

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

February 15, 2005

9:07 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Chair  
Senator Gary Wilken, Co-Chair  
Representative John Coghill  
Representative Bob Lynn  
Representative Jay Ramras  
Senator Charlie Huggins  
Senator Fred Dyson  
Senator Gary Stevens

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Gretchen Guess  
Senator Gene Therriault  
Representative Eric Croft  
Representative John Harris

**OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT**

Senator Donny Olson  
Representative Richard Foster  
Representative Jim Elkins

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

Overviews

- Armed Forces Presentation by Lt. General Chandler
- Alaska National Guard Presentation by General Christensen
- Alaska-Siberia Lend-Lease Program by Alexander Dolitsky

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

**CHAIR NANCY DAHLSTROM** called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at [9:07:58 AM](#). Present were Senators Wilken, Huggins, Dyson and Representatives Coghill, Lynn, Elkins, Ramras and Chair Dahlstrom.

[9:09:32 AM](#)

**Armed Forces Overview**

Lt. General Howie Chandler, Commander of the Alaska Command, thanked the committee for the opportunity to update it on Alaska Armed Forces. He covered the military structure in Alaska saying that it is a bit unique. Alaska has four command positions under three different four-star flag officers. NORAD and USNORTHCOM have the same commander and USPACOM and PACAF have two others.

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He said the mission of the Pacific Command is basically to enhance the security and stability of the Asian Pacific region.

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PACAF's mission is derived from the Pacific Air Force Headquarters at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. Its job is to organize, train and equip the Air Forces here in the state of Alaska and deploy them when required. It also takes care of facilities, families and quality of life in Alaska.

NORAD is headquartered in Colorado Springs and has partnered with our Canadian allies. Its mission has changed since 911 from looking outward for air threats to looking inward.

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USNORTHCOM was established on November 1, 2002 to provide command and control of Department of Defense homeland defense efforts and to coordinate military support for civil authorities.

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He said that Alaska is on the leading edge of defense against the threat of ballistic missiles and he updated the committee on recent activities. Adak has been selected as the homeport for the X-band radar, which is a critical targeting link in the missile defense system, which should be in place by December 2005.

General Chandler said the Kodiak launch complex has had several successful missile launches this year and he anticipated those tests continuing into the future.

Elmendorf Air Force Base is getting C-17s, which provide a greater payload and extreme versatility compared to the current C-130 fleet. A two-unit concept is being used where an associate unit is comprised of reserve personnel that will fly and maintain the same aircraft as the active duty personnel. This basically increases efficiency by keeping all eight of the aircraft in the global mobility system.

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He said the Army has six Stryker Brigade Combat Teams that are using new Stryker vehicles. Alaska will receive a third of the six Stryker Brigades with a brigade consisting of 3,800 soldiers. Fort Richardson will have 2,000 more soldiers. This transformation requires major construction in terms of training and living arrangements.

The Coast Guard has become an integral part of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force and Homeland Security Team in the State of Alaska. It recently commissioned the Maritime Safety and Security Team in Anchorage (MSST). Overall there has been a lot of growth in all areas in the military in the State of Alaska.

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The Alaska National Guard has begun providing security for the missile defense operation at Fort Greely and soldiers are being transformed into a new infantry brigade combat team that is structured with partnerships including Hawaii and other states. It is also building its second largest mobilization since WWII.

He explained that the Alaska Land Mobile Radio system is the first statewide multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional public safety VHF trunk system in the United States. Its overall goal is to have a standard-based secure interoperable communication system that can be shared by federal, state and local agencies during emergencies. This compatibility has been successfully demonstrated during exercises and in real scenarios, which will continue into the fall.

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Lt. General Chandler reviewed the Northern Edge Exercise. In even years it is tied to the Pacific Command and about 9,000 uniformed personnel participated this year. In odd years it has been aligned with the Northern Command to provide a training environment to validate real homeland security concepts and training. The homeland security exercise is conducted every other year in the State of Alaska.

He reviewed airspace training, range access, base realignment and closures. In summary, he said that Alaskan forces are supporting the global war on terrorism abroad and assisting in humanitarian efforts and protecting our homeland.

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### Alaska National Guard Overview

The Alaska National Guard overview was presented by Deputy Adjutant General Craig Christenson who detailed the Guard's structural transformation that is ongoing. He said they routinely conduct search and rescue across the state, medical evacuations and are involved in emergencies and disasters throughout the state. He described the missions and deployments going on throughout the world.

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He said the Alaska Army National Guard transformation is setting the Guard's course for the next three decades and he proceeded to relate how that was progressing.

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General Christenson summarized that the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard is ready serve as their motto says and the transformation, which is happening in cooperation with the Stryker Force at Fort Richardson, will become even more relevant as time goes on.

[10:02:46 AM](#)

CHAIR DAHLSTROM thanked him for his presentation and the work of the Armed Services.

SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS took this opportunity to thank General Chandler, particularly, for helping veterans get access to the joint medical facility at Elmendorf. He asked for a smooth transition for them to use the new medical facility adjacent to the Muldoon Gate. In addition, he thought it was also important to recognize the Alaskan Youth Academy that has helped so many young people to realize their potential.

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CO-CHAIR WILKEN said that during previous updates he was struck by the hardware that was coming to Alaska and during this one he is struck by the breadth that Alaska is reaching out around the world to help defend our country. It's been a truly quick transformation and he said the vision is coming true.

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN also assured him of his support.

REPRESENTATIVE JAY RAMRAS complimented them on their work and spoke of community contributions. He asked how the deployment to Fort Wainwright would affect dependents.

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General Chandler replied that beginning this summer about 2,000 soldiers would arrive at Fort Richardson in the Airborne unit and the estimate for family members follows from there. Another 600 or so will arrive at Fort Wainwright. This is as they transition to the Stryker. The long-term vision (2010) is to migrate entire Stryker organization to north of the range into Wainwright, itself. A lot of things will influence whether or not a family stays during the year-long deployment. The deployment will begin in the fall when children begin going to school and they might be reluctant to move. Some spouses without children might feel more comfortable going home to Mom and Dad; other soldiers will know they are leaving Fort Wainwright on a permanent change of station when they return from their deployment and they may elect to send their family members ahead to their next duty station. He explained:

So, while we plus up by 600, we're going to take approximately 4,700 soldiers from the State of Alaska - many of those will be from Fort Wainwright and the Stryker Brigade on this deployment. There is no doubt in my mind that you will notice the streets will not be as busy on Fort Wainwright when this happens.

CHAIR DAHLSTROM thanked everyone for their comments and said Mr. Dolitsky would next present the history of the Alaska-Siberia Lend-Lease Program.

[10:20:02 AM](#)

**Alaska-Siberia Lend-Lease Program**

Mr. Alexander Dolitsky presented the history of the Alaska-Siberia Lend-Lease Program, which was signed into law in 1941, and was the largest undertaking of the Twentieth Century. Not everyone was in favor of it, and in retrospect, it was an economic declaration of war - as Pearl Harbor was bombed seven months later, but it turned out to be a fortunate event. He concluded by presenting two replica statues of a sculpture, created by Skip Wallen, commemorating this history to the Legislature. The original statue will be displayed in Fairbanks on August 2006.

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SENATOR HUGGINS reminded people that December 1 was the deadline to submit applications to the Veterans' Endowment Fund to enhance and build memorials.

There being no further business to come before the committee, CHAIR DAHLSTROM adjourned the meeting at [10:47:15 AM](#).

