

ARCTIC WARRIOR

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POLAR FORCE



Airmen participate in shoot-move-and-communicate drills at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Oct. 24. The 673d SFS was participating in Polar Force Exercise at Camp Mad Bull. The exercise tests the base's ability to integrate, mobilize, and prepare assigned personnel, aircraft and equipment for a wartime mission, and to employ forces and weapons systems. (U.S. Air Force photo/Jamal Wilson)



LEFT: Airman Kyle Lefler of the 673d Security Forces Squadron dons chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear defense equipment during exercise Polar Force 19-1 Oct. 24. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. James Richardson)



ABOVE: Airmen construct a shelter during Polar Force Oct. 24. The biannual exercise focuses on different scenarios each time, ensuring personnel are fully trained, whether it be deploying personnel to a notional war zone, operating in a contaminated area, or securing JBER against a threat. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. James Richardson)



LEFT: Senior Airman Alexandra Garafalo, 673 Force Support Squadron, conducts a post-attack reconnaissance following a simulated attack during Polar Force Oct. 25. The exercise tests the base's ability to mobilize and prepare personnel, aircraft and equipment for a wartime mission. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. James Richardson)

ON THE COVER: Airman Adam Wagenhoffer, 673d Security Forces Squadron, participates in a drill Oct. 24. (U.S. Air Force photo/Jamal Wilson)

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ARCTIC WARRIOR

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Homecoming heroes: Veterans' Honor Flight

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
CAITLIN RUSSELL**
JBER Public Affairs

Twenty-three veterans from various cities and villages in Alaska went on a whirlwind three-day trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the Last Frontier Honor Flight, whose mission is to ensure veterans are able to visit memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifices.

Veterans visited the National Mall, stopping at the National World War II, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans memorials. Other excursions included the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps memorials and Arlington National Cemetery.

Since the start of the Last Frontier Honor Flight in 2013, the program has impacted the lives of 81 veterans.

Nationally, the program has helped 150,000 veterans visit those memorials.

While most states have an Honor Flight program, Alaska was lacking until Ron Travis and his wife, Linda, decided to change that.

“Being a Vietnam veteran myself and my dad being a World War II veteran, I thought it was important to

start the Last Frontier Honor Flight to honor the veterans,” said Travis, president and co-founder of the Last Frontier Honor Flight.

While the program has been in operation for several years, this is the first time veterans received a welcoming ceremony from Airmen with the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Airman Leadership School, and their friends and families. Approximately 120 Airmen were at the airport to welcome the veterans home.

Tech. Sgt. Michael Felicio, a Professional Military Education instructor who deployed several times and came back each time to an airport full of “welcome back” signs, said he knew the importance of offering that same experience to the veterans.

Once veterans landed, they were also surprised with the Alaskan Celtic Bagpipes and Drums band and a procession which ended with a ceremony. The event included government officials, who spoke about the importance of remembering veterans who have served, and the Quilts of Valor foundation, which gifted each veteran a handmade quilt.

“Being a part of the welcome back

was an honor,” said Senior Airman Gabriele Tulao, 673d Medical Group dental laboratory technician, who pushed the wheelchair of a Korean War veteran during the event. “I felt emotional, and my eyes were tearing up as I walked alongside a war hero who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today. It was probably one of the proudest and most memorable moments in my six years of service.”


As a final sign of gratitude, Airmen and community members stopped to thank and shake hands with the veterans for their service and sacrifices made.

“My grandfather used to tell me stories about his return from Vietnam,” said Tech. Sgt. Brandon Thomas, grandson and Honor Flight guardian of William Watson, a Vietnam veteran. “He was spit on and things were thrown at him. This homecoming was the exact opposite of that. It was one that he, and everybody in the pro-



Toras Fisk, a World War II veteran, holds an official military photo of himself at Ted Stevens International Airport, before leaving with the Last Frontier Honor Flight Oct. 16. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Caitlin Russell)

gram, deserved.”

