

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

February 14, 2013

11:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Saddler, Co-Chair
Senator Fred Dyson
Senator Anna Fairclough
Senator John Coghill
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Representative Eric Feige
Representative Doug Isaacson
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Geran Tarr

PUBLIC MEMBERS

Brigadier General George Cannelos, Alaska Air National Guard,
(Retired)
Colonel Tim Jones, US Army, (Retired)
Lieutenant General Tom Case, Air Force, (Retired) - via
teleconference

MEMBERS ABSENT

All legislative members present

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Click Bishop
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Steve Thompson
Representative Tammy Wilson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Alaska Joint Armed Services Committee Briefing

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

LT. GENERAL STEPHEN HOOG, Commander
11th Air Force

Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided briefing and update on Alaska Air Force activities.

MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS KATKUS, Adjutant General
Alaska National Guard

Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided briefing and update on Alaska National Guard activities in 2012.

MCHUGH PIERRE, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided answers to questions on military activities in Alaska.

REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS P. OSTEBO
United States Coast Guard
Commander 17th Coast Guard District

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided briefing and update on US Coast Guard activities in Alaska for 2012.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[11:04:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR SADDLER called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dyson, Fairclough, Wielechowski, Coghill and Co-Chair Kelly; Representatives Feige, Tarr, Lynn, Isaacson and Co-Chair Saddler. Public members present were: Brigadier General George Cannelos, Alaska Air National Guard, (Ret.); Colonel Tim Jones, US Army, (Ret.); and Lieutenant General Tom Case (Ret.) - via teleconference.

ALASKA JOINT ARMED SERVICES BRIEFING

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CO-CHAIR SADDLER said the Joint Armed Services Committee was established in the 1990s in response to the first Base

Realignment and Closure Commission. It has five Representatives and five Senators and six public members that represent the interests of the military services and agencies, local governments, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and Alaska Natives. Their stated mission is to monitor and address potential realignments of military facilities and missions in the state, to advocate for the National Missile Defense System, to seek out ways to attract new missions to Alaska bases and to support increased joint training activity in Alaska.

He said their mission is especially important these days as our country faces tremendous budget pressures. It's important to keep in mind that Alaska's military services and agencies are essential for national security, for joint training and preparedness, for force projection, and for the stability of our economy and for the safety of our people.

CO-CHAIR SADDLER said this morning the committee would hear presentations from the top military leaders in the state: Air Force Lieutenant General Stephen Hoog, who is commander of Alaskan Air Command and the US Pacific Command and several other commands; Alaska National Guard Major General Thomas Katkus, who is the tag and the commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA); and Coast Guard Rear Admiral Thomas Ostebo, who is commander of the 17th District. He invited Lieutenant General Hoog to give his comments.

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LT. GENERAL STEPHEN HOOG, Commander, 11th Air Force, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), said he had been in Alaska for about 14 months. He said he appreciated the opportunity to update the body on the successes of the US military units stationed in Alaska in 2012 and the opportunities and new challenges they will face in 2013.

First, Lieutenant General Hoog took a moment to honor their fallen who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country over the past year.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG moved on to the overview of US military accomplishments in Alaska in 2012. Their calendar was full of various exercises and 2013 will be no different. He would address both and highlight the value of the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex along with some other recent and upcoming events. Then he would discuss the multi-faceted and complex challenges of Arctic engagement in light of the unprecedented Arctic access

from this last summer. Finally, he would talk about Joint Task Force Alaska Operations, Alaska NORAD Region missile defense entities in Alaska, and the five on-going Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), along with the challenges in the coming year and beyond.

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He said there is a large military presence across the state and aside from the major installations, Alaska is peppered with long range radar stations and radio sites. Counting the active duty soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coast guardsmen, there are over 23,000 service members in Alaska; adding the dependents and the 5,000 US Department of Defense civilians, the active duty military makes up over 10 percent of the state's population. When the veterans and retirees are added that figure becomes about a quarter of the state's population.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said that each of the three Air Force Wings in Alaska can boast a long list of accomplishments in 2012, but he would highlight just a few. He said the 3rd Wing continues to shine as the Air Force premier total force integration wing. Air Force Reserve commands 477 Fighter Group and integrates pilots and maintainers seamlessly with the two active duty F-22 squadrons while the Alaska National Guard's 249th Air Lift Squadron flies side-by-side with their active duty crew members every day.

Over the past several months, maintainers have upgraded several of the F-22s stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf/Richardson (JBER) with a hardware and software modification called Increment 3.1. This upgrade allows Raptors to map ground targets in real time with synthetic aperture radar and employ small diameter bombs along with other combat capabilities. These Alaska-based Raptors are the first Air Force F-22s to undergo this redoubt 1 upgrade.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said recently the Pacific Air Force (PACAF) had presented the 3rd Wing with its Safety Special Achievement Award in recognition of extraordinary safety, despite austere conditions. In 2012, with a winter record snowfall, the 3rd Wing flew 7,000 sorties totaling more than 15,000 flight hours and loaded more than 2,000 passengers and over 4 million pounds of cargo in support of Pacific and Central Command missions - all without a mishap. Over the same period, the 3rd Maintenance Group was awarded the Daedalian Weapon System Maintenance Trophy for 2012 and cited for exceptional effectiveness rates, consistent repairs and modifications ahead

of schedule - all the time with world-wide support for both training and contingency operations.

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The 673rd Air Base Wing, JBER's host, also had a banner year. With their accomplishments it's easy to see how they earned their first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. A year ago the 673rd Medical Group hosted a grand opening for its Fisher House and it just recently completed its new Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said in July, many enjoyed the Arctic Thunder 2012 Air Show, the largest air show that JBER has had to date. It hosted over 230,000 visitors who saw 73 participating aircraft including the F-22 demonstration, the Air Force's Thunderbirds and the Army's Golden Night Parachute Team. This very successful air show helped educate the public on several of the military's weapon systems while developing expanding community partnerships in the Anchorage and surrounding communities.

