

ARCTIC WARRIOR

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON'S SOURCE FOR NEWS

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No tolerance for DUIs

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JONATHAN VALDES**
JBER Public Affairs

Driving while under the influence should be taken very seriously and is something people should always be aware of.

When taking certain prescription medications and using alcohol, driving is something that should be avoided at all costs.

An impaired decision can lead to serious consequences, changing someone's life completely in the blink of an eye.

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson supports awareness and prevention of driving under the influence by providing specialized programs to its service members and community.

"It's not unusual during the holiday season that we might see an increase in DUIs," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Evan Romero, 673d Security Forces Squadron operations support noncommissioned officer. "Having some downtime, individuals have opportunities to have parties and be with friends or family, and sometimes it might lead to an excess of drinking."

Although there might be spikes in DUI occurrences around the holidays, it can happen at any point during the year, and the consequences, will change the life of the offender forever.

"Depending on the location, whether it is on or off base, apprehension or arrest by military or civilian law enforcement is just one of the consequences," said



Air Force Staff Sgt. Evan Romero, a 673d Security Forces Squadron operations support noncommissioned officer, simulates pulling over an impaired driver at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Jan. 15. For someone struggling with drugs or alcohol problems, JBER offers multiple programs and resources such as the Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment program and Army Substance Abuse Program, which can be reached at 580-2181 and 384-1412 respectively. Joint Base Against Drunk Driving, which offers rides to people who have been drinking and need a safe drive home, can be reached at 907-384-7433. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Jonathan Valdes)

Romero. "Also, suspension of driving privileges or complete forfeiture of driver's license can occur. In addition, Uniform Code of Military Justice charges, such as reduction of rank and pay, and effects to an individual's security clearance, are likely."

Not only do these consequences impact individuals, they can also influence JBER's mission.

"Losing the ability to drive in a job that requires it may render a service member incapable of performing their duties," Romero said.

JBER law enforcement personnel take impaired driving seriously – on the road or at the gates.

To avoid these incidents, Joint Base Against Drunk

Driving encourages service members and the community to use its life-saving program.

"It is better to ask for a ride from JBADD than to deal with the consequences of a DUI," said U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Jessica Pry, a 673d Medical Group unit deployment manager and JBADD secretary. "If your plan A and B fall through, don't hesitate to call; we are here to help."

JBADD is a joint-service volunteer program that gives service members and other Department of Defense ID cardholders a contingency plan to prevent drunk driving and DUI incidents, while providing a safe, anonymous and free ride home.

"While the service is avail-

able, don't make JBADD your first choice for a safe ride home," Pry said. "Utilizing the service should be a last resort."

JBADD is located at the Warrior Zone at 655 Richardson Drive. Operations run every Friday and Saturday from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. as well as holidays and down days.

People interested in volunteering can show up during operating hours.


To request a ride from JBADD, call 907-384-RIDE (7433). For more information on JBADD, visit www.facebook.com/JBER.JBADD or email them at jberjbadd@gmail.com.

For those struggling with alcohol or substance misuse or abuse, the Air Force offers the Alcohol Drug Abuse Pre-

vention and Treatment program to provide prevention and assessment and treatment services for drug and alcohol-related issues.

For more information, contact 580-2181.

The Army offers the Army Substance Abuse Program at 384-1412/1411. The program provides alcohol and drug prevention education through unit prevention leader training, military and civilian education classes, awareness events and intense remedial education.

"Driving under the influence is not worth risking your career, your life or someone else's life," Romero said. "It all comes down to safety and responsibility, and we aim to ensure everyone gets where they're going safely." 

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ARCTIC WARRIOR

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Airmen selected for APD academy

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JONATHAN VALDES**
JBER Public Affairs

Two Airmen from the 673d Security Forces Squadron started a six-month-long training course at the Anchorage Police Department's Officer Academy, Dec. 17, 2018.

Staff Sgt. Jacob Sleik and Airman 1st Class Joshua Worley, patrolmen at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, are the first security forces troops to be chosen for this training.

