, the Alaska National Guard and Mongolia have been partnered since 2003. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs



Governor Declares State Disaster for Kenai Peninsula Windstorms

By Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM

JUNEAU, Alaska ... Governor Sean Parnell declared in December a state disaster for the November 2011 Central Kenai Peninsula windstorms.

The declaration authorizes the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to activate the state's disaster recovery public assistance programs and to request a federal disaster declaration for public assistance. The public assistance program is designed to help state, local and tribal governmental entities, as well as certain private nonprofit organizations, restore infrastructure damaged by a specific event to pre-disaster conditions.

A series of high wind events on the Kenai Peninsula, beginning on Nov. 1, 2011, and continuing through Nov. 19, combined with freezing temperatures and high water levels, resulted in widespread and severe damage to electrical distribution systems. Approximately 17,300 homes and businesses lost power for up to 48 hours.

"The absence of power in the middle of winter can have a series of negative effects that cascade throughout a community," Parnell said. "The Kenai Peninsula Borough and Homer Electric Association did an excellent job restoring power. Now that the power is restored, discussions include potential mitigation efforts to prevent future disruptions of the power distribution system."

On Nov. 22, the Kenai Peninsula Borough declared a local disaster emergency and requested that Governor Parnell make a declaration of disaster emergency for assistance in recovering



Damage Repairs. Linemen with Homer Electric Association repair damaged power lines along the Kenai Peninsula after November windstorms left approximately 17,300 homes and businesses without power for as much as 48 hours.

Photos: Courtesy of Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

emergency response costs and repairing storm-related damages exceeding local capabilities.

On Nov. 28, a DHS&EM preliminary damage assessment team deployed to Soldotna. Working with the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the preliminary damage assessment team estimated response and repair costs to be \$2.6 million. The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities reports an additional \$5.1 million in damages to Outer Beach Road.

During the November storm, the Kenai Peninsula Borough opened three warming stations and two evacuation centers. Homer Electric Association hired an additional 32 linemen who, working with 21 Homer Electric Association linemen, expedited repairs and successfully restored power.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough is requesting help from the public in determining the damages from November's windstorms and power outages. Individuals with property damage from the storms are asked to complete a survey, as soon as possible, at the borough website, www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency. ■

AIRBORNE UNIT BOUND FOR AFGHANISTAN

Leaving Alaska. Guardsmen from B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard, walk onto the flight line at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in November to board a plane to Camp Atterbury, Ind., where the unit received final training in preparation for a deployment to Afghanistan.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs



Goodbye Hug. Private First Class Fred Ulroan, B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment, shares a smile and hug with his son, Kevin, during a Yellow Ribbon program in Bethel for his unit. Ulroan is deployed to Afghanistan for a one-year tour.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

By Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... More than 120 Alaska Army National Guardsmen left Alaska in November for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Soldiers of B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment spent a few months in Indiana for their final pre-mobilization and validation training before leaving the United States for Afghanistan.

"B Company was motivated throughout their pre-mobilization training, and they accomplished everything they needed to," said Captain Jason Caldwell, B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment commander. "They worked cohesively, which is important for them to be successful, and they've accomplished a lot in a very short amount of time."

In Afghanistan, the Soldiers of the 1-143rd will provide security forces operations for Provincial

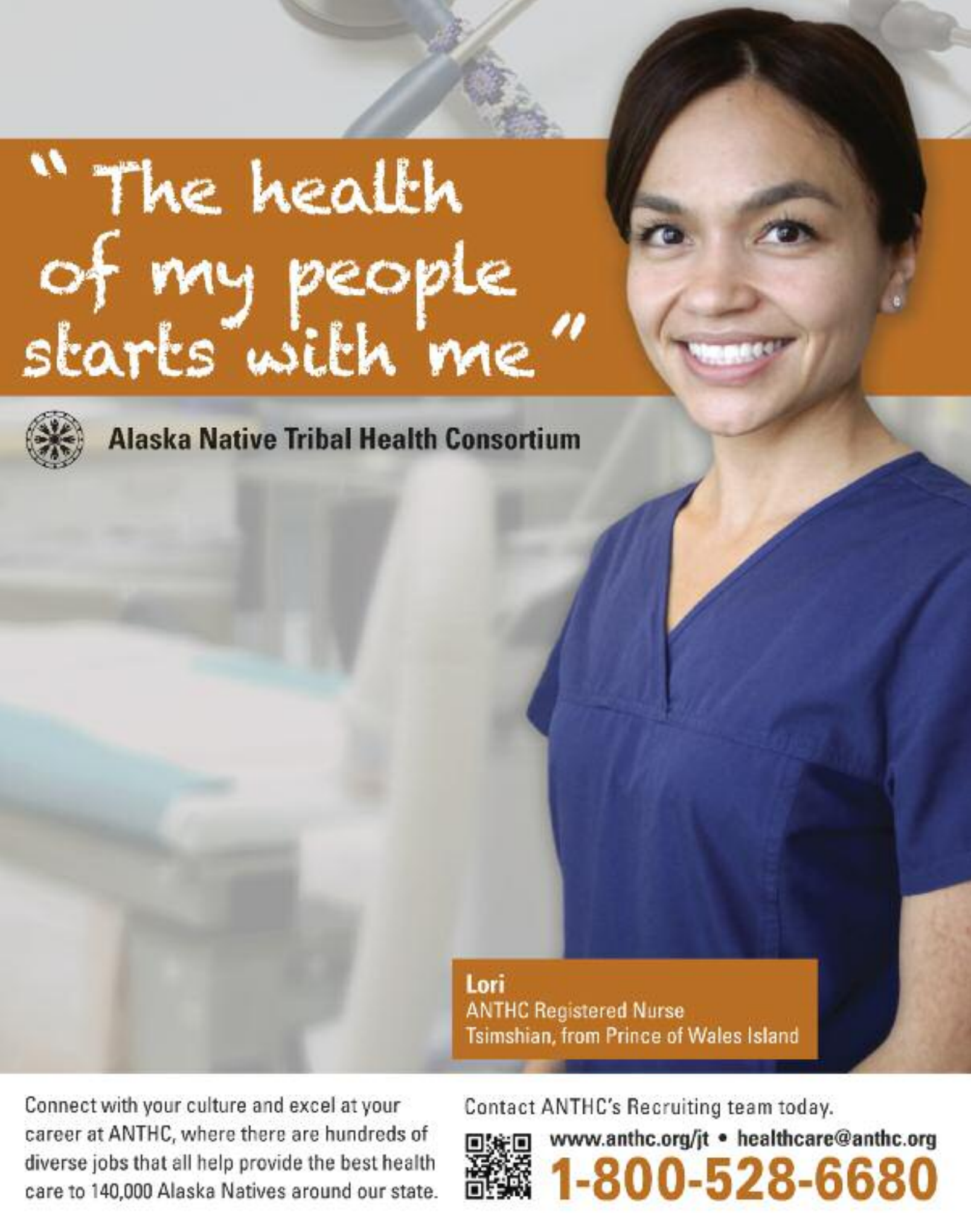
Reconstruction Teams. The PRT operate in potentially dangerous areas to rebuild infrastructure, assist with agriculture, build wells and provide health care.

