

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

February 17, 2015

2:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Lora Reinbold, Co-Chair
Senator John Coghill, Co-Chair
Representative Wes Keller
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Geran Tarr
Senator Anna MacKinnon
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Pete Kelly

PUBLIC MEMBERS

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Case - retired
Colonel Tim Jones - retired
Charles "Chick" Wallace (via teleconference)
Major General Jake Lestenkof - retired (via teleconference)
Colonel George Vakalis - retired (via teleconference)
Chief Warrant Officer Curt Brownlow (via teleconference)

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: "STATE OF THE MILITARY"

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

LIEUTENANT GENERAL RUSSELL J. HANDY, Commander
Eleventh Air Force
Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave an overview on the military in Alaska.

LAURIE HUMMEL, Commissioner
Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
Fort Richardson, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of DMVA.

LUKE HOPKINS, Mayor
Fairbanks North Star Borough
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Described the "Tiger Team."

ACTION NARRATIVE

[2:04:40 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR LORA REINBOLD called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. Representatives Keller, LeDoux, Lynn, Tarr, and Reinbold and Senators Coghill, McKinnon, Bishop, and Wielechowski were present at the call to order. Also in attendance were retired Lieutenant Colonel Tom Case and retired Colonel Tim Jones. Present via teleconference were Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, Chick Wallace, retired Major General Jake Lestenkof, retired Colonel George Vakalis, and Chief Warrant Officer Curt Brownlow.

PRESENTATION: "State of the Military"

[2:07:06 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD announced that the first order of business would be a presentation by Lieutenant General Russell Handy, commander of the Alaska Command of the Eleventh Air Force, the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region (NORAD), and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska. She said General Handy is the senior military officer in Alaska and responsible for the integration of all military activities in Alaska's joint operations area. He is a command pilot with more than 3,600 flight hours, and he participated in Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Desert Fox, Southern Watch, Noble Eagle, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn, she added.

[2:09:04 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL RUSSELL J. HANDY, Commander, Eleventh Air Force, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), noted that there

were six mission-ready military aircraft in Alaska in 1941 and 22,000 military women and men with very poor command and control and no infrastructure. In 1942, the recognition of the importance of Alaska triggered the construction of the Alaska Highway. In the same year, he said, the Japanese invaded and occupied Attu and Kiska Islands. The next year, the 1,500-mile Alaska Highway was completed, providing a way to bring infrastructure overland into the state, he explained. Alaskan Command was formed in 1947, and now it is a sub-unified command under the U.S. Northern Command (NorthCom).

2:11:30 PM

[A video was shown.]

2:12:48 PM

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY noted that the video showed "airmen, soldiers, marines, sailors, active duty guard reserve, coast guardsmen, and civilian warriors, and they're all on there because they're all integrally involved in everything that we do to maintain ready forces for global deployment in Alaska."

2:13:27 PM

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said there are a number of reasons why it is important to have an Alaska command, and he showed a slide entitled "DOD Footprint," [an overlay of a map of Alaska military stations on a map of the Lower 48 states]. There are 32 military installations, 12 major installations, and about 72,000 active-duty guard reserve and families in the state. Adding about 80,000 to 100,000 veterans, one in five Alaskans have direct military involvement, he said, and there are also businesses that depend on the military in Alaska. He noted that about \$1.5 billion a year of DOD [Department of Defense] money is in the Alaska economy, about 18 percent of the state economy. Alaska is geographically isolated, so no other state can lend assistance when natural disasters occur. Additionally, he said, Alaska is a "critical approach to the homeland," because no other state has the extensive coastline and air approach.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said the Northern Command abuts the European Command and the Pacific Command, so it serves to unify DOD action. He showed a chart, "Historical Alignment (pre Oct 14)," and said he has "been aligned with four hats." One is the Eleventh Air Force, where he manages airmen serving Hawaii and Guam. He then spoke of the relationship with the Canadian

government, and said, "We are responsible, of course, for warning assessment and defense of our airspace." He noted that "we had two hats: the Alaskan Command and the Joint Task Force Alaska, one of which worked for Admiral Locklear in Pacific Command and one for Admiral Gortney in Northern Command, but we really, increasingly, were doing more and more in support of NorthCom." So, in October, the Secretary of Defense signed an order to move the Alaska Command from the Pacific Command and disestablish the Joint Task Force, he explained, which is more streamlined and more accurately depicts activities within Alaska. Day-to-day missions and the interactions with FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] and the state are all fundamentally a NorthCom responsibility, he stated, and that is why the organizing makes so much sense.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY turned to a slide showing a snapshot of where the 946 Alaska-based forces are currently deployed, which does not count the thousands who are on temporary duty assignments for training and readiness. The Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Royal Canadian Air Force, and the civilians who work with them stay on watch, "24/7," in support of the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) region, he stated. He said NORAD is responsible for surveillance warning and aerospace control, and there are three North American regions, the Lower 48, Canada, and Alaska, and they all have different challenges. He stated that there has been an increase in activity by the Russians near our borders, "and while the numbers have not increased nearly to the degree that we've seen in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, they have increased, and the sophistication of their training missions has also increased." When this occurs, in accordance with international law, these military training flights do not have to file the same kinds of flight plans or squawk codes as civilian aircraft, he explained. The aircraft often come into our zones unidentified, but "they have not touched our 12-mile international boundary," he said, but "nonetheless we like to know who is coming within our identification zones, and we identify all of the aircraft." He noted a June flight that came within 40 miles of California and 16 other incursions between July and August of 2014 that were intercepted or identified "in some way." The Russians are sending a message that they still have the ability to project power all over the world, he said.

[2:21:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR COGHILL said it is nice to know those borders are being watched, and he mentioned boat traffic in the northern Asian

continent and asked if [Russians] are flying over the [North] Pole.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said yes, but much less frequently than in more southern latitudes. He said the Russians are building infrastructure and are considering ports and bases along the Arctic front to support economic interests in oil and gas.

CO-CHAIR COGHILL asked if Alaska needs infrastructure. The Asian Pacific will be a tense zone, but the Arctic is a growing concern. "We see Alaska as a strategic location, but their northern Asian place must also be equally strategic," he added.

[2:23:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if Russians fly close just to show that they can.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said there is a lot of conjecture, and he believes they have an interest in projecting power, as do we.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if U.S. aircraft fly close to Russian airspace.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said, "We exercise freedom of action throughout the world, quite frankly." He said the Chinese government declared an air defense identification zone, and "I think that it was less than 24 hours later we flew within that--and have every right to do so. While we don't operate very frequently up in that area, we certainly have the ability to do that in accordance with international law anytime we please."

[2:24:26 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY noted that he is also a service commander and management headquarters for all the airmen who serve with the Eleventh Air Force. The Eleventh Air Force recently aligned many of the airmen who were assigned to a commander in Hawaii to him, he said. So, "all of our Air Force assets that are now assigned on U.S. soil are under Eleventh Air Force," he stated. In Alaska, the Eleventh Air Force manages a number of facilities that contribute to readiness, he explained, with two large operations and maintenance contracts managed by the Pacific Regional Support Center and run by Alaska Native corporations. There is an exciting 10-year arrangement with ARCTEC Joint Venture for \$422 million to support the 15 long-range radar sites across the borders of Alaska. He said three

installation-support contracts were merged into one for the King Salmon Airbase, Eareckson Air Station, and Wake Island, and Chugach Federal Solutions manages this \$184 million contract. He said his group is engaged in 63 environmental restoration projects, and many of those cleaning up are Alaska Natives.

2:27:47 PM

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked him to compare our preparedness with that of "other major superpowers."

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY answered that Russia is trying to demonstrate its global presence, but the number of bombers and aerial refueling tankers is dwarfed by the capability of the United States Air Force. He added that we partner and often discuss defense issues with the Chinese military, which is "very, very strong within its region," but it cannot compare to the U.S. in its ability to globally project power.

2:29:10 PM

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if the Air Force has aircraft that go faster than the speed of sound, like the Concord.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said the F-22 not only goes faster than the speed of sound, but it can cruise at that speed without the use of afterburner. The Air Force does not have any large transport aircraft like the Concord, he stated, but "virtually all of our fighter-sized aircraft are supersonic in some way." He added that it takes a lot of fuel to go that fast, and other aircraft can get the job done without that capability.

2:30:30 PM

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY noted that Lockheed Martin just completed an "essential parts replacement program" for all radars, giving them a life of about another 10 years. The Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) is six times the size of its nearest partner in the Lower 48 and has a vast amount of airspace and very sophisticated equipment. He said it needs to be continuously upgraded, especially for the fifth generation aircraft like the B-2, F-22, and F-35 where it is not meeting requirements, "so we're expanding both the vertical size and then some of the equipment capability within the ranges," and that initiative is still ongoing, and he expects it will take 12-18 months before any of those initiatives come to fruition. He said, "The FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] has the ball

right now ... on most of those initiatives, and they're about to come out for public comment."

2:32:41 PM

COLONEL JONES asked about the gaps he intends to address.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY explained that there are six areas that are targeted, and there is a record of decision on the environmental impact statement on each [project]. The first is an expansion of the Fox 3 Military Operating Area—the southernmost piece of that long piece of airspace, which is now very limited in vertical capacity to be able to do realistic training. He said there are some lower altitude areas where civilian aircraft fly, and he wants to be careful and perhaps mitigate the impacts by using corridors and time restrictions. "That's the kind of thing the FAA will help us with," he stated. There are "a couple of enhancements in our area ground ranges, both restricted area 2202 and 2205," he said. It will be a slight extension and re-angling of the airspace in order to drop live ordnance and keep people safe. "Because our F-22s own the night, but we want to continue to have them own the night, we need to fly a little later in the evening," he explained, and instead of having to land at 11 p.m., perhaps land at 1 a.m., which is a very small window at the beginning of spring and at the end of summer. He told the committee that Alaska is at the forefront of remotely piloted vehicles, and he spoke of working with the University of Alaska and other partners, and they are studying what restricted airspace corridors are needed. The next expansion is of the Army range bordering Eielson Air Force Base, he added.

2:36:01 PM

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said the 3rd Wing is one of the major wings in the Eleventh Air Force, and it would take him too long to go through everything the 3rd Wing has done just this past year, but it has been involved all over the world, including supporting the President on a Malaysian trip, being the first F-22s in combat, supporting Typhoon Haiyan [relief efforts], and generating C-17s to support special forces during the Nigerian kidnapping incident. The 3rd Wing was also at the forefront of developing a new concept about expeditionary deployments of sophisticated aircraft like F-22s with a small support package, either overtly or covertly, to places all over the Pacific, he said, and the concept is called Rapid Raptor, and it has been in the media. The 3rd Wing has been involved in other exercises and

readiness initiatives all over the globe, including hosting the South Korean search and rescue effort for a fishing vessel.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY stated that Colonel Brian Bruckbauer and his team [673d Air Base Wing] continue to set the example for how to run a big joint base with over 40,000 airmen, soldiers, and families. He said, "They've started something called a land encroachment executive stakeholder meeting," and he has never seen anything like it. Instead of separate meetings for the Port of Anchorage, Knik Arm crossing, Mountain View noise, and the Ted Stevens [Airport] master plan, for examples, this meeting brings all of the folks together to discuss issues in a holistic manner. It has been a tremendous success, he stated. Many contracts have been restored or captured. The Wing has increased access to the [on-base] medical facility and added urology and vision services to take some of the pressure off of "our clinics downtown." He spoke of the Arctic Thunder open house, where 150,000 people came out to see the Thunder Birds, JBER [Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson] joint teams, and over 35 other performers demonstrating military capability. Referring to "Alaska Shield," he said that the 673rd supported an incredible amount of people to make that exercise happen. He said he is proud to announce that the power plant partnership between the municipality of Anchorage, Doyon, and the base won the 2014 Federal Energy Management Program award by using methane gas from a landfill to generate energy. In its first year, it generated 7.5 percent of the energy needs of the base, and last year it generated almost 26 percent of the power for the base. He said his folks have done an incredible job publicizing all that they are doing and keeping the lines of communication open, and the U.S. Air Force said the 673rd has the number 1 website in the Air Force, and its Facebook pages are in the top 2 percent. He said Eielson [Air Force Base] is adjacent to "our ranges," and it is a premier exercise and training venue in the Pacific and throughout the entire DOD. One of the areas that may not be as appreciated is the First Air Support operations group, he said, and it is assigned to the 354th at Eielson, but it is headquartered at Lewis McChord, at JBER, and in Hawaii. He explained that "these are the joint terminal attack controller airmen that go to war with the Army on a daily basis." They conducted the first-ever Australian mission training trip. He noted that the 63-year-old combined heat and power plant at Eielson is monitored very carefully, as losing heat is a "significant emotional event in the wintertime." It is a coal plant, and boilers one through four have exceeded environmental standards, but boilers five and six need to be replaced, and there is funding in place, he noted.

[2:43:11 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR COGHILL said it is not just a power plant; it keeps the whole place warm. It was so important to DOD that, under sequestration, it moved ahead with the upgrade.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY suggested visiting the old boilers and viewing the impressive modifications.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said there was a cost decision regarding privatized housing to bury [water] pipes without protection, "and that's sort of coming back to haunt us." But they received almost \$7 million for the first phase of a holistic repair. The hospital at Eielson is quite impressive for treating patients and saving energy and money at the same time, he said. There are a few initiatives in Interior [Alaska]. The good news is that the U.S. Air Force announced that Eielson is the preferred alternative for the first overseas base for F-35. He said there is work in that direction, so he is optimistic.

[2:46:03 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP asked if he saw a simulator for F-35s at Eielson in the President's budget.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said he believes so, but until the environmental impact study is done, he can't say for sure.

SENATOR BISHOP asked about coordinating "September with the range control for our Alaskan moose hunters."

[2:47:26 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said he hears him, and there is an ongoing analysis for aggressors, and "we lost a third of our aggressor capability, and so the Air Force is at a bit of a strategic crossroads." They are looking at different ideas to get to an executable plan, including other platforms, reserve component associations, and even contract aggressors. He anticipates hearing an update very soon, hopefully in March. Finally, the Army is bringing a Gray Eagle company, which is a remotely powered vehicle, much like the [MQ-1] Predator, with tremendous and exciting opportunities for Alaska. Not just for readiness for combat, but it is a powerful weapon system and can be used for disaster response.

2:49:21 PM

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked about the F-35 timeline.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said the record of decision on the environmental impact statement is planned for the summer of 2016, "to keep us on track for a first aircraft in 2019."

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD announced that Bill Popp is on teleconference.

2:50:02 PM

CO-CHAIR COGHILL said Mayor [Luke] Hopkins [Fairbanks North Star Borough] is in the audience, and he put together a "tiger team," which has been a good listening session and a good "discussion point." Additionally, Fairbanks Mayor John Eberhart is here.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said there is a tremendous partnership with communities and the [armed services], and Mayor Hopkins is well-known and well-respected, as is Mayor Eberhart.

2:50:57 PM

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY showed a slide of the locations of Army forces in Alaska. He said the Army will make the decisions it's going to make, but his job is to ensure that the decisions are made with full knowledge of what U.S. Army Alaska brings, not just to Alaska, but to national capabilities. "They really are the Arctic experts in the Army," he said. The forces are deployed all over the globe, he noted, but they come home and use that time to get back into their Arctic skills. They collaborate with Nepal, Mongolia, Finland, Norway, and Iceland, and he said he is very proud of them.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY showed dates of community listening sessions [for Army structure changes]. His next slide was on the missile defense system, and he said that the partnership between the Missile Defense Agency, Space and Missile Defense, and the Alaska National Guard has never been stronger. The long-range discrimination RADAR (LRDR) basing decision is still not made, he stated, and "they" are looking at a couple of sites and comparing the costs and benefits. "I think they're interested in moving forward while the interest in funding that is high," he offered. There is \$138 million earmarked for the program, so it is moving forward and the question is: "Where?" The combined heat and power plant plan at the Clear Air Force Station is on track, and the plant will be decommissioned on October 2015. In

Fort Greely, the funding is complete for 14 operationally configured silos, and the upgrade for the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicles, a missile that hits another missile, is underway and funded, he stated. Turning to combat training and readiness, he said Alaska hosted three big Red Flag exercises last year, which involved international allies and partners at varying levels of sophistication. In 2015 [there will be] two big Red Flags, and "we're the only two major blue air, so the friendly side" of the participants were Japan and the Republic of Korea forces, which is significant when one understands the history between those two nations. Northern Edge is biennial and was cancelled in 2013, but it is on track [for 2015] and the only remaining high-end exercise that only includes the U.S. The intent is to look at all the exquisite capabilities that our forces have, and it will occur in the Gulf of Alaska and overland in the JPARC. He said, "Everyone wants to play, because it's been so long since we've done one."

