



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 11, 2018**

018-011

By Sgt. Seth LaCount

## **Engineers conduct ice bridging, chainsaw operations for emergency preparedness**

**Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska** — The Alaskan National Guard has fortified its longstanding relationship with its local population by striving to be ready in the event of a disaster requiring response. Defense Support to Civilian Authorities is an initiative that specifically targets the needs of the State of Alaska in circumstances where emergency relief and community outreach is requested, giving leaders in the Guard guidance on how to maintain readiness to meet those response needs.

As a facet of that mission readiness, specifically focused on route clearance, more than 40 Alaska National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment and the 208th Construction Management Team, a group comprised of more than 13 different occupational specialties in engineering, executed ice bridging and chainsaw operations on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Feb. 10, 2018.

The exercise was part of a drill weekend that provided the Soldiers with hands-on-training, using engineering equipment in cold weather conditions, while utilizing and becoming more familiar with their personal protective equipment and cold weather gear.

“Everybody was operating very safely,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jack Carlson, a construction supervisor and the detachment sergeant for the 207th EUD. “We were augmented by the state safety office for our protective personal equipment. That was the main goal, to demonstrate our ability to mobilize that piece of equipment and to do so safely.”

The operation began with the Soldiers unloading gear near the Bailey bridge that included road signs, warming tents, and most importantly their Hydraulic, Electric, Pneumatic, Petroleum Operated Equipment kits.

The HEPPOE kit comes in a set of 13 different boxes and can work as a power generation unit capable of everything from demolition to rescue capabilities, and comes with multiple tool attachments and crates containing industrial sized water pumps, battery packed Jaws of Life, and hydraulic chain saws.

Soldiers went right to work cutting downed trees in the area adjacent to the bridge and practiced techniques including felling, hanging, bucking and limbing.

-more-

“We have a lot of fun out here,” said Spc. Colton Conant, a 22-year-old Wasilla resident and horizontal construction engineer with the 207th EUD who has served in the unit for two years. “It gets us hands on training so we know how to use each piece of equipment effectively and safely.”

Nearby, Soldiers pumped water from the river and began ice bridging.

“You can think of the exercise as three different missions,” said Carlson. “First, the convoy to the operational site, second the water pumping exercise which demonstrates our ability to ice bridge and then our chain saw operations in response to something like an earthquake where you have downed trees.”

Ice bridging is a method that allows heavy military vehicles to travel over ice, creating a depth safe enough to drive on without breaking through. Typically, ice bridging is conducted on a frozen lake or body of water, water is pumped from the lake and then sprayed over the existing ice with hoses and left to thicken. For training purposes, the Soldiers used the river running under the bridge as their objective crossing.

Additionally during this training 12 Soldiers went through Small Unit Support Vehicle training. The SUSV is a highly mobile, all-terrain vehicle essential for transporting HEPPOE kits across the often treacherous Alaskan landscape. Soldiers conducted convoy operations taking a local route around the job site and trained on the maneuverability of the vehicle.

“The real key for the SUSV is improved mobility for our HEPPOE system. The SUSV allows us to put the kit on the back of a flatbed and take it anywhere, over rock, snow or water,” said Carlson.

The Soldiers utilized the drill training period to crosstrain in both engineering and disaster response capabilities, improving expertise outside of their normal specialties and strengthening the unit’s overall readiness. The unit training supports the Alaska Army National Guard’s initiative to not only be able to respond in the event of a stateside disaster and strengthen its DSCA capabilities, but additionally to apply cold weather training and become arctic subject matter experts.

###

#### **PHOTOS**

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/albums/72157691598706571>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://dvidshub.net/r/nqjl92>

#### **VIDEO**

2. **DVIDS Video link** includes b-roll. <https://dvidshub.net/r/rvucws>

**Photos, next page**



Alaskan National Guard Soldiers with the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment and 208th Construction Management Team set up road signs during an ice bridging operation at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Feb. 10, 2018. “We have a lot of fun out here,” said Colton Conant, a 22-year-old Wasilla resident and horizontal construction engineer with the 207th EUD who has served in the unit for two years. “It gets us hands on, so we know how to use each piece of equipment effectively and safely.” (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/released)



Alaska National Guard Soldiers with the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment and 208th Construction Management Team spray water over the ground and river to thicken and lengthen the ice mass as part of an ice bridging operation at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Feb. 10, 2018. Ice bridging is a method that allows military vehicles to travel over ice that’s at a depth safe enough to drive on, without breaking through. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/released)



Alaska National Guard Soldiers with the 207th Engineer Utility Detachment and 208th Construction Management Team run hoses through an icy river to suck up and use for an ice bridging exercise at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Feb. 10, 2018. “Everybody was operating very safely,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jack Carlson, a construction supervisor and the detachment sergeant for the 207th EUD. “We were augmented by the state safety office in our protective personal equipment. That was the main goal, to demonstrate our ability to mobilize that piece of equipment and to do so safely.” (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Seth LaCount/released)