

'Keeping Tabs'

Issue 34, 22 September 08



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

Forward Operating Base Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan

SECFOR platoons – mission complete!

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL, AFGHANISTAN–

Dozens of New York National Guard Soldiers assigned to a Security Force company of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix have completed their one year tour and are heading home. Many received awards during ceremonies at Camp Phoenix as they prepared to leave.

SGT Travis S. Smithers from Watertown was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for injuries sustained in combat operations in May 2008 and a Meritorious Service Medal (top photo.) 1LT Christopher Culpepper from Salisbury and Specialist Steven Bogardus from Heuvelton, were awarded Bronze Star Medals for their service in training and improving Afghan National Security Forces (bottom photo.)

CPT John Shannon from Elmira was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his service in command of the enlarged infantry company of security force Soldiers mobilized last year. SGTs Lloyd Barregar from Rome, Elias Kougemitros from Cortlandt Manor, and Steven Campbell from Waterford, also received Meritorious Service Medals for exceptional service. Nearly 230 Soldiers from New York's 27th Infantry Brigade



Combat Team were mobilized last September ahead of the main deployment for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The enlarged "SECFOR" team was built around Company A, 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry from Geneseo, with additional platoons coming from the Hudson Valley, Capital District and Adirondack North Country.

"You have done an awesome job since you arrived here so many months ago," said Col. Gary Yaple, deputy commander of CJTF-Phoenix and the 27th IBCT. "You were each hand selected for this assignment because of the work you did," he said. Nearly 40 percent of the unit has served in Iraq and many performed home land security duty across the state following the 9-11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

"And, now you are going home with every one you came here with. That is an accomplishment," said Col. Yaple. "Thank you for doing a terrific job."

CJTF-Phoenix has the mission to mentor and train the Afghan National Army and Police, and assist the Government of Afghanistan and its people. Nearly 1700 members of New York's 27th were mobilized -- the largest number from a single state deployed for CJTF-Phoenix thus far. The Soldiers came from communities across New York and formed the largest single deployment from the New York National Guard in recent memory.



SPC Wanseob Choi from the Bronx, a Korean immigrant earned two Army Achievement Medals (top.) SPC Jason Haberacker from Amsterdam was awarded a Purple Heart Medal and Army Commendation and SPC John Byrne from Smithtown also received the Army Commendation Medal (bottom.)

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.