[2:57:28 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR COGHILL asked about Coast Guard involvement.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY answered that there is training with the Coast Guard in smaller scale events, because it is so busy. It is looking at Northern Edge, but it is difficult for the Coast Guard to commit. The Navy will play a bigger role in the event, he said.

[2:58:27 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY turned to the Alaska Command (ALCOM), which is focused on Alaska and the Arctic. He said Alaska Shield was an incredible success last year and a culmination of 18 months of planning to look at a disaster on the scale of the 1964 Good Friday Alaska Earthquake. It is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) bi-annual capstone event, and there were nine major exercises assessing how to improve Alaska's emergency response capability, including local, state, and tribal plans, as well as interagency coordination. The results included validation of codified responses and many that were in development. In looking at how to make things better, many amazing things came out of the exercise. He noted that Alaska has no adjacent state to provide aid, "so, Commissioner Hummel [Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs] and I spent an awful lot of time talking about how to have no airspace between the active duty Title 10 forces and the Alaska National Guard on how to respond to an incident in this state—and as you know,

that's not necessarily easy." There are many legal and policy issues, and one way to deal with that was to exercise the "dual status command authority." Therefore, he said, there was a 1-star Alaska Guard in command of both Title 10 military forces and Title 32 forces within the guard. There is a special, intense course, and there are only "one or two of them qualified within the state to do that, but we stand that command up and, then, as the sub-unified commander, the overall Joint Force commander, I push commander forces, so tactical command authority with both of those legal hats to that commander, and that commander takes command of them and pushes them, as required, to where they need to go," he explained. He said that approach eliminates "conversations and red tape," and at the tactical level, it puts the commander in charge of forces, which is where the commander needs to be. To be prepared, he and Commissioner Hummel's predecessor signed a standard operating procedure, which covers first indications of a disaster, training and qualifications [of dual command authorities], getting [the appropriate person] appointed by the Governor, and how to execute throughout the exercise. He noted the "Alaska Playbook," and said it is a step up in command and coordination from the SOP [standard operating procedure], and the previous governor and previous commander signed the "playbook," and it is a document that is still being developed. The playbook is like a two-minute drill in a football game; it is what is needed right when a disaster happens, "because if you start talking about it when it happens ... you're late to need." The playbook clarifies [forces] to be requested and what is already available. He said the playbook is a fantastic tool for a disaster, and he will discuss it with the Governor [Walker] tomorrow. The group figured out how to open damaged ports, such as using a ship offshore, which involves boats, pipes, and ramps. The group also exercised, for the first time, a complete aeromedical patient evacuation, and he gave the example of evacuating the injured from Valdez, getting them to a port such as JBER, and processing them at a large facility that was set up from scratch. They also tested the entire critical incident search and rescue response plan. He said the exercise involved about 250,000 people throughout the state, and "I think it was a great confidence builder that we're all ready to work together."

[3:06:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked if the infrastructure will be maintained so it will be ready to go for a live event.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said joint logistics over the shore, for example, are positioned where they can get here in a hurry, but most of the infrastructure is not sitting here. A big challenge is the need to control the flow of aid, because so many people want to help, and the first things that get maxed out are the runway and ramp capacities. The most valuable enduring factors are the documents, arrangements, playbook, and memoranda of understanding between agencies so that no one is arguing when the incident happens. As a DOD officer, he has less involvement than state agencies, but "we're the folks that are ... there with the big heavy capacity to help, but we can't help until we're asked and we're not asked until all those agencies get together and agree on what they want to ask for."

[3:08:17 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said, in answer to Representative Tarr, the Anchorage area is unique, because everything that may be needed is on JBER, including military, National Guard, Coast Guard, and the state emergency operations center.

