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Local soldier receives special homecoming

By Kelly Hessedal

MOLINE- An Erie soldier arrived home to a crowd of smiling faces Saturday evening.

24-year-old Specialist Jeffery Duncan received a purple heart after he was seriously injured when a bomb exploded near his humvee in Iraq a couple weeks ago. He's part of the 202nd National Guard Unit based out of Galva.

A crowd of about 50 family, friends and local veterans gathered at the Quad City International Airport to greet him with a special welcome home celebration.

"It's great - I'm surprised so many people were here to support me," Duncan said after he passed out several hugs and kisses.

"He sounds wonderful, he sounds like Jeff I know," said his sister, Valerie Inman. She spent the day preparing for the celebration. "We just wanna do it to let him know how proud we are and how much we love him," she added.

"When he was injured, he was more upset that he had to come home- he wanted to stay with his unit and finish what he started," she said.

Duncan suffered shrapnel wounds and a broken hip. His sister's just thankful he's alive, and happy he'll finish his recovery here at home.

"I think the upbeat attitude is what'll get him through healing process," she said. "He'll be back on his feet in no time, he's definitely a trooper."

A limo was waiting outside the airport to drive him back to Erie. The rest of his unit is expected to be back on American soil on Tuesday.



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