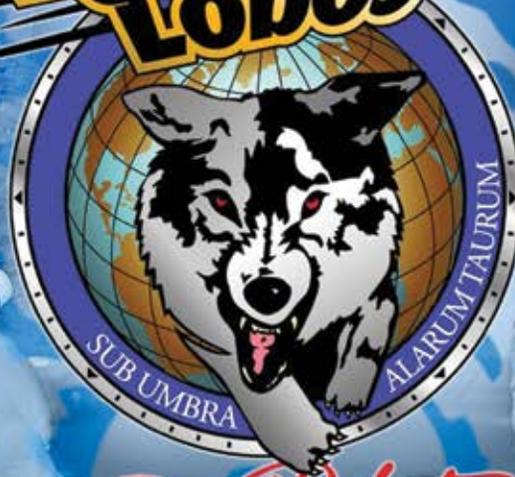


DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • SUMMER 2017

114TH FIGHTER WING DEPLOYS AIRMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE

Fightin' Lobos



South Dakota
AIR NATIONAL GUARD

» ACHIEVEMENTS

- 23 SDARNG units receive SUA
- SDARNG wins gold in ACDE awards

» TRAINING

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- CTX increases readiness for 881st units
- 139th BSB practices disaster response

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- Public Affairs Soldiers train in ROK



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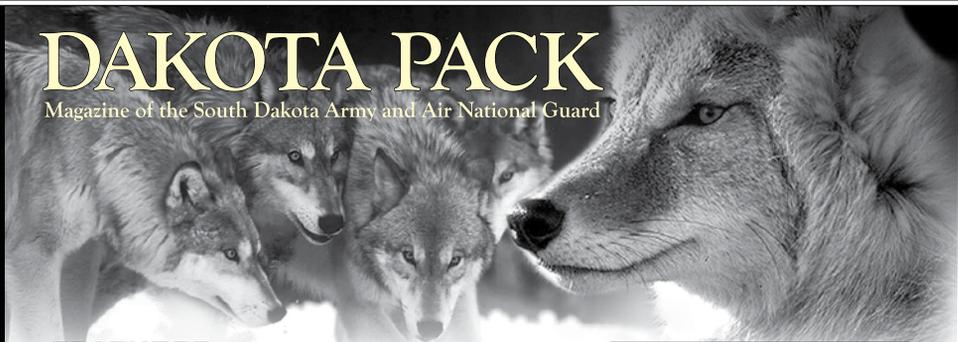
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Submissions: Print and photo submissions of general interest to members of the SDNG, their families, civilian employees, veterans and retirees are invited and encouraged. Please send article and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, complete mailing address and comments to: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil, 605.737.6721. Submissions are subject to editing. Electronic submissions are preferred and digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

DAKOTA PACK

Magazine of the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard



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On the Cover

Photo illustration of 114th Fighter Wing personnel, family members and distinguished guests during the unit's activation ceremony at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, April 1. (Photo illustration by Maj. Anthony Deiss)



Message from the Adjutant General

I'd like to begin by congratulating Brig. Gen. Steve Warren on his retirement from the SDNG after dedicating more than 40 years of service to our state and nation. He held many different positions over the years, with his career culminating as the assistant adjutant general for the Air Guard. I want to wish Steve and his wife Sharon many happy years in their retirement.

Congratulations are also in order for Joel DeGroot who was promoted to brigadier general and installed as the assistant adjutant general-Air upon Steve's retirement. General DeGroot enlisted in the SDANG in 1986 and was commissioned in 1995. Previous command positions include the 114th Services Flight, 114th Maintenance Squadron and 114th Maintenance Group, which he commanded for seven years. I am confident that he will continue to uphold the high standards that the SDANG has become so well-known for.

My top priority is taking excellent care of our Soldiers, Airmen and their families, so I was especially pleased when the 155th Engineer Company's Family Readiness Group was recently named the top Army National Guard Readiness Group in the nation. The award ceremony, which was conducted in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes, acknowledged the many ways the Family Readiness Group worked with the unit commander to ease the burdens that a unit deployment has on family members.

On a related note, 2017 Service Member & Family Support State Family and Youth symposium was conducted in Sioux Falls in late March, bringing together more than 100 adult and youth volunteers who have supported our organization. Those individuals recognized for special dedication were:

Guard Family of the Year Award:

(ARMY) The Ernster Family: Matthew, Stacy, Dylan, Adison, Braden and Braxton
(AIR) The Vanderwolde Family: Ed, Deanna, Nicole, and Brooklyn

Volunteer of the Year Award:

(ARMY) Jennifer Kranz Forward Support Company, 1-147th FA Battalion
(AIR) Melva Hilmoe

Military Member of the Year Award:

(ARMY) Sgt. 1st Class Paul Mausbach, HHC, 139th Brigade Support Battalion
(AIR) Command Chief Master Sgt. Jeanne Gacke

Extra Mile Award (Retiree):

(ARMY) Bill Hoffman, Forward Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion

Unit of the Year Award:

(ARMY) 155th Engineer Company
(AIR) Rising Six

Youth Volunteer Award:

Trevor Bartunek, Youth Council

Youth Development Volunteer Award:

(AIR GUARD) Blake Parke

Family Program Community Purple Award:

Rolling Thunder Chapter 2 of Brookings

I want to personally congratulate the award recipients listed above, and thank all of the wonderful volunteers we have who dedicate their precious time to support the SDNG. I am also very grateful to the dedicated contract employees who provide such wonderful support to our families. Unfortunately, the last couple times those national contracts were re-bid, the process was mishandled by the folks in Washington, D.C., resulting in significant salary cuts to many dedicated contract employees.

I have communicated my utter dissatisfaction directly to those in charge of contracting at the National Guard Bureau, however that doesn't undo the problem of our contract employees quitting to take other jobs that compensate them at levels they deserve. I pledge to continue to do what I can to make sure

our families are supported in the best manner possible.

I want to offer my personal congratulations to the winners of the SDNG's Best Warrior Competition. The 2017 Soldier of the Year is Spc. Lucas Scott of the 842nd Engineer Company. The 2017 Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year is Staff Sgt. Shane Wilkinson of Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery. These, and all of the other enlisted personnel who competed for these honors have brought great pride on themselves and their units.

Congratulations are also in order for Capt. Ross Rollinger of the 114th Fighter Wing, who was named the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Outstanding Lieutenant of the Year Award and Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Fleming of Joint Force Headquarters, for receiving the CW4 Michael F. O'Conner Outstanding Warrant Officer of the Year Award during the National Guard Association of South Dakota annual conference in Deadwood on April 21. We all know that the SDNG has the finest enlisted personnel and officers in the nation, so earning these top honors is truly an extraordinary accomplishment!

The SDNG was recently honored as the overall national winner of the Army Communities of Excellence competition. This award distinguishes the South Dakota Army National Guard as an organizational 'role model' for performance excellence in delivering value, improving performance, sharing innovation and demonstrating readiness results.

Last year we received the First Place Gold (runner-up overall) Award, so our extra efforts have paid off in a big way. We are a premiere organization that has a vision of being the best at everything we do. We set high goals and measure our progress toward achieving those goals on a regular basis. Our Soldiers and Airmen are the absolute best, and this award is yet another example of how working hard and dedicating ourselves results in tremendous achievement.

Congratulations to Brig. Gen. Kevin Griese and all of the Army Guard leadership. A special thanks and recognition go to Col. Mike Oster and Capt. Mitch Nachtigall who did the heavy lifting on the comprehensive award nomination packet, as well as to Col. Marshall Michels, all of the Army Guard directorates and staff for coming together in a special way to make this happen. I am very proud of you all.

In closing, I once again ask for your continued support for the wellbeing of all of our Soldiers and Airmen, whether serving at home or abroad. The first deployments have begun of what will eventually be 125 of our Airmen headed to nine different locations for six months. The 153rd has surpassed the halfway point of their deployment, but they are spread out performing many important missions so we need to continue to pray for their safety every day.

As the summer months approach and our outdoor activities increase, I want to remind everyone to take the time to be safe. Remember to always wear your seat belts, motorcycle helmets, life vests and other safety equipment. If you intend to consume alcohol, do so in moderation and have a plan to get home safely. Our state and nation depend on you greatly, and our family members do so even more. Please don't let them down.



Sincerely,

Timothy A. Reisch

Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch
The Adjutant General

State Command Sgt. Maj. Message

The South Dakota Best Warrior Competition was held April 20-22 at the Boy Scout Camp West of Yankton. The BWC brings together the best four junior enlisted and best four noncommissioned officers from the SDARNG to compete for the prestigious title and represent South Dakota in the region 6 competition.

The BWC is intended to reflect readiness of the competitors and how they react to real-life combat situations, stress, endurance and convey how important both intelligence and dedication are to being a National Guardsman. At the end of the grueling three-day competition, one junior enlisted and one NCO with the highest overall ranking are recognized as best warriors.

During the event, competitors will test their warrior aptitude by conquering six combat lanes, board interviews, physical fitness tests, a ruck march, day and night land navigation, written exams and other tasks and battle drills relevant to today's operational environment.

This year was a particularly competitive event with the junior enlisted competition being tied at the end of all the events and being decided on a tie breaker.

Staff Sgt. Shane Wilkinson, with Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, was named the 2017 SDARNG Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year. Wilkinson's fellow NCOs in the competition were Sgt. Austin Pearce, 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, the 2017 NCO of the Year runner-up/alternate; Sgt. 1st Class Cindy Erickson, 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute); and Staff Sgt. Thomas Wanzek, Joint Force Headquarters.

Spc. Lucas Scott, 842nd Engineer Company, was named the

SDARNG Soldier of the Year. Joining Scott in the Soldier of the Year competition were Spc. Derek Kocer, Company B, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, the 2017 Soldier of the Year runner-up/alternate; Spc. Brianna Bohn, 740th Transportation Company; and Spc. Elijah Houchens, Company C, 189th Aviation Battalion.

The BWC is traditionally an Army event, but there are plans to invite the South Dakota Air Guard to compete in the 2018 BWC. I believe that a joint competition will improve camaraderie.



Sincerely,

State Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman

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Rapid City unit to deploy to Kuwait



RAPID CITY - More than 90 Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment have received a mobilization order for a yearlong deployment to Kuwait beginning in October.

The mission of the Rapid City-based 1-189th is to provide aerial medical evacuation support with its HH-60M Black Hawk helicopters.

The company comprised of pilots, crew chiefs, medics, aviation operations specialists and other support personnel will report to Fort Hood, Texas, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, this will be the third mobilization for the unit, which deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn from 2011-2012 and supported peacekeeping operations in Kosovo from 2008-2009.

SD Army Guard welcomes four new warrant officers



RAPID CITY - The South Dakota Army National Guard welcomed four new warrant officers to its ranks following a commissioning ceremony at Fort McClellan, Alabama, April 8.

Warrant officers make up the technical foundation of the Army, specializing in a technical area, like intelligence, aviation, or maintenance throughout their careers.

The newly commissioned warrant officers

began the three-phase Warrant Officer Candidate School with online courses and training. Five months of drill weekends held at Fort Meade would follow before candidates attend the final two-week phase in Alabama.

Candidates are tested throughout WOCS both academically and physically in areas ranging from leadership to tactics.

The newly commissioned warrant officers are: Christopher Frost, of Groton; Ashton Hanisch, of Sioux Falls; Kenneth Maas, of Mitchell; and Eric Price, of Miller.

SD Army Guard engineers receive national recognition



FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. - Engineers with the South Dakota Army National Guard claimed several top awards from the Society of American Military Engineers recognizing outstanding military and engineering service by both individuals and small units of the armed forces at an annual awards banquet at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, April 28.

The 155th Engineer Company, of Rapid City and Wagner, received the Itschner Award, which recognizes the best engineer company in three categories: U.S. Army, Army Reserve and National Guard. The award is named after the 39th chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Emerson G. Itschner.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Wade Lein, 155th Engineer Company, received the Outstanding Engineer Warrant Officer Award in the National Guard category. Awardees are selected in recognition of their outstanding contributions to military engineering by demonstrating their technical and leadership ability.

Spc. Lucas Scott, Detachment 1, 842nd Engineer Company, of Belle Fourche, received the Van Autreve Award, which recognizes engineer junior-enlisted personnel. Named for the fourth sergeant major of the Army, Leon. L. Van Autreve, the award is presented annually to a Soldier in the U.S. Army, Army Reserve and National Guard.

881st Headquarters Company receives new leadership



STURGIS - Capt. Jolene Kayser, of Black Hawk, assumed command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company for the 881st Troop Command, of Sturgis, during a ceremony on Camp Rapid, April 7.

As HHC commander, Kayser will be responsible for all administrative, training and logistical requirements for the more than 35 Soldiers in the unit.

The 881st provides command and control, and operational support for the battalion's nearly 230 Soldiers in 10 assigned units and detachments in Rapid City.

196th MEB HHC receives new enlisted leadership



SIOUX FALLS - The Headquarters Company for the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, changed senior enlisted leadership at a May 6 ceremony in Sioux Falls.

First Sgt. Josh Price assumed responsibility from Master Sgt. Bob Schmidt, who has held the first sergeant position for the past two years.

Price said that among his top priorities are taking care of Soldiers and ensuring they all understand their roles and responsibilities in the context of the MEB as a whole, which consists of nearly 200 Soldiers in an array of specialties.

Rabenberg assumes senior NCO role for recruiting battalion



SIoux FALLS - Command Sgt. Maj. Corey Rabenberg, of Platte, assumed responsibility of the senior noncommissioned officer position in the South Dakota Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion during a ceremony at the Sioux Falls National Guard Armory, April 8.

Rabenberg assumed duties from Command Sgt. Maj. John Mallinger, of Hartford, who served in the position since November 2013.

As the unit's senior enlisted leader, Rabenberg is responsible for advising the unit commander on all aspects of the battalion's enlisted Soldiers, providing them guidance and mentorship, and assisting in ensuring the nearly 50-member unit is prepared to execute its mission to recruit and retain quality Soldiers for the SDARNG.

Dakota Pack magazine receives top honors from the DoD

ARLINGTON, Va. - The South Dakota National Guard's Dakota Pack magazine received top honors from the Department of Defense in its Defense Media Awards and Defense Media Merit Awards, announced by National Guard Bureau officials in April.

The quarterly magazine placed 1st in the civilian enterprise news publication category for the Defense Media Merit Awards - the DMMA competition is open to U.S. government civilians assigned to the defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands, joint task forces and the National Guard joint force headquarters.

From there, the magazine went on to compete in the DoD-level Defense Media Awards, where it placed 3rd - in the DMA, the magazine went head-to-head against submissions from the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and the Navy.

23 Army Guard units receive Superior Unit Award

RAPID CITY - Twenty-three out of 42 South Dakota Army National Guard units received the National Guard Bureau's Superior Unit Award in recognition of outstanding achievement during training year 2016.

The Superior Unit Award is presented to units who meet highly-enforced military standards in the areas of personnel, training and readiness.

"The South Dakota Army National Guard makes up only 9/10ths of one percent of this nation's National Guard, but we earned 66 percent of the Superior Unit Awards for training year 2016," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard. "This is yet another example of how the South Dakota National Guard stands head and shoulders above our contemporaries."

In order to earn the SUA, units must achieve 95 percent in unit strength, monthly drill attendance, annual training attendance and weapons qualification. In addition to meeting these readiness goals, units must also achieve 90 percent in physical fitness tests and duty-qualified Soldiers. Unit admin and maintenance inspections also factor into award requirements.