As summer faded into fall, JBER began operations with its new Landfill Gas power plant. In a three-way partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage and Doyon Utilities, JBER now receives electricity generated from processed methane collected from the Anchorage landfill that will provide 25 percent of their total energy demand. This methane was previously vented off and burned into the atmosphere; and now the base will far exceed the 7 percent renewable energy requirement set forth in two executive orders in the Environmental Protection Act of 2005. A grant from the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) coupled with a tax benefit from the federal government will help this project turn cash positive within five years. As a whole, this project represents a phenomenal success of collaboration between the Municipality of Anchorage, JBER and private industry.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said on the other side of the Alaska Range, the 354th Fighter Wing at Eielson Air Force Base kept busy. Last year the 18th Aggressive Squadron (AGRS) took a mobile training team to Guam to support the first ever trilateral Cope North Exercise with the Royal Australian Air Force and the Japanese Air Defense Force. In fact, they are again deployed to Guam for Cope North today as he speaks. This was followed by seasonal support to the Hawaiian Air National Guard helping an F-22 Unit achieve initial operation capability there.

The 354th Wing's summer was filled with three Red Flag Alaska exercises that he would highlight in a few slides, after which the 18th Aggressor Squad Mobile Training Team left for PACOM's Exercise Valiant Shield in Australia. He also noted Eielson's Ted Stevens Joint Mobility Complex effectively supported several US Army Alaska deployments and redeployments with nearly 4,000 soldiers and 600 tons of cargo processed.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said on September 28, 2012, Pacific Air Command deactivated the 13th Air Force headquarters at Joint Base Pearl Harbor/Hickam. At that time the two Wings and the 13th Air Force, the 15th Joint Wing at Joint Base Pearl Harbor/Hickam and the 36th Wing at Joint Region Marianas Anderson Air Force Base were realigned under the 11th Air Force. This restructuring did not involve any personnel moves into Alaska, but it expanded 11th Air Force command across a majority of the Pacific and increased the number of personnel to over 13,000. While the national strategy is shifting to focus on the Pacific Region, 11th Air Force is now responsible for the Air Force Wings that form the strategic triangle in the Pacific area.

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The other upcoming restructuring is the deactivation of the 537th Airlift Squadron at JBER. The 537th is the active duty associate squadron with the Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Air Lift Squadron composed of 42 crew members and 13 other personnel. This deactivation will accompany retirement of four of the National Guard's C-130s.

As he indicated last year, Lieutenant General Hoog said the Pacific Air Force's Band of the Pacific at JBER will deactivate this summer with the remaining personnel being sent overseas.

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For US Army Alaska the primary highlight last year was the deployment and redeployment of nearly 8,000 soldiers in support of Operation Enduring Freedom he said. Now that they are back home, the 1/25 and the 4/25 are again sharpening their edge. The 4/25 is focusing on the Joint Forceful Entry Operations and the 1/25 Stryker Brigade is training for other major combat mission sets.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said the 2nd Engineer Brigade participated in major exercises in India and Korea last year and continues to have troops deployed world-wide today. The 16th Combat Aviation Brigade is also staying active in support of global aviation requirements on top of supporting the recent Kulluk salvage operations.

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In honor of the 2011/12 deployments, he said Fort Wainwright dedicated Monterey Lakes Memorial Park as Sergeant Joel Clarkson Training Support Center. In May they gathered over 6,000 service members, veterans, family members, and supporters for their salute to our military parade (STMP) and drew a crowd of 10,000 viewers.

Much like JBER, he said that Fort Wainwright had been lauded for its installation excellence evident from the installation management command Exemplary Workforce Development Award it received last year.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said Fort Wainwright is also part of the TARP US Army Residential Communities Initiative Project. US Army Alaska had been asked to concentrate its efforts on the Asia Pacific Region. This renewed focus will increase the number of training opportunities and exchanges with foreign militaries to improve partnerships, readiness and cooperation between Pacific Base Armies and the United States. This will allow our Alaska based units to train, share tactics, techniques and procedures while developing enriched appreciation for the culture and professional traditions of partner nations within the Pacific.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said for the Army in Alaska, taking a greater role in the Pacific also presents opportunities to demonstrate expertise in the Arctic. The US Army Northern Warfare Training Center in Alaska provides some of the best cold and mountain warfare training in the world. US Army Alaska is uniquely positioned for emerging security requirements in the Pacific and the Arctic by being an Arctic-trained, Pacific-focused, credible ground force capable of rapidly deploying to multiple regions around the world.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said the nation called on many service men and women stationed in Alaska to deploy in support of national interests in 2012. From the two Air Force Wings at JBER almost 900 personnel were deployed across the globe to 66

different locations with a large proportion of them going to support combat operations in the Middle East. Last summer the 90th Fighter Squadron provided a forward posture in the Pacific at Anderson Air Force Base while the 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron continues to provide a rotation of crews to CENTCOM. The 4/25 Airborne Brigade from JBER and the 1/25 Stryker Brigade from Fort Wainwright returned home from their tours of service in Afghanistan, a combined total of over 8,000 soldiers.

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Many Alaska-based service men and women are serving abroad with over 1,000 personnel currently deployed. As the military's footprint in the Middle East draws down, Lieutenant General Hoog said personnel based in Alaska continues to support missions across the globe from Djibouti to Laos to Honduras.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said Alaska has been home to a robust exercise program for those forces that are not deployed. In 2012 Alaska hosted three Red Flag Alaska Exercises with nine visiting countries. These large force exercises provided realistic events in combat representative training environments for all participants. Prior to last summer the Polish Air Force had never flown an exercise out of its own borders and by coming to Alaska they were able to take advantage of an air space structure that is simply unfathomable if you are stationed in Europe.

Last year, he said they broke US Northern Command's Exercise Arctic Edge into four separate compartmentalized exercises to better hone the Joint Task Force Alaska Homeland Defense and Civil Support Mission sets.

