

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

February 22, 2018

1:07 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Chris Tuck, Chair
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Vice Chair
Representative Justin Parish
Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Lora Reinbold
Representative Dan Saddler

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: 151 YEAR HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
IN ALASKA

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

GENE WHITE
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint of "151 Year History
of the United States Coast Guard in Alaska".

ACTION NARRATIVE

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VICE CHAIR GABRIELLE LEDOUX called the House Special Committee
on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.
Representatives Saddler, Reinbold, Spohnholz, Parish, Rauscher,

and Ledoux were present at the call to order. Representative Tuck arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**Presentation: 151 Year History of the
United States Coast Guard in Alaska**

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VICE CHAIR LEDOUX announced that the only order of business would be a presentation titled, "151 Year History of the United States Coast Guard in Alaska."

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GENE WHITE, Representing Self, advised that he has had a long-standing interest in the history of Alaska and the United States Coast Guard, it basically came together in this presentation, and he served for four years in the U.S. Coast Guard many years ago. He turned to slides 2-3 and pointed to the five branches of the U.S. Military, of which there are a total of seven uniformed services including military and non-military. The definition of the National and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United State Public Health Service, under 10 U.S. Code Section 101(a)(5)(B&C), is described as uniformed services. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was created in 1807, originally it was the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

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The committee took a brief at ease.

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CHAIR TUCK brought the committee back to order and asked Mr. White to continue his presentation.

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MR. WHITE reiterated that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) predecessor was created in 1807, as the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey performed a lot of the mapping for navigation around the coastlines. He turned to slides 4-5 and advised that NOAA has commissioned officers and their uniforms are U.S. Navy uniforms with NOAA insignia. The U.S. Public Health Service was created in 1798, under "An Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled

Seamen." The U.S. Public Health Service also wears U.S. Navy uniforms and the United States Surgeon General is an admiral as a commissioned officer. All of the commissioned officers in the United States Center for Diseases Control (CDC) wear uniforms, as they do in the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC).

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MR. WHITE turned to Senator Lisa Murkowski on slide 5, and noted that Senator Murkowski was born in Ketchikan in a Public Health Services hospital while her father was in the United States Coast Guard. Traditionally, the U.S. Coast Guard is the only military branch that does not, essentially, have essentially doctors or hospitals, which is why they use the Public Health Service.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX noted that she lived in Kodiak at one time, and opined that Kodiak has the largest U.S. Coast Guard base in the country. She asked whether the base has its own hospital.

MR. WHITE noted that he does not have the answer to that question, but the U.S. Coast Guard does have clinics.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked the rating of Senator Frank Murkowski's in the U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. WHITE answered that he did not know the answer, and he has never heard Senator Frank Murkowski talk about his rating.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER answered that Senator Murkowski was a storekeeper second.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 6, and explained that under Title 14 U.S. Code, the U.S. Coast Guard was established on January 28, 1915, "it shall be a military service and a branch of the armed forces of the United States at all times." Under 14 U.S. Code Section 89, the U.S. Coast Guard is tasked with being law enforcement that enforces the maritime laws of the United States. In 1915, the U.S. Coast Guard officially became a military service by merging the Revenue Cutter Service and the

U.S. Lifesaving Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard with the emblem known today.

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MR. WHITE turned to slides 7-9 and noted that the U.S. Navy was disbanded in 1785. Initially, he explained, Alexander Hamilton was the Father of the U.S. Coast Guard, on the \$10 bill, and he was the first Secretary of the Treasury. Subsequent to the Revolutionary War, the United States was essentially "a broke country" with no money and not many avenues to collect revenue. In that regard, custom laws were enacted with the intended duties of enforcing tariffs, so Alexander Hamilton decided to develop a system of cutters to help enforce the tariff laws and assist in the collection of the monies. The Constitution of the United States was ratified in 1788, and the Revenue Cutter Service came into existence only two years after the constitution was ratified. The Revenue Cutter Service was charged with enforcing custom laws, then in 1822, the Timber Act was passed to protect the country's strategic natural resources of which the Revenue Cutter Service played a big role in this protection. In April of 1912, the [Royal Mail Ship] RMS Titanic sank and the International Ice Patrol was formed.

MR. WHITE turned to slides 9-10, and advised that in 1791, the first cutter of ten cutters was commissioned, everything was smaller in those days and this ship was only 48' long with two masts. After realizing the U.S. Navy should be recommissioned, the Naval Act of 1794 [Sess. 1, ch. 12, 1 Stat. 350], was passed by the 3rd United States Congress on March 27, 1794 and signed into law by President George Washington. It did not become active until 1798.

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MR. WHITE turned to slides 10-13, and advised that the Revenue Cutter Service/U.S. Coast Guard has been active in all wars. He referred to the 1797-1801 "XYZ Affair," which was a diplomatic incident between French and United States diplomats that resulted in a limited, undeclared war known as the Quasi-War. He advised that the U.S. Navy had not yet become operational and the Revenue Cutter Service was actually the only marine force America had available, and it protected the nation from the problems it was having with privateers. He then read the list of wars from slide 10, and advised that the Revenue Cutter Service/U.S. Coast Guard played an important part in all of the wars. During the War of 1812, United States Revenue Cutter

(USRC) captured the British Schooner *Patriot*, the first naval capture of that conflict. Slide 11a is a photograph of the Confederate Army's Steamer, SS *Nashville* in service at the beginning of the Civil War, and on the right is the United States Revenue Cutter *Harriett Lane*. He explained that the SS *Nashville* was trying to steam into Charleston Harbor without displaying a flag of origin, it was basically trying to sneak into the harbor. The USRC *Harriett Lane* fired a shot over its bow to tell it to show its colors, and that was the first naval shot of the Civil War. In World War 1, six Coast Guard cutters were sent to England to assist in convoy duty due to the damages caused by German U-Boats, so the cutters escorted convoys from Great Britain to Gibraltar. Unfortunately, he advised, as the war was coming to an end in 1918, the U-Boat USCGC *Tampa* sank with the loss of all hands. Slide 12a depicts the current USCGC *Tampa* as the name lives on in memory of those lives lost. In World War 1, Lieutenant Philip Bentley Eaton served Alaska duty on the USCGC *Bear* for two years, he was selected to perform that duty from the first U.S. Coast Guard Naval Aviation class in 1917. He explained that the U.S. Coast Guard had decided that aviation was going to be important, so the first training was held in Pensacola, Florida. Slide 13b depicts World War II, and the sign read as follows: "The Marines salute the Coast Guard for their big part in the invasion of Guam. They put us here and we intend to stay."

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MR. WHITE turned to slides 14-15a, and noted that on September 27, 1942, Signalman 1st Class Douglas Munro was in charge of a group of small boats that were used to drop about 500 Marines at a beachhead by the Matanikau River. When Munro's boats returned to their rallying point, after the drop-off, they were told that the Marines were under attack from a huge Japanese force and needed to be extracted immediately. Signalman 1st Class Munro quickly volunteered for the job and devised a way to evacuate the battalion. Despite heavy fire from machine guns on the island, Munro directed five of his small craft toward the shore to pick up the Marines who had made it back to the beach. As they closed in, he signaled the other boats to land, and they were able to collect most of the Marines, but some were struggling. In an effort to block them from enemy fire, Signalman 1st Class Munro moved his own boat as a shield between the beachhead and the other boats. His actions cost Signalman 1st Class Munro his life, he was hit by enemy fire and killed. According to fellow signalman Ray Evans, who enlisted with Munro, and was on the boat with him when he died, Munro's last

words were, "Did they get off?" referring to the last of the Marines.

MR. WHITE advised that Signalman 1st Class Munro is the only U.S. Coast Guard member to receive the Medal of Honor, and in honor of his actions, the USCGC *Munro* is stationed in Kodiak. The USCGC *Cyane*, while stationed in Ketchikan, served a couple of years of Alaska duty before World War II started, it was then refitted to perform anti-submarine patrols, convoy escorts traveling to Adak, Kodiak, search and rescue duty, and so forth.

