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**Secretary of Defense**

- [Speeches](#)
- [Travels](#)
- [Messages](#)
- [Biography](#)
- [Other Top Leaders](#)

**Press**

- [Today in DoD](#)
- [News Releases](#)
- [Press Advisories](#)
- [Transcripts](#)
- [Audio Clips](#)

**Photos**

- [Imagery Archive](#)
- [Highlights](#)
- [Photo Essays](#)
- [Week in Photos](#)

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- [Post 9/11 GI Bill Transferability](#)
- [Community Relations](#)
- [Stars & Stripes](#)
- [Recovery Act](#)
- [Site Map](#)

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**National Guard, Coast Guard Rescue Plane Crash Victims**

By Air Force Maj. Guy Hayes  
Alaska National Guard

CAMP DENALI, Alaska, Aug. 11, 2010 – The Alaska Air National Guard and the Coast Guard rescued four people from a crash of a single-engine float plane 17-miles north of Dillingham, Alaska, the night of Aug. 9.

[Video](#)

The plane, a de Havilland Otter, was carrying former U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens and eight others when it crashed into a mountainside en route to the Nushagak River for a fishing trip. Stevens was killed in the crash.

The Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were contacted and deployed to the scene, but were unable to make it to the crash site because of inclement weather. The survivors spent the night at the wreckage, but were assisted by four medical personnel who were flown to the site by local helicopter pilots before the weather made it impossible for Guard assets to get to the scene.

Yesterday morning, the weather cleared enough for an Alaska Air National Guard HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter carrying Alaska Air National Guard pararescuemen Senior Master Sgt. Jonathan Davis and Tech. Sgt. Kristofer Abel to the crash site to administer medical assistance.

A Coast Guard C-130 was provided overhead communication support and was available to take victims in need of further medical treatment to Anchorage once they were transported to Dillingham.

Poor weather remained a factor, with less than a quarter-mile visibility at the crash site and less than a 100-foot ceiling in the area, but the Alaska National Guard and Coast Guard were able to transport the four survivors -- Sean O'Keefe, Kevin O'Keefe, Jim Morhard and William "Willy" Phillips Jr. -- to Dillingham.

The Alaska Air National Guard arrived in Dillingham first, with two critical patients onboard, and was met by medical personnel from the Dillingham Hospital.

The Coast Guard HH-60 Jay Hawk brought the two other patients to Dillingham. Three of the survivors were transloaded onto a Coast Guard C-130 and brought to Anchorage, while the fourth survivor was brought to Anchorage on a civilian air ambulance flight.

"I have tremendous respect for our service men and women, the emergency first responders and their ability to perform heroically in the most trying of times," said Army Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "The Alaska National Guard in a joint effort with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Public Safety were extremely resilient and professional in their efforts to rescue the remaining survivors of the plane crash and getting them to medical attention as quickly as possible."

The Alaska Air National Guard and Coast Guard were credited with four saves for this mission.

Meanwhile, the Alaska Air National Guard is transporting the remaining two individuals involved in an Aug. 8 aircraft accident on Knik Glacier to Mat-Su Regional Hospital. Three others were evacuated to a hospital yesterday.

Officials at the 11th Rescue Coordination Center said an Alaska Air National Guard HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter was able to land on the glacier and rescue the final two plane crash victims and the three Alaska Army National Guardsmen who were involved in a Black Hawk helicopter accident during a rescue effort yesterday.

An Alaska Air National Guard combat rescue officer and three Alaska Air National Guard pararescuemen remain on the glacier.

**Related Sites:**

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There are no comments.

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Black History Month Observance  
 Officials at the Pentagon attended a Black History Month event honoring African Americans who served in the Korean War.

1-3 of 11

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- [Home](#)
- [Today in DOD](#)
- [About DOD](#)
  - [Leaders](#)
  - [Organization](#)
  - [Mission](#)
  - [History](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Available jobs with DOD](#)
- [Top Issues](#)
  - [Afghanistan](#)
  - [Iraq](#)
  - [Warrior Care](#)
- [News](#)
  - [Today in DOD](#)
  - [News Releases](#)
  - [News Transcripts](#)

- [Press Advisories](#)
- [Speeches](#)
- [Casualty Status](#)
- [Casualty Releases](#)
  - [Contracts](#)
  - [AFPS Articles](#)
  - [Audio Clips](#)
  - [Special Reports](#)
- [Photos/Videos](#)
  - [The Pentagon Channel](#)
  - [Lead Photo Archive](#)
  - [Photo Essays](#)
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    - [Videos](#)
    - [News Photos](#)
    - [DOD/Military Seals](#)
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  - [News](#)
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