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First, ARDENT SENTRY was designed to validate and verify the defense support to civil authorities' roles and missions. For eight days they established a 24/7 Joint Operation Center and partnered with US Coast Guard District 17 for two tasks: a simulated event off the coast of the North Slope and a search and rescue (SAR) operation in an isolated area in central Alaska. Along with strengthening a vital partnership within the state, they were also able to procure and field test a significant improvement to the Alaska National Guard search and rescue capability through addition of a 72-hour 25-person air-droppable Arctic sustaining package that remains in their possession for use today when necessary.

In ALASKA SHIELD, Lieutenant General Hoog said his headquarters in JBER partnered with the State, Alaska Homeland Defense and Security, and Emergency Management with a series of planning sessions centered on an extreme cold weather event in Alaska. While the focus was on individual preparedness, they also addressed how such an event would impact the installation and what role they might play in supporting state-wide recovery efforts. In ARCTIC AIR, total force medical personnel assisted in the planning and execution of this important event which brings real world medical care to Alaskans in remote locations.

ARCTIC SHIELD provided another opportunity to team with District 17 in their first joint operational exercise of US Coast Guard and Department of Defense (DOD) and successfully deployed and operated oil skimming equipment from the Coast Guard cutter off the coast of Barrow in August, the first time DOD equipment had been used in this fashion in Alaska; many lessons were learned with regard to execution and logistics.

Finally, Lieutenant General Hoog said Exercise VIGILANT SHIELD 2013, which was held last October, was a NORAD/NORTHCOM exercise designed around the homeland defense mission in Alaska. This exercise involved the Alaska NORAD Region and JTF-Alaska; it is the annual reminder that Alaska's strategic location significantly enhances the security and safety of the US and its partners in North America.

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Looking ahead at the 2013 Exercise Season, Lieutenant General Hoog said Alaska will host two Red Flag Exercises with other participating countries. Between the two Red Flags, Northern Edge Exercise 2013 is the US Pacific's Command sponsored exercise that is conducted every other year. It will draw up to 10,000 personnel who will conduct defensive counter air and maritime interdiction, personnel recovery, and limited air and space operations training. Historically, Northern Edge exercises have included a Navy Strike Group, Special Operations Forces and all our military services.

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Further on the horizon they are already into planning for 2014 ARCTIC EDGE Exercise. Over the past six months, they have been working hand in hand with the State Department, Alaska Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and the Alaska National Guard to align planning efforts for a combined ALASKA SHIELD, ARCTIC EDGE, ARCTIC SENTRY and VIGILANT GUARD exercise.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said the central theme of this exercise will be a major earthquake response similar to the Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964. Linking these major events will allow them to ensure they can react with an all-of-government effort to this catastrophic disaster scenario putting DOD support behind the efforts of the State of Alaska to deal with this crisis.

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As the committee knows, the Joint Pacific Air Range Complex (JPARC) provides a training space that makes many of the exercises he mentioned possible. Such a large and unencumbered training space is extremely valuable for the US military's training exercises as well as for our partner nations. Simply inviting another nation to participate in Red Flag Alaska, for example, is an important means of building and strengthening alliances. We learn how to operate better together militarily and exercise co-developed plans.

This past November they hosted over 30 tribal first chiefs and presidents for their quadrennial tribal and military leaders meeting. This forum allows dozens of military commanders from military installations around the state to engage with tribal leaders to hear their concerns and discuss military activities for the upcoming year. Their goal was to reach beyond the conventional DOD channels to enhance understanding and cooperation between the military and federally recognized tribes. Of note, American Indian and Alaska Native service in the military is the largest percentage of any ethnic group and several of the tribal leaders in attendance this year were veterans.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said recently, his command participated in the Alaskan Forum on the Environment that is designed to bring many organizations and entities together to discuss concerns about the environment, to share information and ideas, prevent future damages and resolve existing issues. Since 1991, signatories to the statement of cooperation have pledged to communicate, partner, collaborate, train and educate and uphold these core goals. These agencies have shared many successes including cutting costs for mobilization and demobilization at remote sites, achieving best practices and processes for site clean-up and with a high degree of technology dissemination among the partners to improve collective capabilities.

Two days ago, he and Admiral Ostebo flew to Dead Horse for an orientation so he could learn about North Slope oil spill

response operations. The president of Alaska Clean Seas North Slope Oil Response familiarized him specifically with the operation. No one agency can build all of the infrastructure that is needed and they are looking for ways to partner creatively and share when it makes sense for specific DOD missions.

As evidence of the strong support of the military, the Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) is hosting its 36th annual salute to the military event tomorrow evening and they have invited General Charles Jacoby, Jr., the Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD as guest speaker. The ASYMCA is just one of the many organizations that provide extraordinary support in everything they do. The association of the US Army and the Alaska ACES Hockey organization are two more groups that have raised thousands of dollars to support programs for service members and their families for which they are extremely grateful.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said as human activity and global interests increase in the Arctic, the Arctic Council remains an effective forum for non-security issues. USNORTHCOM has tasked Joint Task Force-Alaska (JTF-Alaska) to consider potential future military capabilities and gaps for the Arctic with prioritization on safety, security, defense and cooperation. The last priority of cooperation is key given the resource constraints within DOD and any progress towards securing and developing the Arctic will require significant coordination, collaboration and cooperation. Currently, they have identified four primary gaps that need to be addressed: communications, maritime domain awareness, infrastructure, and presence.

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In the spirit of collaboration, cooperation, he said that JTF-Alaska has begun discussions with the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) to potentially partner with an Alaska Command (ALCOM) JTF-Alaska Arctic Alaska Bureau. By formalizing an enduring relationship with the University, JTF-Alaska can tap into the vast academic knowledge and expertise on the Arctic while identifying the capability apps he mentioned before.

