

# ALASKA POST

## Home of the Arctic Warriors

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# Army under secretary visits Alaska

**Staff Sgt. Trish McMurphy**  
U.S. Army Alaska Public Affairs

Under Secretary of the Army Dr. Joseph Westphal capped a tour of the U.S. Pacific Command region with a visit to Fort Wainwright, Fort Greely and the Northern Warfare Training Center in central Alaska Jan. 17.

In a series of briefings with U.S. Army Alaska leaders, Westphal learned about the USARAK's vision to build "ready units, strong families and arctic tough leaders," and about the advantages and challenges of training in Alaska.

"It's an important trip for me because it's an opportunity to look at some of the major efforts we're making to realign our forces in the Pacific and how our Army is positioning itself in that new strategy," Westphal said. "I am very happy to end my trip here in Alaska and to see some of the incredibly exciting things going on here."

USARAK Commander Maj. Gen. Michael X. Garrett accompanied Westphal on a tour of Fort Wainwright, the NWTC - the Army's premiere cold weather and mountaineering training school - Fort Greely and a helicopter tour of several vast



Under Secretary of the Army Dr. Joseph Westphal meets with Soldiers at the Army's Northern Warfare Training Center in Interior Alaska, during a tour of the U.S. Pacific Command region. (Photo by Bernardo Fuller, US Army)

See WESTPHAL on page 4

## Army releases programmatic environmental assessment

**Public Affairs staff report,**  
U.S. Army Environmental Command

The Department of the Army has completed a final Programmatic Environmental Assessment and draft Finding of No Significant Impact for Army force structure reductions and realignments

that may occur from Fiscal Years 2013-2020.

The Programmatic Environmental Assessment, known as a PEA, evaluates and assesses the environmental impacts of potential adjustments to Army forces at 21 installations. The Army has completed the analysis to support future anti-

ipated changes and reductions to its forces that are necessary to reduce spending while maintaining critical national defense capabilities.

The Army's proposed action evaluated in the PEA is to reduce the Army's active duty end-strength from 562,000 at the end of Fiscal Year

2012 to 490,000 by Fiscal Year 2020. The PEA analyzes two primary alternatives: Alternative 1. Implement force reductions by inactivating a minimum of eight Brigade Combat Teams, known as BCTs, and realign other combat, combat support, and service support units between Fiscal Year 2013

and Fiscal Year 2020; and Alternative 2. Implement Alternative 1, inactivate additional BCTs, and reorganize remaining BCTs by adding an additional combat maneuver battalion and other units.

The PEA also analyzes a No Action alternative, under which the Army would not reduce the size of the force.

The implementation of Army force realignment will occur over the course of several years to arrive at an optimally configured force in 2020. Reductions in Army Soldiers will also be accompanied by some reduction in civil service employees.

These actions are being undertaken to reshape the Army's forces to meet more effectively national security requirements while reducing the Army's end-strength. Force realignment and some level of force reduction will impact most major Army installations. The implementation of this force rebalancing is necessary to allow the Army to operate in a reduced budget climate, while ensuring the Army can continue to support the nation's critical defense missions.

After more than 10 years of war, our nation is facing new challenges and opportunities that call for reshaping our defense priorities. Concurrent with a reduction and realignment of the force, the Army proposes to reorganize and restructure

its forces using lessons learned over the past 10 years, information about what the future global security environment will be like, and results of previous brigade combat team studies to reshape the Army into a force capable of supporting the full spectrum of military operations.

In the PEA, the Army has evaluated the environmental impacts that may occur at 21 installations that will likely experience changes in Soldier populations as part of Army 2020 force structure realignments and force reduction decisions. Force reductions that may occur as part of the proposed action include the inactivation of Army BCTs and combat support and combat service support units at Army and joint base stationing locations. The decisions on how to best implement Army force reductions and force structure changes from Fiscal Years 2013-2020 will be made over the course of several years to arrive at an optimally configured force in 2020.

Alternatives considered in the PEA evaluate the largest growth potential scenarios at installations that may occur from BCT restructuring, as well as the greatest force reduction scenarios that could occur as a result of Army force draw-down. The range of potential installation reduction

See PEA on page 2

### Winter wonderland fun



Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation offers so much to do this winter season with hiking, tubing, snowboarding, ice skating and various trips through Outdoor Recreation. The possibilities are limited only by what you want to try. (Photo courtesy FMWR)

#### WEEKEND WEATHER



**Friday**  
Mostly cloudy, chance of snow, light winds  
Highs: -14 to -20  
Lows around -45



**Saturday**  
Partly cloudy, day and evening  
Highs around -25  
Lows: -40 to -45



**Sunday**  
Partly cloudy  
Highs around -15  
Lows around -40  
Night mostly clear

#### BRIEFS

##### Marriage, parent workshops

The Scream-Free Parenting Workshop: Five Truths Every Parent Needs To Know, has been rescheduled for Tuesday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044 Apple Street. Registration is required, call 353-7317.

##### Testing installation responders

Giant Voice announcements will occasionally fill the air; police, fire and other emergency vehicles will blare lights and sirens as crisis scenarios are staged for the garrison's training exercise, Monday through Feb. 1. Follow exercise message updates on the garrison's official, public Facebook page - search for FortWainwrightPAO. For more information, call the Public Affairs Office, 353-6780.