"We've been training hard, preparing for this deployment, and I'm very proud that my Soldiers have stepped up and met every challenge they've faced," Caldwell said. "I want them to continue to act in a professional manner and successfully complete their missions in Afghanistan, but my number one priority for this deployment is everyone comes back safe to their families."

The deploying Soldiers hail from Anchorage, Bethel, Chevak, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Eagle River, Ekwok, Emmonak, Fairbanks, Fort Greely, Hooper Bay, Houston, Juneau, Kipnuk, Kodiak, Kongiganak, Kwethluk, Little Diomedea, Marshal, Nikiski, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Port Graham, Quinhagak, Scammon Bay, Shishmaref, Sitka, Tuluksak, Upper Kalskag, Valdez, Wasilla and Wrangell. ■

Deployment. Soldiers from B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment stand in formation during their deployment ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in November. The Guardsmen have deployed to Afghanistan where their mission is to provide security forces operations for Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs





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Alaska State Defense Force

Headquarters Moves to ALCANTRA ARMORY

Story and photos by Brigadier General Roger E. Holl, Alaska State Defense Force

WASILLA, Alaska ... During the summer of 2011, the Alaska State Defense Force moved its brigade headquarters and two battalions from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to Alcantra Armory on Bogard Road in Wasilla.

The new home for the Alaska State Defense Force headquarters has many advantages for training and future development of the organization. The Alaska State Defense Force is a state entity under the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. As such, it is appropriate its headquarters and activities are now on state property, rather than on a federal military base.

The brigade headquarters is housed in the uniquely Alaska setting of the Alcantra log cabin. Sergeant First Class James York, ASDF, volunteered his time during the summer to restore the log cabin, including oiling the logs and painting the entry way to match surrounding buildings. The result is the log cabin is aesthetically pleasing with its fresh finish and looks as it did many years ago. The ASDF takes pride in its new quarters.



Log Cabin. Sergeant First Class James York, Alaska State Defense Force, stands in front of the Alcantra log cabin at the Alcantra Armory in Wasilla in August. He dedicated countless hours to refurbishing the log cabin, showing that the ASDF takes great pride in its new facilities.

The Defense Force is also able to make shared and efficient use of existing facilities at the Alcantra Armory such as the drill hall, storage and other buildings. By good scheduling practices, the ASDF can use much of the armory when it is not otherwise in use.

Alcantra offers space to train outdoors as well. It is also the site of the new Officer Candidate School for the ASDF and the Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Academy.

The storage needs for equipment and trailers of the ASDF have been met by sharing space in the fenced vehicle yard and the construction of a new storage facility for use by the ASDF. Therefore, much of the ASDF can mobilize directly from the Alcantra Armory.

The Alaska State Defense Force has located the 2nd Battalion at Alcantra. This provides military support for field operations in addition to communication capabilities from the 4th Battalion, also located there.

Already, the ASDF has participated in several major events at Alcantra. In May 2011, the ASDF was posted at Alcantra to participate in the communications aspects of the Alaska National Guard Strategic National Stockpile Exercise. The role of the Alaska State Defense Force is to augment the National Guard when needed.

In August 2011, the ASDF hosted its statewide Senior Leadership Conference at Alcantra. Senior officers, commanders and noncommissioned officers were brought in from throughout the state to be introduced to the organizational requirements, administrative guidelines and training programs implemented by the Alaska State Defense Force. Alcantra Armory served as an excellent venue for the conference.

The Alaska State Defense Force looks forward to expanded training opportunities and its future at the Alcantra Armory as the facility continues to develop and grow. ■



Leadership. Members of the Alaska State Defense Force attend the Senior Leadership Conference in August at the ASDF's new headquarters at the Alcantra Armory in Wasilla.



Education

Teaching Resiliency Methods. Second Lieutenant Robert Parrish, standing, state master resilience training coordinator, Alaska National Guard, talks to Alaska Military Youth Academy cadets about resiliency skills and the Action-Thought-Consequence model in December. This model is one of the resiliency techniques from the Army Resiliency Program that Parrish teaches.

Cadets Learn Skills to Deal with Adversity

Story and photo by Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP CARROLL, Alaska ... Many of the Alaska Military Youth Academy cadets are considered at-risk youth, coming from adverse environments that don't encourage growth or resilience, the ability to bounce back after facing adversity.

After graduation, one of the challenges cadets face is returning to the environments they initially left when joining AMYA.

Second Lieutenant Robert Parrish, state master resilience training coordinator, Alaska National Guard, saw this and

reached out to the cadre at AMYA, offering to provide resiliency training to the cadets and even the cadre.

"We are trying to do some outreach with the whole resiliency program," Parrish said. "One of the places we're doing that is the Alaska Military Youth Academy, and the reason we are trying to bring it to the Alaska Military Youth Academy is because they are at-risk youth. A lot of those kids have had problems in school, have had to deal with adversity and maybe don't get these skills or don't learn them. We are teaching them resilience skills so that when they finish with the academy, they have

these skills to fall back on and deal with that adversity when they get home."

While the Army Resiliency Program focuses on military and deployment issues, Parrish said that they have adapted the program to the kinds of scenarios the cadets may face.

"The training we are giving the cadets is modeled on the Army Resiliency Program but tailored to the cadets. They are learning how to positively deal with potentially negative issues," Parrish said. "Essentially we are teaching them skills to use to help them thrive and snap back from adversity."

In the resiliency program, there are seven core skills and two sub-skills that teach varying techniques to look at and react to situations in a more positive manner.

"It's helped me think before I act and follow the Action-Thought-Consequence model and think the situations through my head before I make a decision," said Joseph Lindhartsen, Alaska Military Youth Academy cadet. "I think the resiliency training is going to help me when I graduate, because before, when I was around my friends, instead of thinking before I acted, I would just follow what they did and listen to what they said instead of making my own decisions. I think the training is going to help me make the right decisions." ■

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Historic Airfield

Has Dynamic Future

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

BRYANT ARMY AIRFIELD, Alaska

... There are similar places all across Alaska like Bryant Army Airfield on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Listen closely and you can almost hear the men and women who've worked in the hangars, shops and on the flightline. Their stories paint a picture of a raw Alaska, and listening to their experiences is like sitting down with a blanket in front of a nice fire, warm and vivid with the crackle of an old voice sharing experiences of a simple, yet more challenging time.

In the 1950s, Alaska was an untouched and developing territory with aviation at the forefront of transportation.

Fort Richardson was established in 1939. Following the National Security Act of 1947, the installation split into two military bases in 1950, handing over Elmendorf Field to the newly created Air Force.

