

## **To Those Who Serve**

By Senator Loren Leman

For 10 of the 14 years I've been in the Alaska Legislature it has been my privilege to represent the men and women of Elmendorf AFB and their families. I've helped many military families in their dealings with state government, but I've received much more in return from the relationship. My wife Carolyn and I have met and made life-long friends. We have attended change-of-command ceremonies, Salute to the Military banquets, Honorary Commander functions, Air Shows and I even rode in the back seat of an F-15.

The people we met also influenced the life of another of our family—when the time came for our son Joseph to choose higher education the Air Force Academy was first on his list. He is now finishing his second year at the Academy.

This will be my last session in the Legislature, but before I move on there is something I want to say to those I've represented on Elmendorf AFB, and to the soldiers at Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson, the men and women at Eielson AFB and our other military people around Alaska—and those serving in Afghanistan, Korea, Diego Garcia, Kuwait, Germany and many other points all over the world. And to those who served before, in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Cold War and Desert Storm.

Thank you.

Thank you for your service to our country. Thank you for the sacrifices, the 12-, 16- and even 24-hour days you have put in when needed to protect us. Thank you for making it possible for the rest of us to go to school, conduct our business, go to church and raise our families in security.

Thank you for putting your life on the line.

Representing military people has renewed my faith in duty, honesty, dedication and discipline. Meeting people from all over the United States has given our family an opportunity to observe our differences and appreciate our unity.

I'm pleased that Alaska has a good relationship with our military. Many military people tell me Alaska is their top choice for assignments. I want to keep it that way.

Keep up your good work.

*Loren Leman is Senate Majority Leader in the Alaska Legislature. The father of three children, he represents Senate District G, which includes Northwest Anchorage and Elmendorf Air Force Base.*

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