

Dept. of Military Affairs: Madison-based Black Hawk unit receives Meritorious Unit Commendation for work on recent overseas deployment

Posted on Thursday, Sep 17, 2020

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MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Army National Guard's Madison-based 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for its service during a 2017 deployment to the Middle East.

The unit adorned the Meritorious Unit Commendation streamer to its battalion colors during a September 12 ceremony at its armory in Madison to mark the honor from the Secretary of the Army.

The unit received the commendation from the Army after completing a challenging 2017 deployment that spanned five countries across the Middle East and Southwest Asia in support of Operations Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield.

"We did so many things outside of the norm and did them successfully," Col. Scott Bush, who commanded the battalion during the deployment, said.

Bush, who now serves as the Wisconsin Army National Guard's senior aviation officer, cited an example of how the unit, which flies UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, performed medevac missions that ultimately saved lives overseas despite the fact that the 147th is not a medevac unit. The unit also conducted troop transport, moved cargo, and transported distinguished visitors across the region, where its operations took them to places like Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey.

"This demonstrates what we would like to carry forward in our organization," he

said of the unit's recognition and its versatility and adaptability.

During the ceremony, Maj. Donald Graham, the unit's executive officer said, "The Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to units for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services during military operations against an armed enemy. The unit must display such outstanding devotion and superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks as to set it apart and above other units with similar missions. This is the only unit award established to recognize exceptional service during operations against an armed enemy."

Approximately 140 Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard joined a total battalion force of more than 240 to conduct operations across a wide geographic area that ultimately led to the destruction of ISIS and increased security and stability across the region.

Just a day before the Sept. 12 ceremony, two UH-60 Black Hawks and 15 Soldiers from the unit deployed to California to assist the California National Guard in battling wildfires raging across the state.