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MR. WHITE turned to slides 15b-17a, and advised that the Alaska Purchase Ceremony was on October 18, 1867, purchased in March of that year, and not long after that, the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Lincoln* arrived in Sitka carrying a survey party headed by George Davidson, visiting Kodiak and Unalaska. When Alaska was purchased, the general feeling in the U.S. Congress and possibly the public, was "What? \$7 million to buy a frozen wasteland?" The U.S. Revenue Cutter *Lincoln*, as part of the survey party, produced a 300 page report which was used to assist in the first appropriation of monies for the development of Alaska. The U.S. Revenue Cutter *Lincoln* also brought the official delegation to receive Alaska from Russia during the Alaska Purchase Ceremony, he said.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 17b, and explained that when Alaska was purchased, the only infrastructure it actually received was the Baranof Castle in Sitka where a light beacon was positioned at the top. He explained that there was a separate lighthouse service at the time, it was not part of the U.S. Coast Guard, and that service decided it was too hard to maintain and wanted nothing to do with the lighthouse. He related that, "Out of the goodness of their hearts," the U.S. Army actually ran the beacon on top of the Baranof Castle for 10 years for free.

MR. WHITE turned to slides 18-19a, and advised that the USRC *Wayanda* performed survey and research in Alaska, and recommended that a federal reserve be established to protect the northern fur sales for the Aleut people and the Privoloff Islands after research was done to show they needed some protection, and the federal government acted quickly on this problem. The USRC *Wayanda* also surveyed Cook Inlet and some of Southeast Alaska. When Alaska was purchased, it was considered to be a frozen

wasteland, which included fishing. Except, the USRC *Wayanda* fished close to the Aleutian Islands and found it to be a rich fishing ground for cod and halibut. In 1877, the U.S. Army, which had been protecting Alaska for 10 years, was suddenly pulled out of Alaska. After performing research as to the reason, he found that the year prior, the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn took place which was described as a "huge black eye for the U.S. Army," and a presidential election was coming that November of 1876, and Ulysses S. Grant was President. He explained that the two presidential candidates in 1876 were Samuel Tilden, Democrat, and Rutherford B. Hayes, Republican. Mr. Tilden won the popular vote and received 184 electoral votes, but the electoral college count needed to be 185. Twenty votes had not actually been cast by mostly southern states, he opined, so the U.S. Congress set up a commission to deal with this issue, which resulted in a lot of back room dealing in the Congress. This presidential election took place during the rebuilding of the south which is called Reconstruction [1865-1877], and after the Civil War, U.S. Army troops occupied some southern states and some governors were not allowed to take their seats. In order to solve the presidential election dilemma, it was agreed that all federal troops would withdraw from the south and the governors would re-take their seats. For that deal, President Hayes picked up the rest of the electoral votes resulting in President Hayes with 185 electoral votes, Mr. Tilden with 184 electoral votes. Mr. White commented that exciting elections were not invented just recently.

MR. WHITE advised that in June of 1877, the troops were withdrawn and President Hayes stated the War Department would no longer be in charge of Alaska, and the Department of the Treasury was now in charge. Under the Department of the Treasury was the Revenue Cutter Service. He referred to the actions of Congress and withdrawing the troops, referencing the passage of the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. He noted that the [Wild] West continued the practice of British common law, which gave sheriffs the right to arrest those resisting a warrant and form a posse, he explained. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibited the use of the U.S. Army to aid civil officials in enforcing the law or suppressing civil disorder unless expressly ordered to do so by the president.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 19b, and advised that Thomas Corwin was the Secretary of the Treasury under President Millard Corwin, and the USRC *Corwin* made its first Bering Sea trip in

1877. In 1880, John Sherman, Secretary of the Treasury, ordered annual Bering Sea patrol duty, and Treasury Secretary Sherman is known for the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890. The whole issue of Alaska being under the Department of the Treasury changed the future of Alaska.

MR. WHITE turned to slide 19, and advised that the captain of the USRC *Corwin* was Captain C.L. Hooper who had visited several villages around the state, and one of those villages changed its name to Hooper Bay. In 1883, Captain Michael Healy took command of the USRC *Corwin*.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 20a, "1884 Early Aids to Navigation" and reiterated that the aid to navigation that Alaska had to start with was the beacon on top of Baranof Castle and finally in 1884, 1,400 buoys were set close to Sitka. When the U.S. Army pulled out of Sitka, the beacon on top of the Baranof Castle was also out, and finally, in 1895, a beacon was added back to Sitka. In 1897, the only aids to navigation were around Sitka and it was the time of the Klondike Gold Rush. As the committee is aware, navigating in Southeast Alaska is dangerous especially without any type of help with aids to navigation, and the Klondike Gold Rush actually took place without any navigational assistance, except when close to Sitka.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER requested a description of a Revenue Cutter.

