

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

July 13, 2022

2:35 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Matt Claman, Co-Chair
Senator Mike Shower, Co-Chair (via teleconference)
Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Representative Chris Tuck (via teleconference)
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative David Nelson
Senator Joshua Revak
Senator Roger Holland
Senator Lora Reinbold
Senator Scott Kawasaki (via teleconference)

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S): THE ARMED SERVICES UPDATE

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

DAVID KRUMM, Lieutenant General, U.S. Airforce;
Commander, Eleventh U.S. Air Force, Pacific Air Forces;
Commander, Alaskan Command, U.S. Northern Command;
Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled
"Command Overview Briefing."

BRIAN EIFLER, Major General, U.S. Army;
Commanding General, 11th Airborne Division;
Deputy Commander, Alaskan Command
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "11th Airborne Division America's Arctic Angels."

NATHAN MOORE, Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard;
Deputy Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area;
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard 17th District
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "2022 Coast Guard Update for Joint Armed Services Committee."

Torrence Saxe, Major General, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard;

Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Alaska is Unique-JASC Perspective."

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CO-CHAIR MATT CLAMAN called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. Representatives Claman, Spohnholz, Tuck (via teleconference), Tarr, and Nelson; and Senators Shower (via teleconference), Revak, Holland, Reinbold, and Kawasaki (via teleconference) were present at the call to order.

PRESENTATION(S): The Armed Services Update

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CHAIR CLAMAN announced that the only order of business would be a presentation on an update of the Armed Services.

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DAVID KRUMM, Lieutenant General, U.S. Airforce; Commander, Eleventh U.S. Air Force, Pacific Air Forces; Commander, Alaskan Command, U.S. Northern Command; Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command, provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Command Overview Briefing." He gave a geopolitical overview regarding Arctic warming trends, which include coastal erosion, permafrost melt, and sea ice retreat. He stated that as permafrost melts there will be a risk of instability; therefore, existing infrastructure will need to be improved. He displayed slide 5 and slide 6 which showed photos indicating a

significant loss of sea ice. He pointed out that the current state of erosion represents the rate which had been predicted for 2040.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM stated that the current reduction of sea ice has significantly increased access to a variety of natural resources, and the Northwest Passage has become more available for ships. He continued that this passage has created the potential for ships to shave off seven to ten days of transit time compared with the Suez Canal route. He suggested that this logistical change could result in a reduction of transportation costs. He expressed the opinion that the potential for more natural resource extraction in the Arctic could be problematic. He stated that some countries, like Russia, do not have stringent environmental regulations. He displayed slide 9 which showed a Chinese fishing vessel near the Aleutian Islands. Because of the influence of climate change in fish stocks, he suggested that fishing fleets like these are coming closer to the U.S.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM, moving to slide 10, stated that the U.S. is no longer "a sanctuary." He explained that technology is enabling long-range weapons and preparation is essential. He discussed the challenges with maintaining equipment in winter conditions in the northern part of the state. He advised that cyber-attacks, misinformation, and drone helicopters are serious risks to U.S. Military bases. He expressed gratitude for the work done to create adequate housing for service members around military bases in Alaska, but he added that more housing is needed and obtaining childcare has become a problem. He expressed interest in the sale of public lands for access to training areas and suggested that any sale of land should be done with the knowledge that Airforce training could be done without the fear of adversaries. He concluded by discussing the environmental remediation regarding polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). He stated that \$6 million was used to transport around 15,000 cubic yards of PFAS contaminants from the air base; however, the remaining soil is still contaminated, and he questioned the committee about treatment for this. He thanked the committee.

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BRIAN EIFLER, Major General, U.S. Army; Commanding General, 11th Airborne Division; Deputy Commander, Alaskan Command, provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "11th Airborne Division America's Arctic Angels." Beginning on slide 2, he stated that the U.S. Army Alaska converted to the 11th Airborne Division on June 6, 2022. He explained that the organization and mission of the 11th Airborne Division executes expeditionary operations within the Indo-Pacific theater, conducts multi-domain operations in the Arctic, defends critical infrastructure in homeland defense and on order decisively defeats any adversary in extreme cold weather, mountainous, high latitude, and high-altitude environments through large-scale combat operations. He stated that there is a reorganization underway at the division to maximize efficiency. He moved to slide 3 and discussed the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center for joint and multinational brigade-level training within the region. He spoke about working with allies on the Northern Edge and Arctic Edge in Canada. He also spoke about working with Japan, India, Mongolia, Finland, and Norway. He concluded the presentation by expressing his gratitude for the support given by the committee.

