

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR

December 4, 2016

Release: 16-068

Invitation for media travel

Alaska National Guard's Operation Santa Claus will deliver to St. Michael

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska National Guard and local community volunteers with Operation Santa Claus will travel to St. Michael to spread Christmas cheer, Dec. 4.

Santa, Mrs. Claus and a team of elves will travel to the Yup'ik Eskimo village on an HC-130 Combat King II aircraft from the Alaska Air National Guard's 211th Rescue Squadron based here.

Operation Santa Claus is an Alaska National Guard annual community outreach program that provides Christmas gifts, books, school supplies, fresh fruit and sundaes to youngsters in rural communities.

Operation Santa Claus began in 1956 in response to a request from St. Mary's Mission for toys for their children. Spring floods and a drought had caused a severely negative impact on fishing and hunting that year and the mission spent all of their money to pay for food to be shipped in. This left no money to buy Christmas gifts for the children. The Anchorage community joined together to donate gifts, and the Alaska Air National Guard transported the goods to St. Mary's, sharing neighborly kindness to the small, remote community.

Throughout the years, Op Santa has visited villages throughout the state and provided Christmas joy to tens of thousands of Alaska's children and adults.

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MEDIA TRAVEL DETAILS:

What: Operation Santa Claus

When: Monday, Dec. 4, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: St. Michael

IMPORTANT: Media interested in going on the flight to St. Michael **must email** mvpublicaffairs@alaska.gov to RSVP **no later than Monday, Nov. 27 at 12pm.**

- A limited number of seats are available. Earlier RSVPs will be given priority.
- Media outlets will be allotted **one slot** on the flight, but RSVP may include up to three alternates.
- Provide: First and last name, title, cell phone number (for delays, cancellations, etc.) and emergency contact name and phone number.
- TV news may provide primary and alternate names for videographers and reporters.
- If seats become available, TV news may have the opportunity to send a two-person team.
- *Name changes may not be made after the RSVP deadline due to the internal flight approval process.*

Please direct questions to Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead, 428-6030.