



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Alaska National Guard
Release: 15-108

November 3, 2015

By Staff Sgt. Edward Eagerton

Air Guard Security Forces returns from deployment to Afghanistan

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Eleven Airmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Security Forces Squadron returned here this weekend from a six-month deployment to Afghanistan.

There, the team was split up and sent to different areas in the region to support different security missions, according to Master Sgt. Gary Keller, a squad leader with the 176th SFS.

"We got separated around Afghanistan," he said. "Three [Airmen] from our group went to Jalalabad, where they provided security for the predator [drone] mission there. Six of us were assigned to missions in Kandahar. Some provided security for the unmanned aerial vehicles, and the rest were doing flight-line security for the 451st Air Expeditionary Group."

Keller would later be reassigned to a personal security detail in Kandahar, where he assisted local political personnel.

"We were there to help them function on their own," Keller explained. "The Afghan director would ask about his plans for security for the airport and the flight line, and I would explain to him how I would do it, but ultimately, the decision was his as they take over those functions."

He explained that the days were long for him and his fellow 176th SFS members.

"It felt like a long deployment," Keller said. "Looking back, you always say it goes quickly, but when you're there, it just seems long. Some of our guys were working seven days a week, and were putting in 12-14 hour days. Everybody did great though. Some of the newer Airmen got to experience a deployment, and the people they worked for said everybody met or exceeded their expectations."

Now that they are back, he explained, they will be able to use leave time they earned while overseas before returning to their civilian jobs.

"Some of us are going on vacation together," said Keller, "and of course, we're glad to get the time to spend with our families before we go back to work."

Another group of 176th SFS members who are deployed to Kuwait are scheduled to return in January.

###