



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS

READY TO SERVE

Nearly 5,000 Alaskans are directly involved with today's Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. Most are members of the Army or Air National Guard, and all are volunteers of one stripe or another.

The Department's stated mission, "*Ready to Serve*", encompasses a broad intent that extends from the military members through the hundreds of civilian employees and volunteers.

Overview

More than 4,300 of the 5,000 employees and volunteers of the department are members of the Alaska Army National Guard or the Alaska Air National Guard. More than 2,700 participate as traditional or part-time members of the Guard. Some 275 members of the Alaska State Defense Force and 95 members of the Alaska Naval Militia also contribute thousands of hours of volunteer time each year.

There are facilities in 76 communities around the state. The department has an annual budget of more than \$170 million. That money pays the salaries of Guard members, the Division of Emergency Services and other state employees through federal/state matching fund arrangements.



Alaska Army National Guard
Blackhawk operations in Arctic
Valley near Anchorage.
Photo: Pvt. Logan Haller

Alaska National Guard

More than a job, the Guard is a way of life. Today's citizen-Soldiers and airmen serve our nation and Alaska with unparalleled professionalism. Guard members bring knowledge and experiences gained in civilian life to the various units. Each person returns to their home and workplace with new leadership skills and new insights to build solid families, better businesses and stronger communities.

The Guard has two distinct roles — federal and state. Both roles are embraced with enthusiasm and energy. The vision is clear and direct: The Alaska Army and Air National Guard aspire to be the most ready reserve components in the world—expertly led, highly trained and equipped, and ready to accomplish national security and global military objectives. The Guard has three missions: federal, state and domestic. The first mission brings focus to our national interests — a force for national defense, peacekeeping and promoting democratic values, including global security.

With over 2,100 Soldiers authorized, the Alaska Army National Guard operates armories and other facilities at 76 locations across the state, including Ft. Greely. They also operate 33 aircraft from Bryant Army Guard Heliport on Ft. Richardson, as well as from Juneau, Bethel, Fairbanks and Nome.

The Alaska Air National Guard has units at Kulis ANG Base, Elmendorf AFB, Eielson AFB, Clear AFS and Camp Denali. The Air Guard has more than 2,200 airmen authorized, and 29 aircraft assigned.

Service to America – Global War on Terrorism

In the more than two years since the start on the Global War on Terrorism, the Alaska Army and Air National Guard have continued to deploy Soldiers and airmen to Afghanistan, Iraq, throughout Central Asia, the Pacific and for peace-keeping duties in the Balkans. Fully equipped and funded, the Guard can continue to honor its commitment to respond to our state in times of need.

The Alaska Army and Air National Guard have combat-ready forces poised to respond in times of need. Serving side by side with regular forces in military operations around the world, Alaska's citizen-Soldiers and airmen are capable of conducting wartime and peacekeeping missions in times of international crises and contingencies.

On the home front, more than 250 Soldiers and airmen deployed to 19 airports across Alaska to provide increased security as part of Operation Noble Eagle. They, along with several dozen members of the Alaska State Defense Force, also sent security teams to several key check points associated with the 800-mile-long trans-Alaska oil pipeline.



The Future Is Here, Now

Missile Defense beckons to the Soldiers of the Guard. The first permanently assigned Soldiers to support America's Missile Defense Program are members of the Alaska Army National Guard. They are in place, increasing in strength, and readying the operational mission capabilities of Fort Greely.

In a similar vein, the Alaska Air National Guard is operating the Regional Air Operations Center at Elmendorf AFB, and continues to ramp up operational activities in support of the space surveillance mission at Clear AFS.

These missions are well suited for Alaskans. During this past year, Governor Frank H. Murkowski and the Alaska Legislature have continued to state their enthusiastic support for the Guard involvement with these activities. Each mission is vital to the defense of the nation. Each ideally suits the Guard.

Other missions and opportunities to serve continue to develop. The Alaska National Guard is moving forward into the future in a steady mission growth pattern.



Military policemen patrol a portion of the Trans-Alaska Pipe Line.
Photo: Staff Sgt. Julie Avey



A specially trained team inspects packages for contraband.
Photo: Sgt. Terrence Hayes

Global View – Hometown Forces

On a national basis, the Army National Guard comprises more than half of available Army combat forces and a third of our combat service and combat service support forces.

Tellingly, the Army National Guard provides 34 percent of the Army's total strength on less than 10 percent of the Army's Budget. The Guard trains to the same standards as the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. All Guard units are as ready as they are resourced to be.

Across the nation, the Army Guard has 367,000 Soldiers in 2,700 communities. The Guard operates 3,160 owned and 62 leased armories to support training, aviation, administration and logistics throughout the United States. The Air Guard is 109,000 strong, serving in 88 major flying units and at more than 170 installations.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Virtually every week of the year, the Alaska National Guard responds to calls for help somewhere in the state. Answering to the governor, the Guard's mission includes rescue and recovery support to people in trouble. Last year, with the help of friends and neighbors, the Alaska Air National Guard's Rescue Coordination Center directed more than 300 missions resulting in Army and Air Guard aviators and rescue teams saving or assisting more than 130 people.

The Guard is always ready when neighbors need help.

When it comes to threats of terrorism or disasters, like floods, urban wildfires, winter storms, sea storms, and the like, Guard members readily blend with civil authorities — like the Alaska Office of

Homeland Security and Emergency Management — to apply expertise in transportation, logistics, medical, security, communication and other support. The Department is also the home of the state's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management. A team of more than 60 highly skilled civilians operates from Camp Denali.

The Guard's Alaska Military Youth Academy ChalleNge Program graduated nearly 200 cadets, from two 22-week classes during the fiscal year. Approximately 85 percent of the youngsters go on to college or vocational school afterward.

Youth programs include the Scouting and Junior ROTC programs, among many others, focusing the talents of the Guard on local communities. Guard members

voluntarily apply myriad skills to the mission, including mentoring, linguistic support and public speaking.

The counter-drug efforts of the Guard are obvious and important to Alaska. Last year, Alaska National Guard Soldiers and airmen assisted local, state and federal law-enforcement officials in removing more than \$30 million in marijuana, cocaine, and other illegal, illicit drugs from the streets. They also assisted officers in seizing nearly \$1 million in cash and more than 100 weapons.

Likewise, the drug-demand-reduction efforts are making an impressive impact through the numbers of youth and adults who are involved annually in the community and schools programs.

Photo: Technical Sgt. Keith Brown



An Alaska Army Guard pilot explains the Blackhawk's control system to a youngster.
Photo: Staff Sgt. Cohen A. Young



This past year, more than 50,000 youngsters and adults took part. This program underscores the enduring link of the Guard's commitment to support the Alaska Federation of Natives' Sobriety Movement across our state.

Some of the best outreach efforts have succeeded through partnerships. For example, former NBA all-star Thurl Baily hosted anti-drug/alcohol basketball camps in rural Alaska. Likewise, Brigham Young University's Living Legends entertainment group traveled to remote communities to entertain and serve up positive drug-free lifestyle discussions in an area where drugs, alcohol, and suicide are at epidemic proportions. Healthy lifestyles, vigorous sports and activities add value to our youth and their families.

Alaska's Office of Veterans Affairs is co-located at Camp Denali. Their mission is an advocacy role on behalf of more than 70,000 Alaska veterans. With the help of Veterans Service Officers, more than \$30 million is recouped or accrued as benefits to veterans and their families each year.

In addition, outreach programs such as Stand Down (for homeless vets and their families) is presented by hundreds of volunteers at Camp Carroll (on Ft. Richardson) and also in Fairbanks. The Office of Veterans Affairs also hosts numerous events and activities throughout the year: Veterans & Remembrance Day on November 11; POW/MIA Day on September 18; 9-11 Commemoration Day on September 11; Independence Day on July 4; Flag Day on June 14; Memorial Day Weekend at Byers

Lake State Veterans Memorial; State POW Day in April; and many more activities.

The department has continued to work a series of issues surrounding federal recognition of the famed Alaska Territorial Guard from World War II. With just over 350 of the original 6,600 members remaining alive, time is critical to get this completed. The effort moves forward.

The breadth and variety of activities found within the department is extraordinary. Few agencies possess such diverse, yet complimentary, missions. The success of the department is found in Soldiers, airmen, sailors, Marines, and civilian employees who strive to personify their mission statement, "Ready to Serve."