

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: [ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil](mailto:ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil) Web: [sd.ng.mil](http://sd.ng.mil)



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 4, 2017

## SD National Guard hosts 33rd annual Dining-Out

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard hosted its 2017 Dining-Out at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, Feb. 2.

The annual event brings together Guardsmen from across the state for a formal evening to honor the organization's history and to recognize individual and unit achievements from the past year.

The atmosphere, while formal, includes deep-rooted traditions which lighten the mood and provide both members and guests not only plenty of laughs, but a chance to learn some of the organization's history, traditions and an opportunity to recognize individual and unit achievements.

A video highlighting the many accomplishments made by the men and women of the SDNG in 2016 was shown in addition to comments from Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the SDNG adjutant general. The National Guard also recognized a family, an employer and a public servant with awards recognizing their contributions to the SDNG mission.

### **Pro Patria Award – Rapid City Police Department**

The awards portion of the evening began by presenting the Rapid City Police Department with the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award.

The Pro Patria Award is presented annually to one employer in the state who provides exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support employees serving in the National Guard or Reserve.

“The Rapid City Police Department realizes the importance of a strong force and provides support and opportunities to members of the Armed Forces,” said Maj. Lona Christensen, executive director for the SD ESGR committee.

They actively recruit National Guard and Reserve members to be part of the department and have created a formal policy for military deployment and reintegration to better support their employees during periods of military service. Each deploying employee has a primary point of contact assigned to them and their family to be a resource for the family, maintain communication with the service member and help keep the chief informed regarding the needs and wellness of the service member and family.

The Rapid City Police Department is active in the Fraternal Order of Police. While the service member is out for extended military service, their dues to the FOP are paid by the RCPD so membership is not lost and the family can still receive support from them and utilize their facilities.

-more-

The Rapid City Police Department has Peer Support Program designed to provide confidential emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis. Service members transitioning back into the department are encouraged to reach out for support from this group.

“I just never expected all the support, which made my transition so smooth,” said one service member of the Peer Support Group.

“The Chief’s [Police Chief Karl Jegeris] message to all of his service member employees is ‘Know your transition is at your pace. Our reintegration program and training days are there to help you feel ready to go back on patrol. You need to take care of yourself and your family. Take a breath and come back when you are ready. Our culture here is, when duty calls, you go and we will support you,’” Christensen said.

“The Rapid City Police Department is proud of their employee’s military service as evidenced by their creation of a National Defense Ribbon that officers who served in the Armed Forces are able to wear on their uniforms signifying their military service,” Christensen said. “They are deserving of this recognition for their outstanding contributions to our military services.”

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Hall, a member of the SDARNG’s Joint Force Headquarters and a police sergeant in Rapid City, nominated his employer for the award and joined Chief Jegeris on stage for the presentation of the award from Gov. Daugaard, Reisch and Christensen.

### **The Williamson Militiaman Award – Retired Brig. Gen. R.J. Clift**

The SDNG next awarded the Williamson Militiaman Award to retired Brig. Gen. R.J. Clift.

The Williamson Militiaman Award, established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson, recognizes an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier or Airman as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of the country.

Clift served our state and nation for over 35 years in uniform, beginning with his 1970 enlistment in the South Dakota Air National Guard. He completed undergraduate pilot training at Laredo Air Force Base, Texas in 1972 and returned to South Dakota after F-100 pilot training at Tucson, Arizona in 1973.

He served in various assignments and leadership positions over the next 32 years to include: squadron fighter pilot, instructor pilot, fighter weapons instructor, operations officer, 175th Tactical Fighter Squadron commander, Headquarters director of operations, Headquarters chief of staff, and assistant adjutant general, SDANG, when he retired in 2006.

He flew the T-37, T-38, F-100, A-7 and F-16 aircraft with nearly 3,500 military flying hours. As squadron commander, he led the first European F-16 deployment and the first Air National Guard rainbow combat deployment to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, patrolling the northern no-fly zone over Iraq.

Like the majority of citizen-Soldiers and Airmen, Clift pursued a parallel civilian career, spending 22 years with Northwest Airlines and five years with Delta Airlines flying and instructing, accumulating over 10,000 civilian flight hours.

“His advocacy for the military and the future of the South Dakota Air National Guard at Joe Foss Field continued after retirement when he volunteered to co-chair the Sioux Falls Area Chamber Military Task Force Committee,” Reisch said to the audience, before announcing Clift by name. “He energized the task force efforts when the Air Force announced the criteria and timeline of basing decisions for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

“His interaction with Gov. Daugaard, South Dakota’s senators and congresswoman, the state legislature, Sioux Falls Mayor and City Council, Minnehaha and Lincoln County Commissions along with Air Force and National Guard Bureau leadership helped secure the long term future of the 114th Fighter Wing,” Reisch continued.

“His efforts led to letters of support from the Sioux Falls Mayor and Sioux Falls Airport Authority, resolutions of support from the Sioux Falls City Council and Minnehaha County Commission, and House Concurrent Resolution No. 1002 supporting the selection of the F-35 aircraft bed down at Joe Foss Field with unanimous House and Senate support.

“I expect his outstanding contributions will lead to future F-35’s in South Dakota and can personally testify to this man’s passion for support of the military and commitment to the South Dakota National Guard,” Reisch concluded.

Past recipients of the award include: Former Adjutants General Phil Killey and Harold Sykora; former U.S. Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson; former Governors William Janklow and Michael Rounds; and current Governor Dennis Daugaard.

### **The Adjutant General’s Family Award – Tanya and Charles Totten**

To conclude the awards portion of the evening, Reisch awarded The Adjutant General’s Family Award to Tanya and Charles Totten.

The award recognizes family members who have supported their service members in a truly exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices.

“The Totton family is the personification of the word ‘volunteer,’” Reisch said. “Their willingness to offer their time and resources to ensure service members, veterans and their families in South Dakota receive support and recognition is the driving force behind their efforts.”

In 2011, the Totton family began supporting Soldiers as committee volunteers and organizers of the 200th Engineer Company Camo Quilt Project to build 200 camouflage quilts and raise \$5,200 to pay for supplies and shipping. This exceptional effort was recognized by the South Dakota Legislature when the group received a commemoration from the House (HC 1017) for their work.

They also partnered with Operation Military Kid to make Hero Packs for Chamberlain-area children whose military parents were deployed. Blankets were made for children from birth to three years old for their Hero Packs. Hero Pack backpacks contained age-appropriate items such as cameras and books and were given to children free of charge.

The Tottons decided they wanted to further support the troops, so they worked with the Camo Quilt Project to raise enough money to process 400 pounds of beef into jerky, which they sent overseas to the 200th En. Co. while the unit was deployed to Afghanistan.

In August of 2013, the Tottons were a sponsor of the South Dakota Enlisted Association Flag Relay Run across South Dakota. Since then, they have organized a civilian co-ed team for the 11th Annual Black Hills Veterans March and Marathon on the Mickelson Trail in the Black Hills.

In 2015, they won the “Marchers Favorite Rest Stop” during the BHVM where the crew manning the rest stop rang cow bells and served beef chislic with other staples to keep participants motivated and fueled to the finish.

Additionally, they also received first place in the mixed co-ed team in the 16-mile mini march. In 2016, the Tottos continued to support the BHVM by organizing and participating on a team of marchers and are planning to continue their support and participation.

In September 2016, they continued in their unwavering support for local service members and veterans when they spearheaded an initiative which raised enough funds to cover the cost for over 200 veterans and their spouses to enjoy a complimentary beef brisket and prime rib dinner at the annual Fallfest Cook-Off in Chamberlain. The Chamberlain/Oacoma Sun newspaper recognized the Tottos and their “quiet support for military members and their families in a variety of ways for years.”

The Tottos have displayed their unwavering support for service members, veterans and their families. They continually look for new, innovative and exciting ways to show their gratitude and support through their efforts. The Totton family truly embodies selfless service through their tremendous actions and we are honored to recognize their dedication and contributions that make our organization better.

### **SDNG’s commander in chief addresses Soldiers and Airmen**

As the formal portion of the evening drew to its conclusion, the SDNG’s commander in chief, Gov. Daugaard, took to the podium and recognized the SDNG for the many achievements and awards they received in 2016 on a national scale.

“It’s truly been an honor to be your commander-in-chief over the last six years,” Daugaard said. “Whether it’s a time of war, or a disaster in our state, you have proven that we can count on you. I’ve witnessed your service firsthand while visiting Kuwait and Afghanistan, and I have been impressed time and time again with your response to emergencies here at home.

“To all the members of the National Guard here tonight and to everyone else in their lives, the people of South Dakota want all of you to know that we truly appreciate your sacrifices, your patriotism, and your hard work,” Daugaard said as he closed his remarks. “Thank you for everything you do for us. May God bless you, may God bless the National Guard, and may God bless the great State of South Dakota.”

-30-

High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



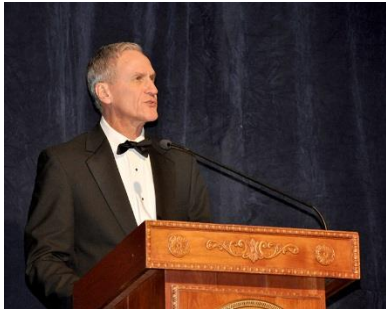
**170202-Z-GT719-047:** The Rapid City Police Department receives the South Dakota Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Pro Patria Award during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out in Pierre, S.D., Feb. 2, 2017. The award is presented by Gov. Dennis Daugaard to Police Chief Karl Jegeris and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Hall, a members of the SDNG and a police sergeant in Rapid City, who nominated his employer for the award. Also pictured, from left, is Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, and Mr. Ron Mielke, ESGR-SD chair. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)



**170202-Z-GT719-053:** Retired Brig. Gen. R.J. Clift, center right, receives the Williamson Militiaman Award from, left to right, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, Gov. Dennis Daugaard and retired Maj. Gen. Ronald Williamson, during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out in Pierre, S.D., Feb. 2, 2017. The award recognizes an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier/Airman as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of our country. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)



**170202-Z-GT719-060:** Charles and Tanya Totten receive the Adjutant General's Family Award from Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out in Pierre, S.D., Feb. 2, 2017. The award recognizes family members who support service members in an exemplary manner while managing family, careers, or even hardship, all the while not seeking recognition for their sacrifices. Also pictured is the Totten's daughter and her husband, Gabby and John Hoing. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)



**170202-Z-GT719-069:** Gov. Dennis Daugaard addresses Soldiers and Airmen during the South Dakota National Guard Dining-Out in Pierre, S.D., Feb. 2, 2017. The annual event brings together Guardsmen from across the state for a formal evening to honor the organization's history and to recognize individual and unit achievements from the past year. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee)

**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](mailto:ng.sd.sdarnng.list.pao@mail.mil)