



Presentation to the Joint Armed Services Committee  
April 25, 2023  
Lieutenant General (AK) Torrence Saxe  
Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard and  
Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



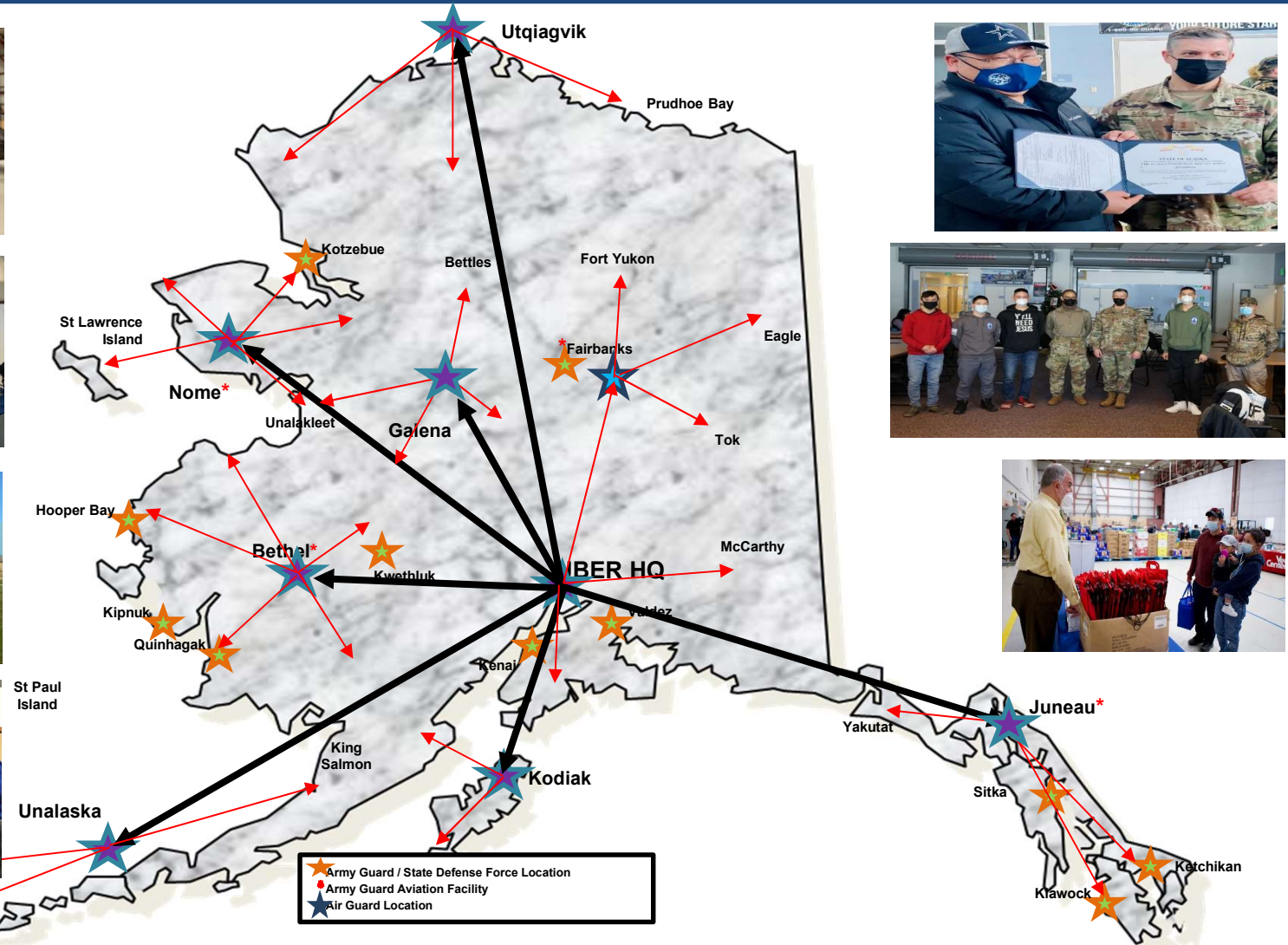
# Alaska National Guard







# Alaska National Guard





# Operation Merbok 2022



## Joint Task Force-Alaska Operation Merbok Response

UNCLASSIFIED

### PRIORITIES:

1. Humanitarian effort
2. Timeliness—  
Freeze up coming
3. Discipline
4. All in

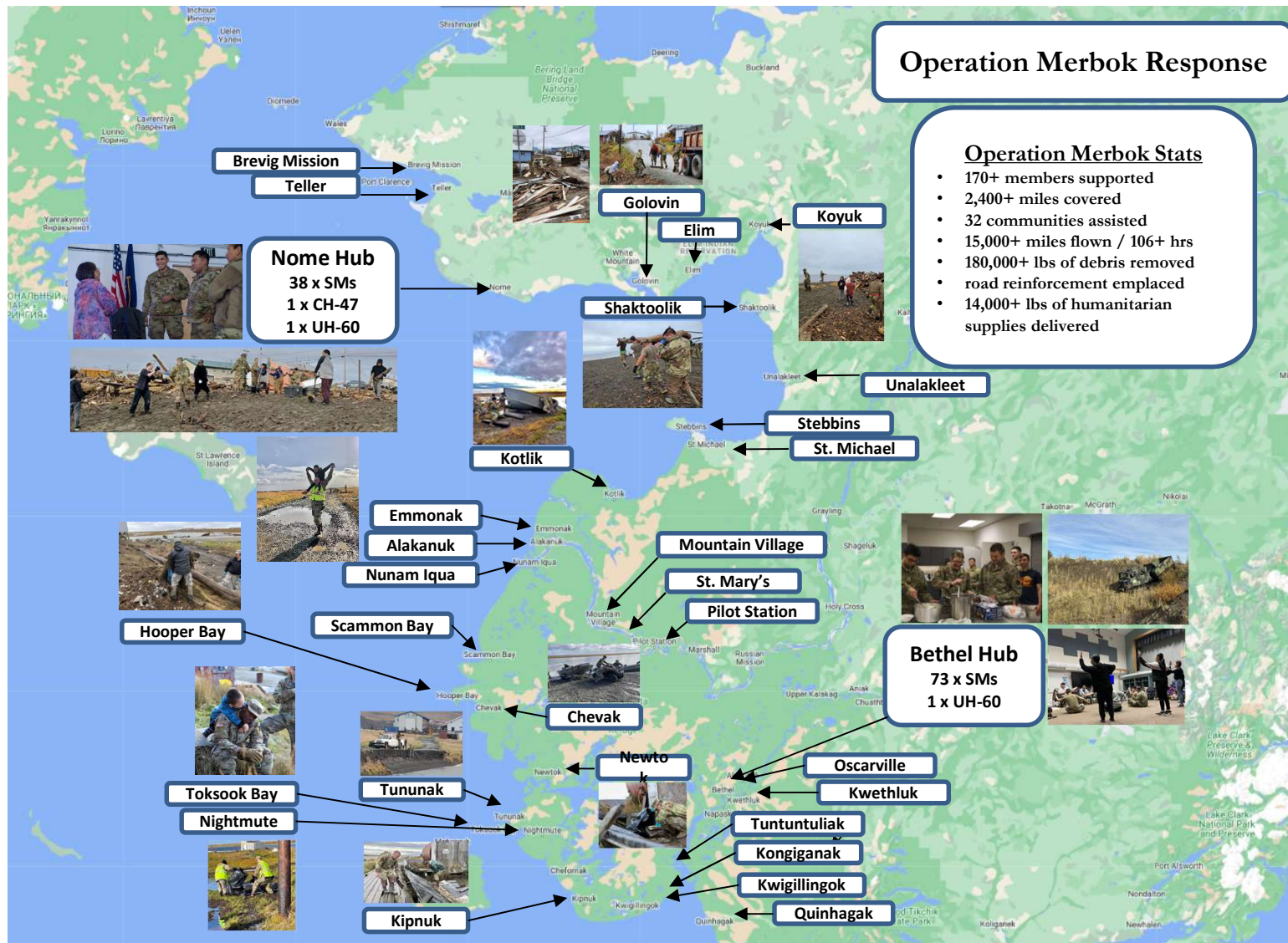


*Focus and Results*





# Operation Merbok 2022





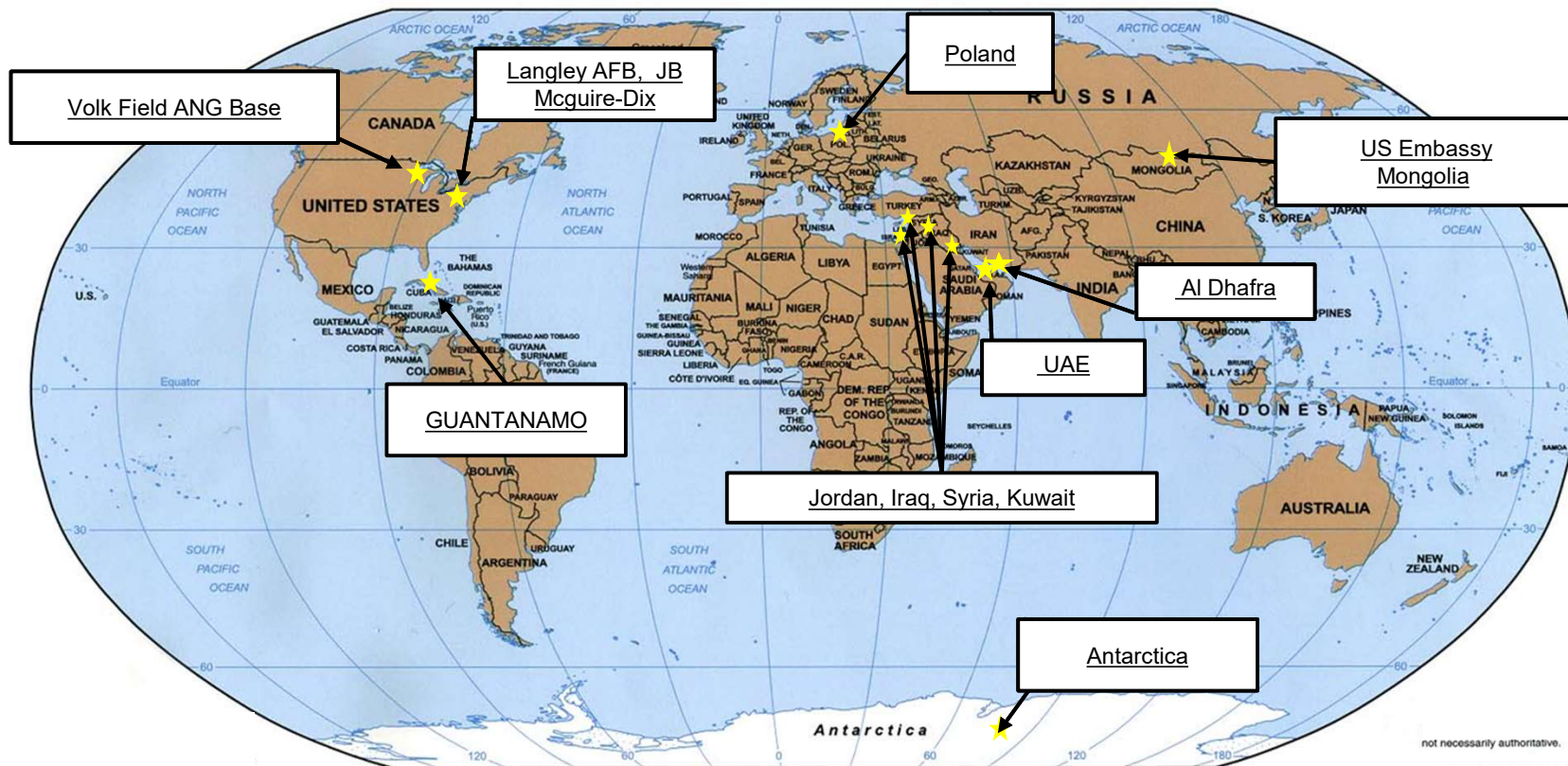
# Response and Connection







# Alaska National Guard

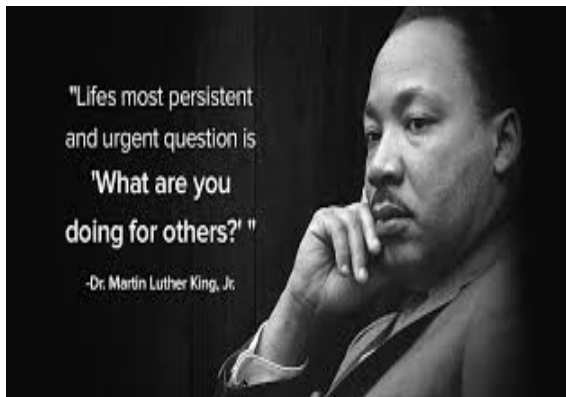




