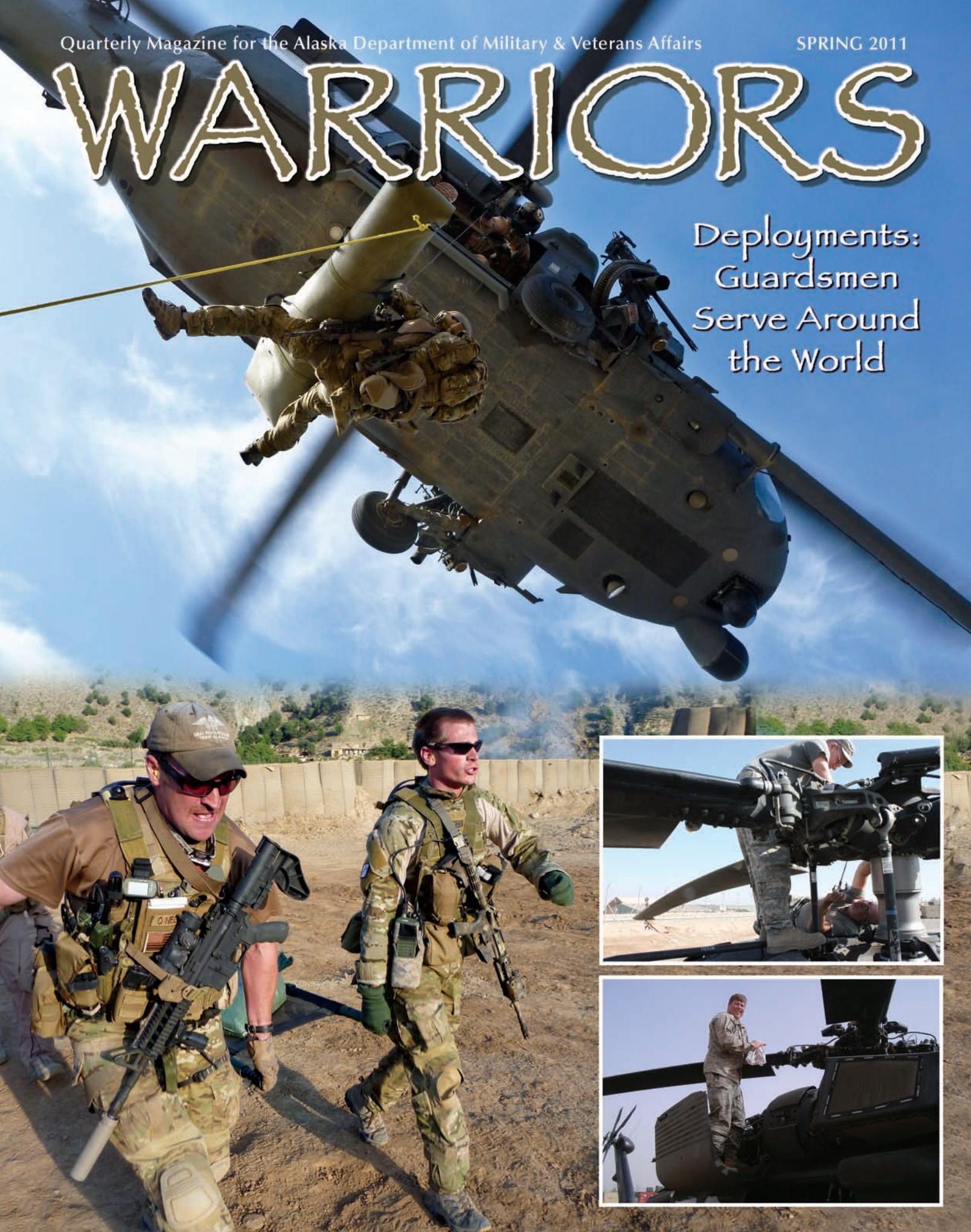


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Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard
& Commissioner of the DMVA

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WARRIORS

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs



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Jump Preparation. Soldiers with the Alaska Army National Guard's 1-297th Long Range Surveillance Company patiently wait for their turn to board a C-23 Sherpa for an airborne jump over the Malamute Drop Zone, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, in February. Photo: Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

Deployments. Pararescuemen from the 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, are deployed to Afghanistan supporting combat search and rescue missions. They are credited with saving more than 60 lives so far and have assisted nearly 100 others to safety. *Inset photo, top:* Specialist Kyle Francione, standing, and Staff Sergeant Stephen Elliott, both of Anchorage and from 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, work on blade pins on a UH-60 Black Hawk post flight at the "ICY" pad. *Inset bottom photo:* Chief Warrant Officer Four Dave Stettenbenz, 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, of Nome, conducts a pre-flight inspection at "ICY" pad, Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq. The Guardsmen of 1-207th Aviation have been deployed to Iraq since fall 2010 supporting missions with their UH-60 helicopters. Photo: Courtesy of 212th Rescue Squadron and Chief Warrant Officer Three Bryan Keese



Concepts for section head logos derived from clipart provided by Alaska Native Knowledge Network. www.ankn.uaf.edu

Warriors is a commercial enterprise publication, produced in partnership, quarterly, by the State of Alaska, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, PO Box 5800, Camp Denali, Ft. Richardson, Alaska 99505-5800, phone (907) 428-6031, fax 428-6035; and AQP Publishing Inc., 8537 Corbin Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99507. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the Departments of the Army and Air Force, or the State of Alaska. All photos are Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs photos unless otherwise credited.

Distribution: **Warriors** is published for all current civilian employees, military members, veterans, and their families, of the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. It is distributed, free of charge, via mail and distribution, through each Division within the Department. It is also available at our Web site: <http://dmva.alaska.gov>.

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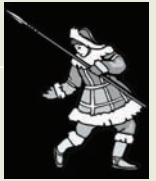
veterans and families are invited and encouraged. Please send articles and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, complete mailing address and comments to:

Warriors Magazine
Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
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For the People

Governor Sean Parnell
Commander in Chief



Preparing for Natural Disasters

As Alaskans, we welcome change that comes this time of year. Breakup begins; snow melts; it snows again; and spring starts to turn the corner to summer. Changing seasons create new opportunities and challenges. The changing weather often brings unpredictable conditions, and recent devastation from natural disasters reminds us all to prepare for the unexpected.

I appreciate the daily and consistent disaster planning efforts of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. Your preparation lays the groundwork for effective emergency response by building strong communities and teaching others how to assist during emergencies. Preparation in the face of potential disaster is one of the greatest assets we can give Alaska communities, and you prepare us in so many ways.

The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management actively monitors weather conditions and river levels to warn communities of potential threats when necessary. From past experiences, we know these conditions are

equally as dangerous as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Additionally, the Alaska National Guard provides assistance to local responders during disasters. The current focus is on training new Guard members in skills that apply to both the military and civilian community. This training equips Guard members with the experience, knowledge, and resources necessary for local response and international response during deployment.

As always, our Alaska National Guard continues to embody the motto "Always ready, always there." Thank you for your hard work ensuring that Alaska remains a more secure place for all of us to call home. ■

Sean Parnell
Governor

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The Adjutant General



Major General Thomas H. Katkus

Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard
& Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

DMVA Acts Quickly in Wake of Japanese Quake

Alaska is an unforgiving land, and her residents have experienced many of the world's worst natural and man-made disasters. Living in a tumultuous state, we must prepare ourselves for the inevitable catastrophic event and stay vigilant in our planning.

We recently witnessed the destruction a magnitude 8.9 earthquake can have on a country – Japan – and even experienced the follow-on effects through tsunami warnings and radiation monitoring here in Alaska. Natural disasters are a real threat to our citizens, and as members of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, we prepare for them by synchronizing all of our efforts with other state and federal agencies.

Following the earthquake in Japan, DMVA's Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management immediately activated the State Emergency Coordination Center. Working closely with the National Weather Service and Alaska Pacific Tsunami Center, our dedicated professionals contacted each community emergency manager in the tsunami warning zones to make sure they were aware of the warnings and advisories. The risk was high, but we were prepared to help mitigate further damage.

In the following days, C-17s with Alaska National Guardsmen and active-duty personnel departed Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to assist disaster victims. In Alaska, the state's Department

of Health and Social Services, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Defense worked closely with DMVA to quell fears of radiation from the damaged Japanese nuclear reactor.

We were prepared as an organization to respond, address threats, and provide resources, working closely with our state and federal partners. Our focus on training, prevention and communication through solid partnerships was critical, and together as the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, we will continue to ensure that the public can trust in our ability to provide support when the next disaster strikes Alaska. ■

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Dispatches from the Front...

Guardsmen Reflects on Iraq Orphanage Visit

By Colonel Jerry Kidrick
Alaska Army National Guard

BASRAH PROVINCE, Afghanistan ...
I experienced a few very poignant moments the other day for several reasons.

First, let me explain that I'm a traditional Guardsman in the Alaska National Guard currently on active duty in Iraq. I'm assigned as chief of a military transition team of combat advisors in Basrah Province.

A poignant moment for me came in November 2010 at the Al-Zahraa Orphanage in downtown Basrah where we delivered donated items to the orphans. For reasons we are all familiar with, there is a great need in Iraq for many of the basics that we in the United States take for granted.

So, our team decided to solicit assistance in collecting donated items in the States and have them shipped to us here in Basrah. We received an overwhelming and immediate response.

Through my connection with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Ariz., the Student Veterans Club solicited donations. The response was immediate, generous and heartfelt. This was my first poignant moment.

These great veterans who have served and are now attending college were willing and eager to once again serve something larger than themselves, put aside any personal issues they might have and step up to meet the obvious need of the innocent victims of the ongoing struggle in Iraq.

