

**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

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT

Colonel George Vakalis, retired - Anchorage
Colonel Robert Doehl, retired - Anchorage

PUBLIC MEMBERS ABSENT

Colonel Tim Jones, retired - Fairbanks
Nelson N. Angapak, Sr. - Anchorage
Commodore James Chase, retired - Anchorage
Brigadier General Julio "Randy" Banez, retired - Fairbanks

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

ARMED SERVICES PRESENTATIONS:

ALASKAN COMMAND (ALCOM) UPDATE

- HEARD

US ARMY ALASKA (USARAK) UPDATE

- HEARD

US COAST GUARD (USCG) 17th DISTRICT UPDATE

- HEARD

ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD (AKNG) UPDATE

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

DAVID A. KRUMM, Commander, Lieutenant General,
Alaskan Command (ALCOM), US Northern Command; Commander,
Eleventh US Air Force, Pacific Air Forces; Commander,
North American Aerospace Defense Command
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered the Alaskan Command (ALCOM)
update.

BRIAN EIFLER, Major General; Commanding General,
US Army Alaska (USARAK), Deputy Commander,
US Alaskan Command (ALCOM)
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered the US Army Alaska (USARAK)
update.

NATHAN A. MOORE, PE
Rear Admiral; Commander,
U.S. Coast Guard 17th District
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered the US Coast Guard 17th District
update.

TORRENCE W. SAXE, Major General; Adjutant General,
Alaska National Guard (AKNG); Commissioner,
Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered the AKNG Update.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[2:35:47 PM](#)

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

PRESENTATION(S) : ARMED SERVICES UPDATES

[2:37:41 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLAMAN announced that the only order of business would be the Armed Services updates.

[2:37:59 PM](#)

DAVID A. KRUMM, Commander, Lieutenant General, Alaskan Command (ALCOM), US Northern Command; Commander, Eleventh US Air Force, Pacific Air Forces; Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command Region, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska, delivered the Alaskan Command (ALCOM) update. He talked to senior military, political, civilian, and foreign leaders who came through Alaska over the past eight months about how the state should prepare for changes in the Arctic. This presentation focuses on environmental changes and geopolitical implications of the Arctic opening.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 2, Summary:

- Arctic Opening/Impacts to Homeland Defense
- Evolving Threats to Homeland Defense
- Opportunities for State Assistance

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM stated that the Arctic is warming at a rate two to four times faster than the rest of the world. The difference between a water temperature of 31 and 32 degrees is significant. He advanced to slide 3, Rising Surface Temperatures:

- Since the late 1970s Alaska annual average temperatures began to increase an average of 0.7°F per decade
- Alaska North Slope warming at 2.6 times the rate of the continental U.S.

- Alaskan west coast, central interior, and Bristol Bay areas are warming at more than twice the rate of the continental U.S.
- Past temperature trends vary widely decade to decade, and are consistent with large-scale patterns of climate variability in the Pacific Ocean sea surface temperatures
- 3 Major Impacts
 - Sea Ice
 - Permafrost
 - Coastal Erosion

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM stated that retreating sea ice is a driving factor of coastal erosion and thawing permafrost. The stability of infrastructure built in the past needs examining in the future. The Air Force takes runways seriously. Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) has a taxiway that must severely restrict the weight limits of aircraft taxiing across it every July and August, and the area has grown larger over the past four years. Infrastructure will need to be revitalized to repair damage caused by thawing permafrost; otherwise, areas will become unusable. He advanced to slide 4, Permafrost - DOD Impacts:

- Over last few years, Eielson AFB has spent \$164 million in new construction and repairs due to permafrost changes
- T-39 taxiway currently usable only for fighter aircraft for approximately 2 months (Jul-Aug)
 - Heavier aircraft buckles the pavement and causes more damage
- Widespread cracks throughout runway
- Increased Wildfire Threat and Intensity
 - 3 of largest wildfire years on record since 2000
 - Warming temperatures
 - Longer snow-free season
 - Permafrost burns easily
 - 2.5M acres burned in 2019

[2:42:32 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 5, Arctic Sea Ice Minimums, showing aerial images of Arctic Sea ice decreasing in mass and a chart depicting a 13 percent decline in sea ice per decade from 1984 to 2016. The chart reflects the average September minimum extent and that the ice expands in the following months. He mentioned that white ice reflects the sunlight and without the ice, the ocean absorbs more sunlight. Less sea ice in the summer means more open water periods, putting more coastal villages at risk of erosion.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 6, Coastal Erosion:

A map depicted the erosion rates in various cities along the Northwest Passage and Northern Sea Route.