With no airfield of its own, the U.S. Army on Fort Richardson established



Historical Bryant. Retired Colonel John Spalding stands in front of a UH-1A on Bryant Army Airfield in 1963. Spalding, the Alaska Army National Guard's first state aviation officer, flew the UH-21 Shawnee, UH-1A Huey, L-19 Bird Dog, OH-13 Sioux and the U-1A single engine Otter. Photo: Courtesy of Retired Colonel John Spalding

Bryant Army Airfield in 1958 to provide logistical support to remote areas across Alaska. Consisting of only one hangar, a landing strip and a few small support facilities, its primary mission was to deliver supplies.

"I came to Alaska in 1963 and went to work for the forestry department," said

retired Colonel John Spalding. "I transferred from the Oklahoma National Guard and was flying with the Army because the Alaska Guard didn't have any aircraft stationed here."

Spalding, the Alaska Army National Guard's first state aviation officer, flew the UH-21 Shawnee, UH-1A Huey, L-19

Bryant Army Airfield Sunrise.

HH-60 Black Hawk crewmembers and maintenance personnel put together a three-ship launch in the morning from Bryant Army Airfield. Daily missions and training keep the airfield consistently active throughout the year.

Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs



Bird Dog, OH-13 Sioux and the U-1A single engine Otter, which the Guard received in 1968, according to Spalding.

"We had three to five Otters at that time," Spalding said. "There was little security, and people could come and go on the flightline. We only had seven or eight pilots, and most of our missions were for training."

Looking across the flightline, Spalding fondly points out how many things have changed and the improvements Bryant has received throughout the years.

"The airfield has changed quite a bit. Part of the runway was paved and part of it wasn't. Also, in those days the airfield had the operations building, black hangar, Butler building, the tower and that was it," Spalding remembers.

The Air Traffic Control Tower, known as building 48,000, was built in 1961 and manned by U.S. Army personnel. The tower operators controlled the airspace over a very busy flight corridor that included the 120th Aviation Company's UH-1 Huey helicopters.



Sharing a Laugh. Retired Colonel John Spalding, left, and Chief Warrant Officer Dave Benesch, Alaska Army National Guard, share a laugh while Spalding sits in an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Bryant Army Airfield in December 2011. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

On March 27, 1964, North America's most powerful earthquake struck south-central Alaska. Following the massive 9.2 earthquake, Alaska National Guardsmen assisted with rescue efforts while U.S. Army pilots flew helicopters out of Bryant to capture aerial photographs and survey the damage.

"This is a very stable geological area," said retired Chief Warrant Officer Jim Noe, Bryant Army Airfield airport manager with 42 years of military service. "The tower communications on Elmendorf and the international airport failed in the '64 earthquake. It didn't stop operations on their airfields too much, but it caused problems, and Bryant didn't have any problems."

In 1984, Bryant Airfield officially became Bryant Army Heliport. The field, also used as a base for flying clubs, was used mainly for rotary wing operations and didn't require fixed-wing aircraft standards for an airfield.

"There are criteria that have to be met on a scheduled basis to keep the airfield up as an airfield," Noe said. "It automatically became a heliport because there are requirements for runway testing and cracked sealing; they just didn't do it, and it became an ineffective airfield."

The U.S. Army's 120th Aviation Company pulled out of Bryant in 1996, eventually leasing the property to the Army National Guard in 1998. With no personnel or funds to keep the tower manned, the air traffic control tower was vacated, but Bryant continued to house the Alaska Army

National Guard's C-23 Sherpas and UH-60 Black Hawks.

With the departure of the U.S. Army and funds to man the tower, safety became a concern for many Alaska National Guard aviators, including Chief Warrant Officer Dave Benesch, who transferred into the Alaska Army National Guard in 1972 following a tour in Vietnam.

"When the 120th left, they took all their tower personnel," Benesch said. "Bryant moved from a Class D, which is controlled airspace, into a Class G, which means anybody can fly through it anytime and do whatever they want to do."

Benesch, who flew the UH-1 Huey 40 years ago in Vietnam, flies the more modern UH-60 Black Hawk today and is optimistic because of the current plans and renovations for the tower, flightline and buildings occurring on Bryant.

"It's a whole different place now and a lot bigger than it was," Benesch commented while sharing a laugh with Spalding. "We have two full-size hangars and this one here, which is almost full size. And what they have coming out in the future, well, I think this is going to be a great place and good headquarters for National Guard aviation." ■

Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series on Bryant Army Airfield. The second feature will appear in the Spring 2012 issue of *Warriors* and will describe the improvements currently occurring to the airfield to make it a critical airfield for the Alaska National Guard and the state of Alaska.

Homeland Security & Emergency Management



COMMUNITIES STAND UP WHEN MONSTER STORM BEARS DOWN

By Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The western Alaska storm in November 2011 came with hurricane force winds, sea surges and blizzards. Media termed it a *snowicane*, *monster storm*, *winter mega-storm* and a *storm of epic magnitude*.

A lack of protective, shore-fast sea ice added to its potential devastating effect and drew comparisons to a powerful 1974 storm. The 2011 storm was as fierce and widespread as anticipated, affecting 1,300 miles of Alaska's coast line; however, short- and long-term preparedness activities mitigated its effects.

"The communities did a great job preparing for this storm," said Bryan Fisher, incident commander and operations chief, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. "They used their emergency operations plans, established shelters and took steps to protect their utilities. Communities hit by the storm did not require emergency assistance from the State Emergency Operations Center."

During this event, Alaskans displayed successful emergency preparedness. This readiness was the outcome of joint efforts by government at the local, state and federal level; partnerships with nongovernmental organizations, such as the Red Cross, utility providers, and voluntary organizations; and Alaskans and their families, many of whom call upon generations of traditional knowledge.

"A community's ability to effectively respond to a disaster is not developed in a few hours or days," said John Madden, DHS&EM director. "Developing emergency operations plans, equipping the community with emergency response tools, training personnel and testing their emergency response systems requires ongoing effort. We saw this work come to fruition before, during and after the 2011 storm."

Planning

Developing a local Emergency Operations Plan requires communities to assess their current level of preparedness



and identify gaps in critical equipment, training, resources and plans. To support local planning, DHS&EM created a streamlined Emergency Operations Plan template, which begins the process of community-based planning that forms the basis for future successful response to an event.

For communities requiring a full EOP, DHS&EM also developed the Alaska Emergency Response Guide for Small Communities.

"The guide gives emergency responders systematic checklists for recommended actions prior to an incident, during the first hours of an event and in the aftermath of an emergency," Fisher said.

DHS&EM supports local government emergency planning through on-site and



Sea Swells. Once heavy winds diminished, the threat of storm-driven coastal sea swells became the main concern during the 2011 western Alaska storm. A shift in wind direction reduced the energy driving waves into communities. Photos: Courtesy of Alaska Department of Public Safety.

telephone support; regional and statewide planning, assessment training and workshops; and state-delivered Security Vulnerability Assessments providing critical data in support of grant applications for equipment. State-funded Local Emergency Planning Committees assist local communities with plans and improve community-based preparedness.

Seasonal Fall Sea Storm/Spring Flood planning workshops provide a forum for communities to plan for seasonal events with state partners and subject matter experts, while Tsunami Operations workshops focus on the year-round risks of tsunami-vulnerable communities.