It struck me that the same spirit of the American servicemen and women that produced things like the Berlin Candy Drop during the Berlin Airlift and the outpouring of care for the many orphans of the Korean War exists in National Guard Warriors today. In fact, the character of American service members never shines brighter than when they are helping innocent victims of war. I was moved by their efforts.

A varied group of generous folks in Salem, Ore., also contributed to the project. Captain Steve Cooper of the Oregon National Guard made a simple request for a few soccer balls and soon found himself getting a workout with a small hand pump and 80 soccer balls.

Soccer is really the national game in Iraq, and delivery of these items brought huge grins from the children. This was the moment I was moved for the second time, and it was by the reaction of the children.



Poignant Moments. Colonel Jerry Kidrick, Alaska Army National Guard, hands a piece of candy to a young boy at the Al-Zahraa Orphanage in Basrah, Iraq.

Photo: Courtesy of U.S. Army

It was truly a joyful moment. They reacted with pure joy and innocence as if their lot in life was no more or less than anyone else's. The children are well cared for, appreciative and a pleasure to be around.

The smaller children prepared a song with the help of some of the older girls. The children who were a little older wanted to meet us, thank us, practice their English, and generally interact in a very open and friendly way. Again, I was moved by these children.

Another aspect of this project that has been a pleasure to be a part of is the

reaction of the MiTT members. As a group, they have embraced the project, and the result has been overwhelmingly positive for team morale.

As I mentioned at the beginning, my poignant moments resulted from several reasons. However, probably the most poignant aspect of this project for me is the fact that I'm the proud father of two orphaned children from Cambodia.

Until this visit, it had been nine years since I last walked into an orphanage. I picked up my then-four-month old son at an orphanage in Phnom Penh. I have first-hand knowledge of the positive impact orphaned children can have on everyone they touch.

As you can tell, my trip with the MiTT to the orphanage touched me in many ways, and created such positive energy for both the giver and receiver, including those back home providing the main effort for this project.

In a country where the gains are small and the need great, I would like to think that a few National Guardsmen backed by caring folks back home brought some brightness into the lives of those on both sides of this humanitarian project. ■

Guard Hoists Four Skiers Out of Avalanche

By Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard were called on in late January to rescue four avalanche victims who were backcountry skiing behind the Summit Lake Lodge in Moose Pass.

The request for assistance came from the Alaska State Troopers, and because of the high probability of another avalanche and the inability to land within half a mile from the location of the survivors, the 11th Rescue Coordination Center tasked the 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons with the mission.

The 210th responded with a hoist-equipped HH-60 Pave Hawk carrying 212th pararescuemen and flew out to the location. It took approximately 35 minutes to get on site.

"It was a great team effort," said Lieutenant Colonel Paul Vanderweide, director of the 11th RCC. "Luckily one of the guys was not buried in the snow and was able to help dig the others out."

After performing a hoist, three of the survivors were taken to an Anchorage hospital and the other survivor was released to the Alaska State Troopers.

The Alaska Air National Guard's 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were awarded one save for this mission. ■

Where in the World

Deployment Preparations

By Lieutenant Colonel Paul Darling
Alaska Army National Guard

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...

The road to war is a long one for deploying Guardsmen, and along the way, those Soldiers need help to prepare themselves, their equipment and their families for the upcoming challenges of deployment.

B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne), scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in late fall, took the first of many steps on that road to deployment in mid-February.

The first step was to consolidate all the Soldiers, spread throughout western Alaska in 24 separate detachments stretching from Nome to Dillingham, and bring them to Anchorage to work on specific Warrior tasks.

Deploying Guardsmen are responsible for passing more than 300 pre-mobilization tasks in order to be fully prepared and eligible for overseas deployment. The Alaska Army National Guard has a trained group of professionals, the Pre-Mobilization Training Assistance Element, to ensure that these tasks are conducted to standard.

In addition to the mandatory training, a Soldier Readiness Program was held. Work was done to ensure that each Soldier's many required personnel documents were up to date, accurate and verified. The state's Judge Advocates General worked jointly on wills and powers of attorney for all Soldiers requesting them.

The medical detachment conducted more than 100 various physicals, verifying the health and readiness of the infantrymen as they prepare for combat. In addition, the medical detachment conducted combat life-saver training for 41 deploying Guardsmen, teaching them the critical skills necessary for combat survival.

All this preparation work is hard, but for the growing number of paratroopers



Airborne. Soldiers with B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne), join Soldiers from the 1-297th Long Range Surveillance Company to board an Alaska Army National Guard C-23 Sherpa at Bryant Army Air Field before flying to the Malamute Drop Zone for an airborne jump in February. The Guard members from B Company, 1-143rd Infantry (Airborne), are preparing for a deployment to Afghanistan this fall.

Photo: Private First Class Karina Paroan, DMVA Public Affairs



Guardian Angels. Pararescuemen from the 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, proudly display an American flag while standing in front of one of their rescue helicopters. The Guardsmen are deployed to Afghanistan supporting combat search and rescue missions. They are credited with saving more than 60 lives so far and have assisted nearly 100 others to safety. Photo: David R. Kuhn

in the company, the work was rewarded as they conducted a jump led by Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, from an Alaska Army National Guard C-23 Sherpa over Malamute Drop Zone on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

"The Soldier Readiness Program went very well, and all Soldiers were taken care of in a timely and professional manner," said Captain Jason Caldwell, B Company, 1-143rd Infantry commander. "The first sergeant, staff and I could not have asked for a better consolidation drill to prepare for our upcoming deployment." ■

Guardsmen Use Talent "For God and Country"

By Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale
DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... When Chief Master Sergeant Timothy Tillman of the Alaska Air National Guard deployed to southwest Asia last fall, his goal was to start a barbershop quartet. But how it fell into place, and the impact his deployed quartet has made, has created quite a buzz.

"Whenever I hear the national anthem played at ceremonies with instruments only



Arctic Skills. Members of the Alaska National Guard's 103rd Civil Support Team proudly display their 2nd place trophy from the Arctic Skills competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in February. The Arctic Skills competition is a two-part event in which participants cross-country ski and snowshoe an approximate three-kilometer course. It's an annual event designed to highlight the unique outdoor opportunities Alaska offers that service members might not have the opportunity to do if they were based elsewhere. From left, front row: Staff Sergeant Nicholas Dutton, Sergeant Robin Munnlyn and Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Wilson; back row: Sergeant First Class Curtis Stull, Staff Sergeant Jason Rode and Captain William Yeo. Photo: Courtesy 103rd Civil Support Team

Desert Fishing. Specialist John Harrop, of Haines, B Company, 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, is fly fishing for carp at a canal to the Al Faw Palace in Baghdad during his off time. The unit is currently deployed to Iraq to support aviation missions utilizing their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Photo: Chief Warrant Officer Three Bryan Keese, 1-207th Aviation



Deployment Construction Work. Master Sergeant Anthony Liberty, supervisor of the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron's Structures Section, removes excess fill in March in preparation for laying a concrete slab while deployed to San Clemente Island, Calif. Liberty, a resident of Kenai, was on a Deployment for Training mission with his unit for two weeks to train and work on a variety of infrastructure projects. Photo: Staff Sergeant N. Alicia Goldberger, 176th Wing Public Affairs

Deployment Music. "For God and Country," a quartet formed by a deployed Alaska Air National Guardsman, sings at one of the many Christmas events during their deployment to southwest Asia. The group was so popular and their performance such a hit, they had to sing a few of the songs twice at the request of their audience. From left, Colonel Mark Danigole, Captain Sean Randall, Chief Master Sergeant Timothy Tillman and Senior Airman Chris Barajas.

Photo: Courtesy of Chief Master Sergeant Timothy Tillman, Alaska Air National Guard



and no words, I offer to sing it the next time," Tillman said. "I feel the words of our anthem are important and need to be heard."

Tillman volunteered to be the worship leader during the Protestant chapel service and was in the position for a few weeks when he heard Senior Airman Chris Barajas sing. Tillman knew then he had the second member of the group.

"I knew it would be difficult to find a tenor," Tillman said. "But as soon as I heard Chris sing, I recognized that he would make a great fit as a tenor."

After the service, Tillman approached Barajas and asked him if he had sung with any barbershop quartets.

"He responded positively and started listing off his favorite barbershop quartets," Tillman joked. "I knew then I was well on my way to starting the group."

Soon rehearsals began when two more deployed Airmen joined the group, forming "For God and Country."

"The reason we named it that is because we were all serving our country and volunteering our free time in the chapel's music programs," Tillman said.

Tillman used his connections as a member of an Alaska quartet in training his deployed quartet. The group responded by sending music, helping the quartet learn tracks and come together as performers.

With a little practice, the group began singing the national anthem and other music at events.

"To say the least, wing members were amazed that we could produce the sound that we did," Tillman said. "At one event, the crowd wanted us to sing more, even after we sang all the songs we knew. So we ended up singing a few songs twice, and they loved it."

Tillman said he is grateful that the members of "For God and Country" were able to use their voices to boost the morale of deployed members around them.

"I am thrilled that we were able to pull it off during our short deployment together," Tillman said. "It's been a great run with fantastic results, and I am just happy to be a part of it." ■

Airmen Complete Construction Mission

By Staff Sergeant N. Alicia Goldberger
176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska ...

Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 176th Civil Engineer Squadron spent two weeks in March doing construction work on San Clemente Island, Calif.

The Guard members were on a Deployment for Training mission. These missions allow Air National Guard members to sharpen their construction trades skills while at the same time meeting real-world needs. Such training keeps Airmen mission-ready in the event they are called overseas.