"We are a metric driven organization and paying close attention to the most important readiness metric has earned 23 of our units the distinction of earning the coveted Superior Unit Award," said Reisch.

The top award for the state went to the 147th Army Band of Mitchell, which received the Eisenhower Trophy for the most exceptional SDARNG unit. The Eisenhower Trophy is named in honor of former General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower and awarded by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to the ARNG unit in each state rated the most outstanding during the training year.

"To be selected from among all of the other very deserving units in the South Dakota Army National Guard is, of course, a huge honor," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Terry Beckler, 147th commander. "It's one more reason to be proud of these Soldiers."

"I can't say enough about the work that all of our Soldiers put in," continued Beckler. "They show up each and every drill and work extremely hard to develop a great product. I know they want to represent the South Dakota National Guard and the Army to the best of their ability. It shows in their hard work."

More than half of the SUA units are continuing consecutive years of training excellence - with four units receiving the award for the second time in a row, three units for a third straight year and five for four consecutive years. The 211th Engineer Company has earned the SUA five years in a row and the 740th Transportation Company has received it five out of the last six years.

This year's recipients of the Superior Unit Award include:

- Headquarters Battery, 147th Field Artillery **
- 147th Army Band
- Battery A, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion ****
- 82nd Civil Support Team ***
- Battery B, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion **
- SDARNG Training Center ***
- 1st Battalion, 196th Regional Training Institute
- SDARNG Medical Command ***
- Det. 1, Company B, 1-112th Aviation Battalion
- HHC, 153rd Engineer Battalion ****
- Det. 5, Company C, 2-641st Aviation Battalion
- FSC, 153rd Engineer Battalion ****
- Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment
- 155th Engineer Company ****
- HHC, 139th Brigade Support Battalion
- 200th Engineer Company ****
- Company B, 139th Brigade Support Battalion
- 211th Engineer Company *****
- 115th Signal Company
- 451st Engineer Detachment (Firefighters)
- 235th Military Police Company
- 842nd Engineer Company **
- 740th Transportation Company **

** 2nd consecutive award *** 3rd consecutive award **** 4th consecutive award ***** 5th consecutive award

DeGroot named new Air Guard assistant adjutant general



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general (center left) presents a flag to U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Joel DeGroot, assistant adjutant general for Air, HQ SDANG (center right), during a promotion and transfer of authority ceremony at Joe Foss Field, April 1. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson)



Brig. Gen. Joel DeGroot

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

SIoux FALLS – Brig. Gen. Joel DeGroot is the new assistant adjutant general for the South Dakota Air National Guard.

A promotion and transfer of authority ceremony took place between DeGroot and Brig. Gen. Steven Warren, the outgoing assistant adjutant general, at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, April 1.

Warren retires from the SDANG with over 40 years of military service.

As the assistant adjutant general, DeGroot is responsible to the South Dakota National Guard’s Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, for strategic planning, strength management, troop readiness and mobilization support of the state’s more than 1,000 National Guard Airmen.

“I have been overwhelmed by graciousness of the people who have wished me well in my new position and have assured me of their support,” DeGroot said. “Support is vital to anyone in a leadership role because that is how missions are accomplished.”

Gaining a broader view of the SDNG is one area DeGroot is looking forward to.

“I have always loved how different the Army and Air are in their mission and approaches to everything, yet when it comes down to making things work, the members of the South Dakota National Guard make it happen brilliantly, without fail,” DeGroot said. “I like to dissect organizations, especially successful ones, and see what makes them tick. Now I have a ‘ring-side seat’ to the action and already have a good idea of what I will discover. It is our high quality, dedicated people that make

our state stand out.”

Other areas DeGroot will focus on include maintaining personnel strength in the SDANG and sustaining the F-16.

“As an aircraft maintainer, I am concerned about sustainment of our F-16s,” said DeGroot. “The F-16 is still an incredible weapons system that will be viable for many years to come. These airframes are getting a lot of hours on them and the basic airframe components are starting to show signs of their age. The Air National Guard has done a great job of funding expanded capability for the F-16, now they have to put some money toward sustainment of the basic airframe.”

DeGroot enlisted into the SDANG in 1986, working his way up the enlisted ranks, achieving the rank of staff sergeant before commissioning in 1995 through the Academy of Military Science in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Soon after commissioning, he served as commander of the 114th Fighter Wing Service Flight and has since served as the 114th Maintenance Group commander, 114th Maintenance Group deputy commander and 114th Maintenance Squadron commander. He deployed to Balad, Iraq, in 2008 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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Soldiers, Airmen showcase marksmanship skills at outdoor match

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY - More than 100 South Dakota National Guard members from across the state came together to compete in the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match in Rapid City, March 17-19.

The competition held at West Camp Rapid allows both Soldiers and Airmen to showcase their marksmanship skills or enhance their current abilities.

Although the event is competition driven, at its core is advanced marksmanship training and techniques. Service members receive safety guidance and advanced preliminary marksmanship instructions prior to firing any rounds.

“The ultimate goal for this event is to raise the standards of marksmanship and increase the lethality and readiness across our force.”

— Sgt. 1st Class Sam Schaefer

“The ultimate goal for this event is to raise the standards of marksmanship and increase the lethality and readiness across our force,” said Sgt. 1st Class Sam Schaefer, event volunteer and competitor from the 147th Forward Support Company, SDARNG. “The intent is twofold; enhance the marksmanship skills of the individual shooter and teach them valuable skills that they can pass along to their unit.”

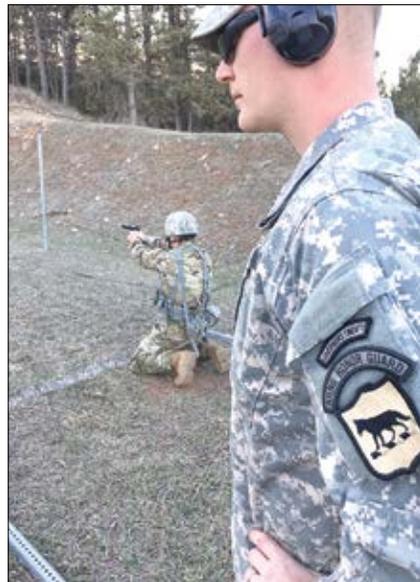
Soldiers and Airmen also compete for top honors in unit teams and as individuals in combat rifle and pistol disciplines. The top 20 percent of each shooting discipline also qualify to earn the Governor's Twenty Tab - a state-level marksmanship award.

While the competition allows for Soldiers and Airmen to obtain bragging rights, Schaefer said the awards come secondary to the true intent of this match.



(Courtesy photo)

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Adam Witte, 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard, takes aim during the reflexive fire competition during the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match, March 18.



(Courtesy photo)

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Wells, Joint Force Headquarters, monitors the firing line on the pistol range during the State Command Sergeant Major's Outdoor Match at West Camp Rapid.

“This competition helps create combat multipliers,” he said. “The ability to shoot accurately is a basic combat skill. Shooters at this event complete several courses of fire that involved many stress factors to include time, multiple targets and round counts, as well as different shooting positions. These courses of fire are designed to stress the shooter and mimic combat scenarios - all in order to hone marksmanship skills.”

Schaefer said the annual match is typically held around the same weekend each year and is an excellent training opportunity for any shooter looking to improve their skills.

“Whether you are a seasoned shooter looking to hone your skills or a novice that would like training and familiarization beyond the standard individual weapons qualification course, you may want to look into trying it out,” said Schaefer.

The annual outdoor match is planned and organized by Joint Force Headquarters' marksmanship section along with the assistance of volunteers from other units.

139th BSB, local agencies practice disaster response

Story by Staff Sgt. Kayla Morris
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Members of the Mitchell-based, Company B, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, and emergency responders from McCook County participate in a disaster-response training exercise.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Kayla Morris)



SALEM - Units of the 139th Brigade Support Battalion trained alongside several public safety agencies in preparation for disaster response in communities throughout eastern South Dakota, March 31-April 2.

The training exercise was a joint disaster response operation to help the South Dakota National Guard and local agencies learn how to work better together when responding to emergencies.

Working with the SDNG in the multi-agency training included city officials from Clear Lake, Redfield and Salem and emergency management officials from Deuel, Spink and McCook counties.

“Our goal was to focus our field training exercise around working with local civilian authorities, emergency managers and city officials to get some experience in responding to a natural disaster or state emergency,” said Lt. Col. Jason Kettwig, 139th commander. “We do a battalion FTX (field training exercise) every year, but this is the first exercise that has ever been focused on emergency management and our state mission.”

The disaster training not only focuses on honing emergency response tasks and

skills, but also community engagement and coordination.

“The most important thing that this exercise does is build the relationship between the National Guard and local agencies,” said Maj. Rebecca Trygstad, 139th administrative officer. “It allows us to both train on the same mission, talk through possible scenarios and do some of the planning prior to an actual state active-duty mission occurring.”

The training in Salem with Company B of the 139th focused on a simulated Humvee rollover with vehicle recovery that featured mannequins portraying casualties. This helped the agencies understand what it would be like to respond in real-life situations.

“Our scenario was that a tornado went through the Salem area and Co. B would respond and provide recovery support to McCook County and the city of Salem,” said Staff Sgt. Dennis Schley, Co. B training NCO. “The event allowed us to conduct a recovery operation with a rolled-over vehicle in the ditch, with casualties. Learning how to work together as an organization, with the command and control, allows us to know where our part is in an event like this.”

Vehicle recovery operators from Co. B worked hand-in-hand with the McCook County Emergency Responders to evaluate the scene and determine a safe course of action to assist the casualties as well as recover the overturned vehicle.

“It’s good to train with the local agencies so that we are a part of the community,” said Spc. Quinton Koch, Co. B vehicle recovery operator. “It’s good to have the additional support as well. Sometimes your team can get spread out and when you have the additional support from civilian agencies, it helps ease the stress of what is going on.”

Since the 9/11 attacks on America, the SDNG has deployed more than 7,600 Soldiers and Airmen in support of overseas contingency operations, while simultaneously preparing to support local communities in the event of a natural disaster.

“It’s beneficial for our troops to be visible and to understand that these towns appreciate that we are here,” said Kettwig. “It’s important they know that these communities are glad that the National Guard can support an exercise or real-life disaster if it happens here in South Dakota.”

Collective training exercise increases readiness for 881st units

Story by Pfc. Alexis Stevens
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



(Photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)

An HH-60 Black Hawk stands ready as a medic with Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment rushes to aid simulated-injured Soldiers at a collective training exercise at Orman Dam, near Belle Fourche.

RAPID CITY – South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers with the 881st Troop Command and Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment participated in a collective training exercise throughout the Black Hills, April 5-6, to increase their combat readiness.

Also known as Operation Thunder, the training event allowed the units to work together to practice medical evacuation procedures and response times involving realistic combat scenarios.

“When you leave your home station and deploy to a combat zone, you never know what you’re going to see,” said Maj. Jon Murphy, executive officer for the 881st.

The Rapid City-based 1-189th Soldiers, an aerial medevac unit which operates HH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, were prepped and prepared to execute missions nonstop for 36 hours, operating out of two forward operating bases at Fort Meade and Custer.

For the Sturgis-based 881st, the battalion headquarters for the 1-189th, the exercise was about finding ways to create and integrate all their Soldiers into the training and stress them at every level throughout the units in realistic combat operations.

“We wanted to challenge them,” said Murphy. “We wanted to give them different situations that will provide a way to develop, to adapt and overcome challenges.”

The unit responded to a variety of medevac requests throughout the Black Hills region and arrived upon scenes involving wounded Soldiers from vehicle-borne explosive devices, wounded civilians or picking up high-value targets.

The range of missions or scenarios created by the 881st staff for the 1-189th Soldiers was a key objective for the exercise.

“My overall goal is to create a battalion training event where we get all subordinate units involved,” said Lt. Col. Scott Linquist, 881st commander. “It helps our staff realize what the mission and capabilities of our subordinate units are.”

“This is an opportunity for us to be able to help the units that we support and maximize that skill set by providing the training they need to be successful,” said Murphy.

Some of the 881st Soldiers were once members of the 1-189th, which gives them insight into creating realistic combat training.

“One aspect of the tactical side of the mission is how they integrate with ground forces, and also be able to fly within the airspace of a combat theatre and some challenges they may see in those scenarios,” said Murphy.

Murphy said this event is just the first phase for the battalion and its subordinate units, and it will continue to grow throughout the year



(Photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)

Medics with Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment aid a simulated-injured Soldier during a collective training exercise at Orman Dam, April 5.

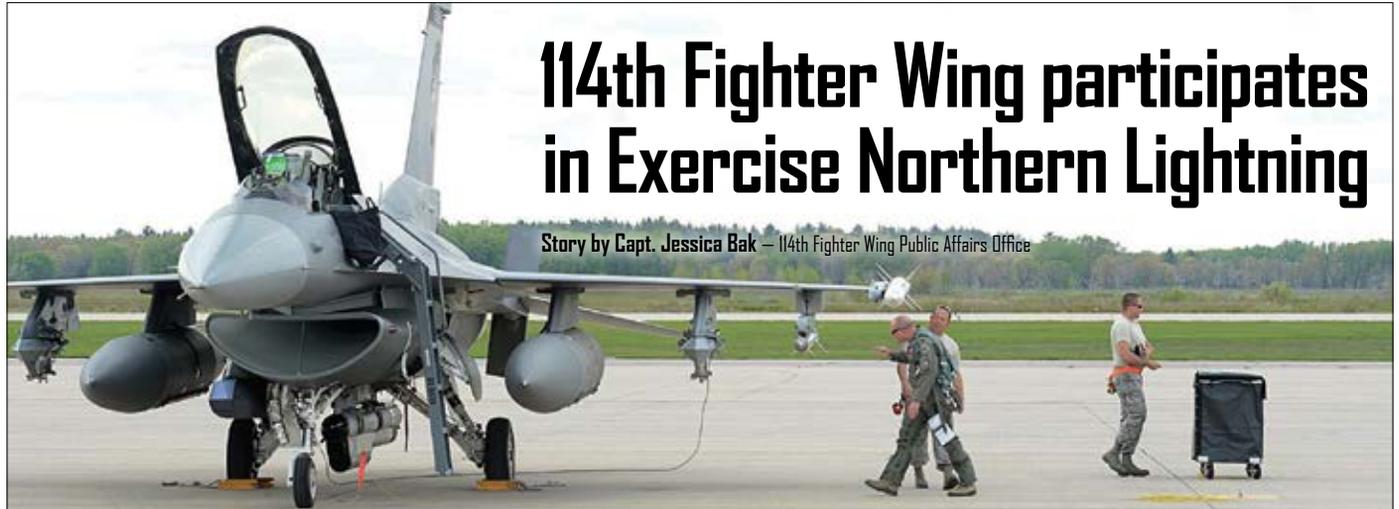
and into the following year.

The training event may have come at a perfect time for the 1-189th, as the unit is preparing for a yearlong deployment to Kuwait this fall.

“Our Soldiers need to get into a tactical mind-set,” said Capt. Brittany Pearson, 2nd Platoon team leader, Company C, 1-189th. “If we go anywhere outside of the United States, where we are in a tactical environment, we will need to be able to think quick on our feet and react to any situation, as well as be able to save lives.”

114th Fighter Wing participates in Exercise Northern Lightning

Story by Capt. Jessica Bak – 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office



VOLK FIELD, Wis. – Members of the 114th Fighter Wing participated in Exercise Northern Lightning at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center, Wisconsin, May 1-12.

What started as an annual exercise with viper aircraft from around the Midwest, has grown into an air combat exercise involving around 1,500 service members from the Air Force, Navy, Marines and National Guard from across the country.

“The vital reason for participating in these joint force exercises is to train for a large-scale war where we will fight as a combined force,

working together to accomplish the mission,” said Capt. Paul Vaughan, fighter pilot and 114th FW chief of scheduling.

These large-force exercises give real-world scenarios and teach pilots how to amplify their capabilities by utilizing each aircraft’s individual assets. Not only did they work in a joint environment, but the pilots also had the opportunity to integrate 4th and 5th generation aircraft during air combat exercises such as air interdiction, offensive counter air, dynamic targeting and close air support.

“It’s great to see the integration between

all the players out there,” said Lt. Col. Steve Schultz, fighter pilot and 114th FW chief of standardization/evaluation.

As a mission commander during the exercise, Schultz was in charge of leading a mission to solve tactical problems while achieving the ground commander’s intent. Learning everyone’s role and what everyone brings to the fight helped them meet their objectives.

“The whole point of large-force exercises is to get everybody working together,” said Schultz.

114th Medical Group hone skills on advanced mannequins

Story by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart – 114th FW PAD

SIoux FALLS – Medics with the 114th Medical Group had the unique opportunity to hone their skills on life-like mannequins. The mannequins and simulated trauma room were brought to Joe Foss Field by Simulation in Motion South Dakota (SIMSD) from Avera Health.

“This is the most life-like scenarios we can have,” said Tech. Sgt. Rachel Vanbeek, 114th Medical Group aerospace medical technician. “The mannequins will actually give you vital signs, they will respond to you, and do things that a normal patient will do.”

The realism of the simulation provides medics from the 114th an opportunity to practice scenarios they may rarely see. The mannequins have the ability to display a large range of vitals and symptoms including heart and lung sounds, pulse at all pulse points, sweating, bleeding and bowel sounds. The operators can speak and groan, through speakers built into the mannequins’ heads, in reaction to the trauma team. The simulation includes a full array of medicines and IVs that can be administered to the mannequins, which will then respond with improving or



Branden Marienau, Simulation in Motion South Dakota education coordinator, shared a few tips with a team of medics from the 114th Medical Group during a simulated medical emergency in the SIMSD Vehicle on Joe Foss Field, May 6.

(Photo by Master Sgt. Christopher Stewart)

deteriorating vital signs.

“We can simulate and discuss a patient from a variety of unique circumstances, which is a great refresher,” said Branden Marienau, simulation education coordinator for SIMSD. “We can talk about the latest trends and medical advances.”

The back half of the SIMSD truck can also simulate the back of an ambulance. Both spaces are controlled by a high-tech control system in the center of the truck where personnel control the vitals and responses of the simulated patients on a sophisticated

computer program.

“The team that runs the simulation and training session consists of an individual with paramedic experience, as well as a registered nurse with emergency and trauma experience,” said Marienau. “We go over different types of procedures and techniques that we find are useful and work well.”

This training directly supports the 114th Medical Group mission to develop and maintain highly trained, professional, medical personnel capable of providing combat medical services.



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SD Army Guard wins ACOE competition

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

ARLINGTON, Va. – The 2017 Army Communities of Excellence Awards presented the South Dakota Army National Guard with a gold recipient award at the Pentagon, May 24.

The ACOE Awards recognize top performance within U.S. Army, National Guard and Reserve installations/communities and their approach to systems management.

“This award is proof positive that the South Dakota Army National Guard is a world class organization,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. “Every one of our Soldiers should take great pride in the part they played in helping to achieve this milestone.”

The ACOE Awards follow a 12-month evaluation and score using the Malcolm Baldrige criteria for performance excellence. ACOE Awards score participants on how well they demonstrate maturity of key organizational processes and their ability to show results in areas such as leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, work force management and operational effectiveness.

After placing as runner-up last year, Reisch said the goal was to take lessons learned and apply them to this year’s competition.

“This competition is about readiness,” said Reisch. “If you apply the principles and put them into practice, you’ll learn that the investment has been very well placed.”

By using criteria established for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award as a framework for performance assessment, the ACOE program helps participating Army installations/communities focus on providing excellence in facilities and services in support of Soldiers, their families and civilians.

Baldrige-based performance assessments provide opportunities to identify best practices in installation management and reveal potential opportunities to apply appropriate performance improvement tools.

Because of the gold finish, the ACOE Awards presented the SDARNG with \$100,000 to enhance the organization even further. The money will support process improvement, specifically supporting workforce professional development.



(Courtesy photo)

South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers accept the first place gold in the 2017 Army Communities of Excellence Awards during a ceremony at the National Guard Bureau, Arlington, Va., May 23.

200th Engineer Co. conducts bridging exercise

Story by Staff Sgt. Nathan Ford

200th Engineer Company

PIERRE – Few military maneuvers require more coordination or have such inherent difficulty than crossing rivers. Rivers are formidable obstacles that shape the battlefield and provide no certainty of success.

In fact, the first major U.S. Army river-crossing in World War II, the Rapido River, in Italy ended dismally. Gen. Eisenhower attributed crossing the Rhine River to the beginning of the destruction of German morale. The Egyptian Army, during the Yom Kipper War, crossed the Suez Canal and overwhelmed the Israeli front line.

Rivers ultimately expose and force units to concentrate into small areas. Surprise is critical to mission success and night operations provide the best camouflage. So under the cover of darkness, the South Dakota Army National Guard's 200th Engineer Company, a multi-role bridge company, took their training to Oahe Dam to conduct a full enclosure bridging exercise.

A full enclosure, or deliberate crossing, is spanning the entire water obstacle from shore to shore. It's the most intensive and technically difficult wet gap crossing and as a result, is rarely attempted over a training weekend.

The 200th, located in Pierre with detachments in Mobridge and Chamberlain, assembled at the West Shore Recreation Area and constructed a base of operations as they prepared to perform a myriad of tasks, many prior to the event thought too difficult to perform in one weekend.

Near dusk, the dry span bridging sections moved north and constructed a 20-meter bridge. Prior to this, the company had only constructed this type of bridge during the day. Beginning the build as the sun set, crews finished the build that night.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Carmichael, a mobilization validator with the 189th Infantry Brigade, 1st U.S. Army, who is in South Dakota to validate the training.

Beginning around 3 a.m., the improved ribbon bridge sections began assembling raft sections, before executing a full closure just west of the Oahe Dam overflow gate. The IRB sections had never been given such a difficult and intensive task before but completed the bridge just as dawn arrived.



(Photos by Capt. Brian Schaff)

ABOVE: 200th Engineer Company Soldiers prepare to cross traffic over an improved ribbon bridge at Lake Oahe, north of Pierre, April 1. **BELOW:** 200th Engineer Company Soldiers prepare an interior bay for a 20 meter dry-span bridge as part of their full-enclosure bridging exercise.



"In my 24 years of experience, I have never done a night-build, constructing rafts and converting to a full enclosure," said 1st Sgt. Mike DeJong. "It was a testament to the troops – to accomplish so much, working throughout the night and on the first build of the year. It was one of the best FTX's I can remember."

The 200th also constructs bridges on land utilizing the dry span bridge. The DSB Sections of 1st and 2nd Platoons were also busy, completing a build that began at dusk and was completed in less than full light.

Due to the lack of depth perception when using night vision goggles, many Soldiers thought it impossible to conduct DSB

operations in anything other than daytime hours. The DSB Sections however completed their builds and anticipate conducting a mission at night this year during annual training.

"I feel so fortunate to be a part of this unit," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Heil. "We can throw any mission at the platoons and they execute it as if they train on a daily basis. That is a solid testament of a unit that embraces their role at all levels, from the leadership to the lowest enlisted. Everyone here at the 200th truly believes we are the best MRBC in the nation and we keep proving it."

