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# Alaska – America's Arctic

The Arctic Strategy of the Alaska Organized Militia

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## **Executive Summary**

This strategy focuses on Alaska's unique status as the only Arctic state in the union. It highlights the Alaska Organized Militia (AKOM) competencies for State and Federal mission assurance in an Arctic environment. The increasing strategic importance of the Arctic among great power competitors requires Alaska to look at the Arctic through a deliberate, unified, and forward-looking lens.

There are multiple competing definitions of the Arctic based on factors like geography, aggregate extent of permafrost, mean temperature, etc. This strategy uses the Arctic Research and Policy Act definition of the Arctic as all U.S and foreign territory north of the Arctic Circle; all U.S. territory north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Rivers; all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort, Bering, and Chukchi Seas; and the Aleutian chain. Additionally, this strategy considers the remainder of the State of Alaska and its territorial waters as vital to U.S. Arctic Operations and therefore incorporates them for planning purposes.

Alaska's geographic location on the edge of the U.S. homeland and at the junction of three critical Combatant Command Areas of Responsibility, Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), European Command (EUCOM), and Northern Command (NORTHCOM) puts the state in a unique position strategically, globally, and economically.

The AKOM fully supports the National Defense Strategy, Department of Defense (DoD) Arctic strategy, and service-specific Arctic strategies. We contribute to DoD's endstate of a secure and stable region where we safeguard United States and Alaska interests, protect the homeland, and cooperatively address shared challenges. These strategies dovetail with the State of Alaska (SoA) declaration of Arctic policy statutes and support Senator Dan Sullivan's Three Pillars of Military Might in the Arctic: Cornerstone of Missile Defense, Strategic Platform for Expeditionary Forces, and Hub of Air Combat Power. While contributing to the federal mission, we will never lose sight of our state mandate: safeguarding and assisting Alaskans in their time of need.

AKOM will work to enhance the DoD and service-specific Arctic strategies while ensuring the viability of SoA priorities and needs. This means critically analyzing those strategies to identify capability gaps where the AKOM can complement and assist in a meaningful and lasting way. AKOM will do this through the following coordinated lines of effort:

- Arctic Homeland Defense and Security
- Capability Projection
- Arctic and Extreme Cold Weather Expertise
- Partnerships and Cooperation

## Introduction

The AKOM has its earliest roots in the Home Guard units established throughout Alaska during World War I. The Japanese invasion of the Aleutian Islands during World War II rejuvenated these home grown units. Under the leadership of Governor Ernest Gruening and Major Marvin “Muktuk” Marston detachments were organized, trained, and equipped throughout Alaska to defend against further aggression. This force, colloquially known as the “Tundra Army”, was officially designated the Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG), and served until 1949 when it became the Alaska National Guard. The Cold War years saw these units



*ATG painting by ATG member “Rusty” C. Heurlin*

organized into Scout battalions which continued the ATG mission of providing constant surveillance of Alaska’s coast. The Alaska Scouts were a unique organization comprised mostly of Alaska Natives who used their vast wealth of cultural knowledge and familiarity with local terrain to provide an unmatched capability in the Alaskan Arctic for over forty years. Reorganized after the Cold War to build expeditionary units more suited for the wars of the late 20th and early 21st century, the legacy of the Alaska Scouts endures today as the proud lineage of the AKOM. Today’s AKOM includes Air and Army National Guard forces as well as unique state forces: Alaska Naval Militia (ANM) and the Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF).

AKOM’s history is inextricably tied to the land and cultures of the Arctic. Its missions, from coastal security to missile defense, are a direct product of its Arctic roots. This strategy continues that long tradition while defining the value we bring to our State and Federal partners. Although this strategy is threat based, the focus of the AKOM Arctic strategy must be broader than near peer competition. As an organized militia we are required to look at problem sets through two different lenses: Federal mission

assurance and Homeland Defense in a Title 10 (T10) status, and State disaster response and civil support in a Title 32 (T32) or State Active Duty (StAD) status.

In our Federal T10 role our mission is homeland defense. We augment T10 DoD forces to accomplish the protection of US sovereignty, territory, domestic population centers, and critical infrastructure.

In our State T32 or StAD role we support Alaska Statute 44.99.105 – Declaration of State Arctic policy. Specifically, we:

44.99.105 (3): enhance the security of the Arctic region of the state and, thereby, the security of the entire state, and

44.99.105 (3) a: enhance disaster and emergency prevention and response.