"The DFT program is an invaluable tool for training opportunities not available at home station," said Senior Master Sergeant Keith Wilson, operations superintendent for the mission.

Naval Special Warfare Group One Maritime Operations, stationed out of San Clemente Island, requested civil engineering support for several projects such as wiring, plumbing and masonry.

"These trips are great because they train Airmen, boost morale and give value to the United States by providing cost-effective construction services to other units," said Lieutenant Colonel Ed Soto, 176th Civil Engineer Squadron commander. ■



Alaska National Guard and Iron Dog Partnership a Success

By Kalei Rupp, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The Alaska National Guard's support of the 2011 Iron Dog snowmachine race was a success, with the pro-class team and ambassador team rider saying this year's event was a great experience that provided a unique venue to strengthen the Alaska National Guard across the state.

For the second year in a row, the Alaska National Guard was the presenting partner for the Iron Dog. The Guard became the lead sponsor in 2009 in order to support a uniquely Alaska event and bolster the



Ambassador on the Trail.

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Lawendowski, Alaska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention commander and ambassador team rider, traverses the Iron Dog trail. He was part of a three-member team of goodwill ambassadors for the race who traveled the race route and made several public appearances along the way.

Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Army National Guard

Alaska National Guard throughout the state and nation.

"The Alaska National Guard is an incredible partner; we're grateful for the support and extremely proud to be working side by side with them," said Kevin Kastner, Iron Dog executive director. "Programs like the ambassador team and the urban-rural student exchange gave the Guard first-hand exposure to communities, students and centers of influence across more than 2,000 miles of Alaska."

In a first for the Iron Dog, there was an ambassador team of riders, including an Alaska Army National Guardsman, serving as goodwill ambassadors for the race. The team of three traveled the race route and made several public appearances along the way.

"We were able to speak at schools and with community leaders, and as we stopped at each checkpoint, we handed out National Guard Army Values coins to the volunteers and thanked them for their support of the Guard and the Iron Dog," said Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Lawendowski, Alaska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention commander and ambassador team rider. "While in Nome we spoke to the entire high school about a variety of topics to include suicide prevention and our Choices program, where we show students the consequences of behaviors and decisions they make, in hopes of changing their decision patterns for the better."

The outreach into communities is something that will carry on despite the end of the official race.

"We hope to not only continue our partnership with the Iron Dog and to



Ready to Race. Alaska Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major Pamela Harrington, left, and Sergeant First Class Elaine Jackson fist bump before the start of the 2011 Iron Dog race in February. The Iron Dog is considered the world's longest and toughest snowmobile race, covering 2,000 miles across Alaska.

Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

continue our efforts with the Ambassador Run in the future but also continue to foster this relationship with the racers in our efforts to reach out and assist Alaska's youth in the west," Lawendowski said.

Command Sergeant Major Pamela Harrington, of Palmer, and Sergeant First Class Elaine Jackson, of Anchorage, represented the Alaska National Guard in the pro-class division of the Iron Dog, known as the world's longest and toughest snowmobile race. It was an especially tough race this year, as a winter storm made portions of the trail impassable with what race officials called "life-threatening" conditions. The race was put on hold mid-race, then later, riders grouped into teams to take a "yellow-flag" expedition for a resumed race start some 250 miles down the trail.

The Guard team didn't get a chance to make it to that portion of the race,

Adventure Awaits. Sergeant First Class Elaine Jackson, left, and Command Sergeant Major Pamela Harrington take off from the starting line of the 2011 Iron Dog pro-class race in February. In addition to the pro-class team, the Alaska National Guard had a Guard member riding as part of the ambassador team, and several Guardsmen volunteered throughout the race by breaking trail and assisting at the start and finish lines.

Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

however. Tricky trail conditions, rutted out portions of the trail and deep snow held Harrington and Jackson to a slower pace than they anticipated. Race officials scratched the team at the Ruby checkpoint because it was determined that the Guard team wouldn't make it to the Nome half-way checkpoint by the required time and date.

"We had planned to do this marathon run, get our two-hour layover done and just make it into Nome," Harrington said. "In my mind, we were going to be the team that rolled in at 11:58 p.m. ahead of that 11:59 p.m. deadline, but if you did the math, that would have been hard."

Race officials did some calculations of their own and decided to scratch the team, citing time and safety as the reason. Harrington and Jackson actually made it to Galena, 52 miles down the trail from Ruby, before race officials notified them that they had scratched the team in Ruby.

"We were going to go until they told us to stop," Harrington said.

Despite the end result, the race experience was a tremendous opportunity, the team said. They were the only all-female team of 28 teams to race in the 2011 pro-class, which traversed more than 2,000 miles of trail from Big Lake to Nome, then on to Fairbanks. Of the 28 teams that started the race, only 12 crossed the finish line.

"Overall, I have no disappointments. My experience this year was very good; it was a challenging year on the trail, but it's an event that I absolutely love," Jackson said. "I definitely want to be a part of it next year in one way or another. Even if I'm not racing, I would love to help out and volunteer and get the Guard name out there." ■



Riding. Command Sergeant Major Pamela Harrington and Sergeant First Class Elaine Jackson, both of the Alaska Army National Guard, take their new snowmachines out for a test ride on Big Lake in February just days before the start of the Iron Dog race. The Alaska National Guard was the presenting partner for the 2011 Iron Dog race.

Photo: Sergeant Edward Eagerton, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

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Safety First. An Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter takes off from the Palmer Municipal Airport in August after helping to recover a disabled Black Hawk from Knik Glacier in August 2010. The incident, coupled with an Alaska Air National Guard C-17 crash, spurred the Alaska National Guard to do an internal review of its safety procedures and to stress safety as the organization's number one priority. Photo: Kalei Rupp, DMVA Public Affairs

By Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Before the flight suits are zipped and the helmets are donned, it's the first thing to cross the mind of anyone involved in Alaska National Guard aviation. Before the wrenches turn and checklists completed, it is the predominant issue in everyone's work day – safety.

Two incidents in 2010 involving Alaska National Guard aviation – a C-17 accident and UH-60 Black Hawk mishap – have prompted the aviation departments of both the Alaska Air and Army National Guard to do an internal review of their safety procedures. It's the organization's number one priority.

"Mission and safety go hand in hand. You do not accomplish the mission if you compromise the safety of the crew," said Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "Safety is something that must be performed seamlessly and integrated into every activity we do. It has to be our top priority."

Since an Alaska Army National Guard Black Hawk went down on Knik Glacier, the Alaska Army National Guard implemented monthly safety stand-down days and weekly work groups that systematically look at the aviation risk assessment procedure. Some of those changes have included the time of the mission, the crew flying and whether the mission itself is worth the risk.

"It's not an overnight fix; this has been looked at carefully, and some situations that used to be viewed as a low risk have been

moved up to a higher degree of risk. Aviation is a risky business," said Lieutenant Colonel Michael Seine, state army aviation officer, Alaska Army National Guard, who has been in the position since April 2010. "Our emphasis is risk mitigation: to reduce it to the lowest possible factor."

The Alaska Air National Guard is no different. On top of numerous U.S. Air Force Aviation Publication changes, accidents affect the aviation community on an individual basis.

"Quite often, when any incident like the C-17 accident happens, everyone takes a look at how they are conducting business," said Major Russell Edwards, 176th Wing flying safety officer. He added that while the mission is the priority, it has to be accomplished safely.

"The Alaska Air National Guard's ideal situation is zero accidents and zero fatalities, but that is only accomplished on a flight by flight basis," Edwards said. "All people on board have to be safety monitors, and if they see something that doesn't look right, they need to say something."

Safety starts with every Guard member involved. Everyone must assess the risk because every flight is different and every mission is unique.

"You could have one hour and have an accident or you could have thousands of hours and have an accident," Seine said. "Our priority is reducing the risk of each specific mission. If we can minimize the risk of each mission and flight, the accident-free hours will be the byproduct." ■

Guardsmen Save 125 Lives in 2010

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Alaska National Guardsmen are recognized for their expertise in search and rescue, and for 125 people here in Alaska or in combat zones in Afghanistan during 2010, they're also considered "Guardian Angels."

Since 1994, Alaska National Guardsmen have supported the 11th Rescue Coordination Center, the sole Alaska representative responsible for all aeronautical search and rescue cases in Alaska, with search and rescue assets, flying more than 20,000 mission hours and earning more than 1,800 saves and 800 assists.

Supporting an unforgiving land, with a road system that covers a relatively small area of the state, Alaska National Guardsmen provide a sense of security in a place where all too often the National Guard represents the last chance for survival.

"Our 'Guardian Angel' teams are survival experts. When they get on-scene, the chances of survival greatly improve right away," said Brigadier General Charles E. "Chuck" Foster, 176th Wing commander, Alaska Air National Guard. "They have truly made the difference in the lives of hundreds of Alaskans because of their heroic efforts."

In addition to performing day-to-day support in Alaska, Guardsmen from the 212th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, also deployed to Afghanistan from August 2010 to March 2011 to support combat search and rescue missions in the Global War on Terrorism. Alaska Guardsmen were credited with saving 61 lives and assisting 99 others to safety during 144 missions in the final four months of 2010.

"Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the 212th Rescue Squadron are at the tip of the spear, using the training received here in Alaska to save service men and women in combat," Foster said. "They put their lives on the line every day to save others, proving once again they're among the elite in search and rescue worldwide."

The Alaska Army National Guard also plays a role in search and rescue missions in Alaska and contributed to saving 11 lives in 2010.

