

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR

November 30, 2018

Release: 18-104

Invitation for media travel

Alaska National Guard's Operation Santa Claus will deliver to Gambell

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The Alaska National Guard and local community volunteers with Operation Santa Claus will travel to Gambell to spread Christmas cheer, Nov. 30.

Santa, Mrs. Claus and a team of elves will travel to the Yup'ik Eskimo village on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea via 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 negatively impacted fishing and hunting that year and the mission used their money to purchase food that required shipment to the remote village. This left no funds 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: Friday, Nov. 30, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: Gambell

IMPORTANT: Media interested in going on the flight to Gambell must email mvapublicaffairs@alaska.gov to RSVP *no later than Monday, Nov. 26 at 12pm*.

- A limited number of seats are available.

- Media outlets will be allotted **one slot** on the flight, but RSVP may include up to three alternates.

- **Email RSVP must include: Reporter first and last name, title, cell phone number (for delays or cancellations) and emergency contact name and phone number.**

- If seats become available, TV news may have the opportunity to send a two-person team.

- TV news may provide primary and alternate names for videographers and reporters.

- ***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.