"They were selected based on their maturity and experience in law enforcement," said Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Kerry Thompson, 673d SFS operations superintendent. "They also went through a selection process by our squadron's senior noncommissioned officers."

Due to the good relation-

ship between JBER security forces and the APD, the doors were opened for this opportunity.

"We reached out to the APD to see if they had any additional training that we could receive," Thompson said. "They told us they would be more than willing to allot us two positions for their academy."

Some of the training the academy offers includes defensive driving tactics, first aid, emergency vehicle operations course, survival, ground fighting and firearms techniques.

Higher productiveness and efficiency are some of the benefits of the training for the already outstanding Airmen.

"This is a force multiplier for us," Thompson said. "Having the ability to learn a different skill set and having additional tools in their tool boxes helps our Airmen do a



Two Airmen of the 673d Security Forces Squadron were selected to attend the Anchorage Police Department's six-month academy course starting in late December. (Courtesy photo/APD)


better job – after all, knowledge is power."

With the additional specialized training, Airmen have an opportunity to grow.

"From this type of schooling, we are able to take away huge amounts of training," Sleik said. "Once we get back to JBER, we can teach other Airmen what we've learned and show them other ways of doing things. It doesn't have to be a better way, just a different one."

Although it's only been a month since they started the academy training, it has already proven extremely effective for both patrolmen.

"The academy training has been a professional and enjoyable learning environment, but still a fun experience," Sleik said. "It has been very informative, helpful and accommodating."

"Overall, it's a wealth of knowledge that most people won't be able to get, and I'm happy I was selected to attend it." 

Keep the trucks rollin' rollin' rollin'



Airman 1st Class Nicholas Johnston, fire truck maintenance apprentice with the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron Vehicle Maintenance, Fire Truck Maintenance shop, changes a coolant hose Jan. 25, 2018, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Crystal A. Jenkins)

LEFT: Senior Airman Teodorico Nicolau, mission general vehicle equipment maintenance journeyman with the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron general purpose Vehicle Maintenance, uses a jack to support a transfer case for safety during an oil change, Jan. 25, 2018, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The shop repairs and services multiple types of transportation vehicles, forklifts, Humvees and Wollard MB-4's.

673d LRS maintains stellar readiness rate

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
CRYSTAL JENKINS**
JBER Public Affairs

Recently, the third-largest vehicle maintenance fleet in the U.S. Air Force, centered at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, has achieved and maintained a 93-percent mission-capable rate.

Such a solid Pacific Air Forces ranking proves the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron is ready for the fight tonight and tomorrow.

Achieving these types of operational levels, though, is no small feat for the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron. These Vehicle Maintenance Airmen are responsible for managing, inspecting, troubleshooting and undertaking all vehicle repairs.

“On a daily basis, we maintain more than 1,700 vehicles with an estimated value of \$203 million,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Neigel Wright, 673d LRS fleet management and analysis section chief. “Our customer base encompasses both the 3rd Wing and 673d Air Base Wing, as well as U.S. Army Alaska, Alaska Command, 176th Alaska Air National Guard, 477th Fighter Group, 611th Air Operations Center, 611th Air Support Group, and the Marine Reserve at JBER alone. This doesn’t include the many geographically separated customers we support throughout the Pacific.”

Even though this giant machine of personnel and equipment’s gears are well-oiled, they know it is essential to continue this pursuit for excellence. They must stay familiar with the ever-changing variety of vehicles with a vast mixture of maintenance needs.

“From the snow blowers, snow plows, and broom trucks to the flight line fuel trucks, deicers and staircase trucks, if it’s broke, we fix it,” said Leon Sutton, shop supervisor for the 673d LRS. “It doesn’t matter if it’s New Year’s Eve on a shift change, our guys come in and get the job done so the mission keeps going.”

Being in the far north, JBER faces a unique set of issues. The extreme climate and the installation’s sheer size mean JBER trucks are used three to four times more than trucks in the Lower 48, in terms of hours on the road.