MR. WHITE explained that a cutter is a reference to a smaller sailing vessel with two masts, and Alexander Hamilton decided America needed a system of cutters. The name Revenue Cutter stuck until the Revenue Cutter Service became the U.S. Coast Guard in 1915. He advised that originally, the Revenue Cutters were there to assist in the collection of revenues for the country.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 20b-22, and advised that in 1885, the USRC *Bear* was transferred to Alaska, and it served 41 years on Alaska patrol duty, which is the longest serving revenue cutter/coast guard cutter ever, and that number has never been surpassed. It is a pretty famous ship, he described. "Hell

Roaring" Captain Mike Healy commanded the USRC *Bear* in 1886, and he was the first African-American to receive a commission in the United States, and the first African-American to command a commissioned ship. Captain Healy was African-American but his father was a slave owner, which is a whole story by itself. Captain Healy was able to go to school, get into the revenue cutter service, and perform especially well. The fact that he was African-American was basically a secret, he never told anyone, and it was not known for a long time, he said.

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CHAIR TUCK noted that the USRC *Bear* was displayed in the [capitol] lounge and when the art was reorganized in the lounge, he took it to his office.

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MR. WHITE explained that the USRC *Bear* controlled the illegal liquor distribution traders used to exploit Natives, and the Native people referred to the USRC *Bear* as "the fire canoe with no whiskey." During the summer of 1888, some whaling ships were stranded in the Arctic, close to Point Barrow, and they couldn't get out. Captain Healy was told that that it was "a near impossible rescue," but he went anyway. This is partly how he got his name Captain "Hell Roaring" Mike Healy. He went there anyway to rescue 160 seamen from the storm with no loss of life.

Mr. White then read a sample of the duties of the revenue cutters at the time, as follows:

The United States Revenue Cutters secured witnesses for a murder case; ferried reindeer from Siberia to Alaska; transported the territorial governor on a tour of Alaska's islands; shipped a USGS survey team to Mt. Saint Elias; carried lumber and supplies for school construction in remote locations and the Arctic; delivered teachers to their remote assignments; carried mail for the U.S. Postal Service; enforced seal hunting laws in the Pribilof; assisted the coast and geodetic survey team; provided medical relief to Native populations; served all life-saving rescue missions; and enforced federal law.

MR. WHITE described the above as a sample of what the revenue cutters were doing for Alaska in the early days.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD commented that she was impressed that that the cutters were able to save lives without a single life lost, "that's called efficient government right there."

MR. WHITE responded that all of the ships he has referenced so far in this presentation performed many of those same duties. The revenue cutters, and later the coast guard cutters also performed judicial functions and were referred to as the "floating court system." The revenue cutters would carry the judge/judges to perform their legal duties to remote locations in Alaska. Alaska was not even a territory until 1912, it did not have judicial districts so the revenue cutter service played an important role.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 23, and explained that reindeer and caribou are, although technically the same, caribou are wild animals indigenous in North America. Reindeer are domestic animals that were domesticated in Europe and brought to North America, which is what slide 23 depicts. Early on, Captain Healy realized that the Natives had been relying on hunting and fishing, except after the white people arrived in Alaska, their stocks of everything were being depleted and malnutrition and starvation was taking place within the Native population. Captain Healy put his head together with Dr. Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian missionary, and they considered domestic reindeer as the solution. In 1891, the USRS *Bear* shipped live reindeer to the Aleutian Islands from Siberia just see whether the reindeer could survive the transport and then survive in Alaska, and they could. In 1892, Captain Healy brought over the first official shipment of animals to Alaska. During the 1890s, revenue cutters transported thousands of reindeer, and by 1930, domesticated reindeer herds totaled 600,000 with 13,000 Native Alaskans relying on the herds for subsistence.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 24a, and noted that the slide depicts the 1/6/2012 commemoration of the USCGC *Healy*, an icebreaker. In 2012, a harsh winter was taking a toll on Nome causing it to basically run out of fuel, an arrangement was made to get a Russian tanker into Nome to refuel the community. In order to facilitate that plan, the USCGC *Healy* actually broke the ice for the tanker to get in and out.

