

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

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

Web: sd.ng.mil

www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard

www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard

twitter.com/SD_Guard



October 9, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Soldiers help Boy Scouts find strength within

By Spc. Carl Johnson
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

YANKTON, S.D. –The crisp air matches the participants’ anticipation as dawn breaks over Lewis and Clark Scout Camp near Yankton. Over 250 boy scouts and more than 60 South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers stand at attention as the flag ceremony begins. In the background the bugle plays as the children’s eyes follow the crew of four Soldiers cradling the neatly folded red, white and blue flag. A picturesque scene with a pink and gold hewn sky stretches out over the crowd.

After the solemn moment fades, Soldiers and scouts began their busy weekend, Oct. 2-4, a joint opportunity allowing Soldiers to instruct while scouts sharpen their survival skills.

“We wanted to do some ‘out of the box’ training for our Soldiers,” said Capt. Michael Nei, commander of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery. “Our guys really enjoyed being able to invest their time into young lives. It was a great event for the community.”

Multiple National Guard units from across South Dakota were involved to include: the 730th Area Support Medical Company; Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery; 842nd Engineer Company; 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), and the 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute provided training support.

The event gave the Soldiers the opportunity to provide inspiration to young men.

“Everybody was so enthused about working with the National Guard,” said Barry Schloss, property manager of the camp. “Our organization is built on learning how to do something, making mistakes, learning from it and moving on. Overcoming adversity really, in that way the two organizations are very similar.”

The Soldiers were able to improve the scouts’ knowledge in several areas: gun safety, fire building, survival techniques, rappelling, military communication, physical fitness, land navigation, flags and military customs, first aid, map reading and exposure to military equipment.

At the gun safety station, an electronic target system allowed scouts to test their marksmanship skills on an electronic target system. The weapons are not actually fired but a laser is released by the pull of the trigger and the target senses where the laser lands. The scores were recorded and friendly competition ensued.

-more-

Several scouts could also be seen exploring the various Humvees and track vehicles. The scouts showed particular interest in the different weapon systems that were on display. Soldiers explained how each system functioned and in what warfare situation they would be used.

During the obstacle course, Soldiers guided the scouts through step swings, cargo nets, slide poles and climbing walls.

While the scouts and Soldiers worked on their skills, leadership saw how the training was benefitting both organizations.

“The National Guard helped us attract a lot more youth to this event,” said Tom Smotherman, the executive director for the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America. “It brought nearly 300 kids out here. We would have expected around 100 normally. We had to cap it at 300 because that is all the dining hall could handle.”

“The Boy Scouts provided a realistic training experience for us,” said 1st Sgt. Brooks Schild, of Battery B, 1/147th FA.

Schild went on to say that training young people tested the Soldiers’ knowledge, as the scouts had numerous questions.

Staff Sgt. Michael Schwans, training NCO for the 147th, was in charge of securing resources for the event. Humvees, various track vehicles, a wide assortment of weapons, and even a MRE (meal ready to eat) lunch were available to the scouts and scout leaders.

“We really tried to get everything possible to provide a great experience for these kids,” said Schwans.

The National Guard was supportive of the Boy Scout leadership’s goal to create a ‘wow’ experience for the scouts, said Smotherman.

“Having the Soldiers here brings that ‘wow’ attraction more than going to the state park, tying some knots and starting some fires,” said Smotherman. “Events like this one help keep kids in the program.”

Jordan Beukelman, a Boy Scout with Troop 72 in Mitchell, had his own ‘wow’ moment.

“I saw a video of people doing the rappel tower,” said Beukelman, with a hint of nervousness in his voice. “I thought to myself ‘I don’t know if I’m ever going to do that.’ I finally did though!”

Several scouts were similar to Beukelman and initially showed hesitation while attempting to scale and descend the rappel tower. As the assisting Soldiers calmly coached them through each step, the scouts’ fears dissipated and gave way to confidence. With a little help, each one found their strength within.

-30-

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



151003-Z-CJ999-170: Ethan Peek, a Boy Scout from Troop 152 in Sioux Falls, S.D., sits in the cab of a tracked military vehicle at the Boy Scout Camporee in Yankton, S.D., Oct. 3, 2015. Multiple South Dakota Army National Guard units from across South Dakota and Boy Scout leaders from the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America coordinated a training exercise that was mutually beneficial for the scouts and Soldiers. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Carl Johnson/Released)



151003-Z-CJ999-077: Caymin Blindauer, a Boy Scout, from Troop 72 in Mitchell, S.D., rappels down a wall while Sgt. Brett Hanes from the South Dakota Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, assists at the Boy Scout Camporee in Yankton, S.D., Oct. 3, 2015. Multiple South Dakota Army National Guard units from across South Dakota and Boy Scout leaders from the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America coordinated a training exercise that was mutually beneficial for the scouts and Soldiers. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Carl Johnson/Released)



151003-Z-CJ999-134: Dylan Kortan and Alex Ketter, of Troop 102 in Yankton, S.D., are taught how to complete a weapon functions check by Spc. Phil Oligmueller, from the South Dakota Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, at the Boy Scout Camporee in Yankton, Oct. 3, 2015. Multiple South Dakota Army National Guard units from across South Dakota and Boy Scout leaders from the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America coordinated a training exercise that was mutually beneficial for the scouts and Soldiers. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Carl Johnson/Released)



151003-Z-CJ999-242: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Heier, multiple launch rocket system crew chief from South Dakota Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, shows Colton Dillon, a Boy Scout from Troop 72 in Mitchell, S.D., how to fold a flag at the Boy Scout Camporee in Yankton, S.D., Oct. 3, 2015. Multiple South Dakota Army National Guard units from across South Dakota and Boy Scout leaders from the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America coordinated a training exercise that was mutually beneficial for the scouts and Soldiers. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Carl Johnson/Released)



151003-Z-BP728-027: U.S. Army Soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, and boy scouts from various regional troops pay their respects to the flag at the Boy Scout Camporee in Yankton, S.D., Oct. 3, 2015. Multiple South Dakota Army National Guard units from across South Dakota and Boy Scout leaders from the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America coordinated a training exercise that was mutually beneficial for the scouts and Soldiers. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



151003-Z-BP728-038: U.S. Army Sgt. Brett Hanes of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, helps a Boy Scout with Troop 102 down from a rappel tower in Yankton, S.D., during the Boy Scout Camporee in Yankton, Oct. 3, 2015. The 147th and Boy Scout leaders from the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America coordinated a training exercise that was mutually beneficial for the scouts and Soldiers. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)

For more information, please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil.