

## Lawyer Who Defends Soldiers' Rights Called to Duty in Iraq

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Mathew Tully was stopped in the lobby of 2 World Trade Center after terrorists slammed a plane into the building.

Tully was a paralegal for Morgan Stanley at the time.

By 8 p.m., he had changed into his National Guard uniform and reported for duty, where he was the No. 2 National Guardsman in charge of providing security for the World Trade Center site.

After that experience, Tully decided to leave New York City and move upstate after completing law school.

Reporting for duty

Nearly four years after the terrorist attacks, Tully is reporting for duty again, heading to Iraq next month with the National Guard.

Tully, 31, is the founding partner of a 10-lawyer, \$2 million firm in Albany. Tully Rinckey & Associates PLLC has nearly 1,000 clients and Tully has received national attention by representing a Muslim prison worker who complained that there aren't enough Arabic translators in prison. He also has carved out a niche in federal employment law with an emphasis on military clients.

Tully said profits would have been higher and his staff would have grown faster if he wasn't leaving.

"But I think this is more important," he said. "By going over there, I'm bringing the fight to the terrorists."

He loves the military, was in ROTC at Hofstra, and served as a paratrooper in Korea. Tully, a National Guard major, is assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division based in Troy. He reports for duty July 30 and heads to Fort Drum Aug. 2. He expects to be in Iraq by mid-August.

Tully hopes to be back home within a year.

"I'm actually excited," he said. "I'm looking forward to serving my country. I consider this an honor to serve my country in a time of war in a war zone."

Planning for departure

Tully said he and managing partner Greg Rinckey began planning for his departure a year ago.

"I had originally wanted to go last year but with our growth, it wasn't possible," he said. "If I had left in 2004, my law firm probably would have gone bankrupt. We only had a few people and I was the main rainmaker."

Tully also got his house in order. He increased his life insurance policy and got his mortgage rates lowered. He and his wife of three years, Kimberly, are moving into a house in Niskayuna this week.

Kimberly Tully isn't thrilled, but knew her husband's call-up was coming.

"I'm nervous and a little scared, but when I met him I knew that he was in the National Guard," she said. "It's always been in the back of my mind that he would go."

Law partner Rinckey has known Tully for 13 years. They were in ROTC together. Rinckey went on to join the Judge Advocate General Corps, or JAG, when Tully joined the Army.

Tully leaves the firm in good shape, he said.

"I'm fully prepared to take over for him," he said. "We put redundancies in place to ensure that I can handle anything he needed to handle. We figured this would happen. It was only a matter of time."

Rinckey called Tully's service "a very noble thing."

Joe Mansour, a federal Bureau of Prisons employee and client of Tully's, said Tully will bring to his unit what he brings to his practice: honor. Mansour, an Arab-American, said he saw that in his own case.

"For somebody like him to represent me was an honor," Mansour said, "Someone who almost died in the World Trade Center to represent my civil liberties. I'm sure no one's rights will be violated in the units he's in. I'm sad to see him leave."