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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Guard unit returned home after Iraq deployment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – After being deployed to Iraq for more than six months, nine Soldiers from Detachment 3, Company A, 641st Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard were honored during a welcome home ceremony on Sunday, May 18, at the Army Aviation Support Facility near the Rapid City Regional Airport.

While in Iraq, the 641st was stationed at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, about 45 miles north of Baghdad. The detachment was deployed with three additional detachments from three other states, Washington, Oregon, and Oklahoma, to form Company A, 641st Aviation Regiment.

While deployed, the unit set various records and implemented new standards. Specializing in transporting personnel and cargo with its C-23 Sherpa cargo planes, the 641st flew 4,045 hours, transported 21,047 passengers and hauled 9,140,165 pounds of cargo and equipment throughout the combat zone during the tour.

“Our biggest accomplishments were the implementation of the night vision goggle program, which allowed us to fly safer at night, and the amount of troops and cargo we hauled,” said Chief Warrant Officer Ronald Boutch, the detachment commander from Harrisburg. “We set records.”

Even though the unit broke several records, Staff Sgt. Christopher Cox from Rapid City looked at the mission’s success in a different way.

“Our number one accomplishment was that we brought everyone home safely,” said Cox.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, or cell (605) 431-8753

PHOTO CUT LINE: Sgt. Matthew Day embraces his wife, Jennifer, at the welcome home ceremony for nine Soldiers from Detachment 3, Company A, 641st Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard on Sunday, May 18, in Rapid City. Chief Warrant Officer Steven Graves (left) and Sgt. Ronald Diekman (right) are standing alongside Day in the receiving line waiting to be greeted by family and friends. Army photo by Sgt. Stein Larsgaard. (Released)

Link to Photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080518-A-0711L-001.jpg>

NOTE 1: Since the terrorist attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 730 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

Currently, more than 250 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations throughout Southwest Asia. More than 4,000 National Guardsmen are available in South Dakota to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.