Increased activity in the Arctic affects Alaska's security, economy, and way of life. This presents both threats and opportunities that we address through a whole of government and interagency approach. The AKOM strategy will focus on the Arctic as a geographical area, not a climate, and address operations that occur year round.

This strategy articulates four lines of effort: Arctic Homeland Defense and Security, Capability Projection, Arctic and Extreme Cold Weather Expertise, and Partnerships and Cooperation. Through a deliberate emphasis on the lines of effort, it aims to achieve a unity of effort that is consistent with our commitment to the state of Alaska and the United States. In order to achieve these lines of effort we will leverage the experience and knowledge of our members and their communities. We will enrich our partnerships with the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), State Universities, Alaska-based T10 forces, and the National Guard Arctic Interest Council (NGAIC), to name a few. We will strive to become a force multiplier, not a replication of force.

The AKOM's desired end state is a secure and stable Arctic built on strong partnerships where the AKOM is the premier mission partner for Arctic operations and emergency response. Alaska is America's Arctic. Following is the Arctic strategy for the Alaska Organized Militia.



## Operational Environment

The Arctic continues to open, creating opportunities and vulnerabilities. Competitors continue to create instability, threatening national interests and continually seeking ways to diminish U.S. military dominance. Our competitors are posturing militarily and economically to dominate the



Arctic region. These challenges directly affect Alaskans due to the state's strategic location. The security interests for the SoA mirror and support those of the US. Securing these interests requires a whole of government approach at both the state and federal level as the physical changes in the Arctic environment allow for increased access. This increase in international competition for access to the Arctic region is driving U.S. Arctic strategy. The key dynamics identified in the DoD Arctic Strategy include:

- Cooperation to Address Shared Interests and Challenges. Mutual respect of sovereign interests has so far caused the Arctic to remain a peaceful and stable region due to shared interest in realizing the benefits of greater access to Arctic region resources.
- Status of Arctic Sea Routes. Canada claims the Northwest Passage as internal waters, subject to Canadian sovereignty. Russia has threatened to use force against foreign vessels that enter the Northern Sea Route (NSR) without Russian permission.
- Increasing Military Activity. Russia has been strengthening its Arctic presence for several years, including forming the Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command in December 2014. They have created new Arctic units and refurbished old infrastructure and airfields in the Arctic. China maintains research efforts in the Arctic, increasing their support for future Chinese military presence.