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SN/ BIRCHWOOD HOMES

## Medical Department Activity - Alaska

# Baby boom expected at Bassett

**Brandy Ostanik,**  
Bassett Army Community  
Hospital PAO

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are..." sang a Soldier quietly as he walked down the hallway. A woman, holding an infant, smiled as she sat in a waiting-room chair and nodded her head to the rhythm of the familiar nursery rhyme tune.

At Bassett Army Community Hospital, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" now plays over the loudspeaker every time a baby is born.

If projected numbers are correct, soon that song will be heard about four times a day, more than double the daily average the hospital has seen over the past two years. Right now, BACH is scheduled to deliver more babies in the next six months than they did in all of 2012.

In order to accommodate the extraordinary increase in births, and ensure the safety of both mothers and babies, staff members here have spent the last six months creating new training programs and procedures.

Cross-training is being implemented in order to accommodate the increase in population, said Col. Maria B. Summers, the deputy commander of nursing at Bassett.

Additionally, the biggest change for beneficiaries and staff is a new procedure

that will move couplets, the term used for a mother and her newborn, from the maternal newborn unit to the medical surgical unit after giving birth. This move will allow room for additional patients to be admitted to the maternal newborn unit, but will not hinder care or the patient experience.

Couplets will have the same amenities on the medical surgical unit as on the maternal newborn unit: private rooms, dedicated nursing staff and security.

This baby boom is not unexpected. Over 4,000 Soldiers returned in March and April from a year-long deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Historically, military hospitals see an increase in births in the year following a deployment, and this redeployment is no exception.

"We knew we had to put a definite plan in place when the hospital lab reported 70 positive pregnancy tests in one day," said Lt. Col. Esterlitta Jackson, the night charge nurse for the maternal newborn unit at Bassett. "That's more than the number births we normally see in a month."

Armed with confirmed numbers of pregnant beneficiaries, staff gathered to discuss how to safely manage as many births as possible before needing to send patients to a civilian hospital off post.

Staffing correctly was a large concern.

Bassett adheres to practice guidelines set by the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nursing, said Jackson. This means two registered nurses are in the room with a laboring patient: one for the mother and one for the infant.

In order to meet this requirement, cross-training has been, and continues to be, conducted for nurses throughout the hospital and an additional five nurses have been hired.

"We've performed extensive training for nurses from the emergency department, operating room and surgical unit to work with the couplets, said Jackson.

While some mothers might find it an inconvenience to be moved from the maternal newborn unit to the surgical unit after they give birth, Summers believes their overall experience will be a safe and positive one.

To further support the influx of newborns at BACH, appointments have been set aside within family practice specifically for two-day baby exams to ensure the maximum number of appointments is available to support the growth in population.

"It's going to be a hectic time for us," said Summers, "but it will also be exciting to hear "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" playing on the loudspeaker letting everyone know we just delivered another baby into our Army family."



Annette Saikor, wife of Pfc. Marvin Baptiste, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division admires her son Isaac as he sleeps. Isaac Baptiste was born this week at Bassett Army Community Hospital. BACH is set to have a "baby boom" with more babies projected to be born in the first six months of 2013 than were born in all of 2012. (Brandy Ostanik/Bassett Army Community Hospital PAO)

## PEA: Informs decision makers

Continued from page 1

and growth (ranging from maximum losses of 8,000 military personnel to maximum increases of 3,000 at the Army's largest installations) was chosen for the environmental analysis to provide flexibility as future force structure realignment decisions are made.

The PEA is designed to inform decision-makers of potential socioeconomic and environmental impacts associated with proposed actions as these stationing decisions are made in the coming years. The specific locations where changes will occur have not been decided.

Stationing sites that were included in the PEA

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.; Fort Knox, Ky.; Fort Lee, Va.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; Fort Polk, La.; Fort Riley, Kan.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; and U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii.

Environmental impacts associated with implementation of alternatives evaluated in the PEA include impacts to air quality, airspace, cultural and biological resources, noise, soil erosion, wetlands, water resources, facilities, socioeconomic impact, energy demand, land use, hazardous materials and waste, and traffic and transportation. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of implementing

and some of these impacts could be significant.

The completion of an environmental assessment results in one of two outcomes: either significant environmental impacts are identified and a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, is issued, or, no significant environmental impacts are identified and a FNSI is signed. Significant socioeconomic impacts alone do not require preparation of an EIS. The Army study finds that there are no significant environmental impacts with either alternative evaluated in the PEA; accordingly a draft FNSI has been prepared.

Final decisions as to which alternative to implement and which installations will see reductions or unit realignments have not yet been made. Those decisions will be made based on mission-related criteria and other factors in light of the information contained in the PEA.

Members of the public can review the PEA and draft FNSI and submit comments on the draft FNSI until Feb. 19. An electronic version of the PEA and draft FNSI will be available for download at: <http://aec.army.mil/usaec/nepa/topics00.html>.

Comments or questions on the PEA should be submitted to: Public Comments USAEC, Attn: IMPA-AE (Army 2020 PEA), 2450 Connell Road, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-7664, or emailed to: [USARMY.JBSA.AEC.MBX@mail.mil](mailto:USARMY.JBSA.AEC.MBX@mail.mil).