MR. WHITE turned to slide 24b, and said that in honor of Black History Month, this is a photo of Alex Haley posing in a U.S. Coast Guard uniform. He is a famous author, wrote the book Roots, he was the first journalist in the U.S. Coast Guard, the first African-American to make Chief Petty Officer grade in the Coast Guard, and he retired with 20 years in the U.S. Coast Guard service.

MR. WHITE turned to slide 25b, and noted that it depicts the commemoration of Alex Haley, as the USCGC *Haley*, which is stationed in Kodiak.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 25b, referred to the USRC *Bear*, and said that in 1897, whalers had gotten into trouble in the Arctic and were stuck in the ice not far from the area the other whalers had been stuck. The only difference was that this rescue was in the winter. President William McKinley ordered a rescue of the eight whaling ships, which was the first time before climate change that a ship sailed into the Arctic during winter. These whalers sailed as far north as they could travel, somewhere around Nome and south of Kotzebue. They obviously could not take a ship up there so a plan was devised to rescue these whalers with reindeer because the whalers would otherwise starve to death. The captain sent Lieutenant David H. Jarvis and Officer Ellsworth P. Bertholf to drive a herd of reindeer all the way around coastal Alaska to Point Barrow, which is about 1,500 miles. In March 1898, they stopped and gathered reindeer along the way and drove them across Kotzebue Sound on the ice, which is a whole story by itself. He said that they drove reindeer 1,500 miles and finally ended up delivering 382 reindeer to the stranded whalers with no loss of life.

MR. WHITE said that to commemorate, the USRC/USCGC *Bear* is depicted in slide 26a, and it is the modern day 35-year old USCGC *Bear*. Slide 26a depicts a photo of Ellsworth Bertholf who has his own long story, and he ended up being the first commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard when it became a military service in 1915. Slide 27a depicts the USCGC *Bertholf* in commemoration of Ellsworth Bertholf.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked how many different classes of cutters are currently being used in the U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. WHITE replied that the U.S. Coast Guard does so many things that he was unsure he could answer that question properly. The USCGC *Bertholf* is a patrol craft in the security class, the first one was actually commissioned in 2010 and, he opined, approximately 12 or 16 will be commissioned. The security class patrol craft are the newest and largest patrol craft of the U.S. Coast Guard. As far as how many different classes, that is scaled down all the way to small boats, it is a complex function that goes to buoy tenders and icebreakers, he said.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked the oldest cutter class in service.

MR. WHITE answered that the oldest class in service for the patrol craft is probably the 378s, such as the USCGC *Munro* which is based in Kodiak. These ships were built during the late 1960s, and he opined that some are still in service today, although, they are slowly going out of commission.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 27a-28a, and advised that in 1898, the USRC *Manning* began its Alaska duty, and in 1900 started its Bering Sea duty. On June 6, 1912, the USRC *Manning* was tied up in Kodiak when the Mount Katmai Volcano began erupting on the Alaska Peninsula, the biggest volcanic eruption in the 20th Century. He advised that not many people were killed because they had received warnings and were evacuated, but some communities and villages were destroyed when a huge amount of ash was dumped on Kodiak. Most of the residents in Kodiak actually boarded the USRC *Manning*, and the next day the ship got underway out to sea for a period of time. The 500 residents of Kodiak were completely evacuated and they returned after the volcano calmed down. The USRC *Manning* helped to relocate several of the villages by transporting the people and some of the products.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 28, and advised that originally, 16 lighthouses were built in 1902-1932, and 11 are still in use today such as, the Unimak Pass [Scotch Cap Lighthouse] on the easternmost island in the Aleutian Islands. When traveling from the North Pacific into the Bering Sea, Unimak Pass is the route to get there. A lighthouse was first built in Unimak Pass in 1903, then rebuilt in 1940. In 1945, Anthony Petit received the assignment light keeper to the Scotch Cap Lighthouse as the head

