

## Alaska Army National Guard promotes first woman to rank of general

By Sgt. Edward Eagerton  
Alaska National Guard

CAMP DENALI, Alaska (9/13/13) - The Alaska Army National Guard is promoting Col. Catherine F. Jorgensen to the rank of Brigadier General at a ceremony today.

She becomes the first woman to be promoted to the rank of general within the history of Alaska Army National Guard.

This indicates and validates that any member of the Alaska Army National Guard can achieve anything that they set out to do if the organization and they do it as a team," said Brig. Gen. Leon M. Bridges, the assistant adjutant general of the Alaska Army National Guard.

Achieving the rank of brigadier general is no small feat, said Bridges.

"It is a huge accomplishment," Bridges said. "If you take a corps of officers who commission in any given year, if you take 100 of them, by the time you add all the filters and funnels in an Army career, typically only one or two will ever pin on a star."

Jorgensen received her commission in 1985, after graduating as a Distinguished Military Graduate from the Reserve Officer Training Program at the University of Alabama, where she earned a Bachelors of Science degree.

Her active-duty career spanned assignments at duty stations including Nellingen, Germany; Fort Bragg, N.C., and Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah. Jorgensen's final active-duty assignment was at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1993.

In 1996, Jorgensen left the active-duty Army, and served in the Army Reserves in Maryland. Before switching to the Army National Guard, she also served with an engineer brigade out of Mississippi, with a duty assignment in Hedelberg, Germany.

In September of 2000, Jorgensen joined the Alaska Army National Guard. Her assignments with the Alaska National Guard include Military Personnel Officer, Assistant Chief of Staff, Deputy Human Resource Officer, and Brigade Commander.

Through the course of her career, Jorgensen has been recognized for her service with many awards and decorations including multiple Meritorious Service Medals, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, multiple Army Commendation Medals, the Army Achievement Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

"All the tasks and roles and missions and levels of achievement along the way have to be consistent and of the highest quality in order to be eligible," said Bridges. "Let alone, they have to make it through all the gates of the small number of slots that there are available for a general officer in the Guard. If you put it down into the state level where you only have a couple of slots, it makes it that much tougher to get there. So she's been fully successful in all of those categories and getting through all of those gates."



Catherine Jorgensen today becomes the Alaska National Guard's first female brigadier general. (Courtesy photo)

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