The Last Frontier Honor Flight program supports events like this throughout the year; for more information or to participate, visit lastfrontierhonorflight.com. 

JBER Key Spouses have lock on helping

By SENIOR AIRMAN
JAVIER ALVAREZ
JBER Public Affairs

Ten Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Key Spouses completed initial training hosted by the Military and Family Readiness Center at JBER's log cabin Oct. 16.

The day-long briefing consisted of an overall program review, rules and responsibilities, communication, diversity, personally identifiable information, sexual assault briefing, suicide prevention and resiliency training, said Frederica Norman, Key Spouse program manager.

With the 10 new members, the all-volunteer program now stands at 100 participants.

At the event's conclusion, volunteers were awarded a silver key-shaped pin, sig-

nifying their official role as Key Spouses.

Key Spouses are selected by unit commanders to provide support for their squadron's families, Norman said. Their role is to care for families by providing information from their squadron's leadership about events, programs and other available resources. They also serve as a point of contact when spouses need to communicate any difficulties they may be experiencing.

"During moving season, the number of Key Spouses changes drastically," Norman said. "When I first came here about three years ago, we had 120 volunteers and shortly after that it dropped to 50."

The MFRC hosts a quarterly training session to replace losses.

Every unit has an appointed Key Spouse; however, there are times when there

are gaps.

Units can have more than one Key Spouse to prevent this, Norman said. Some proactive units have three or four.

There's no limit to the number of years a spouse can volunteer. Allison Hardy, a new JBER volunteer, served as a Key Spouse for seven years at her last duty station.


"It's hard to feel a sense of community when you're so far from home and extended family," Hardy said.

"We were recently stationed at a base that had a high deployment tempo," she said. "We would call partners of deployed service members regularly to see if they needed anything and to let them

know about the resources they have available.

"I remember one spouse I worked with had two children and one on the way," Hardy said. "Since her husband was deployed, we helped her during her pregnancy. We

helped a lot of wives who had babies when their husbands were deployed."

For more information about becoming a Key Spouse, contact your unit commander's section, first sergeant or the MFRC. 



Aspiring Key Spouses listen to a brief on violence prevention at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Oct. 16. Ten Key Spouses were awarded key-shaped pins after the initial training, bringing the Key Spouse total here to 100. Key Spouses are selected by unit commanders to provide support for their squadron's families. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Javier Alvarez)

Spook-tacular Halloween events

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

Halloween comes only once a year, so Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson offers those keen on dressing up plenty of activities to get out during the month of October.

This year community members can look forward to several annual events as well as a few new happenings.

“The Arctic Oasis Community Center is hosting our annual Trunk-or-Treat event,” said Seante Banks, a 673d Force Support Squadron programs coordinator. “Usually it’s cold and snowy this time of year, and some people don’t want to walk around in weather like that.

“Our hope for this event is that service members and their families will come out and enjoy some fun and games together in a safe and warm environment.”

This event is scheduled to take place Oct. 26 from 4 to 7 p.m. There will be decorated trunks for children to trick-or-treat from as well as participate in games and various indoor activities.

On the same day, there are two free events open to all ages. The Costume Fun Run is scheduled to begin at the Elmendorf Fitness Center at 5:30 p.m. and the 673d Medical Group will be hosting its annual Trick-or-Treat at the JBER Hospital Bear entrance. Special-needs admission begins at 1 p.m. with general admission from 2 to 4 p.m.

“This event is something we look forward to each year,” said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Natalisa Smith, the 673d Orthopedic Clinic section chief. “It is a way for us to give back to our



Rodrigo, 5, and Gustavo, 4, participate in the annual 673d Medical Group trick-or-treat event at the hospital on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Oct. 27, 2017. Costumed JBER hospital workers with themes picked by their individual clinics will hand out candy to people of all ages during the annual event scheduled for Oct. 26. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Crystal A. Jenkins)

military community by providing a fun reason to come to the hospital. Each department will have their own family-friendly theme and children will have the opportunity to walk through the hospital collecting candy from each department.”