- Permafrost coasts in the Arctic make up more than 30% of Earth's coastlines
- Changes in permafrost coasts are primarily due to erosion
 - Amplifying Factors:
 - Extent of Sea Ice
 - Increased duration of open water period
 - Rising air temperatures
 - Rising sea-levels
 - Warming permafrost
 - Subsiding permafrost landscapes
 - Increased storminess and wave heights
 - Increased coastal erosion at AF radar early warning and communication installations
 - Risk to DOD early warning system operating with diminished functionality
 - Damaged roads, utility infrastructure, seawalls, and runways
 - Limited access to locations
 - Damaged seawalls allow large waves to overrun runway

[2:43:49 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 7, showing a 2012 Army Corps of Engineers' conceptual erosion model at Oliktok Long Range Radar Station (LRRS). Due to more wind and water, erosion is occurring faster than anticipated, and more will have to be spent on rock and seawalls to protect infrastructure.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM stressed that less sea ice resulted in greater access to the abundance of riches in Alaska and the Arctic; people and nation-states are paying attention to the Arctic openings. He advanced to slide 8:

Increased Human Activity in the Arctic

- Arctic activity will increase
 - Natural resource development
 - Hydrocarbons, minerals, rare earth minerals, and fisheries
 - Transportation corridor
- Conflicting interests will overlap
 - Many stakeholders and non-Arctic actors
- Forecast
 - Increased commercial presence
 - Shipping, research, travel
 - Potential environmental impacts
 - 2020 Norilsk Oil Spill
 - 21,000 tons
 - Resource extractions
- Increased military action

A graphic on slide 8 depicted the projected average extent of ice for September 2070 - 2090 in the Northwest Passage and Northern Sea Route. Four years ago, up to 30 ships used the Northern Sea Route. Last year, 390 ships used that route. Using the Northern Sea Route, a large container ship from East Asia can cut 7 to 10 days off transit time. The route offers a tremendous logistic change, particularly for manufacturing companies in China, possibly looking to reduce transportation costs.

[2:46:51 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 9, Chinese Fishing Vessel Activity:

A graphic illustrated a pattern of Chinese fishing fleets pushing but not violating the boundaries of the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Fish are sensitive to rising ocean temperatures moving north, as are fishing vessels.

China maintains largest Distant Water Fishing (DWF) Fleet in World, ~17,000 PRC compared to 300 U.S.

DWF often associated with unsustainable levels of extraction, and with illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.

Civilian Chinese fishing boats notoriously aggressive and often shadowed by armed Chinese Coast Guard vessels militia. Chinese military scenario for the Arctic foresees dual-use of economic and scientific presence in the Arctic (e.g., militarization of fishing fleet, demanding access to exclusive economic zones).

BLUF: Chinese Fishing Vessels annually continue to migrate northeast to establish new fishing grounds due to fish migration likely following an increase in overfishing (Assessment USCG D-17)

[2:47:32 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 10, emphasizing that access to the riches of hydrocarbons, minerals, rare earth minerals, fish, and shipping corridors that could save billions of dollars in transportation costs will bring increased nation-state activity in the Arctic. The state needs to prepare for this eventuality, ensuring US activity in the Arctic is done by choice, not by consequence. He advocated for resourcing Arctic strategies that many of the armed services and Department of Defense make available.

Evolving Threats to our Nation

- Domain Awareness
- Missiles
 - Ballistic, cruise, hypersonic
- Air
 - Technology transfers, sUAS, electromagnetic warfare
- Cyber
 - Infrastructure, data, misinformation

America is no longer a sanctuary

[2:52:31 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM advanced to slide 11, stating there are several areas where the legislature could assist the Alaska Command:

Opportunities for State Assistance

Key Focus Areas:

- The Fairbanks North Star Borough Housing Situation
- Childcare
- Military and Spouse Licensure Reciprocity
- Medical Providers
- Public Sale of Land IVO JPARC
- Environmental Remediation

**Thank you for Your Commitment to our Military Members
and Families - It Shows!**

[3:01:02 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLAMAN introduced Major General Brian Eifler to do the update for the US Army Alaska (USARAK), which changed to the 11th Airborne Division on June 6, 2022.

[3:01:21 PM](#)

BRIAN EIFLER, Major General; Commanding General, Eleventh Airborne Division, United States Army Alaska (USARAK); Deputy Commander, US Alaskan Command (ALCOM) Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "11th Airborne Division America's Arctic Angels," expressing pride in this newest Army division. The 11th Airborne has a storied history; it was one of five airborne divisions in WWII. The division spent its time in the Pacific, assigned to the US Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM).

MAJOR GENERAL EIFLER began the presentation on slide 2 to discuss the division's identity change. USARAK discovered it was missing a mission, a purpose, and an identity. Previously, the division's identity linked itself to the Hawaii-based 25th Infantry, whose mission differs from Alaska's. While the 11th Airborne's mission supports INDOPACOM, it is not only airborne, but also the Army's Arctic and mountain expert. The brigade in the north is transforming into a Light Brigade that will result in an airborne - Air Assault combination. It is a strategic division, being trained as Arctic experts that will work with cold weather countries over the pole. Division headquarters will expand, as will the intelligence shop for logistics. The division has a WWII legacy and Arctic expert ethos to live up to, which gives the division a uniquely defined mission, purpose, and identity.

The Army's Premier Cold-Weather Force

Changes

- U.S. Army Alaska converted to the 11th Airborne Division June 6th, 2022
- Brigade Combat Teams reflagged (1/11 and 2/11)

Impact

- Supports the Army's Arctic Strategy
- Sets the Army on the path towards a force that is more appropriately manned, trained, and equipped for the Arctic environment
- Defines unified purpose, identity and mission for Soldiers in Alaska

Army Chief of Staff Guidance

- Live up to the legacy of those who have gone before us.
- Be masters of our craft in Arctic warfare and thrive in extreme cold weather and mountainous terrain.
- Be innovative and on the leading edge in developing tactics, techniques and equipment for the harsh Arctic environment.

[3:07:24 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL EIFLER advanced to slide 3, emphasizing the importance of mobilizing effectively, specifically in the region where training and fighting will occur. No training center in the US can replicate an Arctic environment except Alaska. The Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center is a joint armed forces center. It is also multinational; other nations may participate.

Building Readiness

Globally responsive, trained & ready

- Multi-domain enabled land forces to fight & win in cold weather and mountainous terrain
- Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center for joint & multinational brigade-level training
- Humanitarian assistance, disaster response
- Defense support to civil authorities in Alaska

Assuring allies, deterring aggression

Northern Edge & Arctic Edge (**Canada**)

North Wind, Keen Sword, Yama Sakura & Orient Shield (**Japan**)

Yudh Abhyas (**India**)

Khaan Quest (**Mongolia**)

Arctic Forge (**Finland**)

Swift Response (**Norway**)

Boots on the ground in the only state in the Arctic

[3:11:22 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLAMAN introduced Rear Admiral Nathan Moore to do the US Coast Guard 17th District update.

[3:11:37 PM](#)

NATHAN A. MOORE, PE, Rear Admiral; Commander, United States Coast Guard (USCG) District 17, Juneau, Alaska, provided a PowerPoint presentation titled "2022 Coast Guard Update for Joint Armed Services Committee." He began on slide 2, Operations in a Strategically Competitive Space. The slide illustrates a variety of international military operations encountered last September/October 2021 in the Bering Sea, the Aleutians, and maritime space, such as:

- USCG frigates in the Bering Sea at all times. The Department of State can call on Rear Admiral Moore, authorized to work with and communicate with Russia on rescues, oil spills, and maritime emergencies for deconfliction purposes, to ensure rules-based order. The USCG has a long-standing maritime relationship with Russia.

