

South Dakota National Guard

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SD Army National Guard graduates first female drill instructor

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard graduated its first female drill sergeant from the U.S. Army’s Drill Sergeant Academy at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on April 10.

Staff Sgt. Erin Fagnan, of Rapid City, becomes the first female from South Dakota to attend and graduate from the academy while serving as a SDARNG soldier. Fagnan also graduated with honors in the course – achieving the Commandant’s List – placing her in the top 10 in her class out of 107 students.

Fagnan is a member of the SDARNG’s Recruiting and Retention Battalion and serves as a drill instructor for the Recruit Sustainment Program – which prepares new enlisted recruits for Basic Combat Training.

Fagnan has over 11 years of service in the SDARNG and has served as a bridge crewmember with the 200th Engineer Company and as a Service Member and Family Support Program liaison with Joint Force Headquarters. She is also a combat veteran, deploying with the 200th to Afghanistan from May 2011 to May 2012 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In her civilian career, Fagnan is an engineer III with the SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources’ Drinking Water Program in Rapid City. Erin has been with DANR since 2010, when she began her career as an engineer I. She is also the statewide rule manager for the Safe Drinking Water Act’s Lead and Copper Rule, conducts sanitary surveys at water systems, and serves as South Dakota’s Capacity Development coordinator.

A native of Aberdeen, Fagnan attended Northern State University, graduating Magna cum Laude with a double major, earning Bachelor of Science degrees in chemistry and environmental science. She holds a Master of Science in civil/environmental engineering from the S.D. School of Mines and Technology.

She has also completed the John Maxwell Team Leadership, Coaching, Speaking, and Training Development Program, and is a U.S. Army Level 1, Master Resilience Trainer. Using these certifications, Fagnan has developed her own company, Powerfully Equipped, LLC., and uses her military and civic sense of duty along with her professional achievements to promote resiliency through speaking engagements.

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U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Erin Fagnan, South Dakota Army National Guard. (File photo)