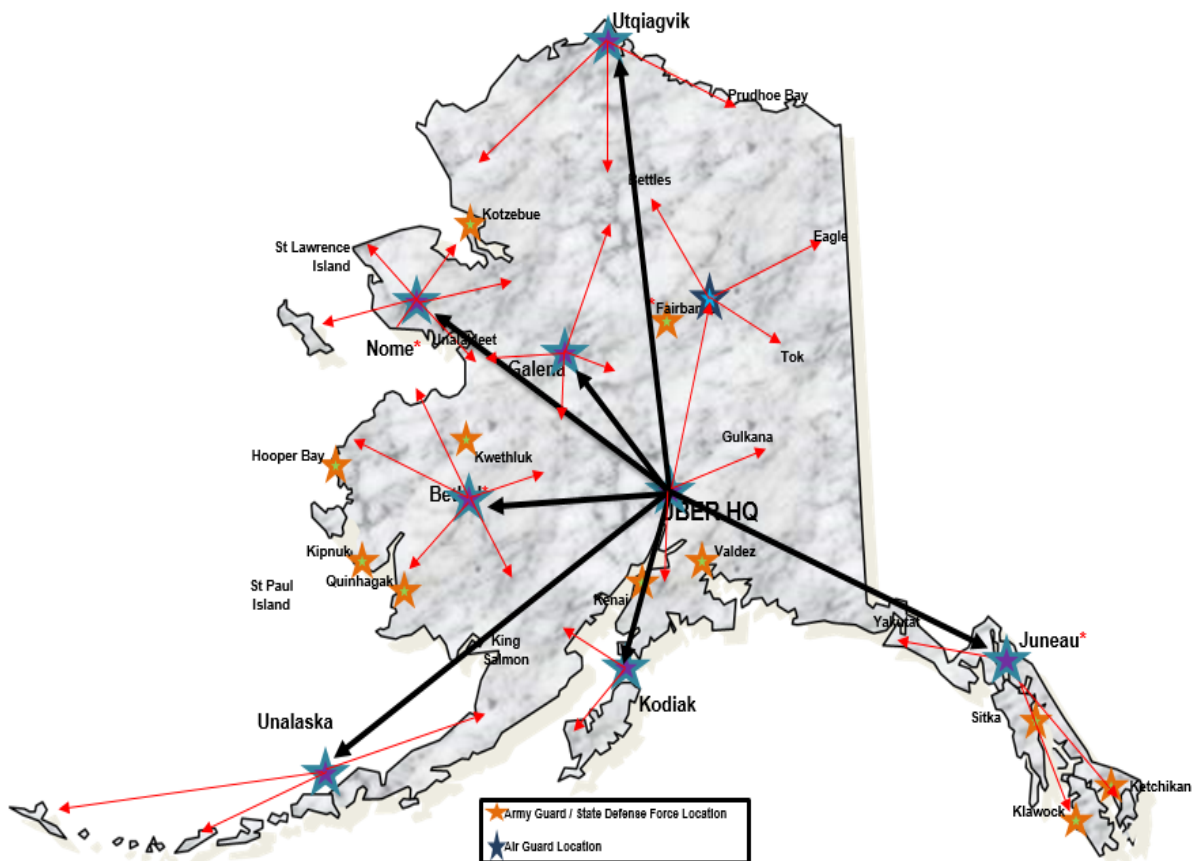
- Attempts to Alter Arctic Governance Through Economic Leverage. China is seeking a role in Arctic governance as part of their “One Belt, One Road” enterprise. Their interest lies primarily in natural resources and Arctic shipping lanes.

AKOM’s area of operations (AO) differs depending on the status in which our units serve. In a non-mobilized T32 or StAD status our AO consists of the State of Alaska and its immediately adjacent littoral waters as defined by current political boundaries. In a federal T10 or mobilized status our units span the globe, serving in such far flung locations as Mongolia, Djibouti, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Poland, and Jordan. For the purposes of this strategy, AKOM’s AO is the State of Alaska. The state’s main population centers (Fairbanks and Anchorage), capital (Juneau), and major military installations (JBER, Fort Wainwright, and Fort Greely) all exist outside the Arctic region, requiring any capabilities projected into the Arctic to first come through or from the sub-Arctic areas. Therefore this strategy considers Alaska as a whole rather than just its Arctic region.



## Lines of Effort

To support state and national interests in the Arctic, the AKOM will pursue four lines of effort: Arctic Homeland Defense and Security, Capability Projection, Arctic and Extreme Cold Weather Expertise, and Partnerships and Cooperation. Critical to this strategy will be the execution and continuous assessment of the AKOM Rural Operations plan which will necessitate incorporating all state and federal stakeholders. The AKOM has transitioned from a rural plan of engagement to one of action. Looking at Alaska as an AO has enabled the AKOM to solve the tyranny of distance problem through strategically selected hubs throughout the State. The Rural Operations plan utilizes a “hub and spoke” concept that allows AKOM to project forces to main Alaskan hubs and beyond to conduct Homeland Defense or Domestic Operations. These main hubs are Juneau, Kodiak, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Unalaska, Bethel, Galena, Nome, Utqiagvik, and Fairbanks to include its military installations.



## **LOE 1. Arctic Homeland Defense and Security**

Arctic security for the United States begins with securing the State of Alaska. AKOM's dual State and Federal mission enhances U.S. Arctic security from both internal and external threats. As T10 mission partners we provide early warning, missile defense, domain awareness, and air sovereignty support that directly contributes to Homeland Defense. Our T32 National Guard and non-Federal organized militias provide resources to Alaskan communities during natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or civil unrest under AS 26.05.070.

AKOM regularly saves lives throughout Alaska in partnership with the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center (ARCC); battles wildfires with helicopters and ground-based logistical and security support; monitors and assists State authorities in responding to seasonal flooding; provides immediate support to suspected CBRN incidents statewide; and trains for "worst day in Alaska" scenarios like 9+ magnitude earthquakes or CBRN attacks. We also maintain Dual Status Command (DSC) trained leaders capable of tightly integrating T10 and T32 forces in the event of a catastrophic natural disaster in the State of Alaska.