114th Fighter Wing deploys Airmen in support of federal mission

Story by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office



More than 1,400 Airmen, family members, and distinguished visitors attended the South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing deployment ceremony at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, April 2. The unit is slated to deploy more than 100 Airmen from 17 specialties to nine different locations in support of U.S. Central Command, U.S. Africa Command, and Port Mortuary tasking. The deploying members are booked to support the Reserve Component Period for 180 days.

As the deployment cycle was recently changed, the RCP assigns each wing to a specific time frame in which they could be called up to deploy. The biggest advantage to this change is that those who deploy would deploy with Airmen they work with on a daily basis.

"We've known about this (deployment) for quite a while," said Staff Sgt. Christine Houska, 114th Security Forces fire team member. "Still very excited and ready to go."

Deploying members come from many squadrons throughout the unit to include: civil engineer squadron, security forces squadron, communication flight, maintenance group, weapons, logistics readiness squadron, force support squadron, comptroller flight, contracting, petroleum, oil and fuels, intel, chaplains office, public affairs, and first sergeants.

"People who wear the uniform in this



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Luke Olson)

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Sen. John Thune, and other distinguished guests thank the 114th Fighter Wing Airmen for their service as they prepare to deploy during an activation ceremony at Joe Foss Field, April 2.

country and their families sacrifice their convenience and their comfort to serve us and I've always figured the least we can do is come out and support them when they go through a deployment ceremony like this," said Sen. John Thune, U.S. Senator from South Dakota.

Distinguished guests attending the ceremony included Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, Representative Kristi Noem, and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general. All were given

the opportunity to thank the Airmen and their families and wish them well on their deployments.

"As you head out on this deployment over the course of the next six months or so, I want to say thank you to the families, thank you for the extra burden that you are going to shoulder," said Thune. "Thank you to the men and women in uniform who have signed up to serve a cause greater than yourselves."

Public affairs Soldiers sharpen skills in S. Korea

Story by Staff Sgt. Kayla Morris
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment honed their public affairs skills while training during the Key Resolve exercise March 12-23 in the Republic of Korea. The exercise provided 12 members of the Rapid City-based unit with realistic training opportunities that support the mission of a public affairs detachment.

The 129th trained alongside Eighth Army public affairs staff during the multinational training exercise that enhances U.S. and ROK forces' operational capabilities to increase alliance readiness, protect the region and maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula.

"The purpose of the exercise is for Soldiers to focus on why they're here and also on the mission," said Sgt. Maj. Chris Seaton, sergeant major for Eighth Army Public Affairs Office. "This is the way we refine our processes. We've got a plan in place for how we will fight if there is a crisis or contingency that we have to get involved with."

The command post exercise provides for scenarios that may occur for military forces on the Korean Peninsula. Those participating include ROK allies as well as U.S. components of the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force.

"Key Resolve provided the unit with an opportunity to train overseas on our mission essential and key collective tasks while operating at a multinational, joint-service component level," said Maj. Anthony Deiss, commander of the 129th MPAD.

Deiss said the unit was able to interact and function with their active-duty counterparts at a strategic level and integrate into operational processes involving real-world scenarios.

"We were able to facilitate a media operations center, issue public affairs guidance, provide news media and press conference training for key leadership," said Deiss. "We also developed press releases, video news segments, social media messaging, tracked media embeds on the battlefield and provided daily media analysis. These are some of the core functions an MPAD needs to be able to do."

For the unit to perform effectively, it takes Soldiers who are trained and competent. Experiences such as Key Resolve allow Soldiers to train and refine their skills in a high-paced operational environment.



ABOVE: Spc. Allison Blume, 129th MPAD, checks her video camera as she prepares to record a mock press conference during the Key Resolve training exercise at Camp Humphreys, March 20. **LEFT:** Sgt. Austin Pearce, 129th MPAD, participates in a live radio broadcast at an Armed Forces Network Korea radio station at U.S. Army Garrison Daegu, South Korea, March 16.

(Photos by Spc. Carl Johnson)

"Working with other staff sections while at Key Resolve gave us the opportunity to coordinate with somebody who is a subject matter expert," said Spc. Allison Blume, 129th broadcast journalist. "They want to get their message across and know that public affairs is the way to do it."

Members of the unit also received valuable training by developing professional relationships with active-duty public affairs personnel, as well as Korean Augmentees to the United States Army.

"Eighth Army staff and the KATUSA's have helped integrate us into the fast-paced operational environment," said Spc. Carl Johnson, 129th print journalist. "They have been very accommodating and are hard-working."

The integration into and support of an active-duty unit allowed the 129th Soldiers to test their abilities at a pace that pushed them above their limits.

"The Soldiers performed exceptionally well, and I was impressed to see them work effectively at a corps or field army level," said Deiss. "These men and women are operating above their pay grade in this environment."

Through participation in the exercise, Eighth Army and 129th leadership are confident the unit is prepared to perform their state and federal mission.

"The 129th has been one of the best units that I've seen getting off the plane and jumping right into the mission," said Seaton. "They have been one of the best at being able to effectively communicate, work as a team and integrate with an active-duty unit. They should be very proud of that."

"This is a great training opportunity and a chance for us to exercise our operational processes," said Deiss. "With the experienced gained, we will continue to refine our best practices to communicate and shape messaging on the home front or the battlefield."

SDNG Officer and Warrant Officer of the Year

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

The South Dakota National Guard selected a Harrisburg man as Lieutenant of the Year during its annual officer's conference in Deadwood, April 21. Capt. Ross Rollinger, commander of the 114th Maintenance Operations Flight, South Dakota Air National Guard, received the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award as the most exceptional lieutenant after competing against lieutenants from several of the SDNG's major commands.

"Capt. Rollinger is my brightest star," said Col. Nathan Alholinna, 114th FW commander. "He's truly an asset to the 114th Fighter Wing and will be for years to come."

Rollinger, who has more than 11 years of service in the Air National Guard, enlisted in 2006 as a jet engine mechanic in the 114th Maintenance Squadron. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and served at Balad Air Base in 2008 and 2010 maintaining jet engines. By March 2013, he would receive his commission as a second lieutenant through the Academy of Military Science and later that year attend the Accelerated Aircraft Maintenance Officer's course at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.

As the flight commander for the 114th Maintenance Operations Flight, he is responsible for maintaining a fleet of 22 F-16 Block 40 aircraft at Joe Foss Field and four at the Aerospace Control Alert Detachment at March Air Reserve Base in California.



Capt. Ross Rollinger
Lieutenant of the Year

"Capt. Rollinger vastly contributes to the outstanding reputation of the 114th Fighter Wing," said Lt. Col. Kevin Curley, 114th Maintenance Group deputy commander. "He has a proven track record of excellence, integrity and service, and is a consummate professional and Airman."

In addition to his responsibilities in the Air National Guard, Rollinger is the assistant principal at Harrisburg North Middle School. He has spent over a decade teaching and coaching the youth of South Dakota in three different school systems.

"Capt. Rollinger's knowledge and leadership abilities play a key role in the success of the entire maintenance group," said Curley. "He is a natural leader who sets the standard throughout the group by leading in continuing education, civic involvement and physical fitness."

Other officers representing their major command for this year's award competition were 1st Lt. Trevor Reisch, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, and 1st Lt. Joelle Mulder, 109th Regional Support Group.

Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award was established in 1968 to annually recognize the most outstanding lieutenant in the South Dakota National Guard. Selection is based on exceptional qualities of leadership, values and performance.

The South Dakota National Guard selected a Rapid City man as Warrant Officer of the Year during its annual officer's conference in Deadwood, April 21. Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Fleming, education and incentives branch chief for Joint Force Headquarters, South Dakota Army National Guard, received the Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael F. O'Connor Award as the most exceptional warrant officer after competing against warrant officers from several of the SDARNG's major commands.

"To receive this award is very humbling and would not have been a consideration without the dedication and hard work of those on the support teams surrounding me at work or at home," said Fleming. "It has to be said that being nominated for an award named after an individual known for his fully engaged support of his fellow Soldiers is inspiring and uplifting."

