



NEWS RELEASE

HOLLOMAN AFB 49TH WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Telephone: 575-572-7381
49wg.paoffice@us.af.mil
www.holloman.af.mil



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Air Force MQ-9s join Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2022

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. – Air Force MQ-9 Reapers will make their first appearance in Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022, June 29 to Aug. 4, 2022.

Airmen and air national guardsmen from across the nation including Holloman Air Force Base, California ANG, Hurlburt Field, Ohio ANG, Arkansas ANG, and Texas ANG will participate in the biennial exercise which is the largest international maritime exercise in the world.

During the exercise, personnel from 26 nations will train together, operating 38 surface ships, four submarines, more than 30 unmanned systems and approximately 170 aircraft. More than 25,000 people will take part in the training in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California.

The Reaper detachment will conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations, test the platform's capabilities in a maritime environment, and work alongside joint and international partners. The MQ-9s will operate primarily out of Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay for the duration of the exercise, with several missions being flown from Holloman AFB.

The U.S. Marine Corps is studying a proposal to operate MQ-9s as part of its Force Design 2030 modernization efforts. Airmen from the 49th Wing have previously trained in Hawaii in order to evaluate the agile combat employment operating concept. RIMPAC provides the latest opportunity to expand both services' familiarity with the aircraft.

The MQ-9 Reaper is an armed, multi-mission, medium-altitude, long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft. The basic crew consists of a pilot to control the aircraft and command the mission, and an enlisted aircrew member to operate sensors and guide weapons.

It is employed primarily as an intelligence-collection asset and secondarily as a strike platform. Given its significant loiter time, wide-range sensors, multi-mode communications suite, and precision weapons, it provides a unique capability to perform strike, coordination, and reconnaissance against high-value, fleeting, and time-sensitive targets.

RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity that strengthens international maritime partnerships, enhances interoperability, and improves the readiness of participating forces for a wide range of potential operations.

Holloman AFB is home to the largest MQ-9 formal training unit in the country.

