Press Release

Release Nr: 2207-12

July 28, 2022

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum MPs return from deployment in support of NATO allies

Soldiers with the 91st Military Police Battalion, 16th MP Brigade, returned to Fort Drum earlier this month after a five-month deployment to the U.S. European Command area of responsibility.

Roughly 170 troops had deployed from Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield to Europe in support of NATO allies before the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“Wherever MPs go, we tend to provide security for deployed troops, and so that was our mission,” said Lt. Col. Anthony Howell, 91st MP Battalion commander. “We also trained with our Polish counterparts, mainly the local police, but with their military police as well.”

The 91st MP Soldiers were assigned to Task Force 82, where units conducted training with soldiers from Romania, Poland and Germany to gather a shared understanding of capabilities and facilitate mutual trust.

“I think it was a very proud moment for all of us, being a part of history and providing security overseas in a very dynamic and ever-changing location,” Howell said. “Our Soldiers did their job well and took a lot of pride in what they did to establish a safe location for all the other Soldiers deployed with Task Force 82 to operate out of.”

The 91st MP Battalion Soldiers were placed on heightened alert for a rapid deployment and departed Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield on Feb. 11.

“Anytime you can get a unit out the door with no or little notice, and they are ready to go, is a proud moment in any commander’s life,” Howell said.

Howell said that they took operational security (OPSEC) precautions seriously prior to deployment, while ensuring that Soldiers and family members had the information they needed.

“We had a town hall before deploying so Soldiers and their families could ask questions together in a closed forum,” he said. “Of course, we couldn’t share everything, and I understand that can be frustrating when you are about to say goodbye to your loved one, but people understand the events going on in the world and that our Soldiers may be a part of that.”

Howell said that Soldiers were able to contact family members while deployed, and that the battalion’s soldier and family readiness groups were a vital part of maintaining connections at home.

“There were events here where spouses could stay informed and have that social support, which I thought was key to this deployment – especially in the first month when families were getting established to a new lifestyle without their Soldier,” he said.

Although details about their homecoming were not widely dispersed outside the MP community, Howell said it was a joyful reunion nonetheless.

“It’s always great to come home and see your family,” he said. “At the welcome ceremony, I told my Soldiers to be proud of what they did. When they were needed, they answered the call and deployed in defense of our nation at a moment’s notice. They were at a high-visible point in time that will be written in the history books, and they were there.”

Howell said the focus since then has been giving Soldiers time to reconnect with their families, returning them to their normal routines and then reintegration back into the units. Then there’s the inevitable shift back to training, professional development and preparing for missions ahead.

“With that, I am very proud of the units that remained here, because they were able to maintain a lot of support while we were deployed,” he said. “Law enforcement presence at Fort Drum did not decrease at all during the deployment.”

That presence in the community will especially be seen during two upcoming events – National Night Out and Mountainfest – which Howell said they are ready to support next month.

“I think we were all honored to be chosen to deploy when the nation needed us and very proud to meet that need,” he said. “But at the same time, now we are all happy to be home and back in this community doing what we do best.”

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Media with inquiries regarding this press release should contact 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs, LTC Josh Jacques, josh.t.jacques.mil@army.mil.

Imagery and Cutlines:

Gov Hochul visit\_03: New York Gov. Kathy Hochul spoke with more than one hundred deploying Soldiers and Family members from Fort Drum via a videoconference Feb. 4, to thank them for their service and wish them well before they depart for Europe. She was originally scheduled to meet the troops in person, but a winter storm made it impossible for her to fly out of the capital to Fort Drum as originally planned. Hochul said that it what these Soldiers are doing – leaving their families and friends on short notice – is an extraordinary example of patriotism.

91st MPs Group Photo: The 91st Military Police Battalion, 16th MP Brigade pose for a group photo during 2021 Mountainfest Activities.

Welcome Home Photos: Soldiers of 91st Military Police Battalion, 16th MP Brigade, are welcomed home after a five-month deployment to the U.S. European Command area of responsibility during a ceremony held earlier this month.

For video of the Soldiers getting onto the plane for the deployment in February:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qrn7hVDnmkArtSfrVFAggSBxJCKCzo1G/view?usp=sharing