He said that JTF-Alaska kept busy last year engaging with partners across the state to accomplish unique operations. For example, when the Alaska Army National Guard discovered a newly exposed wreckage from the 1952 crash of a C-124 Globe Master on Colony Glacier, Alaska Air National Guard para-rescue experts were able to confirm the presence of human remains. JTF-Alaska

assembled a joint total force team of service members and civilians to conduct recovery operations on the hazardous, non-forgiving terrain of an active glacier. The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducted recovery operations on the glacier to recover human remains to help bring closure to the families that lost loved ones six decades ago.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said the Army's Northern Warfare Training Center played a critical role in training and monitoring teams on the glacier to ensure their safety while the US Army Guard U-860 pod crews provided transportation and logistic support, the 673rd Air Base Wing medics and honor guards received and processed the human remains with the dignity and respect they deserved. At the end of the operation, JTF-Alaska worked with UAF to install a glacier tracking system to monitor the melt and overall condition of the glacier so that next year they can return to re-evaluate the site for newly uncovered items.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said more recently two CH-47-F Chinooks were deployed from Fort Wainwright to support operations in response to the grounding of the Shell Oil Arctic drilling rig, Kulluk, in late December. Chinooks from the 16th Combat Aviation Brigade were able to rapidly deploy and successfully deliver essential power and hydraulic equipment despite difficult weather and the dynamics of the sling move operations in support of Coast Guard District 17's efforts.

The Alaskan NORAD Region (ANR) continues to maintain readiness in its two mission sets. They ached Operation NOBLE EAGLE under traditional symmetric Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) protection. ANR works closely with the Canadian NORAD Region to ensure complete Arctic coverage. In the near future with the automatic backup oxygen system upgrade (ABOS), the F-22s based at JBER will resume their traditional alert role and return to fully mission capable combat status for NORAD operations.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said in Interior Alaska, two missile defense bases are providing better protection than ever before. The Fort Greely Missile Defense Complex recently completed the construction of Missile Field 2 with 14 operational silos. Greely also integrated its new power plant with ground-based interceptor field missiles and installed a second ground mid-course defense communication network node (GMD) to enhance testing and training capabilities.

On the business end of the missile defense, Greely upgraded the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicles (EKVs) to improve intercept performance and increase its lethality. Similarly, Clear Air Force Station near Anderson, Alaska, also upgraded its capabilities and security. The new emergency power plant can provide full power to the Pave PAWS radar in the event the power is lost from the existing coal plant. This system's design will automatically switch power seamlessly to prevent a gap in surveillance coverage. The Pave PAWS 10-2 and upgraded early warning radar (UEWR) enhancements are hardware and software modifications that will increase tracking capability and fidelity of the Pave PAWS and tie it to the Fort Greely's Ballistic Missile Defense System for increased ground-based interceptor accuracy.

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On the security side, Lieutenant General Hoog said the High-Altitude Electromagnetic Pulse Project (HEMP) is a three-year construction project to harden the Pave PAWS infrastructure against electronic magnetic pulse attack and this should be accomplished next year.

In an effort to cut energy costs, Clear Air Force Station will tie into the commercial power grid and close its aging coal power plant in the years ahead to the Energy Conservation and Investment Program.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said there are five ongoing Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and one programmatic environmental assessment he wanted to bring to their attention. The first was regarding the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC). While the training spaces in the Lower 48 are being encroached upon by other interests, the JPARC is expanding its base and capabilities. ALCOM, on behalf of US Army and US Air Force and in accordance with the National Environmental Protection Policy Act, has prepared the final JPARC modernization and enhancement EIS, which includes the results of the environmental analysis of the proposed JPARC alternatives. The EIS analysis includes the potential environmental consequences associated with expanding and establishing new military operation areas, restricted air spaces and corridors, and ground maneuver training spaces and training complexes. About a month from now the JPARC final EIS notice of availability will be published and a final EIS will be available on the JPARC website. The final EIS will incorporate all the

comments received during last summer's public comment period and the applicable responses. After a 30-day public review period, a final record of decision will be published in June. They believe the JPARC modernization and enhancement EIS reach a mutually beneficial conclusion for both military units in Alaska and the other land and air space users across the state.

Next, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Lieutenant General Hoog said the Air Force Center for Engineering and Environment will prepare a draft EIS for their proposed relocation of the 18th Aggressor Squadron from Eielson Air Force to JBER and the right sizing of the remaining overhead and base operating support at Eielson.

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Public scoping meetings were held last week to determine the subject of analysis during the draft EIS, which will analyze potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed relocation. The proposal includes two alternatives plus a no action option. There will be a 60-day public comment period this summer to refine the analysis prior to moving to the preliminary EIS.

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In addition, Lieutenant General Hoog said the Department of the Navy is preparing a supplemental to the 2011 Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities EIS and Overseas EIS. The supplemental EIS will support authorization of incidental takes of marine mammals under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and incidental takes of threatened and endangered marine species under the Endangered Species Act. The current federal regulatory permits and the authorizations expire in May 2016. As part of the supplemental EIS, the Navy will use a new acoustical model to protect potential marine species effects.

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He said JBER is preparing a supplemental draft EIS for the resumption of year-round firing opportunities. This supplemental will include the government's response to public comment received in the initial draft EIS issued in 2010. JBER anticipates releasing the supplemental draft for 60-day public comment period in mid-2013. The supplemental analysis will focus on potential environmental consequences associated with providing JBER units the opportunity to conduct indirect live fire-training through the year rather than the current arrangement of using the existing Eagle River Flats impact area in the winter and sending the units to the Interior for training

in the summer. The proposed action has not changed from the initial draft EIS, although mitigation measures have been revised to be more protective of the environment, specifically the Endangered Cook Inlet Beluga Whale and migratory birds. Once again, there will be a public comment period this summer.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said the fifth EIS issue was the two World War II historic Hangars at the Ladd Field Historic Landmark at Fort Wainwright. Several options have been considered for their disposition; unfortunately renovation is not physically possible. As such, Fort Wainwright is studying whether they should demolish the two hangars or allow them to deteriorate until they collapse on their own. The Fort Wainwright Command will decide that one year from now.