AKOM continually adapts to its evolving threat environment. In the last decade AKOM has upgraded most of its fixed and rotor wing aircraft; added two new aerial MEDEVAC detachments; acquired heavy lift helicopters; begun building an initial cyber capability; and conducted numerous Joint operations above the Arctic Circle.

As our state's hometown military force, we are responsible for the implementation of the mandate under Alaska Statute 44.99.105 to "enhance the security of the Arctic region of the state and, thereby, the security of the entire state". Our proven capabilities, combined with constant surveillance of the threat environment and commitment to constant improvement, make us a premier provider of Arctic-capable forces and operational expertise.

Below are some of our current contributions to Arctic Homeland Defense and Security.

## Domain Awareness.

Space domain awareness: The Long Range Discrimination Radar and Upgraded Early Warning arrays at Clear Space Force Station detect and classify space objects to facilitate the larger missile defense enterprise. Additionally, Clear's Enhanced Polar System (EPS) provides protected extremely high frequency satellite communications in the North Polar Region (above 65 degrees North). The EPS provides continuous coverage in the polar region for secure, jam-resistant, strategic and tactical communications.

Air domain awareness: The 176th Wing provides air domain awareness through a series of ground based radars throughout the state of Alaska. Their primary missions, in support of the Alaska NORAD Region, are Operation NOBLE EAGLE and NORTHERN SOVEREIGNTY Operations.

Missile Defense. Alaska's position at the "air crossroads of the world" as Billy Mitchell famously described it, makes us a critical component of any integrated missile defense strategy protecting the continental United States. Senator Dan Sullivan has identified

**THREE PILLARS OF MILITARY MIGHT  
CORNERSTONE OF U.S. MISSILE DEFENSE**

**Threat: North Korea**

- **NK Nuclear Weapons:** "U.S. intelligence officials have estimated the number [of North Korean nuclear weapons] to be between thirty and sixty... confidential U.S. intelligence assessment from July 2017 reportedly concluded that North Korea has developed the technology to miniaturize a nuclear warhead to fit its ballistic missiles." – **Council on Foreign Relations**, "North Korea's Military Capabilities" (December 2019)
- **Kim Jong-Un:** Nearly 110 missile launches and 4 nuclear tests (more than his father & grandfather, combined)
- **Last Nuclear Test (Sept 2017):** 140-200 kt (10X bigger than Hiroshima)

**GMD (Fort Greely)**

- **Alaska:** 40 GBIs, Growing to 60 GBIs (2030), Only Line of Defense Against ICBM Threats

**Missile Defense Radars**

- **Clear AFS:** Upgraded Early Warning Radar, Long Range Discrimination Radar (2021)
- **Eareckson AS (Shemya):** Cobra Dane Radar

**MDA Testing**

- **Kodiak:** Terminal High Altitude Area Defense Systems (THAAD), Patriot Systems, Israel Arrow-3 (Upper-Tier) Testing, and Hypersonic Testing.

**3** U.S. SENATOR FOR ALASKA **DAN SULLIVAN**

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missile defense as one of his three pillars of military might and rightfully acknowledges that this is the only line of defense against the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile threat. The Alaska Army National Guard currently secures and operates over 90% of the U.S. ground-based missile defense interceptor capacity out of Fort Greely. AKOM is committed to maintaining this enduring mission to provide for the security of our fellow citizens. Along with these mission sets the AKOM provides support to DoD by securing the Kodiak Launch Facility during Missile Defense Agency (MDA) test launches.

Search and Rescue. The 176<sup>th</sup> Wing, equipped with HH-60, HC-130J, and Guardian Angel weapons systems provide highly skilled forces capable of rapid deployment anywhere in the state at extremely short notice. Trained in rescue operations across multiple operating environments, the Alaska Air National Guard's rescue professionals routinely operate throughout Alaska and in support of various contingency operations across the globe. They support the Alaska NORAD Region with search and rescue capabilities during Operation NOBLE EAGLE and NORTHERN SOVEREIGNTY Operations.

The Alaska Army National Guard, equipped with hoist capable UH60s, CH47s, and UH72s, conducts search and rescue operations throughout the State of Alaska. Army Aviation Operating Facilities (AAOF) sustain these platforms in key locations throughout the State of Alaska, to include two within the Arctic Region in Bethel and Nome. These facilities also routinely work with Joint and Interagency partners to project forces deep into the Arctic region.

Refueling. 168<sup>th</sup> Wing's refueling capabilities are critical to ensuring Alaska NORAD Region's Operation NOBLE EAGLE and NORTHERN SOVEREIGNTY Operations are successful across Alaska's vast airspace. Their KC-135s enable the largest 5<sup>th</sup> Generation fighter



*Alaska Air National Guard KC135 conducts refuelling operations in the Arctic*

concentration in the world to prosecute targets throughout the Alaskan AO.

Specific objectives LOE 1 include:

- Continue to support and grow mission sets in the Arctic
- Apportionment for the Homeland Defense Plan for Alaska
- Association/Total Force Partnership with U.S. Army Arctic Division
- Ensure parity of equipment modernization with T10 forces
- Partner with USARAK to provide JRSOI and/or set the theater support in the Arctic
- Modernize and field to strength - HH60G replacement to meet intent of the DAF Arctic Strategy
- Increase space early warning capability
- Kodiak launch facility becomes the premier launch site for polar orbit
- Establish TFI with 611<sup>th</sup> Air Operations Center
- Establish Clear Space Force Station TFI and Space National Guard
- Establish KC135 TFI

## LOE 2. Capability Projection



*Alaska Army National Guard CH47 flies over boreal forest to support Operation ICEX*

History teaches us that at high latitudes tactical and operational outcomes are a function of superior mobility. During the Aleutian campaign in 1942-1943, Japanese and U.S. forces fought for fourteen months over a string of remote islands because they were key to mobility throughout the region. The U.S. Army's eventual success in extending a string of airfields towards Attu and Kiska set the conditions that allowed for

the expulsion of Axis forces from Alaska. In every phase of this campaign mobility was the chief concern, from overcoming the challenges of navigating aircraft in constantly cloudy skies to moving artillery and materiel over muskeg and mountains. One key component of U.S. success in this campaign was a small team of scouts, later known as Castner's Cutthroats, who were recruited from among the local population based on their ability to move and survive in the difficult Alaskan environment.

AKOM is committed to developing enduring mobility solutions that address the unique challenges of high latitude operations. This strategic commitment includes advocating for capability development, maintaining significant operational capability projection of our own, and providing professional forums for the development of new operational concepts and approaches.

Below are some of our current contributions to capability projection in the Arctic.



### Small Unit Support Vehicle (SUSV)

Replacement Program. The SUSV is a tracked vehicle developed for use in high latitude and extreme cold conditions. The U.S. Army, Marines, and National Guard all currently operate the vehicle, used mainly for transport. The SUSV, first introduced in the 1980s, is long overdue for replacement. The U.S. Army is leading the replacement effort



and is looking for a similar vehicle that can serve as a general-purpose transport, an ambulance, or in a command and control (C2) mode. Several companies are contending to provide the SUSV replacement. AKOM maintains significant expertise in the use and maintenance of this vehicle, with platforms pre-positioned at locations throughout the state, including Bethel and Nome.

Arctic Sustainment Package. AKOM's 176<sup>th</sup> Wing's rescue squadrons maintain an Arctic Sustainment Package. The air droppable package contains the resources to sustain small units for a short period. Developed for rescue operations, AKOM also uses the package to support operations such as IceX. During this annual exercise, service members deploy by parachute and helicopter to erect shelters on the frozen Beaufort or Chukchi Seas in support of U.S. Navy operations. This capability is currently unique within DoD and provides a template and enduring skillset that is of critical value during high latitude operations.

Rapid Mobility/Global Reach. C-17s from the 176<sup>th</sup> Wing, combined with KC-135s from the 168<sup>th</sup> Wing, can deliver personnel and material to many major Northern Hemisphere cities in approximately eight hours. Additionally, HC-130Js can deliver Search and Rescue capabilities to many remote airfields in Alaska.

