



ALASKA VETERANS FOUNDATION

February 14, 2009

Rep David Guttenberg
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Rep Guttenberg;

As you know the Alaska Veterans Foundation, Inc. is the only statewide veteran service foundation. We claim almost 80,000 members as veterans and another 35,000 active duty, National Guard, and Reserve. When you add these heroes together and multiply that by at least two family members in Alaska, this community of citizens, who understand service to our nation, represents about a third of our state's population.

It is unconscionable that after all these years of statehood, of Alaskan sacrifice to stand guard for America; we do not yet have a veteran's cemetery in Interior Alaska. This means that the families of our fallen heroes must either not put them to rest in a veteran cemetery or that they must travel hundreds, even a thousand miles to say their final farewell or visit the gravesite.

Your continuing efforts to bring this issue forward have engendered a great admiration by our veterans and their families. Your efforts during the last legislative session are well known to us and the refusal by one Senator to allow this priority legislation not to become law, will be remembered.

We stand with you again in total unqualified support for HB97 and ask Chairman Gatto of the House Special Committee on Veterans Affairs to move this legislation forward with strong bipartisan support.

It is time we formally recognized the service and sacrifice of all Alaskan's who have stepped forward to stand guard for America.

Please ensure a copy of this letter is provided to the members of the House Committee for the hearing February 17th and feel free to express our hope that finally we can see this small but essential statement by our state – that we honor the men and women who have served and who choose to spend the rest of eternity in Alaska.

It is an honor,

Ric Davidge
Chairman