



# U.S. ARMY GARRISON, ALASKA ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES

June 2005, Issue 4

This is a quarterly update on U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska activities and issues that might be of interest to federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

## Consolidation Ceremony Unites USAGAK, Fort Richardson

### PAO Staff Report

#### FORT RICHARDSON -

The ceremony to mark the consolidation of United States Army Garrison, Alaska with United States Army Garrison, Fort Richardson occurred on May 20 at the Post Theater. During the ceremony, outgoing commander Col. David Shutt was thanked for his service as Fort Richardson's commander.

The event was hosted by Stanley Sokoloski, regional director, Installation Management Agency, Pacific Region Office. Upon completion of the ceremony, Col. Donna Boltz, USAGAK commander, became the United States Army Garrison, Alaska and Fort Richardson commander.

Her offices relocated to the third floor of Bldg. 600. The telephone numbers for her office and staff have not changed.

## BRAC Commission Hears How Army Realignment Will Build Future Force

### Army News Service

WASHINGTON - The planned closures of many Army Reserve and National Guard centers and several military installations, and the return of units from overseas were among the primary concerns expressed when Army officials testified before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission May 18.

Under the Army's current recommendations, the 2005 BRAC would close 15 installations, seven

enables the operational Army to better meet the challenges of the 21st-century security environment," Harvey told the commission.

### Rebase troops

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, who chairs the commission, started the questioning by asking Schoomaker about the return of troops from overseas.

"With regard to rebasing the 70,000 overseas troops, they don't

problems in the area's dry climate.

"All of this is informed by the national military defense strategy which adds 10 brigades to the Army force structure and 34 brigades to the National Guard and Reserve," Schoomaker said. He said Fort Bliss offered the right mix of maneuver space, unrestricted airspace, free radio spectrum for the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and access to sister services.

Commissioner Sue Ellen Turner

**BRAC 2005 has a minimal impact at Fort Richardson. The Army intends to realign Fort Richardson's garrison functions under Elmendorf Air Force Base and transfer Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) functions to a consolidated center at Fort Huachuca, AZ. No details on this realignment are known at this time.**

leased sites, 176 Army Reserve installations, and 211 Army National Guard facilities. It will also create seven training "centers of excellence," seven joint technical and research facilities, and four joint material and logistics facilities.

Giving primary information for the Army were Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Infrastructure Development Craig College.

"The recommendations of BRAC 2005 will holistically transform the current infrastructure into a streamlined portfolio of installations with an 11-percent increase in military value which, thereby,

add up to 70,000 in the numbers we have," Principi said.

Schoomaker said the Army's portion of the 70,000 troops to be rebased is only 47,000, of which 22,000 are in units that will stand down and be reassigned in the new modular force structure. He said the remainder is made up of larger units that will return from overseas and be distributed to large installations such as Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Lewis, Wash. and Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

College told the commission these major moves will take place over a period of years.

Principi also asked if the movement of large units to Fort Bliss might overload the area's communities, or lead to water-supply

asked if the closure of Red River Army Depot, Texas, called for in the BRAC plan is a good idea in the wake of media reports of difficulty fielding items such as up-armored Humvees.

Harvey said the Army has an excess production capacity, and it will be enhanced by creating "centers of excellence" in specific fields.

"In the past 50 years, the highest number of direct labor hours we've ever used is 25 million. By closing Red River and creating centers of excellence, we can surge to 50 million direct labor hours," he said.

Transforming the National Guard, Reserve Commissioner Samuel Skinner asked about the closure of

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National Guard and Reserve centers, and their consolidation into joint centers.

"I guess it's like 'Field of Dreams.' You're saying that if you build these world-class facilities, you hope the Guard will come," Skinner said.

Schoomaker said the Army is continuing to work toward a "one-Army" concept.

"The Guard and Reserve are increasingly important to that one-Army concept," he said. "What we're doing is taking over-structure out of the Guard and Reserve and making them into whole units. You said it pretty well. We are committed to building 125 facilities with the hopes that 211 state facilities will align into them."

Specially sworn in to testify, Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, told the commission the states have cooperated with the Army's analysis of which sites will be closed under the current plan.

"These realignments started from field submissions," Schultz said.

"They have been line-time detail reviewed by the state leaderships."

Harvey said that the new joint centers will be constructed in the same areas as the old bases slated for closure. "We plan them for the same demographic area, within a 50 mile radius of where they were before," he said.

"There are two points about this," Schoomaker said. "The first is the obvious opportunity to improve training and retention. The second, as we look at this movement we would expect to see divestiture of the old sites, and direct our funding into these 125 centers."

