

## **Duty Calls: Lt. Col. Tully Earns Bronze Star in Afghanistan War**

New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Mathew B. Tully of Niskayuna, who is recovering from combat wounds, has received official notification that he will receive a Bronze Star medal.

Tully, 39, received copies of orders and the citation for his medal.

Tully earned the medal for his performance with the Army Intelligence and Security Command in eastern Afghanistan.

Tully "was clearly the most kinetic soldier in this command during this time period," according to the award citation. He also was recognized for "unyielding engagement with the enemy."

During the deployment, he received a Purple Heart for wounds he sustained when he and his unit were attacked by insurgents using a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device on Aug. 7, 2012.

He is at the Wounded Warrior Unit in Concord, Mass., where he is recovering from wounds to his neck, back and legs.

Tully also received the Combat Action Badge after insurgents attacked his unit. The enemy used rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47 assault rifles in the May 2012 attack.

Tully is expected to return to his civilian career as an attorney and chief executive at Tully Rinckey PLLC in Colonie this summer.

Tully serves as a combat arms officer, rather than a JAG attorney. When he's released from active duty, he expects to return to the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division in Troy.

His military career dates back to 1991, when he joined Hofstra University's ROTC program.

On Sept. 11, 2001, while employed in the legal department of Morgan Stanley, he escaped from his office moments after the first of two airliners crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City.

Tully also is a veteran of the Iraq war. As a civilian Tully is a founding partner in the law firm Tully Rinckey PLLC. The firm has offices in Colonie, Syracuse and Buffalo.

Tully has pioneered the litigation of military service members' rights.

Most notably, in 2007 Tully helped then-Sen. Barack Obama make improvements to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act that ultimately were signed into law by President George W. Bush. During Tully's most recent deployment, President Obama strengthened USERRA by signing legislation its protections to Transportation Security Administration employees, something for which Tully has long advocated.

Tully has earned more than 30 other federal and state military awards including a Meritorious

Service medal, an Army Achievement medal, the Army Space Badge and the Army Parachutist Badge.

The Department of Defense has created the Distinguished Warfare medal to recognize a service member's extraordinary achievements directly impacting combat operations.

Modern technology enables service members with special training and capabilities to more directly and precisely impact military operations at times far from the battlefield.

The Distinguished Warfare medal will be awarded in the name of the secretary of defense to service members whose extraordinary achievements, regardless of their distance to the traditional combat theater, deserve distinct department-wide recognition.

"I have seen first-hand how modern tools like remotely piloted platforms and cyber systems have changed the way wars can be fought," said Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta. "We should also have the ability to honor extraordinary actions that make a true difference in combat operations, even if those actions are physically removed from the fight."

Based on the order of precedence, the Distinguished Warfare medal will sit directly below the Distinguished Flying Cross. It may be awarded for actions in any domain but not involving acts of valor.

## **Adaptive Sports**

Team Albany Adaptive Sports received a \$3,500 donation from Norman Morey of Malta, a member of the Knights of Columbus at Corpus Cristi Church, Round Lake, during a ceremony at the Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albany on Wednesday.

Morey, who also is a member of Team Albany Adaptive Sports, received recognition for his success in competing in cycling competitions last year. The 83-year-old disabled Army veteran entered and placed first in his age division in nine of 14 races. The Korean and Vietnam War veteran also placed second once and third in four other races.

Team Albany Adaptive Sports offers sports and other programs to disabled veterans year round, said Michelle Ferraullo, recreational therapist. The group, which is funded by donations and fundraisers, meets at noon on the second Wednesday of each month at Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, 113 Holland Ave., Albany. For information, call Ferraullo at 626-5804.

## **Veterans' legal clinic**

Albany Law School's Veterans' Rights Pro Bono Project will help veterans obtain free legal advice from attorneys at a Veterans' Legal Clinic from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, at Albany Law School, 1928 Building, 80 New Scotland Ave. in Albany.

Attorneys will provide counsel in a number of legal areas, including but not limited to, wills, health care proxies, powers of attorney, Medicaid; employment issues, including USERRA claims; debtor/creditor matters, bankruptcy; tax questions; family law; landlord/tenant issues; and VA benefits and other benefits.