

South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Soldiers honored at Freedom Salute ceremony

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Eight Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard’s Detachment 3, Company A, 641st Aviation Regiment were honored for their service to the nation at a Freedom Salute ceremony on Friday, Jan. 27 at Camp Rapid.

The detachment returned home in September after a year-long deployment to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.

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.

This was 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.

The 641st is the first SDARNG unit to receive the Freedom Salute Award in support of Operation New Dawn.

The National Guard Freedom Salute Campaign is a dedication to the Soldiers, family members, and employers of units deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, Noble Eagle and peacekeeping operations across the globe. On behalf of the National Guard, each eligible Soldier is presented with an encased American flag, a sequentially numbered commemorative coin, a certificate of appreciation and a lapel insignia.

Two Soldiers of the 641st completed their second deployment, for which they received a Freedom Salute ring certificate and mantle clock. Three Soldiers completed their third deployment, for which they received a picture plaque.



120127-A-CW157-074: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Heckel, of Rapid City, receives the National Guard Freedom Salute Award from Maj. Tom Nelson, 881st Troop Command administrative officer, during a ceremony on Jan. 27, 2012, at Camp Rapid. Heckel was presented with an encased American flag, a sequentially numbered commemorative coin, a certificate of appreciation and a lapel insignia, all in recognition of his first deployment in support of Operation New Dawn. (SDNG photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)



120127-A-CW157-087: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Fred Loofbourow, of Rapid City, receives the National Guard Freedom Salute Award from Maj. Tom Nelson, 881st Troop Command administrative officer, during a ceremony on Jan. 27, 2012, at Camp Rapid. Loofbourow was presented with a picture plaque in recognition of his third deployment in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn. (SDNG photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail pao@sd.ngb.army.mil