

# Orion Completes Home Station Training Phase...

By Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff and 1st Sgt. Christopher Holmes, Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Element

FORT DRUM - Just like a sequel to a movie or perhaps the movie 'Ground Hog Day' New York's Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Element at Fort Drum took the opportunity to continue pre-mobilization training in Alpha mode.

During the May-June time frame, the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was able to push approximately 1,950 troops through the Pre-Mobilization Training 2 or PMT II process to get them certified for the 27th's approaching deployment to Afghanistan.

This was just short of the 27th command staff's desire to have 100 percent of the brigade certified in the form of approximately 2,000 Soldiers ready to deploy. But like most human endeavors, not everyone can be in the right place at the right time so the PTAE crew rolled up their sleeves and did PMT II-Alpha for the remaining members of the 27th as well as New York's 14th Finance Detachment that is nearing a deployment date in the future.

From Aug. 9 to 20, approximately 300 more New York Soldiers were paced through the Alpha portion in preparation for deployments.

The reason for conducting a PMT II-Alpha was for brigade Soldiers who missed PMT II in May-June time frame due to being at basic training, advanced individual training or for medical reasons.

The 27th Brigade Soldiers who missed the May-June time frame, would be sure not to miss the impact of training. Alpha training was conducted by the same PTAE Observer Controllers/Trainer's, with assistance from the 42nd Special Troops Battalion on the same 15 Army Warrior Tasks and four Battle Drills handed down from Forces Command. **gt**



27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers get certified on the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer as part of their pre-deployment training. The HEAT trainer closely replicates a humvee that has rolled over, forcing Soldiers to escape individually and assist everyone in the vehicle until everyone is accounted for. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th IBCT.



Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, a Public Affairs Non-Commissioned Officer for the 27th Inf. Bde. Combat Tm. completes the weapons qualification portion of pre-deployment training before moving on to more desert-like training at Fort Irwin, Calif. Photo by Maj. Robert Romano, 27th IBCT.

# ...and then heads Westward...

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Dust, heat and tactical marches through mountainous terrain greeted more than 2,000 New York Army National Guard Soldiers of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team at the National Training Center (NTC) here in October.

In fact, some of the troops saw the rough terrain and environment as all part of the training plan to ready them for a planned 2012 deployment to Afghanistan.

“I think it would be impossible to come out of this and not be a better Soldier,” said 2nd Lt. Patrick Tumberello, who belongs to the 1st Battery, 258th Field Artillery. Tumberello, of Manhattan, N.Y., was one of the over 2,000 brigade Soldiers who trained here.

Since their training rotation at the NTC, the Army changed the 27th Brigade mission. More than 2,000 New York Army National Guard Soldiers and 811 Soldiers from the South Carolina National Guard will now conduct a security force mission in Kuwait.

The Soldiers left Hancock Field Air National Guard Base for Fort Irwin on Sept. 30 on 13 charter flights. They returned Oct. 22 –Oct. 25, landing at Hancock Field and then busing back to their home armories.

