



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **251<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company Returns from Afghanistan Homecoming celebration planned for 7 p.m. tonight in Lexington, Tenn.**

**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – Soldiers from the Tennessee National Guard’s 251st Military Police Company stepped back onto Tennessee soil for the first time today, as they returned from their nearly yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The company’s 103 soldiers touched down at Volunteer Training Site – Smyrna at 12:20 p.m., greeted by a reception of family and friends joyfully welcoming them home.

After out-processing at the training site, the soldiers loaded a bus headed to Lexington, Tenn., where the town has planned a homecoming celebration in their honor. Accompanied by Patriot Guard riders and escorted by the Tennessee Highway Patrol, Henderson County Sheriff’s Department and Lexington Police Department, soldiers of the 251<sup>st</sup> will come home to a reception of cheering neighbors and friends.

Lt. Col. Jennifer Steed, commander of the 168<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, said the company performed admirably during their detainee operations mission in the heart of Afghanistan. Most importantly, she said, they brought their brothers and sisters home safely.

“They came home with everyone they went over with,” she said with a smile as her soldiers reunited with their families.

Steed said units from her battalion, including the 251<sup>st</sup>, have been continuously deployed since the beginning of the Guard’s efforts in Afghanistan. Their return now marks the end of this frequent deployment cycle.

“This is the first time in a long time the 168<sup>th</sup> has had all of our units at home,” Maj. Russell Newbill, the battalion’s executive officer said. “Having them home now finally makes the battalion complete.”

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The Lexington homecoming ceremony is tentatively planned for 7 p.m. tonight, dependent on the soldiers' arrival. A parade of law enforcement officials will escort the military police into town beginning at Parkers Crossroads. Family, friends and media are encouraged to welcome them on the north side of Court Square as they arrive home.

**STORY BY:**

Staff Sgt. Melissa Wood, 118<sup>th</sup> Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**CAPTIONS:**

**140201-A-XR807-001**

**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – Lt. Col. Jennifer Steed, commander of the 168<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, welcomes soldiers of the Tennessee National Guard's 251<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company as they arrive at Volunteer Training Site – Smyrna, Feb. 1. The soldiers arrived to a reception of family and friends welcoming them home after their nearly yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Wood/RELEASED)

<http://www.dvidshub.net/image/1160017/251st-military-police-company-returns-afghanistan-homecoming-celebration-planned-7-pm-tonight-lexington-tenn>

**140201-A-XR807-002**

**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – A reception of family and friends waits to greet soldiers of the Tennessee National Guard's 251<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company as they arrive at Volunteer Training Site – Smyrna, Feb. 1. The soldiers returned home upon completion of their nearly yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Wood/RELEASED)

<http://www.dvidshub.net/image/1160018/251st-military-police-company-returns-afghanistan-homecoming-celebration-planned-7-pm-tonight-lexington-tenn>

**140201-A-XR807-003**

**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – A reception of family and friends welcomes soldiers from the Tennessee National Guard's 251<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company as they arrive at Volunteer Training Site – Smyrna, Feb. 1. The soldiers returned home upon completion of their nearly yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Wood/RELEASED)

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<http://www.dvidshub.net/image/1160019/251st-military-police-company-returns-afghanistan-homecoming-celebration-planned-7-pm-tonight-lexington-tenn>

**140201-A-XR807-004**

**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – Soldiers of the Tennessee National Guard's 251<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company arrived at Volunteer Training Site – Smyrna, Feb. 1, upon completion of their nearly yearlong deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Wood/RELEASED)

<http://www.dvidshub.net/image/1160020/251st-military-police-company-returns-afghanistan-homecoming-celebration-planned-7-pm-tonight-lexington-tenn>

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