of a five-man crew. All of the men were killed on April 1, 1946 during the 1946 Aleutian Islands earthquake, when a massive tsunami struck the station, destroying it. This was the worst disaster to ever befall a land-based Coast Guard light station. The United States Coast Guard named a Keeper Class buoy tender USCGC *Anthony Petit* (WLM-558), based in Ketchikan in his honor and it maintains aids to navigation.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 30b, and advised that during World War II, the War Department decided it would turn off all aids to navigation in order to not help the enemy navigate around Alaska. Unfortunately, not only did that decision not help the enemy but it didn't help our friends because the SS *Mount McKinley* ran aground in bad weather, close to Scotch Cap Lighthouse in 194, because the light was not lit.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 31a, referred to the aids to navigation after the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush, and noted that in June 1906, the first real aids to navigation were actually installed in the state, not counting the lighthouses which were the large aids. He reiterated that the lighthouse service was a separate organization until 1939 when it merged with the U.S. Coast Guard, but the U.S. Coast Guard was performing the aids to navigation.

MR. WHITE turned to slide 31b, and advised that the photo depicts the USCGC *Storis*, stationed in Kodiak for a long time, it has an interesting service which is a whole story by itself. In World War II, the USCGC *Storis* had an interesting story in Greenland, and in 1948 it was transferred to Alaska for Bering Sea duty. In its role in Alaska, it also performed in the same manner as its predecessors by delivering medical, dental, and judicial services around the state. The USCGC *Storis* was stationed in Kodiak until it was decommissioned in 2007. It was the first ship to circum-navigate North America in 1957, and together with two buoy tenders, they went all the way around and ended up on the East Coast.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 32, and noted that the bridge on the left of the photo depicts the old Juneau-Douglas bridge, and the bridge on the right depicts the new Juneau-Douglas bridge. He

advised that the U.S. Coast Guard approves all bridges over the navigable waters of the United States. He suggested requesting a review from the U.S. Coast Guard as to what they are doing in Alaska today. He described that there are 14 cutters stationed around the state, 17 aircraft, an air station in Kodiak and Sitka, and 3 small boat stations.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 33, and advised that the U.S. Coast Guard continues aids to navigation, and in long ship channels range markers are installed: there is a forward and after range marker; one is low and one is high; when the range markers are lined up, "you are in the channel." The photo is the range marker installed just below the runway at the Anchorage International Airport where a moose photo-bombed his picture.

MR. WHITE advised that the U.S. Coast Guard maintains approximately 1,300 aids to navigation around the state, and some are seasonal. For example, in the Gastineau Channel, seasonal markers are installed in the channel during the summer, and they are removed in the winter. He described the Gastineau Channel as a "very tricky place," it is getting shallower and shallower and the U.S. Coast Guard does its best to keep the channel as safe as possible.

MR. WHITE turned to slide 33b, and advised that the U.S. Coast Guard is the only branch that is not under the Department of Defense. It originally started under the Department of the Treasury under Alexander Hamilton, it stayed there until 1967 when it was moved to the U.S. Department of Transportation, which is when the U.S. Coast Guard was assigned the responsibility of approving bridges. In 2002, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. Coast Guard was moved to the Department of Homeland Security where it resides today. The U.S. Coast Guard is the only branch of the military allowed to enforce civil law under the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. He commented that the country does not want the military enforcing civil law, but it does want the U.S. Coast Guard enforcing all maritime laws. He described it as good news and bad news that the U.S. Coast Guard is the only branch not housed under the Department of Defense because the U.S. Coast Guard is always competing with other civilian functions. Previously the U.S. Coast Guard was under the Department of Transportation and competed with freeways for money, and currently it is competing for everything else that is under the Department of Homeland Security budget, he said.

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MR. WHITE turned to slides 34a-35a, and advised that on 8/23/17, the USCGC *Maple*, a buoy tender stationed in Southeast Alaska, celebrated its 60th anniversary. The USCGC *Maple* circumnavigated North America, traveled all the way around to the East Coast, and back through the Panama Canal on its way back to Alaska.

MR. WHITE turned to slide 35a, and advised that the U.S. Coast Guard's white flag will always be on the right when the five flags of the services are displayed, and the U.S. Army's white flag is always displayed on the left.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked the history of the colors of the flags.