"Alaska National Guardsmen set the bar when it comes to rescuing our military members in a combat zone in Afghanistan or civilians on a mountainside in Alaska," said Major General Thomas H. Katkus,



Search and Rescue. Pararescuemen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 212th Rescue Squadron practice hoist maneuvers while hanging from a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter. Alaska National Guardsmen were credited with saving 125 people in Alaska or in combat zones in Afghanistan during 2010.

Photo: Master Sergeant Sean Mitchell, 210th Rescue Squadron

adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "They are recognized for their expertise and are extremely professional in

their efforts no matter what the circumstance, time or place. They embody the best of all Alaska National Guardsmen." ■



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Operation Proper Exit. Service members prepare to board an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as part of Operation Proper Exit. The program allows previously wounded service members to return to Iraq and then leave the country on their own terms to give them a sense of closure. Photo: Staff Sergeant Corenthia Fennell, U.S. Air Force

ALASKANS ASSIST WOUNDED WARRIORS WITH 'PROPER EXIT' IN IRAQ

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... For many service members, days spent deployed overseas start to blend together. However, for eight Alaska National Guardsmen serving in Iraq, one day stands apart, the day they had the privilege to support Operation Proper Exit.

A program that provides combat veterans the opportunity to return to the location where they were injured, Operation Proper Exit provides wounded warriors a chance to retrace their final steps before going home.

"The program allows service members to leave on their own terms," said Lieutenant Peter Pagni, pilot, B Company, 1-207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard.

Pagni, who has been deployed for seven months in support of Operation New Dawn, spends most of his days, like others in his unit, performing the vital mission of transporting distinguished visitors, Soldiers and equipment via UH-60 Black Hawks from camp to camp in Iraq.

He's proud to be an Alaska Army National Guardsman and honored to perform his daily mission, but according to him, this mission was even more special.

"It was great and probably the best thing I've done over here," Pagni said. "We flew 10 warriors from the Air Force, Marines and Army over the exact areas they had been injured. None of them actually remember leaving the spot they were injured at, but they were happy about seeing it for one last time before they left."

It was a day full of emotions, especially for one Soldier who lost a friend at the final location they flew over.

"The last guy had lost both bottom portions of his legs by Sadr City; it was pretty emotional for him because he lost a

buddy right there, and he was wearing his buddy's bracelet," Pagni said. "We flew right over the spot on the road."

At the end of the day, Pagni and his fellow Alaska National Guard aviators helped bring a little closure and, surprisingly, even happiness to a few of America's finest warriors.

"They were definitely the most appreciative group of people I've ever met," Pagni said. "They were happy because this allowed them to leave on their own terms, and I'm glad I got to be a part of that." ■

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Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Tsunami Preparedness

By Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... In a tsunami, seconds can mean the difference between life and death. A tsunami siren, a well-marked tsunami evacuation route and individuals warning others can give people critical time to reach safety. Alaska, with more than 70 communities that face some tsunami danger, is continuously improving the systems, plans and training that prepare our people for the next big wave.

Tsunamis, almost all of which are caused by earthquakes, have tremendous destructive power and can send millions of gallons of water surging beyond normal coastal confines, inundating inland areas and sweeping away anything in its wake. They can strike a community in a matter

of minutes or travel thousands of miles to wreak havoc.

The 1964 Good Friday earthquake led to tsunamis that immediately struck Seward with enough force to sweep a railroad locomotive 100 feet inland and also caused 12 deaths in Crescent City, Calif., thousands of miles away.

"Community emergency managers are the driving force behind efforts to reduce the threat of tsunamis in Alaska," said Mark Roberts, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management Mitigation Program manager. "They understand the tsunami threat, acknowledge their responsibility to prepare their community, and look for every opportunity to improve the technology, plans and equipment to reduce the tsunami risk."

Across the state, communities continually increase their ability to deal with the threat of tsunamis. Local and state training events and exercises equip emergency managers and first responders with the knowledge, experience, and well-honed skills so they can quickly warn people about an impending tsunami threat and respond to inundations if a tsunami strikes.

In November 2010, 35 key personnel from 14 tsunami-threatened communities met in Unalaska to participate in a Tsunami Operations workshop. Participants left with an increased understanding of specific actions required during and after a tsunami warning/event. The workshop also gave communities the opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned with peers.

"Tsunami readiness is essential," said Jamie Sunderland, emergency manager for Unalaska. "It goes beyond equipment maintenance and requires practicing the plan through training and exercise to keep it fresh."

The Alaska National Guard is an active participant in tsunami readiness and other exercises. In October 2010, the Kenai Community Emergency Response Team, Kenai Fire Department, Kenai Office of Emergency Management and Alaska Army National Guard's B Troop, 297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance, teamed up to practice their unified response to a simulated tsunami.

The Kenai CERT utilized its search and rescue training, the Kenai Fire Department acted as the incident command, the Kenai OEM activated its command vehicle and



Tsunami Response Exercise. The Kenai Community Emergency Response Team, Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management, Kenai Fire Department and the Alaska National Guard debrief after a one-day tsunami response exercise that strengthened the bond between Citizen-Soldier and civilian responder. Photo: Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

King Cove's All-Hazard Siren.

Photo: Chris Babcock, King Cove Fire Department



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After an earthquake, gas leaks are common. Have a wrench or pliers by your gas shut-off valve to turn off the gas if the system is leaking. Do not shut off your gas supply if you do not smell gas. Otherwise, the utility company will have to reset your meter to restore gas service.

communications expertise, and the Guard mobilized its transportation and communications assets for a combined response during the tsunami exercise.

Every year, near the anniversary of the 1964 earthquake, the Alaska Emergency Alert System tests the Tsunami Warning Systems Live Code. The test of the Tsunami Warning Live Code is distributed throughout the state by radio, television stations, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio.

"Throughout the last five years, the tests of the Tsunami Warning System Live codes have allowed us to identify problems and make the necessary changes to the system," Roberts said. "The end result is a system that distributes a message throughout the state with a very low margin of error. We will never know how the warning systems, plans and training will work unless we conduct realistic tests."

Since 2009, 28 all-hazard tsunami sirens have been installed in 13 communities through strong partnerships between local communities, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, and NOAA working to coordinate state and

federal grant resources. Communities with plans, evacuation routes, shelters, sirens and education programs in place can seek designation as tsunami-ready communities. Yakutat and Sand Point have most recently received the tsunami-ready designation, bringing the total tsunami-ready communities to seven.

"Partnerships have been the key to Alaska's successful tsunami preparedness program," said John Madden, DHS&EM director. "The scientific knowledge of our federal partners, the state's understanding of community needs and the communities' willingness to improve tsunami readiness combine to continue tsunami preparedness."

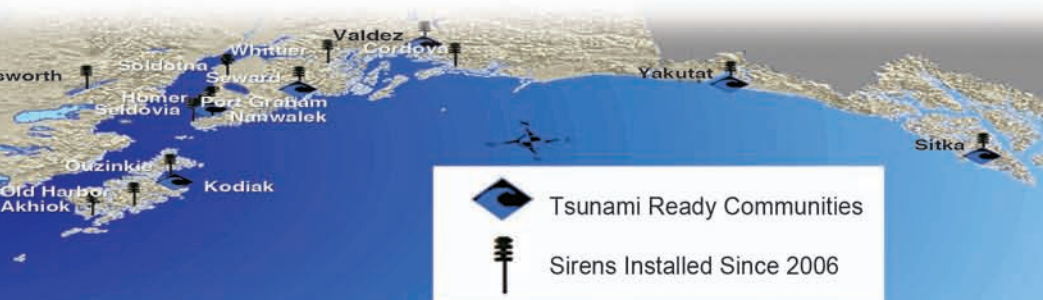
"The cycle of improvement is continuous," Madden continued. "As technology and emergency management techniques improve, tsunami-vulnerable communities in Alaska will continue to have the opportunity to access and upgrade equipment and skills."

When tsunamis come, those improvements will be in place, they will be in good working order, and the message will be received by people who know they must head for higher ground." ■

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Leadership Changes at 168th Air Refueling Wing

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing welcomed a new commander in March and also said goodbye to a commander they truly respected.

Colonel Donald S. "Scott" Wenke, departing the wing he has commanded since April 2008, relinquished command to Colonel Timothy P. O'Brien.

"It was an honor to serve the last three years as the 168th Air Refueling Wing commander," Wenke said. "The men and women of this organization are some of the finest Airmen in today's total force military. Each and every one of them represents our great state with excellence all around the world."

As commander, Wenke was responsible for nine KC-135R Stratotankers and provided leadership and support to more than 675 Guardsmen at Eielson Air Force Base and Clear Air Force Station.

"Colonel Wenke is a phenomenal leader who has a proven track record," said Major General Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "He successfully led the Air National Guard's busiest air refueling wing, while providing a reliable alert force and air refueling capability to NORAD for northern sovereignty missions. Colonel Wenke is a respected leader who knows how to get the job done – under the most difficult circumstances here in Alaska or deployed overseas."

A few of the notable accomplishments during Wenke's tenure as commander of the 168th Air Refueling Wing include selection for the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, two consecutive governor's trophies, an "excellent" overall grade in the Pacific Air Forces Operational Readiness Inspection, 60,000 wing flying hours without a chargeable class A or B mishap and the General Lance W. Lord award.

Wenke is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flying hours in the F-4, A-10 and KC-135, including 82 combat missions and 326 combat flying hours. His next assignment is as vice wing commander of the 176th Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

"I am very excited for the 'Guardians of the Last Frontier' in the coming years,

as they are getting a tremendous leader in Colonel Tim O'Brien," Wenke said.

