



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 1, 2011**  
By: Lt. Bernie Kale

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

### **Alaska Air National Guardsmen Deploy to Iraq**

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska** – More than 30 Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 168<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, based out of Eielson Air Force Base, will depart the United States today to begin a six-month deployment in Iraq.

The Guard members from the 168<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Squadron are finishing their pre-deployment training on air bases in Florida and Nevada to prepare them for situations they may face while at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq.

"You always want more training," said Lt. Col. Jeff Elliot, 168<sup>th</sup> Security Forces Squadron commander. "While it's been strenuous, we are as prepared as can be and are ready to get our boots on the ground."

The primary mission of the deploying members will be to provide air base defense and entry control-point security.

"The security they are providing is vital to the accomplishment of the mission," said Col. Timothy O'Brien, 168<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing commander, Alaska Air National Guard. "They have been training for this type of environment, and I am confident they will succeed."

The members left Alaska in early July to begin their training at Cheech Air Force Base, Nev., and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

Some of the pre-deployment training included battle drills, entry control-point training, weapons systems, land navigation and terrain reading.

"We are extremely proud of our Airmen," O'Brien said. "They are serving our country and representing the state of Alaska with honor."

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**For Immediate Release**

**November 26, 2011**

By Maj. Guy Hayes

**Alaska Army National Guard unit deploying to Afghanistan**

**Cutlines:**

**111126-F-ZH346-001/002/004**

A departure ceremony for family and friends to say goodbye to Alaska Army National Guardsmen of B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment was held today at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. In Afghanistan, the Soldiers of the 1-143rd will provide Security Forces Operations (SECFOR) for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). The PRT operates in potentially dangerous areas to rebuild infrastructure, assist with agriculture, build wells and provide healthcare. Photo By Maj Guy Hayes, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**111126-F-ZH346-005**

Sen. Mark Begich speaks to Alaska Army National Guardsmen of B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment today at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Begich also went around to shake the hand of every Soldier deploying to Afghanistan. Photo By Maj Guy Hayes, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

**111126-F-ZH346-006**

Pfc. Coleman Wenke (left) smiles with his father Col. Scott Wenke, Alaska Air National Guard 176<sup>th</sup> Wing commander, following the deployment ceremony for B Company, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry (Airborne) Regiment today at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Pfc. Wenke is deploying for a year with the Soldiers of the 1-143rd to provide Security Forces Operations (SECFOR) for Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). The PRT operates in potentially dangerous areas to rebuild infrastructure, assist with agriculture, build wells and provide healthcare. Photo By Maj Guy Hayes, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 7, 2011**

By: Maj. Guy Hayes

**Alaska National Guard responding to Alaska community buried in snow**

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska**— The Alaska National Guard is responding to personnel and equipment requests for support in Cordova after weeks of record snowfall have left the city covered in more than 18 feet of snow.

Personnel in the Alaska National Guard's Joint Operation Center are responding to a resource request from the State Emergency Operation Center to send more than 50 Guard members, supplies and equipment to Cordova Sunday, weather permitting, to provide much needed support.

"We have called upon the Alaska National Guard to help the community with emergency snow removal that will protect public buildings and residences," said John Madden, director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. "Their ability to rapidly deploy large numbers of Guardsmen anywhere in state is a great resource."

Isolated off the state highway system and having the sea and airport as the only means of transportation in or out of the small Alaskan community, Cordova residents have worked hard to clear snow, including 42 inches in the most recent storm, but conditions continue to worsen, posing a serious safety issue to the citizens.

"Cordova is continuing their outstanding job responding to several weeks of intense snowfall," Madden said. "Cordova utilized all of their snow management resources to maintain emergency access, but now face a new round of storms that will bring heavy snow and perhaps rain."

With more snow and rain expected, avalanche danger remains very high in Cordova and some buildings have collapsed due to heavy snow loads. This makes the Alaska National Guard the right resource to assist the citizens of Alaska during this emergency.

