

Dept. of Military Affairs: 924th Engineer Detachment back on US soil after Kuwait deployment

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A Wisconsin Army National Guard engineer detachment returned safely to U.S. soil last week after a 10-month mobilization to Kuwait.

The Milwaukee-based 924th Engineer Facilities Detachment returned to Fort Bliss, Texas, where they will spend several weeks completing demobilization requirements before returning home to Wisconsin.

The 14-Soldier unit mobilized in January and deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, where it functioned as the sprawling base's department of public works.

The unit overcame significant challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic as it managed the daily functions of a major base in the Middle East.

The 924th returns amidst a historic period for the Wisconsin National Guard. In addition to the 924th, hundreds of Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers have returned in recent months from deployments to Afghanistan and Ukraine. In fact, since Veterans Day 2019, more than 1,200 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen from the Wisconsin National Guard have either deployed or returned from overseas deployments.

Approximately 150 Soldiers from the 829th Engineer Company returned to Wisconsin in September after a yearlong mobilization that spanned the Middle East and Afghanistan. Another 400 Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry returned from a mobilization to Afghanistan in waves over the spring and summer, while the 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and

roughly 160 Soldiers returned from a deployment to Ukraine in August after serving as the headquarters element for training advisors to the Ukrainian military.

The Camp Douglas, Wisconsin-based 1967th Contracting Team continues its deployment in the Horn of Africa, and 35 Soldiers from the West Bend-based Detachment 1, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation remain deployed to the Middle East in support of Operations Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield conducting medevac missions across the theater.

Thousands of Citizen Soldiers and Airmen have simultaneously been engaged in a variety of missions across Wisconsin and elsewhere in an unprecedented slate of mobilizations here at home.

More than 1,400 Wisconsin National Guard members were mobilized at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic response operating COVID-19 testing sites, running self-isolation facilities, managing logistics, manning a warehouse and distributing critical PPE shipments, and more. More than 700 remain on duty in support of the COVID-19 pandemic in the largest sustained domestic mobilization in the Wisconsin National Guard's history.

Thousands more have assisted the Wisconsin Elections Commission as poll workers in four separate elections in April, May, August, and November as COVID-19 fears resulted in a mass shortage of volunteers to staff polling places statewide.

Additionally, thousands of troops have assisted civil authorities in preserving public safety amidst multiple instances of civil unrest over the course of the spring, summer, and fall in Milwaukee, Madison, Racine, Kenosha, Green Bay, and Wauwatosa.

Also, two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and crews also deployed to California for more than a month in September and October to help battle wildfires there.