MR. WHITE answered that he does not know the history behind the development of the flag and he would have to perform research. He opined that it was developed not long after the U.S. Coast Guard became an official part of the military.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD referred to slide 34b, and requested the meaning of the banners in the flag, and is the meaning of Semper Paratus.

MR. WHITE answered that the Latin on top of the eagle, "E pluribus unum" is the national motto, [which means out of many, one]. The U.S. Coast Guard's motto is Semper paratus, "always ready", and the U.S. Marine Corp.'s motto is Semper fidelis "always faithful."

CHAIR TUCK noted that it resembles the "U.S. Seal" symbol with the arrows and the olive branch, and the 13 colonies are represented in the stars.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER commented that that is the national crest, and E pluribus unum is the country's national motto.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 35b, and described it as the U.S. Coast Guard emblem, and the stripes appeared in 1967. Prior to that time, U.S. Coast Guard ships were white and the only way to determine whether it was a U.S. Coast Guard ship was because it had the letter "W" before the hull number. After 1967, all U.S. Coast Guard ships and boats wore the racing stripe, which many other countries have copied in trying to emulate the U.S. Coast Guard.

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MR. WHITE turned to slide 36, and noted that the picture depicts the three ship colors, the top left is the USCGC *Maple*, which is black and is a buoy tender. These buoy tenders are also known as "working ships" blue collar ships, because those ships maintain the aids to navigation, which is extremely hard work. The servicemembers pull the buoys out of the water that have been sitting there for a year or years and are completely covered with barnacles, wherein the buoys have to be refurbished and make sure everything is in working order, and then returned to their location. All of the aids to navigation, the floating aids, the buoys, the fixed aids on shore, and the day markers, are maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard and it is a huge amount of work. The ship on the right is the USCGC *Bertholf*, it is the newest of the security class cutters, and the bottom picture is the USCGC *Healy*, all U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers in today's world are red, he explained.

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MR. WHITE referred to slide 37, and advised that he cut this article out of the Anchorage paper in 1999, it is the USCGC *Polar Sea* taken from the boat launch in Anchorage. He explained that the USCGC *Polar Sea* and the USCGC *Polar Star* are sisterships built in 1976. He explained the USCGC *Polar Sea* is now permanently tied up in Seattle, Washington, and is essentially being used for parts for its sistership, USCGC *Polar Star*. The U.S. Coast Guard still claims that this is an icebreaker but the USCGC *Polar Sea* is not working, and the USCGC *Polar Star* is the only functional icebreaker the service has at this time. The USCGC *Polar Star* is becoming an aging ship and every time they take it out something happens, it supports the United States interest in Antarctic every winter. This is a huge issue, he noted because the U.S. Coast Guard needs icebreakers, another icebreaker has been approved but there is no money to build it at this time. Although, money was included

in the budget last year but it never made it through the U.S. Senate, money is being put in the budget this year and hopefully there will be enough money to build one more icebreaker. He stressed that the country really needs five to ten more icebreakers, but right now the U.S. government is struggling just to get one more. He described that the cost of an icebreaker is approximately \$1 billion, and it takes about 10 years to build, which is a lot of lag time.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD commented that Russia has "a ton of these" and asked how icebreakers were taken off the nation's radar with such a large, critical, and important coastline.

MR. WHITE said that he completely agrees, these ships were built in the 1970s and are over 40 years old. He advised that the country needs to have a national priority to get icebreakers out there because as the climate changes, this will become more and more important and he cannot stress this issue enough. Mr. White opined that approximately \$700 million is in the federal budget, which is not enough to build a whole icebreaker, but at least most of the icebreaker could be completed. Hopefully, he suggested, the U.S. Congress has the foresight to actually pass this budget. As to how this issue fell off the radar, he said that he honestly does not know the answer to that question. He noted that he has been tracking this personally for approximately 15 years. In 2010-2011, he was working in Juneau as a staffer when the USCG performed an update and the Admiral advised him, off the record, that there was no plan to really go after this issue. He described this issue as hugely important for this state and nationally, the USCG played such an important role in the past and icebreakers are part of its future. This is an important role to carry on for oil exploration, more cruise ship passengers, more freight, and so forth, he pointed out.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD stated that the amount spent on social services is approximately \$3.3 billion, and the nation could build three icebreakers with that budget.

