

**Brig. Gen. Torrence Saxe**

*Commissioner & Adjutant General*

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**Alaska National Guard**

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## **Schell takes command of 297th Regional Support Group**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Alaska Army National Guard Lt. Col. Matthew Schell assumed command of the 297th Regional Support Group during a Jan. 25 ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Schell succeeded Col. Peter Mondelli, who couldn't be at the ceremony due to conflicts with his civilian job.

Presiding officer, Brig. Gen. Joseph Streff, Alaska Army National Guard commander, said Mondelli served with distinction as the commander during the past two years.

"He was the first commander of this brigade and created the conditions for the successful unit that it is today," Streff said.

During Mondelli's tenure, most of the group's Soldiers deployed to or trained at locations around the world, including Afghanistan, Mongolia, Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, Jordan, Korea, Kuwait and the Virgin Islands.

"Colonel Mondelli implemented an aggressive plan to increase the readiness of the units in the RSG," Streff said. "It is clear by looking at the metrics that every subordinate unit in the RSG formation has made gains in their preparation to deploy to a theater of war or respond to a state emergency."

Streff said Schell is well suited to command the group.

"Lieutenant Colonel Schell comes to the unit with a considerable range of experience, which will complement the various missions of the RSG," Streff said.

Schell was commissioned in the Regular Army as an aviation officer after graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, in 1994. After attending the U.S. Army Aviation Officer Basic Course, Schell flew the EH-60 Quickfix heliborne electronic warfare helicopter and medical evacuation UH-60 Black Hawks, serving as a platoon leader for both types.

Transitioning to the Alaska Army National Guard in 2004, Schell commanded E Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, before eventually commanding 1-207th Aviation. He deployed to Bosnia in 1998 for Operation Joint Forge, Iraq in 2007 for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and to Kosovo in 2009 for Operation Enduring Freedom.

Schell's last job before taking command was Alaska Army National Guard deputy G-3.

During his remarks, Schell outlined his top three priorities as challenging training, discipline and fitness.

In terms of challenging training, Schell said units will best grow through examining mistakes made during realistic exercises.

"We won't aim low and hit every time," he said. "We'll aim high, and miss and learn."

In addition to ensuring a culture of safety, Schell said discipline undergirds the Army Values.

"Discipline is required for us to live our values," he said. "The discipline to live your values is called integrity, and it's essential in an organization built on character."

Schell said holistic fitness includes rest, nutrition, physical fitness, spiritual fitness and healthy relationships.

"Individual fitness gives us the stamina to meet the unpredictable worldwide demands of our profession," he said.

Schell summarized the organizational investment of pursuing all three of his priorities.

"Here's the magic: these three things don't cost anything," he said. "They don't require genius or more resources or more hours in the day. They just require our commitment, and I believe they are the building blocks of a solid foundation of readiness."

Streff expressed his trust in Schell's leadership.

"Lieutenant Colonel Schell has built strong and capable teams wherever he was assigned, and I have no doubt he will bring great ideas and enthusiasm to the RSG," Streff said. "All of the Soldiers in the unit can feel confident that they're getting an outstanding new commander."

Schell concluded by sharing his feelings about taking command.

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"I'm proud to be part of this team, and I look forward to learning, growing and engaging the mission with each of you," he said.

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## PHOTOS

**DVIDS link** <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/308383/schell-takes-command-297th-regional-support-group>



Alaska Army National Guard Lt. Col. Matthew Schell accepts the 297th Regional Support Group colors from Brig. Gen. Joseph Streff, Alaska Army National Guard commander, during the group's Jan. 26, 2019, assumption-of-command ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Schell succeeded Col. Peter Mondelli during the ceremony. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/released)