

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

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155th Soldiers welcomed home from Kuwait deployment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – More than 150 Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company were welcomed home by family and friends at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, July 2, after returning from duty in Kuwait.

The Rapid City- and Wagner-based unit served 10 months completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. 155th members traveled throughout the region, to include Iraq and Jordan, to complete carpentry, plumbing, masonry and electrical projects.

The Soldiers arrived home just in time to celebrate Independence Day with their families.

“The Fourth of July for my family is a big deal, because I grew up with my family owning a fireworks stand and it’s always been one of those holidays we always got together for,” said Sgt. 1st Class Adam Sanderson, of Sioux Falls.” Arriving home in time to celebrate the holiday makes it really special.”

“Were home and it’s an awesome feeling having been gone for almost a year and reuniting with my family,” said Sgt. 1st Class Allan Baker, of Summerset.” To see my daughter and how much she has [grown] this past year, to see my wife and to make it home one day before my daughter’s birthday on the Fourth of July is a dream come true.”

“Happy and overwhelmed” were just a few of the words Baker’s wife, Stephanie, used to describe her husband’s return home from his second deployment overseas.

“We are just happy he is home safe,” she said. “We were nervous and scared when he left, but you don’t have any choice – you just have to go with it. We really rely on our other military wives to get us through it.

Many state and local government leaders were also pleased to see the Soldiers return home safe.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, U.S. Representative Kristi Noem, Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender and SDNG Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch were at the event and praised the Soldiers for their service.

“Independence Day is about celebrating the beliefs upon which America was founded ... but beliefs alone did not secure America’s way of life,” said Daugaard, during the ceremony. “Rather, it was those beliefs made tangible through the sacrifices of those who have worn our country’s uniform. It is thanks to the men and women of the 155th Engineer Company and all of those who have served that we are free.”

“It’s great to have you back!” said Reisch, congratulating the Soldiers on a mission well done. “The mission you performed was critical to this nation’s strategic objectives in the Middle East and by all accounts you performed all aspects of your mission in an outstanding manner.”

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During their deployment, the 155th completed over 300 projects – totaling more than 67,000 man hours of work. The Soldiers remodeled schools, clinics, offices and living areas. They demolished old buildings and brought more viable buildings up to code.

“You answered the call to service,” said Capt. David Dodson, 155th commander, while addressing his Soldiers in the audience. “You were handed the toughest assignments. You exceeded all expectations. Your worked shaped the battlefield ... and with every project, you improved the conditions of those around you. You represent the best of South Dakota.”

“To all the members of the 155th, to the families, and to everyone else in their lives, the people of South Dakota truly appreciate your sacrifices, your patriotism and your hard work,” said Daugaard. “Thank you and welcome home.”

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



160702-Z-TL267-001: Family members of Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company cheer as the unit returns home from a deployment to Kuwait at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The Soldiers served 10 months in the Middle East where they completed new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the region. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-002: Sgt. Brandon Greiner is embraced by his wife, Mindy, after returning from a deployment to Kuwait with the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The Soldiers served 10 months in the Middle East where they completed new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the region. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-003: Sgt. Justin Kolbeck is embraced by his wife, Megan, after returning from a deployment to Kuwait with the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The Soldiers served 10 months in the Middle East where they completed new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the region. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-004: 1st Lt. Chase Hagen and his wife, Emily, take a selfie during the welcome home ceremony of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The unit served 10 months in Kuwait completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-005: Spc. Timothy Tillman of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, holds his son for the first time, Leonidas, 4 months old, during the unit's welcome home ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The unit served 10 months in Kuwait completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-007: Capt. David Dodson, commander of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, addresses the audience during the unit's welcome home ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The unit served 10 months in Kuwait completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-008: Gov. Dennis Daugaard, U.S. Senator John Thune and U.S. Representative Kristi Noem express their appreciation to Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company for their service the country during the unit's welcome home ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The unit served 10 months in Kuwait completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-009: Staff Sgt. Matthew Mortenson and other Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company stand for roll call during the unit's welcome home ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The unit served 10 months in Kuwait completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)



160702-Z-TL267-010: Spc. Travis Tschumper and other Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company stand for roll call during the unit's welcome home ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, S.D., July 2, 2016. The unit served 10 months in Kuwait completing new construction and remodeling projects at bases across the Middle East. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Anthony Deiss/Released)

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