

1451st welcomed home

Written by Lauren Ohnesorge
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Tears and smiles greeted the North Carolina Army National Guard 1451st Transportation Company as they returned to the High Country.

In Iraq since last May, the team returned Saturday, just in time to meet crowds of well-wishers at a welcome home ceremony Sunday at Watauga County High School. Some, like 8-year-old James Padgett, whose stepfather just returned home, were more excited than others to see the soldiers return. He almost knocked his sister down trying to get to soldier Randy Miller.

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Others took their appreciation a step further. Boone Mayor Loretta Clawson expressed the town's appreciation by asking the 1451st company to marshal the July 4th parade.

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The company traveled over 1 million miles and earned 17 Army Achievement Medals, 117 Army Commendation Medals, 3 Meritorious Service Medals and 24 Bronze Star Medals. The company completed 451 missions. With home-made signs and waving flags, the High Country made its appreciation known.