For those who might be looking for opportunities to have some fun bowling with friends or family, the Polar Bowl hosts ‘Kids Spooktacular Bowling Bash’ from 1 to 3 p.m. and ‘Bowl-A-Ween’ for single service members from 7 p.m. to 12 a.m. on Oct. 20.

During this season of ghouls and goblins, the JBER Safety Office recommends using a battle buddy

or wingman when partaking in festivities.

Another thing for adults and children to consider is the need to be seen on Halloween; this can be accomplished by choosing brightly colored costumes, reflective material or adding reflective tape. According to Safe Kids World Wide, twice as many child pedestrians are killed on Halloween than any other days of the year.

JBER’s designated trick-or-treat hours are scheduled for Oct. 31 from 6 to 8 p.m.


During this time, Security Forces will operate their pumpkin patrol to help ensure a safe Halloween for

all residents.

“Parents should always accompany children under the age of 10, and for those over the age of 10 going in groups is recommended,” said Tech. Sgt. Jon Reed, a 673d Air Base Wing occupational safety technician.

“If there was any time not to be distracted, it’s Halloween! Put down your phone and watch out for the mini Avengers and Moanas.”

If there is an emergency or you see suspicious activities during Halloween, contact the Base Defense Operations Center at 552-3421.

For more information or a complete listing of events, visit www.jberlife.com. 



Staff Sgt. Yelena Scott from the 673d Medical Support Squadron trick-or-treats with her son Austyn, 3, Oct. 27, 2017. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Crystal A. Jenkins)



Parents and adults should inspect any treats from a stranger. Always check if candy is outdated, spoiled or tampered with to keep children safe, and never eat unwrapped candy. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Airman 1st Class Christopher R. Morales)

**Friday
Costume Fun Run**

Join the Elmendorf Fitness Center at 5:30 p.m. for a free fun and festive run. Open to all ages, prizes will be awarded to the top three finishers in each category. After the race, run through our spooky walkway to the Arctic Oasis for the Trunk or treat event. For more information, call 552-5353.

School's out bowling

The Polar Bowl hosts this family fun day of bowling from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with deals on games. For more information, call 753-7467.

Trunk or Treat:

From 4 to 7 p.m., the Arctic Oasis has a fun alternative to trick or treating in the cold, plus a trunk decorating contest, candy, and fun games for all ages. For more information, call 552-8529.

**Saturday
Magic Tournament**

Come to the Warrior Zone for a free card tournament at 12 p.m. Must have at least 8 players to play for prizes. Prizes will be awarded to first, second, third, and cosplay winner. For more information, call 552-8529.

Kid's Halloween Train

This special Alaska Railroad Halloween train departs from the Anchorage Historic Depot at 10 a.m. or 3 p.m. Catch this fun ride with costumes, crafts, treats and more. For information, visit alaskarailroad.com.

**Monday
Pumpkin Carving**

Calling all youth to 2Rivers Youth Center from 4:30 to 6 p.m. for a fun evening of

pumpkin carving. For more information, call 384-1508.

**Tuesday
Spooky Triple Play Day**

The 2Rivers Youth Center hosts a Spooky Triple Play Day from 4 to 5 p.m. Triple play is a dynamic wellness program designed to help youth take charge of their health. Members of all ages are welcome. For information, call 384-1508.

**Wednesday
Spooky Slime Making**

Youth Members of all ages are welcome to join 2Rivers Youth Center from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. to make spooky slime. For more information, call 384-1508.

Costume Contest

Show off your costumes in the costume contest at Kenecott Youth Center from 4 to 6 p.m. Open to all members 9-18. For more information, call 552-2266.

Zoo Boo

Get your best costume and celebrate Halloween at the Alaska Zoo from 4 to 8 p.m., with spooky decorations and trick-or-treating around the grounds. For more information, visit alaskazoo.org.

**Thursday
Elmendorf Pool Closure**

The Elmendorf Fitness Center Pool will be closed for annual maintenance November 1-30. Buckner Fitness Pool and the Polar Paradise Pool will be under normal operations. For more information, call 552-5353.

**Nov. 8 and 9
Veteran Business Forum**

The local veteran business community hosts this event

about business development, government contracting opportunities and more at the BP Energy Center from 1:30 to 6 p.m. both days.

For information, call 271-4850 or visit alaska-veteran-business-forum.eventbrite.com.

**Ongoing
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, 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 more 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 552-4353 or visit facebook.com/msmrrre.

Evening Hike

These hikes hit a different route each time. Mondays are easier and are great for families; Thursdays are moderately difficult. Hikes begin at 6:35 p.m. sharp. For location and more information, call 440-9934.

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.

Words of wisdom



Elementary school children spell out "Life is your journey" in recognition of Red Ribbon Week at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Oct. 18. The campaign motto for this year is "Life is your journey, travel drug free." Red Ribbon Week is observed nationwide Oct. 23 to 31 and promotes being drug-free, while honoring the memory of fallen Drug Enforcement Agency agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Caitlin Russell)

Even one flame makes night bright as day

By **ARMY CHAPLAIN (CAPT.) BRETT NEWMAN**
1-501 Infantry Chaplain

I have a vivid recollection of visiting Carlsbad Caverns while on a family road trip as a child. For those who have never been to Carlsbad, this is one of the most spectacular cave systems in North America.

I still remember the excitement of descending into the depths of the cave, and feeling like an explorer going on a grand adventure. Some caverns within this system are simply enormous, and you feel as if you have entered a vast underground ballroom.

But I also remember a point in the tour when our tour guide took us into a narrow passageway and turned out the lights. So far under the earth, there was not a single ray of light, and the sudden onset of such deep darkness gives you an immediate sense of claustrophobia.

The longer it went on, the more oppressive the darkness became, until it felt like there was nothing I wanted more than a little light.

We all go through dark times in

our lives. Sometimes, this darkness is literal (as we experience in an Alaska winter), but, often, the greater darkness is a metaphorical darkness.

It creeps in with every goodbye to a loved one or cherished friend, with every broken promise or unfulfilled expectation, and with every setback in our personal or professional lives.

Then there are the times when the darkness comes crashing in and turns our world upside down. It can come with the words, "I want a divorce," "I've been diagnosed with cancer," or "Come home now; your father has taken a turn for the worse."

This kind of darkness can weigh so heavy on your spirit that it feels like it is oppressing your very soul. In these moments, where do we turn?

As an Airborne paratrooper, I have often used the words of Psalm 139 to encourage my troopers before a jump.

"Where shall I go from your spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the ut-

termost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me." (Psalm 139: 7-10)

It is of enormous comfort to know nothing can separate us from the presence and love of God. It does not matter whether we have ascended to the heights of the heavens or have crashed down to the depths of the earth (both of which we do in the course of an airborne jump), God is still with us, leading us, and holding us tight.


But, you might say, my darkness is not related to my physical location; can God find me in the midst of such great darkness? The Psalm continues: "If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you."

There are certainly times in our lives where darkness can feel like an oppressive covering. So much so, in fact, that even those things in our lives that once brought us joy and happiness have lost their luster. But even in the midst of such darkness



(Courtesy photo)

and gloom, God is there; such darkness cannot keep him away.

The incredible thing about darkness is that, no matter how deep it is, it can be driven away by even the smallest amount of light. This is what happened to me in the caverns when our guide finally lit a small match; even such a small amount of light drove away the darkness. Do you feel the enormous weight of darkness in your life? Are you longing for a little light to shine into the deepest reaches of your soul? As the Apostle John said, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). He is ready and willing to shine his light into your life this winter. 

Disposition of effects

1st Lt. Spencer Davis, D Battery, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, is authorized to make disposition of personal effects of Sgt. 1st Class James Alcorn, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-377th PFAR, as stated in Army Regulation 638-2.

Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of the deceased should contact Davis at 805-861-4196.

Firewood permits

Free personal-use firewood permits will not be issued after Oct. 26. Free permits will expire Oct. 31; effective Nov. 1, there will be a cost of \$35 per cord of firewood, and \$17.50 for a half-cord. To receive a permit, an iSportsman permit is required. For information, visit <https://jber.isportsman.net/Firewood.aspx>.

Law School applications

The Office of The Judge Advocate General is ac-

cepting applications for the Army's Funded Legal Education Program.

The Army projects sending up to 25 active-duty officers to law school at government expense beginning the fall of 2018; officers will remain on active duty while attending.

Interested lieutenants and captains should immediately contact the Staff Judge Advocate at 384-2434 for information.

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 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 will be 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 in case crews need to follow up.

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 materials.

They design, print and distribute business cards, letterhead, invitations and programs, and provide devices to print, scan, copy and fax while providing maintenance and printer 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.

Don't skip this survey: Task Force True North

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
CAITLIN RUSSELL**
JBER Public Affairs

The 673d Air Base Wing and 3rd Wing have been selected to participate in the True North Program, a research study that will help commanders understand the needs of Airmen at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

“The True North Program includes two brief surveys that will be sent out via email from Nov. 5 through Nov. 29,” said Bodey Turner, 673d ABW Task Force True North program manager. “The surveys are specifically focusing on individual squadrons, which means the driving factor is the participation from Airmen.”

The first of the two surveys – True North – takes a few minutes to complete. It will provide Air Force leadership data that will assist with decisions related to future Air Force-wide implementation of the True

North program.

The second, the North Star Unit Survey, takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes and can be taken via smartphone, tablet, laptop, or any Internet-connected device. It will generate information on current problems possibly unknown to commanders as well as risks and protective factors in relation to those problems.

The North Star Unit Survey will be conducted through a research study based at New York University and will appear in emails with “Non-DoD Source” in the subject line.

Another option is the use of a QR code which will automatically direct Airmen to the survey.

“This program really gives us insight about how an individual Airman’s life is not only in the job but at home,” Turner said. “We can see what they are struggling with and have test results broken down into categories



(Courtesy photo)

such as post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal ideation, resiliency, anger, family violence and depression.”

Both surveys are anonymous, so Airmen can answer as truthfully as possible, Turner said.

After the results are collected, commanders will receive raw data, which will compare specific squadrons to the overall Air Force. Results are shared with the unit and an action plan is created to target problems with evi-

dence-based interventions.

“These results will be able to show us how we’re doing comparatively and what we can do to make it better for our Airmen,” Turner said. “The overall purpose of the survey is to implement and test different levels of support to enhance resiliency, increase help-seeking behavior, prevent violence and respond to our Airmen’s needs.”

To be able to offer a more immediate response to cer-

tain issues, the North Star Unit Survey is interactive and provides several self-help resources available once it is completed.

“While it does give you the option to speak to a chaplain or mental health professional, it also offers online research material and phone applications you can download,” Turner said.

“Taking the step to have that conversation, even just a general conversation, can go a long way in normalizing help-seeking behavior,” said Ashley Wofford, 673d Logistics Readiness Squadron embedded licensed clinic social worker. “When your time comes to leave the military, the mental health problems don’t suddenly disappear. Learning how to cope with them now can assist you in the long run.”

These surveys will be sent out every six months continuously for each unit.

For information, contact Turner at 552-2755. 

Winter is coming: Get vehicles winter-ready

By **SENIOR AIRMAN JAVIER ALVAREZ**
JBER Public Affairs

The first snowfall in Anchorage typically comes in the last couple weeks of October. Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson residents can look east toward the Chugach Mountains and see the frost level creep lower with every passing day.

On Oct. 21, 2017, Mother Nature blanketed Anchorage with an overwhelming two-tenths of an inch of snow, the first of the season. That day, the Anchorage Police Department reported 29 vehicle collisions and 13 calls from people in distress or stuck in a ditch.

People new to the Last Frontier and especially those unfamiliar with a frosty winter climate are encouraged to take extra precautions this winter, said David Spellman, JBER Occupational Safety Office occupational health and safety specialist. Not having a winter-ready vehicle could worsen an already stressful situation.

The JBER Occupational Safety Office is encouraging Alaska residents to start the winter season right with their slogan, "Ready your vehicle, ready yourself, and be ready for an emergency."

Ready your vehicle by performing

a regular tune-up or maintenance before snow flies, Spellman said. Consult your owner's manual for specific requirements.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, when the temperature drops, so does battery power. For gasoline and diesel engines, it takes more battery power to start a vehicle in cold weather. For electric and hybrid-electric vehicles, the driving range is reduced when the battery is cold.

"All-season tires can be enough to get people from point A to point B, but snow or studded tires are recommended because they provide an extra level of traction," Spellman said.

According to the Municipality of Anchorage's website, studded tires are legal only between Sept. 15 and April 30 each year.

People mechanically inclined can take advantage of the JBER Auto Skills Center.

The shop is home to a full array of equipment, tools and knowledgeable staff for do-it-yourself maintenance and repair to personal vehicles. People with JBER access can take advantage of the three tire machines and balancers for a fee.

Be ready for an emergency by keeping a winter kit in your vehicle and stocking it with all the things you



Benjamin Mock, left, a University of Alaska Anchorage ROTC cadet, sets a newly installed winter tire on the ground as Bryce Ward, UAA ROTC cadet, removes a summer tire at the Auto Skills Center at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Oct. 17. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Javier Alvarez)


might need.

Recommended items include: a first aid kit, cellphone charger, flashlight, hand warmers, water and nonperishable snacks, boots, gloves, warm clothes, jumper cables, flares; a snow shovel, ice scraper and snow brush, tire chains, and an insulated weatherproof container to store the items.

Ensure you have at least a half tank of gas at all times, Spellman said. There's only one road in and out of Anchorage and what is typi-

cally a 30-minute commute to base for people who live in the Valley can turn into a multiple-hour standstill.

"With the first freeze you'll see an increase of vehicles in ditches along the highway," Spellman said. "People need to know if this happens to them, they won't be the only one waiting for a tow truck. It's not uncommon for towing companies to have wait times in excess of eight hours."

For more tips on winter driving, visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-tips>. 

HIGHLY MOBILE HIGHLY CAPABLE HIMARS

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

By 6:30 a.m., the first truck rolled onto the flight line at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Tactically, Airmen and Soldiers guided two five-ton vehicles onto two C-130J Super Hercules – a testament to the aircrafts’ herculean strength. In four hours the vehicles were secured, shipped and transplanted 300 miles up to Fort Greely.

Because it was the final day of Red Flag-Alaska 19-1, Fort Bragg Soldiers were prepared to give it all they had and finish the exercise more than strong.

To the layman, the big box trucks are like any other military vehicles; a matte beige tractor-trailer style with what looks like a rear cargo bay. People familiar with the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System know the awesome firepower of the weapons system.

“You see two groups of professional military members, each with their specialty and each working together,” said Army Lt. Col. Jeremy Linney, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment (HIMARS), 18th Field Artillery Brigade commander. “When loading and unloading the aircraft, it didn’t matter which uniform you were wearing, everybody was working together. There was good communication between both groups of people.”

The battalion from Fort Bragg partnered with Airmen from the 327th Airlift Squadron and 61st Airlift Squadron from Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, for the day’s mission.

The HIMARS is a key component of military firepower, adding extraordinary competency to the joint mission and a serious threat to those at the other end of it.

