

# STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 73, No. 192 ©SS 2015

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)  
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

# WORLD

TOP  
OF  
THE

## It is a desolate wonder.

You approach Thule Air Base by banking over Baffin Bay. The lucky ones on the right side of the aircraft look down at the icebergs, lonely in September but increasing in number as the four-month nighttime of winter closes in. On the ground, the pristine becomes practical: a long runway from bygone missions, the hangars and support buildings at the entrance to America's northernmost base and military community. Here at Thule Air Base in northern Greenland, 140 airmen, along with 500 Danish and Greenlandic contractors, watch polar-orbiting satellites, look for ballistic missile launches and support almost anything that happens north of the Arctic Circle. Stars and Stripes visited to find out about the mission and the people who get the privilege of spending a year on this remote — and remotely understood — assignment.

Pages 16-20

**TRUE NORTH**  
At Thule: vigilance,  
community » Page 16

**COLD WAR, COLD PEACE**  
For airmen, extreme conditions  
part of the landscape » Page 17

**EYES ON THE SKY**  
Keeping watch for missiles  
'launched in anger' » Page 18

**ONLINE**  
Interactive map, videos  
and photos » [stripes.com/go/thule](http://stripes.com/go/thule)



## Afghan officials: Islamic State group operating in south

By **LYNNE O'DONNELL**  
*The Associated Press*

CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan — Afghan officials confirmed for the first time Monday that the extremist Islamic State group is active in the south, recruiting fighters, flying black flags and, according to some sources, even battling Taliban militants.

The sources, including an Afghan general and a provincial governor, said a man identified as Mullah Abdul Rauf was actively recruiting fighters for the group, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq.

Gen. Mahmood Khan, the deputy commander of the army's 215 Corps, said that within the past week residents of a number of

districts in the southern Helmand province have said Rauf's representatives are fanning out to recruit people.

"A number of tribal leaders, jihadi commanders and some ulema (religious council members) and other people have contacted me to tell me that Mullah Rauf had contacted them and invited them to join him," Khan

said.

But he said the Taliban, which are active across Helmand and controls some districts, has warned people not to contact Rauf.

"People are saying that he has raised black flags and even has tried to bring down white Taliban flags in some areas," said Saifulah Sanginwal, a tribal leader in Sangin district. "There are re-

ports that 19 or 20 people have been killed" in fighting between the Taliban and the Islamic State group, he added.

Rauf was a corps commander during the Taliban's 1996-2001 rule of Afghanistan, according to Amir Mohammad Akundzada, the governor of Nimroz province, neighboring Helmand.

**SEE SOUTH ON PAGE 3**

### VETERANS

Bill to overhaul vet suicide programs passes in House  
**Page 2**



**FACES**  
'Late Show with Stephen Colbert' to debut Sept. 8  
**Page 14**

### PACIFIC

US, South Korea begin 2-day joint naval warfare drill  
**Page 4**



**Buckeyes run away from Ducks to win title game » Back page**