Fleming, who has 29 years of military service, is the senior advisor



Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Fleming
Warrant Officer of the Year

to the SDARNG director of personnel and unit commanders on all concerns related to National Guard educational funding and incentives, initiatives and programs. He was also the runner-up for the 2016 Technician of the Year Award for the SDNG.

"Chief Warrant Officer 3 Fleming's experience and knowledge have made him an invaluable asset to Joint Force Headquarters," said Col. John Weber, G1 director

of personnel, JFHQ. "He is exceptionally qualified for this award, and over the past year his contributions to the South Dakota Army National Guard have been significant, particularly dealing with benefits and incentives available to our Soldiers."

"I enjoy helping my fellow Soldiers discover how they can reach their post-secondary educational goals," said Fleming. "The men and women of the South Dakota Army National Guard deserve the best we can give them and being a small part of aiding them is extremely rewarding."

Fleming also volunteers much of his free time to local organizations. He has been a foster parent with the S.D. Dept. of Social Services for 13 years, a member of the American Legion Post 22, a volunteer at his church and a member of the Black Hills Society of Human Resources.

Other warrant officers representing their major command for this year's competition were CW2 Tyler Ehnes, 109th Regional Support Group, and CW2 Ryan Peterson, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. The CW4 Michael F. O'Connor Award was established in 2000 to recognize the most outstanding SDARNG warrant officer of the past year. Criterion for the award is based on exceptional qualities of technical knowledge, leadership, dedication and initiative.

SDARNG Soldier, NCO of the Year

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

The South Dakota Army National Guard brought four enlisted Soldiers and four non-commissioned officers to Yankton, April 20-22, to compete in the state's Best Warrior Competition, which names the Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, respectively. After the three-day competition, Staff Sgt.

Shane Wilkinson, with Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, was named the 2017 SDARNG Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. Lucas Scott, 842nd Engineer Company, the SDARNG Soldier of the Year.

"The importance of this event is readiness," said State Command Sgt.

Maj. James Hoekman, the SDNG's senior enlisted leader. "Everything we do in the National Guard is to support our two missions, which is to have a ready force to engage, fight, and win our nation's wars, and to be ready to perform our state mission when called upon."

Day one of the competition began with a very brief welcome from Hoekman, a quick shakedown and inspection, and competitors were soon taking the Army Physical Fitness Test, comprised of push-ups, sit-ups and a two-mile run.

Following the APFT, Soldiers took an exam on map reading, grid coordinates and terrain association. After handing in their exams, they changed into the Army Service Uniform for an interview board comprised of four command sergeants major, a uniform inspection and a proficiency test on drill and ceremony.

"The competition is rigorous - both physically and intellectually," said Hoekman. "We're bringing back the field craft and the warrior skills that every Soldier should have."

The following day began at dark, with a night land-navigation test, a timed ruck march, and once the sun had risen, a daytime land-navigation course. Various stations followed, designed to test warrior tasks and battle drills, such as the ability to evaluate and treat a casualty, to set up radio communications and request medical evacuation, vehicle maintenance, knowledge and proficiency on various weapons systems and reacting to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and/or explosive materials.

The third day of the competition included an essay and exam and then command sergeants major complete the final grading and evaluations.

"This year's competition was extremely close," said Hoekman. "The Soldiers were very well prepared. In fact, the Soldier of the Year

competition came down to a tiebreaker on an exam. Our competitors maintained the high level of expertise that always has been known in the South Dakota National Guard."

"It was an honor to even be selected to compete," said Scott, of Rapid City, who has served in the SDARNG just under three years.

Joining Scott in the Soldier of the Year competition were Spc. Derek Kocer, Company B, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, the 2017 Soldier of the Year runner-up/alternate; Spc. Brianna Bohn, 740th Transportation Company; and Spc. Elijah Houchens, Company C, 189th Aviation Battalion.

"It means a lot to me," said Wilkinson, a Faulkton native and member of the SDARNG for 19 years. "I trained hard for this; not only for this competition but the brigade-level competition as well."

Wilkinson's fellow NCOs in the competition were Sgt. Austin Pearce, 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, the 2017 NCO of the Year runner-up/alternate; Sgt. 1st Class Cindy Erickson, 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute); and Staff Sgt. Thomas Wanzek, Joint Force Headquarters.

While Wilkinson and Scott will move on to represent South Dakota in the regional competition, and potentially nationally, it was the year leading up to the competition that ultimately affects the organization as a whole.

"You have to refresh yourself when preparing for a contest like this," said Wilkinson. "As a result, it will allow me to provide my Soldiers with more quality training."

"We want all of our competitors to bring the skills back to their respective units and to work with their leadership to continue stressing the importance of training warrior tasks and Soldier skills," Hoekman said. "This all comes back to readiness."



Spc. Lucas Scott - Soldier of the Year



Staff Sgt. Shane Wilkinson - NCO of the Year

SD Guard, Suriname military participate in Women in Leadership exchange

Story by SONG Public Affairs Office

Tech. Sgt. Mike Larson, 114th Aircraft Maintenance weapons specialist, discusses the weapon system of the F-16 Fighting Falcon with Suriname Army officers, Maj. Sieglein Grot and Capt. Hemma Grebbe, March 3.
(Photo by Staff Sgt. Duane Duimstra)



Members of the South Dakota National Guard and Suriname Defense Force participated in a Women in Leadership exchange, March 3-5. Four women from Suriname met with Soldiers and Airmen throughout eastern South Dakota to understand the support services and programs provided to SDNG members and the types of opportunities for females to serve. The exchange was conducted as part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, which seeks to strengthen ties between partnering country's representatives, both culturally and professionally, through engagement on military topics and capabilities.

The Suriname delegation was hosted by members of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and 139th Brigade Support Battalion and visited several Army and Air Guard units.

"Last year I had an opportunity to be part of the Women in Leadership exchange in Suriname," said Maj. Rebecca Trygstad, administrative officer for the 139th BSB. "This gave me a better understanding of the Suriname Army and some of the opportunities females face within their ranks. Many of the topics we discussed during this visit were based off what we discussed last year, and some of the programs they wanted to get a better understanding of during our last exchange."

The exchange began with a tour of the Air National Guard base at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, where the Surinamers received a 114th Fighter Wing overview brief from Col. Nathan Alholinna, 114th FW commander. One of the first 114th female F-16 pilots, Capt. Shannon Davis, also talked about her experience in training and being a member of the SDANG.

The Suriname delegation also visited the Army Guard's Unit Training and Equipment Site to better understand the maintenance services provided to units and their equipment.

They were also provided briefs on the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Family Readiness, Recruiting and Retention, Sexual Assault Response and Equal Employment Opportunity programs and what

each program provides to Soldiers and Airmen.

"Each one of the presentations provided an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Suriname military and how their make-up relates to ours," said Trygstad.

The Suriname women later visited the 196th MEB, 139th BSB and 235th Military Police Company and received an overview of each unit's structure and was able to see some the equipment they use to train Soldiers.

"Female Soldiers from each one of these units talked about their experience in the SDNG to include training, opportunities, challenges, and why they joined the National

Guard," said Trygstad.

The delegation next traveled to Watertown where they met with Soldiers from the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion and Company A, 139th BSB. The 1-147th had a number of their female Soldiers attend the visit where they spoke about the transition of female Soldiers into the battalion and a battery.

By the end of the visit, Trygstad said the exchange provided an opportunity for female Soldiers from the SDNG and Suriname military to work with foreign partners, share their experiences and gain a better understanding of each other's culture.



