

CONTACT:

Douglas Stone

215-262-8125

dstone@armedforcesfoundation.org**ARMED FORCES FOUNDATION****-PRESS RELEASE-****Armed Forces Foundation Joins Massachusetts Governor and Military Families in Welcoming Home Army National Guard****National Military Benevolent Foundation Joins State and Local Elected Officials in Recognizing Massachusetts Heroes**

WASHINGTON, DC (February 10, 2008) – On Sunday February 10th, the Armed Forces Foundation (AFF) along with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Melrose Mayor Robert Dolan and Brigadier General Thomas Sellars, welcomed home approximately 220 Massachusetts Army National Guardsmen from Task Force Patriot, 1st Squadron 182nd Cavalry. The Squadron just completed a 15-month tour of active duty in Kosovo, supporting N.A.T.O peacekeeping missions. The welcome home ceremony took place at the Melrose Memorial Town Hall, located in Melrose, Massachusetts.

“On behalf of the Armed Forces Foundation, I am honored to welcome home members of the 1st Squadron 182nd Cavalry, who have exhibited tremendous amounts of sacrifice and commitment,” said Patricia Driscoll, President of the Armed Forces Foundation. “Their willingness to leave their families and defend the ideals of our nation is a true testament to their patriotism.”

The Armed Forces Foundation also presented the unit with an award of excellence, recognizing the unit’s service and commitment to America.

The mission of Task Force Patriot, which also included members of the Ohio Army National Guard, was to ensure a safe and secure environment in Kosovo as final status talks take place between the United Nations, Serbia, and Kosovo. The Task Force had the additional responsibility of training with and conducting joint operations with the newly formed Kosovo Police Service (KPS). The operations conducted included counter drug operations, vehicle inspections, and interdiction of weapons smuggling. The greatest contribution of Task Force Patriot was through its civil affairs programs, which collected school-material donations from Massachusetts, taught English to children and provided basic medical care to remote areas of Kosovo.

About the Armed Forces Foundation:

The Armed Forces Foundation (AFF) was established in 2001 as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization and is a part of the U.S. Department of Defense’s America Supports You Program. AFF supports active-duty and retired personnel, National Guard, Reserve components and military families during their time of greatest need. With 14 programs, the Foundation assists with food, rent, hotel rooms for families visiting a wounded loved one, holiday gifts for military children, among others. The Armed Forces Foundation has been recognized by The White House, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Energy, the Department of Education, and other nonprofits for its dedication and support of America’s Service Members.

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