

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

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



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Military Police Company trains for state, federal missions

By Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard’s 235th Military Police Company conducted a field training exercise April 10 at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City to prepare for its state and federal missions.

The primary mission of the 235th is detainee operations, but is also capable of conducting internal and external security operations for facilities. The field training exercise, or FTX, prepares soldiers by rehearsing tactics, techniques and procedures, coordination and team building.

“This is a great experience to get outside and get back to the basics of Soldiering,” said Capt. Pat Moran, commander of the 235th. “There’s a little bit of chaos so they can think on their feet and so the junior enlisted are looking to their leaders for advice in an uncomfortable situation.”

Soldiers rehearsed combat patrols, enemy prisoner of war operations and detainee operations and transports.

“The training we’ve done is a culminating event to take some of our mission essential tasks we have to do as an MP company and put them all into one big exercise,” said Sgt. Derek Malone, a squad leader for the 235th. “This way we’re able to train on multiple aspects of a mission that we will eventually be assigned and enable us to fine-tune our skills.”

The 235th has deployed three times since the formation of the unit in 1999, and has recently converted from a law enforcement company to a military police detention company.

“The thing I’m looking forward to most is growing in my squad leader role and being able to be a good leader to the soldiers I’ll have under me,” said Malone. “To get hands-on and have that first-line level of leadership with your soldiers is a great experience to get.”

There are two detachments for the 235th, one in Rapid City and the other in Sioux Falls, and they come together for training only a couple times a year. This FTX was the first time they’ve trained together since Moran took command in October.

“One purpose of this FTX is team cohesion; we mixed up the squads so the Rapid City and Sioux Falls sides (platoons) are actually blended together, they’re not just their organic squads,” said Moran. “Team cohesion is important to make sure we work together in an austere environment where people are put out of their comfort zone of seeing and training with the same people every drill.

“The second purpose is for leadership evaluation,” Moran continued. “We are a detention correction facility company, but it’s important to see leadership aspects out in the field and to see basic soldiering

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skills so junior enlisted soldiers can look up to their squad leaders and see that they're the authoritative role."

While the FTX provided all members of the unit the opportunity to rehearse and train on mission essential tasks, the main priority was to hone leadership skills by placing soldiers in uncomfortable situations so they learn from their experiences.

"The intent for this FTX wasn't to evaluate tactics of soldiers, it was to evaluate leadership," said Moran. "I wanted to see how the platoon sergeants conducted operations uncomfortably and get them back to basic soldiering skills so they're ready for anything."

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1210410-Z-TW084-1020: Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, conduct a tactical road march April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)



210410-Z-TW084-1109: Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, respond to direct fire April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)



210410-Z-TW084-1073: Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, conduct tactical casualty care April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)



210410-Z-TW084-1077: U.S. Army Sgt. Derek Malone, military police with the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, calls in a nine-line medevac request April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)



210410-Z-TW084-1144: U.S. Army Spc. Bryce Charlton, military police with the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, conducts detainee operations April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)



210410-Z-TW084-1195: Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, rehearse detainee transport operations with members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment, April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)



210410-Z-YW529-1136: U.S. Army Sgt. Derek Malone, military police with the 235th Military Police Detention Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, patrols a combat lane April 10, 2021, at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D. The 235th rehearsed mission essential tasks during a field training exercise to prepare for its state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

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