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NATHAN MOORE, Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard; Deputy Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area; Commander, U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "2022 Coast Guard Update for Joint Armed Services Committee." He stated that slide 2 depicts operations in a strategically competitive space. He said that the U.S. Coast Guard is one of the few agencies given authority by the U.S. Department of State to work with Russia for the purposes of rescue, oil spills, and other maritime emergencies. He also discussed working with Canada around the maritime boundary of the Northwest Passage route, as the U.S. Coast Guard and Canada work together with security and search and rescue within this area. Moving to slide 3, he discussed the mental health difficulties the staff based in Alaska face. He pointed out that there had been three suicides earlier in the year. He stated that, compared with other armed forces in the state, the U.S. Coast Guard is more spread out, making it difficult for servicepeople to maintain personal connections.

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REAR ADMIRAL MOORE stated that the U.S. Coast Guard's work in the state includes medivacs from cruise ships, commercial ships, and fishing boats, and he referenced its involvement with the

television show, "The Deadliest Catch." He stated that more aircraft are coming to the U.S. Coast Guard airbase in Kodiak, and new cutters will be stationed around the state, including in Ketchikan and Kodiak. He referenced the struggles within the U.S. Coast Guard communications infrastructure. He stated that maintenance and replacement of mountaintop repeaters for search and rescue is needed in Southeast Alaska and along the coast of Central Alaska. He stated that new funding has been helpful to build new housing, piers, and covered moorings.

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TORRENCE SAX, Major General, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Alaska is Unique-JASC Perspective." He discussed a commander meeting he attended and explained that roughly 40 percent of the state has direct connections to the military. He told a personal anecdote about a car accident which focused on the expectation that military presence delivers safety and security to Alaskan citizens. He explained that the Alaska National Guard has worked hard to stop sexual assault. He moved to slide 2 and pointed out the unique relationship the California National Guard has with Ukraine. He stated that the Alaska National Guard aims to form a similarly unique relationship with Mongolia, which has a strategic location between Russia and China. He displayed slide 3 and slide 4 which addressed North Korea's successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile. The missile flew 933 kilometers. He related that an independent analyst has suggested the missile could reach a maximum range of 6,700 kilometers.

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MAJOR GENERAL SAXE moved to slide 5 which showed the many places that the Alaska National Guard can be deployed, including Guantanamo Bay, Antarctica, and Poland. He discussed recruitment and training around the state. Moving to slide 8, he described the National Guard's commitment to creating leaders, and he emphasized that strength is built through community, relationships, and rural outreach. He stated that the U.S. National Guard provides election support throughout the state, and historically the last two years have been the busiest for the Alaska National Guard. He summarized the remainder of the slides, which showed examples of heroes from Alaska and how the U.S. National Guard has honored them.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM responded to a series of questions from Senator Reinbold. In reference to the ice levels in the winter, he gave an example of two Russian natural gas tankers which broke through ice this past year. Concerning what is contributing to climate change, he explained that his role is to prepare for what is happening, not to determine why climate change is happening. He added that because there is less ice in the summer, there is more access. Concerning misinformation, he exemplified Russia, Ukraine, and China as concerning in the "cyber arena." He expressed the opinion that troops should be educated about misinformation. In response to a final question, he expressed the opinion that elected officials should support military efforts concerning any changing threats to Alaska.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM, in response to Senator Holland, stated Russia has asserted that the Northern Sea Route is within its territorial waters, even though it is considered international waters. He stated that Russia has requested payment for passage and requires Russian pilots to be present.

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MAJOR GENERAL EIFLER, in response to Senator Revak, detailed Mission 100 which seeks 100 percent connection throughout the organization, including leaders, soldiers, and their next of kin. He emphasized that the spread of hope and human connection is important to prevent suicide. He stated that Mission 100 requires mandatory counseling, as members of the military would be exposed to available tools and resources.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM, in response to the same question, discussed incorporating best practices.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM, in response to Representative Nelson, stated that there are around 100 to 150 new military personnel expected. He expressed optimism about working with communities for housing options.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM, in response to a question from Representative Tarr concerning domestic and international threats, expressed concern about the utilization of unmanned ariel vehicles in unauthorized areas.

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REAR ADMIRAL MOORE, in response to Representative Spohnholz's inquiry about the use of wind and solar in rural Alaska for communications infrastructure, stated that the U.S. Coast Guard is looking to replace the communications network for search and rescue communication throughout the entire country. He said that new technology may be satellite-based, and with this there would be less maintenance than diesel-powered generators running on mountaintops.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM, in response to Senator Reinbold, stated that the fire near the Clear Airforce Station is currently about a mile away from where evacuation notices will need to be issued. He offered that rain is in the forecast, and equipment has been sent to help with the fire.

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CO-CHAIR CLAMAN thanked the presenters and provided closing remarks.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.