

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Siblings join family lineage of military service

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – As her family looked on, Alyvia Ahnberg took her oath of enlistment at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Sioux Falls, Aug. 3.

As she recited the words “to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic,” Alyvia’s brother, Briar, and father, Kevin, watched with pride, as she joined the family’s lineage of service in the U.S. military.

As the newest member of the South Dakota National Guard’s 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Ahnberg follows the footsteps of her brother Briar into the ranks of the Sioux Falls-based 196th. Alyvia’s father was another inspiration to her, who served in the Marine Corps.

“Congratulations, you are now a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard,” said Maj. Jason Thomson, 196th MEB personnel officer, after administering the oath. “This is the start of a career opportunity that you should be proud of.”

A resident of Sioux Falls, Alyvia is currently preparing for her senior year within the Harrisburg School District. Alyvia said she felt no pressure or obligation to enlist – in fact, her parents preferred she enlist a little later.

“I knew that this was an opportunity that I would have to work hard for from the start, both physically and mentally, to prove that I can actually do this,” said Alyvia.

She credits her can-do attitude and work ethic to growing up with strong family values. Alyvia enlisted as a human resource specialist within the human resource section of the 196th MEB.

Her brother, Briar, enlisted as a geospatial engineer within the brigade headquarters in 2013. He delayed his first year of college after graduating from the Harrisburg School District last year and attended training throughout the majority of 2014 in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Briar was initially interested in joining the Marine Corps but kept his options open when making his decision. He recalls the moment his recruiter came to his family’s house to talk about the different units and jobs available in the National Guard.

“He explained to my parents and I that there were a few openings here in Sioux Falls that could really benefit my civilian job experience and opportunities down the road if I would like to attend college instead of going active duty,” said Briar. “I said without hesitating that this is what I want to do, causing my parents to get excited about me being able to be a citizen-Soldier and going to college locally.”

“This career opportunity opens up so many opportunities in life, especially with the job I chose, human resources,” said Alyvia. “My dad served in the Marines at one point and that always intrigued me. I knew this job could open up doors to that kind of thing.”

Alyvia’s father, Kevin, served in the Marine Corps from 1990 – 1994. He spent much of his time during his service at Camp Hanson, Okinawa, as well as Camp Pendleton, California.

“I regretted not continuing my service, so I appreciate the fact that my children recognize the importance of it and have taken the leap on their own,” said Kevin.

After graduating high school later this spring, Alyvia will head to basic training and then to human resource training before joining the 196th as a member of its military human resource section.

“Both kids enlisted on their own and for their own reasons, and I believe the right reasons – not anybody else’s,” said Kevin. “I’m proud of each of them and hope they take advantage of their service.”

The unit that both Briar and Alyvia are a part of is scheduled for a deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Spartan Shield in late February 2016.

Thirty-nine Soldiers from the unit are being selected to serve on the nine-month deployment to conduct force protection and security operations.

Regardless of this knowledge, Alyvia still decided to join the unit and looks forward to the opportunity when she will be able to contribute to the unit’s mission.

“I am proud when anyone raises their right hand to serve,” said Thomson. “I hope both are looking for a challenge and a chance to learn and grow within a professional organization.”

Briar is looking to put his military education incentives to work this fall by starting college at South Dakota State University in Brookings. Alyvia also looks forward to attending SDSU upon the completion of her training.

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High resolution photos are available upon request.



150803-Z-ZZ999-001: Army Spc. Briar Ahnberg and Pvt. Alyvia Ahnberg, of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, pose for a photo during drill in Sioux Falls, S.D., Aug. 8, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Jason Thomson/Released)



150819-Z-ZZ999-002: Army Spc. Briar Ahnberg and Pvt. Alyvia Ahnberg, of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, work together on preventive maintenance on their section equipment while attending drill in Sioux Falls, S.D., Aug. 8, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Jason Thomson/Released)



150803-Z-ZZ999-003: The Ahnberg family after the oath of enlistment of Army Pvt. Alyvia Ahnberg, Aug. 3, 2015, at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Sioux Falls, S.D. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Jason Thomson/Released)