Capt. Shannon Davis, 175th Fighter Squadron pilot, shares her experience in the military with female officers from the Suriname Defense Force at Joe Foss Field during the Women in Leadership exchange.
(Photo by Staff Sgt. Duane Duimstra)



First female 114th Security Forces Airman completes Combat Leadership School

(Photos by Staff Sgt. Duane Duimstra)

Story by Staff Sgt. Duane Duimstra
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

Staff Sgt. Makayla McConnell, 114th Security Forces Squadron security response team member, instructs her fellow Airmen on proper tactical squad movements on a training site near Sioux Falls, May 6.

Staff Sgt. Makayla McConnell, 114th Security Forces Squadron security response team member, is the first female from the 114th SFS to attend and complete the Combat Leadership School at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Air Force Base, Camp Bullis, San Antonio, Texas. The course places a heavy emphasis on leadership, operation planning and physical fitness.

“I wasn’t sure if I would be a good candidate to attend the course,” said McConnell. “It was encouraging that my leadership believed in my skill sets to complete this challenging course.”

Only two females attended out of 40 active duty, National Guard and Reserve security forces Airmen. Training included basic and advanced techniques for air base defense, convoys, patrolling, urban warfare and military operations other than war to prepare them to become effective squad leaders.

“The course trains future squad leaders how to lead a 13-man squad in a combat situation,” said Master Sgt. Chad Harris, 114th SFS NCOIC of training.

During the course, McConnell honed her skills on air base defense doctrine, operation planning, troop leading procedures, land navigation with compass and global positioning system, weapon employment, command and control tools and techniques, handling and securing enemy prisoners of war, displaced



persons and indigenous personnel.

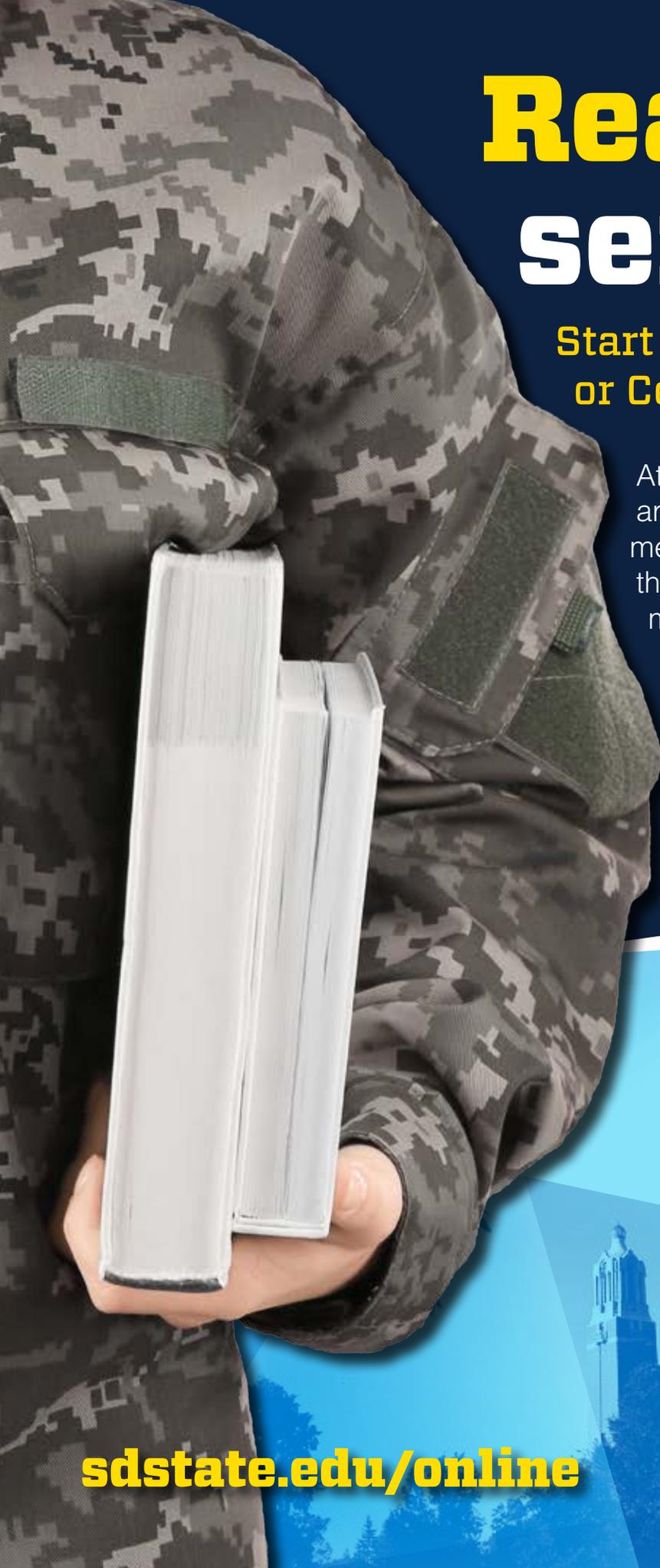
The training had a direct correlation of the Airmen’s physical fitness. They performed combat agility drills instead of the typical Air Force fitness test. The purpose of CADs is to train the security forces Airmen to stay calm while under pressure or in stressful conditions. One of their CADs was a two-mile ruck march carrying a minimum of a 35-pound ruck sack, a 50-pound ammo box, then immediately performing live-fire training after completing the ruck march.

“You definitely have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable because this course pushes you physically and mentally farther

than what you imagined your body could do,” said McConnell.

Combat Leadership School is a challenging course that pushes Airmen to their limits. Airmen need to be highly motivated and physically fit to perform well in class and during combat scenario training. Completing the course alone is an accomplishment said McConnell, and being the first female from the 114th Fighter Wing is more motivation for her to keep pushing the boundaries in the Air Force.

“It’s exciting because it shows females can do well in a male-dominated career field,” said McConnell.



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Message from the JFHQ Chaplain: "Self Talk"

Frank and Bob were walking down the street together, when Bob suddenly started talking to himself. Frank looked up and said, "People will think you're crazy if you keep talking to yourself." Bob retorted, "Hey! I'm not crazy!" Frank replied, "I wasn't talking to you."

If you aren't laughing now, either I don't know how to tell a joke, or maybe you don't know how to read one. But the point remains that we all talk to ourselves from time to time. At issue is whether our self talk is helpful or hurtful.

We will often say things to ourselves that we would never say to another person and would be ready to fight if they said it to us. And if we say those hurtful things enough times, we begin to believe them and to make choices consistent with them. They become a self-fulfilling prophecy. We need a way to make our conversations with ourselves more healthy and productive.

I would suggest that a great way to start is to learn to ask yourself better questions. Listen to the questions you ask yourself and evaluate them carefully. Do they promote healthy, productive options, or do they push you toward negativity? The human brain does a great job of answering the questions we ask it. So if we ask why we are failures, or why we can't have a good relationship, or why we can't learn to manage our finances better, we will get answers that reinforce the idea that success is impossible for us.

We become so focused on what didn't work that we lose the ability to think creatively about what might work. So we end up settling for less than we really wanted without even considering that something better may be possible. We should instead be asking questions that

move toward a positive answer. How can I prepare better for the next interview? How can I present myself better in a social setting? What can I do differently in this situation to get out of this rut?

I would go so far as to recommend that you stop asking yourself "why" questions altogether. We might think that they are good self-reflection questions, but the reality is that they trap us in the past. "Why" almost always looks at what happened yesterday. We don't need options for yesterday, we need options for today.

Before you object too strenuously, pointing to the ubiquitous after action review as a model, consider that the AAR asks what was planned, what happened, what should we keep, what should we toss, what could we do differently or better, etc. The question of why is not asked. The point of the AAR is actually the next event, not the last one.

So when it feels like the rats are winning the race, stop, take a moment to breathe, and listen to the conversation you are having with yourself. What kinds of questions do you hear yourself asking yourself? Are they building, or draining? Inspiring or discouraging?

Remember Frank and Bob, but understand that it really does not matter what others might think about your self talk. What does matter is how your self talk makes you think.

Sincerely,

Maj. Tom Tedmon
Joint Force Headquarters Chaplain

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