Arctic People and DoD Infrastructure

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• ‘The People’
• DoD and the Arctic
• Legacy
• Future Arctic DoD

Canadian Geographic
The People

- Inuit as example:
- Approx. 148,000 pop. (U.S., Canada, Greenland, Denmark)
- Over 10 languages
- All Tribes: Rely on traditional living methods
- All Tribes: Significant contribution to construction and operation of DoD Arctic installations – past and present
DoD and the Arctic

- 1st International Polar Year – Greely Expedition (US Army) 1881
- Yukon to Bering Sea - Schwatka Expedition (US Army) 1883
- Northern Alaska – Navy Petro Reserve #4
- Alaska Territorial Guard - WWII
- Central Alaska, Aleutian Islands – WWII
- ACFEL (CRREL) and NARL – post WWII
- Thule AB, DEW Line – Cold War to current
- Northern Scandinavia - Current
Legacy

- Continued presence – lower population
- Abandoned installations – partially and completely removed
- Environmental residuals – FUDS, other
- Social Impacts ……

Inuit respect for and knowledge of the land is a central aspect of their world, while disrespect for the environment and ignorance of how to live with it have been normal for many newcomers to the North. Preconditioning DEW Liners to battle an enemy environment while reinforcing notions of arctic isolation, remoteness, desolation, and hardship did not bode well for interracial relations.

(Fritz, S., The DEW Line Passage: Tracing the legacies of Arctic Militarization, 2010)

“The Arctic: desolate, savage, remote... Not too bad for caribou or polar bears, but no place for human beings.”

(Federal Electric Film – DEW Line)

“The Eskimos too were recruited, and they did a good job” (Western Electric Film – DEW Line)
Future Arctic DoD

- Continued presence – increasing population?
- Temporary or permanent - new or reutilization
- Environmental – disturbance (permafrost, hydrology, veg…) and residuals (lessons learned)
- Social Impacts – Lessons learned?
Thank you