

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

842nd honored at Welcome Home ceremony

SPEARFISH, S.D. – Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 842nd Engineer Company arrived back in the Black Hills today after completing a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A welcome home ceremony was held in their honor at the Donald E. Young Center at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, where more than 1,500 family members, friends and community supporters gathered to greet them, including Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Sen. John Thune, Rep. Kristi Noem, Spearfish Mayor Jerry Krambeck, Sturgis Mayor Mark Carstensen, Belle Fourche Mayor Gary Hendrickson and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG.

“Today is a day to enjoy life, to be glad to be back together with your family and friends and to enjoy each other’s company,” said Gov. Daugaard. “We are so proud of you. Welcome home to all of you and we are glad you are back safe and sound.”

“Thank you 842nd for what you have done for our state and for what you continue to do for our communities and our country. We are all blessed by your service,” said Sen. Thune.

The 160 members of the Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis-based unit deployed in September 2011 with a mission to provide horizontal construction and engineering support. Equipped with bulldozers, scrapers, cranes, loaders and 20-ton dump trucks, the unit built and maintained roads, constructed base force protection measures and provided limited clearing operations.

While on deployment, the 842nd partnered with Afghan Army soldiers to train them on engineering techniques, worked alongside coalition partner nations such as Norway, Poland and Germany for various operations, conducted missions at 58 different locations throughout Afghanistan and completed 123 operations. The total value of all their engineering efforts totaled \$21 million.

The unit also completed 275 miles of road construction and improvements, traveled 16,000 convoy miles, completed more than 373,000 cubic yards of cut and fill, maintained 445 pieces of equipment, and was awarded 247 medals for their accomplishments.

“We had a highly successful deployment,” said Capt. Allen Godsell, 842nd commander. “The Soldiers remained focused, they remained diligent and they got the job done time after time. It speaks volumes to the quality of Soldiers before you and to the dedication they have to doing the job right.”

“It’s quite remarkable the accomplishments of the unit over that year’s time,” said Thune. “The efficiency, the professionalism, the skill, the courage with which you have done your jobs is a great tribute to not only you and your families but also to our state and country, and I cannot tell you how grateful we all are for your service.”

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



120927-A-FO377-202: Sgt. Corbin Peterson, his wife, Kristan, and daughter, Blakeley, 15 months, reunite at the Donald E. Young Center in Spearfish, Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012. Soldiers of the 842nd Engineer Company arrived back in the Black Hills after completing a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis-based unit deployed in September 2011 with a mission to provide horizontal construction and engineering support. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson)(RELEASED)



120927-A-FO377-338: Sgt. Colin Nelson, of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 842nd Engineer Company, embraces his father, Steven Nelson, a Chief Warrant Officer 3 in the South Dakota Army National Guard and a member of the Patriot Guard, at the Rapid City Airport, Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012. Soldiers of the 842nd Engineer Company arrived back in the Black Hills after completing a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis-based unit deployed in September 2011 with a mission to provide horizontal construction and engineering support. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson)(RELEASED)



120927-A-FO377-259: Gov. Dennis Daugaard welcomes home Spc. Tyrel Boettcher, a Sturgis native and member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 842 Engineer Company, at the Donald E. Young Center in Spearfish, Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012. Soldiers of the 842nd arrived back in the Black Hills after completing a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis-based unit deployed in September 2011 with a mission to provide horizontal construction and engineering support. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson)(RELEASED)

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