

'Keeping Tabs'

Issue 40, 3 November 08



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

Forward Operating Base Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan

Family members serving together



SSG Gil Brassard and son SPC Ben Brassard from Mooers, NY watch as MRAPs and up armored humvees pull out of the Camp Phoenix motor pool. Father and son would soon leave on separate missions. Gil is based at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, while Ben is based at FOB Lighting in Eastern Afghanistan.

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL -- The National Guard is often referred to as a family, but in many instances the description can be taken literally. And when family members deploy together, the sense of unity as well as risk is heightened. The 27th IBCT serving in Afghanistan has father and son, mother and son, twin sisters and brother combinations on-the-ground, just to mention a few. SSG Gil Brassard from the Plattsburgh-area told reporter Dave Tobin from the Syracuse Post Standard that he volunteered for the mission when he learned his son, 23, was going. The Brassards are a family of service men and women who have and continue to serve. Gil, 55, is a Marine Vietnam veteran who also served in Iraq with NY's 719th Transportation Company in 2003. This is Ben's first deployment. They are truck drivers assigned to Company A 427th Brigade Support Battalion serving here in Logistics Task Force-A, the transportation company. Though assigned to different bases, they occasionally have brief reunions when missions bring Ben through Camp Phoenix. Gil serves as a transportation platoon sergeant, overseeing the numerous daily missions from Camp Phoenix while also going out on many, too. He views all members of his platoon as his "kids" and looks out for them continuously.



Brothers in arms

SSG John Gould from Yonkers is a Westchester police officer serving on a Police Mentoring Team in Eastern Afghanistan. Younger brother SPC Timothy Gould from Brewster in the driver's seat of an M1151 up armored humvee is assigned to the Security force (SECFOR) team that moves with and protects the mentors. The brothers catch up as they both prepare to leave in separate march elements on the same mission from Camp Phoenix. The men consider all others on their teams as "brothers" and Tim wears the name of a fallen comrade – SPC Jason Vonzerneck on his sleeve in remembrance.

Marefat School Art Auction



1SG Marc Maynard from Rochester, assigned to LTF-A hands artwork to a happy buyer during the Marefat School silent art auction held at Camp Phoenix on Halloween. SPC Meg Buchanan from SC shows off her purchase at right. The Marefat School based in Kabul offers student artwork for sale to help poor students and cover expenses. This is the third visit to Camp Phoenix. Members of LTF host the visit in front of the Post Exchange. Buyers write bids down on a sheet next to each painting, drawing or photo. At the end, highest bidder gets to buy the work. "There is real talent in the artwork and each piece offers an Afghan perspective," said 1SG Maynard.

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.