"I have the utmost confidence that he and Catherine will continue to achieve great accolades with these fine Airmen."

"I have large footsteps to follow with Colonel Wenke's departure, and I am deeply grateful to his superior service here at the wing," O'Brien said. "I'm deeply humbled and honored to be named commander of the finest wing in the Air National Guard."

O'Brien previously served as vice wing commander of the 168th Wing. He has also commanded a combat search and rescue helicopter squadron, held a variety of operational flying and staff assignments at the wing level, completed Headquarters Air Force staff assignment in acquisition and requirements and was the commandant of the U. S. Air Force Officer Training School. He is a command pilot with more than 3,300 flying hours.



Colonel Donald S.
"Scott" Wenke



Colonel Timothy P. O'Brien

"I look forward to serving alongside our men and women of the 168th," O'Brien said. "Our missions of Global Reach and Vigilance are truly critical to our state and nation. We have amazingly talented men and women who continually impress me with their excellence and service to our Air National Guard."

The 168th Air Refueling Wing provides Air Force capabilities of Global Reach and Vigilance through the combined operations of Air Refueling and Space Warning Squadrons. The unit also maintains a constant watch and commitment for Pacific Air Forces, Northern and Air Force Space Commands and Alaskan NORAD Region. ■



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176TH MOVES INTO NEW HOME

By Staff Sergeant N. Alicia Goldberger and First Lieutenant John Callahan, 176th Wing Public Affairs; Second Lieutenant Bernie Kale, DMVA Public Affairs; and Luke Waak, JBER Public Affairs

KULIS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Alaska ... The 176th Wing completed one of the largest missions in its history in February, moving all its aviation assets and most of the wing from Kulis Air National Guard Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

"Although we love this area around Kulis and will always be connected to it, JBER offers the wing growth as a team and a partnership that works," said Brigadier General Charles "Chuck" Foster, 176th Wing commander.



The Fly-Away Ceremony

Military members, families, retirees and media spilled out near the flight line to watch and wave as five C-130 cargo planes, four HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters, and two HC-130 Hercules aircraft took off and circled around for a fly-by on their way to JBER.

Among the attendees were some notable names, including the son of the base's namesake, First Lieutenant Albert Kulis, and retired Colonel Marjorie Paulson, the first female in the Alaska Air National Guard.

After the planes departed, spectators made their way to the wing's new facilities on JBER. The group skirted the flight line to watch the aircraft fly in to their new home.



Ready for Departure. An Alaska Air National Guard C-130 from the 176th Wing starts up its engines in preparation for departing Kulis Air National Guard Base for the final time. Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

Kulis Departure. Alaska Air National Guard HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters from the 210th Rescue Squadron depart Kulis Air National Guard Base for the last time with C-130s waiting to follow.

Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



Wing History

The ceremony celebrating the relocation was dubbed “Coming Full Circle” in reference to the 176th Wing’s history.

The 176th Wing began as the 8144th Air Base Wing in 1952 with 11 enlisted members, five officers and no planes. The small staff worked out of an office in downtown Anchorage. Shortly thereafter, the wing received one T-6G “Texan” trainer, and the members trained out of Elmendorf Air Force Base.

The wing underwent a series of changes in missions, aircraft, size and location. It moved to the then-new Kulis Air National Guard Base in 1954 as the 144th Fighter-Bomber Squadron.

The 1960s through the 1990s brought even more growth and adjustment. In 1995, the organization became the 176th Wing.

Throughout the wing’s history, it has been an integral part of the community and military. From the 1964 earthquake to the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill to the myriad of plane crash victim recoveries, the 176th Wing has been one of Alaska’s premier public-service organizations.

Why move?

The move to JBER has been five years in the making, fulfilling a mandate from the 2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Leadership has considered the move a good fit for the 176th Wing for several reasons.



Goodbye Wave. A Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Wing waves goodbye as others watch the last C-130 depart Kulis Air National Guard Base in February.
Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs





Final Pass. C-130s, HC-130s and HH-60 Pave Hawks from the 176th Wing of the Alaska Air National Guard make one final pass over Kulis Air National Guard Base in February before landing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, their new home.

Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

“Although we love this area around Kulis and will always be connected to it, JBER offers the wing growth as a team and a partnership that works.”

– Brigadier General Charles “Chuck” Foster, 176th Wing Commander



“We have 100 percent cooperation with the active duty Air Force, Army, and Army National Guard regarding our transition onto the base,” Foster said. “It will streamline our support services, capture efficiencies of scale and add more value to the taxpayer’s dollar.”

In addition, the 176th Wing has taken on a more global role and entered into partnerships with the active duty. For instance, the Alaska Air National Guard’s 249th Airlift Squadron is an active associate unit with the active duty’s 517th Airlift Squadron; together they fly the C-17 Globemasters all around the planet.

The move also gives the 176th more room for future expansion.

“Having outgrown our old facilities, this gives us room to grow,” said Chief Master Sergeant Timothy Delph. “It also helps the active duty see the contributions of the Guard to the overall fight.”

“We have a great future here at JBER,” Foster said. ■



Home Landing. An Alaska Air National Guard crew chief assists a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter after landing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in February. The U.S. Air Force C-17 behind the HH-60 is also flown by the Alaska National Guard in a joint relationship with the active duty Air Force. Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

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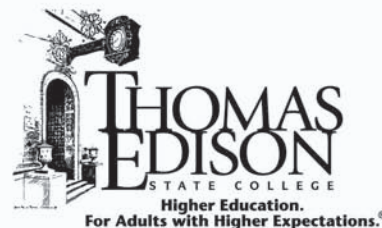


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Alaska Guard Rugby Team Receives International Recognition

By Kalei Rupp and Private First Class Karina Paraoan, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Alaska National Guardsmen had the rare opportunity to be a part of the first-ever Alaska National Guard-sponsored rugby team to compete in a worldwide tournament held in Las Vegas in February.

The team, known as the Alaska Maulers, consists of Alaska National Guardsmen, active duty Soldiers, a Navy reservist and civilian rugby players.

The Las Vegas Invitational Tournament was the official tournament for all teams of different ages and skill levels associated with the USA Sevens International Tournament and Festival. The annual event featured club teams from across the United States and Canada, as well as select countries from around the world.

The Alaska Maulers placed fifth out of 12 teams in the men's elite division. They finished with a 4-3 record.

*"We scored first,
and the stadium erupted."*

— Sergeant First Class Donald Gum

"We had a great time during the tournament," said Sergeant First Class Donald Gum, Recruiting and Retention Command, Alaska Army National Guard. "We were known as the 'Guard team from Alaska' and had news agencies waiting on the sidelines after all our games wanting to interview us. We received a lot of great recognition."

Members of the Alaska Maulers began playing together in late October 2010 when they started preparing for the tournament. They faced some tough competition in Las Vegas where the first team they played was against Kamikaze International, England's all-star rugby team.

"We scored first, and the stadium erupted when we did," Gum said. "They ended up beating us 24-19, but after the game, the coach came up to us and said we were the most physical team they played while traveling."



Maulers. The Alaska Maulers, an Alaska National Guard-sponsored rugby team, takes a break from practice in February. The team participated in The Las Vegas Invitational Tournament and placed fifth out of 12 teams in its division.

Photo: Courtesy of Alaska National Guard

The Alaska National Guard Soldiers on the team are Gum and Sergeant Eti Edward Faaaliga, both with Recruiting and Retention Command, Sergeant Anthony Lee from the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and Specialist Thomas Foilefutu from 1-207th Aviation.

Captain August Manelick, an active duty Soldier, and Lieutenant Commander Dennis Gum Jr., a Navy reserve officer, are the captains of the team.

"We have some of the best military players in the country playing on our team right here in Alaska," Gum said. ■

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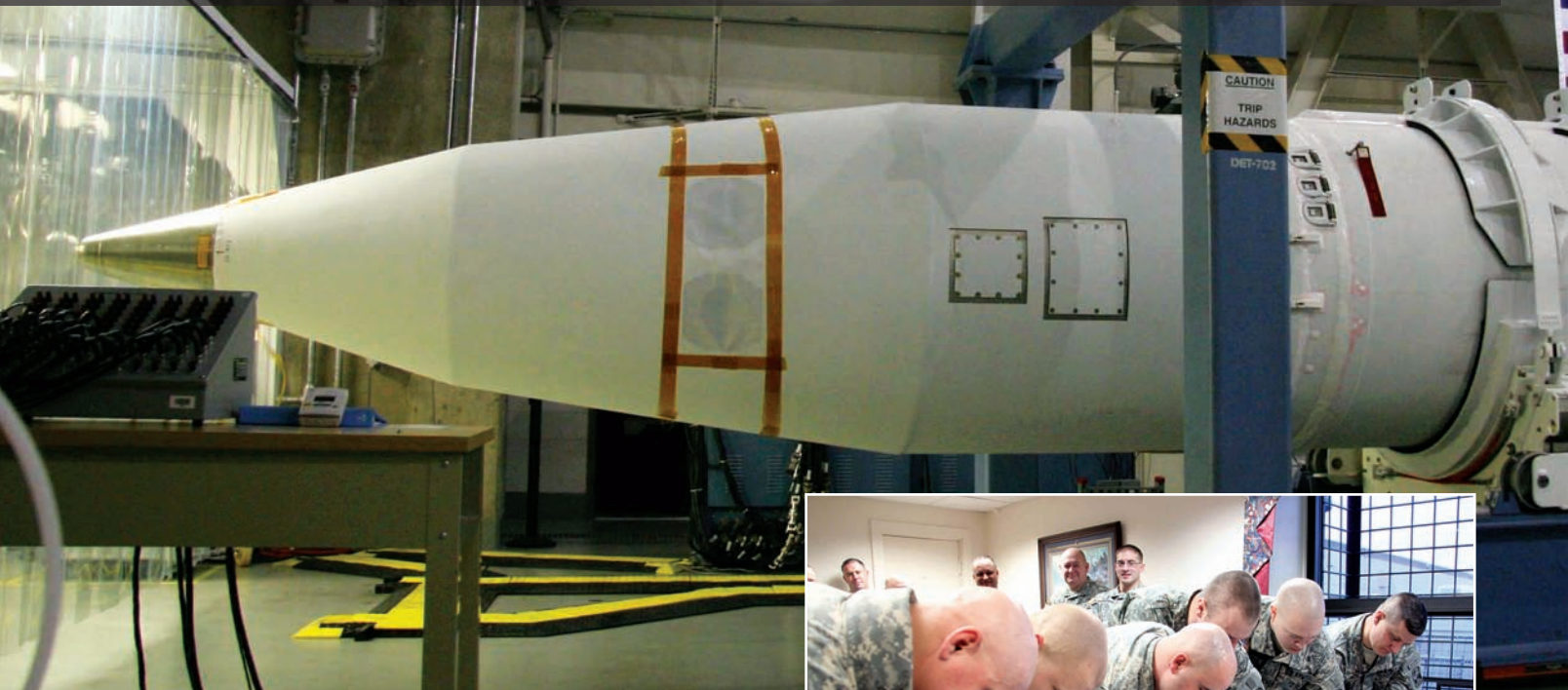
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Missile Defense



