

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

March 22, 2018

11:34 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Mia Costello, Co-Chair
Representative Scott Kawasaki, Co-Chair
Senator John Coghill
Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Anna MacKinnon
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Lora Reinbold

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT

Nelson N. Angapak, Sr., Anchorage
Jerry Beasley, Chief Warrant Officer, USCG - retired - Juneau
Colonel Tim Jones - retired - Fairbanks

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Representative David Eastman
Representative Justin Parish
Senator Mike Shower

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

ARMED SERVICES BRIEFINGS:

- Major General Laurel J. Hummel, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs
- Chief Master Sergeant Paul Nelson, Seventeenth U.S. Coast Guard District, Juneau, Alaska

- Colonel Cory Mendenhall, Joint Headquarters, U.S. Army, Juneau, Alaska
- Major General Mark O'Neil, Commanding General, U.S. Army, Juneau, Alaska
- Rear Admiral Michael McAllister, Commander, Seventeenth U.S. Coast Guard District, Juneau, Alaska

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

MAJOR GENERAL LAUREL J. HUMMEL, Adjutant General
Alaska National Guard

Commissioner, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided National Guard Alaska and DMVA activity update.

COLONEL CORY MENDENHALL
U.S. Army

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Stepping in for Lieutenant General Kenneth S. Wilsbach, Commander, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Region, Alaskan Command, Eleventh Air Force, provided Army-Alaska update.

MAJOR GENERAL MARK O'NEIL, Commanding General
U.S. Army-Alaska (USARAK)

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided update on U.S. Army Alaska.

REAR ADMIRAL MICHAEL MCALLISTER, Commander
Seventeenth U.S. Coast Guard District
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a Coast Guard Alaska update.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT PAUL NELSON
Seventeenth U.S. Coast Guard District
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Added comments to Coast Guard update.

ACTION NARRATIVE

11:34:55 AM

CO-CHAIR MIA COSTELLO called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at 11:34 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators MacKinnon, Coghill, Wielechowski, Kelly, and Co-Chair Costello; Representatives Zulkosky, Reinbold, Tarr, LeDoux, and Co-chair Kawasaki. Public members present were Tim Jones from Fairbanks, Jerry Beasley from Juneau, and Nelson Angapak from Anchorage,

ARMED SERVICES BRIEFINGS:

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO asked members to introduce themselves and said that the committee would then take up the Joint Armed Services briefing and update. She welcomed Major General Laurel J. Hummel to the table and reviewed her biography.

11:37:00 AM

MAJOR GENERAL LAUREL J. HUMMEL, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard, Commissioner, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska, thanked the committee for the opportunity to brief them on activities, hopes, and concerns of the military commands serving people in Alaska. She said Alaska statute directs the Adjutant General as the official liaison between the State of Alaska and all active military serving there.

One of her responsibilities is to coordinate with all military components to ensure unity of effort on items of importance to the state from vetting candidates for the next civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army to integrating realistic homeland defense training with domestic emergency responses. There is tremendous benefit to Alaska when the active component and the Alaska-Organized militia work together. Teamwork and a sense of common purpose are the touch stones for the military in Alaska. And there isn't a more committed team of commanding officers than the four flag officers present or represented here today.

For the sake of protocol, General Hummel said she would provide an introduction. She said Lieutenant General Kenneth S. Wilsbach wears three hats: Commander of the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Region, the Alaska Command, and Eleventh Air Force, which has force structure spread across Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam. He is in Australia today, but will be represented by his Chief of Staff, Colonel Cory Mendenhall.

11:41:58 AM

COLONEL CORY MENDENHALL, Joint Headquarters, U.S. Army, Juneau, Alaska, said today he was stepping in for Lieutenant General Kenneth S. Wilsbach, Commander, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Region, Alaskan Command, Eleventh Air Force, who sends his regards. He was called out of state by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

COLONEL MENDENHALL said he was wearing purple today, because it is the color that signifies their joint headquarters where he represents the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force. He expressed their appreciation for the support of the legislature, the Governor, civic leaders, and the communities to the military living in Alaska. They could not execute their day-to-day mission without the exceptional support of the Alaska National Guard, U.S. Army Alaska, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, and their interagency partners.

COLONEL MENDENHALL said he will highlight several topics he discussed with the Vice President during his visit to headquarters in February: where they are today in a changing environment, highlighting what the military men and women and civilian team mates have accomplished in 2017, and provide a look at where they are headed with military construction, building capacity, and capability to project power and defend the homeland.

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Slide 3 illustrated the strategic importance of Alaska to the defense of the nation. Today most people view the United States from a flat map and Alaska is a small dot in the upper left-hand corner. Most media attention goes to the Lower 48 which pretty much distorts the importance and size of Alaska. The world is round and when the globe is tilted, putting the North Pole at center, Alaska is singularly as close or closer to all major capitals in the northern hemisphere. Thus, Alaska provides the U.S. the ability to respond to key locations in the Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East faster than any military base in the Lower 48. It takes approximately 9.5 hours to reach any of them. The importance of Alaska will continue to grow as the Arctic evolves and human activity increases there.

[11:46:15 AM](#)

COLONEL MENDENHALL said several trends are happening in the Arctic: melting ice, competition for natural resources, increasing Russian military activity, and China's influence. These are monitored very closely. They also recognize the reality of climate change.

Interest in the Arctic can lead to more friction and higher probability of human error in conflict, he said. Reduced ice is opening sea routes, easing navigation, and increasing commerce with access to resources and tourism. In 2017, the first Chinese research ship sailed through the Northwest Passage from Shanghai to New York, cutting seven days off the trip if they were sailing through the Suez Canal.

Russia is turning their northern sea route into a seafaring toll road charging for contracted ice breaker support and has a fleet of 41 icebreakers. This route cuts 14,000 miles off transportation. In August 2017, a natural gas carrier sailed from Norway to South Korea in 6.5 days through the Passage.