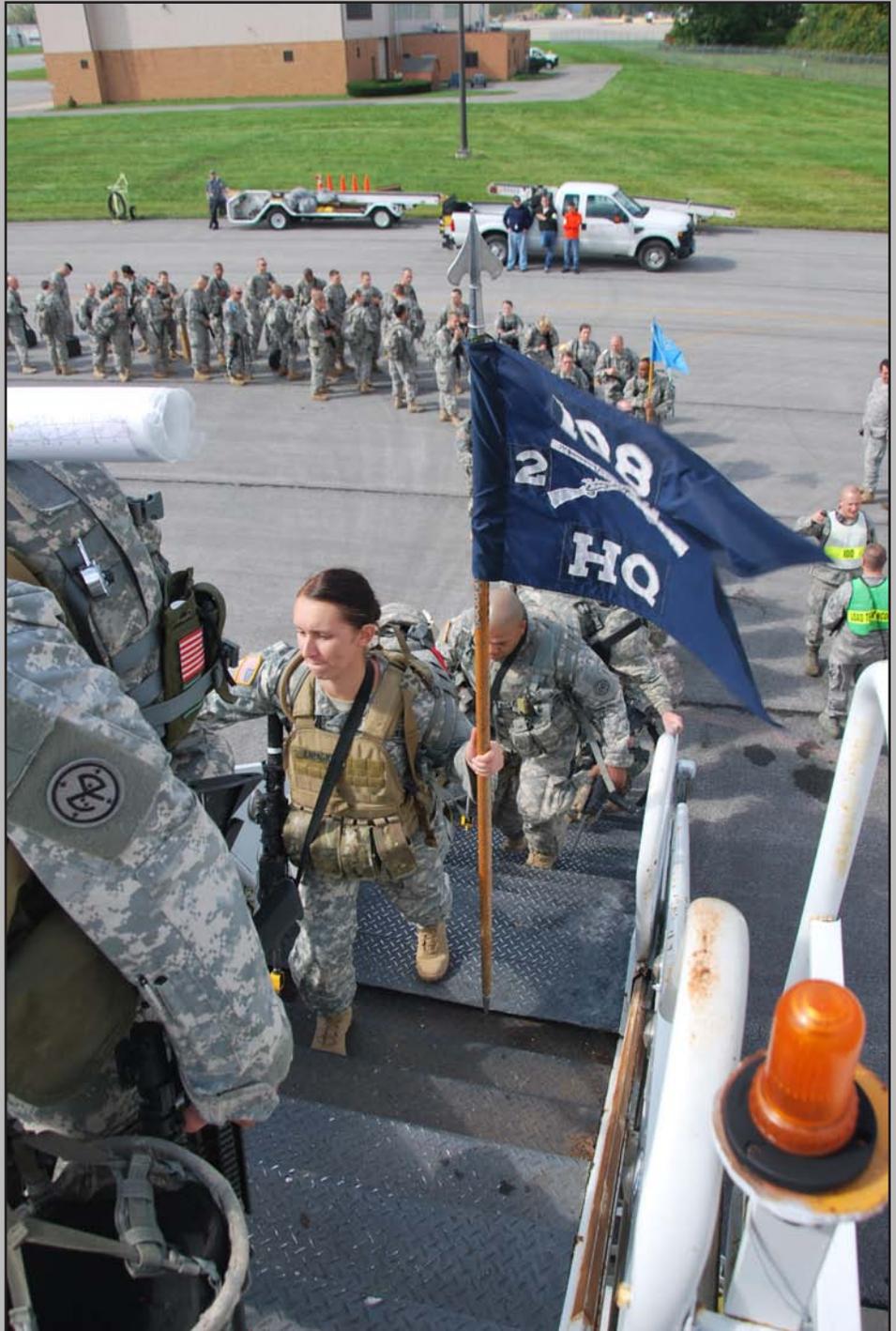
The NTC training included simulated combat missions and stability operations under the realistic, demanding and stressful environment provided by the NTC, which mirrors the physical and cultural conditions of Afghanistan, the original mission location.

Like Afghanistan, the troops manned and lived on forward operating bases (FOBs) and smaller outposts during the exercise and conducted combat operations in NTC’s mountainous, desert terrain.

“When we train back home, we don’t train for mountains,” said Spc. Marc Dorsey, a sniper with the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, based in Utica. “There’s no substitute for actually marching mountains.”

Dorsey, from Albany described the mountainous terrain as “insane,” calling it a three-dimensional battlefield which stressed the Soldiers physically and opened their eyes to what they’ll face in Afghanistan. They dealt

*Continued on next page*



Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Battalion board a plane in Syracuse, Sept. 30. More than 2000 New York Army National Guard troops head for the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. for pre-mobilization training as they prepare for a deployment to Afghanistan. The training area at NTC is located in the Mojave Desert, just south of Death Valley. Photo by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.