Arctic Mobility. To the uninitiated, Arctic operations are synonymous with cold-weather operations. The experienced Alaskan sportsman or military professional, however, knows that the Arctic is not always frozen and that mobility challenges at high latitudes vary dramatically with the passing seasons. To help educate senior leaders on these

unique challenges, AKOM will begin hosting Arctic Mobility Roundtables each year at locations throughout the State of Alaska. These events will expose participants to the seasonal mobility challenges of high latitude operations. Just as importantly, they will provide an opportunity for senior DOD decision makers to hear directly from Alaska's native communities about the ways and means by which they have lived and thrived in these environments for millennia. Participants will leave with a nuanced understanding of the economics, culture, climate, topography, and beauty of the north that they can achieve in no other way.

Emergency Response. The AKOM supports AS 44.99.105 (3) a: enhance disaster and emergency prevention and response, in a T32 or StAD status. The AKOM has deployed across the state to provide assistance to Alaskans in their time of need. Recent response and support efforts include ongoing Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID) support, the 7.1M earthquake in 2018, and the 2015 Sockeye wildfire.

Specific objectives for LOE 2 include:

- Conduct Annual Arctic Mobility Roundtables with mission partners
- Partner with Alaska based T10 forces to identify and fill mobility requirements
- Advocate for TFI with emerging Air Force capabilities
- Contribute to critical command and control function partnering with NORAD/NORTHCOM

### LOE 3. Arctic and Extreme Cold Weather Expertise

Alaska is what makes the United States an Arctic Nation. As a part of everyday life, Alaskans live, work, and play in the Arctic. For thousands of years, Alaskan Natives have been operating in the Arctic. During that time, they have developed and refined the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to not only survive, but also thrive in the Arctic's harsh environment.



*Ssg Carl, supported by Lt Viray, competes in the Kuskokwim 300 Dog Sled Race.*

Alaskan businesses have also developed ways to thrive in the Arctic. With decades of experience, they have established the blueprints for how to successfully build and sustain Lines of Communication and safeguard their people and equipment from the effects of the extreme cold. Additionally, Alaskan sportsmen and women recreate throughout Alaska and the Arctic region year round. The everyday experience of Alaskans that live, work, and play in the Arctic make them the true subject matter experts of Arctic Operations.



*AKNG members compete in the Iron Dog snowmachine race. At more than 2,400 miles it is the longest high speed cross-country snowmachine race in the world.*

Without the help of Alaskan residents, the DoD will struggle to create effective strategy, doctrine, and TTPs for the Arctic Region. The AKOM is ideally situated to act as a conduit between Alaskan Natives, businesses, and sportsmen/women and the DoD. The AKOM must engage Arctic stakeholders in the DoD and promote Alaskans as the true subject matter experts of the Arctic Domain to

facilitate collaboration between DoD and Alaskans. This collaboration must promote the exchange of ideas and recommendations concerning ways and means, issues, lessons learned, and TTPs. This forum will also ensure Alaskans have an opportunity to share Alaskan culture with DoD stakeholders to ensure it is accounted for in all planning efforts. Maintaining the AKOM's connection with Alaskan businesses and rural communities is critical to our success. To maintain this connection, we must leverage our service members, veterans, and retirees and continue to support our rural communities through engagements and operations. As with almost everything we do, our ability to build and maintain relationships will determine our level of success.

Specific objectives for LOE 3 include:

- Participate in doctrine updates, specific to Arctic and ECW operations
- Partner with Alaskan based T10 forces to support ECW training for transient/new arrivals
- Develop Arctic Agile Combat Employment capability
- All efforts will be made to conduct in-state Annual Training

## LOE 4. Partnerships and Cooperation

Alaskan Native culture emphasizes the importance of sharing, generosity, and cooperation. Shaped over millennia through constant interaction with the Arctic landscape, Native culture is perfectly adapted to its environment. Native communities recognize that only through cooperation can people safely and effectively live and work at high latitudes. Likewise, AKOM recognizes that the key to building DOD Arctic capacity is forming strong partnerships with organizations and communities. No single entity can or ever will own all the resources and knowledge necessary to provide security in the Arctic. AKOM, in its unique dual State and Federal role, seeks to be the bridge that will connect military and civilian expertise to bring new capabilities to the DOD.

State Partnership Program. The AKOM has a long and tenured relationship with Mongolia. Critical to this relationship is the AKOM State Partnership Coordinator in Alaska and the Bilateral Affairs Officers assigned to the embassy in Ulaanbaatar. Through Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE) and exercises, the AKOM shares ECW expertise and enhances interoperability with regional partners.



