

South Dakota National Guard

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SD National Guard names Lieutenant of the Year

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The South Dakota National Guard selected 1st Lt. Klye Heyn, of Wentworth, as its Lieutenant of the Year and recipient of the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award.

Heyn, who serves as the executive officer for the 200th Engineer Company in Pierre, received the award as the most exceptional lieutenant after competing against officers from several of the SDNG's major commands.

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

"I was humbled to be selected and it is a great honor to receive this award," said Heyn, a native of Chester. "I had the opportunity to serve along side other great officers for this award and it's inspiring to see what the state has to offer for leadership."

"There are few lieutenants under the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade that can match 1st Lt. Heyn's dedication to duty coupled with his leadership qualities," said Col. Phillip Stiles, 196th MEB commander. "His loyalty to the South Dakota National Guard, leadership, and dedication have earned him the distinguished honor of being recognized as the SDNG's most outstanding Lieutenant of the Year."

Heyn enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guard in 2014 as a food service specialist. He received a commissioned as a second lieutenant in 2017 from the ROTC program at South Dakota State University.

Heyn's outstanding service over the past year includes volunteering for two state active duty missions in addition to his assigned unit duties. He served as the liaison officer for the 2021 Capitol Security Force in Pierre, where he earned his South Dakota Emergency Operations Ribbon. Heyn also volunteered to serve on Task Force 153 to support the Texas National Guard's Task Force Salerno for Operation Lone Star for 70 days, where he served as the office in charge of 46 soldiers assisting U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

"The meaning of service in the National Guard is being able to support our communities, state and nation," Heyn said. "It meant a lot to me to serve on the Texas deployment, which has been a highlight of my time in the National Guard thus far, and I hope I get the opportunity to do more."

Other officers representing their major command for this year's award competition were 2nd Lt. Hillary Smith from the 109th Regional Support Group, and 1st Lt. David Wiederich from the 114th Fighter Wing.

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220423-Z-A3566-0001: South Dakota National Guard Lieutenant of the Year, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Kyle Heyn, is presented the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award by Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, (right) adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard, and Maj. Cody Becker, president of the National Guard Association of South Dakota, at the NGASD annual conference, April 23, 2022, in Rapid City, S.D.