

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

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National Guard engineers conduct river crossing

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CHAMBERLAIN, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard’s 200th Engineer Company (multi-role bridge company) conducted a river crossing operation on the Missouri River near Chamberlain, South Dakota, June 11 as part of the Golden Coyote training exercise.

The operation was part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise hosted by the South Dakota National Guard. The mission provided Soldiers of the 200th the opportunity to exercise their skills and gain experience working with units from across the country.

“The purpose of this training was to get our Soldiers trained and more proficient,” said 1st Lt. Steven Skinner, platoon leader with the 200th. “The training helped them gain experience in rafting operations.”

When units needed to cross the river, the raft crew guided the trucks onto one of four rafts. The raft commander then directed two boat operators to maneuver the raft across the river to the far shore, where the trucks were unloaded to continue their mission.

“Each member played a crucial role,” said Staff Sgt. Dan Hunnel, one of the raft commanders in the 200th. “Everyone has to know their job and the other crew members’ jobs to be prepared for any situation.”

A large-scale operation like this requires the engineer company to coordinate with everyone who plans to cross the river.

“One challenge is communicating the importance of safety once the trucks are on the rafts and being transported during this operation,” said Hunnel.

The Golden Coyote training exercise provides the 200th an opportunity to train in an environment that would simulate what they would experience on a deployment.

“Every time we can utilize these skills it prepares us for operations we would do while deployed,” said Skinner.

While the 200th practices constructing and tearing down rafts throughout the year, the summer gives them the opportunity to train on the water.

“Anytime we operate with the equipment it’s good training,” said Skinner. “It just makes the process smoother and more efficient each time we can do it.”

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This year the 200th transported 236 personnel and 101 trucks from six different units across the river. Each raft made approximately nine round trips across the river throughout the day.

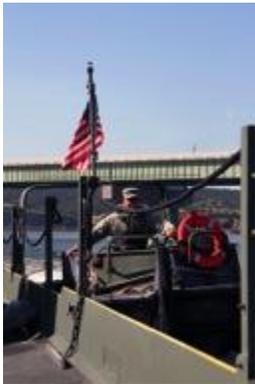
“It was a really good experience and it was interesting to see how other units conduct operations,” said Spc. Lindsy Dey, a medic with the 730th Area Support Medical Company.

The river crossing operation provides a unique experience for everyone who participates in the operation.

“I would like everyone to realize what the South Dakota National Guard can do and all the assets the engineers bring to the military,” said Skinner. “Army training like this can be fun, new and different for everyone.”

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



160611-Z-BP728-009: U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Brisbee, a boat operator in the 200th Engineer Company of the South Dakota Army National Guard, helps direct a raft across the Missouri River in Chamberlain, S.D., on June 11, 2016. The river crossing operation is part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise and provides the engineers the opportunity to conduct training that simulates overseas operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



160611-Z-BP728-020: U.S. Army Sgt. Owen Shay, an assistant raft commander in the 200th Engineer Company of the South Dakota Army National Guard, ground guides trucks from the 235th Military Police Company off a raft onto the western bank of the Missouri River in Chamberlain, S.D., June 11, 2016. The bridge crossing operation is part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise and provides the engineers the opportunity to coordinate training with other participating units. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



160611-Z-BP728-034: A Black Hawk helicopter flies over as members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 200th Engineer Company conduct a river crossing operation in Chamberlain, S.D., June 11, 2016. The river crossing operation is part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise that provides the engineer company the opportunity to conduct training that simulates overseas operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



160611-Z-BP728-047: Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 200th Engineer Company guide a raft on the Missouri River during a river crossing operation in Chamberlain, S.D., June 11, 2016. The river crossing operation is part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise and provides the engineer unit the opportunity to utilize their skills in deployment scenarios. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



160611-Z-BP728-062: Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 200th Engineer Company load trucks from the 730th Area Support Medical Company during a river crossing operation in Chamberlain, S.D., June 11, 2016. The river crossing operation is part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise and provides the engineer company the opportunity to utilize their skills while coordinating with other units. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)



160611-Z-BP728-076: Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 200th Engineer Company escort Brig. Gen. Thomas Croymans, Commander of the Troops, and Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser, Exercise Sergeant Major, across the Missouri River during a river crossing operation in Chamberlain, S.D., June 11, 2016. The bridge crossing operation is part of the 32nd Golden Coyote training exercise and provides the engineer company the opportunity to conduct training in a deployment environment. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Kristin Lichius/Released)

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