During the summer months, rebuild programs go into full swing, but starting every October, the Heavy Equipment Repair and Flightline



LEFT: Airman Matthew Tracy and Airman 1st Class Maria Preciado, apprentices with the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron Vehicle Maintenance Fleet Management and Analysis shop, audit vehicle record jacket files, Jan. 25, 2018, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. FMNA maintains record jackets and maintenance schedules for all vehicles in addition to opening and closing work orders for the vehicles customers bring in for maintenance. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Crystal A. Jenkins)

BELOW: Airman 1st Class Spencer Ludlow, mission general vehicle equipment maintenance apprentice with the 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron Vehicle Maintenance, Flightline Maintenance shop, connects a wire harness on a 50K forklift, Jan. 25, 2018 at JBER. Flight line maintenance repairs and services all of the Global deicer trucks, Caterpillar 50K forklifts lifts, 60K aircraft cargo loader/transporters and Grove MB-2 Aircraft tug/pushback tractors used for flight line operations.



Maintenance shops begin 24/7 operations, dedicated to snow removal with more than 100 vehicles to service. No matter what the weather or problem is, the Airmen’s expertise is vital to the base’s success.

“Overall, it’s a team effort to make sure our vehicles are maintained and serviced in a timely manner,” said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Dylan Proteau, noncommissioned officer in charge of Flightline Maintenance. “Whether it’s a part or tool needed from one of the other shops, or simply making sure that a job is done right instead of fast, our Airmen step up to the plate and give it their all.”

A 93 percent rating means that for 1,700 vehicles, more than 1,580 of them are fully operational and ready


for the mission, while the others are being repaired or replaced.

Since vehicle maintenance Airmen are required to be subject matter experts on the many different machines they repair, specialized on-the-job training is received.

“I think the tactile type of advanced training our Airmen receive from the PACAF Transportation Center helps our Airmen sharpen their skill-set immensely,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jackie Rieke, 673d LRS Flight Support section chief. “This set-aside time allows them to combine their on-the-job training with a deeper knowledge of their professional expertise. Sure it takes them out of the bay for the day, but we gain that back tenfold when they

are able to advance in their specialized skills and get repairs done more efficiently.”

Whether it is transportation vehicles, upholstery, or body work, it is peoples’ dedication to fixing something right the first time that is the key to success, said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Thomas Wooldridge, 673d LRS main shop noncommissioned officer in charge.

“I have stuck with asking my Airmen to do something over telling them,” Wooldridge said. “I find a general and mutual level of respect increases almost anyone’s desire to put quality over quantity. I believe this is what truly gives us the ability to achieve and maintain these kind of ratings.” 

Friday

Free ASL class
Learn the basics of sign language at the Library from 2 to 3 p.m. with this class for elementary-school-aged students. Homeschoolers welcome. For information, call 384-1640.

Slow cooker secrets
Illa School-Age Center offers this class starting at 4:30 p.m. in using the busy parent’s best friend. For information, call 384-1608.

Saturday
Ice climbing
Scale a frozen waterfall and experience the awe of Alaska with this trip for ages 16 and older from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, call 552-2023.

Ping-pong tournament
Show off your skills at the Warrior Zone starting at 2 p.m., with prizes for the top three places. For information, call 384-9006.

Comic Con
Head to the JBER Library for this celebration of superheroes and villains from 1 to 3 p.m., with contests, giveaways, games and more. For information, call 384-1640.

Fat tire bike ride
Enjoy Portage Lake or Girdwood with this ride from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. open to all service members and dependents. For information, call 552-2023.

Sunday
Snowmachine ride
Snowmachine at Willow or Spencer Glacier with this ride from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. open to all service members and dependents. For information, call 552-2023.

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Tuesday
Snowshoe trip
Take an unforgettable snowshoe trip with the Outdoor Adventure Program from 5 to 9 p.m., open to ages 14 and older. For information, call 552-2023.

Intro to lead climbing
Singles can take their climbing to the next level with techniques for clipping quick draws, managing rope and more with this class at the Outdoor Adventure Program from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. For information, call 552-2023.