# Focus on the Troops



## Leadership Matters







# Honor and Respect

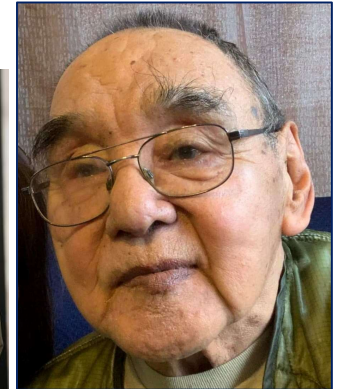


Private George Fox





# Way Forward







# 2023 Women Veterans Event



Held the first Alaska event connecting female Veterans with over 150 participants





# Renaming Event



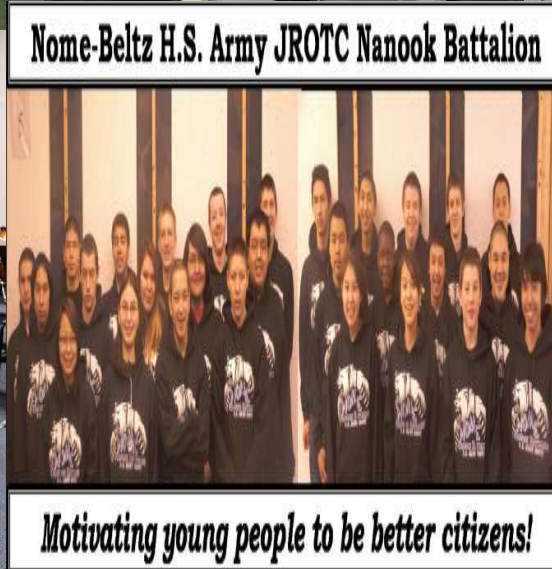
Renamed the Alaska VA Healthcare campus the Colonel Mary Louise Rasmuson Campus –  
1<sup>st</sup> whole VA Campus named after a noted female Veteran







# Rural & Local Outreach







# Honoring Our Heroes



On June 22, 1955 a U.S. Navy plane with 11 crew members departed from Kodiak on a routine patrol mission to check navigational aids and document sea ice.

