

South Dakota National Guard

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SD National Guard selects Lieutenant of the Year

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The South Dakota National Guard selected Capt. Guy Bauermeister, of Omaha, as its Lieutenant of the Year during its annual officer's conference in Sioux Falls, April 27.

Bauermeister, a mission planning officer with the 175th Fighter Squadron, 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.

"Bauermeister is an outstanding officer who has established himself as my number one, go-to junior officer in the 175th Fighter Squadron," said Col. Nathan Alholinna, 114th Fighter Wing commander. "He embodies the ethos of service before self and continually demonstrates nothing short of excellence as a leader to the Airmen of the 175th Fighter Squadron."

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

"Being selected for the Steele Award is a huge honor for me," said Bauermeister. "In the fighter pilot world we hold ourselves to exceptionally high standards, so it can be easy at times to lose perspective on what you have accomplished."

"The majority of our time is spent analyzing the mistakes we made and developing lessons learned, so we can avoid that situation again and pass lessons learned to others," Bauermeister continued. "Ultimately, it's a nice reminder to me that hard work always pays off."

Bauermeister, who has nearly 11 years of service in the Air National Guard, enlisted in 2008 and attended Tactical Aircraft Maintenance Technical Training, where he graduated the top of his class. He was later selected to serve as a crew chief. By 2014, he was selected to attend pilot training and received his commission as a second lieutenant from the U.S. Air Force Academy of Military Science at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Since then, Bauermeister attended the Euro NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training at Sheppard AFB, Texas, where he flew the T-6 Texan II and T-38 Talon. He earned his wings in May of 2016 and went on to complete the Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Course at Sheppard AFB, followed by the F-16 Basic Course at Luke AFB, Arizona, where he graduated with honors.

"From day one, I've always known that I've wanted to be a fighter pilot," said Bauermeister. "Getting to this point is a very humbling experience, and I always try to keep things in perspective."

Bauermeister is also a combat veteran, deploying to Southwest Asia in 2018, where he flew 45 combat missions with over 190 hours of flight time – employing joint direct-attack munitions and 20 millimeter high-explosive rounds.

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“Our recent deployment to Afghanistan was very busy, and we were able to do some good work for the Soldiers on the ground, and I consider it to be one of my greatest accomplishments,” said Bauermeister. “When 9/11 happened, I was only 11 years old, and to be able to be there and make a difference has always been something that I wanted to get the opportunity to do.”

Bauermeister is a 2014 graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education. Upon graduation, he taught 7th and 8th grades at Elkhorn Valley View Middle School in Omaha before being selected into a pilot position with the 114th Fighter Wing.

Other officers representing their major command for this year’s award competition were 1st Lt. Mark Bubac, 109th Regional Support Group, and 1st Lt. Emily Von Klompensburg, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

Although receiving Lieutenant of the Year honors is a huge accomplishment for Bauermeister, he is also proud of what the award represents beyond himself.

“The Steele Award is a great opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of the 114th Fighter Wing as a unit over the past year,” added Bauermeister. “If you were to look at any of the individuals in the South Dakota Guard, both Air and Army components, who participated in deployments last year, you could without a doubt put any of them in my position. It’s great that I have the opportunity to represent the 114th Fighter Wing and 175th Fighter Squadron.”

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U.S. Air Force Capt. Guy Bauermeister, Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award recipient and South Dakota National Guard Lieutenant of the Year (U.S. Air National Guard file photo)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605) 737-6721 or e-mail ng.sd.sdarnng.list.pao@mail.mil