[3:09:23 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said he has briefed the committee on Colony Glacier, where a C-124 aircraft crashed in 1952 and was not recovered at the time. A few years ago, fragments starting coming out of the glacier. A few weeks a year, teams recover items from the wreckage, and last year, seven sets of remains were repatriated to families. Operation Nanook is a big Canadian search and rescue exercise, and last year it used a scenario with a cruise ship in the Arctic. He said his group participated at a small scale, and he hopes to get more engaged with Canada and its Arctic experts. He spoke of the Arctic Collaborative Environment (ACE), a tool where state officials can use a desktop and get a coherent picture of everything that is going on in the Arctic. He said it is another step toward "all-domain awareness." He said he appointed a new position of an interagency coordinator. He said the Arctic Speaker Series has been a success, bringing in Arctic stakeholders from all over to share what they are doing and to how to operate in the region. The vice-president for external affairs for BP talked about its operations, for example. He then showed a slide, "Other Initiatives," which provides perspective on the multiple programs that relate to the Arctic. The military is trying to stay in front of that issue, he stated.

[3:14:06 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said the budget is better than last year, "because we did achieve some stability in the FY2015 budget, and we were able to meet, at least minimally, most of our mission requirements for readiness and capability." All of the national security services could probably use more money, but they need predictability. He said the bad news is that the Budget Control Act of 2011 reemerges in 2016.

[3:15:15 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD asked what the legislature can do [to influence Congress].

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said the Alaska delegation does not want sequestration, so they would be the ones to ask. From a military perspective, he said he wants everyone to understand that there will be significant implications, because "most of what we're looking at for 2016 assumes that we are not in sequestration." He said the legislature could stress how big of an impact sequestration would have.

[3:17:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD recognized Deputy Commissioner Bob Doehl and Alaska National Army Brigadier General Bridges.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY continued to review the DOD budget. He said there is \$29 million for the [long-range discrimination RADAR], \$11.5 million for the Clear power plant fuel system, and \$1.98 million for transient barracks in Barrow for the Alaska Army National Guard and others, in recognition of the [melting] Arctic. He thanked the committee and the Alaska communities.

[3:20:15 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR COGHILL said he appreciates the military's work. He spoke of personal issues, like PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] and family problems, when military personnel return home, and he asked how the legislature can help.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY said one of the best ways to take care of these men and women is to ensure their families are cared for while they are deployed, including quality public school education for the children and helping teachers understand the needs of military kids.

CO-CHAIR COGHILL said a young 4-H student with a military family visited him and said she is going to Hawaii but plans to return to Alaska.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HANDY noted that he recently attended one of the tribal military meetings, which brought 229 presidents and first chiefs to come to Anchorage. This year it was coordinated with the Alaska Forum on the Environment, and it was a tremendous opportunity to talk about the ancestral lands that the military operates on. He said he then chaired the Statement of Cooperation Executive Steering Group, which was started by General Case and is an opportunity to bring together everyone in federal and state agencies that deal with the environment. He said it helps to get the mission done while still being good stewards of the environment.

[3:25:19 PM](#)

RETIRED GENERAL CASE said the entire university system is completely behind veterans and their families, and that support is growing.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR said the legislature has been working on legislation that helps veterans who return to civilian life, and she asked Lieutenant General Handy to keep in touch with ideas.

[3:27:22 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD said Alaska is in great hands.

The committee took an at-ease from 3:28 p.m. to 3:32 p.m.

[3:32:59 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD welcomed Commissioner Laurie Hummel and highlighted some of her accomplishments: U.S. Army, retired colonel; Senior Advisor of the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, NATO training mission; and directing the Operations Intelligence and Chief Joint Intelligence Support Element, Alaska Command.

[3:34:23 PM](#)

LAURIE HUMMEL, Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA), recognized Lieutenant Tom Case for his service and mentoring and Brigadier General Mike Bridges for his leadership and selfless dedication to the Alaska National Guard

during a difficult time. She said this is her eighth day on the job, and she has spent half of it with General Handy and looks forward to forging a great relationship between the National Guard and Alaska Command. She showed a chart of DMVA organization, and she said the Alaska Aerospace Corporation gets administrative support from the DMVA, and the U.S. Property & Fiscal Office is there to make sure that fiscal and property processes are legal and ethical. Initially, she intends to lead the National Guard and align more closely with the missions of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. She said Deputy Commissioner Bob Doehl will head up the rest of the department.

