



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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By: Kalei Brooks

Deployed Guardsman Honored as "Top Forty Under 40"

Camp Denali, Alaska –An Alaska Army National Guard member currently deployed to Afghanistan has been named a national and state top 40 under 40 honoree.

Maj. Wayne Don, originally from Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island, was recognized by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development in its inaugural "Native American 40 Under 40," which honors 40 young native professionals across the country who have made a significant contribution to their tribes and communities. Don was also named as one of "Alaska's Top Forty Under 40," a selection by the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Alaska Journal of Commerce that recognizes the state's leading young professionals who have demonstrated professional excellence and a commitment to their community. Don is a member of the Alaska Army National Guard and serves as the chairman of his village corporation, NIMA Corporation.

"There are some very accomplished people on the list, so it's very humbling and exciting to be included with such a distinguished group of people," said Don, who is currently serving a six-month deployment providing base security in Afghanistan.

Don is part of a two-member team from the Alaska Army National Guard that is embedded with the Mongolian Expeditionary Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The two Alaska Army National Guardsmen are working as tactical advisers, consultants on base security operations and mentors – serving to offer insight into the U.S. command structure and operational tempo.

"Maj. Don is a testament to the strength of character and professionalism that is the Alaska National Guard," said Brig. Gen. Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "We are proud of his accomplishments and contributions not only to the Alaska National Guard and his community but to the nation as well."

Don, who joined the Alaska Army National Guard in 2005, said the best childhood lesson he learned was in kindergarten.

"My kindergarten teacher would have us march whenever we got too rowdy to re-establish order in the classroom," Don said. "I found out after she passed away that she was a former Marine drill sergeant. While in college I enrolled in ROTC and served 11 years on active duty and continue to serve in the Alaska Army National Guard. I think the lesson of good order and discipline started with learning to march and had an impact on my initial career choice."

The state "Top Forty Under 40" award will be handed out at a luncheon in Anchorage on Jan. 14. His children will accept the award on his behalf.

Photo cutlines:

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Alaska Army National Guard Maj. Wayne Don and Mongolian Armed Forces Maj. Javkhlanbayar Dondogdorj discuss a traffic control point training scenario as the Mongolian Expeditionary Force executes the objective Aug. 20 at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia. Don, an Eagle River resident, deployed with Dondogdorj and the Mongolian Expeditionary Force as an embedded U.S. liaison in September. Photo: Capt. Amy B. Slinker, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

Khaan Quest 09:

Alaska Army National Guard Master Sgt. Eric Schlemme, left, and Maj. Wayne Don, center, join Mongolian Armed Forces Senior Sgt. Battulga Baatar to observe the tactics and techniques used by the Mongolian Expeditionary Force at Five Hills Training Area in Mongolia during Khaan Quest 2009 in August. Schlemme and Don deployed in September as embedded U.S. liaisons with the Mongolian Expeditionary Force to Afghanistan. Photo: Capt. Amy Slinker, 134th Public Affairs Detachment, Alaska Army National Guard

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Maj. Wayne Don, Camp Eggers, Afghanistan, November 2009. Photo: Master Sgt. Scott Hardesty, Task Force Avenger

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