



176th Wing • Alaska Air National Guard

eGuardian

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

ARCTIC GUARDIANS: WELCOME TO 2022

By Brig. Gen. Anthony Stratton and Command Chief Master Sgt. Peter Pratt
176th Wing command team

Arctic Guardians welcome to 2022.

Hopefully, you had a blessed, rewarding, and restful holiday. As is true most of the time, the challenges we engaged in 2021 will most assuredly bubble over into 2022. As Solomon reminds us "**there is nothing new under the sun.**" With this in mind, what should we expect over the next year? More importantly, how can we mitigate the frustration and fatigue common to the anxiety and fear that frequently accompanies these situations?

What should we expect from 2022? Here in the wing, we can expect the same challenges we face each year: budget constraints, high mission tempo, our folks doing amazing innovative things, retirements, ancillary training, major readiness exercise, Inspector General unit/program inspections, changes of command, changes in senior leadership, accession of new Airmen, implementation of challenging policies, facility renovations, and of course DTS.

At home we will all experience the adversity of unexpected situations from job challenges, births and deaths, performance accolades and constructive criticism, turbulence in established relationships, the joy of new relationships, cars that decide not to operate consistently, childcare that seems elusive, or potentially the realization that we are not where we should be.

Whew, that is a lot. How does anyone survive, let alone thrive, in such a demanding environment? We don't, not alone. Pete and I both understand the rigorous demands each of you engages on a daily basis, and we encourage you to reach out.

Take advantage of the wing's Resiliency Tactical Pause (RTP) policy (hopefully, your unit/shop executes this at least on a quarterly basis), the expanded telework resources, the professionals residing in the wellness center (Diann, Justin, Dawn,

Captain Westfall, Chaplain McEntire, and Mr. Reynolds), our, Pete's and my, open door policy (if you desire to speak directly to us, we welcome your call or schedule and appointment – even better just stop by), the opportunity to take leave, or simply to request an extension to a deadline or suspense that you are working on.

The critical action when engaging these challenges and opportunities is to always remember that you are not alone; we are a very diverse “blended” family in the 176th Wing.

Someone has experienced what you are currently facing; we just need to help you connect with them. It is easy for us to believe that we are the only one with the variables currently challenging us. It is also very easy for us to think that no one else could possibly understand. Neither of these is accurate as the nearly 1,500 Arctic Guardians collectively have thousands of years of experience – as Alaskans, commuters, DSGs, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, spouses, technicians, AGRs, Guard bums (😊), employees, business owners, supervisors, Airmen, NCOs, officers, commanders, volunteers, students, professors, teachers, retirees, recoverees, sponsors, and people in general.

As a leadership team, Pete and I desire each of you to have the opportunity to reach the potential each has been blessed with. Engage the adversity together.

One area of adversity the wing has experienced recently includes a rash of alcohol-related incidents. We are in the process of adding a “button” to the wing app to aid in this challenge. Pete and I implore each Arctic Guardian: do not take the risk when alcohol is involved. Please ask for a ride. I realize this can be inconvenient when one finds themselves in this position unplanned.

The consequences are exponentially more disruptive than the inconvenience. Also, remember that our bodies take time to process the effects of alcohol, so just “waiting it out” might not be as effective as reaching out. Because of this processing time in the aircrew world, most flying is restricted for the 12 hours following alcohol consumption.

Pete and I value each of you. We strive to remove barriers, provide support, creatively address unforeseen adversity, and get to know each of you better.

Just like the shepherd who rejoices over finding a single lost lamb, we rejoice in your resilience. Be the Wingman you want to have and let us know where we need to focus.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HAYES RETIRES *Jan. 22*

Lt. Col. Guy Hayes, 176th Wing Inspector General Office, celebrates a successful career during his Saturday, Jan. 22 retirement ceremony at 2 p.m. at the Kulis Theater.

10 STEPS TO A FEDERAL JOB CLASS *Jan. 23*

The 176th Wing Airman and Family Readiness program manager will teach the 10 Steps to a Federal Job class Sunday, Jan. 23 at 8 a.m. in the Wellness Center. If interested, please let the program manager know by calling (907) 347-4194. The class is anticipated to be roughly 3-4 hours long.

The class sizes are small due to room size so there will be more classes soon. If the program manager isn't able to get you into the class, he will put your name on a list for the up-coming classes.

HRE/POSH TRAINING *Jan. 23*

176th Wing Equal Opportunity Program practitioners will be hosting a virtual HRE (Human Relations Education) / POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) discussions Sunday Jan. 23 from 10-11 a.m. via Zoom. Unit training managers (UTMs) will schedule overdue members for class in ARCNet and also provide members with the Zoom link. Members may log in individually or participate in group watch parties (one person logs in and projects the class on the screen). Contact Capt. Kimberly Westfall at (907) 428-6664 with any questions.