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Finally, the Department of Army completed a final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EPA) and draft finding of no significant impact for Army future force structure reductions and realignments that may occur in FY 2013-2020. The EPA is analyzing environmental impacts of the potential reduction in Army forces necessary to reduce spending while maintaining critical national defense capabilities. JBER and Fort Wainwright are among 21 bases being analyzed and considered for force structure realignments. Final decisions as to which alternatives to implement and which installations will see reductions, unit realignments or possible additions have not yet been made. The implementation of the Army force structure realignment will occur over the course of several years to arrive at an optimally configured force in 2020.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said in an effort to control energy costs by augmenting energy security, he had initiated an executive energy steering group to pool together the body of knowledge on the subject from the DOD, State of Alaska, and federal and industry representatives. Their goal is to lower energy costs for Alaska's military installations over the next two to seven years. So far, they have held two of these quarterly meetings and have started to piece together the full scale of the challenges.

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While the energy piece is a significant concern for the cold weather bases, it represents just one subset of the larger issue of resource management. They are also including how service men

and women are taken care of. Suicides within the military have risen dramatically over the past few years and across all demographics. The services are actively engaging on this issue to increase awareness, provide support for members and to drive the number of suicides down as far as possible.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said sexual assaults have also risen to the surface as a significant issue across the services. Each branch is attacking this problem and doing the best to root out the people that simply don't belong in the service.

And everyone is waiting to see what happens with the sequestration in the budget, he said. Yesterday, all four service chiefs testified as to potential impacts and he couldn't add much to their comments. In the meantime they are trying to be good stewards of their infrastructure and reduce budgets while continuing to provide combat readiness to support national interests.

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On May 4 the US Navy will honor the State of Alaska by commissioning the USS Anchorage in the Port of Anchorage; this will be the first US Navy ship commissioned in Alaska. An amphibious transport dock ship, designated as LPD-23, will be available for tours from the Port of Anchorage for this ceremony. The USS Anchorage is a San Antonio class LPD built in May 14, 2011. It will provide amphibious lift for the marines, vehicles and cargo and can also act as an aviation platform.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG concluded that Alaska's military units and installations have been busy doing great things for the state and for the US and will continue to do so. They remain committed to supporting service members and their families and ensuring readiness to answer the nation's call. He thanked them for their continued support for the service men and women who call Alaska home.

SENATOR DYSON said a few years ago there was discussion about expanding NORAD to include the maritime and terrestrial domain and asked what happened with that.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered that is one of General Jacoby's stated goals, but not a lot of progress has been made. Studies are being done on how to more effectively gain that awareness. A lot of what they have is based on District 17's ability to use the automatic interrogations system for cooperative ships that have the beacons of the local maritime interrogators on board.

But, from a non-cooperative point of view, they have not made much progress on the ships that don't.

SENATOR DYSON asked if it was true that an increasing number of Russian bombers are entering our air space.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered it's true, but it's nothing threatening. They now have the Russian equivalent of GPS, which is something the US has had for years. With refueling much more often and adding satellite communications to a bomber that can refuel with GPS they can now transit like our B-52s without being provocative. The Russians have been watching us conduct operations for the last 20 years and are starting to exercise their long-range aviation in the same way we do.

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SENATOR DYSON asked if there is a gap in our submarine surveillance with Adak closed.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said he didn't know that answer.

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REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE said they were planning to connect to the local grid at Clear Air Force Base and shutter the coal plant; at one point they were talking about farming it out to some kind of private entity who could turn it into a power producer of about 22 megawatts to be fed back into the Golden Valley grid. That could in theory be replace diesel generated electricity and use locally available coal, but part of the reason that fell through was because the Air Force was not willing to let the air permit that would be grandfathered in to the coal plant go along with the power plant. He asked if the Air Force could find a way to provide that cheaper source of electricity to the area.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG replied that the US Space Command owns and operates Clear Station and he could get the specifics on the permitting piece for him. But the plant had been down-scoped a while ago to affect savings because of the reduction in energy needed to operate the newer design radar and the current permit is only to the tune of 4 to 5 megawatts, not the 23. When the Air Force permitted that facility they only elected to get it licensed for the lower amount.

One of the reasons he started the Energy Group was because they have installations ranging from Clear down to Greeley and up and each are struggling to find individual capacity solutions. Space Command is executing their decision right now to hook up to the

grid and downsize. The other thing that goes with that piece is the challenge of upgrading the coal facility to meet current EPA standards; and when that analysis was done the feedback from the private sector was that it wasn't economical to operate a commercial power plant at such a low output.

[11:45:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked why Russians are in our air space.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered that they are operating off the coast, but have not encroached on Alaska, and they were tracked the entire time.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if they go further than international law allows.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered no.

[11:47:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON said he really appreciates what the military in Alaska is doing and asked why no Red Flags were scheduled for 2014. Will there be any scheduled?

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG replied they are planning on Red Flags in 2014 and he was looking forward to talking about how they are partnering with the National Guard and the State to do the incident respond similar to the great Alaskan earthquake. The normal air exercise will be planned as a matter of course. They do three Red Flags a year; one of them this year is Northern Edge. The biggest issue for 2014 is funding.

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON said he heard a rumor there wasn't anything in the budget for 2014, maybe 2015 and asked when that normally gets into the budget process.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said that was a good question. He didn't know how much they would get for 2013. Pacific Air Forces use about three Red Flags a year as a good intermediate mix of how to optimize training as well to bring units in to do some local flying.

[11:49:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON responded that would probably be answered in the upcoming months. [Lieutenant General Hoog indicated that he agreed.] He asked about the resumption of year-round firing opportunities supplemental EIS in lieu of using Interior ranges in the winter and asked him to explain

that a little more. How does that enhance operations in JBER or is it necessary to complete transfer of the F-16s to JBER?

[11:50:00 AM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG replied this was an Army initiative that stemmed from the environmental impact of phosphorus on the Flats from about a decade ago. During the course of clean up and mitigation the Army adjusted its training to accommodate that operation and now they are trying to get back to their basic table of firing at JBER with equipment that they have. Obviously, some of their equipment is large enough caliber that they can't shoot it at JBER and have to go to the Interior, but for the smaller size munitions, training locally reduces costs from having to pack up and go North.

[11:50:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON asked if there is a way for legislators to become involved in the Executive Energies Steering Group so they have a better understanding of the cost of energy in running the military bases and perhaps be able to run interference when needed to help maintain the profile of the military bases in Alaska.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said ultimately yes. He explained that their first meeting was with DOD only, because they didn't know what each other didn't know. In the second meeting they opened up a little bit more. His intent was to open it up since it's a public forum and put the issues out there. They will be as open and as transparent as they can.

[11:52:29 AM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked him to talk about the impacts of the 11th Air Force restructuring jobs and economic mission and about Alaska's readiness in light of the North Korean nuclear missile test.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered they gave him an increased staff of 15 people. He is arguing for four and he might end up with two. The administration functions of two other Wing commanders are under him. The operational functions, for instance and the mission planning are still going to headquarters.

[11:53:44 AM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked about retiring of the four C-130s.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said he would let General Katkus talk about the airplanes, but in using "total force integration" one organization will own the iron and another organization will contribute pilots and maintainers. For example, in the F-22s they have the active duty squadrons and reservists fly and maintain those aircraft.

The attempt here was to plus-up the capabilities of the C-130s in Alaska by adding some active duty service members not because the airplanes are not being maintained but with the additional four airplanes there would be a chance to better utilize and fly the iron in inventory. When the Air Force made the decision to downsize a number of C-130s, they looked cross the Air Force to see where capacity was and said they didn't need the active associate in Alaska any more.

It's more common to have something on a C-17, because that is a more heavily tasked asset day-to-day. They were about half way through the build-up when it was put on hold for the initial budget and they stopped there. Then the decision was made to go back and stop the active associate. So those active duty service men will be leaving over the next 12 to 18 months.

[11:55:12 AM](#)

On the North Korean question, Lieutenant General Hoog said he was part of the teleconference yesterday with Admiral Locklear and all of his regional commanders. Obviously he is aware of the nuclear blast; and all of those discussions are going on at the highest level in terms of what the US response is going to be. Our aircraft remain ready as they have been, so there is no change to our readiness posture. He couldn't comment on the missile defense side of the house.

[11:56:01 AM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL said he had honored far too many fallen soldiers, but it was a reminder of the things lawmakers have to do in their standing. He thanked him for that. Like him with sequestration, the Interior has had to live with the question of the value to the US of Eielson Air Force Base. He wanted him to take back to his peers that the EIS process didn't line up well for them, because the impact of JPARC to the Interior would probably be significantly different if the EIS for Eielson had been started earlier; they had what was almost false information and he hoped they would have that conversation down the road since it impacted them so much. It was an unfortunate circumstance for the Interior and there was nothing they could do about it.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG said he would take that message back to General Carlisle and General Malinowski who did the presentations.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked if the 2014 earthquake exercises will have a civilian component.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered that the response is primarily civilian through the state; so the Alaska Department of Emergency Management will be in the lead followed by the Alaska National Guard. His role is to be there as a backstop and to fill in the known gaps. For instance, JBER has bridging equipment that could compliment the state's equipment so they could put up a bridge. They are trying to synchronize with the state, because having an exercise within the confines of JBER is interesting, but not relevant if they are not practicing with the state.

[12:00:05 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON said the two magnificent airports at King Salmon and Cold Bay would serve well as an emergency land spot and asked if they were still under his jurisdiction.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG replied that King Salmon is in their Emergency Aircraft Divert file, but not the one at Cold Bay.

SENATOR DYSON asked if there are any others.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered no, other than the Coast Guard air stations.

[12:00:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON said he just heard from the mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough two nights ago that another EIS is going on for Fort Wainwright and that it could either gain 1,000 troops or lose 4,000 troops and public comment was due by the end of the month.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HOOG answered that was one in which the Department of Army basically said that given their force structure they were to reduce 50,000 or 60,000 soldiers. So, they looked across all their installations and said that they could go anywhere from up to 1,000 or down by 4,000. He offered to get more specific information. That process is their equivalent of trying to make adjustments either by force structure or unit realignments.

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON said if Fort Wainwright loses 4,000 troops and Eielson loses half of that, Fairbanks has lost two-thirds of its economic pillar.

CO-CHAIR SADDLER thanked him for his presentation and invited General Katkus to testify.

[12:03:11 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS KATKUS, Adjutant General for the Alaska National Guard and Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA), Anchorage, Alaska, introduced DMVA Deputy Commissioner McHugh Pierre and said he had been given a simple task, which was to show off the National Guard for that he provided a video by a second lieutenant that demonstrated the high quality of skill sets today's military has. This same gentleman won five national-level awards in the National Guard competition for public affairs. It demonstrates the partnership between the military forces in Alaska and the cooperation within the DMVA, how the Department of Homeland Emergency Management works with JTF-Alaska, how they work with other agencies across the state, and how our National Guard supports every operational mission going on in Alaska even to the point that our veterans are taken care of in such a manner to ensure that Alaska is the place to retire and the place to take your family.

[12:05:20 PM](#)

The video played from 12:05 to 12:16 p.m.

[12:16:41 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL KATKUS said the second portion of his presentation was about 2013 deployments. There will be 292 total Army Guard deployments in 2013 on Title 10. The preponderance of those is the brand new military police unit they had just reorganized with the mission of going to Guantanamo Bay for a year and providing security. Currently, approximately 54 Air Warriors with Black Hawk UH-60s are going down to Fort Hood in preparation for a year-long deployment in Kuwait. They continue to put two soldiers with the Mongolian unit that is in Afghanistan and the other individuals are doctors, dentists.

The 168th Wing continues to provide fuel all over the world; they are extremely relevant and extremely pressed to maintain those missions.

[12:18:14 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL KATKUS said the 176th Wing has relocated on JBER and have fallen into a "regular op tempo," which is manageable; they are very much accepting the new facilities and at the same time getting ready to go it Kuwait and continue operations.

He showed a picture of a Black Hawk and a Coast Guard HA-60 together as an example of the great cooperative effort the National Guard does in today's world of having to be operational and keeping up with the Joneses and participating equally with everyone out there.

CO-CHAIR SADDLER said he appreciated his presentation and that the video was outstanding work.

