

South Dakota National Guard

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152nd CSSB welcomed to Brookings community

By Maj. Bridget Flannery – Joint Force Headquarters

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Any time the South Dakota Army National Guard is able to host a ribbon cutting, it's a special occasion. A ribbon cutting ceremony and open house was held by the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Brookings, May 1, and officially welcomed the unit to the community.

The event held special significance for the unit, community members and many in attendance. The 152nd called Pierre home from its inception in 2007 until November 2020, when the unit moved to Brookings as part of a re-stationing plan.

Capt. Travis Tipton, commander of the headquarters company, says that the move to Brookings makes sense from a service perspective, because it locates the battalion closer to the companies it supports along the I-29 and I-90 corridors. Serving the communities of the 152nd is important to Tipton.

“We’re here for the community. If there’s a state of emergency, or if we’re just needed to help out in a parade, we are here,” Tipton said. “This ribbon cutting isn’t for us, it’s for the people of Brookings, and I’m excited to introduce them to our unit and our soldiers.”

The soldiers of the 152nd are a big part of what makes the CSSB special. According to their first sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Randy Tollefson, the diversity of talent amongst his soldiers is a big part of what makes them successful.

“We have communication specialists, generator mechanics, movement control specialists, cooks, admin personnel, just all types of career paths,” Tollefson said. “The 152nd is a lot of talented people with a common goal and that makes for a great organization.”

One of the newest members of their organization is Pfc. Matthew Larsen, whose area of specialty is the radios soldiers use to communicate.

“I really like what I’m doing here,” he said. “I like the structure and the work. There’s always something to do.”

Like Tollefson though, Larsen thinks the people make the difference.

“I don’t know if the Guard makes people better or you just find better people in the Guard, but I’ve found a lot of nice people here,” added Larsen.

Brig. Gen. Michael Oster, assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG, served as the battalion commander for the 152nd from 2011 to 2014, which included a deployment to Afghanistan. He acknowledged the dedication of the soldiers in his remarks.

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“The 152nd just returned from Iraq last summer and that was their second deployment in less than 10 years,” Oster said during the ceremony. “Then just a few months after getting home, we asked them to move locations. That’s asking a lot, and the 152nd delivered.”

Brookings Mayor Keith Corbett, a retired brigadier general for the SDARNG, shared the community’s gratitude for the 152nd.

“We’re so excited to welcome you to Brookings, so excited to have you here. Thank you for making Brookings your home,” Corbett said during the ceremony.

Oster, a former Brookings resident, knew the soldiers of the CSSB would get the strong community support Corbett referenced.

“I fully expected the 152nd would get a warm embrace from Brookings and that’s exactly what happened,” Oster said. “The South Dakota National Guard loves serving this community.”

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IMG_001: A ribbon cutting ceremony and open house was held by the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)



IMG_002: A ribbon cutting ceremony and open house was held by the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)



IMG_003: Soldiers with the 147th Army Band play during a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house held by the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)



IMG_004: A soldier from the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion explains the operation of a .50 caliber machine gun during a community open house in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)



IMG_005: Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion visit with community members during a unit open house in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)



IMG_006: Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion visit with community members during a unit open house in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)



IMG_007: Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion explain the operation of a tactical radio in a Humvee with community members during a unit open house in Brookings, S.D., May 1, 2021. The event officially welcomed the unit to the community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mikaela Birath)