This training will cover:

- Air Force policy and procedures as they relate to inequities and sexual harassment.
- DoD definitions of sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
- Tools for naming and addressing the impacts of microaggressions in the military. Best practice response and reporting for military leaders to support members who have EO-related concerns. Reminder: EO provides mandatory 1-hour training to all Air National Guard members required every four years. Thank you for helping us get maximum class sizes and participation! Some units have arranged to have several people participate in a room with

one person's sign on a computer, with the meeting/class projected on a large screen. We take attendance at the end of class, so all participants' names will be captured

EVENTS / OPPORTUNITIES

WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY, BECOME LESS OVERWHELMED THROUGH PURSUING BRAIN HEALTH

The 176th Wing has been chosen as one of the sites for the Brain Health Cognitive Training Pilot Program – a joint partnership with the National Guard Bureau Warrior Resilience and Fitness Division and the Center for Brain Health.

The objective of this program is to build a service member's overall wellness through fostering brain health (cognitive enhancement, improvement in strategic thinking skills and memory, focus on overall wellbeing). It is a brain fitness program that includes cognitive training – online training modules, direct feedback from a brain coach and customized/personalized app use to enhance cognitive skills. If the program is utilized effectively, anticipated benefits will result in statistically significant improvement in one's strategic attention and focus, improved reasoning, increased innovation, increased processing speeds, as well as, improved emotional regulation, increased mindfulness, decreased stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms, and increased resiliency skills.

The 176th Wing director of Psychological Health, Diann Richardson, is the POC and will serve to coordinate the project. Any of your personal/specific brain health data is communicated with the Center for Brain Health (not 176 WG personnel). If you have any questions, please contact her at (907) 306-9941 or diann.richardson.1@us.af.mil

If you are interested in participating (200 Airmen AND their spouses) and can commit to training/app engagement (@15 minutes a day, 5 days a week for 6 month) for the time outlined, please email diann.richardson.1@us.af.mil with the below information to complete the registration. All submissions will go directly to the POC.

Name
ANG occupation
Cell Phone
Work Email
Personal Email
Comments or Questions

FAMILY RESILIENCY MEMBERSHIP

The Family Resiliency Membership is an initiative to provide resiliency resources to Alaska National Guard families.

Here's what participants get when they register:

- At the beginning of each month, participants will receive a packet with resiliency facts, activities or crafts, and challenges to do that month with the family.
- We will have virtual meetings once a month to share how families did with the resiliency challenges and discuss additional resources.
- Registration is valid for the year (except June and July)
- The membership is completely FREE!

Please send us an email to receive a registration form to jordanweber.ctr@gmail.com or gaizka.c.vazquez-lam.ctr@mail.mil

ONGOING FREE COUNSELING SERVICES

Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) provide short term non-medical solution-focused counseling to support military families with the challenges of deployments, reintegration, parenting, relationship issues, conflict resolution, anger management and other life issues. They provide free, confidential services on and off military installations, flexible service delivery in non-traditional settings and times. With the exception of child abuse, domestic violence, mandatory reporting, and duty to warn situations, services are confidential.

In response to COVID-19, MFLCs are providing services via secure, encrypted video teleconference.

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call Husch Hathorne-Cantil at 907-382-1407. Appointments are available within 24-48 hours.

SERVICES / ANNOUNCEMENTS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please welcome 176th Wing/Equal Opportunity's newest Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute graduate: Tech. Sgt. Elijah Gutierrez graduated EO 3-level school in December. Captain Westfall (formerly Conkling) and Gutierrez are your fully-trained Wing EO team!

EO will continue to follow up with commanders for Post-DEOMI Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) support. Commander action plans were due in November and should be being carried out.

New commanders Come get your required Key Personnel EO Brief! Contact Westfall to get scheduled: kimberly.c.westfall.mil@mail.mil

MILITARY ONESOURCE RESOURCES

Did you know that Military OneSource is bigger than a 24/7/365 toll free number? The program offers more than just free non-medical counseling. It also provides assistance for the deployment readiness cycle. Military OneSource is a Department of Defense funded program that aids eligible service and family members with building resiliency; both within the military culture and on the homefront. To help strengthen one's resiliency skillset, Military OneSource offers many activities that you and your family members can partake in. For example:

MWR Digital Library:

- Ancestry.com Library Edition - unlock the story of your family using more than 8,000 resources.
- Consumer Reports – are you looking to make a purchase? Use this online library to access 1,000+ ratings, reviews, expert buying advice, product comparisons, consumer user reviews and product video clips.
- EBSCO Audiobooks - more than 2,000 audiobooks in different subjects and categories available for free download.
- Mango Languages - check out this digital language learning program for learners of all levels, with courses in more than 70 different foreign languages, 21 English language courses, and 44 specialty courses.
- Morningstar Investment Research Center - find information and advice on mutual funds, stocks, exchange-traded funds, and market returns. Track investments, access daily market news and commentary, view snapshots on investments, and interact on the research center forums.
- PressReader Digital Newspapers - unlimited digital access to more than 7,000 newspapers from 120 countries in more than 60 different languages. These newspapers are provided in full-color, full-page format, and appear on your screen exactly as they appear on the news stand, many providing instant translation and audio.