Commitment. Members of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion sign their reenlistment forms after accepting their oath of enlistment. More than 50 battalion Soldiers extended their commitment to the Alaska Army National Guard during the 2010 fiscal year.

Photo: Sergeant First Class Kevin McGaha, 49th Missile Defense Battalion



Filming Break. Members of Charlie Crew, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, pose with videographers contracted with the Missile Defense Agency to shoot a high definition video of Fort Greely and the battalion's missile defenders. The Missile Defense Agency fields a layered defensive system to protect the United States and its allies against limited ballistic missile attack. Photo: Staff Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion



Prepared for Cold Weather, Safety. Sergeant Michael Dichanko, Military Police, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, stands outside the Fort Greely main post sign with a snow machine and safety gear. Members of the Alaska Army National Guard and the 49th Missile Defense Battalion are thoroughly trained in proper wear and use of safety gear for numerous outdoor activities. Photo: Sergeant First Class Kevin McGaha, 49th Missile Defense Battalion



Protecting the Nation. A ground-based interceptor sits in the Missile Assembly Building on the Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely. Interceptors like the one pictured are fielded in Alaska and California to protect the nation from a limited intercontinental ballistic missile threat.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion



Avenger Crewmember. Sergeant Nick Power, Fire Direction Center communications operator, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, pauses during live-fire range training at Camp Blanding, Fla. Power and two other Missile Defense Battalion Soldiers recently completed the Avenger Crewmember Course.

Photo: Staff Sergeant Jack W. Carlson III, 49th Missile Defense Battalion

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Top Forty under 40

By Staff Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... An Alaska National Guardsman and Department of Military & Veterans Affairs employee were among the 40 Alaskans honored as the state's "Top Forty under 40."

Captain Amy Slinker and Ryan Ray were selected by the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and Alaska Journal of Commerce as two of the state's leading professionals for demonstrating professional excellence and a commitment to their communities.

Slinker, the commander of the Alaska Army National Guard's 134th Public Affairs Detachment and director of marketing for Pfeffer Development in Anchorage, has been highly involved in her community since she moved to Alaska in 2005. She said both her civilian career and her military duty has benefited the other.

"Any successes I've had in my civilian life have made me a better Soldier," Slinker said. "My successes in the Guard have made me a better employee in my civilian career. As a civilian, I take a lot of pride in serving as a Guard member. I know that every day I'm representing the Alaska National Guard, whether I'm at my civilian job or serving the community. I take into account that my actions always need to reflect the high standards of the Army and the Alaska National Guard."

In addition to her military service, Slinker found it important to become even more deeply involved in the state she's grown to love, volunteering hundreds of hours to the Public Relations Society of America and getting involved with other organizations and events including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Construction (benefiting Food Bank of Alaska), B Troop 1-40th Cavalry Family Readiness Group, Alaska National Guard Operation Santa Claus, Alaska National Guard Officers Association, Alaska Federation of Natives Conference and the Alaska Run for Women.

"It's extremely important that as Guard members we really get to know our community and become a part of it; I hope that junior Soldiers take advantage of the opportunities of both worlds," Slinker said.



Guard Soldier, Civilian Stand Out. Captain Amy Slinker, commander of the Alaska Army National Guard's 134th Public Affairs Detachment and director of marketing for Pfeffer Development, accepts her "Top Forty under 40" award from Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan at an awards luncheon in March. Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Journal of Commerce

Ryan Ray, special assistant II for the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs is by Alaska terms a "sourdough," born and raised in Alaska, and has used his education to benefit his community.

Day to day, Ray manages special projects for the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, but on his "off" time, Ray, who has a background as a substance abuse counselor, founded and chairs a successful non-profit substance abuse treatment center in Wasilla and owns and runs Areli Coaching and Consulting.

"I was nominated not only for the things I do for the state but because I'm also the founder and chairman of Set Free Alaska, which is a very innovative and progressive treatment center modeled after a center in Louisiana that is the model for President Bush's model program for faith-based treatment centers in the nation," Ray said. "I was a substance abuse counselor for years and really saw a huge need in Alaska. It took a lot of time thinking and praying about it, but I opened the center and adapted it to fit the culture and people of Alaska. I also own and run a consultant company which offers life coaching, executive business coaching and profit engineering, all geared to assist people in becoming more successful in their lives."

Ray said becoming a "Top Forty under 40" was never a goal of his, but he's proud and honored because he feels it reflects well on DMVA and his other ventures.

"Anytime you work in the kinds of fields I do, credibility is really important and so you have to work extremely hard to build that credibility and maintain it. Being honored as one of the 'Top Forty under 40' will allow me to continue to help others through my work."

A few of the special projects Ray is currently involved in for DMVA are facilitating the Alaska Military Force Advocacy and Structure Team, an executive-level advisory group to the governor on maintaining military force structure in Alaska, working on the continued development of the Alaska Aerospace Corporation, with a goal to make the Kodiak Launch Complex the premier launch site in the United States for rockets, and streamlining access to the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex to better enhance military training.

Ray encourages other young people to take advantage of every opportunity because you never know where it will lead.

"The two things that I've really worked hard at are understanding that every day you have an opportunity to make an impact and what you choose to do with that opportunity is really what sets you apart." ■



Entrepreneur. Ryan Ray, special assistant II for the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, stands with Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan after receiving his award as one of the state's "Top Forty under 40." Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Journal of Commerce



Veterans

GI BILL 2.0 GIVES STRONGER BENEFITS

By Verdie Bowen, State Veterans Affairs Office

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... New enhancements to the GI Bill mean stronger benefits for most veterans, reflecting the changing needs of today's military members seeking higher education.

The president signed into law the new GI Bill 2.0, which reforms the Post-9/11 GI Bill. While the changes have added better benefits for most, there were some reductions in order to fund the overall program. The start date for the GI Bill 2.0 is Aug. 1, 2011, with the education enhancements beginning Oct. 1, 2011.

THE GAINS:

- National Guard members who didn't qualify under the old rules can now use both AGR and Title 32 service to count toward their Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility.
- Active-duty service members and their eligible spouses will qualify for the \$1,000 annual book stipend.
- Students attending 100 percent of their classes online (distance learning) can now qualify for a housing (living) stipend of up to \$673.50 a month for full-time enrollment.
- Veterans seeking all degrees – undergraduate through doctorate – will have 100 percent of the in-state tuition and fees paid for by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs if eligible, as long as they attend a state operated (public) institution of higher learning.
- Veterans seeking vocational, technical, certificate, on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs will be able to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

- Veterans who need to take placement exams to apply for school (LSAT, GRE, GMAT, SAT, ACT) will be able to take the exams under the GI Bill.
- Eligible National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Public Health Service personnel will be able to transfer Post-9/11 benefits to dependents.
- Vocational rehabilitation participants will have the option to use their Post-9/11 housing stipend instead of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment subsistence rate. They will receive twice the housing stipend in Alaska.

THE LOSSES:

- Veterans who rely on the housing stipend to cover their living expenses during mandatory school break periods will find the payments end during such breaks.
- Veterans enrolled less than full-time will see their housing stipend prorated to match their rate of pursuit – the number of credit hours taken each term.
- Veterans whose private school tuition exceeds \$17,500 a year will have to find alternative means for covering their tuition. (Note: Yellow Ribbon still applies and may be available to help cover the additional expenses.)

The new GI Bill gives veterans 15 years after separation/retirement to use the benefits. One of the best investments our country provides to our veterans is the education programs offered to them. ■

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Alaskan Employers Have 'Total Force' VISION

By Pete Jensen, ESGR Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Alaskan employers from Fairbanks traveled to Florida in January to gain insight on how the National Guard and Reserve forces integrate into the Department of Defense "Total Force."

Participants spent four information-packed days on tours and briefs pertaining to the Guard and Reserve's duties and missions. The employers sharpened their awareness of Guard and Reserve members' environment, as well as duties and missions.

