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For immediate release

October 19, 2020

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Soldier Dad Home from Overseas Deployment Surprises Daughter at Vernon's Lake Street School

VERNON, Connecticut – Gabriella Flint, a kindergartener at Vernon's Lake Street School, got a wonderful surprise Monday morning when her father, a soldier with the Connecticut Army National Guard who had been deployed to Jordan since January, surprised her at school.

Gabriella, who is known as Ella, and her classmates in Kelly Browne's class were outside taking a mask break and doing stretches when her dad, Sgt. First Class David Flint, walked up. "Daddy!" Ella said as she opened her arms to get a hug. Her dad picked her up and she buried her head in his shoulder.



The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

There was a collective “awwww” and some tears from school staff assembled to watch the moment, and cheering from Ella’s classmates. Ella’s younger brother Max, 3, had his reunion earlier in the day at his daycare.

David Flint returned from deployment Sunday evening and hid in the family’s basement so that he could share the happy moment with Ella’s classmates, which delighted Lake Street School Principal Tracy Duenzl, whose own family has a history of military service.



Ella Flint looks at her dad, Connecticut Army National Guard Sgt. First Class David Flint a moment after he surprised her at Vernon’s Lake Street School. Flint returned from deployment to Jordan on Sunday evening.

“It can be a very private thing, but it was very nice that they shared it with us,” Duenzl said “It was very special.”

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Ella Flint with a “stuffy” of her dad, Connecticut Army National Guard Sgt. First Class David Flint.

Ella was a bit shy, but said she is happy her dad is home.

Her mom, Cara Flint, asked her whether she wanted to finish the day at school or come home.

“Come home,” Ella replied.

David Flint said he tried to be in touch with his family each day via Facetime, but there’s nothing like being home.

“Today was special,” he said. “I’ve been looking forward to seeing these guys a lot. It was awesome of the school to let me do this. It was a good day.” Flint is assigned to the 242nd Construction Management Team.



The Flint family heads home after returning from deployment and surprising his daughter Ella at Vernon’s Lake Street School on Monday.

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