For questions or additional information about this PEA, please call (210) 466-1590 or email [USARMY.JBSA.AEC.MBX@mail.mil](mailto:USARMY.JBSA.AEC.MBX@mail.mil).

## Well-baby doctor visits: Why they're so important

**Shari Lopatin**  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

You've missed your baby's scheduled well-baby doctor exam; should you be concerned? Your baby isn't sick, so it's not that important ... is it?

Because babies grow so quickly, regular well-baby doctor visits help keep them happy and healthy. Wellness visits start two days after discharge from the hospital and should continue on the following schedule: two weeks old, then four, six, nine, 12, 15, and 18-months old.

These regular visits allow the pediatrician or nurse practitioner to check your baby's growth and development. They also give you—as the parent—important information about what to expect as your child

grows up. Identifying any growth or development issues early helps your child get additional specialty care if needed.

During a well-baby visit, your child will also receive any vaccinations that are due. Vaccinations are a big part of protecting your child from disease. If your baby isn't vaccinated, these diseases could make your child very sick, or even cause death.

Make the most during your regular well-baby visits. Write down any questions or concerns you may have about your child's development and bring them with you. This way you won't forget to ask the provider during the exam.

Well-baby visits are a Tricare-covered benefit with no authorizations, cost-shares, co-payments, or deductibles for those eligible.



(U.S. Army photo illustration)

are those sites that could experience a change in Soldiers and civilians that exceeds at total of plus or minus 1,000 military personnel. Sites considered in the PEA include: U.S. Army Garrison Fort Wainwright, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Campbell, Ky.; Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Drum, N.Y.; Fort Gordon, Ga.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Irwin, Calif.; ; Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.;

either alternative associated with the proposed action, with the exception of socioeconomic impacts.

Socioeconomic impacts are of particular concern to the Army because they affect communities around Army installations. Therefore, the PEA has a comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic impacts to inform the decision makers and communities. Impacts could include reduced employment, income, regional population, and sales

# ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

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The ALASKA POST - Home of the Arctic Warriors

# Dignity and Respect

**Maj. Gen. Michael X. Garrett,**  
U.S. Army Alaska Commanding General

When I look across our formation, I'm impressed with the courage and quality of our young men and women. Only about two percent of Americans are willing and qualified to wear a military uniform and every one of us serving here in the Last Frontier are among those few noble volunteers. I think of all that our Soldiers had to resist and accomplish just to be eligible to serve in our ranks. I have a son in high school and a daughter in college. I know the difficulties our youth face to overcome peer pressure and the resolve it takes to maintain their morals.

Only 25 percent of Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 years old are even qualified to join. Our Army doesn't accept criminals, addicts, the obese or the uneducated. Every one of us should recognize this when we look to our left and our right and know that every Soldier we see is exceptional, especially when compared to their civilian contemporaries.

That is why I am often so devastated when I read reports or observe troops not affording their battle buddies the appropriate degree of dignity and respect. It is a true travesty when Soldiers hurt other Soldiers with their words or actions. As an Army, we are only as good as those who choose to serve and we must all encourage each other to be the best warriors and professionals possible. Yet too often, Soldiers who are seen as different are ridiculed. This should offend every one of us.

I have witnessed a direct connection between how Soldiers are treated and how they perform their duties. Our Army has been defending the nation against tyranny since 1776. Soldiers carry the banner of freedom and offer their lives to protect the values and principles which have made America great. It's absolutely imperative we recognize that how our warriors are treated affects how they perform when closing with, engaging and killing the enemy. By showing the proper dignity and respect to every Soldier we interact with, we are helping our Army to be as prepared as possible to fight our nation's wars. No one who feels threatened in our own ranks can be fully focused on the enemy.

Over my career as an officer and commander, I have been given the responsibility of reviewing and recommending punishment for many disciplinary action packets. In most of those cases I was able to identify a lack of dignity and re-



Maj. Gen. Michael X. Garrett, commander of U.S. Army Alaska, speaks to garrison, brigade and battalion command teams from across Alaska about his expectations for their performance while attending the Cold Weather Orientation Course. (Capt. Richard Packer, US Army Alaska Public Affairs)

spect for others or self as a root issue for the infraction. Hazing, sexual harassment, drug use, excessive drinking and even being overweight or failing at PT can show a lack of dignity in self and respect for others and our profession.

All Soldiers, especially leaders, must be aware of these situations in their formations and take the appropriate actions to prevent any Soldier from being hazed because they are unique. Our Army has transformed over many decades into the most diverse large organization in the nation. We should be celebrating our diversity rather than alienating those who are different.

When it comes to treating others

with dignity and respect, there are no exceptions. Leaders must influence the climate in their commands by setting the pattern for others to emulate. This is accomplished by personally modeling the appropriate treatment of Soldiers. Persecution of any Soldier for any reason can ruin the fabric of a unit and must be eradicated.

Building bonds of reliance and learning to operate cohesively as a team are indicators of a unit that focuses on dignity and respect. These traits are vital in forming units that will persevere and thrive in the most difficult conditions and under the most trying situations. Ultimately, our profession is about fighting and

winning. Accomplishing these goals should be paramount in every Soldier's mind and actions.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my thoughts on dignity and respect. I am honored to lead you and I promise to give you my absolute best every single day. In return, I expect every Arctic Warrior to show the proper dignity and respect to our profession by being the absolutely best Soldier possible. Anything less is an insult to our Army and the nation we serve. I am extremely proud of each of you for your decision to serve in our ranks and hope that it is as personally fulfilling for you as it has always been for me.