COMMISSIONER HUMMEL noted that Alaska has a Dual Mission Force, with a state mission under Title 32, and sometimes they are called to federal status under Title 10. Most of Alaska's guardsmen have been called to Title 10 missions, "time and time and time again," she said. The Air Guard is led by Brigadier General Tim O'Brien, and the inbound Air Guard commander will be Colonel Karen Mansfield. She said the state has two wings. The 168th air refueling wing at Eielson runs the KC-135 tanker fleet and the Space Warning and Surveillance Squadron at the Clear Air Station. Additionally, the most complex wing in the Air National Guard is the 176th Wing, which is at JBER. It has a broad suite of responsibilities: combat search and rescue, tactical and strategic airlift, air control, and rescue coordination. The Air Guard is continuously involved in overseas deployment, she said. It runs the regional air operation center (RAOC), which is the 24-hour mission to ensure air sovereignty, and the State Emergency Response Asset is managed through the rescue coordination center. The Air Guard will grow in the next few years by about 250 personnel, she reported.

COMMISSIONER HUMMEL said the three major units of the Alaska Army National Guard are Joint Forces Headquarters, the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade (which will be eliminated), and the 38th Troop Command. She said the good news is that "we will stand up new units in the Army Guard at regional support group and infantry battalion." Having a regional support group is a good fit as a brigade replacement, because its focus is defense support to civil authorities, she explained. "There is a need to exercise this mission set in Korea, which we hope to be able to take opportunity to do that, and it also focusses on force protection logistics and all the mission-essential tasks that are, by necessity, exercised during defense support to civil authorities' types of situations." She said the Infantry Battalion that will be "stood up" works well for recruiting,

especially in rural Alaska, but it does not have a diversity of occupational specialties and does not allow the force to recruit many women, because women are not found below the battalion staff level. She said she is entertaining the idea of asking for elements of an engineer battalion, because they do construction missions, both vertical and horizontal, which is a good capability. The occupational specialties can be recruited throughout the state, and there is an opportunity for women and men. Regarding the operational relevance of the Guard, she said she will focus on the way forward, and she suggested "increasing our strategic alignment within the Pacific Command area of responsibility and strengthening our partnerships." There needs to be regionally aligned federal force partnerships, she explained, and that will ensure the guard's relevance. Relevance in the eyes of the federal force, the National Guard Bureau, is what promotes funding and force structure. She noted that the guard has a successful state partnership program with Mongolia, and she said she is considering adding Nepal as another state partnership program. That will not only increase relevance in the AOR [area of responsibility], but it will expand training in cold weather and high altitude environments.

[3:46:31 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER HUMMEL stated that the DMVA's Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM) is captained by John Madden, and its mission is to protect people and property from all possible hazards. She proposed to improve the coordination between the Guard forces and HSEM with regard to defense support to civil authorities. She said that DMVA needs to work more closely with cities and boroughs on response and support, and it has built partnerships in Bethel, Valdez, Kenai, and Barrow over the last couple of years by hosting exercises in those areas. Commissioner Hummel noted that the guard has not been continuously focused on defense support to civil authorities over the past 14 years, so she sees that as a focus area. She said she wants to ensure, in future exercises, that all the phases from kick-off to the finish include the guard. Usually, she said, the guard comes in during the middle to mitigate a hazard. The initial response is the period where a request is received and assessed by the State Emergency Operations Center, and at the end of an exercise, the department analyzes the cost, efficiency, and effectiveness. She opined that the DMVA has exercised the middle piece well, but she said it needs to choose the best defense force and follow up by accounting for the lessons that were learned for future operations.

COMMISSIONER HUMMEL said the Alaska Military Youth Academy is partnered with the National Guard, and it is consistently in the top five Challenge programs in the country. A study found that every dollar invested in these programs yields considerable savings in societal costs, she stated. Turning to the Office of Veterans Affairs, she said the office it is strategically located because the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is upstairs. It is also on a bus route, which showed her how customer-oriented the director is. She said she hopes to increase rural outreach by bringing division representatives to rural exercise missions, improving public relations, and connecting better to veteran service organizations, including national offices. She noted that many female veterans do not think of themselves as veterans and of having access to those services.