Two Russian MiG-15 aircraft attacked the US Navy plane. Disabled, the plane had to crash land on the closest land, about 8 – 10 miles south of Gambell. On impact, the plane burst into flames.







# Honoring Our Heroes



Gambell Guardsmen heard the commotion and jumped into action. They traveled along the coast and brought the 11 survivors to Gambell via boat to receive emergency care.

Track vehicles moved the injured from Gambell's beach to the local church and Gambell cared for the US Navy aircrew until their return to Elmendorf Air Force Base.





# Honoring Our Heroes



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.

These awards were presented to Cpl. Bruce Boolowon and surviving family of:

Master Sgt. Willis Walunga

Sfc. Herbert Apassingok

Cpl. Victor Campbell

Cpl. Ned Koozaata

Pfc. Holden Apatiki

Pfc. Woodrow Malewotkuk

Pfc. Vernon Slwooko

Pfc. Leroy Kulukhon

Staff Sgt. Clifford Iknokinok

Sgt. Ralph Apatiki Sr.

Cpl. Joseph Slwooko

Pfc. Lane Iyakitan

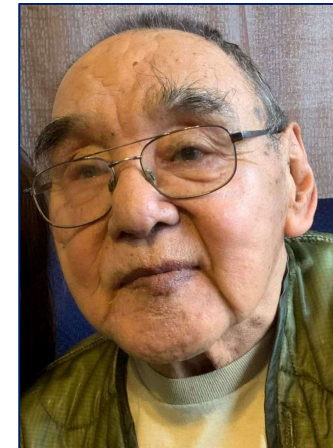
Pfc. Roger Slwooko

Pfc. Donald Ungott

Pvt. Luke Kulukhon



Photo: L. Boolowon



**Cpl. Bruce Boolowon**





# Honoring Our Heroes





# Alaskans Helping Alaskans



ONE TEAM  
TEAM ALASKA







**Torrence Saxe, Lieutenant General (AK)**  
**Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard**  
**Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**  
Work: 907-428-6003  
Email: [torrence.saxe@alaska.gov](mailto:torrence.saxe@alaska.gov)