



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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By Sgt. David Bedard

134th Public Affairs Detachment

## **Aviation operations specialists balance Guard, civilian life**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — When Sgt. Cidjomar Fischer was an active-duty Army cannon crewmember, his job was to hurl 100-pound projectiles from his howitzer section's emplacement to a known point miles away.

The task requires exacting precision, following a checklist, and paying attention to minute details.

Now drilling with the Alaska Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, Fischer's military job as an aviation operations specialist requires him to plan, schedule and track 1-207th Aviation UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from origin to destination.

Fischer's tools of the trade are a mix of old and new. Though he uses a number of web-based programs to schedule and track helicopters, and communicates with aircrew through his compact radio, he still clings to a gridiron dry-erase board to ensure he can keep tabs on transiting Black Hawks despite possible power outages or spotty Wi-Fi.

Because he entered the Alaska Army National Guard as a military occupational specialty reclassification, he was able to attend a transition course at the Western Army National Guard Aviation Training Site, Silverbell Army Heliport, Arizona.

For Pfc. Rosemary Vinoya, the process of becoming an aviation operations specialist was more serpentine.

Vinoya, who hadn't visited any other state besides Alaska before enlisting, attended Basic Combat Training near the end of a hot Southern summer at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

"It was a big culture shock coming from Alaska and going to the South," she said. "Everybody told me I have an accent, and a lot of people didn't believe Alaska is a state. I'd never experienced over 100-degree heat in my life."

Upon graduating BCT, Vinoya attended advanced-individual training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, the mecca of U.S. Army aviation.

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Both Soldiers have civilian aviation backgrounds in a state that has few roads and where lakes oftentimes make for ad hoc airports connecting rural Alaska to faraway population centers.

Vinoya was a load planner, calculating weight and balance for 747 Jumbo Jets before she went to a career college and earned a medical assistant certificate and a job at a dermatology center in Anchorage. She said she plans to use her Army National Guard education benefits to certify as an active-duty Army physician assistant.

Fischer is a supervisor “above the wing” for a major national airline. He is responsible for ticketing, scheduling and coordinating security with the Transportation Security Administration. He said he plans to use his active-duty GI Bill in conjunction with Guard benefits to further his studies, though he doesn't know what direction to go in.

Both Soldiers are traditional Guardsmen who serve one weekend a month and two weeks of annual training. Both are using their military service to set course for educational and career success.

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#### PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/275666/aviation-operations-specialists-balance-guard-civilian-life>



Alaska Army National Guard Pfc. Rosemary Vinoya is an aviation operations specialist with 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment. Vinoya plans to use her education benefits to pursue certification as a physician assistant. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard)