



For Immediate Release  
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## **Alaska Air National Guardsmen Arrive in Qatar** *168<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing Guardsmen provide refueling support at Al Udeid*

**AL UDEID AIR BASE, Qatar**—Sixty-three members from the Alaska Air National Guard's 168<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing arrived here on Dec. 28 to perform air refueling missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Alaska Guardsmen have integrated themselves into every corner of the air operations at Al Udeid. Five aircrews and at least 10 staff members participate in the daily planning and execution of KC-135 missions, and launch times are around the clock. In fact, at any given time, it's possible you'll pass an Alaska Air National Guardsmen coming back from a mission or stepping to go fly. It is truly an around-the-clock operation.

"Launch the GAR!" is the usual response to the ringing phone on the corner desk at Al Udeid. The GAR, passionately known as the Ground Alert Response aircraft, is married with the alert B-1B aircraft. Both respond to a tasking that flows from Central Command Combined Air Operations Center and the alert controllers in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

Al Udeid is the central lynch pin for both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. It is home to more than 60 heavy combat aircraft: KC-135, Rivet Joint, RC135, and B-1B bombers. These aircraft share the ramp with more than 40 Air Mobility Command and NATO aircraft. It's become the hub of activity for support operations and mobility to and from the commands area of responsibility.

In 2008, the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron out of Al Udeid was a direct contributor to the Global War on Terrorism by offloading more than 155-million pounds of fuel to coalition aircraft. This directly contributed to more than 520 intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, 290 aero-medical evacuations and 65 combat missions in support of coalition troops on the ground.

The end result is that launching the GAR directly supports our troops and it's Alaska Air National Guardsmen who are at the forefront of this mission to fight the Global War on Terrorism.

**Photo Cutline's:**

**Refueling.** A KC-135 sits on a runway located at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Sixty-three members of the Alaska Air National Guards 168<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing are currently deployed there in support of the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. Air Force photo by Technical Sergeant Michael Boquette.

**KC-135R take-off.** An Alaska Air National Guard KC-135 stratotanker from the 168<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing takes off from a runway at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. U.S. Air Force photo.