- People's Republic of China (PRC) intel collection ships. These ships routinely make their way up into the Bering Strait, international waters, the Chukchi Sea, and the Arctic Ocean. Ongoing for years, the USCG monitors these intel ships closely. Awareness is essential.
- Joint maneuvers with the Canadians. The US shares a maritime boundary with Canada through the Northwest Passage Route, sharing transits, search and rescue, and oil spill response with Canada.
- Partnerships: A South Korean naval vessel that came through last summer, the Japanese self-defense force training ship KASHIMA, and the Royal Canadian Navy ship "Harry DeWolf" is pictured in photo #7.
- Photo #8 depicts a PRC naval strategic action group vessel inside the Aleutian chain. The USCG was on scene with the vessel. PRC ship was legally in international waters, but from a domain awareness and national security standpoint, the USCG went out to meet them.

REAR ADMIRAL MOORE expects more of these same operations as they tend to repeat.

[3:16:27 PM](#)

REAR ADMIRAL MOORE switched gears, advancing to slide 3, Workforce Initiatives:

Campaign to Connect
"Connection creates hope, and hope saves lives"

The USCG has been troubled here in Alaska by a string of suicides this past year. Three suicides occurred in three months, starting just after Christmas. The USCG has worked diligently to get its arms wrapped around this issue. Young people struggle with seasonal affective disorder, human connection, and staying connected. It can be isolating if one person does not get along with someone on a crew of 15. The bases in Alaska are very dispersed, with as few as 15, 20, or 25 Coast Guard billets in one place. The USCG reached out to local community partners to improve its mental health and suicide prevention efforts.

[3:18:14 PM](#)

REAR ADMIRAL MOORE advanced to slide 4, stating the USCG continues to fulfill its domestic operations:

- vessel facility examinations
- safety examinations

- aids to navigation
- coastal fishing vessel boarding
- medivacs off of cruise ships
- medivacs off of commercial ships
- serving fishing vessels
- continue to have a solid link to National Geographic's "Deadliest Catch"
- all of the traditional USCG missions continue in Alaska

REAR ADMIRAL MOORE advanced to slides 5 and 6, Communications and Shore Infrastructure which pictured some of the following:

Aviation

The USCG had the first five C-130Js fielded anywhere in the country, located in Kodiak. The USCG version of the Blackhawk helicopter will continue to roll out, and more will arrive in Kodiak in the future.

Cutters

A new, fast response cutter has been commissioned for Ketchikan for the end of September. The USCG plans to station three more cutters in Kodiak within the next two years. A USCG icebreaker is coming for operation in the Arctic.

Shore Infrastructure

Search and rescue operations use VHF channel 16. Mountains block VHF signals, so mountaintop communications systems are integral in transmitting signals. Communications infrastructure is affected by climate change. Diesel-generated communication systems do not run forever unattended on mountain tops. Most of these systems have been replaced, but the future of mountain top communication networks will give way to other technologies, for example, satellite systems. The USCG is working on it.

REAR ADMIRAL MOORE stated that the 17th District received an incredible amount of infrastructure funding over the last couple of years from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and the USCG budget. The USCG plans to build 80 new homes in Kodiak, the largest USCG base in the country. As stated earlier, Kodiak will receive new ships, which means an increase in Coast Guard families that need a place to live. Valdez has built covered moorings to keep small boats in ready status; it is challenging to be at the ready when the crew is constantly shoveling snow off vessels. The USCG would like to bring a new cutter into Sitka, but the partially condemned, old Sitka pier is a problem. USCG has been working with the state to purchase land alongside the coastline pictured in slide 5. The objective would be to

build-out and expand the pier to accommodate the new cutter. Obtaining the ground to execute the Sitka project has been a challenge. He reiterated that the USCG has a lot of funds available and would like to implement these projects.

[3:23:38 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLAMAN introduced Major General Torrence Saxe for the Alaska National Guard update.

[3:23:49 PM](#)

TORRENCE SAXE, Major General; Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard (AKNG); Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska, delivered the AKNG update with the PowerPoint presentation titled "Alaska is Unique - JASC Perspective." Slide 1 touched on the following points:

- Thirteen percent of veterans live in Alaska, which is over ten times the national average. Multiply this statistic by one degree of separation, husbands, wives, etcetera, and roughly forty percent of the state's population has a direct connection to the military.

- Alaska is fundamentally a unique, military-centric state with high regard for the military and high expectations that the military delivers results.

- AKNG is now a strong model for the entire National Guard on how to do things right to prevent sexual assault. The AKNG built its prevention model on developing a culture of respecting people and dignity.

[3:26:54 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 2, Global Scene. He described the special relationship between the California National Guard and Ukraine. It is the type of relationship AKNG wants to establish with Mongolia. A map on slide 2 shows Mongolia's strategic position sandwiched between Russia and China.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 3, North Korea. A BBC published map shows missile range estimates, and a Reuters published map discusses a 933 km test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile. The AKNG is concerned, and many in-state forces monitor this daily.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 4, Missile Warning. An unclassified level world map illustrates how systems would track a missile from potential adversaries or China/North Korea. He noted that National Guardsmen operate almost every entity mentioned.

3:29:00 PM

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 5, which details where AKNG could be deployed worldwide on any given day.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 6, Alaska National Guard, which focuses on hub armory operations. He enlisted the legislature's help in recruiting to areas like Bethel, Nome, and Kotzebue, which are also areas the AKNG trains. A bright spot for recruiting is Chevak which performed well for a rural, sparsely populated community. Photos show commissary deliveries to Bethel last year, illustrating that AKNG is trying to provide commissary benefits to off-road communities. Veteran buy-in for community armories is encouraged; for example, the Kodiak Armory is in the process of being named in honor of Private Daniel Harmon, a Vietnam veteran killed in action.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 7, Way Forward—Three Phase. Pictured is a house built on a rock, symbolizing a solid foundation in the unit; a map of Alaska, representing the AKNG focus on the state; and a map of the US, indicating AKNG should be doing things right on the national level.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 8, Phase 1. This slide showed a collage of pictures focused on building leaders. Of note was a photo of Colonel Ellis, a Vietnam veteran who spent 5 1/2 years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi. Colonel Ellis recently spoke, sharing stories of survival under severe, torturous conditions. His perspective provided life lessons for making better leaders and being better leaders to the troops.

3:31:51 PM

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE reviewed slides 9 and 10 which focused on building solid relationships with the Joint Armed Services Committee, the USCG, the Alaskan Command, and the 11th Airborne Division. He stressed the importance of ensuring these relationships remain strong. It is vital to move forward as a team; there is strength in unity.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 11, Rural/Local Outreach which discussed the benefits of forging relationships in rural communities. The collage of pictures shows AKNG participating in

school activities, fish camps, and Christmas festivities during Operation Santa Claus.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 12, Election Support. Naval militia, state defense force, and the National Guard went to many polling places around the state dressed in civilian clothing and offered support to ensure Alaskans had the opportunity to vote during COVID-19. Slide 12 shows some of the communities they visited.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 13, Alaska Operations. In-state usage of AKNG has been busier in the past two years than any time over the past 25 years combined, for deployments to distribute food during COVID-19 and Manly Hot Springs, to name a few.

[3:34:22 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE summarized slides 14 - 19, Honoring our Heroes. AKNG would like to honor those who have performed acts of heroism. The following slides review the story of the Gambell First Scout Battalion who rescued the crew of a downed US Navy Patrol plane on June 22, 1955:

Slide 14 pictured a Navy patrol plane with crew:

U.S. Navy

- June 22, 1955 a U.S. Navy patrol plane with 11 crew from Kodiak.
- 40 miles from Chukotka and 200 miles west of Nome
- Mission: Patrol, check navigational aids, document sea ice

Slide 15 showed the crash site location and a MiG-15:

22 June 1955

- Two Russian MiG-15 aircraft attacked the US Navy Patrol plane
- Disabled, the plane had to crash land on the closest land
- The plane burned on impact ~8-10 miles south of Gambell

Slide 16 pictured the damaged aircraft:

- The plane was disabled, pilot had to crash land
- Crew escaped the burning aircraft but many were injured
- The injured aircrew expected capture by Russians

Slide 17 pictured skin boats, like those used in the rescue:

