

# Dept. of Military Affairs: 107th Maintenance Company lands back on U.S. soil following deployment to Europe

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Approximately 150 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers from the 107th Maintenance Company landed safely on U.S. soil this week following a deployment to Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Soldiers with the unit, which is headquartered in Sparta, Wisconsin – with detachments in Viroqua, Wisconsin and Camp Ripley, Minnesota – returned to Fort Hood, Texas, where they will de-mobilize before returning to Wisconsin. Senior Wisconsin Army National Guard leadership greeted every Soldier as they came off the plane.

“I’m so glad I was able to see you guys walking off the plane – It’s one of my most favorite jobs ever,” said Brig. Gen. Joanne Mathews, Wisconsin’s deputy adjutant general for Army. “You guys did an awesome job. I’m so incredibly proud of you.”

Mathews introduced the Soldiers to the Wisconsin National Guard’s new state command chaplain, Col. Carl Livingston.

“I want you to keep making investments in your resiliency – spiritual, emotional, mental, physical,” Livingston said to the Soldiers. “You are a total being. Take care of your entire self. Welcome home.”

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Troy Bittner, the Wisconsin National Guard’s command chief warrant officer, encouraged the Soldiers to be patient as they go through the de-

mobilization process and get their needs met.

“The last thing that I’ll leave you with is enjoy this warm weather because back home it’s still only highs in the 40s,” Bittner said. “So if you get a chance, get out, soak up some sunshine, relax a little bit, and we look forward to seeing you back in Wisconsin real soon.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Patrouille, the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s senior enlisted leader, told the Soldiers he was proud of what they accomplished and the discipline they maintained while deployed. He encouraged them to shift gears as they reunite with their families.

“The last year you’ve been focused on serving your country,” Patrouille said. “What I ask you is when you get home, take some time and focus on yourself and your family.”

After mobilizing last May, the unit was dispersed across Poland, Romania, and Lithuania as a part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. Every day, the Soldiers conducted services on cars, computers, air conditioning and refrigeration units, heating units, communications equipment, and more.

This was the first deployment for Spc. Anna Erickson, a radio specialist. She enjoyed the camaraderie with other members of her unit and the ability to learn different things while deployed.

“I got to work in the battalion [communications and information technology] shop so I got to cross train doing a whole different job, learning other skills,” Erickson said.

Soldiers within the unit also had the opportunity to really delve into their jobs throughout the mission.

“The highlights for this deployment was really seeing the troops get out there, do their jobs, seeing my clerks being able to work their role day in and day out, get very proficient at it,” said Master Sgt. Barry Grimsled, a maintenance control noncommissioned officer. “My inspectors were able to get out there and do their job.”

This was Grimsled’s fourth deployment. He said the deployment provided an experience the Soldiers typically can’t get during a drill weekend.

“Like a two week or three week annual training, by the time you get rolling into it you’re done, you’re heading back to home station,” Grimsled said. “You really got to see people step up, learn their jobs. You see who really took charge and went after it, so that was really nice to see.”

In addition to doing their jobs, Soldiers with the 107th had the opportunity to work closely with civil affairs.

“I think the best part of this deployment was that it’s a permissive environment so we’re able to actually get out and interact with the community,” said Lt. Kaitlyn Clemons, and ordinance officer who was in charge of the automotive armament and allied trades platoon.

The unit also worked closely with their foreign counterparts.

“I would say my favorite part was being able to work with the foreign militaries and see how they coordinate with our forces but also internally within their forces,” said Lt. Jason Brasch, an ordinance officer who was in charge of the electronics platoon.

Brasch said he is excited to return home to spend time with his wife and 6-month old daughter.

“I was fortunate enough to be able to get two weeks of paternity leave approved, so I was at least able to welcome her into the world,” Brasch said.

Including Brasch, there were five Soldiers whose significant others had babies while the unit was deployed.

Overall, the unit is ready to be reunited to be home with their families in Wisconsin soon.

“It feels good to be back in Texas,” Grimsled said. “It will feel even greater to be back in Wisconsin.”