- Stingray Qello Concerts - enjoy more than 1700 live moments in music history with the world's largest collection of full-length concerts and music documentaries streamed on-demand to just about any digital device. From the 1920s to today's hottest artists, Qello Concerts spans more than 30 genres, from classical to rock, reggae to country.
- Small Business Builder - helps patrons interested in planning and optimizing their businesses or nonprofits. Built for aspiring entrepreneurs and those with existing small businesses, it provides a step-by-step process supported by a rich variety of recognized tools that enable users to produce complete business plans and other documents essential for gaining access to capital and growing their enterprise.
- Universal Class - over 500 online courses to aid with personal and professional interests: including FREE CEUs, plus online books, movies and music for all ages. Over 40 different references to use.
- Weiss Financial Ratings - Enjoy access to financial literacy tools on retirement planning, home and mortgage, insurance strategies, and saving for your child's education.
- Chill Drills: An overview of four simple drills to help reverse the symptoms of stress. These drills can help slow your heart rate, lower your blood pressure and reduce the level of stress hormones in your body. By doing these drills regularly, you can lower your baseline stress level and be better prepared to deal with stress in the future. Order yours online (free shipping) or download to your smartphone.
- MilTax - free tax services, which provides easy-to-use software that is designed specifically for the military community and is available mid-January through mid-October. MilTax also offers free consultations with experts trained to help military members and their families take command of their taxes.

Many other resources are located online with just a click of the mouse or online chat with a trained consultant to provide more guidance with your ideal topic. See: www.militaryonesource.mil.

AIRMAN SAFETY APP

If there was a way to anonymously and quickly make safety reports on your phone, would you use it? There's an app for that. The Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) a voluntary, identity-protected means of reporting safety issues that increase the risk to Aviation, Occupational, or Weapons Safety. The goal of

the program is to prevent future mishaps and strengthen a culture of safe, effective mission accomplishment. The two ways to submit an ASAP report are on the website (<https://asap.safety.af.mil>) or the smartphone app "Airmen Safety App." Contact: your friendly safety office (551-7604, 176wg.se.176wg@us.af.mil)

UPCOMING AWS DAYS

The 176th Wing is essentially shut down for business on the upcoming Alternate Work Schedule days. RDs (rescheduled drills) and AT days should not be scheduled for these times. The full AWS calendar can be found on the new Wing SharePoint in the Resource Library.

January: 28

February: 11, 18

March: 4, 18

ALASKA NEWS

CMSAF BASS VISITS WITH ARCTIC GUARDIANS OF 176TH WING

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass met with the command group and Guard Airmen of 176th Wing here Jan. 10.

Bass, the 19th CMSAF, visited Guard, regular Air Force and Air Force Reserve Airmen during her Alaska trip to JBER, Eielson Air Force Base and Point Barrow on the arctic coast of Alaska.

Brig. Gen. Anthony Stratton, 176th Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Peter Pratt, 176th Wing command chief, met Bass at the wing headquarters before a wing capabilities presentation.

Stratton briefed the wing missions of air defense, combat search and rescue, strategic airlift and tactical airlift.

The wing commander explained the composition of the wing's Rescue Triad comprising HH-60G Pave Hawk Airmen of the 210th Rescue Squadron, HC-130J Combat King II Airmen of the 211th Rescue Squadron, and Guardian Angels of the 212th Rescue Squadron.

Stratton said the Rescue Triad supports the air sovereignty mission carried out by F-22 Raptor fighters of the 11th Air Force.

"We sit search and rescue alert 24/7 because it goes along with the air sovereignty mission," he said. "Primarily what we're here for is if the F-22 folks have a bad day when they go out and intercept the Russians."

Guardsmen of the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center provide search and rescue command and control in support of the 11th AF. Stratton said they also control rescue missions for the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Alaska, the Alaska Army National Guard, the Alaska State Troopers, the National Park Service, the Civil Air Patrol and other agencies.

Providing the 11th AF with radar search and tracking as well as air battle management of the Raptors are Airmen of the 176th Air Defense Squadron who stand alert 24/7/365 in the Region Air Operations Center.

In the RAOC, plaques overlooking the radar screens operated by 176th ADS Airmen signify decades of air sovereignty missions controlled by the unit.

"On the wall, they have several hundred red stars, which are all of the intercepts they have done since the Air National Guard has owned that mission set," Stratton said. "If you take the Eastern, Western and the Pacific Air Defense Sectors together, they have about 15 total."

Stratton said the missions require tight integration with 11th Air Force commander Lt. General David Krumm and his staff.

"One of the things that makes us unique and the Airmen in this wing unique is we do all of the search and rescue for General Krumm, we do all of the air defense for General Krumm, and we do all of the rescue coordination for General Krumm," Stratton said.

Airmen of the 144th Airlift Squadron operate eight C-17 Globemaster III aircraft and provide tactical and strategic airlift worldwide.

"We give two of those jets every single day to the United States Transportation Command," Stratton said. "One gets used here in the Pacific, and one gets used by Air Mobility Command."

The 144th AS provided C-17s in support of Operation Allies Refuge, evacuating hundreds of Afghans and allied personnel.

While the Rescue Triad stands alert in support of 11th AF, they are also available to rescue Alaskans in distress. With highways covering a tiny fraction of the state's 663,000 square miles, all-weather military aviation is often the only means of rescue.

"The incidental benefit to the state of Alaska is we typically save 150-160 lives a year," Stratton said before talking about the challenges of the limited road system. "That's one of the things that drives the utilization of the Rescue Triad. If someone gets trapped out there, there really is no way to get to them in a timely fashion."