In 2010, DHS&EM brought together surrounding communities in the regional hub communities of Nome, Dillingham and King Salmon for Fall Sea Storm workshops. There, attendees honed individual plans, reviewed assumptions across plans and furthered regional response strategies.

Prior to the storm, DHS&EM worked with Nome, Kotzebue, Bethel and Barrow to update their emergency operations plans. The knowledge and experience from the storm will be incorporated into future planning and preparedness.

In 2009, the smaller western communities of Shaktoolik, Unalakleet, Kivalina, and Shishmaref, at significant risk from severe weather events, used DHS&EM's technical assistance to complete a suite of emergency response plans including Emergency Operations, Emergency Evacuation and Continuity of Operations. All four communities utilized those plans, and the knowledge gained during the planning process, to keep their people safe and property secure during the 2011 storm.

Community leaders along the western coast considered sheltering-in-place, voluntary evacuations, and mandatory evacuations – each reaching decisions based upon their plans and assessments of the storm and its potential effects.

Kotzebue, concerned about people leaving their homes and getting lost in blizzards while trying to reach a shelter, encouraged residents to stay inside. City leaders in Nome evacuated low-lying areas, including half of Front Street, in anticipation of storm surges breaching the seawall along Front Street. Along the Seward Peninsula, dozens of Teller residents went to friends and relatives on higher ground. Workers in Point Hope located on a narrow spit 330 miles southwest of Barrow, sounded ambulance and fire truck sirens at the first sign of flooding, alerting residents to evacuate to the school, which stands on pilings about 15 feet above the rest of the village. Each community exercised critical decision-making that led to a variety of



Emergency Operations. State, federal and voluntary agencies work in the State Emergency Operations Center to communicate with communities and respond to requests for emergency assistance. While the 2011 West Coast storm raged in the Bering Sea, the SEOC was staffed 24 hours a day. Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

responses, all of which kept residents safe.

Three years earlier, in December 2008, 58 representatives from 23 western Alaska communities and 19 agencies attended a three-day DHS&EM Western Alaska Evacuation and Sheltering workshop to learn how they could better prepare communities for shelter-in-place operations and to identify triggers that would initiate an evacuation.

"Village leaders, emergency managers, first responders, clinic and hospital staff, and school representatives shared the realities of rural shelter-in-place operations, equipping shelters and ways communities could support one another," said Merry Carlson, DHS&EM Preparedness Program manager. "Community and agency participants discovered critical issues about hub communities and proposed evacuation sites that they addressed at the conference or during subsequent planning."

Communications

DHS&EM has invested millions of grant dollars in local equipment and training to enable communication within and across jurisdictions, as well as with the state. Communications technologies include satellite phones, Alaska land mobile radios, conventional VHF and marine band radios.

Many village and city governments, emergency responders and residents prefer inexpensive off-the-shelf marine band radios; however, federal communication grant guidelines do not allow funding for marine band radios.

"When marine band is the communication system that people use, equipping emergency responders with noncompatible technology would reduce communication between responders and their communities," said Leon Morgan, DHS&EM statewide interoperability communications planner. "We obtained a marine band exemption for affected areas of Alaska by working with federal grant administrators."

Preparedness Pays Dividends

Despite its power and duration, most of the communities experienced little major damage in the 2011 West Coast storm. Ninety-mile-per-hour wind gusts and coastal sea swells 10 feet higher than normal tide levels resulted in relatively minor damages to buildings, roads, infrastructure and some vehicles.

"As demonstrated during this event, we know that when communities prepare for disasters, it saves lives and reduces the amount of damages, and that an effective response leads to an organized recovery," said Mike O'Hare, DHS&EM deputy director. "It is no different than for an individual or family. When they prepare by assembling an emergency kit, developing a family emergency communication plan and practicing that plan, they reduce the effect of the event on their family. Their self-sufficiency allows emergency responders to focus on critical needs and allows them to help their neighbors. Most importantly, prepared individuals and families establish themselves as survivors, not victims." ■

Holiday Spirit



Spread to Village Alaska



Christmas Smile. Mrs. Claus kneels down to bring holiday cheer to a four-year-old Allakaket resident. The village of around 185 residents welcomed the volunteers into their school for the day to celebrate Christmas.

Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs



Presents. Two young Allakaket boys open the presents that Santa brought them. Gifts also included books, backpacks and toothbrushes to accommodate everyday needs. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

By Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale,
DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Flying in an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 Hercules instead of a sleigh and reindeer, Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and Santa's little helpers arrived in Allakaket in November as part of Operation Santa Claus.

The Alaska National Guard and volunteer members from organizations such as the Salvation Army, Tastee Freez and Costco teamed together and kicked off this year's 55th annual Operation Santa Claus, a yearly community relations and support program that provides toys, clothing,

books, school supplies, fresh fruit and sundaes to children in communities across the state each year.

"It's so great to have the entire community be present and taken care of," said Marilyn Marshall, an Allakaket school teacher. "We have had a rough start to the school year, so to have folks come in and bring presents, food and hospitality is something truly amazing."

The event took place inside Allakaket's school where the Alaska Guard members and volunteers set up tables for warm food, books and ice cream sundaes. Each child received a wrapped Christmas present from Santa and a goody bag filled with fresh fruit, little toys and cupcakes.



Santa's Sleigh. A C-130 from the Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Airlift Squadron is unloaded on the airstrip of Wales, Alaska. The aircraft along with about 35 volunteers from Anchorage traveled to Wales in December to bring Operation Santa Claus to the remote town. Photo: Master Sergeant Shannon Oleson, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Wish List. Johnson Moses, 87, shares his Christmas wish list with Santa and Mrs. Claus during the celebration in Allakaket. Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

“It’s such a wonderful thing because I don’t think there are a whole lot of villages that have had Santa Claus come to visit them,” said Sherry Valentine, Operation Santa Claus volunteer. “It’s a very gratifying thing to see the kids and see how excited they are, and the entire community is just happy to be a part of this.”

Operation Santa Claus also visited Wales in December on an Alaska Air National Guard C-130, providing Santa, Mrs. Claus and a team of elves the opportunity to spread more holiday spirit. ■



Sundaes. George Wuerch, right, a volunteer for Operation Santa Claus, serves an ice cream sundae to Lloyd Oxereok of Wales in December. Wuerch and three dozen other volunteers from Anchorage were in Wales for an Operation Santa Claus mission. The ice cream sundaes were donated by Jewel Lake Tastee Freez of Anchorage. Photo: Master Sergeant Shannon Oleson, 176th Wing Public Affairs



Welcome Dance. Allakaket youth perform a native dance for the guests and volunteers of Operation Santa Claus before the festivities begin.

Photo: Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

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Missile Defense

Technology Brings Soldier Into Classroom

Story and photos by Michele Trainor, Delta Wind

DELTA JUNCTION, Alaska ... It was a story delivered far from home but came directly to the students in the classroom. Staff Sergeant Jack Carlson, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, wanted to volunteer for his daughter Alexis Carlson's first grade class. The only hitch is that he is on the other side of the globe serving in Afghanistan.

