

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

April 13, 2023

1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Stanley Wright, Chair
Representative Laddie Shaw
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Cliff Groh
Representative Andrew Gray

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Dan Saddler

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S) : OVERVIEW OF THE ALASKA NAVAL MILITIA

- HEARD

PRESENTATION(S) : OVERVIEW OF THE CIVIL AIR PATROL

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

JASON WOODWARD, Captain, Commander
Alaska Naval Militia
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of the Alaska Naval Militia.

STEPHEN SAMMONS, Lieutenant Colonel, Emergency Services Officer
Alaska Wing
Civil Air Patrol
Elmendorf Air Force Base
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of the Alaska Wing Civil Air Patrol.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:02:00 PM](#)

CHAIR STANLEY WRIGHT called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Representatives Shaw, Groh, Gray, and Wright were present at the call to order. Representative Rauscher arrived as the meeting was in progress.

Presentation(s): Overview of the Alaska Naval Militia

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CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the first order of business would be the Overview of the Alaska Naval Militia presentation.

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JASON WOODWARD, Captain, Commander, Alaska Naval Militia, gave the PowerPoint presentation, titled "Overview of the Alaska Naval Militia" [hardcopy included in committee packet]. He moved to slide 2, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The Alaska Naval Militia (AKNM), was established in 1974 with one full time employee who was stationed in Juneau. The organization was inactive until re-established in 1985.

Per AS 26.05.010, the Naval Militia is comprised of USC Title 10 Navy and Marine Corps Reservists who serve in the AKNM as prescribed by AS 26.05.030.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD advanced to slide 4 and reported that AKNM has 48 members. He said the militia now allows for a 5 percent retired member status, which is done for leadership continuity. He explained that all navy reservists in the unit who live in Alaska are eligible and work on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER). He said the unit is in a Title 10 status of the U.S. Code, which means "active duty." He stated that unless called upon by the state, it would move to Title 32 status [full-time National Guard duty]. He presented slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Training available with Air Guard units at JBER and Eielson Air Force Base
- DMVA has access to fully trained and integrated personnel when needed
- Joint Staff Training (five members trained & integrated in 2018)
- Member Benefits:
 - Pension: Base Benefit of \$100 for each month of guard service (AS 26.05)
 - Education: First-term personnel may apply for tuition reimbursement of 12 university credits
- Members may be placed on Title 10 orders for Title 10 funded missions

CAPTAIN WOODWARD moved to and read slide 6, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

State Active Duty the Alaska Naval Militia has participated in over the years:

- Search and Rescue Missions
- Y2K Watch
- Public Affairs Support
- Earthquake Exercises
- Annual Admin/Retirement Report
- Arctic Care Support
- Operation Santa Clause
- Alaska Shield Exercise 2014
- Millers Reach and Other Fires
- Yakutat Snow Storm
- Seward Landslide
- Typhoon Merbock (sic)
- COVID 19 Support
- Swan Lake Fire
- Alaska Homeport Study
- Montana Creek Flood
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Response
- Turnagain Pass Avalanche Body Recovery

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REPRESENTATIVE SHAW asked for a comparison between AKNM and the Alaska Defense Force.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD answered that AKNM is aligned with the defense force in the organizational structure under the adjutant general (TAG) as an organized militia. He explained that the militia is a working unit that is not directly assigned to the state.

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REPRESENTATIVE GRAY asked for an explanation around pension benefits and how this works.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD answered that retired members would receive "a good year in the navy" once all standards are met. He stated that this would add a "one" in a person's retirement. He explained that an individual would also receive a concurrent benefit with the state, but this would not be realized until there is retirement from federal support after 20 years, as well as 5 years in continued service for AKNM. He said that, once this is completed, there is a benefit of \$100 each month as a lump sum. He stated that only a few individuals qualify, as most members join for service or education. In response to a question about AKNM offering additional pension money for continued service, he explained that he submits an annual retirement and benefits spreadsheet to the Department of Veteran's Affairs. He offered to provide a more detailed answer in a follow-up.

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CHAIR WRIGHT asked if AKNM holds monthly trainings.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD answered yes, and the training is with naval units. He explained that there is only one unit in Alaska, so most members are assigned to a unit outside of the state.

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REPRESENTATIVE GRAY asked about members assigned outside of Alaska.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD explained that every state has a naval reserve center, which is where naval reservists "hang their hat", and Alaska's center is on JBER. He said that it has about 100 people from units not in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY asked how the militia and the reserves differ.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD responded that militia members are navy reservists first, which comes with Title 10 status and allows them to volunteer to be assimilated into AKNM.

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY offered his understanding that the Alaska State Defense Force has people who are no longer in the military, while AKNM has current reservists who can be a part of the naval militia. He continued that AKNM would be for people who are still in the military; however, once a person is finished with the reserves, the person would be no longer part of the militia.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD responded in agreement. He explained that in the last year, the statute was changed to allow for 5 percent of the militia to be in retired status.

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY disclosed that he does not represent the Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Military, National Guard, or the Office of Veteran's Affairs, and that nothing he says has anything to do with the U.S. Military.

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REPRESENTATIVE GROH asked about trends in militia membership.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD answered that the previous TAG made a requirement that the militia would do a certain number of drills with the National Guard. He explained that because this was a direct conflict with the primary mission, it caused numbers to drop because the requirement could not be met, as it needed to focus on Title 10. He said the current TAG removed the requirement and added the 5 percent rule; therefore, numbers are trending up. He added that AKNM is now more attractive to senior officers who would fill joint staff roles in the event of a disaster.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked about the 5 percent retirement rule and who decides this.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD answered that TAG would decide.

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CHAIR WRIGHT asked about which operations AKNM has helped with.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD returned to slide 6 of the presentation, and said its biggest response was for Typhoon Merbok [in Western Alaska].

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked what AKNM's duty had been during the Swan Lake Fire.

CAPTAIN WOODWARD answered that it supplied road guards.

Presentation(s): Overview of the Civil Air Patrol

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CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the final order of business would be the Overview of the Civil Air Patrol presentation.

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STEPHEN SAMMONS, Lieutenant Colonel, Emergency Services Officer, Alaska Wing Civil Air Patrol (CAP), returned to the PowerPoint presentation, on slide 7, titled "Overview of the Alaska Wing Civil." He paraphrased slide 8, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

What is the Civil Air Patrol?

- Federally chartered
- Nonprofit, Humanitarian Organization
- Serves as the Civilian Auxiliary to the United States Air Force
- Serving America for over 80 years

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS moved to and read slide 9 [original punctuation provided]:

CAP Missions: Emergency Services

- Disaster Relief
 - Point of Distribution (POD) Support
 - Sandbag Brigade
 - Damage Assessment
- •Homeland Security
- Search & Rescue (Air & Ground)
- •Counterdrug
- •Humanitarian Services

- •Air Force ROTC Flights

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS advanced to and read slide 10 [original punctuation provided]:

CAP Missions: Cadet Programs

- Leadership Skills
- Aerospace Education
- Physical Fitness
- Character Development
- Activities (including Flight Training & SAR)

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS moved to slide 12 to explain the Unique Service Organization, which has Title 36 status and provides 501(c)(3) status. He explained that the organization also holds Title 10 status.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS transitioned to and paraphrased slide 13 [original punctuation provided]:

CAP's Legal Status

- A group of citizen volunteers and paid corporate staff who are a Federally supported, Congressionally Chartered, Non-Profit, Public benefit Corporation
- CAP serves as the Auxiliary Of The Air Force (when tasked)
 - Defined in Title 10 U.S.C. 9441-9448
 - Must be performing an AF-Assigned Non-Combat Program or Mission
 - Members serve as an "instrumentality of the United States" and receive federal legal protection and benefits in this status
- There is no permanent "Air Force Auxiliary" - it is a temporary legal status enjoyed by CAP members when performing Federal missions
- The AF funds CAP through a Cooperative Agreement IAW 2 CFR 200

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS presented an organizational chart of CAP on slide 14. He moved to slide 15 to show where CAP squadrons are located across the state. On slide 16, he detailed CAP's Alaska resources, which include several Cessna Gipsland aircraft, as well as a few gliders for training purposes.