COLONEL MENDENHALL said another picture on slide 4 outlined the overlapping boundaries between countries in the Arctic. Russia's interest there stems from the fact that 20 percent of their GDP is generated in the Arctic compared to less than 1 percent for the U.S.

China continues to show interest in the Arctic with investments in mining companies in Greenland and asserts itself as a near-Arctic state. Thankfully, any disputes over the claims have been done diplomatically, so far. A lower-right graphic depicts a disturbing trend of Russia's in establishing new and refurbishing 15 Arctic bases that the joint command watches very closely. Expansion of Russian military capabilities on their East Coast is a top concern for his commander.

He said Department of Defense (DOD) objectives remain assuring security, supporting safety, and being able to respond to a wide range of challenges and contingencies. To meet these objectives, smart investments in infrastructure and capabilities need to be made in Alaska.

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COLONEL MENDENHALL said slide 5 provides perspective on how big Alaska is compared to the Lower 48. DOD spends \$1.5 billion in the state per year and federal spending constitutes about 18 percent of the total state economy. While the total active force stationed in Alaska is small, it is significant when considering the total state population is just above 700,000. In short, roughly 20 percent of Alaskans have personal ties to the military, something they are very proud of.

[11:50:11 AM](#)

COLONEL CORY MENDENHALL said the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) at 67,000 square miles is the largest and absolute best training range in the U.S. It hosts year-round exercises and readiness training in air, land, and maritime domains. It provides the space to really demonstrate the capabilities of the most advanced U.S. military systems, like the fifth-generation fighter, the F-22, and the F-35. Continued support for the JPARC is important to ensure the military remains trained and ready.

11:51:04 AM

He said the headquarters plans, prepares, and executes a host of joint and service-specific key military exercises. Some of the more prominent ones are Vigilant Shield (NORAD and USNORTHCOM), in Colorado Springs that is an annual homeland defense command post exercise (slide 7). This is normally done every September/October.

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Arctic Edge (USNORTHCOM), a biennial homeland defense exercise, was just completed for the first time in Alaska (March 12-23). It went extremely well with 1500 marines, special operation forces, sailors, and soldiers from all over Alaska supporting the exercise to validate and refine mission requirements. Additionally, they hosted a Distinguished Visitor Day from Fairbanks down to Fort Greely on one of the range complexes. The planning for Arctic Edge 2020 has started. Observers from the United Kingdom and Canada participated.

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RED FLAG-Alaska (USAF) had 14 coalition and international partners participate in three exercises in 2017. Four exercises are scheduled here for 2018, starting in May.

Northern Edge (USPACOM) is a U.S.-specific command out of Hawaii, a biennial exercise - joint air/land/sea - in the Gulf of Alaska. There were about 6,000 participants in 2018 and the same number is expected for Northern Edge 2019.

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COLONEL MENDENHALL said one of the highlights of 2017 was the US Air Force Arctic Security Expedition in September where 16 US Air Force general officers and Senator Sullivan flew to Fairbanks and held discussions on Arctic awareness and highlighted challenges of operating in the Arctic. Other briefings were held in other villages and Greenland. This helped

inform what the Air Force is working on in their Arctic strategy.

11:55:44 AM

He said the Arctic Maritime Symposium headquarters is spearheading an effort to better understand Naval operations in the Arctic and participated in several events in the Lower 48 including a recent table-top exercise in Juneau with the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy partners. They will be hosting an Arctic Maritime Symposium in Anchorage in August that will include Naval personnel from Norfolk, Virginia.

Operation Colony Glacier collected over 14,000 pounds of debris and recovered 37 of the 52 passenger and crew member remains and will be back out on the ice in June.

COLONEL MENDENHALL said the Rescue Coordination Center is another joint military and interagency success that has resulted in saving 22 lives since last April.

11:57:30 AM

Alaska NORAD Regional work missions (slide 9) is a 24/7 awareness and response capability ready to deter threats. This mission cannot be overstated given the strategic location of Alaska and emerging challenges in the Arctic. Over the last 11 years, they have anywhere between zero and 15 intercepts a year and have had six intercepts so far this year.

COLONEL MENDENHALL said their coalition with Canada provides early warning and defense to North America. There are 15 radar sites and air space control is provided by the 176 Air Defense Squadron from the Alaska National Guard, F-11s at JBER, and Eielson's E3AWAX and KC135 tankers. They positively identify and intercept all aircraft that enter in the U.S. Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Due to the size of ADIZ, the time/distance to intercept, and wanting to remain unpredictable to adversaries, they do not intercept every unknown aircraft. However, Russia can launch aircraft and enter the ADIZ within about 30-45 minutes, and that is watched very closely.

11:59:06 AM

He said this year will mark the 60th Anniversary of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado and the partnership between the U.S. and Canada. He highlighted that their FY18 military construction includes creating missile field number four and adding 20 ground-based interceptor missiles at Fort Greely at a cost of \$20 million.

In addition, \$169 million has been committed and approved in FY18 for the F-35 to be at Eielson Air Force Base. Fifty-four aircraft will arrive between 2020 and 2022, making Alaska the only location worldwide with over 100 fifth-generation fighters capable of strategic air power throughout the northern hemisphere. The bottom line is that the Department of Defense continues making strong investments in Alaska's infrastructure.

[12:00:05 PM](#)

Slide 11, the takeaway slide: Their number-one priority - has always been and will not change - the defense of our homeland and its citizens. The U.S. military is the best-trained, led, and equipped force in the world. Second, their relationships with local civil authorities and interagency partners is very strong.

COLONEL MENDENHALL said the Arctic remains one of the commander's top priorities and they remain committed to working collaboratively with allies and partners to promote a balanced approach to improving security there.