Enter the world of technology, and Carlson is on the big screen reading to a class of avid listeners.

"Staff Sergeant Carlson wanted to do something for his daughter's class. Since he is obviously unable to volunteer in person, he made a recording of himself on a DVD reading a book," explained teacher Milt Hooten. "And there he is on the big screen."

Larger than life, dressed in his multi-camouflage uniform, Carlson was on the screen reading Deborah Diesen's story *Pout-Pout Fish in the Big-Big Dark* to the class as if he were there in person. He raised and lowered his voice, providing animation and bringing the story to life. The class of first graders sat quietly, raptly watching the screen as this wonder of technology took place before them.

"This goes to show you anyone, anywhere can volunteer," commented Principal Michelle Beito. "A grandparent on the East Coast can Skype in, or a distant sibling can come online. Volunteering anymore doesn't necessarily mean physically showing up. Hopefully this is the start of something." ■

Carlson is stationed at Bagram Airfield and is deployed with the Alaska Army National Guard's Detachment 54. The unit is in Afghanistan supporting an intelligence and surveillance mission.



Volunteering from Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Jack Carlson, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, waves to his daughter Alexis and her first grade class after reading *Pout-Pout Fish in the Big-Big Dark*. Carlson made a DVD recording of himself reading the book while deployed to Afghanistan on a yearlong deployment.



Virtual Storytime. While deployed to Afghanistan on a yearlong deployment with the aviation unit Detachment 54, Staff Sergeant Jack Carlson, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, reads *Pout-Pout Fish in the Big-Big Dark* to his daughter Alexis and her first grade class via a DVD recording. Carlson captured the attention of the class by raising and lowering his voice to provide animation.



Veterans

Veterans Day Reminds Us to SUPPORT SERVICE MEMBERS

By Verdie Bowen, State Veterans Affairs Office

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Veterans Day 2011 was special in that the calendar read 11-11-11, a unique and poignant reminder to honor our veterans.

The overwhelming majority of veterans in Alaska served with honor and a great sense of pride in the accomplishment of their assigned mission. Whether that

mission was during war or in peacetime, each one through his or her service has earned our respect and commitment to stand behind them in the best of times and through the worst.

Our all-volunteer military continues to serve with an unwavering commitment to our nation. These young men and women understand their mission and the commitment they have made to our nation, to us

and to each other. Long after Veterans Day has passed, everyone should continue to thank those members in uniform, our veterans, and most of all, the families left behind.

Most military members will tell you, without reservation, that their mission while deployed is much easier than their families' mission at home. Many service members work 12-hour shifts, 7 days a week and have a wealth of support. Spouses, on the other hand, have the difficult tasks to face each day dealing with medical emergencies, school crises and vehicles that decide to die. After all the crises, there is the additional task of sleepless nights thinking about the next day's events and whether those on the battlefield would return home.

Remember that through the commitment of our members in uniform, the commitment our veterans had and still have, and those family and friends who support them, you will always know the freedom America has for all. ■



Honor. Veterans solemnly place a wreath at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson during the Canadian Forces Remembrance Day event, held in conjunction with the state's Veterans Day ceremony, in November. Photo: Senior Airman Cynthia Spalding, U.S. Air Force



Reflection. A veteran salutes wreaths honoring fallen veterans placed at the Fort Richardson National Cemetery on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Photo: Senior Airman Cynthia Spalding, U.S. Air Force

2011 Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The 2011 Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award winner was announced during the Veterans Day ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in November.

Nancy Smoyer, of Fairbanks, was selected by Governor Sean Parnell as this year's recipient for her 42 years of service, providing comfort and camaraderie to many of Alaska's veterans.

Smoyer's passion for helping veterans began during the Vietnam era when she became an American Red Cross "Donut Dollie" bringing cheer to troops and veterans serving in Vietnam in 1967-68. During that time, Smoyer used her time and talent to aid many of America's service men fighting for our country.

Smoyer lost her brother, U.S. Marine Corps Reservist Second Lieutenant William Stanley Smoyer, when he was killed in action, along with 17 other Marines, on July 28, 1968, while on a sweep in South Vietnam.

Following that loss, Smoyer's desire to help veterans was only strengthened and has been evident in her selfless volunteerism and devotion to assist veterans here in Alaska throughout the last four decades.

A few of her contributions include bringing the "Moving Wall" to Alaska multiple times, organizing the Fairbanks annual "Stand Down" for veterans the last 13 years, volunteering countless hours at the Fairbanks Veterans Center and continuing to be an avid volunteer at the Vietnam memorial in Washington, D.C.

A true veterans advocate, Smoyer's lifelong dedication to serving Alaska's veterans led to her being selected as the Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award winner for 2011. ■



Veterans Day. Municipality of Anchorage Municipal Manager George Vakalis salutes after placing a wreath during the state's Veterans Day ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory in November.

Photo: Senior Airman Cynthia Spalding, U.S. Air Force



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Family Programs

Family Resiliency Conference Shares Resources to Change Lives

Story and photo by Private First Class Karina Paraoan, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The third annual Alaska National Guard State Warrior and Family Resiliency Conference was held in Anchorage in September to give attendees the tools and resources needed to give better support to our Alaska National Guardsmen and their families.

"Resiliency and being able to understand how to cope with stress helps you become a stronger person," said Staff Sergeant Ken Weichert, a master fitness and resiliency trainer with the Tennessee National Guard, who led the *Strong Body Resiliency* training portion. "It is the biggest factor in building self esteem."

Approximately 100 volunteers, Guard members and their families across the state of Alaska attended the three-day conference exchanging ideas, discussing what volunteers from different units are doing and learning about the different resources available.

"Unlike the active duty, many Guard members and their families do not spend every day acclimating to life in the military, so when our service members deploy or go

to training, some families are not educated on our resources and often do not know who to ask," said Gianna Simmons, senior family readiness assistant, Alaska National Guard Family Programs. "It is important to bring everyone together so they can learn about the resources available and how to be resilient in a sometimes trying lifestyle."

Simmons said that resiliency training was added into the conference because of how valuable the tools are to both the families and the Guard members.

"Last year, we added resiliency to the conference to ensure we empower and strengthen our service members and their families," Simmons said.

Volunteers also had the chance to swap ideas and share what they do for their Guard units.

"It was great to meet other volunteers from across Alaska," said Keisha Scott, Fort Greely volunteer. "We got to share our experiences as volunteers and learn about different ways we can better help our service members and their families."

During the conference, a short movie titled *Brothers at War* was shown to give volunteers who serve the military a better idea of what Soldiers go through overseas.

"The video generated a greater understanding of the sacrifice and dedication of service members, as well as the impact on their loved ones," said Lyn Tashea, psychological health director, Alaska National Guard Family Programs. "This helps everyone understand how it is to walk in each other's shoes, whether it is as a service member who is deployed or the loved one waiting at home."

Weichert gave a presentation on nutrition, discussing eating habits that can affect a person's health both positively and negatively. He later led a physical training session.