*AKNG member participates in a Cold Weather SMEE with the Mongolian Armed Forces at the Five Hills Training Area in Mongolia.*

AKOM Tribal Liaison. The AKOM has a full time tribal liaison charged with developing and maintaining lines of communication with key leaders in rural Alaska with an emphasis on hub communities. This is a critical position within the AKOM that provides 24/7 situational awareness across the state. This position also provides a timely, culturally sensitive line of communication with rural communities that is essential for effective Arctic operations.

Industry. Alaskan businesses operate routinely in the Arctic and have solved many of the same sustainment challenges DOD will face if it ever has to employ armed force at



high latitudes. AKOM members already work for and, in some cases, lead in these organizations. AKOM will foster relationships with businesses that routinely operate in the Arctic to identify novel solutions to DOD capability gaps and create constructive dialogue on solving common challenges.

Academia. The University of Alaska system conducts significant research in the Arctic and offers multiple degree programs in multiple disciplines with an Arctic focus to include a Ph.D. in Arctic and Northern Studies. Additional programs include the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Center for Arctic Security and Resilience (CASR), which "endeavors to contribute knowledge and scholarly value at the speed of relevance for today's most challenging issues impacting the Circumpolar North and Arctic Region"; and the University of Alaska Anchorage hosted, Arctic Domain Awareness Center whose mission is to "develop and transition technology solutions, innovative products, and educational programs to improve situational awareness and crisis response capabilities related to emerging maritime challenges in the dynamic Arctic environment." The AKOM will continue its enduring relationship with these and other academic institutions to build better understanding of the physical, electromagnetic, cultural, and geopolitical environment in the Arctic and to enhance transfer of that knowledge to DOD stakeholders to include the future Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. We will become involved in CASR's Arctic E-talk series to socialize AKOM capabilities and contribute when applicable. The AKOM will partner with Universities to allow graduate students an opportunity to work on real world problem sets as graded and approved projects.

Communities and Tribes. AKOM's unique dual State and Federal role allows it to serve as a natural bridge between DOD and the many communities and tribal organizations throughout the State of Alaska. AKOM will continue its ongoing initiatives to build and maintain constructive, cooperative



*Demonstrating the AKOMs strong ties to community, this Alaska Air National Guard KC135s newly painted tail flash honors the village of Minto*



relationships and will act as a valuable intermediary to facilitate conversations between Federal DOD stakeholders and local Alaskan tribes and communities. A successful product of this relationship is the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) that occurs across the state. Examples of IRT success are the extension of the runway in Old Harbor and Arctic Care, an annual IRT that provides free medical and dental care to rural communities in need.

National Guard Arctic Interest Council. Many of our fellow state National Guards have extremely valuable capabilities in high latitude and extreme cold weather environments. The New York Guard, for example, regularly flies sustainment missions to Antarctica, while the Vermont Army Guard owns and operates the schoolhouse that is the proponent for the U.S. Army's mountain warfare doctrine. These kinds of specialized capabilities exist in many of the state National Guards, and are of tremendous potential value to DOD during any future conflict in the Arctic. The NGAIC, with Alaska as a permanent Co-Chair, provides a forum for representatives from states to advocate for the National Guard's equities in the Arctic and operations in Extreme Cold Weather (ECW). The NGAIC also conducts Joint Integrated Planning for Arctic and National Guard stakeholders and organizations, including Joint Integrated Arctic Exercise planning.

Specific objectives for LOE 4 include:

- Partner with T10 forces in Alaska or those that can affect Alaska to protect AKOM equities
- Affiliation with CASR
- Continue to provide in state IRT support
- Increase communication and incorporate AKOM veterans and retirees into rural operations
- NGAIC representative in all Arctic discussions and plans in Alaska

## **Conclusion**

Alaska is America's Arctic and AKOM's home, but we can't ensure the protection of its people and national level critical assets alone. We require a whole of government approach and assistance from our valued partners. The AKOM is pursuing this through our four lines of effort: Arctic Homeland Defense and Security, Capability Projection, Arctic and Extreme Cold Weather Expertise, and Partnerships and Cooperation. We will proactively exercise new and innovative ideas to address capability gaps in order to achieve our endstate of a secure and stable Arctic built on strong partnerships where the AKOM is the premier mission partner for Arctic operations and emergency response.