

# Wisconsin Dept. of Military Affairs: Homecoming ceremony planned for returning field artillery unit

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**MADISON, Wis.** — Gov. Tony Evers, Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, Maj. Gen. Donald Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, and senior Wisconsin National Guard leaders will join families and friends to welcome home more than 350 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery at ceremonies on Thursday, May 23 at 12:45 p.m. and Friday May 24 at 12 p.m. Both ceremonies will take place at the 128th Air Refueling Wing, 1901 E. Grange Ave., Milwaukee.

The Milwaukee-based unit, which has subordinate units in Sussex and Plymouth, returns to Wisconsin after a nine-month deployment to six nations across the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The unit conducted high-mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) fire support missions for coalition and partner militaries in the region.

During this deployment, the 121st Field Artillery destroyed or neutralized enemy forces, helping defeat the Islamic State "caliphate" in Iraq and Syria, as well as degrading Taliban and ISIS-K operations in support of Operations Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel and Resolute Support.

The 121st Field Artillery also trained with the United Arab Emirates' 74th Cannon Regiment and Jordan's 29th Royal HIMARS Battalion in support of Operation Spartan Shield, establishing a foundation for future exercise designed to leverage each

nation's capabilities to support regional security.

The unit has deployed multiple times since Sept. 11, 2001. In 2006, the full battalion deployed to Iraq to conduct a convoy escort mission. Elements of the battalion deployed to Iraq again in 2009 with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Plymouth-based Battery B deployed to Afghanistan in 2013, where it became the first Army National Guard HIMARS unit to conduct combat fire support missions there. Its sister unit, Sussex-based Battery A, deployed to Afghanistan in 2014 for the same fire support mission. This was the first deployment for the 121st Field Artillery since 2006, when it performed a convoy escort mission in Iraq. Parts of the battalion deployed with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team to Iraq in 2009. Battery B, based in Plymouth, Wisconsin, deployed to Afghanistan in 2013, becoming the first Army National Guard HIMARS unit to conduct combat fire support missions there. Battery A deployed to Afghanistan in 2014 for the same fire support mission.

The 121st left Wisconsin in July 2018 enroute to the Middle East, and the unit arrived back on U.S. soil earlier this month after landing at Fort Bliss, Texas, where it spent two weeks completing post-mobilization requirements.