

South Dakota National Guard

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SD Army National Guard names Warrant Officer of the Year

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard selected Chief Warrant Officer 4 Clinton Store as its Warrant Officer of the Year and recipient of the Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael F. O’Connor Award.

Store, who serves as an instructor for the Warrant Officer Candidate School with 1st Battalion, 196th Regional Training Institute in Sturgis, received the award as the most exceptional warrant officer after competing against warrant officers from several of the SDARNG’s major commands.

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.

“CW4 Store has been a member of the SDARNG for more than 20 years, with 28 years total (military) service. The experience and knowledge from his years of service definitely make him an asset to our regiment and the entire organization,” said Col. Deb Bartunek, commander of the 196th Regiment (RTI).

Store enlisted in the Illinois National Guard in 1993 as a transport operator assigned to the 1-79th Infantry Battalion in Chicago. From 1995 to 2000, he served on active duty with units in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and at Fort Carson, Colorado. In 2000, Store transferred to the SDARNG’s 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion as an information systems analyst.

In 2006, Store attended Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and later assigned as a signal warrant. From 2007 to 2019, he served in roles as an information systems analyst, technician, and a network systems manager for the SDARNG’s Joint Force Headquarters, 115th Signal Company, 152nd Combat Sustainment Battalion and 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. Store is also a combat veteran and deployed to Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011 with the 196th MEB.

In his civilian career, Store works as for the U.S. Department of the Interior as a cyber-security specialist. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems from Baker College and a Master of Science degree in cybersecurity from Dakota State University. Other warrant officers representing their major command for this year’s award were CW2 Steven Fritch with the 109th Regional Support Group and CW2 Ryan Peterson with the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

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U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Clinton Store. CW4 Michael F. O’Connor Award recipient and South Dakota Army National Guard Warrant Officer of the Year. (U.S. Army National Guard file photo)