"We all know that in society, one of the biggest killers of self esteem is being in poor physical condition," Weichert said. "When you look in the mirror and you feel good about yourself, you're better off and you feel confident."

"This training was very beneficial," said Private First Class Kameron Wagner, military intelligence analyst, 1-297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard. "Everyone was able to get out of their seats and learn new tools that they can use at home."

Trevor Romain, a best-selling author and illustrator of an award-winning series of self-help books for children, spoke about military children and how important their role is in the family, focusing on how parents can better understand their children and how to express their feelings. This helps families with their communication and overcoming challenges.

"I really wanted people to leave this conference with more knowledge to change their lives," Simmons said. "I chose the most inspirational speakers to cover everything from spiritual, humor and physical resilience to help our volunteers and Guard families. Now they have to make the choice to be resilient." ■

Editor's Note: The next issue of Warriors, Spring 2012, will feature more details on the Resiliency Program. For additional information, contact Second Lieutenant Robert Parrish, Alaska resiliency master trainer and coordinator, at (907) 952-6239 or robert.w.parrish1@us.army.mil.



Strong Body, Strong Message. Staff Sergeant Ken Weichert, master fitness trainer and master resiliency trainer, Tennessee National Guard, leads the group in physical training exercises during the *Strong Body Resiliency* portion of the State Warrior and Family Resiliency Conference.



Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve



Above and Beyond. During the Marine Corps Ball in October, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve presents McKesson Pharmaceuticals with an ESGR Above and Beyond award in recognition of its exceptional support of deployed Reservists and National Guardsmen. McKesson Pharmaceuticals regularly adopts a deployed National Guard or Reserve unit and sends them care packages in the form of sundry items – toiletries, cards, snacks, games and letters of support. From left, Bradley Miller, ESGR program support specialist; Ron Duval, McKesson Pharmaceutical managing supervisor; and Michael Buzinski, ESGR public affairs director. Photo: Courtesy of ESGR



Statement of Support. The Anchorage office of the Department of Homeland Security Transportation Security Administration proudly displays its Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Statement of Support, representing its continued support of all Guard and Reserve members of the Armed Forces. Federal security director Jesse C. Sanchez signed the statement of support in November at the TSA regional office in Anchorage. Alaska Army National Guardsman and TSA officer Evan Johnston, right, joins ESGR program support specialist Bradley Miller in showing off the signed Statement of Support, a document to be proudly displayed by an employer showing dedication and support for service members and the employer's continued commitment and understanding of the value of our military service. Photo: Jamie Abordonado, ESGR

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Who We Are...

What is your favorite winter activity?

**Lieutenant Colonel
Emma Thyen**

Alaska Army National Guard



"I'm not a big winter outdoors person, so we try to do a family getaway to Hawaii."

**Chief Master Sergeant
Bernie Kale**

Joint Forces Headquarters (Air)



"My favorite winter activity is hockey; I like watching the Aces."

Jamie Abordonado

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve



"Sleeping."

**First Sergeant
Charlie Hooper**

207th Combat Support Company



"My favorite winter activity would be sledding with the kids."

**Colonel
Edie Grunwald**

Joint Forces Headquarters (Air)



"Cross country skiing is my favorite winter activity."



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A Soldier's Farewell

To the Soldiers of the Alaska Army National Guard:

As I reflect on my 30-year journey as a Soldier, I have been blessed with having served with outstanding Soldiers, both officers and enlisted, throughout my career. Starting with my father, who was an Air Force enlisted Airman, he laid the foundation by always telling me as a leader, taking care of my people was the most important job with which I will ever be entrusted.

Early in my career I was mentored by outstanding officers and non-commissioned officers who had served during the Vietnam War. They shared their knowledge and experiences, driving home the important point that poor leadership and a lack of caring will destroy a team faster and more completely than any enemy engagement. I have learned along the way that mission accomplishment and taking care of your people are inter-connected and inseparable, and more importantly, trust and respect are earned from your Soldiers and cannot be demanded.

I was recently asked what my greatest accomplishment is after 30 years of service. After some thought, it was not the schools that I attended or the positions that I was assigned or even the rank I obtained. My greatest accomplishment was serving with professional, dedicated Soldiers and earning their respect – that is the true measure of my success in uniform.

During World War II, the 8th Infantry Division, after the breakout of the Normandy beachhead, had been decisively engaged with an SS armored division for more than two months. The units fought hard, pitched battles, but the 8th Infantry Division was victorious. When Brigadier General Charles Canham, the assistant division commander, and his Soldiers entered the German division headquarters, the German commander, Lieutenant General Hermann-Bernhard Ramcke, demanded, “I am to surrender to you? I want to see your credentials.” Canham pointed to his Soldiers and said, “These are my credentials.”

As Soldiers, you expect, deserve and have earned the best of your leaders. It is my sincere hope that I provided that during my time in the organization. As I end my career, I point at each of you and say, you are my credentials, you are my accomplishment and I am yours.

It has been my honor and privilege to be a member of the Alaska Army National Guard. During the last 10 years that our nation has been at war, there have been significant changes in the Alaska Army National Guard. We have deployed more than 75 percent of our personnel; we have transformed the 207th Infantry Group into the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade; and we have moved from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve with highly trained Soldiers, high tech and modern equipment and a relevant mission focus. Never forgetting where we came from with our roots in the Alaska Territorial Guard or the

Soldiers we lost along the way, the Alaska National Guard of today has proven its mettle in combat and its compassion in peace and is poised for the future.

As I end my career of 30 years, I am proud to have served in uniform, but more importantly, I count myself privileged to have trained and worked with the finest Soldiers, both in combat and peacetime. I am proud to serve with people who understand the meaning of duty and sacrifice so much of themselves; they do not ask for anything in return. To all the Soldiers past and present, I thank you for your service to our nation. You are my heroes.

God Bless,

Brigadier General Julio R. Banez
Assistant Adjutant General – Army



Change of Command. Brigadier General Julio R. Banez, left, outgoing commander of the Alaska Army National Guard, passes the guidon to Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, as a symbol of relinquishing command during the Alaska Army National Guard change of command ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard Armory in January. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

New Army Guard Commander

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The Alaska Army National Guard welcomed a new commander in January.

Brigadier General Leon M. "Mike" Bridges took command of the Alaska Army National Guard during a special ceremony, taking the colors from Brigadier General Julio R. "Randy" Banez, who had commanded the Alaska Army National Guard since November 2009. Banez retired Feb. 1.

Bridges, a career National Guardsman, has served more than 31 years in the Oregon, Washington and Alaska National Guards.

"I moved from Washington to Alaska in 1986 and transferred into the Alaska Army National Guard," Bridges said. "It's been my whole life to be a Guardsman, and I can't imagine a greater honor than to serve as the Alaska Army National Guard commander."

Bridges has served in a number of command and staff assignments, most recently as the deputy chief of staff for logistics for the Alaska National Guard. He also deployed for a year in Iraq serving as deputy team leader and governance advisor of an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad during 2007-2008.