Stratton explained how the 176th Wing combines operational, maintenance, mission support and medical functions in one wing to support worldwide contingency operations and crisis response for the state and the country.

"Unique here on JBER, you have Col. (Travolis) Simmons running 3rd Wing and Col. (Kirsten) Aguilar running the 673d Air Base Wing, and together I have all of their functions: maintenance, operations, medical and support," he said. "Inside of that are all of our domestic support functions: the security forces, the civil engineers, and firefighters get used on a regular basis."

Recently, the wing used those functions to provide support to communities affected by hurricane-force winds that ravaged much of Alaska.

"We had Guardsmen out there checking on folks in their homes, taking water, and taking food during the past two weeks," Stratton said.

During her visit to the 212th Rescue Squadron attended by commanders, chiefs, and Arctic Guardians from across the wing, Bass acknowledged the unique contributions that traditional drill-weekend Guardsmen bring to the total force through their civilian education and work experience. She highlighted how part-time Guardsmen ready to activate or deploy on a moment's notice provides capacity to the Air Force while saving money.

"We know the value we get with our Guard and our Reserve, period," she said. "We get an unmatched capability with the civilian and military experience you bring to the fight. It's something we can't replace."

ALASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD AIRMEN MEDEVAC TWO PATIENTS DURING HARSH ALASKA WEATHER

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of the 176th Wing medically evacuated two patients this week in separate incidents during extreme weather conditions throughout much of Alaska.

The National Weather Service released several regional weather advisories ranging in scope from hurricane-force winds to blizzard white outs to freezing rain throughout the first week of the year.

Alaska Air National Guardsmen of 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons medevac'd a woman suffering a fall at Good News Bay Jan. 3, and they later rescued a man in medical distress at Tununak Jan. 5.

Good News Bay is about 115 miles south of Bethel, and Tununak is about 120 miles west of Bethel.

Alaska Air National Guard Lt. Col. Christen Brewer, Alaska Rescue Coordination Center director, said officials of the Kakanak Community Health Clinic requested assistance for the woman who fell.

The 176th Wing launched a 210th RQS HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter and a 211th RQS HC-130J Combat King II rescue aircraft Dec. 30. Both aircraft had highly trained pararescue (PJs) Airmen of 212th RQS onboard. The aircraft was required to turn around due to severe weather conditions.

On Jan. 3, the 176th Wing issued a waiver, allowing the helicopter to fly around the violently turbulent weather in order to reach its destination.

The HH-60 landed at Good News Bay, disembarking two PJs who stabilized the patient before loading her onboard the Pave Hawk for evacuation to the Bethel Airport and transloaded her to the HC-130 for a more expedited flight to Anchorage.

The crew of the HC-130 transported the woman to JBER where she was transferred to an ambulance and taken to the Alaska Native Medical Center.

Late the next evening, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation officials of the requested assistance for the man in distress requiring medical evacuation.

The 176th Wing launched an HH-60 and an HC-130 with PJs on both aircraft early morning, Jan. 5, landed the HH-60 at Tununak Airport, and disembarked two PJs

who stabilized the patient before loading him onboard the Pave Hawk for evacuation to the Bethel Airport. There, he was and transloaded on the HC-130, transported to JBER, and transported via ambulance to Providence Alaska Medical Center.

Brewer said Airmen of 176th Wing successfully medevac'd the patients despite challenging weather.

"Unfortunately, Western Alaska was experiencing extreme weather patterns for several days, and it delayed civilian and military response to the medevac requests," she said. "The 176th Wing rescue triad was watching the weather closely and was ready to respond as soon as a weather window allowed."

For these operations, 210th RQS, 211th RQS, 212th RQS and the AKRCC were awarded two saves, one for each mission.

ALASKA AIR NATIONAL GUARD AIRMEN RESCUE PREGNANT WOMAN IN DISTRESS AT KIPNUK

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Alaska Air National Guardsmen of the 176th Wing rescued a pregnant woman in distress Dec. 27 at Kipnuk about 100 miles southwest of Bethel.

Alaska Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Evan Budd, Alaska Rescue Coordination Center superintendent, said officials of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital requested assistance when a pregnant woman was injured in a snowmachine accident.

The 176th Wing launched a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter and a 211th Rescue Squadron HC-130J Combat King II rescue aircraft. Both aircraft had highly trained pararescue (PJs) Airmen onboard.

The HC-130 was the first aircraft on scene, dropping much-needed medical supplies to local medical professionals for use stabilizing the patient.

The HH-60 then landed on scene, disembarking two PJs who spent an hour stabilizing the patient before loading her onboard the Pave Hawk for evacuation to the Bethel Airport and transloaded her to the HC-130.

The crew of the HC-130 then transported the woman to JBER where she was transloaded to a JBER Fire Emergency Services ambulance. Paramedics of the

673d Civil Engineer Squadron then transported the patient to the Alaska Native Medical Center.

Budd said teamwork between the 176th Wing units and the 673d CES was a critical dimension during the mission.