MR. WHITE stressed, "That's nothing compared to the military budget. We're talking hundreds of [billions] of dollars in the military budget." The USCG is not under the Department of Defense, and in all fairness, the money that has been proposed

is actually in the U.S. Navy budget, which is where it belongs. In a declared war, the USCG becomes part of the U.S. Navy, he reiterated.

CHAIR TUCK corrected Mr. White's misstatement and said that hundreds of "billions" of dollars are in the military budget.

MR. WHITE agreed that he meant billions of dollars.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER opined that the federal government has authorized money for icebreakers but not appropriated the money, which is an important distinction.

CHAIR TUCK pointed out that there is a resolution in the Alaska House of Representatives that will be going to the Arctic Policy, Economic Development & Tourism Special Committee to address that issue.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER further opined that "our strategy is to pray for global warming to accelerate."

MR. WHITE responded that the thing about global warming is that it will allow the nation to have more time in the Arctic, but during the winter, there will still be ice and the need for icebreakers for hundreds of years. Therefore, he pointed out, this is still a huge issue.

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MR. WHITE turned to slides 38-40, advised that slide 38 is a picture of himself in boot camp, and a picture of his patrol ship. Beginning in 1970, the USCGC *Sebago* performed ocean stations and long patrols in the Atlantic Ocean under a major traffic route. Slide 39a depicts a historical plaque that was put in at the Pensacola training facility three years ago commemorating his ship. He said he would not explain slide 39b because it was not directly related to the USCG. He turned to slide 40a, and commented that the USCG receives a lot of ribbing from the U.S. Navy as "coasties" and this slide is his friendly ribbing back to the U.S. Navy. The slide depicts a \$4 billion proto-type Navy ship that actually broke down, and at the bottom of the picture the caption read, "Hang on We're Coming," to rescue the Navy ship. Slide 40b represents a message from the Department of Defense to keep everything safe, and he can no longer access those research sites.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER commented that he appreciated the historical lessons, and asked whether other maritime nations, with the same coastal protection of revenue interests, employ the same model of a separate naval warfare branch, or do the countries incorporate it into their naval functions.

MR. WHITE related that interestingly, he was talking to former Representative John Harris yesterday, and his great uncle was a USCG captain who helped develop, after World War II, the initial Japanese Coast Guard. Mr. White said that Canada has a coast guard and the United States and Canada work closely together on many issues. The difference with Canada is that Canada has a discrete coast guard that is similar to the USCG, but in Canada it is not a military force, it is a civilian force. As far as a military function, he opined, the Canadian Coast Guard does not have a role in the military.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER requested the grade/rank structure of the USCG versus the U.S. Army or U.S. Navy.

MR. WHITE responded that the USCG mirrors the U.S. Navy, and up until 1967, their uniforms were identical except for "one small thing" to the U.S. Navy.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER requested a description of the enlisted ranks.

MR. WHITE answered that it mirrors the U.S. Navy in all aspects and grades.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether the retirement benefits are the same in the USCG and the U.S. Navy.

MR. WHITE replied that the retirement benefits are the same and that all military use the same scale for pay, retirement, veteran benefits, medical service, and so forth.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether the accommodations or medals for when the USCG comes under fire, are the same.

MR. WHITE replied that they receive the same accommodations and the USCG is eligible for all of the same medals for any military

service. The USCG has been in all of the wars, he reiterated, and the USCG is a regular military service with the peculiarity of not being under the Department of Defense.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER thanked Mr. White for his presentation because clearly, he is dedicated to the USCG and has a fondness for history.

CHAIR TUCK thanked Mr. White as well for his service, being a good advocate for the armed forces during his retired life, and sharing the history he has researched.

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REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether there is an academy for USCG officers.

MR. WHITE responded that the USCG has an academy that is like the other military academies with one difference, in every other military academy, a person must be appointed by a senator or someone. In the USCG Academy, the only requirement to enter the academy is to apply, other than that, the USCG Academy is located in New London, Connecticut, and it is just like all of the other military academies with all the same military fun.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 2:13 p.m.