3:53:42 PM

COMMISSIONER HUMMEL turned to the Office of Complex Investigations (OCI) and its timeline for investigating potential misconduct and malfeasance with the Alaska guard. There has been a lot of self-assessment, she said, before, during, and after the OCI report. She spoke of a bi-weekly "commanders update briefing" to address "the areas of concern that were an outcome from the OCI." She guaranteed that leadership will take the OCI report and Judge Collins' special investigation and use them "in every possible manner to increase the capacity of the National Guard and to build and/or rebuild an effective command climate." She said there is a new special victim counsel on staff, loaned from the National Guard Bureau, and she deals exclusively with sexual assault victims. She said she is also focused on getting the state code of military justice into statute and hiring someone to coordinate that effort with the legislature. Lastly, she said she has identified the need for additional legal assistance within the guard. The Judge Advocate General officers and attorneys are overworked in a stressful environment. She said she has requested help from the National Guard Bureau with temporary help or preference at paralegal schools to fill empty slots. The bureau is very receptive, she added. There were five areas noted in the OCI report that were turned over to internal teams, and the sixth issue was a finding of fraud and was addressed in an external federal audit, and although all of the results are not in, no illegal activity was found, but there were administrative mistakes in accounting. She said the DMVA will be at the listening sessions mentioned by Lieutenant General Handy.

4:00:04 PM

CO-CHAIR COGHILL thanked the speakers. He said he went to a listening session a long time ago and it was "a very lofty conversation." He said it is a nomination process, and he hopes "that we're still nominating people from Alaska." He added that he appreciates the focus on readiness for Alaska.

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD said there are flyers on the downsizing events. The main focus is for the members, leaders, and partners to have direct input regarding the Army before the decisions are made. She announced the time and locations of the sessions. She stressed that downsizing would be devastating for Fairbanks or Anchorage. She requested Mayor Luke Hopkins speak to the committee about the Tiger Team.

4:06:45 PM

LUKE HOPKINS, Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough, said that after [the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001], another mayor began monthly civilian/military meetings to discuss how to work together. When there was a "BRAC [base realignment and closure] issue" in 2005 with Eielson Air Force Base, there was a similar effort, he said. He spoke of filling the Carlson Center "with red shirts," and there was a team that met regularly on that issue. When the downsizing issues came around, which included moving F-16s, "we created a Tiger Team" to include members of Congress, the assembly, and non-elected officials to meet every week. The assembly provided funds for studies and consultants, he added. He said there was a party when "the announcement came for the F-35s," but there is work to be done so the Tiger Team will continue meeting. The State of Alaska and the borough are members of the "Association of Defense Communities," and that is like a Tiger Team but at a different level, he explained, and Alaska is in competition with other states for forces and expenditures. Senator John McCain has a lot of strength, he noted. He said, "So, that's how the Tiger Team works; we're continually bringing up issues of how to respond to the needs that we think our community should have and serve the military." With regard to the expansion of JPARC, it is "a big bite" for Alaska, but it is important to have the record of decision made. He recalled when a stealth bomber came to Eielson Air Force Base during one of the Red Flags, and it was hot-fueling; "they had the simulation of being able to go undetected just as if they were over the Mediterranean and the enemy was trying to identify that aircraft coming in. That's how big JPARC airspace is," he stated.

4:15:02 PM

CO-CHAIR COGHILL recalled that the Tiger Team prepared comments for the environmental impact statement for JPARC, and it allowed community members and local aviation members to help. He said it also allowed the community to understand the military better.

MAYOR HOPKINS added that the legislature is involved in the Tiger Team. The group does other things and is working on a joint land use study. He spoke of a partnership between communities and individual bases, including small businesses. There are nine subgroups that meet regularly, including one on sexual harassment, which includes the University of Alaska. He said, "We're lowering the cost of energy," and that affects military families. He spoke of unmanned aircraft and ties to the University of Alaska. Industry is allowed to work with the military in its restricted airspace, which is a big deal, he noted. He said he wants to give people on the base a quality of life by way of public transportation. The team works together to solve problems that Alaska faces, he summarized.

4:22:15 PM

CO-CHAIR REINBOLD noted that CSHJR 13(MLV) passed the Alaska House. She then highlighted the importance of preventing downsizing because of [Alaska's] strategic location, deployment platforms, railroad connectivity, and good training areas. She quoted Army Major General William Mitchell, father of the Air Force, who said: "I believe that in the future, whoever holds Alaska will hold the world."

4:24:51 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.