Arctic Warrior! Arctic Tough!

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## The Harbaugh brothers meet in the Har-bowl: That's what I'm talking about

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

National Football League teams have played 251 games this season and now it all comes down to one. Although Super Bowl XLVII will feature two teams of men battling for the ultimate prize, the underlying story remains.

There are two brothers in the NFL who are head coaches. Jim Harbaugh, who leads the National Football Conference champion San Francisco 49ers, and John, who is the head coach for the American Football Conference champion Baltimore Ravens, will meet on opposite sidelines in New Orleans, Feb. 3. This is the first time in NFL history such a phenomenon has happened.

Older brother John, by exactly 15 months, took his determined Baltimore Ravens team to play the red-hot New England Patriots Sunday. The Ravens

defense controlled the Patriots ground game and kept a fairly tight rein on New England all-pro quarterback Tom Brady. In a 28-24 loss, Brady threw 54 passes, completed 28 for 320 yards and threw two interceptions. Baltimore quarterback Joe Flacco tossed three touchdown passes in the second half and claimed most valuable player honors.

All-pro linebacker Ray Lewis, who announced his retirement at the end of the regular season, will play his final game at the Superdome in New Orleans. Lewis was the MVP of that game when the Ravens claimed victory in 2001.

In the National Football Conference, the top-seeded Atlanta Falcons opened the game on fire dominating the first half with a 17-0 lead. San Francisco rallied in the second half when the 49ers offense took charge. Niners quarterback

Colin Kaepernick dissected the birds with a combination of precision passes, along with some punishing rushing by San Fran running back Frank Gore. Kaepernick threw for 233 yards and a TD, while Gore tallied 90 yards on the ground and two touchdowns.

Once again, there is proof as to why they play the games. Of course in such a tight match-up with powerhouse teams, the advantage always goes to the home squad. In this instance, the visiting teams came away victorious.

Whether your team made it or not, it's bound to be an exciting Super Bowl with lots of story lines to keep it interesting. So now that we know, please get involved for the fun of it. Send the Alaska Post a picture of you and yours dressed in your team's colors and make a prediction. Email them to [allen.lshaw6.civ@mail.mil](mailto:allen.lshaw6.civ@mail.mil).

As for your regular Fort Wainwright prognosticators, A-Team has tried to remain cool, take each week in stride and let the chips fall, but baby, I picked the winners last week and it has put me over the top. I am the champion this year and that's what I'm talking about. A-Team is sitting on 169 wins, followed by the Jones Bros with 161; they chose the home teams this week. Brain did the same but finished third, tied with Bear who chose San Francisco. Bro-Brose Salsa also picked the conference winners and bumped their wins to 158. Tate was next with 156 and Urbi, who also did one better with the 49er victory, finished with 137 wins.

Since A-Team has a solid lock on top-dog, the fight for second comes down to the Jones Bros, Brain and Bear. Pick wisely my and stay thirsty my friends. I love it when a plan comes together.

## Westphal: Army under secretary visits Alaska

Continued from page 1

training areas courtesy of 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment.

Westphal gave a press conference after his tour, addressing such topics as downsizing, cutbacks and how the restructuring of the Army will affect Soldiers, civilians and Families across the globe and in Alaska.

"Alaska is an important venue to the Pacific," he said. "I think we have proven that in regards to our Stryker brigades here on [Fort] Wainwright.

Westphal noted the importance of Alaska's large training areas.

"We have nothing as significant as that in other parts of the Pacific outside of [the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.], so that's a very, very important asset to all our forces, particularly to our Army.

"We have no plans to shut anything down in the state of Alaska," Westphal said.

The under secretary commented on the training he observed at the NWTC.

"I got a chance to meet with some of the Soldiers who were doing their training [at

the Cold Weather Leaders Course]. An amazing set of Soldiers ... and these Soldiers, some from southern states, were loving being here, enjoying the training that they've gone through and the training that they've now got to offer to other younger Soldiers," Westphal said.

One of the objectives of Westphal's visit was to help convey the Army's appreciation for the service and sacrifice of Soldiers, Family members, and the Department of the Army civilian workforce.

"We have seen over the last 10 years what our Soldiers are willing and capable of doing and most importantly, what they are ready to do in the way of sacrifice for their country," Westphal said. "Every Soldier took those engagements seriously and every Family member supported it.

"Our country owes them a tremendous debt of gratitude, because without them we could not be the country we are," he said.

For more images of Dr. Westphal's visit see: <http://www.flicker.com/photos/under-secarmy-pao/sets/>.

## Ice-Fog training exercise



(Courtesy photo)

Fort Wainwright will hold a training exercise, Ice-Fog 01-13, from Jan. 28 to Feb. 1. The purpose of this exercise is to test the capabilities of emergency responders and other agencies to prepare for the possibilities of a real-life crisis on Fort Wainwright.

Other agencies, including the City of Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star Borough, City of North Pole, Alaska Division of Forestry, and Bureau of Land Management will also be involved in the exercise. Those who visit or work and live on Fort Wainwright may see emergency vehicles responding or experience access control point restrictions such as delays. They may also hear sounds or messages on the giant voice system.