#### Combining bases

Commissioner James Hill said he was pleased to see DoD "get it right" by combining Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg N.C., in the current BRAC proposal. He asked why similar steps aren't planned for McChord Air Force Base and Fort Lewis, Wash.

"The big difference is the Air Force's intended use of Pope. They'll be leaving only a small element there," College said. "So it makes sense to have a single entity under Army control. McChord

will retain a large Air Force presence." He said the current study is to determine how the bases might share suppliers and support services.

Hill also returned to the subject of increasing the troop numbers at Fort Bliss, asking if there were environmental issues to address. Schoomaker said the environmental issues there are minimal, and the base will be well served by being close to additional training pace at White Sands, and Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., and Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz.

Hill also asked why the Army had decided to put its decisions regarding leased property inside the BRAC plan. "You could have terminated those leases if you wanted," he said.

College said BRAC was the appropriate time to analyze and address the use of leased property.

"If you're going to take on the issue of the high cost of leased space, it should be looked at to determine how that infrastructure would work to support the team. We thought BRAC is the precise

tool to look at it in a comprehensive way, rather than taking small steps over time."

Hill's final question concerned the move of research and development from Fort Monmouth, N.J., to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Harvey called the move "a judgment call," but said because Monmouth is relatively close to Maryland that he expects more of the high-tech specialists from Monmouth will make the move than would happen with a larger geographic move.

Commissioner Philip Coyle asked about the many differences between this round of BRAC and previous rounds.

Schoomaker said the current round of BRAC is allowing the Army to accomplish numerous goals as the force structure changes.

"We have the opportunity to set the force the way we want it to be in the future," he said.

## Update on Army Alternate Procedures

On April 4-5, 2005, the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska (USAG-AK) hosted a meeting in Fairbanks with tribes and interested parties to discuss the Army Alternate Procedures (AAP) and the Historic Properties Component (HPC) to the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan. Meeting attendees included 18 tribal reps from 11 different tribes, Tanana Chiefs Conference, the UAF Museum curator of archaeology, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), a representative from the National Park Service in Anchorage, a member of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Historic Preservation Committee, two members of the federal Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP), two representatives from the Army Environmental Center (AEC), and several USAG-AK representatives.

Review of HPC comments on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning was extremely useful and identified a number of areas in the HPC for clarification or further explanation. The Army Environmental

Center will be receiving all of the comments for incorporation into the third and final draft HPC. These comments will cover not only technical issues associated with cultural resources management but also the role of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in the AAP.

Although USAG-AK has been working on this process for over two years, some tribes expressed concerns that they would like more time before the HPC is finalized. In response to this concern, the USAG-AK Native Liaison offered that additional time to further discuss the HPC would be most effective if interested tribes invited USAG-AK to visit one-on-one in their villages. Colonel Donna Boltz, USAG-AK Commander, sent letters to tribes requesting that they send written requests for Army representatives to visit their villages to discuss the HPC, if so desired. The village visits will be accomplished during the summer of 2005.



## Update on Battle Area Complex and Combined Arms Collective Training Facility

U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska is currently reviewing all comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the construction and operation of at Battle Area Complex (BAX) and Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) and taking them into consideration during the preparation of a second DEIS. USAG-AK is preparing a second DEIS to evaluate an additional alternative location for the BAX and CACTF. In depth environmental field studies are also being conducted during the summer of 2005, and results will be included in the second DEIS. The anticipated publication date for the second DEIS is expected to be in late Fall of 2005. Meetings with tribes will be held to discuss the differences between the first and second DEIS documents and to collect comments. These meetings are anticipated to be held between November 2005 and January 2006. Distribution of a final DEIS can be expected in early Spring of 2006. The publication of the Record of Decision (ROD), which will outline the decision made and identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected, is anticipated to occur in May of 2006. A monitoring and enforcement program will also be developed for any mitigation associated with the construction and operation of a BAX and CACTF. Tribes will receive a copy of the Final EIS and Record of Decision and USAG-AK will host a meeting to discuss the decision with tribes at that time.

## WASHINGTON POST OPINION-EDITORIAL SUBMISSION SENT FROM A CONCERNED SOLDIER IN MOSUL, IRAQ

I read the article about the Stryker's substandard performance in Mosul with interest. I offer the readers the following facts based on six months of fighting a counter-insurgency with Strykers in Mosul, Iraq and ask them to make their own conclusion. These facts are purely as they apply to one Stryker Infantry Battalion – 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, which has operated in Mosul, Iraq since Oct 2004 with 75 Strykers.

The article specifically faulted the Stryker's substandard survivability and maintenance to the point of stating it places soldiers' lives at risk. I would argue that nothing could be further from the truth.

