

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil

Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Deployment ceremony held for 155th Engineer Co. Soldiers

RAPID CITY, S.D. – A deployment ceremony was held for 161 Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company in Rapid City, Wednesday, Aug. 12.

More than a thousand family members, friends and community supporters gathered at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center’s Barnett Arena to support their loved ones as the Rapid City and Wagner-based unit deploys to Kuwait for one year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield.

“The Soldiers of the 155th represent the best of South Dakota, and I am proud to be a part of this South Dakota National Guard unit,” said Capt. David Dodson, 155th commander. “We’ve trained hard. We’ve learned to do whatever it takes to make us successful and we are prepared.”

The 155th is a vertical engineer company capable of providing engineer support in the construction of base camps and facilities. The unit’s mission will be to provide construction, repair and maintenance of vertical infrastructures and facilities on a base in Kuwait.

Speakers for the ceremony included Gov. Dennis Daugaard, U.S. Senators John Thune and Michael Rounds, Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general.

“I am thankful for the sacrifice our National Guard Soldiers are making,” said Gov. Daugaard, while addressing the audience. “National Guard Soldiers in South Dakota are the most capable, dependable, adaptable, courageous and determined people you will ever meet. They are the kind of people you want at your back, when you need someone at your back. I am grateful for your willingness to serve.”

“I couldn’t be prouder of this unit. I know how hard you trained to get yourselves ready,” said Maj. Gen. Reisch, during the ceremony. “There is no doubt in my mind you are going to go over there and perform extremely well in the coming year. I look forward to the day next year when we welcome you back to South Dakota.”

As a construction company, 155th has a wide variety of occupational specialties including carpentry, plumbing, electrical and masonry – services they have performed in a deployed environment before.

This is the second mobilization for the 155th, which deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Noble Eagle in 2002-2003.

The 155th was the first SDNG unit to deploy after 9/11 in support of the Global War on Terror, where they helped to build up base infrastructure in Kuwait in the lead up to the Iraq war.

While deployed, it's not only the Soldiers that make sacrifices – the families share the burden as well.

“As Soldiers, we volunteered and are proud to wear the uniform. But we don't wear it alone. Parents, spouses, brothers, sisters, children and relatives ... your support for us is invaluable,” said Dodson, while addressing the families. “What we experience, you experience and we thank you.”

“The world is a dangerous place – full of rogue nations, rouge terrorists and evil things who do not like America,” said Daugaard. “Our National Guard is part of the vanguard that defends us, and as Senator Thune put it – keeps the wolves from our door.”

“We've trained as a team, we will fight as a team, we will build as a team and we will come home as a team,” said Dodson. “Were are ready. Let's go.”

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



150812-Z-CW157-138: U.S. Army Capt. David Dodson, commander of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company, addresses the audience during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-186: U.S. Army Spc. Mike Stearns a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company interacts with his daughter during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-206: U.S. Army Spc. Jordan Wendell a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company feeds his 9-month-old baby while his son rests on his shoulder during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-211: U.S. Army Spc. Jessica and Staff Sgt. Nielson, a married couple who are members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company and their daughter stand for the National Anthem during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-216: U.S. Army Spc. Trever Harrington a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company stands with his family during the National Anthem during the deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-298: U.S. Senator Mike Rounds, U.S. Senator John Thune and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, South Dakota National Guard adjutant general, shake hands with Soldiers of the SDNG's 155th Engineer Company during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-383: Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company stand for roll call during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)



150812-Z-CW157-411: The South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company stand for roll call during the company's deployment ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena in Rapid City, S.D., Aug. 12, 2015. The unit will deploy for a year to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann/Released)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ng.sd.sdarnng.list.pao@mail.mil