Employers went on a tour of MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., and received briefings on the U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron, Navy Operational Support Center, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The trip to Florida and back to Alaska also gave employers a better understanding of what the troops do. Participants traveled to MacDill Air Force Base from Eielson Air Force Base on board an Alaska Air National Guard KC-135R Stratotanker from the 168th Air Refueling Wing. Each flight took approximately seven and a half hours and gave employers a personal understanding of what the troops endure while flying for hours on end.

In all, Alaska's ESGR employers said they gained an in-depth awareness and appreciation for what their reserve component employees do when they are away from their civilian occupations for military duties. ■



Boss Lift to Florida. Employers from Interior Alaska learn about the Department of Defense "Total Force" concept, specifically the missions and duties of their Guard and Reserve employees. From left, front row: William Nordmark, Motel Nord Haven; Clarence Bolden, Fairbanks North Star Borough; Douglas Isaacson, City of North Pole; John Sloan, Buffalo Center Drive-In; and Ronald Woolf, Golden Valley Electric Association. From left, back row: Rich Owens, Alaska ESGR chairman and Tastee Freez; Ron Wall, Alaska State Troopers; Janey Hovenden, City of Fairbanks; David Lamothe, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network; Tom Moyer, Office of U.S. Senator Mark Begich; Michelle Maynor, Interior Graphics & Printing; Cassandra Pinkel, Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation; Renee Staley, Birchwood Homes; Kathy Weber, City of Fairbanks; Dave Ferree, Fairbanks North Star Borough; Chief Master Sergeant Dennis Hogan, Alaska Air National Guard; Lisa Herbert, Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce; and Steve Lundgren, Denali State Bank. Photo: Pete Jensen, ESGR Public Affairs

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Education

Accomplishment. Alaska Military Youth Academy graduates throw their hats in the air and cheer upon their dismissal from the Alaska Military Youth Academy graduation ceremony held in Anchorage in February. Graduating from the 22-week program were 137 cadets. Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



Be a Volunteer to Help At-Risk Youth Succeed

By Alaska Military Youth Academy Staff

CAMP CARROLL, Alaska ... Volunteerism is at the heart of what makes America great! Are you looking for an opportunity to directly affect the lives of Alaskan youth and the future of the state and country?

The Alaska Military Youth Academy provides an opportunity for spouses, military members and friends to participate and help. We have opportunities throughout the program all year for either hands-on involvement in the field or in the classroom with physical training, teaching vocational education classes, administrative tasks or assistance with mentoring.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy's National Guard Bureau ChalleNGe Program is designed to provide life coping skills and meet the educational needs of at-risk 16- to 18-year-old Alaskans. Our mission is to motivate young men and women to become successful citizens, with the values, skills, education and self-discipline to succeed as adults.

During the busy Pre-ChalleNGe Program (acclimation period), candidates are introduced to many aspects of military culture and given the opportunity to acclimate to the physical and mental aspects of the program. This time would be familiar to anyone who has been through a similar military indoctrination period. Training focuses on teamwork, self-discipline, close-order drill, code of conduct, leadership and followership and physical fitness. During this period, candidates are also given a glimpse of the academic structure and the expectations of the academy.

The program is a 22-week residential school based on the traditional military training model. Cadets are instructed in life coping skills, job skills, responsible citizenship, academic excellence, leadership and followership, health and hygiene, physical fitness and service to the community.

During the residential phase, cadets can work toward receiving their high school diploma and/or GED. Cadets can also obtain various certifications by participating in specific work readiness programs such as Culinary Arts, ETT, Microsoft A+ and National Center for Construction and Research/Carpentry.

The Academy provides continuing mentorship and resources to the graduate during the 12-month post-residential after-care phase. During the program, cadets have weekly contact with their mentors. Mentors help support the cadets during the residential and post-residential phases of the program.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy has been fortunate to have many National Guard members volunteer as mentors and team leader assistants throughout the years. We are always looking for National Guard members to mentor the cadets and/or work with academy staff during one of the most crucial times of the program, the acclimation period: Pre-ChalleNGe Program.

If you or someone you know would like more information to volunteer, be a mentor and/or to volunteer to work alongside program staff, please contact the Recruiting, Mentoring and Placement Supervisor, Deb Morton at (907) 384-6120 or deborah.morton@alaska.gov. ■



Focused. Cadets stand in formation during the 2010 Veterans Day ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory. The Alaska Military Youth Academy program is a 22-week residential school based on the traditional military training model.

Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Military Youth Academy



Mentor Visit. Cadet Samuel Davis, 1st Platoon, class of 2011-01, plays dominoes with his mentor during mentor visitation time.

Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Military Youth Academy



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Family Programs

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program

By Kimberly Leary, Family Programs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Greetings from the Alaska National Guard Joint Services Support team! It's been a very busy time for us as we continue to provide quality services to military members and their families from all of our armed forces. We would like to highlight one of our services: the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program.

You hear it in the news often enough, but the following statistics are worrisome enough that they're worth repeating:

- Alaska has the highest rate per capita in the country for rape – true for 23 out of the last 30 years. (FBI's Uniform Crime Report, <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>).
- Alaska's reported rate of rape per capita is 2.6 times the national average. (FBI's UCR).
- Anchorage has the ninth highest sexual assault rate of any city in the United States. Fairbanks is ranked first. (FBI's UCR).
- The Fairbanks rape rate is 4.7 times the national average. (FBI's UCR).
- Alaska's child abuse rate is six times higher than the national average. (Department of Public Safety / AK CDVSA Annual Report for FY 2006).
- Native American and Alaska Native women are two to two-and-a-half times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women of all other ethnicities in the United States.

(Amnesty International Report, 2007: www.amnestyusa.org; National Survey of Violence Against Women 2006, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/210346.pdf>).

This is why the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program is so critical. The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program reinforces the National Guard's commitment to eliminate incidents of sexual assault through a comprehensive policy that centers on awareness and prevention, training and education, victim advocacy, response, reporting and follow-up.

Air and Army policy promotes sensitive care and confidential reporting for victims of sexual assault, and accountability for those who commit these crimes. Leading this program is the Alaska National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Gretchen Nealy.

It is the responsibility of the SARC to provide prevention education, training and direct services to address the problems associated with domestic violence and sexual assault in the military. It is through the SARC and other trained victim advocates that this program provides its services, to include the victim's right to choose from restricted, unrestricted and limited reporting options.

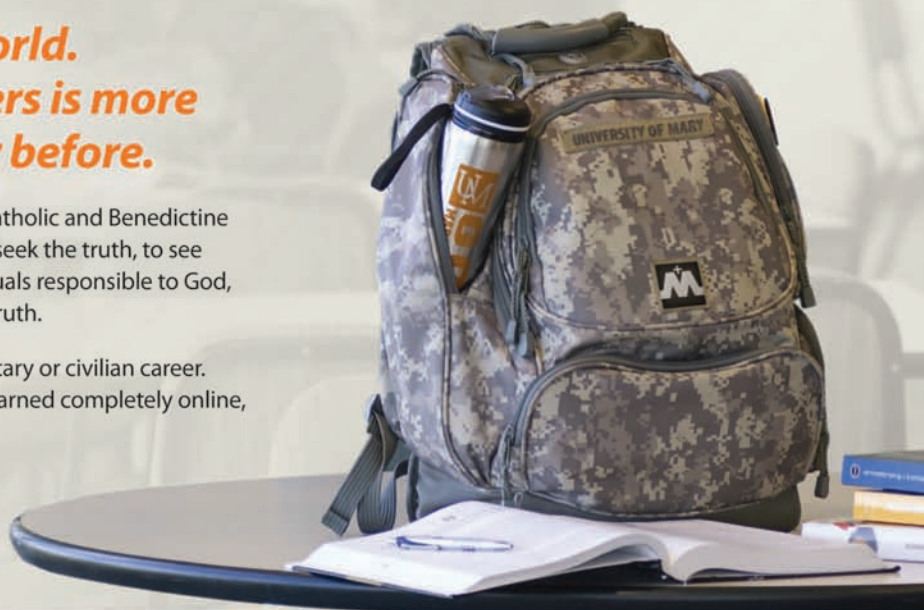
There is much to this program, and its importance cannot be stressed enough. For more information, or to learn about your rights as a victim, please contact Gretchen Nealy for a completely confidential conversation at (907) 428-6219/6147 local to Anchorage, nation-wide toll-free at (888) 917-3608 or via email at gretchen.nealy1@us.army.mil. ■

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**Major
Gary Rowe**
297th BFSB



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**Specialist
Jennifer Keohanam**
297th BFSB



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Shenah Ray
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CPT Anthony Mortrud 49th MDB
LTC Kevin Peterman 103rd CST
CPT Dwayne Wirfel 297th SIG

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1LT Steven Major 49th MDB
SGT Joe Yeager RRD
SGT Jason Stokes RRD
SGT Daryl Palembang RRD
SSG Michelle Clark 297th NSC

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TSgt Saroya Porche JFHQ-AK (Air)

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MSgt Michael W. Williams 168th AMXS
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SSgt Amanda Galles 176th LRS
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SSG Harry Alexie RRD

Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal



CPT Janice Golub JFHQ-AK (Army)

Armed Forces Reserve Medal



SGM Richard Hildreth RRD
SSG Harry Alexie RRD
CPT Janice Golub JFHQ-AK (Army)

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Alaska Distinguished Service Medal



SSG Michelle Clark 297th NSC
SGM John Barlow 207th RTI

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SPC Pricilla Ortiz MED DET
PFC Jacquelyn Little MED DET
SSG Robert Harris MED DET
PFC Michael Richeal MED DET
SPC May Felarca MED DET

SPC Paige Henslee MED DET
SFC Matthew Roeber 761st MP
SGT Timothy Henry 1-43rd INF
SSG Benjamin Miyasato 297th MP

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SrA Ferdie Villaflores 176th OSS

Alaska Community Service Medal



1SG Sherry Butters JFHQ-AK (Army)
SGT Brandee Gresham JFHQ-AK (Army)

Alaska State Service Medal



SSG Harry Alexie RRD



Alaska State Defense Force Commander Promoted. Major General Thomas H. Katkus, left, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, pins the rank of brigadier general on Colonel Roger E. Holl, commander of the 49th Readiness Brigade, Alaska State Defense Force, during his promotion ceremony held at the Alaska National Guard Armory in March. The Alaska State Defense Force is an all volunteer, state sanctioned militia, which supports and augments the Alaska National Guard in times of emergency and disaster. There are about 300 members in the Alaska State Defense Force who drill on a monthly basis in communities across the state.

