

'Keeping Tabs'

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27th Brigade Combat Team --- Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII

Forward Operating Base Patriot, Fort Bragg, North Carolina

The 27th Completes First Week of Post Mobilization Training at Fort Bragg

The Brigade has completed its first full-week of training at Fort Bragg since leaving home station armories in New York on 20 January. Nearly 1400 troops are operating from two Forward Operating Bases especially constructed to prepare Soldiers for deployment to Afghanistan. Dozens of other troops assigned to Embedded Training Teams and Police Mentoring Teams are engaged in specialized training at Fort Riley, KS. Living in a field environment on Fobs is called Theater Immersion Training and is meant to



give Soldiers as much realism as possible tailored for the destination they are headed to. The motto here is "Train as You're Gonna' fight." Since arriving at FOB Patriot at Fort Bragg, troops have begun physical training, issuance of new equipment, Soldier readiness checks, weapons qualification, finance processing, physical conditioning and more. FOB Patriot is the larger of the two camps at Bragg and is meant to replicate Camp Phoenix in theater. The smaller camp, FOB Latham now houses the Training Assistance Group that will be based in the Kabul Military Training Center located outside Kabul.

FOB Life

Troops are housed in canvas tents with hard floors that come with heating/cooling systems. Each tent houses up to 16 Soldiers and each Soldier gets a folding aluminum and canvas cot. Tents also have electricity so Soldiers can charge cell phones and computer batteries but using other appliances is prohibited.

Breakfast is served every morning in tents referred to here as Dining Facilities. These are long tents similar in design to the others and have folding tables and chairs. Soldiers file through and are served by civilian contractors. Paper plates, plastic utensils and Styrofoam cups are the dinner ware. Lunch is the ever-popular Meal Ready to Eat (MRE.)

Port-o-Johns serve as the plumbing. Showers are available in special trailers and one large tent, but Soldiers are limited to one shower every three days. Soldiers can wash, shave, brush teeth in tents with rows of sinks. Occasionally the water is warm and once in a while it is hot. The Post Exchange operates two satellite trailers on the FOB from 1700 to 2100 daily so the Soldiers can purchase snacks, toiletries and other personal items.



Daily Routine

Most Soldiers are awake by 0530 but many are up before 0500. Depending on planned training for the day, Soldiers may begin with physical training including calisthenics and running. Then they will be given a short amount of time to clean up, file through the dining facilities and collect and put on the uniform and equipment for the day and report for first formation and training.

Training usually lasts all day and sometimes into the evening. Dinner is served from 1700 to 2000 each day and sometimes is extended in case training runs late.

Leaders and key staff are required for daily meetings in the early evening and section meeting take place after that. Most Soldiers are not able to clean up to get to bed before 2200 and usually don't get to sleep until an hour or so after that.

Training

Field training is done off the FOB and in full gear including the Army Combat Helmet, weapon, the latest body armor and other web gear. The Soldiers have been issued the Improved Outer Tactical Vest, which includes armor plates in the front, back and sides. The system also comes with additional shoulder panels. It's the latest in personal protection and is lighter than previously issued vests.



Classroom instruction such as cultural training is delivered in tents where the Soldiers can get out of the weather and sit on folding chairs. The standard uniform on the FOB is the Army Combat Uniform and soft cap with weapon.

Keeping Tabs –

Is a weekly electronic newsletter produced by the HQ 27th BCT Public Affairs Section for family members and friends back home and is available on-line through the NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs website at www.dmna.state.ny.us For more information contact the DMNA Public Affairs Office at (518) 786-4581.