12:19:19 PM

GENERAL GEORGE CANNELOS, public member of the Joint Armed Services Committee, said that he was a huge supporter of infrastructure that makes long term sense for the state and he was delighted to hear about the progress on the Tanana River Bridge.

MAJOR GENERAL KATKUS commented that he and Deputy Commissioner McHugh went to review the Tanana River Bridge project recently and found that it is under budget and on time. It is a dual model bridge which means it carries railroad trains and wheeled or track vehicles. So, it's set up in order to support JPARC. The Army will be able to cross the Tanana River Bridge in 2014 to have the option of year-round training access. That was a vision originally established by General Troy, General Jacoby, and General Leighfield for safety, primarily to keep those large vehicles off of the road system and into the training areas. Access there provides a mile-long bridge maintained by the Alaska Railroad for the next 100 years, a tremendous year-round guaranteed-access not dependent upon weather and a singular ice bridge across that big obstacle.

The State of Alaska benefits because the last major obstacle for a railroad into and through the Interior is now being crossed. The state put up \$88 million as their portion and the federal government put up a little over \$100 million. It's a great partnership across the board.

GENERAL CANNELOS said he was in Mongolia last year and met with the defense attaché, which made him realize that the Mongolian partnership is way more than just "feel good." The attaché told him that thanks to Alaska National Guard the Mongolian forces are now certified with the United Nations for peace keeping

around the world. That in turn brings millions of dollars to that country. It's another example of our little state is doing great, great things.

[12:21:26 PM](#)

MCHUGH PIERRE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA), Anchorage, Alaska, said he had some answers to previous questions. The Army Personnel Environmental Assessment (PEA) was referenced earlier and that the original deadline for comments was tomorrow, but it had been extended to the end of the month.

CO-CHAIR SADDLER thanked them for an efficient presentation and for what the National Guard is doing here and abroad.

MAJOR GENERAL KATKUS thanked the committee for having them and offered to answer questions.

[12:22:19 PM](#)

REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS P. OSTEBO, United States Coast Guard, Commander 17th Coast Guard District, said he should have brought an episode of Coast Guard Alaska that would have been as interesting as Major General Katkus' video. He thanked them for the opportunity to speak today. He said he was honored to accompany Major General Katkus and Lieutenant General Hoog in providing exceptional leadership for the Department of Defense and National Guard forces that call Alaska home; together they make up a strong team that serves both the state and the national government. Today, he looked forward to talking about the great work that the Coast Guard men and women are doing in Alaska and updating their activities including ARCTIC SHIELD 2012 and most recently, the Kulluk grounding incident.

[12:23:59 PM](#)

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO said the Alaska Coast Guard's goals are to serve and safeguard the public, protect the environment and its resources, and defend the nation's interests in the Alaska maritime regime. Through seamless cooperation with their sister services and with close collaboration with federal, state, local and tribal partners, they do this every day and with expertise. In an average month, nearly 3,000 dedicated Coast Guard men and women conduct 51 search and rescue (SAR) cases and assist with saving the lives of 74 people in Alaska. They board 161 vessels every month and service over 60 aids to navigation and respond to 10 pollution incidents, and help with the safe transport of over 70 million gallons of oil and 1.4 million pounds of explosives around the state. They save the lives of about 800

people a year in Alaska. He said they conduct these missions through operations coordinated here by D-17 Command Center and with major commands located in Anchorage and Juneau.

They have two major air stations: one in Kodiak, the largest Coast Guard facility in the US, and another in Sitka. They have small boat stations, patrol boats, buoy tenders, and marine safety teams located throughout the state from Ketchikan up and out to Dutch Harbor and as far north as Barrow.

Last year, Coast Guard District 17 (D-17) re-engaged in the Arctic with a major program called ARCTIC SHIELD 2012. They proposed ARCTIC SHIELD 2012 to respond to the dramatic increases in Arctic activity resulting from diminished sea ice and longer open water periods. The mission there had three primary objectives:

1. Operational excellence and to re-familiarize the Coast Guard with operating north of the Arctic Circle
2. Capability assessment so they could test existing and new equipment to be used in the Arctic across all missions
3. Outreach to local community to help educate them in their work up there

He assured them that ARCTIC SHIELD 2012 was a resounding success, overcoming the obstacles of distance, logistical challenges and working with the absence of a deep water port.

[12:26:39 PM](#)

In particular, he said D-17's Arctic operations last year consisted of opening a seasonal air facility in Barrow consisting of two H-60 helicopters, their crews, maintenance personnel, transportable communication center and supporting personnel. The H-60s flew over 289 flight hours, conducted 11 search and rescue cases, saved 4 lives and assisted with the saving of 6 other lives. They conduct ice reconnaissance, maritime domain awareness, and provided VIP and homeland security support all summer long as well as support for the state and other federal agencies.

In addition to the H-60s, C-130s were deployed to the Arctic almost continuously from Kodiak, which is 820 miles away. They provided 70 logistics flights, moved over 1 million pounds of cargo and fuel, conducted 15 maritime domain awareness sorties, and over 34 hours of ice reconnaissance. In addition, the C-130s were used for medical transportation and SAR across the region.

[12:27:56 PM](#)

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO said in addition to their aviation assets, they had a minimum of at least two Coast Guard cutters operating offshore throughout the drill seasons last summer. Those cutters operated across the mission sets of Arctic domain awareness, search and rescue, law enforcement and had a particular mission to provide the safety zones around both of the drill rigs, not only in the Arctic, but while they were down in Dutch Harbor and during their transit from Dutch Harbor north of the Arctic Circle.

[12:28:29 PM](#)

Most recently, the Coast Guard had been extremely active at first with the SAR and then with the mobile drilling unit Kulluk grounding and rescue. Their two main goals in this mission were accomplished; the first was that nobody gets killed or hurt and second was to have no environmental damage or pollution.

