



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Alaska Guardsmen depart for Mongolia**

**FIVE HILLS TRAINING AREA, Mongolia** — The opening ceremony for Khaan Quest 2018, a regularly scheduled, multinational exercise co-sponsored by U.S. Pacific Command and hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces, marked the beginning of the exercise here June 14, 2018.

KQ18 is scheduled to take place June 14-28.

The purpose of the exercise is to gain United Nations training and certification for the participants through conducting realistic peace support operations, to include increasing and improving UN Peacekeeping Operations interoperability and military relationships among participating nations.

Lt. Gen. D.Davaa, Chief of the General Staff, Mongolian Armed Forces, began the ceremony with opening remarks.

Next to speak was Maj. Gen. Timothy McKeithen, Deputy Commanding General-National Guard, U.S. Army Pacific.

"Perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of this exercise is the forging of relationships. Not only will we create professional military-to-military relations, we can and should build personal, lasting connections as well," said McKeithen.

Following McKeithen's remarks, Battulga Khaltmaa, President of Mongolia, delivered a speech.

"Through you, I extend my sincere appreciation to the United States and all participating countries that sent their military personnel for your support to organize Khaan Quest," he said. "This training deepens the mutual defense understanding and friendship among our countries."

"It provides opportunities to cooperate and share knowledge and experience with each other."

Through partnerships, participating countries can address broader shared interests across the Indo-Pacific region. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises offer opportunities to practice the difficult integration of capabilities of joint forces, international and national aid organizations.

To conclude the opening ceremony, platoons from the participating countries marched around the parade field past the reviewing stand. The ceremony also included a performance by a MAF band and a photo session with the distinguished visitors.

Two hundred U.S. personnel and 1134 MAF personnel are participating in KQ18, along with 212 personnel from various other nations. This year, 17 other nations are participating, including the U.S.

The exercise consists of a UN peacekeeping operation (PKO) Command Post Exercise and field training exercise, a Command Training Exercise, and the Critical Enabler Capability Enhancement Exercise at the Five Hills Training Area, each of which will support the overall exercise objectives.

During these portions of the exercise, all forces involved will work to enhance interoperability and mission effectiveness in common tactics, techniques and procedures in accordance with the United Nations doctrine for peacekeeping operations.

The U.S. military and members of the MAF have a longstanding relationship and routinely participate in joint exercises. The U.S. Embassy represents U.S. activities in the country and announces U.S. involvement in exercises.

Other nations involved in the exercise include Australia, Bhutan, Canada, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

For more information about Khaan Quest, please visit the exercise's official Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/khaanquest](http://www.facebook.com/khaanquest)

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## 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/news/281222/opening-ceremony-kicks-off-khaan-quest-2018>



Alaska Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Sonya Hood, platoon leader for the 297th Regional Support Group contingent at Khaan Quest 18, stands at the head of the platoon June 14, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, before the opening ceremony for the exercise. Khaan Quest 18 is a combined (multinational) joint (multi-service) training exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian and other partner nations in international peace support operations. (U.S. Army



Mongolian President Battulga Khaltmaa troops the line during the Khaan Quest 18 opening ceremony June 14, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia. Khaan Quest 18 is a combined (multinational) joint (multi-service) training exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian and other partner nations in international peace support operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/Released)



U.S. Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Anthony Cone, platoon leader for the Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, contingent at Khaan Quest 18, stands at the head of the platoon June 14, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, before the opening ceremony for the exercise. Khaan Quest 18 is a combined (multinational) joint (multi-service) training exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian and other partner nations in international peace support operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/Released)



A Mongolian Armed Forces Honor Guard soldier participates in a rehearsal June 14, 2018, at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia, before the opening ceremony for Khaan Quest 18. Khaan Quest 18 is a combined (multinational) joint (multi-service) training exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian and other partner nations in international peace support operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard/Released)