

**Brig. Gen. Torrence Saxe**

*Commissioner & Adjutant General*

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**Alaska National Guard**

*Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs*

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

019-049

**June 9, 2019**

By Pvt. Grace Nechanicky

**Alaska National Guardsmen mobilize at Fort Bliss**

279th Infantry Regiment Soldiers prepare to deploy to Kosovo

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Alaska Army National Guardsmen of 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, 38th Troop Command, are at Fort Bliss, Texas to train and prepare for an upcoming deployment to Kosovo in support of NATO's Kosovo Force.

The battalion are staying in Texas for approximately two weeks to complete mobilization that began last September. They are participating primarily in administrative, medical and personnel in-processing. They will be flying directly to Europe for their deployment after completion of mobilization.

Half of the unit departed to Fort Bliss on the morning of May 29, followed by the second half on May 30.

During the training leading up to the unit's departure, the Soldiers took part in a capstone training prior to their ceremony. They participated in multiple events, with some occurring at JBER's Baumeister Range urban training complex, where they simulated multiple scenarios, including unexploded ordnance and urgent medical situations requiring immediate attention from combat medic specialists.

During this training, Soldiers from the Wyoming National Guard participated as well.

The unit had its deployment ceremony at their home base, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, on May 5, where Alaska Army National Guard Col. Joel Gilbert, 38th Troop Command commander, spoke on behalf of the Kosovo Force mission that the unit is to support while overseas.

The KFOR mission has existed since June 1999, marking this year as the 20th since its beginning.

The NATO mission in Kosovo is primarily to guarantee a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all citizens of Kosovo, as mandated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

In carrying out its mission, NATO cooperates and assists the United Nations, the European Union and other international actors, as appropriate, to support the development of a stable and peaceful Kosovo.

According to NATOS's website, the objectives of KFOR are currently to deter renewed hostility threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces; establish a secure environment and ensure public safety and order; demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army; support the international humanitarian effort; and coordinate with, and support, the international civil presence.

- more -

The KFOR operation is supported by approximately 4,000 troops provided by 28 different countries, according to the NATO website.

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## PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5448306/alaska-national-guardsmen-mobilize-fort-bliss>



Alaska Army National Guard Pfc. Ben Godfrey, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, waits for the unit to depart from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 30, 2019, to Fort Bliss where they will complete mobilization for their deployment to Kosovo. The mission in Kosovo is to keep citizens of the country safe and secure as well as provide humanitarian support among other objectives. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Candis Olmstead)



Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Rachel Morris, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, answers questions during an interview for local news channel KTVA about the departure from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 30, 2019, to Fort Bliss where they will complete mobilization for their deployment to Kosovo. The mission in Kosovo is to keep citizens of the country safe and secure as well as provide humanitarian support among other objectives. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Candis Olmstead)



Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, depart from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 30, 2019, to Fort Bliss where they will complete mobilization for their deployment to Kosovo. The mission in Kosovo is to keep citizens of the country safe and secure as well as provide humanitarian support among other objectives. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Candis Olmstead)



Alaska Army National Guard Sgt. Trenton Buning, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, stands in line to board the military contracted aircraft and depart from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 30, 2019, to Fort Bliss where they will complete mobilization for their deployment to Kosovo. The mission in Kosovo is to keep citizens of the country safe and secure as well as provide humanitarian support among other objectives. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Candis Olmstead)

Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, depart from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, May 30, 2019, to Fort Bliss where they will complete mobilization for their deployment to Kosovo. The mission in Kosovo is to keep citizens of the country safe and secure as well as provide humanitarian support among other objectives. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Candis Olmstead)

