

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deployed Soldiers honored at welcome home ceremony

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Seven Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighting Team) returned home today after completing a one-year tour to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A welcome home ceremony was held in their honor and nearly 200 family members and friends gathered at the Duke Corning Armory in Rapid City for their arrival.

The Sturgis-based 451st deployed in September 2011 and provided structural fire protection of bases in Marmal, Afghanistan. This was the unit’s first deployment.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, were featured speakers at the ceremony and commended the Soldiers for a job well done.

“We’re glad your back, not only so you can come back to the way of life we’re so lucky to have here in America, but because we know your safe,” said Daugaard. “Whether training Afghans or working with other firefighters from other states or other countries, we’re very proud of what you did.”

While deployed, the 451st responded to 21 emergency and non-emergency calls for aid, provided fire and life safety evaluations, assisted in a flood relief operation, trained with German forces and trained Afghan National Army soldiers on firefighting techniques.

“The South Dakota National Guard has a tremendous legacy that goes back over 150 years. Each of our units that go off carries that legacy with them,” said Reisch. “The 451st has done its part to maintain and extend the legacy. Thank you for what you’ve done and welcome home.”

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotanationalguard

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120907-A-WA247-063: Gov. Dennis Daugaard thanks Spc. Kyle Bryant, of Sturgis, member of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighting Team) for his service during the unit’s yearlong deployment to Afghanistan. The 451st gathered with family and friends in Rapid City, S.D., on Sept. 7, 2012, for a welcome home ceremony to officially end their deployment. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald) (RELEASED)



120906-A-RN486-100: Seven Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighting Team) were welcomed home to Rapid City, S.D., Sept. 7, 2012, after completing a yearlong tour to Afghanistan. Back row, left to right: Staff Sgt. Travis Stoltenburg, Spc. Maxwell Aschwege, Spc. Duayne Ruona and Sgt. 1st Class Austin Hagen. Front row: Spc. Adam North, Spc. Ryan Krogstad and Spc. Kyle Bryant. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald) (RELEASED)



120907-A-WA247-006: Staff Sgt. Maxwell Stoltenburg, member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighting Team) spends some quality time with his wife, April, and daughter, Makayla, 2, before his unit's welcome home ceremony in Rapid City, S.D., Sept. 7, 2012. Stoltenburg, of Aberdeen, S.D., was one of the seven Soldier team returning from a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald) (RELEASED)



120907-A-WA247-028: Quinn Aschwege, 3, wears a home-made patriotic shirt at the welcome home ceremony for the South Dakota Army National Guard's 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighting Team) in Rapid City, S.D., on Sept. 7, 2012. Quinn's dad, Spc. Travis Aschwege, was one of seven Soldiers deployed on a yearlong mission to Afghanistan. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald) (RELEASED)

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