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Slide 12 thanked the legislature for its support of the military.

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO recognized Senator Showers, and Representatives Spohnholz and Easton.

[12:02:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked what the state should be prepared for.

COLONEL MENDENHALL answered that right now the biggest thing on the horizon is a \$50-million allocation for refurbishing facilities at King Salmon. They are also focusing on Eielson Air Force Base with the 54 fighters and the 3500 people that will be stationed there. On-base facilities are maxed out and options for moving people off-base are being considered.

[12:04:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked what Alaska's role is in terms of defense in the Arctic and climate change.

COLONEL MENDENHALL deferred comment on the state's defense to General Hummel adding that they all work together as an integral part of the defense of Alaska and the homeland.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked how many icebreakers the U.S. has compared to Russia's has 41.

COLONEL MENDENHALL replied that the Navy doesn't have any icebreakers, but Admiral McAllister could probably talk a little bit about the Coast Guard's capabilities. He stated, "Obviously, our U.S. Coast Guard is the best in the world." He added that the U.S. Marine Corps is taking a very hard look at training in the Arctic. That is why 370-plus Marines were here during Arctic Edge. The commandant of the Marine Corp is taking a very keen interest in the Arctic and he wants the Marines to participate more.

12:06:21 PM

At ease

12:08:24 PM

Co-CHAIR COSTELLO called the meeting back to order and invited the next presenter, Major General Mark O'Neil.

MAJOR GENERAL MARK O'NEIL, Commanding General, U.S. Army-Alaska, said it was an honor to be here today representing over 11,000 team mates of U.S. Army Alaska. He is proud to be part of such a great team of Arctic Warriors, Department of Army civilians, and their families, whose selfless dedication to duty never ceases to amaze him. He is equally proud to serve in command in Alaska, home of the northern-most combat brigades and supporting forces that truly understand the meaning of "Arctic Tough."

12:09:42 PM

The cover slide of his presentation was a picture of the Airborne Brigade conducting Spartan Pegasus, a defense support of civil authorities training exercise near Deadhorse last winter, where the temperature on the ground was -60 F. The Arctic Tough soldiers are equipped and trained to not only survive but thrive and succeed in these extreme conditions. They are ready to deploy, fight and win anywhere on the globe.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL said their mission is clear: to provide trained and ready forces in support of worldwide unified land operations, which include supporting the U.S. Army Pacific Command and the U.S. Army Pacific in the Indo-Asia Pacific Region. It also consists of being prepared to respond for contingencies at home in defense support of civil authorities' role and homeland defense. To do this mission, an array of forces is assigned to U.S. Army-Alaska that are well supported

and backed by the leadership of America's First Corps headquartered out of Joint Base Lewis McCord in Washington State and the U.S. Army Pacific in Hawaii out of Fort Shafter.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL said they also have a relationship with the Alaskan Command. When it comes to missions with the Alaska Joint Operations area, they work very closely with the Alaskan Command staff to ensure they are ready to respond to missions in the homeland. The recent Arctic Edge exercise was a great example of how joint operations are conducted.

12:12:18 PM

He said readiness is the Army's number-one priority (slide 3). This means trained, combat-ready, dependable, rapidly deployable teams of skilled, tough, alert, and adaptable warriors who act with disciplined initiative and lead by personal example at all levels. These leaders clearly articulate the intent and build trust within the organizations and empower subordinates. Where fighting is their focus they employ all the tools and resources to be ready at a moment's notice to engage and destroy the enemy. He stated:

In short, U.S. Army Alaska is a true Arctic tough team of soldiers and families. We are privileged to live in Alaska and are proud to serve as America's Arctic Warriors. We are grateful for the support of our local communities, our local, state, and national leaders, and are dedicated civilian workforce in world class installations. We stand ready to answer our nation's call anywhere, anytime.

12:13:25 PM

Slide 4 displayed the priorities that drive their organization:

- Building readiness and strong relationships
- Developing Leaders
- Strengthening the Profession of Arms

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL said in a world where the drivers of instability continue to pose a threat to peace and prosperity, being prepared is their focus. Readiness is their number-one priority. Each warrior has the responsibility to be personally prepared and aware of their surroundings 24/7, 365/days/year and to interact with community leaders whenever possible. It's best to go into a situation knowing the leaders. Developing leaders at every level is important to their ability to operate and succeed.

He said U.S. Senator Sullivan is right when he calls JPARC the Crown Jewel of the DOD training environment. JPARC also enables them to train as a joint force, as was demonstrated by the recent Arctic Edge exercise with allies and multi-national partners; add to this the Northern Warfare Training Center (NWTTC) where leaders are taught from across the DOD to thrive in the cold and mountainous terrain.

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(Slide 5) A testament to the quality of the soldiers is how often they are called to duty around the world; while they are assigned to U.S. Pacific Command, their unique capabilities are sought by many regions around the globe. Specific accomplishments include the Airborne Brigade starting the year with Operation Arctic Pegasus at Deadhorse. This was followed by soldiers from both brigades participating in Pacific Pathways where soldiers trained with allies in countries around the Pacific Rim that include Australia, Singapore, Thailand, and Japan. During this time, the Airborne Brigade deployed a good portion of their unit to Afghanistan where U.S. soldiers continue to do important work to train and assist the Afghan security forces.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL said: "Let us all not forget, as we are here today, we have U.S. Army Alaska soldiers deployed in harm's way protecting our freedoms."

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In upcoming events for U.S. Army Alaska, a portion of the Airborne Brigade will participate in a joint warfighter assessment at Yakima Training Grounds in Washington State and at Fort Bliss, Texas. This exercise is an assessment of capabilities and refinement of requirements while looking at the art of the possible for future operations.

In May, the First Striker Brigade will train with the Canadian Army in an exercise called Maple Resolve. It will help certify the Canadian Army on some of their capabilities and that exercise will take place at Wainwright, Canada.