He was also honored to represent the air station crews that rescued 18 people off of the Kulluk in 45 ft. seas and hurricane weather. He had convened a formal Coast Guard marine casualty investigation that will look into this matter and investigate all aspects of the grounding including its support vessels, the equipment that was used, and investigating the possible errors or mistakes that may have happened. Identifying what went wrong and how these types of incidents may be avoided in the future will allow the Coast Guard to potentially save lives and protect the environment in the future.

As of yesterday they stood down the unified command in Anchorage on this case. The tow plans had been submitted to the Coast Guard and been reviewed; with some minor edits they are complete and he expected the Kulluk to leave Kiliuda Bay in the next few days for repair overseas.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO concluded that the Coast Guard had been extremely busy and their work throughout Alaska continues to grow. Maritime activity from Dixon Entrance to the Arctic EEZ out to the Unimak Pass is expanding and as it does, you can always count on the US Coast Guard to be there and to be "Semper Paratus." He thanked them for giving the Coast Guard the opportunity to testify here today and offered to take questions.

[12:31:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ISAACSON asked what he meant by the Arctic EEZ.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO clarified that he meant the Exclusive Economic Zone, which is out to 200 miles around the state.

SENATOR DYSON asked for an update on the re-commissioning of the Polar Star and whether the Polar Sea would be treated similarly.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO answered the Coast Guard currently has one operating ice breaker, Coast Guard Cutter Healy, and she is extremely valuable in Alaska. They have two other major ice breakers that are in caretaker status: the Polar Star is the largest conventionally powered ice breaker in the world and is in the process of being reactivated; she will be back in service by next summer with some early run-up work taking place in Alaska to get her crews trained up on breaking ice. Then she would go towards Antarctic to help McMurdo Base break out next winter.

SENATOR DYSON asked if the Polar Sea is still active.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO replied that the Polar Sea will remain in caretaker status until and if funding is made available to bring her back into service.

SENATOR DYSON said those are the only boats we have that are capable of breaking multi-year ice.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO said that was correct. Healy, while quite capable, is limited in her icebreaking capabilities. She is actually technically a medium icebreaker. The other two are heavy world class icebreakers.

[12:33:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked him what other elements were involved in the Kulluk incident and to elaborate on the Tugboat Alert's role in it.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO said he received a number of phone calls on the first night of the SAR case and one was from Retired Vice Admiral Tom Barrette who asked if he needed help; his answer was yes. He responded by diverting the Tug Alert that is focused on Prince William Sound. Alert came out there and he couldn't say enough about the work it had done. They awarded the crew a lot of recognition. They were the last tug connected to Kulluk by a seven-inch nylon braided emergency towing line and they were determined to keep it off the beach. He had to order them twice to cut the tow line when they were a quarter mile offshore for fear of them ending up on the beach as well, but they just

didn't want that boat to go on the beach. They did an outstanding job.

You try to learn from these kinds of tragedies he said, and the unified command was probably the best exercise in a maritime environment that the state could have possibly had. They went from zero folks and no unified command to about 750 people within about two days of the Kulluk going aground with all federal partners, and state local and tribal partners helping to put together a consolidated response. Clearly it was a combined effort by everybody, not only on the active duty side but by their state partners. He thanked him for bringing that up.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if this was due to a freak weather situation or should Shell have known about this and not been in the waters at the time.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO said all that will come out in the marine investigation and he couldn't get into the specifics. He could say that the Weather Service in NOAA typically puts out a reliable weather forecast for about five days into the future. Beyond that it gets to be less and less reliable. At the same time that the Kulluk was transiting from Kodiak towards Washington when she hit this bad weather, there over 100 other vessels operating in the northern Gulf of Alaska including a Coast Guard cutter. He added that the Kulluk had an extensive tow plan that was reviewed by their towing agent, Shell Corporation, the Coast Guard and other folks before they left Dutch Harbor.

[12:38:00 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR SADDLER asked, given the increasing Outer Continental Shelf activity and the increased shipping along the Great Circle Route and the Northwest Passage, what the long term plans were for Coast Guard presence in or near the Arctic. Kodiak is great, but it's a little far away.

REAR ADMIRAL OSTEBO said the lead-up to his question pointed to two different areas that are important to talk about. One is the Great Circle Route and growth in maritime transportation and traffic primarily between Dixon Entrance out to Unimak Pass and over to Korea. He explained that Dixon Entrance is an international entrance just south of Ketchikan between Canada and the US. That leads to the fourth largest port on the West Coast, which is Prince Rupert. It is currently larger than Oakland in the amount of traffic that goes in and out because a boat with IKEA products from Korea runs through the Great Circle

Route and into Prince Rupert, it can make it to market in Chicago or the East Coast three of four days faster than if it were to travel further south to California.

[12:39:17 PM](#)

Clearly, he said, as DOD swings to the Pacific, as attention swings to the Pacific, traffic and maritime commerce is increasing from about 300 vessels a month through Unimak Pass up to 400 vessels a month. The Selendang Ayu was one and that gave him pause and concern for the international straits known as Unimak Pass and Dixon Entrance. Addressing that traffic presents a very specific and very interesting problem for the US Coast Guard and the State of Alaska in responding to maritime accidents not only in the saving of life but in terms of responding to environmental damage that might happen from that increased traffic.

In addition, as Kitimat and Prince Rupert become major exporting places for oil and perhaps gas in the future from Canada, that raises the bar for escorting tankers leaving out of Dixon Entrance. The Coast Guard is working to evaluate what the best resources would be to attack that problem.

[12:40:34 PM](#)

In the Arctic, part of the mission of ARCTIC SHIELD 2012 was to evaluate their response capability with the assets they have to provide a long term presence in the Arctic. Clearly every indication is that the Arctic will continue to grow in its relevance in the maritime community and the Coast Guard is evaluating its strategic and long term presence up there both offshore with more and better capable ships and onshore, primarily, with a seasonal air facility.

[12:41:47 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR SADDLER found no questions and thanked everyone for being with them today. He hoped this was just one more element in the continuing conversation between legislative leaders and the military services and agencies about meeting the opportunities and challenges in Alaska. Alaska respects the military and values them and hopes they can stay here and grow. With that he adjourned the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting at 12:41 p.m.