

'Keeping Tabs'

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

Forward Operating Base Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan

Officially in Charge

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The command of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix was transferred on April 26th from the South Carolina National Guard's 218th Heavy Separate Brigade to the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, when Major General Robert Cone, commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan handed over the 27th Brigade Colors to its commander.

Colonel Brian K. Balfe, the incoming commander officially succeeded Brigadier General Robert E. Livingston during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony in Patriot Square, Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. "Members of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are proud Soldiers, with a storied history," said Colonel Balfe. "We are honored to be here as guests of the government and people of Afghanistan. We believe in our mission. It is a privilege to have been called to perform it," he said.



The ceremony signaled both the transfer of responsibility from the 218th to the 27th and that the mission to train and mentor Afghanistan's National Security Forces will continue. It also points to the continued commitment by the United States to the government and people of Afghanistan.

Nearly 1700 members of the New York National Guard's 27th IBCT, from across New York State, have deployed for this mission, the largest single deployment from New York in recent memory. Thousands of New York troops have performed both state and federal active duty since the 9-11, 2001 terrorist attacks. It is the only part of America's military force that served at "Ground Zero." Roughly a third of the team in Afghanistan has already served in previous deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Our South Carolina Soldiers are now returning home, having changed Afghanistan for the better," said BG Livingston. "The 27th from the New York National Guard is poised to take over and continue this vital mission. I am confident I am leaving the mission in capable hands."



View of Patriot Square

The Color Guard comprised of Soldiers of both the 218th and 27th Brigades is flanked by Command Sergeant Major John Harrelson from South Carolina as the Transfer of Authority ceremony begins. Soldiers from France, Romania and Mongolia were also on hand and representatives of the Afghan National Army and an Afghan Army Band also participated in the formal program. In addition to Guard soldiers, members of the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Marines were also there.



Combat Patch Ceremony

Colonel Brian K. Balfe, commander of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII places "Orion" patches on the right shoulders of the three youngest Soldiers from brigade Headquarters Company, and the Security Force and Logistical Task Force battalions during a combat patch ceremony the day after the Transfer of Authority. The U.S. Army is the only service branch that authorizes the wearing of a combat patch on the uniform, which signifies that the Soldiers in a command have served an average of 30 continuous days in an overseas combat zone where the threat of direct or indirect enemy fire is possible. Assisting Colonel Balfe is Command Sergeant Major David Piwowarski.

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.