- Russian MiG-15s continued to circle the crash site
- Aircrew injuries included burns, bullet, and shrapnel wounds
- The Gambell First Scout Battalion were first on scene via skin boats

Slide 18 pictured seven survivors on the mainland recovering from injuries. Two more were at a burn center in California:

- Gambell Guardsmen provided emergency care and brought the 11 survivors to Gambell via boat
- Track vehicles moved injured from Gambell's beach to the church
- Gambell cared for the US Navy aircrew until their return to Elmendorf AFB

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slide 19:

9 July 2022 - Gambell

After a review by Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe, Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard and Director of the Office of Veterans Affairs, awards were upgraded to the Alaska Heroism Medal - the highest award for Heroism in the Alaska National Guard awards program. These awards will be presented to Cpl. Bruce Boolowon and surviving family of:

Master Sgt. Willis Walunga	Staff Sgt. Clifford Iknokinok
Sfc. Herbert Apassingok	Sgt. Ralph Apatiki Sr.
Cpl. Bruce Boolowon	Cpl. Victor Campbell
Cpl. Ned Koozaata	Cpl. Joseph Slwooko
Pfc. Holden Apatiki	Pfc. Lane Iyakitan
Pfc. Woodrow Malewotkuk	Pfc. Roger Slwooko
Pfc. Vernon Slwooko	Pfc. Donald Ungott
Pfc. Leroy Kulukhon	Pvt. Luke Kulukhon

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said AKNG is reaching out to communities to honor others and welcomes stories of heroism. Ideally, AKNG

would like to honor heroes while they are still living, to see the smiles and the actual people, and to say thank you in person.

[3:36:33 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE advanced to slides 20 and 21, stating there are several items the legislature could help AKNG improve:

- Quality of life for soldiers. He did a tour of barracks a couple of years ago and saw roughly 40 soldiers to one bathroom in a major installation. He plans to seek funding in an upcoming tour to remedy the problem. No one should be required to live in those accommodations, and it will not happen anymore.

- AKNG is looking for the next generation of rescue helicopters for search and rescue. AKNG pararescuemen (PJs), combat rescue officers, do roughly one save per week all year long. They do amazing work, day in and day out in all types of weather.

- AKNG is looking to transition a small Air National Guard unit to the Space National Guard.

Initiatives/Endeavors:

- ARMY/AIR FORCE:
 - Quality of Life—Camp Carroll / Fort Greely
 - KC-135 Association - KC-46 follow-on
 - Arctic Search and Rescue Helicopter acquisition
 - Space National Guard

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE thanked the legislature for its support at Ft. Greely

[3:38:10 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLAMAN invited questions from committee members.

[3:38:23 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD inquired about Arctic ice levels in the winter.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM answered the ice comes back to about the same place in the winter, but a lot of it becomes new ice which is a little different than old ice. A ship can break through new ice a little easier than old ice. He does not have the exact details, but the retreat that occurs in the summertime does not happen in the wintertime.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked what was contributing to climate change.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM replied that he did not know why the climate was changing. The Armed Services' role is to prepare itself for what is happening.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked him to expound on the comment that misinformation was a major concern.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM replied that misinformation is always a concern. He has seen misinformation come out of Russia, Ukraine, and China. It is a concern in the cyber arena. An adversary's falsehoods about an issue can impact the situation itself. So, in a crisis, it is incumbent upon the commander to prepare the troops for propaganda to ensure they are not negatively affected by misinformation.

[3:41:58 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD asked what the greatest threat to Alaska is currently.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM replied that threats to the homeland shift and morph. He does not see an immediate threat right now, but looking forward is important, so anything the Armed Services do is not by consequence. The legislature's continued support of things asked for is enabling, needed, and appreciated for homeland defense.

[3:44:14 PM](#)

SENATOR HOLLAND asked whether icebreaker escorts or fleets with thicker hulls are needed to move through the northern routes.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM answered yes. No one wants a repeat of the Titanic. Vessels are escorted or have ice-hardened hulls most of the time. It appears China hopes to use normal shipping vessels during ice-free times. Russia requests payment and a Russian pilot board vessels traversing the route. While both requirements are understandable, search and rescue vessels are in limited supply in the area, the Northern Sea Route is in international waters. The US and Russia disagree on this point.

