

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

February 12, 2008

1:08 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bill Wielechowski, Co-Chair
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Co-Chair
Senator Bettye Davis
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Gary Wilken
Representative John Coghill
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Bob Roses
Representative Andrea Doll

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Albert Kookesh
Representative John Harris

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Jay Ramras

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

ALASKA'S MILITARY: CHANGING TIMES

- HEARD AND HELD

ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD

- HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DOUGLAS FRASER, Commander
Alaskan Command
Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Region
11th Air Force and Joint Task Force - Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a presentation titled "Alaska's Military: Changing Times."

BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS KATKUS
Alaska Army National Guard

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a presentation on the Alaska National Guard.

BRIGADIER GENERAL MCMANUS
Alaska Air National Guard

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered remarks regarding the National Guard.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CO-CHAIR BILL WIELECHOWSKI called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at [1:08:08 PM](#). Representatives Dahlstrom, Coghill, Lynn, Roses, and Doll and Senators Wielechowski, Davis, Huggins, and Wilken were present at the call to order. Also in attendance was Representative Ramras.

Alaska's Military: Changing Times

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CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that the committee would begin with a presentation titled "Alaska's Military: Changing Times." Co-Chair Wielechowski introduced Lieutenant General Fraser, who integrates the activities of more than 21,000 active duty National Guard and Reserve members from all services in Alaska. Lieutenant General Fraser, he related, oversees the training and readiness of one technical fighter wing, one operational wing, and air force installations throughout the state. As the commander of the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region, Lieutenant General Fraser directs air operations within Alaska to ensure defense against all hostile airborne threats. Furthermore, Lieutenant General Fraser is responsible for all the planning and execution of all homeland defense operations within the theatre, including security and civil support actions.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL DOUGLAS FRASER, Commander, Alaskan Command, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Region, began by thanking Alaskans for the continual support they

provide to the military. Because of the support the military receive in Alaska, there's no better place to live than Alaska. Lieutenant General Fraser began his presentation titled "Alaska's Military: Changing Times." He turned attention to the slide titled "Overview" and related that in late November F-15s were grounded for about two months while determining the reason a Missouri Air National Guard airplane broke apart in flight. During that timeframe other aircraft were enlisted to help with the Alaska NORAD mission. In fact, the Canadians provided help with their CF-18s for a couple of weeks. He informed the committee that today, in Alaska, there are 14 F-22s and the goal is to total 40 airplanes by the end of this year. Due to the extended time during which the F-15s were down and the ability to make crew members mission ready again, the pilots are on deployment. Therefore, the Duluth Air National Guard is flying F-16s in alert capability to supplement the grounded F-15s. Lieutenant General Fraser informed the committee that although the F-15s are safe to fly, they are getting older as illustrated by the fact that the F-15 that crashed was 27 years old.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER moved on to the slide titled "Russia's Long Range Aviation," which presents a chart illustrating the flight history of Russia's long range aviation from 1982-2007. Although the chart highlights that Russian operations are on the increase, NORAD continues to work and there should be no reason for concern. The next slide titled "F-22 Raptors" illustrates the renovated facilities and new fighter town, all to support F-22s at Elmendorf Air Force Base (Elmendorf). About \$260 million worth of construction has been funded. He then moved on to the slide titled "Airlift-Rescue," which illustrates the construction that will occur to integrate the Kulis Air National Guard Base and the 176th Wing into Elmendorf. The aforementioned is on track and \$160 million has been appropriated by the U.S. Air Force. Elmendorf, he opined, will reflect a total force capability for the Air Force. The F-22s are being flown by active duty and the Air Force Reserve, which is recruiting personnel across the U.S. to support that unit. The C-17s are being flown by active duty and the Alaska Air National Guard and are fully integrated. As the 176th and 144th squadron moves, it will become a reverse association, which means that it will be primarily owned and operated by the Alaska Air National Guard with an active component. Lieutenant General Fraser said that across the facility, the operational and support capabilities will illustrate a very integrated

capability. He suggested that those visiting the base won't know whether those in uniform are active duty, Air National Guard, or Air Force Reserve. The aforementioned is desired. He then highlighted the construction of a hangar by the C-17 engine storage facility, which had some design issues resulting in a redesign. The hope is that it will be completed some time this next year and into fiscal year 2009, he said.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER continued with the slide titled "1/25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team." The Stryker Brigade returned from deployment last year and is now in the process of refitting and retraining for deployment. He noted that the Stryker Brigade is now part of the nation's immediate response brigade. The immediate response brigade status will remain until some time this summer and then rotate to another unit. The 1/25 Stryker Brigade was the first unit in Alaska to have the aforementioned responsibility. Eielson Air Force Base (Eielson) is ready for worldwide deployment and thus it's a seamless integrated effort. If the entire brigade was called to go, it would likely require reliance on Alaska's entire infrastructure as the brigade is moved by rail and road from Fairbanks to Anchorage and then through the port for deployment. He characterized the aforementioned as a "big endeavor." The brigade is resetting for combat operations as it's likely it will deploy later this year or early in the coming year.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER moved on to the slide title "4/25 Airborne Brigade Combat Team," which recently returned from a successful 15-month combat tour in Iraq. He noted that unfortunately during that time 53 soldiers were lost and 345 were wounded. He again thanked the wonderful support the military has received from Alaskans. He noted that the 4/25 Airborne Brigade Combat Team is part of a pilot program for the U.S. Army in which they accelerate their reset timeline to be prepared to support combat operations. Continuing with the slide titled "Task Force 49," Lieutenant General Fraser related that last year the headquarters of Task Force 49 were called to deploy. Within 53 days the unit was formed, forces were prepared, and they were deployed to Iraq. Currently, they are performing the Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters. Referring to the slide "Company C 1/52 Aviation Regiment," Lieutenant General Fraser informed the committee that Company C 1/52 Aviation Regiment is the Medivac unit that provides Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic (MAST) for Fairbanks. That MAST support will stop on July 1 because all 12 of its

helicopters have been tasked to deploy. In fact, the U.S. Army will have to contract its own Medivac to support its training needs in the Interior.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER, in response to Representative Doll, related his belief that the U.S. Army can't guarantee the level of support it has in the past because of the level of deployments. Therefore, he recommended that the state review the core requirement to support the Medivac mission in the state and consider use of the military as a supplement. In response to Co-Chair Dahlstrom, Lieutenant General Fraser confirmed that the U.S. Army has already begun discussions with the Division of Homeland Security and Department of Public Safety as well as the Alaska National Guard.

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REPRESENTATIVE DOLL inquired as to the following: the conditions of contract service to replace MAST; the amount of funding involved; the direct point of command for future inquiry dealing with MAST; and the possibility of the loss of service in Northern Alaska.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER specified that General Lehfield, Commander of the U.S. Army Alaska, will be working [on MAST]. With regard to the contract requirements, he opined that those are things that still need to be worked out. The state will need to determine the necessary level of service, which will determine the cost.

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SENATOR WILKEN informed the committee that the Interior delegation is working with the U.S. Army and the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs to answer the questions relayed by Representative Doll. He offered to work with Representative Doll to obtain the answers.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER continued his presentation by referring to the slide titled "Maneuver Enhancement Brigade." He told the committee that as part of the "Grow the Army" in FY 09 the U.S. Army will have upwards of 1,700 soldiers entering the state. There will be about 1,100 in the Fort Richardson