The Airborne Brigade that redeploys early this summer and after a period of well-deserved leave, will pick up a rigorous home station training and readiness glide path to get ready and to be ready.

June will bring the yearly exercise Arctic Aurora back to Alaska. This is a bilateral training exercise with the Japanese

Ground Self Defense Force. During the summer months, a portion of the Army Aviation Forces stationed in Alaska will participate in the Pacific Pathways where they will train across the Pacific theaters in countries including Australia, Japan, Thailand, Guam, and in the Philippines.

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In the fall, they will conduct Arctic Anvil, which is a major home station training event preparing the First Striker Brigade to deploy for national training center rotation scheduled in the spring of 2019.

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MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL concluded saying the Arctic Warriors are very busy training and always preparing to ensure the safety and protection of our country and its interests. They are blessed to be afforded this great opportunity to train in the Great State of Alaska with its unmatched joint training environment and backed by the strong relationships with Alaska and its people. He thanked the committee for allowing him to tell them about the Arctic Warriors and said he was available for questions.

[12:19:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked the number of Alaskans who are now deployed as well as nationwide.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL replied that he didn't want to guess and could get those numbers to her, but folks are in harm's way from this state and across all the services.

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REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked if there are any deficiencies in equipment or supplies, or anything they are seeking from the federal government or from Alaska.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL replied that they are working with the Army and senior leadership and are looking for the replacement for support vehicle for the squad. The Army has a recognized operational need statement and is going through a procurement process to figure out what will be the successor of that program. It's bigger than an Army problem and deals across the entire joint force.

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Another challenge they are working on with the Tenth Mountain Division is getting protective clothing for extreme cold weather operations. The Army, senior leaders, and the joint team will

speak with one voice to get what is needed. Hopefully, they can procure collectively and get that out to their formations. Upgrades will be accepted as they come down the road. He wouldn't classify them as deficiencies, but they trying to better equip soldiers so they can be better prepared to survive and thrive in extreme cold weather environments.

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO asked what happens following a training exercise. Is there a debriefing process?

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL answered for every training event they go through the preparation phase, certify and validate leaders, go through the training repetition, and at the end the most important this is having an after-action review focusing on shortfalls and deficiencies. The most important thing out of an after-action report is how to go ahead and improve and make things better. It is a cyclic process depending on what is on the horizon and what the senior leaders' priorities are. New leaders are being brought into Alaska and told what the expectations and risks are, and then they are to empower young, talented, non-commissioned officers and junior enlisted people to find other creative ways to accomplish the mission.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked for an update on the JBER runway and if there is any discussion of funding at federal level.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL answered that he would default to Cory Mendenhall and he would get back to her with the answer.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX thanked them for their presentation and service. She asked what the Alaska legislature can do to support them that they aren't getting right now.

MAJOR GENERAL O'NEIL answered that he couldn't think of any. He is grateful for the engagements with legislators and delegations.

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CO-CHAIR COSTELLO thanked him for his efforts in fostering the next generation of leaders.

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At ease

[12:29:34 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO called the meeting back to order and invited the next presenter, Rear Admiral Michael McAllister, to the table.

REAR ADMIRAL MICHAEL MCALLISTER, Commander, Seventeenth U.S. Coast Guard District, Juneau, Alaska, said he was honored and privileged to be here today with the others to provide them with an update. He introduced Lieutenant Evonne Manning and said when she is not busy keeping him focused she is an expert in fisheries enforcement and management. She helps on an everyday basis to sustain one of the best managed fisheries programs in the entire country and arguably around the world.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said his intention today was to go over their missions and where there are Coast Guard people throughout the state and then focus a little bit on Arctic activities and international engagement and cooperation, all of which bear upon the national security of the United States and Alaska's state interests.

He said the Coast Guard Mission is generally speaking: try to prevent bad things from happening on or to the water and when despite their best efforts, bad things do happen they are prepared to respond to those events.

On the prevention side are: commercial vessel safety and security, water front facility safety and security, aids to navigation, ice breaking boating safety and so forth. However, the Coast Guard is best known for their response side: search and rescue, oil and chemical spill response, fisheries law enforcement in Alaska, and border and port security.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said Coast Guard defense operations are fairly unique in that they are simultaneous and at all-times a civil authority that has law enforcement authority and an organization under Title 10 of the U.S. Code. So, they conduct defense operations in concert with their partners. It is a seamless transition from civil to military capabilities.

Alaska's Seventeenth Coast Guard District has about 2,500 Coast Guard members, a permanent footprint in 11 different locations, and four forward-operating locations (places assets are moved to during various times of the year for surge operations). For example, Cold Bay is a forward-operating location during the height of the crabbing season in the Bering Sea and that provides rapid search and rescue response there.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said what slide 3 doesn't show is that they are the recipients of a lot of deployed capability from other places around the Coast Guard (CG). For example, today CG Cutter Stratton is conducting fisheries law enforcement and commercial fishery vessel safety boardings in the Bering Sea. They cover about 4 million square miles of water; most of it is part of the United States' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). It is more area than the rest of the U.S. combined. The EEZ is the area where the United States manages its resources whether it be oil and gas, minerals, or fisheries and protects its sovereignty. They also have an international boundary: two with Canada and one with Russia. He would describe some of those activities in a moment.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said their cause for action for having a significant presence in the Arctic is unchanged. The melting ice provides more access to those who would use the opening oceans. For example, traffic through the Bering Strait and the U.S. Arctic is up 140 percent from 2008 to 2016. There was a small decline in 2016/17; a lot of it related to decreasing construction (military and civil capabilities) along the Russian Northern Sea Route. The long-term outlook is for a doubling to quadrupling increase in traffic depending on one's assumptions on oil and gas extraction, container shipping, and other factors.

He noted that last summer the M/V Crystal Serenity made her second successful transit through the U.S. Arctic and the Northwest Passage with 1,400 passengers and crew. She was the first large cruise ship to do that. She will not make that transit next year, but the cruise line as well as many others are building purpose-built vessels for northern cruises; so, smaller ships but increasing interest in adventure tourism.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said Colonel Mendenhall mentioned increased economic activity in the Russian Northern Sea Route, because of LNG activity, and the new LNG icebreaking capable carriers made a record transit through the Northern Sea Route. It can break ice in both directions. So, they anticipate seeing more year-round activity through the Bering Strait, which is of interest to the U.S. as a result of Russia's increasing capability to move LNG and other commodities year-round through there.

Research continues at high levels in the Arctic; a lot of it focused on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) of the U.S. and other nations that are preparing to make claims under the United Nations Convention Law of the Sea, which allows nations to claim beyond their EEZ if they can show a historical tie to the Outer Continental Shelf. Research vessels from all nations with Arctic interests are seen on a routine basis near Alaska.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said they continued to see a combination of military activity and nation-state involvement in the Arctic and coming through the Bering Strait last year. The result of all this is increased Coast Guard demand for things like search and rescue, readiness for oil spill response, and having a sovereign presence for much of the year. He said they mount sizable Arctic operations yearly to the point of having year-round capability of deploying in the Arctic.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said they do a variety of activities under this operation: training, inspections, exercises with local communities. They do patrols and are staged to do search and rescue, oil spill response, science support, and other things. They did 26 search and rescue cases last year and saved 20 lives above the Arctic Circle based out of their forward-operating location in Kotzebue.

Their logistics are greatly facilitated by other organizations, particularly the Eleventh Air Force ALCOM and the Alaska National Guard that provides "heavy lift" for getting to some of the northern communities. They also lease a hanger in Kotzebue, which has been their staging point for helicopters for search and rescue and other purposes.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said the commandant of the Coast Guard remains very much committed to providing the right resources to be able to expand into this new operating area and he feels fortunate to get many more resources than many of his counterparts. He showed more pictures of Arctic operations including a medivac situation off the Chinese research ship, joint training with local communities on boating safety and oil spill response, and joint training with the Royal Canadian Navy.

He showed a picture from the bridge of the Coast Guard Cutter Maple stationed in Sitka. She had to go to the East Coast and was sent through the Northwest Passage. She was the first Coast Guard non-icebreaker to make the transit in 60 years and

celebrated the 60-year anniversary of the first-time deep draft ships went through the Northwest Passage. Three Coast Guard ships and one Canadian Icebreaker made that first trip and did many of the soundings that allow commerce throughout that route. The Coast Guard also does a number of things on research and development in oil spill technology and has a dive program.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said the Coast Guard is prioritizing Alaska for new capabilities: many replacements for existing assets that may be 30, 40, or 50 or more years old. But the new capabilities are leaps and bounds ahead of where they are today. As an example, Air Station Kodiak will see new C130s over the next two years: five new aircraft to replace the H models. They have longer range, greater speed, and can be operated more economically. They have two fast-response cutters stationed in Southeast and expect four more in the coming years. Those are great new capabilities as a significant portion of their time is focused on fisheries management. New offshore patrol cutters will go to Kodiak. Those are now in the final stages of going out to contract. They have national security cutters; the Stratton is under way today in the Bering Sea.

The good news on icebreakers is that the President's request for 2018/19 includes money for a replacement icebreaker. The Coast Guard has two icebreakers in its inventory; sometimes they say one and a half - the half referring to either the fact that one of them is 50 years old and can't steam for very long without breaking down and most of the replacement parts don't exist anymore. That would be the first one replaced. The other reference to half an icebreaker is they actually have one icebreaker in inventory (the 50-year old one); but they also have a medium icebreaker, the Coast Guard Cutter Healy, which routinely patrols the Alaskan waters, primarily in support of science and other types of research. The Coast Guard has gone on records as needing six icebreakers in the nation, but you have to start with one.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said the Coast Guard was provided some money by Congress to kick-start a program to use both ship-board, unmanned area vehicles, and land-based UAVs to provide "maritime domain awareness" of Alaskan EEZ.

On the International Cooperation front, as Colonel Mendenhall appropriately said, the Arctic is an area of potential conflict or potential miscalculation. Rear Admiral McAllister offered

that it is also an area where they see a high level of cooperation amongst Arctic nations and nations that have an interest in the Arctic. As an example, for search and rescue they have near-daily cooperation with their counterparts in Russia, Canada, Japan, and other nations to carry out everyday missions.

He thanked Alaska Command and the U.S. Northern Command for doing the first joint search and rescue exercise (under the new Search and Rescue agreement) last year called Arctic Chinook, under the new Arctic Council. They exercised their ability to take cruise ship passengers off a stricken ship and provided appropriate care for them.

On the law enforcement side, they coordinate with their counterparts with the Russian Coast Guard on the maritime boundary line between the U.S. and Russia and on illegal, unreported, and under regulated fisheries. For an example of how that cooperation has improved fisheries management, in the last 14 months, eight vessels were suspect between the two nations required joint operations; five of those vessels were eventually seized, detained, or given violations; and just those five vessels alone accounted for 10,000 tons of fish and crab that was illegally caught.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said the Coast Guard also manages waterways both in state and federal waters. They have created safe shipping routing zones, which help ships to avoid conflicts with subsistence fishing activities and staying far enough offshore from Alaska communities so that if there would be an oil spill they would have time to respond. The Coast Guard proposed this scheme to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) with the Russians. Most of it was accepted in the IMO and it will now become part of the global framework for managing ship traffic through the Bering Strait.

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He said two Coast Guard cutters are stationed in Alaska and will be deploying overseas this summer. One of them, the Coast Guard Cutter Spar, will be doing multi-national training operations with Japan, South Korea, and potentially other Northern Pacific nations. The Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley, in Kodiak, will be doing multi-national, high-seas fisheries operations with Canada, Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan (the nations that cooperate in international fisheries in the North Pacific).

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER said community engagement is a core element of Coast Guard strategy. All the way from the Arctic to Southeast Alaska, they try to involve communities in maritime safety and security, while getting some of the traditional knowledge that comes out of the Alaska Native communities, in particular. These subjects include oil spill training, mass rescue planning and exercises, education on things like cold weather and cold-water survival, ice rescue, and maritime domain awareness. The Coast Guard provides briefings on how to avoid conflicts with subsistence activities, and is proud partner of the Kids Don't Float Campaign (training 3,000 kids last summer).

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Slide 10 concluded his presentation. He said the Coast Guard is proud to serve in Alaska, and because they often work in small communities becoming part of the fabric of Alaska, they are positioned well to continue that service far into the future. He thanked the committee for its support of Coast Guard men and women around the state, as well as their fellow military services.

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CO-CHAIR COSTELLO thanked him and asked for questions.

MR. ANGAPAK related that the Arctic is a center of activity among nations and one of the most important things in considering national security is food security and defending resources. He reminded them that food can be used as a weapon in warfare. He asked what the U.S. Armed Forces had done in terms of protecting food security.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER responded that they often think about national security in terms of food security particularly for the coastal communities in Alaska and do a variety of things to ensure it like ensuring that ship routing takes ships outside of subsistence activity areas and that a ship is far enough offshore that if it was stricken it wouldn't ground or spill oil but yet not so far offshore that it becomes a safety problem for the ship. They engage with local communities in things like oil spill response training and along with the state DEC have containers of oil spill response equipment in many communities so that communities can act as their own first response while the cavalry comes in with additional equipment. But just having a presence in the Arctic to enforce against or intercept illegal activities on a year-round or a near-year-round basis is very important.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked what the Coast Guard's thinking is on the necessity of having a second port aside from Kodiak. He has heard Port Clarence identified as a potential port.

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REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER replied that most of the assets into the Arctic are long endurance assets: large cutters with helicopters on the back, icebreakers that can stay under way for two or three months at a time. Right now, their approach is called "a mobile seasonal presence." They take advantage of places like Nome where they can get stores and provisions and provide the opportunity for people to get off the ship.

But in the conversation about new infrastructure the Coast Guard's position thus far is "if you build a port, we will use it." He is not convinced another port is needed specifically for the Coast Guard, but that may change.

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO recognized Representative Parish.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY said coming from Tribal Health, she wanted to thank the Coast Guard for having a strong presence in rural communities in terms of the Kids Don't Float program and water safety on the open ocean as well as on rivers.

SENATOR SHOWER said he knows that the U.S. Navy has been interested in another port and that one would be needed at some point from a national security perspective. It segues into other things like food security and the economic viability of taking gas and oil into other areas. He asked how many icebreakers the United States needs.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER answered that the Navy is doing an exercise with submarines, but it's a different challenge on the surface. He encourages and is willing to facilitate any sort of Navy presence here that the DOD and U.S. Northern Command feels is appropriate. Six icebreakers are needed: three heavies and three mediums. They do work in both Antarctica and the Arctic and that would ensure year-round access to both locations and appropriate backup, because if an icebreaker gets stuck or breaks down, another icebreaker is needed to provide search and rescue or other capabilities.

CHAIR COSTELLO asked how he balances his budget for law enforcement and military priorities with the search and rescue operations.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER replied that the federal budget process has a different budgeting system for the Coast Guard than for other military services that are under the Department of Defense budget. The Coast Guard is in the Department of Homeland Security and the majority of its funding is considered non-defense, non-security funding. So, they are not seeing quite the same level of increases in funding as the other services.

He explained that on any given day, 10-20 percent of Coast Guard assets are committed to commanders around the globe, but 4 percent of their budget comes from the DOD. Their commandant has been very vocal about saying they have readiness issues and the Coast Guard would be well deserved to get an increased budget.

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Search and rescue is probably the number one mission of the Coast Guard and comes off the top in terms of budget priorities in determining where to place Coast Guard cutters. Everything else flows from there as second or third priority missions.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked if they have the capability to respond to a large disaster.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER replied that he has the right types of assets and people who are skilled and can respond. He has good partnerships in place with state agencies, the DOD, and other federal partners and local organizations. So, responding would be a team effort. Time is not their friend, he said; a cruise ship incident along the North Slope would be very tough to get to in a timely fashion to meet public expectations and to get everybody off a ship safely. He continues to advocate for the "right amount of stuff" in the Coast Guard inventory to increase his readiness.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked what the relationship is like with China in terms of national security aside from the AKLNG situation and fisheries.

REAR ADMIRAL MCALLISTER answered that the Coast Guard sees amongst its many missions including fisheries, oil spill response, and search and rescue that spirit of cooperation, even with China. For example, the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley will be deployed this summer to a high seas fisheries operation and will actually carry Chinese Coast Guard ship riders who will have more authority than the U.S. Coast Guard does if they come across a Chinese-flagged vessel, and they will likely do some joint patrolling with Chinese Coast Guard vessels. The Chinese

have been forward leaning and cooperative on a variety of maritime issues.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX said she lived in Kodiak for over 30 years and wanted him to know that probably not one person living in Kodiak does not have a friend or a relative who has been rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard. You are heroes in that community and many others, she said.

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO thanked him for his service and his presentation.

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CHAIR COSTELLO called the meeting back to order and welcomed Major General Laurel Hummel to the table.

