

SALUTING THE TENNESSEE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD'S 168TH MILITARY POLICE BATTALION

MR.

SPEAKER, I rise today to salute an outstanding group of men and women - the Tennessee Army National Guard's 168th Military Police Battalion of Lebanon, Tennessee. On Sunday, February 5th, the 168th will receive the Valorous Unit Award at a special presentation at the Armory in Lebanon.

The

Valorous Unit Award is one of the nation's most prestigious military awards. It is presented to units of the Armed Forces of the United States for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy of the United States while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing force. To receive this award, a unit must have performed with marked distinction under difficult and hazardous conditions in accomplishing its mission so as to set it apart from, and above, other units participating in the same conflict. Its equivalent in individual awards is the Silver Star.

I

know all Tennesseans, and all Americans, join with me in thanking the 168th for their bravery, their commitment and their selfless service while in Iraq.

The

168th received its award for performance of duties from May 20, 2003 through January 31, 2004. While they performed many duties, some of their key accomplishments during their service were to establish Law and Order operations in all of East Baghdad, establish Iraqi Police Stations, train Iraqi Police Officers and establish an Iraqi Police Academy.

The Battalion coordinated numerous offensive operations and patrols within its Area of Operations under very austere conditions. They were responsible for confiscating numerous weapons caches, counterfeit money, and ammunition. And they frequently provided escort and security service to convoys in the region.

During

their service, the 168th Battalion and its subordinate units receive numerous Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts, and Army Commendation Medals for Valor. Their service was one that required heroism and courage on a daily basis.

I

am honored to serve as the Congressman for Lebanon and privileged to represent these men and women in Washington. We are all blessed to live in

the greatest country in the history of the world. And we are particularly blessed that men and women, like the members of Tennessee's 168th Military Police Battalion, willingly put their lives on the line every day so that we may continue to enjoy freedom here at home.

Words

cannot adequately thank the members of the 168th for their exceptional service. But I want to take this moment, and this occasion of their Valorous Unit Award presentation, to salute them on behalf of all Americans for their heroic service to our country and to freedom around the world.

Jim Cooper

Member of Congress