"The transload was key because the weather was so poor in the passes," he said. "There were a lot of tough obstacles to overcome, but everyone came together and knocked this one out of the park." For the operation, 210th RQS, 211th RQS, 212th RQS and the AKRCC were awarded one save.

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ARCTIC GUARDIAN KEEPS WATCH WITH 176TH AIR DEFENSE SQUADRON

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Besides her distinctively mottled Canadian Disruptive Pattern uniform and a habit of pronouncing lieutenant as "left-tenant," there is nothing differentiating Royal Canadian Air Force Capt. Elyse O'Brien, 176th Air Defense Squadron air battle manager, from her fellow "Top Rock" squadron members.

While monitoring her radar-display scope directing F-22 Raptor fighters, O'Brien works shoulder-to-shoulder with her American counterparts from the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing.

Alaska Air National Guard Lt. Col. James Fowley, 176th ADS commander, said the relationship between the U.S. Air Force, the Alaska Air National Guard and the RCAF spans decades as the constituent parts of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

"The foundation of the relationship goes back to the founding of NORAD in the '50s," he said. "NORAD was founded as a bi-national command meaning Canadians and Americans were joined at the start for the defense of North America, which includes both of our countries. As that relationship has grown and evolved through the years, it has come to the point where we have Canadian officers and enlisted personnel stationed at Elmendorf, and those people are embedded with the 176th Air Defense Squadron as well as the 962nd (Airborne Air Control Squadron). The only difference is the different uniforms and occasionally a different turn of phrase."

From the secure, high-tech Region operations floor on JBER, the 176th ADS keeps continuous watch on the skies over North America. The ADS is part of the Alaskan

NORAD Region (ANR). Squadron Airmen work with regular Air Force members of the ANR, the 11th Air Force and the 611th Air Operations Center to detect and intercept any intrusion into U.S. or Canadian airspace. The line of demarcation often used is the air defense identification zone.

"The air defense identification zone is a piece of airspace where we have the responsibility and the control to be able to identify different air tracks that enter the ADIZ," O'Brien said. "That allows us to identify who is coming into our airspace – Are they friendly? Do we know who they are? – and that's a really important piece of understanding who is coming into our airspace."

At O'Brien's fingertips is an ADS computer on the receiving end of a lot of radar data covering Alaska and the surrounding region.

"Our scopes give us a broad-level view of being able to see the Alaska airspace," she said. "We are able to see radar data, and we get those feeds from different radar sites. This lets us know who it is and potentially what altitude they are at and some of their identifiers through some of the modes and codes that they squawk."

The modes and codes are transmitted by the aircraft transponder and help identify it as civilian or military.

If ANR leadership should decide to intercept, they will direct the 611th AOC to issue the order, and 176th ADS would work closely with Raptor pilots of 3rd Wing's 90th and 525th Fighter Squadrons, Reserve component F-22 pilots from the 302nd Fighter Squadron as well as E-3 Sentry air battle managers of 962nd AACS.

"We are responsible at the tactical level to provide direction to the fighters," O'Brien said, further explaining strategic command and guidance come from U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. David Krumm, 11th Air Force and ANR commander. "I am one of the Airmen reaching out to pilots over the radio, contacting them over the phone pre-mission as well as being a key piece of the command-and-control component within the NORAD enterprise."

A native of Bradford, Ontario, 40 minutes outside of Toronto, O'Brien was three years into earning a psychology degree before she decided to pursue a military commission. She said she was influenced by service members from the nearby Royal Military College of Canada and other local military facilities.

"I think I really fell into the military," O'Brien said. "There is a base in Kingston as well as a military college, so you start to get to know people who go there, and you start to think, 'Oh, this is a pretty decent job.'"

O'Brien said she chose the RCAF aerospace control officer career field.

"This was a job I happened to qualify for based on aptitude, testing and my degree, so I heard weapons was one of the options, I thought it sounded pretty cool, and that's how I got into it," she said.

O'Brien said she looked at Washington and Alaska as outside-Canada, called OUT-CAN, assignments of choice. As fate would have it, she was posted to Canada's northern neighbor state.

"Alaska is not like where I'm from," she explained. "I'm not used to the mountains because there are mostly just hills in southern Ontario. For me, Alaska is absolutely beautiful, and it doesn't get old."

O'Brien said she has two military homes at JBER in the 176th ADS and the Canadian Detachment JBER.

"There is definitely a pretty strong Canadian component here," she said. "It makes things interesting. We definitely do get made fun of for how we say things sometimes, but other than that, I think we bring trainings that, maybe, Americans don't have, and they bring training that we don't have, so we're able to fill in a lot of those gaps."

Fowley echoed O'Brien's assessment of the blend of experience.

"A lot of the Canadians spend a large portion if not their entire career in the air defense organization, so they bring a wealth of knowledge with them when they check into the unit, knowledge our Guardsmen may not have based on their background," he said before mentioning other benefits of the RCAF integration. "When you're working a 24/7/365 operation, it's really nice to have three in a crew position instead of two. It really gives you some relief from the night schedule but the benefit goes far beyond that."

Fowley said RCAF Airmen and Alaska Air National Guardsmen are trained to the same standard and are employed in an identical manner. Additionally, RCAF officers and noncommissioned officers are vested with the same authorities.

"I like to say, when I give folks tours, that there are times at 2 in the morning when Alaska is defended by a Canadian mission crew commander, a Canadian mission crew technician/enlisted member, the senior director is Canadian, and the controller on call is Canadian as well, so Team Canada is protecting Alaska from inside Alaska," he said. "Canadians are truly integrated in the entire mission of defending North America. We can't do it without them."

Fowley said he has been impressed with O'Brien's work ethic and her ability to take the records from a defensive counter-air mission, analyze those records, and then work with the Americans to improve processes.

"She is an extremely dedicated and hard-working individual," he said. "What I mean by that is she is really taken the lead for some of the Americans to help show them from a debrief perspective what they can and should be doing."

After serving in the squadron, O'Brien said she relishes the assignment.

"From a professional standpoint, I feel grateful and really lucky to be here," she said. "I know that there are some opportunities that I may not get in Canada that I do get here. It's definitely somewhere where if you want to get really good at your job as a controller, this is the place to be."

JOINT EXERCISE ARCTIC EAGLE DESCENDS ON NOME

Py Peter Loewi | Nome Nugget

NOME, Alaska — Describing the way he was advised, fresh out of flight school, to introduce himself to Nome – by flying helicopters over the town – Alaska Army National Guard Lieutenant Colonel Eric Marcellus announced, "the Guard is here." In preparation for their upcoming exercise Arctic Eagle/Patriot 2022, Alaska National Guard military and civilian personnel joined a Strait Science series talk, co-produced by UAF Northwest Campus and Alaska Sea Grant.

Approximately 1,000 military and civilian personnel will be coming to Alaska from February 22 to March 10 for a large-scale exercise, though not all will descend on Nome. Approximately 600 Air and Army National Guard forces from 28 states, 300 federal participants from 25 agencies including the Department of Defense, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, as well as six Alaska state participants including Alaska State Defense Force and Department of Health and Social Services, 13 local agencies and three Canadian agencies will be joining this exercise in Nome, Kodiak and Southcentral to learn how to operate in extreme cold weather environments.

The mission is to "Conduct full-spectrum operations and special operations within an Arctic environment to synchronize a unified civil and military capability to respond to threat/attacks from a peer adversary." This means, essentially, "working together, in the cold, in case the situation with Russia or China descends into conflict."

The Nome portion of the mission will be taking place from around February 25 to March 6, with about 250 people coming, not all at once. At any given time, there will be about 150, said LTC Marcellus.

Acknowledging that resources here can be limited, Captain Erica Olson explained that they plan on coming with a fully stocked kitchen to prepare breakfast and lunch for the troops. Dinner, however, is on the local economy, and soldiers will be getting a per diem to spend in Nome restaurants, an ask from the City.

Most of the exercises will be in and around Nome. With the command center set up in the Nome Public Safety Building, activities, operations, meals and lodging will take place all across Nome. The buildings mentioned during the talk include the Army Aviation Operations Facility (National Guard hangar) at the airport on one end, all the way to Norton Sound Regional Hospital on the other, via the Armory, the Rec Center, the Port area, and NACTEC. Personnel will be staged, running exercises, and lodged in these facilities throughout the exercise. At all of these sites, facility managers have been included in the planning, and are to disseminate information to employees and residents about any potential impacts. Coming to Nome will be members from the Alaska Air National Guard, Alaska Army National Guard, Alaska State Defense Force, Colorado National Guard, Kentucky National Guard, North Dakota National Guard, US Army Alaska, the 673rd Airbase Wing Alaska, Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services, NOAA and multiple test agencies, entities which focus on the development of equipment, for example.

This exercise is just that: an exercise. The missions are practice, designed so that forces from across the country can communicate or navigate together – or simply survive – in the Arctic, an area of increasing geopolitical significance. Some of the missions that will be conducted in Nome include Command and Control; Aerial Port Opening, meaning unloading equipment from planes, inspecting, and refueling; High Latitude Communications; Hazardous Material Testing and Identification, which will take place around the port, is about checking whether equipment will work in the extreme cold. They will also be testing new and emerging technologies. One sub-mission, food services, recreation, lodging, personnel accountability, is about the troops' ability to set up facilities, including their new container kitchen. There is also a new medical tent, and a burn medevac drill is planned. One mission is land navigation, giving troops the opportunity to do things the "old-fashioned" way of using a map and compass.

As it was asked during the Q and A session, there is no plan to jam civilian access to GPS satellite systems.

The Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard has made rural operations a

priority, and this exercise includes several engagement opportunities. On February 27 and 28, there will be a recruiting event at the Armory in Nome, and on March 2 will be Distinguished Visitor's Day. Details are still being finalized, but there will also be "Ted Talks," during which experts will present to the community on a variety of topics. There will be several demonstrations and information sessions throughout the exercise which community members will be invited to.

In an email to the Nugget, Major Chelsea Aspelund listed some of the equipment that would be used. Don't be surprised or frightened if you see "one to two C130 flights per day, one to two C17s overall, and possibly a helicopter for a few days supporting training at the airport; potentially a couple SUSV (small unit support vehicle) and snow machines (those already stationed in Nome are being fixed for use); a box truck and the mobile kitchen at the Rec Center and the JISCC (joint incident site communications capability) at the Public Safety building. A few porta potties will be set up at some of the training sites and some tents at the AAOF for the medical testing. A couple Arctic Oven tents will be brought up for safety shelters away from the building locations."