[3:46:15 PM](#)

SENATOR REVAK commented on military spousal licensure. The legislature passed [SB 12], which requires temporary licensure within thirty days. The legislature wants the bill correctly implemented, so if military spouses are experiencing licensing

difficulties, please notify the legislature. He asked about Mission 100 and what was working for the prevention of suicides.

MAJOR GENERAL EIFLER answered Mission 100 began about seven months ago and was operationalized so that soldiers understood the mission's purpose, 100 percent connection. People who fall prey to suicide are absent hope. Connection brings hope, and hope is the Army's weapon against suicide. He detailed Mission 100.

[3:53:05 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM expressed appreciation for the Army's Mission 100 results and is looking to incorporate its "best practices" strategies.

SENATOR REVAK thanked the Army for its effort on this issue.

[3:54:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked whether Alaska was prepared for housing an increase of soldiers.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM answered Eielson AFB is the only place that will have a significant increase in housing as far as he is aware. It is a small community, so a small personnel influx can significantly impact housing. Housing is problematic for soldiers and airmen in the Fort Wainwright/Eielson AFB area because options are limited. He expressed appreciation for the community's response to the problem and is optimistic as long as those efforts continue.

[3:57:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR commented on suicide and sexual assault prevention efforts. She asked about domestic and international threats from unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and whether the legislature should be taking action.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM replied the use of devices in unauthorized areas is of concern, some of it is done in ignorance, and some is not. Better protection methods are needed. Military facilities conduct sensitive business and need protection from nefarious activities.

[4:01:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ noted that Lieutenant General Krumm brought up the challenge of childcare a second year in a row. She acknowledged childcare is an issue throughout the state. Alaska is working on being more military friendly, making more

resources available, including childcare. The legislature came close to funding a Child Care Trust this past session. She asked about communications infrastructure and whether the USCG was considering wind and solar power to remedy the energy source issue in rural and coastal Alaska.

REAR ADMIRAL MOORE answered that Alaska's communication system differs from the Lower 48. The USCG is working on replacing its entire coastal communication network for search and rescue coordination. Alaska and the Lower 48 will share a common communication system which will be good for the 17th District. Alaska will no longer have a separate system supported differently and with different functionality. The USCG might get a satellite-based system that is less maintenance intensive than diesel-powered generators.

[4:04:06 PM](#)

COLONEL VAKALIS brought up comments about remedying soil contamination, inquiring about types and causes of soil contamination.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM answered that contaminated soil was discovered during construction at Eielson AFB. Contamination caused by petroleum chemicals was not much of an issue, but PFAS was. The soil contains toxins that do not diminish over time. This issue was initially brought up when the legislature asked what it could do to help problem solve and innovate.

COLONEL VAKALIS thanked all collectively for their work.

[4:06:21 PM](#)

COLONEL DOEHL said the points about the need for behavioral health specialists were well taken, particularly in Alaska which has a shortage of specialists statewide. He asked whether they would support a new initiative focused on growing the behavioral health workforce and cultivating student interest in the field.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM answered he would help in any way he could.

[4:07:14 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER thanked the senior military officers, their support staff, and everybody for their time, service, and updates.

[4:08:26 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD asked for an update on the fire in the area of Clear, Alaska.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM said he received an update today at noon. As of this morning, the fire was about a mile away from where mandatory evacuations would be issued. He was optimistic the rain would help slow the burn but is concerned a heavy rainfall may cause washouts in fire-damaged areas.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked to be notified if she could help.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRUMM noted that equipment had been sent from Eielson AFB, JBER, and Fort Wainwright to assist. It has been an all-out effort from all military units in Alaska, helping with fire breaks and other tasks. Anything requested has been sent.

SENATOR REINBOLD discussed the COVID-19 vaccine, misinformation, and the need for senior military leaders to defend and protect their troops.

[4:11:57 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLAMAN thanked everyone for their attendance today, specifically Lieutenant General Krumm, Major General Eifler, Rear Admiral Moore, and Major General Saxe for their participation.

[4:12:11 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Co-Chair Claman adjourned the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting at 4:12 p.m.