

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 12, 2022

152nd CSSB hosts first battalion-wide field training exercise

By Staff Sgt. Christopher Valdez – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

PIERRE, S.D. – The 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion hosted its first field training exercise, April 30 – May 1, at Camp Ripley, Minn., bringing together the battalion headquarters and all associated units together since the 152nd was established.

“I went through an FTX like this about seven or eight years ago, thought it was very beneficial, and when I came into command about a year and a half ago, I thought it’d be a good idea to push for,” said Lt. Col. Jason Kleinschmit, commander of the 152nd CSSB. “To get the whole battalion together, that doesn’t happen very often and that has not happened in the 152nd since it came into existence.”

The four-day training operation included participation by prospective recruits on many training events and cross-training opportunities between units in the 152nd.

“Our plan is to have every unit bring something to the table; to show other units how they do something or teach them something they don’t typically do,” Kleinschmit said. “The maintenance company is very good at recovery and the maintenance side so they worked with the transportation companies to show them more.”

“Three take-aways from the NCO perspective are: one is soldier training, the next one is readiness, and hand-in-hand with that is recruiting and retention,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Schmidt, the senior enlisted leader of the 152nd CSSB.

The 740th Transportation Company’s recovery team of mechanics enjoyed the unique opportunity for realistic hands-on training hosted by their peers and subject matter experts of 665th Support Maintenance Company.

“The 740th has about 18 mechanics which support all our tractor trailers,” said Capt. Betsy Schaefer, commander of the 740th TC. “This is their first time training with the 665th.”

Of note, the 1742nd Transportation Company is currently assigned to the southwest border mission; however, the rear detachment of Soldiers joined the exercise to represent their parent unit.

The 152nd also invited the U.S. Army’s First Army exercise and training evaluators to visit with the 740th, as well as the 730th Area Support Medical Company. The First Army team is the units’ evaluators for the next few years and available to observe and evaluate training.

“Their main role is to visit units that may be quickly out the door if something does happen,” Kleinschmit said. “They wanted to get a chance to evaluate them and they’re making an initial connection with those units.”

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As the 152nd CSSB approaches a change-of-command, the exercise has another unique feature: the presence of both the current, as well as expected incoming commander.

“I really appreciated the opportunity and invitation to come and observe the staff, observe the soldiers, and observe the training,” said Lt. Col. Nate Moore. “To meet folks and get a warm introduction to the unit, normally that doesn’t happen. It’s been a good opportunity for me to look, listen, and learn, and see the units.”

The 152nd’s training plan encompassed both in-depth training objectives and afforded a unique opportunity for peer command teams and units to experience their different capabilities. They also experienced comradery at all levels working through the objectives and challenges of their shared field exercise.

“What I’ve observed over the last three or four days is those junior NCOs, those junior soldiers being empowered to be able to work within their collective teams,” said Schmidt. “Completing their soldier tasks: working on ranges, understanding weapons qualification, those individual and junior leadership NCO tasks of small unit leadership.”

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220501-Z-JQ500-1003: Mechanics from the 740th Transportation Company, receive training instruction during the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion field training exercise at Camp Ripley, Minn., May 1, 2022. Vehicle recovery experts from the 665th Support Maintenance Company provide their 740th counterparts with realistic hands-on training. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Valdez)



220501-Z-JQ500-1024: A mechanic from the 740th Transportation Company prepares to rig an overturned Humvee for field recovery training during the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion field training exercise at Camp Ripley, Minn., May 1, 2022. Vehicle recovery experts from the 665th Support Maintenance Company provide their 740th counterparts with realistic hands-on training. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Valdez)



220501-Z-JQ500-1053: Mechanics from the 740th Transportation Company pull cable in wet-weather field conditions to rig an overturned Humvee for field recovery training during the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion field training exercise at Camp Ripley, Minn., May 2, 2022. Vehicle recovery experts from the 665th Support Maintenance Company provide their 740th counterparts with realistic hands-on training. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Valdez)



220501-Z-JQ500-1054: Mechanics from the 740th Transportation Company pull cable in wet-weather field conditions to rig an overturned Humvee for field recovery training during the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion field training exercise at Camp Ripley, M.N., May 2, 2022. Vehicle recovery experts from the 665th Support Maintenance Company provide their 740th counterparts with realistic hands-on training. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. Christopher Valdez)



220501-Z-JQ500-1065: A vehicle recovery team from the 740th Transportation Company prepare their Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck 10-ton Recovery Wrecker in wet-weather field conditions for training recovery of an overturned Humvee at the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion field training exercise at Camp Ripley, M.N., May 2, 2022. Vehicle recovery experts from the 665th Support Maintenance Company provide their 740th counterparts with realistic hands-on training. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Valdez)



220501-Z-JQ500-1081: Vehicle recovery experts from the 665th Support Maintenance Company supervise overturned vehicle recovery training operation during the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion field training exercise at Camp Ripley, M.N., May 2, 2022. A 740th Transportation Company vehicle recovery team direct winch operations for training recovery of an overturned Humvee. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Valdez)