

LOCKLEED NEWS

A Base in Minnesota Is the New Home of Coast Guard Cold Weather Training

Military Families Magazine | By Elizabeth Aslakson



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan McManus, a student in the Cold Water Ice Diving (CWID) course, treads water on Ferrell Lake, located on Camp Ripley, Feb. 3, 2022. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jessica Fontenette)

The Coast Guard's Cold Water Ice Diving (CWID) joint-service course will now occur in the Arctic environment of Camp Ripley, Minnesota.

"Because if you can operate in Minnesota in the dead of winter — you can operate anywhere," said Chief Warrant Officer Sean Eversole, a Coast Guard instructor, regarding the high-risk training held at the National Guard facility for the first time earlier this year.

Though the Department of Defense recently emphasized its Arctic Strategy because of threats from Russia and China, CWID exercises are not new for the military.

CWID has occurred for decades among the service branches, but when a fatal accident involving two divers

occurred in 2006, the Coast Guard took charge of the training, explained Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Bredesen, lead CWID instructor.

Not only has the Coast Guard trained divers since World War II, but divers have also honed their CWID skills for rescue missions and defending America's borders in the most severe conditions. In addition, they protect maritime environments in extreme climates, like supporting summer rotations to the McMurdo Station, a research station in Antarctica.

At first, bases in Seattle, Washington, and British Columbia hosted CWID, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced the divers to look elsewhere. Camp Ripley met the criteria. In fact, the Minnesota grounds proved so ideal, they will now continue to host CWID, Eversole and Bredesen both said.

The instructors also explained that because many divers are stationed in warmer climates, such as the USCG Special Missions Training Center at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, or the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City, Florida, CWID training is a necessity for preparedness.

The 12 Coast Guardsmen, two Navy divers and two Army divers participating this year also followed "a crawl, walk, run" approach to allow for acclimation, according to Bredesen.

First, divers familiarized themselves with equipment outfitted for the extreme temperatures and practiced emergency procedures in a controlled dive tank near the facility at the Minnesota School of Diving Inc. in Brainerd.

Next, students went on to Ripley's frozen Ferrell Lake, where they learned to assess ice thickness, determine if it's safe



to work on and cut entry and exit holes.

Divers then set up tents as they operated in and out of 35-degree water with air temperatures dipping below 40 degrees with wind chills. Even with temperatures above freezing in the enclosed space, the team had to clear ice from the entry and exit holes every hour.

After equipment divers double-checked equipment for safety, they submerged for 20 minutes at a time so they could adapt to maneuvering under the ice in multiple layers.

In subsequent dives, students advanced to performing tasks that tested dexterity and fine motor skills, such as using wrenches to remove nuts from bolts before egressing through an emergency hole, with the high risk of becoming lost under the ice and murky waters.

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Casey Connors, a student, detailed the experience. He described dressing in a layering system including thermal wear, wool socks, beanies and gloves before getting into a dry suit and scuba gear, creating the tightest sealing system possible.

Connor explained what it was like being squeezed by the change of pressure when submerged underwater in the frigid lake.

"It's scary and beautiful at the same time," he said, especially "when diving under the ice in Minnesota, knowing there's 15 inches of ice above you ... the view is like looking through a glass from underwater."

He reiterated that equipment is more prone to failure in extreme temperatures, including when they experienced an 80-degree change from one day to the next during the course.

But CWID training teaches students "how to deal with potential failures and how not to panic," he stated, and the "point of the course is to also build divers' confidence."

Connor also emphasized that despite the inherent dangers of diving and participating in hazardous training, everyone wants the opportunity to dive.

"Even if it doesn't sound like the greatest job, everyone raises their hand," he said.

The reason being, the camaraderie between the tight-knit group of 60 divers makes "being part of the Coast Guard dive family one of the greatest jobs you can get in this world," he added.

USA Cares Top Golf Fundrasier

LockLeed was honored to be the Title Sponsor for this great event on May 25th. USA Cares was launched through a grassroots partnership between WAVE-3 TV in Louisville, KY, the Mid-South Division of Kroger Food Stores, and the Association of the United States Army Fort Knox Chapter. The organization was dubbed Kentuckiana Cares, with a goal to raise funds to help military families in financial crises through the sale of "Support Our Troops" yard signs. In October 2003, in response to the increasing number of requests for assistance, Kentuckiana Cares evolved into what is now USA Cares, a 501(c)(3) national non-profit organization that has assisted thousands of veterans and military families facing hardships related to service.



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3 Things to Remember About Memorial Day

1 | Memorial Day began as a response to the Civil War.

Memorial Day was a response to the unprecedented carnage of the Civil War. The tremendous loss of life and its effect on communities led to several spontaneous commemorations of the dead.

In 1864, women from Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, put flowers on the graves of their fallen soldiers from the just-fought Battle of Gettysburg. The next year, a group of women decorated the graves of soldiers buried in a Vicksburg, Mississippi, cemetery.

Two years later, women from Columbus, Mississippi, laid flowers on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers. In the same month, in Carbondale, Illinois, 219 Civil War veterans marched through town to Woodlawn Cemetery in memory of the fallen, where Union hero Major General John A. Logan delivered the principal address. The ceremony gave Carbondale its claim to the first organized, community-wide Memorial Day observance.

Waterloo, New York, began holding an annual community service on May 5, 1866. Although many towns claimed the title, it was Waterloo that won congressional recognition as the "Birthplace of Memorial Day."

2 | Major General John A. Logan made Memorial Day official.

General Logan, the speaker at the Carbondale gathering, was also commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans. On May 5, 1868, he issued General Order No. 11, which set aside May 30, 1868, "for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion."

The orders expressed hope that the observance would be "kept up from year to year while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades."

3 | Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day.

The holiday was long known as Decoration Day thanks to the practice of decorating graves with flowers, wreaths, and flags. The name "Memorial Day" goes back to 1882, but the older name didn't completely disappear until after World War II. It wasn't until 1967 that federal law declared "Memorial Day" the official name.

Every Third Saturday Opens New Veterans Center

The offices and coffee shop are a joint effort between Every Third Saturday and The Hands Foundation and a culmination of years of development. The offices will give Veterans in need and their families a place to go if they need assistance with the many problems that can arise from a return to civilian life. It will also be a place to gather with other Veterans to share their experiences. It will also be a permanent site for homeless Veterans to get the supplies they need. To learn more please visit everythirdsaturday.com or find them on Facebook.

Every Third Saturday | 4303 54th Street East | Minneapolis, MN