"Alaska has significant challenges and the National Guard has the manpower skill and equipment to meet those demands and quickly respond in support of civilian authorities when called upon," said Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "Our Soldiers and Airmen will move forward and support the people of



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By: Maj. Guy Hayes

**Alaska Air National Guard to provide rescue support for Hurricane Irene**

**CAMP DENALI, Alaska-** The Alaska Air National Guard is ramping up this afternoon to send crews and equipment to Charleston, W. Va. to provide search and rescue assets in response to Hurricane Irene.

A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III flown by members of the Alaska Air National Guard's 249<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron are currently scheduled to depart Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Saturday with approximately 45 personnel from the 176<sup>th</sup> Wing for a two week deployment.

"We are sending two Pave Hawk helicopters with four flight crews, eight 'Guardian Angels' and 20 maintenance and support personnel to support the mission," said Lt. Col. Blake Gettys, 176<sup>th</sup> Wing Operations Group commander, Alaska Air National Guard. "We'll also be working with Guardian Angels from Kentucky and special tactics squadron personnel from Portland."

The C-17 is expected to depart Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson at 10 a.m. with the goal to be on the ground ready to support rescue operations by Sunday.

"We are prepared and committed to support our fellow Americans in their time of need," said Governor Sean Parnell. "Our Alaska National Guardsmen are unparalleled in their experience in saving lives and they are the perfect choice to assist civilian authorities during this potential national emergency. As Alaskans we understand what it's like to live through disasters, so when called upon, we will be ready to aid communities and Governors of states that need our support."

The Alaska Air National Guard supported relief efforts in 2008 following hurricanes Gustav, Hannah and Ike in the Gulf Coast region saving 16 lives, while flying 22 missions during a 16-day deployment.

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Media: If you are interested in attending the departure, please contact Maj. Guy Hayes at 382-5189.



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 12, 2011**

By: Master Sgt. Shannon Oleson, 176<sup>th</sup> Wing Public Affairs

**Alaska National Guard brings Operation Santa Claus to Wales**

**WALES, Alaska** – Santa, Mrs. Claus and 35 helpers brought Operation Santa Claus and holiday cheer on an Alaska National Guard C-130 to the small, remote Alaska village of Wales Dec. 9.

The Alaska Air National Guard C-130 landed on the village's airstrip and was warmly greeted by community members on snowmachines. The temperature, in the teens, was chilly but not cold by Wales' standards.

Operation Santa Claus volunteers and community members quickly off-loaded boxes from the aircraft and onto sleds tied to the snowmachines for the mile ride to the Wales school.

"It's a great time of year and unique way for us to get out and support Alaska citizens," said Col. Mike Bridges, director of logistics for the Alaska Army National Guard. "I've probably been on at least 20 Operation Santa Claus trips and each one is a special experience."

While boxes were unpacked in the school's gym, members of Alaska Brass, a brass and percussion ensemble from the U.S. Air Force Band of the Pacific, began to play festive holiday tunes while the gym filled with nearly everyone from the village.

Following the festive music, a prayer of thanks was given by Alaska Air National Guard Chaplain Brian Musselman before a warm meal, made and donated by Pentagon North, Inc. of Anchorage, was served.

To the delight of everyone, ice cream sundaes were also provided by Tastee Freez, while village youth performed a dance for the audience and their guests.

And then the moment everyone was waiting for, Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived.

"I enjoy visiting with the elders and veterans of the community, while they see their kids interact with Santa Claus," Bridges said. "It's a great time for everyone involved."

One by one, each child had a chance to visit Santa and receive a gift. They were also given a new backpack filled with a couple of pieces of fresh fruit, books, a toothbrush and other incidentals.

"This event was incredible," said Roxie Quick, the Wales School principal. "It was a great way to show the children a lesson in sharing and about the volunteer spirit."

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