



PRESS RELEASE

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Alaska National Guard joins multi-national forces in Mongolia for military exercise

FIVE HILLS TRAINING AREA, Mongolia — Alaska Army and Air National Guard and III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) service-members joined military members from 14 countries to conduct a command post exercise (CPX) during Khaan Quest 2017, July 23 - Aug. 3.

Khaan Quest 2017, in its 15th iteration, prepared participating member nations for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

“The whole intent of this exercise is this interoperability with the U.S. and Mongolian militaries, and we’re starting to see the fruits of our labor with the Mongolians in their deployments,” said Colleen Ruru, a CPX planner with the Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) based in Monterey, California.

The exercise featured U.S. and Mongolian military members working from a command center in a notional peacekeeping operation in a fictitious country. A headquarter brigade and three maneuver battalions were each presented with unique problems, called injects, which they had to respond to and overcome.

“It’s a mixture of planning for events and the inject of current operations as well,” Ruru said.

In addition to becoming familiar with how U.N. missions are organized, Capt. Zolzaya Sumiyasuren, MAF Unit 015 company commander, said he felt more prepared because the events were similar to reality.

“As a young officer it was very, very interesting how the different styles of the staff function and coordinate with each other,” Zolzaya said. “I have built a lot of confidence from the exercise - how to develop the (Military Decision Making Process) and produce these integrated briefings.”

Alaska Guardsmen, III MEF Marines, MAF members and numerous international service-members worked in tandem at brigade and battalion levels.

Alaska Army National Guard 1st Lt. Lolitta Lapriel, Echo Company 1-207th Aviation Battalion executive officer, said acting as a battalion battle captain challenged her outside of her comfort zone.

“We always say that people in the military are flexible, adaptable, resilient, but to be put in a situation where we are not full head, full force go in and do what you got to do and get it out is the biggest takeaway,” Lapriel said. “It’s good to pause and do a perspective check, look to your left and your right, rub elbows with other agencies that are also involved that have the same mission as you and rock on. And that’s really empowering.”

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CCMR is a Department of Defense organization that builds partner capacity and improves interagency and international coordination and cooperation by addressing civil-military challenges, according to its website.

Approximately 250 U.S. personnel and 600 MAF personnel participated in Khaan Quest 2017, along with approximately 300 personnel from 25 other nations. Exercises like Khaan Quest contribute to a regional peacekeeping capability in Asia, which in turn fosters worldwide peacekeeping operations.

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1. **Attached pdf** includes story and selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes story selected full-resolution, free downloadable images. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.)