Photo: Specialist Balinda O'Neal, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

PROMOTIONS

Colonel

Ray Kelley MED DET
Michael Thompson 297th BFSB
Stephen Sweet JFHQ-AK (Army)

Major

Lindsay Teplesky MED DET
Scott Monson JFHQ-AK (Army)

Captain

Linda Janes 297th BFSB

First Lieutenant

William Heath 49th MDB
Anthony Rivas JFHQ-AK (Army)

Chief Warrant Officer Three

Gabriel Hennemann 207th AVN

Chief Master Sergeant

Catherine A. Pointer 168th FSF
J. Quattlebaum 176th MDG

Master Sergeant (Army)

Christopher Gongora 103rd CST

Senior Master Sergeant

Anthony J. Kuntz 168th MSG

Sergeant First Class

John Flood 297th MP
Shawn Layton 297th BFSB
Raymon Armitage 1-297th R&S
Corwin Viglione 207th AVN

Master Sergeant (Air)

Michael R. Reyor 213th SWS
Leo Claunan 212th RQS
Chadwick Jennings 176th CES
Matthew Schrader 212th RQS
Marlene Windel 176th AMXS
Cecil Dickerson 249th AS
Tanna L. Carter 168th ARS

Staff Sergeant (Army)

Mark Thomas 207th AVN
Miguel Gomez 207th AVN
Robert Pike 207th AVN
Troy Hicks 1-297th CAV

Jill King 134th PAD
Zachary Huckstep 1-143rd IN ABN
Ralph Harris 297th BFSB
Dean Burgess 207th AVN

Technical Sergeant

Raymond S. Allen 168th AMXS
Heman Quiones 176th ACS
John Davison 176th AMXS
Aldrine Balyuout 176th CES
David Glass 176th ACS
Derek Hansen 176th OSS
Summer Rehak 176th LRS

Sergeant

Devon Kothe 207th AVN
Odin Ramsey 207th AVN
Katheryn Ross 207th AVN
Jonathan Hillman 207th AVN
Edward Eagerton 134th PAD
Anthony Lee 207th BSC
Paul Oliver 103rd CST
Florida Torres-Marizan 207TH BSC
Esric Haddock 207th AVN
Christopher Greene 207th AVN
Albis Gomezgiron 49th MDB
Rebekah Hirschel 49th MDB
Julian Muniz 49th MDB
Raul Riveratorres 49th MDB
Raymond Castner 207th AVN
Joshua Reiersen 761st MP
Kevin Macan 297th MP
Tommy Phillip Jr. 1-143rd IN ABN
Charles Kanrilak 1-143rd IN ABN
John Tugatuk 1-143rd IN ABN

Staff Sergeant (Air)

Chad M. Muniz 168th AMXS
John Charron 176th LRS
Brian Belcher 176th ACS
Ji Yoo 176th MXS
Kim Matthews 176th LRS
Matthew Baca 176th MXS
Nathan Green 212th RQS
Joshua A. Moore 213th SWS

RETIREMENTS

CMSgt Charles E. Sears 168th SFS
TSgt Patrick L. Scott 168th LRS
SFC Kevin Slayden 297th SIG
CW4 Ronald Gilson DET 54
CPT Elecon Reformado 297th BFSB
SFC David Edmond 1-297th R&S
SSG Carlos Huff 297th MP
Capt Tina Wagendorf 176th MDG
MSgt Mack Schwalm 176th CES
MSgt Michael Phillips 176th MXS
SMSgt Forrest Muhle 211th RQS
SMSgt Richard Maxted JFHQ-AK (Air)
Maj Randall Oefelein 144th AS
Lt Col Eric Kelm 144th AS
TSgt Tyronne Chisholm 176th SFS
SSgt Gary Howard 176th MXS
MSgt Alfred Kinzel 176th ACS
TSgt Ronald Frost 176th SFS
Lt Col Gregg Origer 144th AS



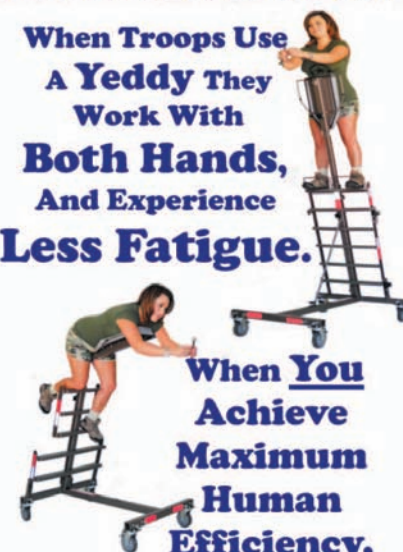
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Corey Largo
Kimberly Hatzis
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Dennis Walker
Chad Kiminski
Blake McDowell
Steven Koeber
Crystal Kappelman

168th Air Refueling Wing

Melissa McInelly
Justin Smith
Tupou Ainuu
Bobby Pico
Kelly Merrell
Charles Strong
Kevin Nelson
Jaymie Stepanek
Argenis Sambois
Timothy O'Brien
Jessica Delgadillo
Dominic Smith
Paul Wipf
Andrew Graham
Nideasa Burgess
Alan Carvajal
Jason Martinez
Scott Hanks
Miranda Haddow

761st Military Police Battalion

Megan Hawkins
Alex Gonzales
Josue Guzman

207th Aviation

Mikana Halloran
Jamie Berry
Christopher Cummins
Dillon Dvorovy
John Sparks
Chantal Ledue
Marc Roach

Elizabeth Larue
Thecla Jeanlouis
Paul Gillquist

297th Reconnaissance and Surveillance

Jarron Jimmie
Christopher Sternhagen
Landon Mendes
Berald Escribano
Weckhorst Daniel
Dillon Gilroy
Kyle Presher
Michael Rodriguez
David Robinson
Kenneth Christensen

297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade

Aliana Isip
Victoria Marsh

297th Military Police Company

Mark Sullivan



Dedicated to State and Nation. Former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin gives the reenlistment oath to Sergeant Michael Skinner, B Troop, 1-297th Cavalry, Alaska Army National Guard, in January.

Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

Patrick Brown
Tyler Schultz

207th Brigade Support Company

Shaylunn Lee
Zack Fetta

Dennis Denniston
Dana Willard
Michael Fischer

297th Cavalry

Chester Dyson
Jeffrey Conner

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	May	June	July
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	21-22	4-5	16-17
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	21-22	4-5, 6-10 AT	No Drill

Alaska Army National Guard

297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	21-22	4-5, 11-25 AT	No Drill
38th Troop Command	21-22	4-5	No Drill

Alaska Air National Guard

168th Air Refueling Wing	21-22	4-5	16-17
176th Wing	21-22	4-5	16-17

Alaska State Defense Force

Headquarters	7-8	4-5	2-3
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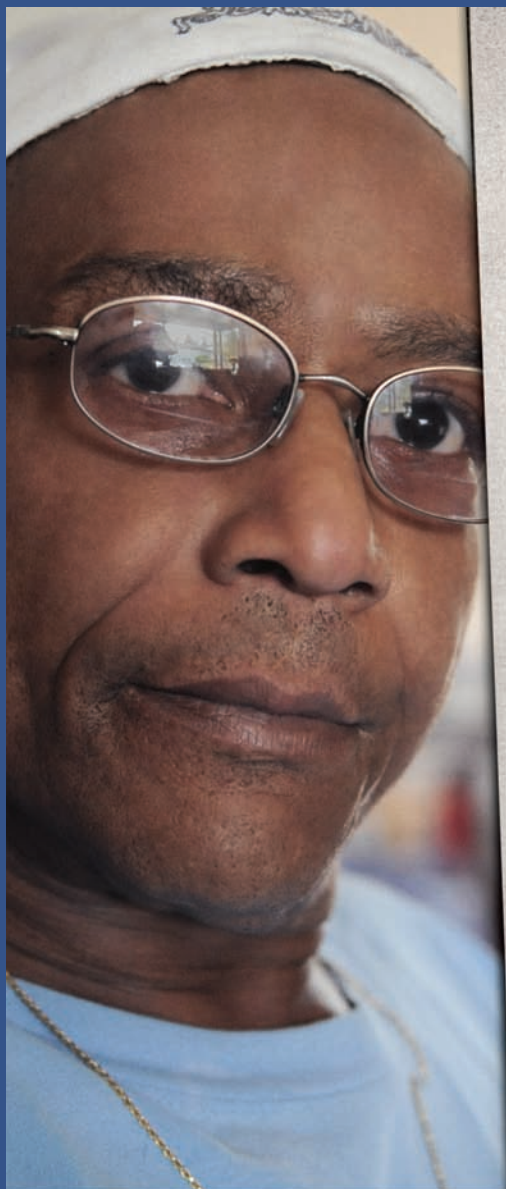
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