Since Oct 2004, our Battalion's Strykers have been engaged with 122 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), 186 Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), 33 car bombs, of which 10 were Suicide Car Bombs, and countless mortar and small arms engagements. In November and December we were fighting an enemy that massed up to 70 insurgents during attacks. As a result the battalion has had 7 soldiers killed in action and 102 wounded in action (81 of which were able to return to duty within 21 days). The majority of all casualties have come from doing what the nation expects us to do - dismounted infantry operations closing with and destroying the enemy.

The insurgents most dangerous and powerful weapon is the suicide car bomb. I have personally watched 4 of 10 suicide car bombs slam into Strykers creating an explosion that is equivalent to a 500lb bomb, one of which was a suicide truck carrying 52 x (times) 155mm rounds (a net explosive weight 10% greater than a 2000lb JDAM) that detonated within 25m of a Stryker. In all 10 suicide car bomb attacks we did not lose a single soldiers' life, limb or eyesight for those soldiers riding on the Stryker.

One example -- Over the last six months, one Stryker, C21, has been hit by a suicide car bomb, 9 IEDs, 8 RPG direct hits, and countless small arms. The Infantry squad has had 6 wounded but every soldier is still in Iraq and still fighting on a daily basis. After each attack, the Stryker continued to stay in the fight or was repaired in less than 48 hours.

Not only is the Stryker survivable, it is incredibly reliable. Our 75 Strykers each have at least 20,000 miles on them. We average over 1,000 miles a month on each Stryker and amazingly we average greater than 96% Operational Readiness rate. That is 3-4 Strykers down at any given time. This is the highest operational readiness rate of any armored vehicle in the Army inventory. We average less than 24 hours to refit a vehicle after it has received battle damage. The electronic

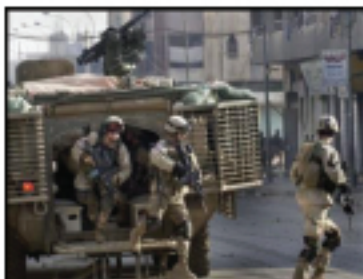
computers, monitors, mapping software, weapons cameras and radios that give us incredible situational awareness average greater than a 94% operational readiness rate.

Much like every other weapon system the Army has fielded it will continue to get modified and better with time. Remember, we are on the fifth major modification of the M1 tank. These are the irrefutable facts without emotion.

Now, let me share with you some emotion. I have watched this vehicle save my soldiers lives and enable them to kill our nation's enemies. In urban combat there is no better vehicle for delivering a squad of infantryman to close with and destroy the enemy. It is fast, quiet, incredibly survivable, reliable, lethal, and capable of providing amazing situational awareness. These qualities distinguish it from every other platform in the Army inventory but most importantly it delivers the most valuable weapon on the battlefield - a soldier.

Do not just take my word on the Stryker, ask one of the 700 soldiers in this Battalion which vehicle they want to go to combat in.

MICHAEL E. KURILLA  
Lieutenant Colonel  
1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment  
(Stryker Brigade Combat Team) MOSUL, IRAQ



## USAG-AK Staff Visit Native Village of Eagle

Chief Isaac Juneby invited USAG-AK staff Amanda Shearer and Russell Sackett to the Native Village of Eagle on February 22-23, 2005. The purpose of the visit was two-fold: to attend the 3rd Annual Subsistence Potlatch hosted by Eagle Village Council and to meet with the Eagle Village Council as requested to discuss the Historic Properties Component (HPC) of the Army Alternate Procedures to Section 106.

The potlatch on February 22 provided a wonderful opportunity for USAG-AK staff to gain a better understanding of the subsistence lifestyle. Several agencies in addition to the Army attended, along with villagers from Eagle. Guests were asked to introduce themselves and to talk about how they had worked with tribes through their agencies. The meal was delicious and included both fish and moose dishes.

The next day began with breakfast graciously provided by Eagle Village Council. The meeting with Eagle Village Council to discuss the HPC was very productive. Valuable input from the Council regarding the importance of traditional knowledge will be reflected in the Historic Properties Component of the Army Alternate Procedures.

We sincerely appreciated everyone's generosity during our visit. Thanks goes to all those involved in the planning and preparing of the subsistence potlatch.



## USAG-AK Cultural Resource Manager Position

As many of you know, Russ Sackett, former USAG-AK cultural resource manager, left Alaska in April to take a position as an historical architect at Fort Bliss, Texas. USAG-AK hopes to fill the vacant cultural resource manager position by the end of June 2005. Until that time, please direct any USAG-AK cultural resource management questions to Gary Larsen, (907) 384-3074 or [gary.larsen@richardson.army.mil](mailto:gary.larsen@richardson.army.mil).

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