

'Keeping Tabs'

Issue 33, 15 September 08



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

Forward Operating Base Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan

CJTF-Phoenix VII passes half-way point

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team has past the mid-tour point in its mission as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII. Colonel Brian K. Balfe, commander of the 27th took over the task force last April 26. CJTF-Phoenix is comprised of nearly 9,500 service men and women from all U.S. branches including Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, coalition partners and civilian professionals spread over nearly 260 Forward Operating Bases throughout Afghanistan. CJTF-Phoenix has the mission to mentor and train the Afghan National Army and Police, and assist the Government of Afghanistan and its people.

“I am extremely proud of every service member in the task force and the daily contributions they are making to improve the Afghan National Security Forces, support the government and help the people,” said Colonel Balfe. “It is remarkable that so much has been accomplished by our trainers and mentors, our security and logistical personnel, and the various staff sections in the five months we have been here. We are determined to make the most of the time left to us and ensure that our successors from the 33rd Brigade Combat Team from Illinois will be able to transition in smoothly, pick up from us, and keep this mission moving forward,” he said.



SGTs Jodi Brock and Steven Watt mount a Mk 19 40mm Grenade Launcher in the turret of a M1151 Up Armored Humvee in preparation for a morning convoy from Camp Phoenix.

Nearly 1700 members of New York's 27th were mobilized for the mission, the largest number from a single state thus far deployed for CJTF-Phoenix. The Soldiers came from across the state, forming the largest single deployment from the New York National Guard in recent memory. About 230 were mobilized in September of last year while the rest were called up in January. New York Soldiers are serving as trainers, advisors, mentors, security-force, logistics and staff. Many served in state and federal active duty after the 9-11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The New York National Guard is the only part of America's military force that served at "Ground Zero." Roughly a third of the 27th team has already served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



CJTF-Phoenix VII Accomplishments

- The Afghan National Army has grown by 10,000 new Soldiers.
- 19 more Afghan National Army Battalions, known as Kandaks, have been validated for independent operations.
- CJTF Phoenix VII has assisted in the planning and execution of 78 combat operations of the Afghan National Security Forces.
- 900 new Afghan National Police graduated at the end of June through the Focused District Development program and more are in training now.
- Under CJTF-Phoenix VII the Afghan National Army has begun to receive and be trained on up armored humvees and NATO weapons including M16 rifles to replace their worn out Soviet-era weaponry thus improving their capabilities.
- More than ¼ billion dollars has been committed to more than 400 separate construction and improvement projects for both ANSF and U.S. forces.
- \$32 million have been obligated through our Commanders Emergency Response Program to build roads, schools, wells, clinics, etc to improve living conditions for the Afghan people.
- 1000 tons of humanitarian assistance aid has been delivered to women, children, schools and orphanages – an average of about 150 tons per month.
- CJTF-Phoenix has also conducted more than 100 humanitarian assistance and civil medical assistance operations - an average of about 25 visits or drops per month.



SFC John Marshall, the NCOIC of a Police Mentoring Team prepares to head out on a mission. Below, CBS News cameraman Richard Butler films members of mentoring team preparing bundles for a humanitarian mission.

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.