Tuesday – Wednesday
Entrepreneurship
Sign up for this two-day workshop designed for anyone considering owning a business. Learn from the Small Business Association about financial resources, develop your business plan, and more. Class is at the Air Force Transition Assistance Program office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information, call 552-6619 or 552-4943.

Thursday
Backward day
In honor of Backward Day, Kennecott Youth Center invites participants to do everything backward – reverse your walk, direction, or just your shirt. For information, call 552-2266.

Ongoing
Family skate series
Skate with Anchorage at the Westchester Lagoon every Saturday through the end of February. There are warming barrels, free hot chocolate, and music from 3 to 5 p.m.

Fit to Fight skiing
Cross-country skiing at Eagleglen Fitness Park is open every day except federal holidays. Bring gear or check out free equipment from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, call 552-2023.

Zoo Lights
Check out the lighted parade of animals at the Alaska Zoo Thursday through Sunday nights from 5 to 8 p.m. through Jan. 31. For more information, visit alaskazoo.org.

Civil Air Patrol
Adult members of the Civil Air Patrol meet at the Aero Club Hangar the first and third Tuesdays of each month; cadets meet Saturdays. For more information or to join the CAP, call 350-7951.

Thursday science club
Youth are invited to the JBER Library to conduct

experiment and think about science from 6:30 to 7 p.m. For information, call 384-1640.

Library story times
The JBER Library hosts preschool story times Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m.
Toddler Tales is Wednesdays from 10 to 10:30 a.m.
All-ages story time is Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7 p.m.
For more information, call 384-1640.

Model railroading
The Military Society of Model Railroad Engineers meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday and 1 p.m. Saturday in the basement of Matanuska Hall.
They also host an open house every third Saturday through April; everyone is invited.
For more information, call 552-5234, e-mail msmrre@gmail.com or visit [facebook.com/msmrre](https://www.facebook.com/msmrre).

Chapel services

Catholic Mass

Sunday
9 a.m. – Arctic Warrior Chapel
Monday and Wednesday
11:40 a.m. – Arctic Warrior Chapel
Tuesday
Noon – JBER Hospital Chapel
Friday
Noon – JBER Hospital Chapel

Confession

Confessions are available anytime by appointment or after any mass. Call 552-5762.

Protestant Sunday worship services

Gospel
9:30 a.m. – Midnight Sun Chapel
Contemporary
11 a.m. – Arctic Warrior Chapel
Traditional
11 a.m. – Heritage Chapel

Religious Education

For schedules, call the Religious Operations Center at 552-5762.

Cache me outside, how ‘bout that



An Alaska Native cache, adopted by trappers and early settlers to keep bears and other animals out of critical food supplies, stands near the Post Road gate on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson as the “Super Blood Wolf moon” rises Jan 20. The cache was built by members of the Native Village of Eklutna. (U.S. Air Force photo/Dana Rosso)

Take a leap of faith – and surprise yourself

By **ARMY CHAPLAIN (COL.) RICK KOCH**
AKNG State Chaplain

A spring hike in a Midwestern marshy area many years ago marked a weekend trip with my Boy Scout troop.

We were going to cook a picnic lunch at a designated campsite.

Each of us carried a backpack with cans of food, which I’m sure seemed heavy to us adolescents at the time.

To keep our feet dry, we wore heavy rubber boots. We slogged our way along a trail bordered by spongy marshlands on either side.

Then, an unexpected obstacle confronted us about halfway through the journey – a drainage ditch filled with water. To cross the ditch, each of us had to leap from one side to the other.

We challenged each other with light-hearted trash talking as we surveyed the situation.

Yet, deep down I could sense every one of us was frightened of the prospect of leaping that ditch.

Sure, there was fear of getting wet and muddy on a cool spring day, but

the biggest fear was failure. Nobody wanted to be “that guy” who embarrassed himself by not clearing the ditch high and dry.

The weight of the packs with cans and the heavy rubber boots added to our fear, although I’m sure if I had drawn a chalk line denoting the width of the two edges of the ditch on my driveway at home, I would have been able to leap it successfully every time.

The seven- or eight-foot depth of the ditch with about three feet of water at the bottom, however, played in our minds and made the prospect of safe passage quite daunting.

In my heart, I believed I had enough strength and skill to make the leap, but I wasn’t sure.

I did not know it then, but I was learning a faith lesson.

Years later, when attending seminary, the topic of the nature of faith came up in one of my classes.

Scripture tells us, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

In short, a person who possesses

faith in something does so without complete, or sometimes even any, information.

In ancient Greek, the word for knowledge is “gnosis” and therefore an “agnostic” represents a person without knowledge.

During our classroom discussion, the professor wondered if a person motivated by faith is, in fact, an agnostic who is willing, without full knowledge, to step out in a direction in which they believe is correct.

The more we think about faith, then, the more we need to connect it with courage.

Faith, in essence, represents an action. Faith is not just a thought.

Having faith means we’re willing, even if afraid, to move toward a desired goal even if we don’t know how things will turn out.

In short, a person of faith is a believer who courageously acts without any or perhaps full knowledge.

So, a group of Boy Scouts hiking through Midwestern marshland gathered their collective courage, and one after the other leapt across a rather inconsequential drainage ditch on

their way to a picnic lunch.

Some did better than others, though in every respect no one completely failed.

As for me, I exerted such a strong effort I surpassed my initial expectations by a few feet.


The leap of faith, completed by courage, dispelled the unknown and added new knowledge and confidence to me and all the other boys.

Acting on faith can lead to strengthened belief in our own abilities and the actions of others whom we trust – and especially help build a deeper relationship with the divine.

People can get stuck in deep and unproductive ruts when they lack the courage to step out in faith.

Courageously acting on the critical moments of faith throughout life allows us to grow and change in wondrous ways we may have once thought impossible.

Being stagnant will never get us to the picnic.

Taking leaps of faith leads us to the promise of new growth – and fuller lives. 

Hospital Family Day hours

The 673d Medical Group will be open on Pacific Air Forces family days to ensure patients have access to acute care and several other services. Specialty care, surgical services, the laboratory, pharmacy and radiology will be open. For more information, call 580-2778.

Disposition of effects

Army Capt. Paul Dolan, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, is authorized to make disposition of personal effects of Sgt. Andrew Washington, HHT, 1-40th Cav. Regt., as stated in Army Regulation 638-2.

Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of the deceased should contact Dolan at (907) 903-6756.

Firewood permits

Firewood is \$35 per cord or \$17.50 per half-cord. To receive a permit, an iSportsman permit is required. For

information, visit <https://jber.isportsman.net>.

Main Pharmacy hours

The main JBER pharmacy, on the first floor of the JBER hospital near the Bear entrance, is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The pharmacy at the Exchange is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays for civilian prescriptions and refills, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for refills only.

iSportsman enrollment

Anyone choosing to recreate in JBER training areas must obtain an iSportsman permit and sign in and out using the iSportsman system prior to recreating. A pass costs \$10; \$5 for those 60 and older and disabled persons. Passholders may also need an installation access pass. For information, visit [isportsman.jber.net](https://jber.isportsman.net) or call 552-8609 or 384-6224.

Reserve ‘Scroll’

Officers wanting to transition to the Air Force Reserve

must have their commission transferred to a list called “the Scroll” and approved by the Secretary of Defense.

The process averages 120 days, but can take longer, and must be approved before participating in the Reserve, which may mean a break in service. Even if you’re unsure about transitioning to the Air Force Reserve, the process can be initiated. For information, call 552-3595.

Pothole repair

The 773d Civil Engineer Squadron encourages all Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson personnel to report potholes. For holes in housing areas, contact Aurora Housing at 753-1051. Other requests are tracked by 773d CES. Note the location, including cross-streets or building numbers. Then email 773ces.ceoh.potholerepair@us.af.mil or call 552-2994 or 552-2995. Include contact information for crews.

U-Fix-It Store

The U-Fix-It stores, open

to all Aurora Military Housing tenants, issue home maintenance items. Availability is subject to change and limits; some items may have a cost.

U-Fix-It allows occupants to make minor improvements and repairs.

The JBER-E location, at 6350 Arctic Warrior Drive, is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, closed from 1 to 1:30 p.m. for lunch, and Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

The JBER-R office is at 338 Hoonah Ave., open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and closed from 1 to 1:30 p.m. for lunch.

A blind-cleaning machine is available at the JBER-E location; priority goes to those PCSing. For information, call 375-5540.

DLA Document Services

Defense Logistics Agency Document Services duplicates and prints documents, including color, large-format photos, engineering drawings, sensitive materials, manuals and training mate-

rials. They design, print and distribute business cards, letterhead, invitations and programs, and provide devices to print, scan, copy and fax while providing maintenance and ink cartridges. They offer document automation and content services for building digital libraries.

To register, go to <https://www.dso.documentservices.dla.mil>. For information, visit documentservices.dla.mil or call (808) 473-1699 or (315) 473-1699.

OTC pharmacy counter

The pharmacy at the JBER hospital has over-the-counter medication for DoD beneficiaries from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m., Monday through Friday. Flyers and those on personnel reliability program status, pregnant, or under the age of 2 are not eligible.

The clinic offers pain relievers; cough, cold and allergy medications; ointments; constipation and diarrhea medications, and others. For information, visit JBERPharmacy on Facebook.

Paws to Read marks three years and counting

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CRYSTAL JENKINS**
JBER Public Affairs

The Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Library offers an opportunity for children in kindergarten through 5th grade to read to service dogs.

“We started the Paws to Read program three years ago, in reaction to the difficulties we saw some children have with [out-loud] reading,” said Phyllis Talas, 673d Force Support Squadron library technician. “Coming in and reading to therapy and service dogs provides them an opportunity to get over their fear of reading aloud and promotes confidence when they’re learning to read.”

During the reading session, children don’t have to be worried about making mistakes or stumbling because the dogs don’t mind. If the children need help with certain words, they can get assistance from the dog handlers.

“Participants are encouraged to look to the handler for help with difficult words; we request that parents don’t correct or intervene,” Talas said.

The Paws to Read program is scheduled to continue every third

Saturday of the month.

Because this monthly event has limited availability, the library highly encourages pre-registering. Time slots are 15- to 20- minute sessions and are preassigned to each child.

Pre-registration allows for both the librarians to know how many dogs they need at each session and provides parents a guarantee their child will have a slot, versus coming in and waiting for an open spot.

“Depending on the number of pre-registrants, we will have two to three dogs at most sessions,” Talas said. “If there is extra time throughout the program or at the end, children are allowed extra time with the dogs. If participation rises, we will work to accommodate as many as we can allow.”

For a program that is well into its third year, many people continue bringing in their children after they see the effectiveness of the arrangement.

“The Paws to Read program has provided my son a unique opportunity to gain confidence while reading in a comfortable environment,” said Jade Patterson, spouse of U.S. Coast Guardsman Erik Patterson of Sector




Leland Erker, 2, reads to Sheila Barrett, a therapy dog handler, and Swivel Shot, a therapy dog with Midnight Sun Service Dogs, at Paws to Read at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson library in 2016. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Javier Alvarez)

Anchorage. “Since the program’s inception here in 2015, my son Aiden, who is 11 now, has been to every program. He has blossomed into a better-rounded student because of it.

“Kids who can cuddle up next to a content dog may find their inhibitions drop, and they begin to enjoy reading aloud more,” said Patterson. “It’s not often you see children these days looking forward to going to the library for reading. These days it is

more likely you’ll see them sitting behind the electronic device of their choice. It’s great to see the JBER library staff step outside the box, and bring a wonderful assortment of opportunities to children of all ages.”

Feb. 16 will be the next opportunity to participate in the reading program.

To register or for information on more programs offered by the JBER Library, call 384-1640. 

AK Guardsmen shine at regional biathlon

By **2ND LT. BALINDA O'NEAL DRESEL**
AKNG Public Affairs

MIDWAY, Utah — After skiing across the finish line of the 2019 National Guard Bureau Western Regional Biathlon Competition, two Alaska Army National Guardsmen raised their right hands and reaffirmed their commitment to help defend their state and nation at the Soldier Hollow Nordic Center here Jan. 12.

With the snow-covered Wasatch Mountains as their backdrop, 1st Sgt. Travis Kulp, D Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, and Staff Sgt. Heather Percy, 297th Military Police Co., recited the Oath of Enlistment in front of teammates at the site of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

“It’s opportunities like this that have kept me in the National Guard — doing something cool and different from the usual,” said Percy, who has spent 18 years in combined NG, Reserve and active service as a combat medic. “I have always wanted to visit Soldier Hollow since living among Olympians in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. It’s historic, beautiful and filled with challenging hills.”

Alaska Air and Army Guardsmen raced on the same hills that the 2019



Alaska Air and Army Guardsmen compete in the 2019 National Guard Bureau Western Regional Biathlon Competition at the Soldier Hollow Nordic Center in Midway, Utah, Jan. 11. They joined competitors from California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming for training and sprint and pursuit races where events were held during the 2002 Olympics. (U.S. Army National Guard photo/2nd Lt. Balinda O’Neal Dresel)

International Biathlon Union World Cup Biathlon tour will stop at in less than a month. With a seven-pound, .22-caliber rifle strapped to their backs, they skied a series of laps and then fired at five 4.5-inch targets from either a standing or prone position.

Both Kulp and Percy said biathlon is an ideal sport for Alaska Guardsmen, as it exemplifies training in snow, marksmanship and teamwork.

“Biathlon incorporates fitness, endurance, discipline, mental fortitude and preparation,” said Percy, competing at her first biathlon competition despite skiing since 2001. “Things change constantly — the weather, snow, wind, equipment, and require

us to adapt and overcome.”


Team Alaska joined Guard competitors from California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming for three days of official training and sprint and pursuit races.

The Alaska men’s team took home an overall second place award for their speed on skis and accuracy with a rifle. Winners included Sgt. 1st Class Adam Schwartz, third-place finish in the novice men’s category, Pfc. Everett Darrow, first-place in the men’s category, and Maj. David Cunningham, third-place in the men’s master’s category.

“It was a great job for a grow-

ing team made possible by newer soldiers challenging themselves by skiing and shooting at a higher level — reinforced by new teammates who are taking the time and energy to learn the nuances of biathlon on their own,” said Kulp, the Alaska team captain who has 21 years of service in the Guard and joined the team in 2012.

“I have learned so much from the more experienced team members and have so many takeaways to work on and improve,” Percy said.

Alaska’s top four men and four women will compete at the Biathlon Championships at the Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Vermont. 

Guard, Reserve critical part of total force

Commentary by
DAVID BEDARD
AKNG Public Affairs

When I was an active-duty Soldier, I had a pretty low opinion of the National Guard and the Reserve. To me, they were JV, and the active service was varsity.

I joined the active duty in 1999 as a Field Artillery Soldier and was stationed with the 172nd Infantry Brigade at Fort Wainwright.

The cataclysmic events of 9/11 had lasting effects for all components of the military. Sitting in an Army day room watching the horrific developments of the terrorist attack unfold, I knew I was going to war, and everything changed for the active military. It changed for the National Guard and the Reserve as well.

In my mind back then, Guard and Reserve service was little more than two days a month and two weeks of the year for annual training.

Though that is the typical schedule for Guardsmen and Reservists, the ensuing Global War on Terrorism would sweep up thousands of “week-end warriors” who all took the same risks in combat and had many of the same accomplishments as active-duty troops.

During a 2005 deployment to Iraq, I ran into many Guard and Reserve service members who were indistinguishable on the battlefield, their unit patches serving as the only clue they were “part-time.”

Alaska Army National Guardsmen of the 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, transported Soldiers of our brigade throughout Iraq in UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters emblazoned with the Alaska Guard shield. When I left Iraq on mid-tour leave, it was an Alaska Air National Guard C-130 Hercules belonging to the 144th Airlift Squadron that took me home.

I spoke with Guardsmen and Reservists and asked questions about how they mobilized in the states for several months before deploying.

I quickly realized their mobilization plus deployment meant they often spent more time away from family than I had. I also realized they were well-trained professionals who brought civilian experience I lacked.

I left active duty a few months after returning from the Middle East and went to work for the Department of Defense as a civilian.

Though I enjoyed being a service member, my home is Alaska,



Chief Master Sgt. Lance Jordan, command chief master sergeant for the Alaska Air National Guard, shelters from the rotor blast of a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter June 5, 2018 during his final flight. (U.S. Air National Guard photos/David Bedard)

BELOW: Alaska Army and Air National Guard Soldiers and Airmen load two 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters onto a 144th Airlift Squadron C-17 Globemaster III Sept. 17, 2018, at JBER, bound for the East Coast to assist in hurricane relief efforts.



and I wanted to stay put in the Last Frontier.

It was in the Department of Defense civil service where I found my calling as a public affairs specialist. As a journalist, I am privileged to be able to witness all aspects of military service and to capture it with a camera and a pen.

As fulfilling as civilian work can be, I missed wearing the uniform, and I pined for the days of a brand of fellowship only found in military circles.

After an eight-year break in service, I joined the Alaska National Guard, and I found a new family that cuts across Army and Air components. Wearing the uniform while

being able to build a home in Alaska is truly the best of both worlds.


Since I joined in 2015, I have been all over Alaska, and I have been to Mongolia, our State Partnership Program partner, twice. In fact, I have been to more places in three years of Guard service than I went during eight years of active service.

Currently, I am a public affairs civilian with the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. In much the same way I was impressed by the professionalism and capability of the Army Guard, I have been astounded at what the Airmen of our wing can do.

Despite being a mix of Active

Guard Reserve, civilian technicians and traditional drilling Guardsmen, the 176th Wing manages to carry out the full-time enterprise of maintaining and operating C-17 Globemaster IIIs, HC-130J Combat King IIs, and HH-60G Pave Hawks.

Additionally, the wing provides 24/7 search and rescue to a majority of the state.

The fact is, I was flat wrong nearly two decades ago in my assessment of the Guard and Reserve. They are lethal, capable and critical components of the total force – a fact I learned on active duty, which has only been reinforced by my experience as a Citizen Soldier and Alaska Air National Guard employee. 

Pararescuemen save pilot near Chickaloon

By **DAVID BEDARD**
AKNG Public Affairs

Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard’s 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons rescued a pilot of a Piper PA-22 aircraft Jan. 22 at Chickaloon Flats after the plane was damaged.

According to Alaska Air National Guard Capt. Wesley Ladd of the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, the alert notification came from activation of the PA-22’s 406 emergency locator transmitter.

Ladd dispatched an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter from the 210th RQS, stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, based on the location provided from the transmitter and communication with Anchorage Approach Control.

A few minutes later, the pilot contacted the Alaska RCC on his cell phone re-

porting minor injuries.

The Pave Hawk was able to land near the crash site allowing the pararescuemen to assess and treat the pilot’s injuries.

The crew then transported him to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage, where he was released to medical personnel.


Ladd credited the pilot’s accurate registration of the plane’s 406 ELT, which included contact information for the pilot and his family, for the timely rescue.

“He affected his own rescue by having accurate information,” he said. “I called his cell phone and left a message after the ELT activated.

“He called right back and gave us his exact location and nature of injury,” Ladd



Airmen of the 176th Wing launch a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk Nov. 27 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The HH-60 pictured here was recalled when pararescuemen of the 212th Rescue Squadron earlier deployed with another HH-60 crew and rescued a pilot and a passenger of a Cessna 172 that crashed on Montague Island. (U.S. Air National Guard photo/David Bedard)

continued. “I was able to call his wife and let her know what was going on, and	that we were launching to rescue him.”	and 212th Rescue Squadrons and the AK RCC were awarded one save. 
For this mission, the 210th		