Exercise updates will be shared on the installation's official, public Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/FortWainwrightPAO](http://www.facebook.com/FortWainwrightPAO). The installation's public safety messages are available on [Nixle.com](http://Nixle.com). The subscriber service offers text and email alerts. The post's zip code, 99703, is required.

## What is the Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Division?

Vicki Madick, Environmental Support Specialist  
Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Division

The Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division is where work on many aspects of the environment happens. We provide support to the Soldier, the installation and the community.

The Environmental Division is located in building 3023. Not only does the office help manage Fort Wainwright land, which includes the Tanana Flats Train-

ing Area and the Yukon Training Area, we also have staff at the Donnelly Training Area, and can provide information concerning all of Fort Wainwright's 1.6 million acres.

The office is made up of the Compliance and Conservation Branches. The Compliance Branch manages several programs aimed at protecting Fort Wainwright's natural environment. Some examples include handling of hazardous waste, spills and spill response, air quality, storm water, solid waste and Fort Wainwright's landfill, and the Restoration Program. The National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA is also part of this branch and is responsible for promoting the enhancement of the environment and making sure Army leaders take the environment into consideration when making a decision.

The Conservation Branch manages Installation Cultural Resources archeology and architectural history of Fort Wainwright land and buildings. Natural Resources also falls under this branch, including forestry, wetlands, wildlife and recreation on post lands. Here at the Environmental Division you can ob-

tain a Recreational Access Permit, which allows you to recreate on Army land, including hunting, trapping, snowmachining, ATV-riding, hiking, fishing and berry picking. You can also purchase a firewood permit which allows you to harvest firewood in designated areas. Bea-baiting permits and registering your trapline on Fort Wainwright land are completed here. The Cultural Resources department offers free historical booklets and pamphlets on the history of Ladd Field and Fort Wainwright.

The Native Liaison Officer is also located in the Environmental Division, providing support to the garrison commander, installation and community. Specific supporting actions include attending community meetings and newcomers briefings.

If you are looking for additional information, the Environmental website is a great resource at [www.wainwright.army.mil/env/](http://www.wainwright.army.mil/env/).

Feel free to stop in and see what we are all about. We are open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., located in building 3023 on the corner of Engineer Place and Neely Road.

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# Alaska wildlife update – avoiding dangerous encounters with moose

**Aleya Brinkman**, DPW Environmental Division Wildlife Biologist, US Army Garrison Fort Wainwright, Alaska

Almost every Alaskan has a story about coming face-to-face with a moose. We trade these tales enthusiastically but more than a few are harrowing escapes from close encounters. For those worst-case scenarios seared into the collective memory, we think to ourselves, what would we have done? For that matter, what would you do? Do you know how to respond?

Moose are a part of life on Fort Wainwright. They seek out young willow and aspen trees along the banks of the Chena River, burned areas, roadway ditches, airfields, housing units and recreational trails. Moose are also crepuscular, or most active at twilight, which coincides with the morning commute and the evening ski at Birch Hill. They like our landscaping, the occasional Halloween pumpkin and the cabbage patch. On Fort Wainwright, encounters with moose are inevitable.

While the greatest threat comes from vehicle collisions, to stay safe and avoid dangerous face-to-face encounters with moose, it's important to understand something about their behavior, the warning signs and how to protect yourself if you are charged. Encountering a moose may not weigh as heavily on the mind as running into a grizzly bear, but there are major differences in how we should react to predators versus prey.

Alaskan moose (*Alces alces gigas*) are the largest moose in the world. Every May, cows give birth to a thirty-pound calf or two. The twinning rate, or percentage of cows that have twins, is an indication of population health. The more food available, the greater the chance of multiples. By winter, a calf will have grown to 10 times its original size. Calves remain with their mothers throughout the winter but only about 50 percent will survive their first year of life. By spring, a yearling is well on its way to becoming an 800 to 1,600-pound adult moose.

Every year, face-to-face encounters with these exceptionally large animals probably number in the hundreds. Unlike vehicle collisions, direct encounters are difficult to quantify because many go unreported. However, it's reasonable to assume these happen quite frequently.

So, here's the scenario: While on an evening ski after work, you come over a small rise in the trail and see a moose not 50 feet ahead browsing on some brush. It's twice the distance to ski back the way you came and getting dark quickly. Do you, a) stop, wave your arms and shout at the moose until he moves off the trail, b) keep skiing quietly by and hope he doesn't notice, c) retreat slowly and ski



While watching moose it is better to do from a distance as they can be dangerous creatures. (File photo by Brian Schlumbohm/Fort Wainwright PAO)

back the way you came or d) command your dog to "get em?"

If your answer was "c," you avoided a potentially dangerous encounter with a moose. A majority of the time moose move out of an area when people enter. However, moose that are surprised can react quickly. If a moose's hackles are raised, ears laid flat and its head lowered, watch out! These are signs that a moose is ready to charge. Charging moose can trample, kick and stomp humans, resulting in serious injuries and in rare cases, death.

If you frequently recreate outdoors, you have a greater chance of encountering moose. Dog-walkers, cross-country skiers, nature photographers and soldiers engaging in physical training should be on guard when in moose habitat. Remember these tips to stay safe:

- When moose are present, main-

tain a distance of at least 200 feet. Pay attention to the nearest escape cover. Monitor the moose's body posture and don't approach under any condition.