## ... and Finally, Completing a Training Tour at NTC



Spc. Casey Rosiak from Scotia, assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry based in Gloversville, carries a 60mm mortar tube prior to live fire at Fort Irwin, Calif. Oct. 6. The 108th is part of an upcoming deployment with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2012. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, Joint Force Headquarters.

with elevations of about 3,000 feet above sea level, he added.

“You can even feel the effects of elevation here,” Dorsey said. “We start out at 8,000 feet in Afghanistan. Your body needs to know how to process (thinner air) more efficiently. For every 300 feet of elevation, you have to add an hour of travel time.”

The dust forced them to clean their weapons twice a day, and the training also showed them how to pack more efficiently, balancing amenities against mission necessities, he explained.

“We gave up comfort for the mission,” Dorsey said.

Those missions included over watching the brigade’s tactical movement into the exercise area and its assault against a drug/IED factory and other mock insurgent positions -- manned by the National Training Center’s aggressive, experienced opposing force -- in a steep, narrow mountain pass. They were able to take out insurgent snipers who were pinning down infantry troops who were moving against these positions, Dorsey said.

Tumberello commanded a personal security detachment which teamed up with Afghan National Army role players to clear a route between two FOBs -- a six-mile stretch of dusty

desert road which included IED and ambush scenarios. The mission took about two to three hours, Tumberello recalled, and though they captured a suspected terrorist in possession of an IED, the patrol suffered mock casualties in four engagements, and they had to render aid and perform medevac procedures.

But he doesn’t consider that a loss.

“I want my Soldiers to become more efficient in all basic Soldier skills, and all other skills which will ensure their survival,” he said.

The patrol also taught them the importance of standard operating procedures, and that all Soldiers in the chain of command must know



An 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment Soldier role-playing as an Afghan, provides over watch for New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry through a mock village battle at Fort Irwin, Calif. on Oct. 9. The training rotation provided Soldiers from the 27th some realistic scenario training before their deployment. Photo by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters.

the procedures and courses of action, Tumberello said.

“In order to execute a mission successfully, everyone has to be synchronized,” he said.

Capt. Shaun Joyce, commander of Company D, 427th Forward Support Battalion said NTC is phenomenal.

“They closely replicate combat conditions without putting you in harms way,” he said.

The company’s main mission is to provide logistical and maintenance support to other troops. In addition to contending with the heat and mountains, Joyce said, troops had learned to deal with a foreign culture, in

the form of simulated Afghan villages.

“They even have vendors who try to sell us fruit or a coke,” recalled Joyce, who is from East Amherst, N.Y.

Life on the FOBs wasn’t free of NTC’s realism, and exercise controllers would often rock the FOBs with loud bangs to mimic insurgent mor-

tar or rocket attacks, sending brigade Soldiers running for cover. Those loud bangs provide the “rush factor” to show Soldiers the various stresses of combat, said Sgt. Scott Kramer, of Company D.

“Your mission has to be accomplished faster due all these different pressures,” said Kramer, an Iraq war veteran from Buffalo.

Attacks like that led to mock mass-casualty exercises, spurring medical personnel -- like the nurses, doctors, physicians assistants and medics of Company C, 427th Brigade Support Battalion -- into action. The exercises help them better learn and streamline their roles in evaluating, treating and evacuating casualties, said unit member Spc. Brendan Knapp.

“We were rather busy,” Knapp said of the mass-casualty exercises. “It gave us a good idea of how things should run in a medical company. The treatment team had to assess a lot of different casualties and treat them appropriately.”

Knapp said he would like return to NTC.

“I think everyone here went out of their way to provide the perspective of the bigger picture, in terms of operations,” Knapp said. “This was probably the closest thing to an actual deployment without actually going.”

The training was invaluable, Dorsey stressed, and he would like to return to NTC as well.

“Without these smaller steps, you can’t take the larger steps,” he said. **gt**