“You have a precision-guided munition with high net weight of explosives that is all-weather system,” said Army Capt. John Heath, Alpha Battery 3-27th FAR commander. “It can shoot in adverse conditions such



TOP: Army Staff Sgt. Shane Woods, a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) chief assigned to Alpha Battery, 3rd Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment (HIMARS), 18th Field Artillery Brigade, Fort Bragg, N.C., mounts an antenna on a M142 HIMARS at Fort Greely Oct. 19, during Red Flag-Alaska 19-1. The unit was tasked to provide long-range artillery support during RF-A, allowing the unit to showcase its capabilities and develop relationships with other services. The antenna helped maintain FM radio communications. (U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Jonathan Valdes Montijo)

LEFT: Soldiers fire a M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System at Fort Greely Oct. 19 during Red Flag-Alaska 19-1. The Soldiers of Alpha Battery, 3-27th FAR provided long-range artillery support to U.S. Army Alaska troops during RF-A.

as snow and rain. Being on a five-ton-chassis, it’s highly mobile and deployable.”

Although many other assets can be loaded inside an aircraft and travel anywhere around the world, the M142 HIMARS delivers an exclusive capability with its rocket-launching accuracy, Heath said.


The HIMARS’ long-range capabilities allow it to reach targets

300 kilometers away with pinpoint accuracy – beyond the reach of conventional artillery, Heath said.

The incredible execution of the HIMARS during RF-A 19-1 would not have been possible if it wasn’t for the Alpha Battery Soldiers, who dedicated all their efforts and strove for nothing short of perfection.

“What we do is difficult to master,” Linney said. “Our training is

time consuming and demanding so that we can do our job right and do it fast. A lot goes into operating the HIMARS but only three people operate it. Every operator carries an incredible wealth of knowledge.”

Maintaining readiness requires a lot of practice and dedication; however, exercises like RF-A allows them to train with other services and get better each day. 

Children's Waiting Room helps families

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

Since late 2004, the Armed Services YMCA of Alaska at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson has offered year-round support to families and children through a program known as "Teddy's Child Watch."

During the fall of 2018, the program's name changed nationwide to "Children's Waiting Room."

"Even though the name has changed, parents can expect this great program will maintain the same high level of standards it always has," said Soha Dobbins, a Children's Waiting Room child specialist. "We are so grateful that parents trust us with their priceless treasures while they tend to their health needs."

Nationally, the program is expanding, and the Armed

Services YMCA wants to provide a uniform approach for its continued success.

The Children's Waiting Room offers parents with hospital appointments a safe, temporary child care solution for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. Children signed in can stay for up to two hours daily while parents attend scheduled medical appointments in one of the hospital's clinics.

"A goal for all military branches is to reduce the number of missed and cancelled appointments," said Brina Lynch, ASYMCA of Alaska program director. "Our main mission is to do whatever we can to support our service members and we're always looking for ways to help. Since this program and 'Y on Wheels' began, the base has seen a 42 percent reduction rate in missed appointments. We are so happy to see our efforts contribute in such an



Soha Dobbins, a child specialist, washes toys at the Children's Waiting Room at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Oct. 18. The program offers parents with hospital appointments safe, no-cost, temporary child care. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Crystal A. Jenkins)

impactful way."

All service members, retirees, or anyone with hospital access and a scheduled appointment can use this program.

So far, during 2018, more than 200 children on average have been cared for per month, and more than 2,700 were cared for in 2017, Lynch said.

Because the service is in such high demand, the ASYMCA of Alaska strongly

recommends visiting the facility, filling out the two-page registration form and providing a current shot record prior to needing the service.

"Even though we accept walk-ins, we highly encourage individuals to call ahead and reserve a time slot as soon as they are done booking their appointment," Lynch said. "Based on the age of the participants, we maintain a safe child-to-staff ratio so we can provide a

quality experience."

While reservations are preferred, the ASYMCA staff understand emergencies come up and will take last-minute appointments should staffing permit.

"The main thing I hear from parents is how our program allows them to focus," Dobbins said. "Instead of having to divide their attention between the care of their young child and what the doctor is trying to provide to them, their minds can be on the appointment completely. They can have peace of mind knowing we are well-qualified to take care of their children."

The Children's Waiting Room is staffed by part-time ASYMCA employees vetted and background-checked by national YMCA standards.

For information about the program, hours of operation, or to make an appointment, call 580-6455. 