



For Immediate Release

17 Aug 2008

Alaska Army National Guard Return from Afghanistan *Thirteen Embedded Transition Team Soldiers return to U.S. soil*

FT. RILEY, Kansas—Soldiers from the Alaska Army Guard’s Embedded Transition Team returned to U.S. soil Aug. 9, where family members waited to welcome them home in an official welcome home ceremony at Fort. Riley, Kan.

The 13 Guard members, who were a part of the Embedded Transition Team across southern Afghanistan, were trained to specialize in the mentoring and training of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

“Our task was to assist the ANA in reaching a higher level of independence and skilled mission operability,” said Lt. Col. Peter Savage, ETT commander. “We also assisted in improving and organizing the infrastructure of the ANA and ANP.”

Upon arrival in Afghanistan, the main ETT was broken into smaller teams of less than five and were responsible for the daily training and mentoring of the ANA and ANP.

When ANA Battalions or Kandaks were considered proficient, raids on suspected Al Qaeda locations were carried out by U.S. and ANA forces side-by-side.

“It was an eye-opener,” said 1st Lt. Ronald Savok, ETT, ANA mentor “I did my duty while I was over there, but there is a lot of work to be done still.”

On several occasions, members of the Alaska Army National Guard, assisted in successful raids, including the capture of arms and munitions, as well as at least one Al Qaeda officer.

“We did our jobs, and we saw definite improvements in the ANA Kandaks,” Savage said. “But we still have a long way to go before we can consider the job done. With the kind of dedication that our team gave to the ANA, I believe that is certainly an attainable goal.”

Thirteen members of the 16-man team have arrived safely home to the United States; three have chosen to extend their tours overseas. Most have made it back to their homes in Alaska, while others have chosen to take leave before returning home.

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CUTLINE:

Apel

Following a welcome home ceremony for the Alaska Army National Guard's Embedded Transition Team, Master Sgt. Rob Apel, of Palmer, is greeted by his wife in Ft. Riley, Kas. Apel was a member of the 16-man Embedded Transition Team that was tasked to assist in the training of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, the team returned from the year-long tour Aug. 9. Courtesy photo