- Never get between a cow and a calf. Cows are very protective of their calves. Always assume there are two animals and you can't see one of them.

- Keep your dog under control. Moose perceive dogs much the same way they do wolves, a natural predator of their young. A barking dog can often escalate the situation.

- If charged, get out of the way, fast! Attempt to put a tree between you and the moose. This is different than advice given in bear encounters. Running invokes predatory behavior in bears and wolves but a moose is not a predator. Running from a moose will often break off the charge because you will cease to be

perceived as a threat.

- Be aware there are certain times of year when extra care is necessary. During calving season cows are very defensive of newborn calves. Bull moose are more aggressive during the fall mating season, or rut. And as winter takes its course, moose often become nutritionally-stressed from lack of food. These animals can act more unpredictably than others. Moose can also become irritable on exceptionally hot days.

- While Alaska offers many opportunities to photograph moose in their natural surroundings, be sure to do so either from a vehicle or a safe distance.

Though following these guidelines is not a guarantee, it will reduce the chance that an encounter with a moose will turn into a dangerous attack.

## Open for business



Capt. James Berreth, with Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army Alaska and Lt. Col. Robert Eriksen, garrison chief of staff, cut the ribbon at the opening of Fort Wainwright's Tax Center, Wednesday. The Tax Center, now open for business, is located in building 1051, Suite 9. For more information call 353-2613. (Photo by Brian Schlumbohm/Fort Wainwright PAO)

Available to GCI Cable subscribers on post

**CHANNEL 5**

**WELCOME**  
To the Fort Wainwright  
**Command Channel**  
To Submit information and ideas  
to the Command Channel.  
Call: 353-6779  
E-mail: brian.w.schlumbohm@us.army.mil

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Community Events

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AK POST/AK POST  
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13406091

MARKET BASKET INC.

**Friday – 25th**

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 9:15 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137.

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 10:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137.

**COSMIC BOWLING**, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-4137.

**ALYESKA SKI/SNOWBOARD ADVENTURE**, three days, Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050. Cost is \$200. Call 361-6349.

**STORY HOUR & CRAFTS: THOMAS CRAPPER'S REENACTMENT**, 4 p.m., library, building 3700. No cost. Call 353-2642.

**EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM – INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING**, 6 p.m., Melaven PFC, building 3452. Cost is \$3. Call 353-4243.

**Saturday - 26th**

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, 10 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**YOGA FOR ATHLETES**, 11 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS**, 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Cost is \$7. Call 353-7294.

**CHESS CLUB**, 3 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. Call 353-7755.

**COSMIC BOWLING**, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

**WOMEN IN THE WILDERNESS-THE WHITE MOUNTAINS**, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050. Cost is \$75. Call 361-6349.

**HIGH SCHOOL BOWLING PIZZA PARTY**, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Youth Center, building 4109. No cost. Permission slip required. Call 353-5437.

**YOUTH SPONSORSHIP**, 1 p.m., School Support Services at Youth Center, building 4109. No cost. Call 361-9377.

**EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM – BOWLING FUN**, 10 to 11 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3452. Cost is \$3.50 per game, shoes included. Call 353-4243.

**Sunday – 27th**

**CATHOLIC SERVICES**, 8 and 9:30 a.m. Catholic religious education and 11 a.m. Catholic Mass, Southern Lights Chapel, building 4107. Call 353-9825.

**GOSPEL SERVICES**, 1 p.m. Gospel worship service, Bassett Army Community Hospital, third floor conference room, building 4076. Call 353-9825.

**PROTESTANT SERVICES**, 10 a.m., Sunday school and 11 a.m., Sunday Protestant worship Northern Lights Chapel, building 3430. Call 353-9825.

**FAMILY HALF-DAY SKI**, 1 to 3 p.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, building 4050. Cost is \$5. Call 361-6349.

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, noon, Physical Fitness

Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**BOUNCY HUT NIGHT**, 5 to 7:30 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. Ages 4 to 12. Call 353-7755.

**ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS**, 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Cost is \$7. Call 353-7294.

**Monday – 28th**

**CORE TRAINING**, 5:30 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP: COMMUNITY RESOURCES**, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. Call 353-7372.

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 9:15 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 10:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, noon, Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS**, 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Cost is \$7. Call 353-7294.

**Tuesday – 29th**

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, 6:30 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**LEAPS FOR LEARNING**, 10:30 a.m., Murphy Hall Basement, building 1045. Call 353-7713.

**FIT MAMA PREGNANCY GROUP**, 11 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**HOUR OF POWER GROUP STRENGTH CLASS**, noon, Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, 5 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**YOGA FOR ATHLETES**, 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**Wednesday - 30th**

**CORE TRAINING**, 5:30 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 9:15 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137.

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 10:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137.

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, noon, Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**TURBO KICK**, 5 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**Thursday – 31st**

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, 6:30 a.m. Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**HOUR OF POWER GROUP STRENGTH CLASS**, noon, Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, 5 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**YOGA FOR BEGINNERS**, 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS**, 6 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Cost is \$7. Call 353-7294.

**ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP**, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. No cost. Call 353-7372.

