

South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office

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September 17, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SD National Guard Aviation Regiment returns home from Iraq

2nd Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs

Friends and family gathered at Range Road Armory in Rapid City to welcome home nine members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 3, A Company, 641st Aviation Regiment as they returned home after a yearlong deployment to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn Saturday, September 17.

The 641st was stationed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, where they transported more than two million pounds of cargo, 8,000 passengers and flew more than 150 missions, all at night, using Night Vision Goggles.

"It's safer at night; you have the cover of darkness," said CW3 Fred Loofbourow, Det. 3 commander, on why the 641st conducted all of their missions at night. "It's also a performance issue; you have better year-round mission capability because it's cooler at night, so you get better performance out of the aircraft, better lift capability and better distance."

This is the 641st's third deployment since Sept. 11, 2001. They deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom first from January 2005-January 2006, again from October 2007-May 2008 and their latest deployment from October 2010-September 2011 in support of Operation New Dawn.

"This is a testament to the high value of professionalism of this particular unit and the value that it serves to the United States Armed Forces and to the quality of the Soldiers in this unit," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, South Dakota National Guard adjutant general.

The aviation regiment, consisting of 33 personnel, from four detachments located in Oregon (Headquarters), Washington, Oklahoma and South Dakota, provide command, control and communications, staff transport and liaison, casualty transport and air movement of critical equipment, supplies and personnel.

"The South Dakota National Guard has a tremendous legacy, it goes all way back to 1862, but never in our long history has the National Guard been better trained, better equipped or more heavily relied upon than they are today," said Reisch. "This unit, the 641st, has enhanced and added to that legacy by the outstanding way that they have performed this past year in Iraq."

PHOTOS: High-resolution photos for this release are available upon request or at: www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



110917-A-FO377-005 - (From right to left) Sgt. Clint Walker, his daughter, Ella, 9 months and wife, Katie, enjoy the homecoming and deactivation ceremony for the 641st Aviation Regiment at the National Guard Armory on Range Road, Sept. 17, 2011. Walker was deployed to Iraq with the 641st during the last nine months where the unit provided fixed wing aviation support. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)



110917-A-FO377-009 - The South Dakota Army National Guard held a homecoming ceremony for nine members of Detachment 3, A Company, 641st Aviation Regiment at Range Road Armory in Rapid City, Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011. The aviation regiment spent approximately one year at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, in support of Operation New Dawn, where they transported more than two million pounds of cargo, 8,000 passengers and flew more than 150 missions, all at night, using Night Vision Goggles. Pictured right to left are: Sgt. Matt Day, CW3 Fred Loofbourow, CW3 John Schneider, CW2 Julie Loofbourow, Sgt. Ronald Diekman, Sgt. Clint Walker, Sgt. Tyler Clavel and Spc. Charles Brookens (CW2 Robert Heckel not pictured). (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)

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