Excited about the challenge and opportunity to lead a proud and honorable



Leadership. From left, Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard; Brigadier General Leon M. "Mike" Bridges, incoming commander of the Alaska Army National Guard; and Brigadier General Julio R. "Randy" Banez, outgoing commander of the Alaska Army National Guard, stand at attention during an Alaska Army National Guard change of command ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard Armory in January.

Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

organization, Bridges hopes to provide a positive, professionally challenging and rewarding atmosphere to Soldiers in the Alaska Army National Guard.

"I plan to continue our extraordinary support to the worldwide deployment missions of our country, improve our technical capabilities in support of Alaska state emergency response missions and ensure our Soldiers, their families and our retirees continue to strengthen their bonds as we build the Alaska Army National Guard of the future," Bridges said.

Major General Thomas H. Katkus,

adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, believes Bridges is the right person for the job and has confidence he will continue to lead the organization in a positive direction.

"Brigadier General Bridges is a seasoned and proven leader in the Alaska Army National Guard," Katkus said. "He has the experience and the ability to lead our Alaska Soldiers, and I have the utmost faith that he will build a strong Alaska Army National Guard available to respond to our state emergency needs and deployments overseas." ■



Award Winner. Master Sergeant Sean Mitchell, left, 210th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, won first place in the 2010 National Guard Media Contest Pictorial Photo category for his "Alaska Refuel and Rescue" photo, shown at left, depicting an HC-130 ready to refuel an HH-60 Pave Hawk over Knik Glacier. The award was announced in 2011 and Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, presented it to Mitchell in November.

Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



Awards • Decorations • Promotions

Meritorious Service Medal



LTC Simon Brown JFHQ-AK (Army)
 LTC Nicholas Henegan JFHQ-AK (Army)
 LTC John McShane JFHQ-AK (Army)
 LTC Stephen Wilson 103rd CST
 MAJ Kelly Nichols JFHQ-AK (Army)
 SFC John Sztajer R&R BN
 SSG Marvin Ronimous 297th MP
 SGT Michael Boisvert 297th MP
 SMSgt Timothy A. Gilbert 168th AMXS

Army Achievement Medal



SFC Jerome Arisman JFHQ-AK (Army)
 2LT Jill King 1-207th AVN
 PFC Karina Paraoan 134th PAD
 SPC Michelle Brown 134th PAD

Alaska Legion of Merit



LTC Christopher Grell JFHQ-AK (Army)

Alaska Distinguished Service Medal



LTC Nicholas Henegan JFHQ-AK (Army)
 MAJ Kelly Nichols JFHQ-AK (Army)
 SFC Charlotte Olito 1-959th TEAM

Alaska Commendation Medal



CPT Glenn Slaughter 49th MDB
 SFC Steven Branham 49th MDB
 SFC Matthew Madison 2-196th IN BDE

SFC Paul Meyer 2-196th IN BDE
 Junius Parham AKNG

Alaska State Partnership Medal



1SG Michael Grunst 1-297th R&S
 SSgt Nina Kolyvanova 103rd CST
 MSgt Kristian Mauk 103rd CST
 LtCol David McPhetres JFHQ-AK (Air)
 1SG Eric Schlemme 1-297th CAV
 SSG Karima Turner 134th PAD
 SFC Paul Wonder JFHQ-AK (Army)

PROMOTIONS

Brigadier General

Mike Bridges JFHQ-AK (Army)

Lieutenant Colonel

Matthew Schell JFHQ-AK (Army)
 Joe Lyon JFHQ-AK (Army)

Captain

Jennifer King 297th BFSB
 Tori Schmidt 297th BFSB
 Jessie Janes 297th BFSB

First Lieutenant

Robert Gordon 1-297th CAV

Second Lieutenant

Skye Long 297th BFSB
 Brian Clausson 49th TG

Chief Warrant Officer Two

Clinton Brown III DET 54

Warrant Officer One

Jay Daw 1-207th AVN
 Jeffery Rogers 1-207th AVN

First Sergeant

William Crowley 1-297th R&S

Senior Master Sergeant

Sharon L. Blair 168th ARW
 Christy L. Blaum 168th FSF

Master Sergeant (Air)

Joseph W. Brunsvold 213th SWS

Staff Sergeant (Army)

Nicholas Power 49th MDB
 Sirithone Sourivong JFHQ-AK (Army)
 Larry Beene II 1-297th CAV

Technical Sergeant

Raymond S. Allen 168th AMXS
 Lee W. Dockery 213th SWS
 Sean K. Finney 168th MXS
 Brandon S. Grisham 168th OSF

Sergeant

Anthony Kline 1-297th R&S
 Justin Sekerak 1-297th R&S
 Trent Lee 297th BFSB
 Kevin Baker R&R BN
 Alex Barnes 1-207th AVN

Staff Sergeant (Air)

Jason S. Mills 168th SFS
 Thera L. Scarber 168th LRS
 David J. Snapp 168th MXS
 Jordan C. Ross 168th MXS

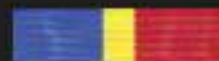
RETIREMENTS

BG Julio R. Banez JFHQ-AK (Army)
 LtCol John D. Davis 168th MSG
 SMSgt Shannon D. Hanks 168th ARW
 MSgt Maxwell M. Whitacre 213th SWS
 SSgt Susanne S. O'Neal 168th FSF
 MSgt Gary L. Brock 213th SWS
 1SG Sherry Butters JFHQ-AK (Army)
 SFC Richard Sztajer R&R
 1SG Daniel Lewis 1-297th R&S
 SFC Gregory Ray R&R
 SGT Claudio Bantan 49th MDB

SFC Nicholas Knowles JFHQ-AK (Army)
 SFC Charlotte Olito 1-959th CCT
 SFC Steven Branham 49th MDB
 LTC Nicholas Henegan JFHQ-AK (Army)
 SFC Francis Uttereyuk 1-143rd ABN
 MSgt Adam W. Heineken 168th AMXS
 TSgt Tillman W. Stovall 168th CF
 MSgt Gary L. Brock 213th SWS
 MSgt Nathan P. Horne 168th MXS
 SMSgt Timothy Gilbert 168th AMXS



Alaska State Partnership Program Ribbon



By Staff Sergeant Karima Turner

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...

Alaska Guardsmen are now eligible for the State Partnership Program Ribbon awarded as a result of a successful partnership with the Republic of Mongolia through the National Guard State Partnership Program.

"In order for Soldiers or Airmen of the Alaska National Guard to receive the ribbon, they must have deployed to the Republic of Mongolia or any other country with a Mongolian delegation in support of the State Partnership Program for a period of at least seven days including travel," said Major Wayne Don, Alaska State Partnership Program director.

The Alaska National Guard State Partnership Program Ribbon is divided into three vertical sections of blue, gold and red, portraying the significance of the partnership between Alaska and the Republic of Mongolia by representing the colors of each of their flags. The blue also represents the eternal skies expanding above both nations, the red symbolizes progress and prosperity, and the gold signifies wealth.

"Soldiers and Airmen of the Alaska National Guard who meet the criteria to receive a ribbon, may be retroactively awarded," Don said. "We have been authorized to award the ribbon for service all the way back to September 2003, when the State Partnership Program began."

Don said Alaska National Guard members who traveled and participated in exercises in Mongolia are eligible to receive the ribbon because they have played an integral role in developing the relationship between the sister countries.

"To receive the ribbon retroactively, Soldiers and Airmen will need to provide documentation of their mission and trip," Don said. "Orders, a manifest or roster, an agenda for the event that covers seven days would be the kinds of documentation we need to approve the award. I'm hoping that we are able to award the ribbon to as many eligible Soldiers and Airmen as possible. They've done the work and helped to make the State Partnership Program a success and deserve to get the ribbon." ■



New Ribbon. Six Alaska National Guard members are the first to receive the new State Partnership Ribbon in December. Alaska Guardsmen are now eligible for the State Partnership Program Ribbon as a result of a successful partnership with the Republic of Mongolia through the National Guard State Partnership Program.

Photo: Specialist Balinda O'Neal, DMVA Public Affairs



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Chanique D. Wilson
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Kelly Harrison
James K. Bullock
Jonilynn L. Reyes
Nathaniel D. Grimes
David E. Hoepfner
Breanna F Howard
Casey M. McBride
Adam C. Miller
Cornelius L. Mingo
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Kadeem Prescott
Mindy Cason
Igor Galit
Brittany Horner
Christina Dyson
John Schauer
Danny Canlas Jr.

1-297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance

Kristian Seward

Gideon Burke
Taylor Schackelford
Anthony Lapis
Kyle Scheibe
David Luther
Sierra Valdivinos

297th Signal Company

Tristan Bellotti

1-207th Aviation

Robert Mullowney
Amber Roy
Tanner Lauderback
Daniel Drake
Daniel Pau
Meagan Johnson
Joshua Vanderloovn
Thomas James
Damien Tserlentakis

297th Military Police Company

Sunya Maxwell
Trevor Martin
Keith Chasse
Rodriguez Santana
Grant Endres
Nathanial Jones

Jordan Rymer
Brandon Galvin

1-297th Cavalry

Aurel Scram
Ryan Burnham
Chase Kaschnigg
Harris Graves

297th Support Battalion

Joel Riojas
Isaac Marmor
Zachary Metzger
Catalina Rivas



Guard Support. Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, smiles after receiving a \$10,000 check from Larry Sutterer of TriWest. TriWest's contribution is part of its holiday "Giving to the Guard" campaign, in which it provides support to National Guard units within its 21-state west region.

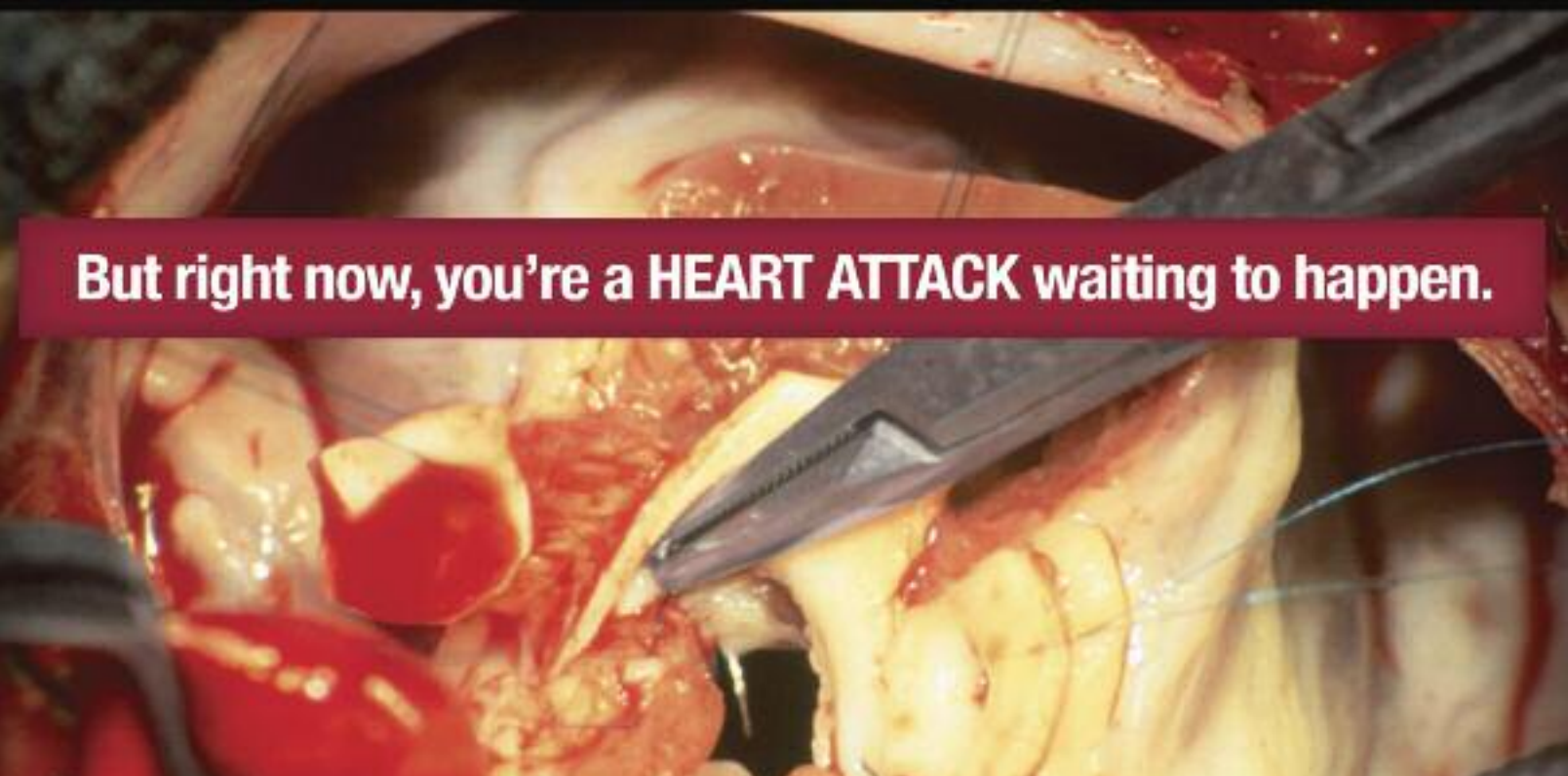
Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

Warriors Training Schedule

Here are the inactive training dates for most Alaska Army *and* Air National Guard units. All dates are subject to change.

Alaska National Guard	Feb.	March	April
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	11-12	3-4	21-22
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	10-12	17-18	20-22
Alaska Army National Guard			
297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	4-5	16-18	20-22
38th Troop Command	10-12	17-18	20-22
Alaska Air National Guard			
168th Air Refueling Wing	11-12	3-4	21-22
176th Wing	11-12	3-6	21-22
Alaska State Defense Force			
Headquarters	18-19	10-11	14-15

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