Despite all of this, Major Aspelund explained that they "do not expect any disruption to traffic, roads, or winter trails in terms of community members not being able to use their normal routes to/from daily activities.

That's a lot more people running around in uniform than usual, LTC Marcellus agreed. Participants in uniform will be patronizing stores in the community, and there will be military grade equipment around. In terms of numbers, it is not something that will be surprising, "but there will be quite a bit of activity going on," he said.

In a pandemic?

"The military takes COVID pretty serious," he said. The exercise is not a given and could still be canceled if the pandemic worsens.

Amy Schwalber, planner for the operation, explained that every single person coming into Nome will be tested with 72 hours prior to entering the community. This was part of the COVID plan submitted to the City, which met the City Manager's approval.

They will be wearing masks, and the majority will be vaccinated, but Schwalber wasn't able to say the exact vaccination rate. Since the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense mandated the vaccine for all military personnel, some of the organizations sending participants have reached 100 percent fully vaccinated, but Alaska was one of six states where Republican Governors sent letters to the Pentagon against the vaccine mandate. "I anticipate [the vaccination rate] will be very high," said Schwalber.

But not everyone likes being buzzed by low-flying helicopters. "They're disruptive; they shudder our houses," Austin Ahmasuk said. Sharing his concern about the militarization of the Arctic, he added, "here in the Arctic, we want peace." LTC Marcellus said that he thinks there is a valid reason for the government wanting to operate in the region, and a way to find a balance, doing so in a way which respects the individuals who live here full time. In general, there were verbal agreements on the importance of engaging more.

Resident Addy Ahmasuk noted concern that the Alaska National Guard had spoken with the City Manager, the Chamber of Commerce, and the LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) but not with the tribes. While the presentation and panel discussion did include a Tribal Liaison, who said they would reach out to tribes "in a responsible way, and be prepared for consultation, if necessary," prior to the operation, the question of why this wasn't done as part of the planning process went unanswered.

Ahmasuk continued, saying "You mentioned compasses and maps as being the old-fashioned way. But for us, we didn't have compasses and maps. We dug underneath the snow, we checked to see which way the grass was laying, and that told us the direction we were headed in the middle of the storm. We have generations-old ways of knowing. We've been here the longest, we know how to survive up here."

Another attendee suggested that instead of simply holding TedTalks for the military to speak to Nome, there should be opportunities for Nome to speak to the military. "I think some of us that have been around could offer some insights and advice on how to cope with the Arctic. I hope that you're amenable to talking with local people and having your different teams get with those of us that have had some experience," he said.

In response, LTC Marcellus stressed two-way communication, "we recognize the abilities and knowledge that the locals bring," he said.

Strait Science Organizer Gay Sheffield asked in closing, how can the people of the region engage? Planner Amy Schwalber said she could at least point people in the right direction. Major Chelsea Aspelund also said that as details become solidified, much will be shared through social media and with local news outlets, like the Nugget.

176TH MAINTENANCE GROUP VIRTUAL REALITY LAB INTRODUCES INNOVATIVE TRAINING

By David Bedard | 176th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The 176th Maintenance Group opened its innovative Virtual Reality Training Lab here Dec. 4, 2021.

The 176th MXG used squadron innovation funds from ARCWERX to create the lab, which will enhance training capabilities for maintenance Airmen by giving them an interactive way to familiarize themselves with maintenance processes without a physical airframe. The purpose of ARCWERX is to create and foster a lasting culture of innovation in the Air National Guard that builds on the unique structure, geographic distribution and talents of individual Guardsmen.

"This is intended for a trainer to be a safety rep and stand behind him but also to teach while he's going through the steps," said Master Sgt. Bryan LoPorto, 176th MXG maintenance training manager. "It enables them to provide training to supplement what they would learn on the aircraft in an environment that's less stressful."

So far, there are 18 modules that the lab can access. The controls for the virtual reality program are easy to learn, which allows greater accessibility and helps to streamline the learning process, LoPorto said.

Virtual Hangar uses the same controllers and program available on Steam, a game service that is popular in the online gaming community. The lab only has access to C-130 modules, but the long-term plan is to have modules that focus on the other airframes present at the 176th Wing.

"For someone like me that has zero maintenance experience, I can see how new troops can benefit from this training," said Tech. Sgt. Esdei Arurang, 176th MXG unit training manager. "It familiarizes you with the steps in the [technical order] and gives insight into the layout of the airframe. It does this without waiting on a part of the plane to break or waiting for that task to come up. Ideally, 100 students can hop on from anywhere in the world, and an instructor can walk those students through the proper steps in real time."

This virtual reality setup is being used in training locations to help address the issue of trainer shortages across the maintenance career fields. When the lab setup is complete, trainers from across the Department of Defense will be able to give feedback and guidance to students in real time as they go through tasks.