MAJOR GENERAL LAUREL HUMMEL, Commissioner, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs(DMVA), Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard, Juneau, Alaska, introduced her "battle buddy," her senior enlisted leader for the Alaska National Guard, Command Chief, Master Sergeant Paul Nelson. Together they make the joint command team for the Alaska National Guard. She would discuss what the Alaska Organized militia has done over the past year. One of her goals as the adjutant general is to leverage all the capabilities and increase the capacity for all the components of the organized militia which include the Alaska Army Guard, the Air Guard, the Alaska Naval Militia, and the Alaska State Defense Force.

Their mission is given to them in AS 26, but the organized militia portion of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is involved in every aspect of these mission statements from deployments overseas to protecting the nation, to responding to catastrophic natural disasters, assisting veterans during the greatest time of need, and mentoring young people in the Alaska Military Youth Academy.

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MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL said leading a successful organization begins with establishing a shared vision in common efforts supported by core values. The DMVA vision outlines their four major common lines of effort across the entire department.

1. Success in ongoing missions in support of the active component and being ready to go to war is what she means by achieving federal mission assurance.
2. Doing all they can within the DOD and Department of Homeland Security, the nexus within she works to promote a viable Arctic strategy.
3. Increasing our emergency management capacity across the state.
4. Engage with Alaskan communities.

Everything they do as an organization within all the divisions in DMVA directly supports one or more of these lines of effort, she said. This focus makes them more efficient with their people, equipment, and fiscal resources.

MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL highlighted a couple of things they had done since their last meeting: Last year, the C17 flip made big headlines. This is when they essentially finalized the reversal of the partnership they had with an active component and took ownership of the C17 aircraft, which is a first in the entire Air Force. So, this year the big new story for the Air Guard is the arrival of the HC 130J (photo on slide 4), the Air Force's newest and most capable search and rescue aircraft.

Another photo was of the Civil Support Team (CST) and some National Guard forces that joined them from Washington and Connecticut who were participating in an exercise in Valdez just last month. They got a real-world request from the local incident commander to assist in an emergency, a tanker truck that had flipped over and was leaking diesel close to a salmon stream. Her soldiers went from exercising and training mode to real world mode seamlessly and assisted DEC in that incident.

MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL noted in the bottom middle photo of their civil engineers from the 168th Wing housed at Eielson Air Force Base that were conducting their annual training in the country of Latvia where they were building and repairing infrastructure in a key North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-partner country.

While the civil engineers were in Europe, the engineers from the Army Guard continued to improve the runway at Old Harbor through innovative readiness training (IRT) where military units conduct their federal military training while at the same time executing

projects that benefit local communities. If constituents have questions about this program, contact her and she will get them to the IRT experts. It is their job to help guide their communities through the application process.

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MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL said the bottom right photo was taken from Exercise Arctic Eagle, a ground breaking National Guard-led exercise. This exercise was a "grand slam," she said, because it fed all four of the lines of effort.

She turned the presentation over to Chief Master Sergeant Paul Nelson who would update them on how they are working on character development and growing the next generation of leaders through their Ethical Fitness Program.

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CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT PAUL NELSON, said over the last two-and-a-half years, the Alaska National Guard has continued to develop a campaign and an action plan aimed at improving ethical decision-making skills, as well as exploring the idea of strengthening character among Guard members of all ranks and positions of authority. Their strategic goal involves improving a culture, which in turn has a positive impact on unit climate and individual identity of Guard members.

He said the Alaska National Guard remains committed to swiftly addressing specific instances of poor character and unethical behavior using the tools provided to the commanders by military regulation and Alaska statute, specifically the Alaska Code of Military Justice.

With regards to professional development, instead of focusing on the symptoms of poor character, the Alaska National Guard is conducting numerous conferences and small group workshops that are specifically designed to address the topic of ethical behavior and improving positive character development among the members. This program has gained national attention, and the National Guard is planning on using it as a best practice around the nation. They have also been working closely with the Department of Army's Center for Army Profession and Ethics (CAPE) to further operationalize the concept of character development across the total Army force.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT NELSON said this leads to another question: where to go next. The Alaska National Guard is committed to fully integrating these concepts into their culture

for the long haul. In addition to their continued relationship with CAPE they are currently planning on working with the Department of the Air Force's Professional Airmen's Center of Excellence (PACE) to further explore ways to expand and improve their flagship program.

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In addition to that, he highlighted six members of the Alaska National Guard seated behind him and said, "As a 33-year veteran and a senior enlisted leader of the Alaska National Guard, these warriors, they fill my heart with pride."

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO lead the room in applause for the warriors.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT NELSON emphasized their diversity in thinking and skill sets: they range across numerous career fields to include a pilot, military police and law enforcement, personalist in human resources, medical technicians, and an engineer. They stand with resolve and commitment of purpose. "They are Alaska's sons and daughters and they truly are your varsity team."

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MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL next talked about Federal Mission Assurance lines of effort (slide 6). She explained that the federal portion of the organized militia - the Army and the Air National Guard - continue to train, deploy, operate, and return home as part of their federal mission status. Their operations span the globe from Ice-X that is happening right now in the Arctic Ocean to Deep Freeze in Antarctica, to Conquest in Mongolia, and Northern Edge here at home. She works with her mission partners on these exercises as previously described. This is a testament to how integrated the total force is in Alaska.

She said their cargo aircraft continue to move people and equipment around the world. Last year she joked that they always have more personnel take off than land, because U.S. Army Alaska insists on leaving while the plane is in air. That is still the case, but this year they also distributed 11.5 million pounds of aviation fuel, a large portion of that going to Lieutenant General Wilsbach's very thirsty jets who prefer to refuel in mid-air as opposed to on the ground. To put that number in perspective, assuming the standard gas tanks on automobiles, their 168th Wing refueled over 115,000 cars while in flight at 450 mph if cars could fly.

MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL said in addition to supporting exercises around the globe this past year, they deployed 295 (about 7 percent of their total force) of their soldiers and airmen into harm's way in Southwest Asia in support of the nation's security objectives. As always, the Alaska National Guard is not solely a part-time outfit as evidenced by the list of 24/7 in-state federal missions that they are working to keep Alaska safe. She thanked the co-chairs for sponsoring their lunch and learn yesterday where they talked about their space mission at Clear Air Force Station and ground-based mid-course defense, the Ground-based Missile Defense (GMD) mission out of Fort Greely and would like to do it again next year.

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MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL said Alaska is what makes the U.S. an Arctic nation. To that end, their joint staff continue to ensure that the interests of the National Guard and Alaska are taken into account in DOD working groups charged with crafting policy and identifying requirements for operations in the Arctic.

They continue to chair the National Guard Arctic Interest Council, which now has 18 member-states that are engaged in policy development, legislation, training, equipment procurement, and sustainment.

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Emergency management is another line of effort (slide 8), she said. The Alaska organized militia has both federal and state missions, and a photo showed how involved 108 personnel were in support of Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands hurricane rescue and response. Before last hurricane season, the National Guard was the only component of the organized militia to conduct emergency response missions outside of Alaska. But that changed last fall, because of the four Alaska State Defense Force soldiers deployed to Puerto Rico to operate emergency communications equipment alongside their Guardsmen. This is the first effort deployment of state militia into another state to assist in emergencies. Clearly the steps they have taken to reorganize and modernize the state defense force are really paying dividends.

She noted a photo of Sergeant Andrew of Bethel who traveled to Quithluk to recognize Sergeant First Class Samuel Jackson's military service. Sergeant Jackson started in the Alaska Territorial Guard and he ended his service with retirement from the Alaska Army National Guard. This is one of seven retirement ceremonies they have conducted around the Yukon-Kuskokwim and

Southwest Alaska where they determined there were members of the Guard who retired but did not have a retirement ceremony and were not honored in a fitting way. Another photo was of Major Johnny Evan who had previously been discharged from the Guard with no retirement benefits. He thought he might actually have qualified for retirement and contacted them. Personnel staff found that he had accumulated enough points to qualify for a traditional reserve retirement. His records were updated, and the retirement ceremony was held at AFN last October. The really great news story is that this happened just prior to his 60th birthday, and that is the golden day that reserve Guards start to draw retirement benefits.

MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL said they are continuing to reach out across the state to find all former Guardsmen and ensure that they receive every award and benefit they have earned. She pointed out another photo of the 61st year of Operation Santa, where a plane load of elves and associated goodies went to St. Michael.

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MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL said she has mentioned she is very proud of Arctic Eagle, because it is a National Guard Bureau-sponsored special focus exercise. The National Guard Arctic Interest Council and the Alaska National Guard joint staff did the heavy lifting to develop it, resource it, and to execute it (slide 10). The exercise recently concluded, and it successfully demonstrated the Guard's ability to conduct a joint interagency, intergovernmental, multi-national operation. She said 1,227 individuals representing 76 organizations including USRAC, ALCOM, the 17th District U.S. Coast Guard, 14 states' National Guards, and Canada participated in an exercise scenario that was based on a foreign radio-active satellite that fell to Earth in Valdez. In that scenario, it crashed releasing toxic chemicals and radioactivity. Simultaneously, the exercise had a cyberattack that compromised their communications networks. A complex scenario of this scope tested many of their planning and training muscles along with the abilities of all their mission partners to work together in an emergency.

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Her closing slide 11 was a "powerful picture" of the hands of Sergeant First Class Jackson holding his Alaska Territorial Guard service medal.

MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL closed saying she hopes "they have continued confidence in the fitness and the readiness of the men

and women in your Guard and know that in your greatest time of need, we will fulfill the Guard's motto of always ready, always there."

For the record, Major General Hummel also stated: "When I retire from the Army again, I want to join the Coast Guard."

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO thanked her for her presentation and said she was forgiven for bragging.

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MR. ANGAPAK thanked Rear Admiral McAllister for addressing the readiness of the Coast Guard in rural Alaska. However, he urged them to think about what would happen in large cities, like Anchorage, in the event of a natural disaster or a transportation derailment happens on land. Is our military prepared to deal with that kind of natural emergency in so far as food security in urban settings?

MAJOR GENERAL HUMMEL responded first by thanking him for his service as a Viet Nam veteran and as the brother and son of a veteran. His question goes to heart of some of what they train and exercised to, which is restoring critical infrastructure and restoring, if need be, civil order in times of distress, reopening ports, and getting assistance to reopen airports and airfields.

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She said the heart of his question is about food security all across the state including changes in the Arctic, and she is proud to say that the DOD is a leader in thinking about environmental security, the field of how environmental situations and changes in the environment and climate affect stability and security. Last year, the Alaska National Guard hosted people from 17 different countries, to include the People's Republic of China, where all the Pacific region nations came together to talk about how changes in climate and environmental security are affecting their ability to keep their people safe and secure.

They have plans for all different kinds of hazards, but having enough food and supplies to move forward to the repair state is very important, too. Putting her state hat on, she said the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management stresses how important it is for each individual Alaskan and every family to be prepared for disaster. Their website at ready.Alaska.gov

has a lot of information about how families can be prepared for the worst so that families can help themselves.

MR. ANGAVAK corrected that he is a veteran, and while he volunteered for the Viet Nam conflict, he was stationed in Europe.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ commended Major General Hummel and the Guard effort as a whole for taking leadership when it comes to character and moral leadership. She was very impressed with the depth of work that has been done by the Guard during the "dark time" to establish ethical and moral leadership and character as an essential component of service. It is well reflected in the body of the personnel here today.

CO-CHAIR COSTELLO thanked Major General Hummel for her presence today and for the work she oversees.

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CO-CHAIR COSTELLO adjourned the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting at 1:35 p.m.