area and another 400-500 in the Fort Wainwright area. The modular brigade headquarters still provide the overall command and control for the engineer, military police, and signal unit functions. Continuing with the slide titled "Deployed Alaskans," Lieutenant General Fraser stated that Alaska and the military forces assigned to Alaska will continue to support the military requirements. He then directed attention to the totals of deployed Alaskans in 2007 and also pointed out that in 2008 the majority of deployments will be for Iraq. With regard to the slide titled "Missile Defense," Lieutenant General Fraser specified that there has been no new construction. Missile defense capability in Alaska has been fielded and primarily transferred to operations and maintenance, and therefore it's an ongoing support activity. Turning to the slide titled "Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX)," Lieutenant General Fraser informed the committee that the SBX visited Adak in February to perform a Shakedown cruise. He noted that although SBX will be home ported in Adak, it will be deployed, as needed, around the Pacific to support missile defense activities. The SBX is expected to return to Adak in early 2009 after receiving modifications and subsequently supporting the Missile Defense Agency tests in the Pacific. The Missile Defense Agency has been working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) facility in Juneau to place the AN/TPY-2 in order to test the capability of the radar. The slide titled "AN/TPY-2 Radar in Juneau" depicts that the target vehicle would be launched from Kodiak, the interceptor missile would be launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, and the intercept would occur somewhere over the Pacific. Juneau provides a good position for the radar to be placed in an operational environment similar to if it was deployed other places. He reminded members that once the test is completed, the radar will be removed from Juneau. Lieutenant General Fraser moved on to the slide titled "Pacific Alaska Range Complex." He related that no where else is there the air or ground space as exists in Alaska. Therefore, the military is in the process of building the threat capabilities on the range and developing the airspace to continue to support the Red Flag Alaska mission. There will be four Red Flag Alaska exercises, the first of which will be in April this year. The annual exercise, Northern Edge, will focus on a Pacific command mission in May during which over 9,000 military will attend. The exercise conducted in 2006 was very successful, which is likely one of the reasons a carrier was added. Therefore, the range complex will grow in its capability. The air craft type that flies out of Eielson Air Force Base has been changed in order to replicate an adversary aircraft, which supports the Red Flag Alaska mission. The U.S.

Army is reviewing its range capability and the military is working to ensure that all branches are complementing one another and that a truly joint capability is grown.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER directed the committee's attention to the slide titled "PARC Strategic Vision," which highlights the full spectrum of joint and multi-national training [within the Pacific Alaska Range Complex (PARC)]. Such training utilizes various simulators to represent what one would find in combat and the level of difficulty can be increased by computers. The aforementioned was demonstrated in 2006 and has improved further in 2008. The 2030 timeframe illustrates the time it will take to build the capability necessary on the range space. The next slide, titled "PARC Past, Present, Future," relates the successes of PRAC. He informed the committee that PARC is part of the Pacific Command training strategy, which is important because that provides a broader level of support across the U.S. Department of Defense. The U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army are focused on investing in Alaska and there's great congressional support as well. The structure sets the standard for Pacific Command. Lieutenant General Fraser informed the committee that a strategic working group is being put together in order to develop a uniform vision regarding the range. With regard to the airspace vision, the type of airspace and how it's being used for training is being reviewed. The airspace not being used should be returned. He opined that the military intends on being good stewards of this scheduling in order to make the best use of the airspace. Therefore, it needs to be a much more dynamic process such that general aviation can utilize the airspace when it's not being used for training. Pacific Command has designated Alaska as a joint training center of excellence. He continued with the slide titled "Improved Range Access," and stressed that there's no year-round access across the Tanana River to the Tanana Flats and Donnelly Training areas. This year \$44.2 million was received from the U.S. Department of Defense to begin construction of bridge access across the Tanana River. This bridge access is being performed in conjunction with the Alaska Railroad, which has been conducting an environmental impact study (EIS) on a railroad extension from Fairbanks to Delta Junction. The overall cost of the bridge is \$100-\$130 million, which he attributed to the fact that it's a migrated stream that migrates a lot. This year-round access is necessary for the Stryker Brigade and once across the river additional roads will be necessary to reach the Donnelly Training area. He then directed attention to the slide titled

"Tanana River Crossing," which provides a concept of the bridge span. He likened it to the Whittier Tunnel in which there's a combined rail and single lane road. He highlighted the projected gap in funding of \$60-\$90 million. Lieutenant General Fraser suggested that the state consider whether it's in its interest to support, in a cooperative fashion, a portion of the cost of building this bridge.

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CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the proposed bridge might assist in the construction of a gas pipeline.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER answered that he didn't believe so. One potential location for a bridge is just to the east of Salcha and the other potential location is even further to the east. The current pipeline is to the north of these locations and crosses the river close to Delta Junction. The bridge would be located closer to Eielson Air Force Base. He related his understanding from the Alaska Railroad that it would build on the south side of the Tanana River because of better terrain and access. Another bridge would need to be built to re-cross the Tanana River in the Delta Junction area.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER returned to his presentation and the slide titled "Annual Arctic Minimum Sea Ice," which depicts the loss in the sea ice. He related that in 2005 many expressed that it was the minimum sea ice observed in many years. Furthermore, much of the multi-year ice has been depleted. He recalled from an article that in the 1970s about 80 percent of the ice in the Arctic was multi-year ice, whereas now it amounts to only about 3 percent. The slide titled "Projected Minimum Summer Sea Ice" provides a model analysis illustrating the minimum sea ice in 2000 and a projection of what it will look like in 2040. There is speculation now that minimum sea ice will be reached much earlier than 2040. The aforementioned means, as related in the slide titled "The Maritime Arctic of Today," that there's the possibility of increased activity in the Arctic. There are more cruise ships entering the Arctic and cruise ships are entering the Bering and Beaufort Seas. The possibility of the Northwest Passage as well as the Northern Sea passage along the north shore of Russia decreases the distance for maritime shipping between Europe and Asia by 40 percent. The Bering Strait then becomes the choke point from the Arctic into the Pacific. The U.S. Coast Guard is reviewing the

aforementioned in an attempt to understand what it takes to operate in the Arctic because the ability to support search and rescue and potential growing activity in the Arctic is very fragile at this point. The matters in the Arctic are ones in which everyone, state and federal governments, will have to work together to address. Lieutenant General Fraser related pride in the 3rd Medical Group, which was named the "Best Hospital in USAF." Referring to the slide titled "Alaska Road Completed," Lieutenant General Fraser reported that after 10 years the U.S. Department of Defense work on the Alaska road has been completed. However, the "Department of Highways" still has about two years of work left and a ferry terminal at the north end of the road remains to be constructed. The Alaska road was a great training opportunity as it allowed training of over 12,000 people across the services. He then highlighted the continuing Arctic care in which medical, dental, optometry, and veterinary support services to underserved villages in Alaska. These support services will be provided in the Kodiak area this year. The aforementioned support and services provide great a training opportunity as it's in a more remote area and simulates some of the limitations that would occur in providing these services elsewhere in the world. Lieutenant General Fraser concluded by thanking all Alaskans for the support they provide the military in the state.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER then informed the committee that he is soon to be the Deputy Commander for U.S. Pacific Command. He said that it has been a great privilege and honor to serve in Alaska.

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CO-CHAIR DAHLSTROM commented that it will be a great loss to the state, but a great gain to the nation for Lieutenant General Fraser to become the deputy commander.

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SENATOR HUGGINS inquired as to the roles and missions of the F-35.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL FRASER answered that from an Air Force standpoint it will be very much like the F-16 in that it will be a multi-role fighter. Therefore, the F-35 will have air-to-air capability, interdiction capability, and a level of low observing capability. He reminded the committee that the F-35 is being built in three different versions for the U.S. Air

Force, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Marines. In further response to Senator Huggins, Lieutenant General Fraser related his understanding that the Veterans Administration (VA) treatment facility outside the Muldoon gate is being constructed so that veterans have access without going through the entry gate. There will be a corridor that connects the U.S. Air Force hospital on Elmendorf Air Force Base with the VA facility. He related that the military has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the VA, which supports the intensive care unit within the Elmendorf Air Force Base hospital and will expand and enhance the care of the military in Alaska whether they be active duty or veterans. He characterized it as a medical campus facility.

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GENERAL LESTENKOF thanked Lieutenant General Fraser for his work in Alaska.

The committee took an at-ease from 2:00 p.m. to 2:03 p.m.

Alaska National Guard

[2:03:11 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that the final order of business would be the presentation from the Alaska National Guard. Co-Chair Wielechowski informed the committee that Brigadier General Katkus is a lifelong Alaskan who enlisted in the Alaska Army National Guard in 1977. Brigadier General Katkus has served in various capacities from an airborne medic, a light reconnaissance team leader, battalion motor officer, headquarters' company commander, to assistant adjutant general. Thirty years after enlisting, Brigadier General Katkus, in April 2007, assumed the duties of Commander of the Alaska Army National Guard Assistant Adjutant General - Army. In his civilian career, Brigadier General Katkus retired from the Anchorage Police Department in 2000 after over 21 years of service.

CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI then introduced Brigadier General McManus, who enlisted in the Washington, D.C., Air National Guard in 1981. She was subsequently commissioned with the Maryland Air National Guard in 1985. In 1992, Brigadier General McManus became the Alaska Air Command Director of the Objective Memorandum Program. She then moved on to Elmendorf Air Force Base as a Child Development Director. Brigadier General McManus received her first command in 1996 with the 176th Maintenance

Support Flight and in 1998 she became the assistant logistic squadron commander. As the Assistant Adjutant General and Commander of the Alaska Air National Guard, Brigadier General McManus is responsible for all Alaska Air National Guard programs, operations, and activities, including the primary flying missions of air refueling, combat, rescue, and airlift and to provide a ready and capable force to the U.S. Air Force as well as to the governor of the State of Alaska during times of homeland crisis.

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BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS KATKUS, began by reviewing the responsibilities of the personnel listed on the slide titled "Personnel: New Leadership Roles." He then directed attention to the slide titled "Deployments of last 12 months-Army," which relates the various activities of the last year. He noted that on the horizon more deployments are coming while additional individual deployments will continue. The slide titled "AKANG Deployments" relates the deployments of the Alaska Air National Guard (AKANG). In 2008 there will be continued deployments of AKANG rescue forces who will provide support to active duty soldiers. At the same time that the Air National Guard is deploying, it's still maintaining its state mission of rescue, space warning, refueling, and supporting active duty military in Alaska.

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BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS moved on to the slide titled "Operation Jump Start." Operation Jump Start monitors the border and pursues drug smugglers while providing soldiers the opportunity for training. He then turned attention to the slide titled "Battlefield Surveillance Brigade," which relates the changing of the National Guard. The Battlefield Surveillance Brigade is being stood up to change the 207th Infantry Group and is the trigger point to establish the troop command. The troop command will be larger than the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade and will have the following two deployable elements: aviation and military police (MPs). During the shift to a MP entity, there will be a MP battalion in Juneau and sections will be offered throughout the state. Furthermore, there will be the opportunity to recruit females into the MP. The aforementioned will broaden the recruitment area and "we don't have to travel as many folks around Alaska to get into a central headquarters, as we do with infantry units right now." He suggested that the assets of aviation and MP will continue emphasis on Alaska

deployments. The Battlefield Surveillance Brigade provides quite a bit of technology to the combatant commander, the commander in the field. As the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade stands up, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and other types of sensors will be operated by soldiers. He characterized the aforementioned as the cutting edge of technology. "We have a force that is very relevant to today's requirements on the battlefield," he said. Brigadier General Katkus, referring to the slide titled "BRAC 2005 Impact to AKANG," explained that the closing of Kulis and relocation of the 176th Wing to Elmendorf Air Force Base is the BRAC. The \$150 million is for military construction, but doesn't include the design and preparation work that is going forward. At same time of the BRAC, the C-17 mission is occurring and thus has unified the group. He then reviewed the slide "BRAC MILCON @ Elmendorf," which relates the funding breakdown of FY 07- FY 10 construction projects.

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BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS then moved on to the slide titled "Permanent jobs added to Alaska's economy in last 5 years" and highlighted that those jobs have primarily been added in the Active Guard and Reserve. Clear Air Force Station with its space warning and surveillance has provided an additional 100 jobs. The Ground-based Mid-course Defense has provided 250 jobs while the Air Control Squadron of Elmendorf Air Force Base has created 125 jobs. He related that Fort Greely is going to continue to be important. The soldiers are beginning to purchase homes in the area, off the base, and becoming more involved in the community. Referring to the slide titled "Mongolia State Partnership Program," Brigadier General Katkus informed the committee that originally the relationship with Mongolia began with an exchange of soldiers. That relationship has evolved into an exchange of technology and potential business partners. Relationships such as these are important for business and security reasons. He then turned attention to the slide titled "AKANG Rescue Missions," which relates that the AKANG is performing most of the rescue missions. The slide titled "Alaska State Defense Force" speaks to the spirit of volunteers trained as military police to assist the Alaska National Guard. With regard to rural involvement, the slide titled "Operation Santa Claus: Giving in rural Alaska" relates the villages visited in 2007. In those areas in which a C-130 can't land, Black Hawk helicopters and smaller aircraft are being utilized to transport Santa Clause and even ice cream.

