



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2018

018-043

Staff Sgt. Daniel Nelson
134th Public Affairs Detachment

Alaska Guardsmen depart for Mongolia

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Soldiers from the Alaska Army National Guard departed from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson June 10, for Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where they will take part in Khaan Quest 2018, an annual multinational United Nations exercise established to increase interoperability between U.S. and Mongolian forces.

Alaska National Guardsmen have participated in Khaan Quest since 2003 as part of the State Partnership Program between Alaska and Mongolia, which began the same year.

“The Alaska National Guard has been an integral part of this mission, and we’re going to continue that this year,” stated Maj. Luke Bushatz, operations officer for the 297th Regional Support Group, Alaska Army National Guard. “We will be out there supporting the command post exercise and the overall exercise.”

The 27 Soldiers who departed from the 297th RSG will train in Mongolia for two weeks, serving in a variety of roles during both a field training exercise and command post exercise.

In addition, members of the 297th Military Police Company, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Joint Forces Headquarters and 297th Signal Network Support Company are attending the exercise to assist with support operations and further increase multinational interoperability between the U.S. and other foreign militaries that are participating.

“A lot of these soldiers who have supporting MOS’ [military occupational specialty] will get opportunities to go out and do more infantry and combat arms skills training, which a lot of times they might miss out on,” stated Bushatz. “So, this will be a good opportunity for them.”

Some of the participating Soldiers have previously attended Khaan Quest. However, this year’s exercise will be the first for many of the Soldiers attending.

“Their benefit is threefold,” said Bushatz, explaining their opportunity for international experience, training in new and different skillsets and working alongside counterparts from other countries.

“They are going to have the opportunity to employ a broader spectrum of skills,” added Bushatz. “And they get to represent the Alaska Army National Guard in a way that is very visible and very powerful to U.S. and international forces.”

PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/sets/72157692022475800/>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/4486611/alaska-guardsmen-depart-mongolia>



As part of their loading process, Soldiers assigned to the 297th Regional Support Group, Alaska Army National Guard, weigh their baggage and selves prior to boarding a KC-135 Hercules for a flight to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, June 10. The Soldiers will be participating in Khaan Quest 2018 where they will provide command and support to Mongolian forces. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Nelson/released)



Soldiers from the Alaska National Guard load their bags and equipment into a KC-135 Stratotanker in preparation for their flight to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, June 10. The Soldiers will be conducting command and support operations with Mongolian and other regional militaries to increase multinational interoperability and build on the partnership between organizations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Nelson/released)



Soldiers from the Alaska National Guard load their bags and equipment into a KC-135 Stratotanker in preparation for their flight to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, June 10. The Soldiers will be conducting command and support operations with Mongolian and other regional militaries to increase multinational interoperability and build on the partnership between organizations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Nelson/released)



Alaska National Guard Soldiers board a KC-135 Stratotanker to depart for Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to take part in Khaan Quest 2018 June 10. Khan Quest is an annual multinational United Nations exercise established to increase interoperability between militaries from throughout the region. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Nelson/released)