**Friday – 1st**

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 9:15 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137

**FAME FITNESS SESSIONS**, 10:45 a.m., Melaven Fitness Center, building 3452. Call 353-9137

**COSMIC BOWLING**, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-4137.

**STORY HOUR & CRAFTS: READ ACROSS ALASKA**, 4 p.m., library, building 3700. No cost. Call 353-2642.

**EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM – INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING**, 6 p.m., Melaven PFC, building 3452. Cost is \$3. Call 353-4243.

**Saturday – 2nd**

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, 10 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**YOGA FOR ATHLETES**, 11 a.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

**ZUMBA FITNESS CLASS**, 1 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Cost is \$7. Call 353-7294.

**CHESS CLUB**, 3 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, building 1044. Call 353-7755.

**COSMIC BOWLING**, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, building 3702. Call 353-2654.

**Sunday – 3rd**

**SUPER BOWL SUNDAY**, 1 p.m., Warrior Zone, building 3205; with NFL cheerleaders, a mascot and pro football player. Open to DoD cardholders age 18 and older. Call 353-1087.

**CATHOLIC SERVICES**, 8 and 9:30 a.m. Catholic religious education and 11 a.m. Catholic Mass, Southern Lights Chapel, building 4107. Call 353-9825.

**GOSPEL SERVICES**, 1 p.m. Gospel worship service, Bassett Army Community Hospital, third floor conference room, building 4076. Call 353-9825.

**PROTESTANT SERVICES**, 10 a.m., Sunday school and 11 a.m., Sunday Protestant worship Northern Lights Chapel, building 3430. Call 353-9825.

**GROUP CYCLING CLASS**, noon, Physical Fitness Center, building 3709. Call 353-7223.

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**OFF LIMITS UPDATE**

At the direction of the commanding officers of Eielson Air Force Base and Fort Wainwright, the following locations are declared off-limits to military personnel assigned or attached to Eielson Air Force Base and Fort Wainwright:

The Smoke Shop, 334 Old Steese Highway  
The Scentz, 1616 Cushman Street  
Mr. Rock and Roll, 1452 Cushman Street  
Mr. Rock and Roll II, 2016 College Road  
Still Smoking Tobacco and Gifts, 516 Old Steese

The Smoke Shop and The Scentz are off limits to military personnel immediately per the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board and are being recommended to be placed permanently off limits to U.S. Army Alaska Command and Eielson's commander. The other establishments remain permanently off limits to Air Force and Army personnel.

**SHARE THE LOVE**

If you are interested in submitting a photo and a Valentine's Day message (10 words or less) to your sweetheart to be printed in the Feb. 15 issue of the Alaska Post: deadline for submissions is Feb. 4. Send photos and appropriate messages to [allen.l.shaw6.civ@mail.mil](mailto:allen.l.shaw6.civ@mail.mil). The Alaska Post has the right to refuse and choose depending on space limitations.

**U.S. CITIZENSHIP**

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services will offer a naturalization information session Feb. 6 at the University of Alaska, Rasmuson Library media classroom from 6 to 7 p.m. This free session is for legal permanent residents and interested naturalization applicants. For more information, contact [clairesa.davis@dhs.gov](mailto:clairesa.davis@dhs.gov) or call 474-4781.

**RETIREE COUNCIL**

The next meeting of the Military Retiree Council will be Feb. 7 at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. For more information about the agenda or the council call 353-2130.

**FUNDRAISERS**

All fundraisers on Fort Wainwright require the approval of the garrison commander. Fundraisers need to be submitted a minimum of two weeks before the planned event. Fundraiser requests are to be submitted to Shenicia Askew at [shenicia.askew.naf@mail.mil](mailto:shenicia.askew.naf@mail.mil) and a copy furnished to Cindy Blum at [cynthia.a.blum.civ@mail.mil](mailto:cynthia.a.blum.civ@mail.mil). For additional information please contact Blum via e-mail or at 353-7633.

**TAX CENTER**

The Tax Center is open. Active-duty, military retirees from all branches and their Family members who have simple personal income tax returns are eligible for tax assistance service. Returns may be filed electronically whether you are getting a refund or you owe taxes. Only taxes prepared by a Fort Wainwright Tax Assistance Center staff member can be electronically filed at the Tax Assistance Center. The Tax Assistance Center is located in building 1051-9 near the law center on the north side of Fort Wainwright. Walk-in customers are welcome, but customers with appointments take priority. For more information or to schedule an appointment call 353-2613.

**DECA SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Defense Commissary Agency Scholarships for Military Children Program is offering scholarships to qualified applicants. Scholarship awards will be based on available funds; however individual awards of at least \$1,500 are anticipated by DECA leaders. If there are no eligible applicants, the funds allotted will be forwarded to another installation. Applications are available through the local commissary or online at [www.militaryscholar.org](http://www.militaryscholar.org) or [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com). Application deadline is Feb. 22. For more information call Loriann McDonald at 353-7310.

**OFFICIAL INFORMATION**

Fort Wainwright's official Facebook page for installation news - like changes to road conditions and reporting status - and events can be found at [www.facebook.com/FortWainwrightPAO](http://www.facebook.com/FortWainwrightPAO). It is also a great place to ask questions and get answers.