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BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS concluded with the slide titled "Honoring the Past." He emphasized that as the military transforms and adjusts going forward, it's critical to keep in mind where [the military in Alaska] started. He highlighted that he is working to identify members of the Alaska Territorial Guard, obtain their discharge certificates, and provide compensation for them. The chart illustrates an increase in the number of discharges, which he characterized as positive because it illustrates that the military takes care of all of its service members.

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BRIGADIER GENERAL MCMANUS, related her pride in the service the National Guard is performing for the state and the nation.

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SENATOR WILKEN inquired as to whether the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade is a new mission or a replacement mission.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS explained that the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade is a change in maneuver element. The 207th Infantry group has been around for quite some time, but its structure is transforming into something that's relevant to today's battlefield. The Battlefield Surveillance Brigade is comprised of those elements that provide intelligence gathering in the field. The brigade is able to defend and engage on a limited scale. He noted that the brigade provides quite a bit of technology. He explained that roughly about 900 soldiers are broken down into smaller battalions, which then come together to train and are put forward. The [Battlefield Surveillance Brigade] is a fairly new concept for the military as there are only about six in existence at this point. Therefore, [the brigade] provides Alaska with relevancy to the military. [The brigade] should be ready to stand up and deploy in 2012.

SENATOR WILKEN, regarding the missile defense slide, asked if the 125 jobs at Elmendorf Air Force Base are specific to missile defense.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS specified that the positions at Elmendorf Air Force Base are Air National Guard positions. However, he noted that the Ground-Based Missile Defense are Army positions in which some of the sensors are monitored.

BRIGADIER GENERAL MCMANUS informed the committee that the Air Control Squadron was assumed from active duty several years ago and consists of 125 full-time people. She specified that these are air controllers, who look inside and outside of Alaska for threats. The squadron also scrambles the fighters that perform any intercepts. Therefore, the Air Guard and the Active Duty Air Force are full participants in the sovereignty mission. The tankers from the 168th are located at Eielson Air Force Base and also fly with the fighters on intercept missions.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS added that the battle space for Missile Defense is outer space. As the threat leaves or enters the atmosphere, Missile Defense engages.

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REPRESENTATIVE DOLL recalled testimony that there would be an MP battalion in Juneau, and inquired as to the size of a battalion. She asked if that's part of the Alaska State Defense Force.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS answered that the size of the elements are roughly the size of an infantry battalion. There's no net gain as a result of the transformation and thus there will be roughly the same amount of soldiers. The Military Police and the State Defense Force are viewed as training opportunities that provide institutional knowledge, although the missions are completely different. The mission of the military police can be anything from law enforcement to site security, while the State Defense Force has specific missions.

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CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI inquired as to Alaska's experience with recruitment and retention.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS said that currently the numbers for the U.S. Army are very good. The younger generation is joining the National Guard and armed forces out of a sense of duty and accomplishment, not just for an education, he related.

BRIGADIER GENERAL MCMANUS acknowledged that in the Air National Guard there are challenges [in the area of recruitment and retention.] Over the past 6-7 years, new missions have been brought on line, which draws from other missions. This past year has been disruptive. Recruitment and retention is the number one priority and has resulted in obtaining additional recruiters. In fact, the Air National Guard is looking at

opening an office in Wasilla. Brigadier General McManus highlighted that there are great federal incentives that can be offered, such as the \$20,000 enlistment bonus for non-prior service. She related the expectation for the [recruitment and retention] to recover in the near future.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS highlighted that another significant incentive is the \$2,000 bonus for recommending individuals to service.

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CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the state should do anything with regard to the opening of the Arctic ice sheet.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KATKUS characterized the aforementioned as a "new area" and that he couldn't answer at this time. He remarked that he was glad to see Admiral Brooks bringing this to everyone's attention.

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TOM CASE related his thanks to the entire active duty Guard and Reserve team in Alaska, particularly to Lieutenant General Fraser. He highlighted the magnificent accomplishment this team has achieved by building the new systems and infrastructure in Alaska for training while so many have been deployed into combat zones.

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CO-CHAIR DAHLSTROM also thanked everyone for their service. She related her pride in hearing from all levels that Alaska is the best place to serve. She also related her pride in those serving as well as their leaders.

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CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI echoed Co-Chair Dahlstrom's comments.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting was adjourned at [2:30:59 PM](#).