LoPorto said the 176th Wing is one of the first Air National Guard units to have the capability of a virtual reality lab. Through this capability Airmen can familiarize themselves with procedural maintenance that is rare or hard to cover during their drill status.

"Certain tasks are rarely done, for example a C-check is done every 810 days or so" said Tech. Sgt. Michael Decorato, 176th Maintenance Squadron environmental systems specialist. "If a troop misses it, they would miss out on tasks that are specific to that check. An entire check could take a few weeks."

Although the lab cannot replace the experience of working on an airframe, it greatly enhances training capabilities. The capability to train maintenance personnel in a shorter timeframe without the need for an airframe can help drill status Guardsmen who cannot take weeks at a time to go through a process.

The future capabilities of the virtual reality lab will also greatly supplement the total force as more modules are added, LoPorto said. Virtual reality is just one of many tools Airmen can use to increase their effectiveness and enhance innovative problem solving throughout the Air Force.

RSD SCHEDULE

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED DRILL WEEKENDS

February/March: Super Drill Feb. 26-March 3

March: 26, 27

April: Core-drill dates, 9, 10; Quarterly drill, 9-14

RSD SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

RSD ROTATOR PROCESS

Members sign up directly via Facebook, as well as check flight updates. Rotator riders can request access to the Facebook group by searching "AKANG RSD Rotator" and requesting membership.

Friday Pick-up

South UTA Shuttle		
Location	Arrive	Depart
Elmendorf	CANCELLED	1715
Kodiak	1815	1830
Homer	1910	1920
Kenai	1935	1945
Elmendorf	2000	
	CANCELLED	

PAX Transfer

North UTA Shuttle		
Location	Arrive	Depart
Elmendorf		1900
Eielson	2000	2015
Elmendorf	2100	

Sunday Return

South UTA Shuttle		
Location	Arrive	Depart
Elmendorf	CANCELLED	1715
Kenai	1800	1810
Homer	1825	1835
Kodiak	1915	1925
Elmendorf	2030	

PAX Transfer

North UTA Shuttle		
Location	Arrive	Depart
Eielson		1700
Elmendorf	1800	1815
Eielson	1915	

Log Plans will post events for each flight a week prior to departure. New riders fill out a new rider request form (LGRDX Share Point under the RSD Rotator folder) and send to the Log Plans shop (176WG.LGRR@us.af.mil) to be filed. Logistics Plans office cell: 947-4395

PLEASE NOTE: the SOUTH UTA SHUTTLE has been CANCELLED until further notice. The North

UTA Shuttle will still be scheduled on a monthly basis.

JBER show time is two hours prior to take off at the passenger terminal.

176OSS CURRENT OPS Number: 551-5208

JBER ATOC: 552-2104 (Call to update gates)

EDF PAX TERM: Fax 552-3996 / Office 552-3781 (Call to update gates)

Eielson show time is three hours prior to take off at the passenger terminal

EIL PAX TERM: Fax 377-2287 / Office 377-1250

RSD Rotator Share Point:

<https://jber.eis.pacaf.af.mil/176WG/176MSG/176LRS/LGRD%20Log%20Plans/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2F176WG%2F176MSG%2F176LRS%2FLGRD%20Log%20Plans%2FUTA%20Rotator&FolderCTID=0x01200074092A9858D1664D86D7BCF8C1287C0A&View=%7BC246B693%2DEB0F%2D4968%2DAEF8%2DD89451AEDCAA%7D>

WEEKEND DINING FACILITY HOURS

The Iditarod (Elmendorf) Dining Facility will be closed on Saturday August 1, as renovations are to be completed.

On Saturday members will be encouraged to have lunch at the Wilderness in (Bldg. 647 Ft Richardson).

The Wilderness Inn serves "brunch" from 1000-1400 on the weekend.

The Army DFAC will honor the provided ESM roster and not charge DSGs for their meal.

If anyone gets turned away on the Army side please contact MSgt Franz Deters
907-903-5545

If AGRs or officers wish to eat on the Army side, a flat rate of \$5.65 will apply.

On Sunday the Iditarod will be open again for business (normal hours).

There will not be POD support for the flight line over the weekend (located near F-22 hangers)

Normal Hours:

BREAKFAST: 0630-0830

GRAB-N-GO: 0900-1030

LUNCH: 1030-1330

GRAB-N-GO: 1330-1630

DINNER: 1630-1830

MIDNIGHT: 2300-0100

GATE HOURS

For latest gate hours, visit <https://www.jber.jb.mil/Units/673abw/673SFS/>

POINTS OF INTEREST

176th Wing

Website: <http://www.176wg.ang.af.mil/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/176thWing>

Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/176thwing>

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/176wg/>

DVIDs: <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/176WPA>

SharePoint (requires CAC):

<https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/12468/Pages/176%20Wing.aspx>

Alaska National Guard

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/AKNationalGuard>

Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/alaskanationalguard>

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard>

Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalGuardAlaska>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/AKNationalGuard>

JBER

Website: <http://www.jber.jb.mil/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/JBERAK>

Newspaper: <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/397/arctic-warrior>

Fulltime Job Opportunities:

<http://dmva.alaska.gov/employment.htm>

HRO – Alaska National Guard:

<http://dmva.alaska.gov/HRO>

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