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**Alaska National Guard**

*Department of Military  
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STATE OF ALASKA

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## **Alaska Guard military police company redeploys from Kuwait**

297th Military Police Company returns home from nine months overseas

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Approximately 80 Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 297th Military Police Company returned home Dec. 11, following a nine-month deployment to Kuwait.

As Soldiers in 297th MP Co. were transported on busses to the Guard armory from the airport, their family members eagerly waited to be reunited with their spouses, parents and children – while one father and son were about to meet for the first time.

The 297th MP Co. was assigned to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

According to the U.S. Army Central website, Operation Spartan Shield maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen U.S. defense relationships and build partner capacity.

The Alaska Army National Guard unit was responsible for the law enforcement mission at two locations – Camp Arifjan and Camp Buehring. Both camps provide logistics support and unit-staging areas for the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

The 297th MP Co.'s law enforcement duties included presence patrols, traffic enforcement, and assistance with investigations.

“Our main mission was to provide law enforcement,” said Capt. Kevin Fulmer, commander of the 297th MP Co., “and with all of our Soldiers being traditional Guardsmen, they did an amazing job adapting to being full-time Military Police.”

In one instance, 297th MPs responded to a structure fire.

“Our Soldiers overcame a lot of challenges, provided a lot of relevant support, and responded to a variety of situations, such as the fire on one of our mission locations at Camp Buehring,” said Fulmer.

Coming from Alaska, the unit took time at the beginning of the deployment to adapt to Kuwait temperatures that can reach into the 120s.

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“The hottest we saw was about 135 degrees,” said Fulmer, “and with all of us being arctic Soldiers, I’m very proud of how we adapted to the environment so well.”

Throughout the deployment, the company took advantage of the camps’ range facilities to train and keep their law-enforcement skills sharp.

The company worked with host nation and contract law-enforcement agencies during the deployment.

“We were very fortunate to have some unique opportunities to work and train with Kuwaiti soldiers and special forces while overseas, which also served to strengthen our law enforcement partnerships,” said Fulmer.

Fulmer said that the time overseas went by quickly and they are all eager to complete the demobilization process and get back to their loved ones.

The mobilization and demobilization processes taking place on JBER is a proof of concept for U.S. Army Pacific that JBER can serve as a mobilization station. Deploying Soldiers have traditionally been required to complete mobilization and demobilization on military installations out of state.

Processing on JBER provides a secondary benefit that allows local service members to spend less time away from home as they prepare to meet deployment requirements, and as they in-process for a week or two upon returning state-side.

The 297th MP Co. will demobilize on their home base in time to spend the holiday season with their families.

“We’re all super happy and excited that he gets to be here for Christmas,” said Cammie Sundgren, as she held her infant son, Korbin Cheney, born while his father was deployed.

Standing on the drill hall floor, surrounded by others reuniting with their loved ones, Spc. Matthew Cheney met his son for the first time, embracing him and smiling at him, enjoying the moment with Sundgren and his parents.

The couple plans to get married next week, just in time to celebrate over the holidays.

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## PHOTOS

1. Low-resolution photos for viewing on screen follow on the next page.
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/albums/72157712180745162>



Approximately 80 Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 297th Military Police Company returned home Dec. 11, 2019, landing at Ted Stevens International Airport on a military contract aircraft following a nine-month deployment to Kuwait. Soldiers were greeted by leadership and members of their rear detachment. They were bussed to the National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, where their families awaited their arrival. The 297th MP Co. was assigned to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield. The 297th MP Co.'s law enforcement duties included presence patrols, traffic enforcement, and assistance with investigations at Camp Arifjan and Camp Buehring. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead)



Charlotte Austin and Williem McKay play on the National Guard armory drill hall floor as they wait for their fathers to return home from a nine-month deployment to Kuwait, Dec. 11, 2019. Staff Sgt. Joshua Austin and Sgt. Donald McKay, assigned to the Alaska Army National Guard's 297th Military Police Company, returned with approximately 80 Soldiers from their unit. Soldiers reunited with family members at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson upon their return from deployment, after serving in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead)





Spc. Matthew Cheney holds his son, Korbin Cheney, born while his father was deployed to Kuwait for nine months. They smile with Cheney's parents, Ken and Dedra, for a photo taken by the child's mom, Cammie Sundgren. Soldiers reunited with family members at the National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Dec. 11, 2019, upon their return from deployment. Approximately 80 Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 297th Military Police Company were assigned to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield. The 297th MP Co.'s law enforcement duties included presence patrols, traffic enforcement, and assistance with investigations at Camp Arifjan and Camp Buehring. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead)