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WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 5 -- "Today is a proud and happy date in Hays and Russell for soldier-citizens from this area are coming home," U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) said on the Senate floor.

Dole referred to the 995th Maintenance Company of the Kansas National Guard, with headquarters in Hays, The Company was released from active duty after 18 months service.

"I have had the privilege of personally knowing many of these men in the company," Dole said. "I know, first hand, what these eighteen months have meant to them and their communities. Their sacrifice in terms of time, careers and emotions has been profound."

"I wish to express my congratulations and appreciation for the job the 995th has done and to extend best wishes and warm regards as our men resume their civilian lives."

"The nation owes a deep debt of gratitude to them," he said.