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REPRESENTATIVE SHAW asked whether CAP owns its own aircraft.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered that the aircraft are owned under CAP's 501(c)(3) status. He noted that member-owned aircraft have seen a decline in use due to federal restrictions.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked what a typical flight crew consists of.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered that, for primary missions, there is a mission pilot, a mission observer, and a mission scanner. In response to a follow-up question, he explained that a typical mission consists of a search and rescue mission crew, and it would plan a route search, monitor for emergency beacons, and determine the best approach to a search area. He said other missions include damage assessments, which involves an aerial photographer, focusing on photos of infrastructure that are in disrepair.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER inquired whether CAP works with state troopers during search and rescue missions.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS responded that the Department of Public Safety has statutory authority over ground-based rescues. He stated that many of CAP's missions are aeronautical search and rescue, which falls under the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center. He expressed appreciation for local, state, and federal agencies working together in search and rescues.

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CHAIR WRIGHT asked if CAP has ever been activated for Title 32.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered no, as it is not state owned. He said its approving authority would be the Eleventh Air Force.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS returned to the presentation and slide 17, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

CAP's Mission Roles

- Flies 90% of all inland Search and Rescue
- Actively supports civilian authorities
 - National level exercises
 - Relied upon by FEMA, USGS, State and local authorities
- Supports Green Flag East and West exercises
- International award winning cadet and aerospace programs
 - Received multiple grants for STEM initiatives

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS moved to and read slide 17 [original punctuation provided]:

The Alaska Wing (AKWG) Funding

- Flying is either AF-funded (\$30K) or Member-funded (\$20K) per year
- Vehicles/equipment are provided by CAP National HQ
- Utilities and facility maintenance are paid for locally with assistance from the grant provided by the State of Alaska
 - Vital to keeping the lights on (literally), especially in Interior Alaska
- FY23 Plan:
 - ~\$60K Roof for Leaking Kodiak Hangar
 - ~\$30K Broken Merrill Hangar Door
 - ~\$130K State-Wide Unit Facility Utilities (per Annum)
 - ~\$30K Ops/IG/Aerospace Education/Cadet Programs (STEM/outreach)
- \$15K "Fenced" for State Missions as requested (e.g. Nov 2018)
- Unpaid Volunteer manpower hours annually (~2.6M in FY18)

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS advanced to and read slide 18 [original punctuation provided]:

Search and Recovery (SAR) Mission Impact

- Actively involved in 40% of all Alaska Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) missions
- CY 2019 Alaska RCC SAR missions
 - 60 Missions
 - 84.7 Ground Hours
 - 44 Air Sorties
 - 94.9 Air Hours
 - 28 Finds
 - 1 Save

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CHAIR WRIGHT asked if mission numbers are similar in different calendar years.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered that that are "pretty similar." He explained that there was a decrease in flights due to rainy weather. He said the mission numbers for 2021 are about the same as 2019.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS moved to slide 19 to present Alaska Wing disaster response imagery. He moved to slide 20, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Intelligence Collection

- CAP is not an intelligence organization
- Conducts civil support missions for Non-Intelligence purposes
- Legal review required
- Does not collect, disseminate, or retain information about US citizens

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS moved to slide 21 and spoke about requests for CAP forces. He explained that the Air Force has priority, followed by DoD, federal agencies, and state/local agencies.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS moved to slide 22 and explained how to request Alaska Wing CAP support. The slide shows contact

information for mission requests, as well as search and rescue requests.

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REPRESENTATIVE GRAY referred to slide 21 and asked why the slide is named "Intelligence Collection."

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered that the slides presented were re-worded in some areas and slide 21 discusses photography missions. He said that the photos taken are not used for intelligence purposes.

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REPRESENTATIVE GROH asked whether there are fewer than 1,000 members.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered yes. In response to a follow-up question, explained that its 2.6 million volunteer hours was calculated across the national average.

REPRESENTATIVE GROH offered his understanding that the average volunteer hours per member is about 2,500 a year.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS responded that the national membership in CAP is 52,000 and are still actively involved in COVID-19 response and blood bank missions.

REPRESENTATIVE GROH sought confirmation that the 2.6 million hours is nationwide.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered that is correct.

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REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER questioned the need for slide 21.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS answered that it does missions for the Drug Enforcement Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard during exercises under Title 5 and 14 [in the U.S. Code].

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked for the definitions of Title 5 and 14.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMMONS explained that Title 5 and 14 missions include law enforcement, further. He added that Title

14 addresses environmental response, like pollution from companies.

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CHAIR WRIGHT thanked the presenters.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:46 p.m.