**HOCKEY WEEK IN FAIRBANKS**

One of the favorite events for sports-minded Fairbanksans will return in mid-February. Hockey Week in Fairbanks is scheduled for Feb. 15 through 24 and is coordinated by the Fairbanks Hockey Hall of Fame. Hall of Fame president Randy Zarnke said, "We're really excited about the way the event is coming together. There is always something for everyone. We invite the entire community to get involved and join the fun." For more information, contact Randy Zarnke at [itrap2@gci.net](mailto:itrap2@gci.net) or call 452-6857.

**BUCK-A-RIDE**

The Armed Services YMCA Y on Wheels shuttle service provides rides anywhere on post for \$1. Schedule your ride Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., with last pickup at 7:30 p.m. Door-to-door pick-up and delivery. Children 5 and younger ride free. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 353-3733.

**REMOVE ICE, SNOW**

The Fort Wainwright Fire Department would like to remind everyone to please keep fire hydrants visible and accessible during the winter months. Soldiers, Families and civilian employees can help by keeping snow cleared at least three feet around fire hydrants. Please also keep a path clear from the hydrant to the road. This can help firefighters quickly find and use the fire hydrant to fight a fire. Keep sidewalks and entries clear of excess snow. All exit doors, mechanical room doors, sprinkler and standpipe connections should be kept free of snow and ice. Continued diligence will improve the fire department's access to the building and fire suppression systems in the event of a fire or medical emergency. If you have an emergency - police, fire or medical - remember to dial 911. Have a warm and safe winter.

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# Exposing the Northern Lights

Brian Schlumbohm,  
Fort Wainwright PAO

The aurora borealis, or northern lights, are a common sight in Alaska, at least for a few of those who may venture out in the hours of darkness and cold with the luck of timing on their side. Having lived here for years myself, there have been occasions where, awed by the sight of one, I might wake the family or even call a neighbor when an especially good show was happening.

Along with the joy of seeing one, and bitten by the shutter-bug, frequently comes the desire to capture an image to share that experience through photography.

Not having mastered the art or science of photographing the aurora as of yet, I do have a few tips that may help get you within the proverbial, celestial ball park.

A motionless camera, a long exposure and a great aurora are all you need.

First, having a tripod is a must; but even if you don't have one don't let that stop you. Grab a bag of dried beans or rice - that's right, a bag of dry beans or rice placed inside in an extra stocking cap or large tube sock will work great as a camera stabilizer. Setting the bag on any stable surface, such as a car hood, lawn chair or mailbox, anything that won't move or sway during an exposure, will work. Gently seat the camera on the bag, pressing down until it is completely supported by the bag while you are still able to view through the eye piece. It works well in a crunch. I keep a bag of beans under my driver's seat just in case. You never know when a great shot will present itself and tripods take up room.



The changing light intensities from the aurora borealis as it dances across the Alaskan sky make camera settings as ever-changing and fluid as the aurora itself. Note: Shutter speed, 30 seconds; F-stop or aperture, 2.8; ISO set at 400 and lens 10.5 mm. (File photo by Brian Schlumbohm/Fort Wainwright PAO)

It is best if the camera can be manually set. The ability to set shutter speeds, aperture settings, focusing and the ISO settings provides the best results for capturing low-light scenes. Some of the newer automatic cameras have programmed low-light settings which could allow for a successful aurora photo. It wouldn't hurt to give it a try and experiment with a camera's automatic shooting programs.

When shooting the aurora, find an area to shoot from that is out of the direct light from street lights, passing cars or building lights.

Once the camera is securely fixed atop a tripod or safely nestled on a bag of beans, try a starting exposure at 15 seconds, 5.6 f stop (ap-

erture) and an ISO of 320. From that setting, depending on the intensity of the aurora's glow and movement, adjustments can be made to the speed and aperture to brighten or darken the image captured.

Check the LCD screen. If the image is too dark and the aurora doesn't show very well, try a longer exposure (shutter setting) or lower aperture number.

If the image is too light or lacks vivid colors, shorten the exposure time or raise the aperture number. Lastly, if the images are still too dark, the ISO number can be raised up in increments. Note that the higher the ISO number, the "grainier" the images may become.

Every aurora is different in size, intensity, movement and color. Starting out with a basic setting allows quick changes in a timely manner. The northern lights can change slowly and the camera's settings may work for many exposures. Or the intensity of the lights may grow or diminish and exposure settings may have to be changed often.

Reviewing captured images in the LCD viewer will help in determining exposure changes.

A good practice is to have a notebook to jot down observances of the

scene to compare how the images turn out with different camera settings. This will help you better understand what to expect the next time. Also take into consideration that digital cameras save various types of information with image files. Not only time and date, but also information about apertures, shutter speeds, ISOs and other camera settings.

Keep in mind that the aurora happens hundreds of miles above the earth, so where to direct your focus is important. Some of the best aurora shots are made with interesting foregrounds in them: cabins, trees, lakes and even people. It's a hard decision to make on just where to focus in your scene.

Being out with the right equipment, at the right time, and photographing the aurora is to be considered lucky. But as to not always count on luck, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute's aurora activity forecast webpage is an excellent source to gauge when the possibilities are good for an aurora photo opportunity. The web page can be found at [www.gedds.alaska.edu/auroraforecast/](http://www.gedds.alaska.edu/auroraforecast/).

Alaska scenery is a photographer's paradise, even when the lights are out.

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**Fort Wainwright PAO  
website:**

[www.wainwright.mil](http://www.wainwright.mil)

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