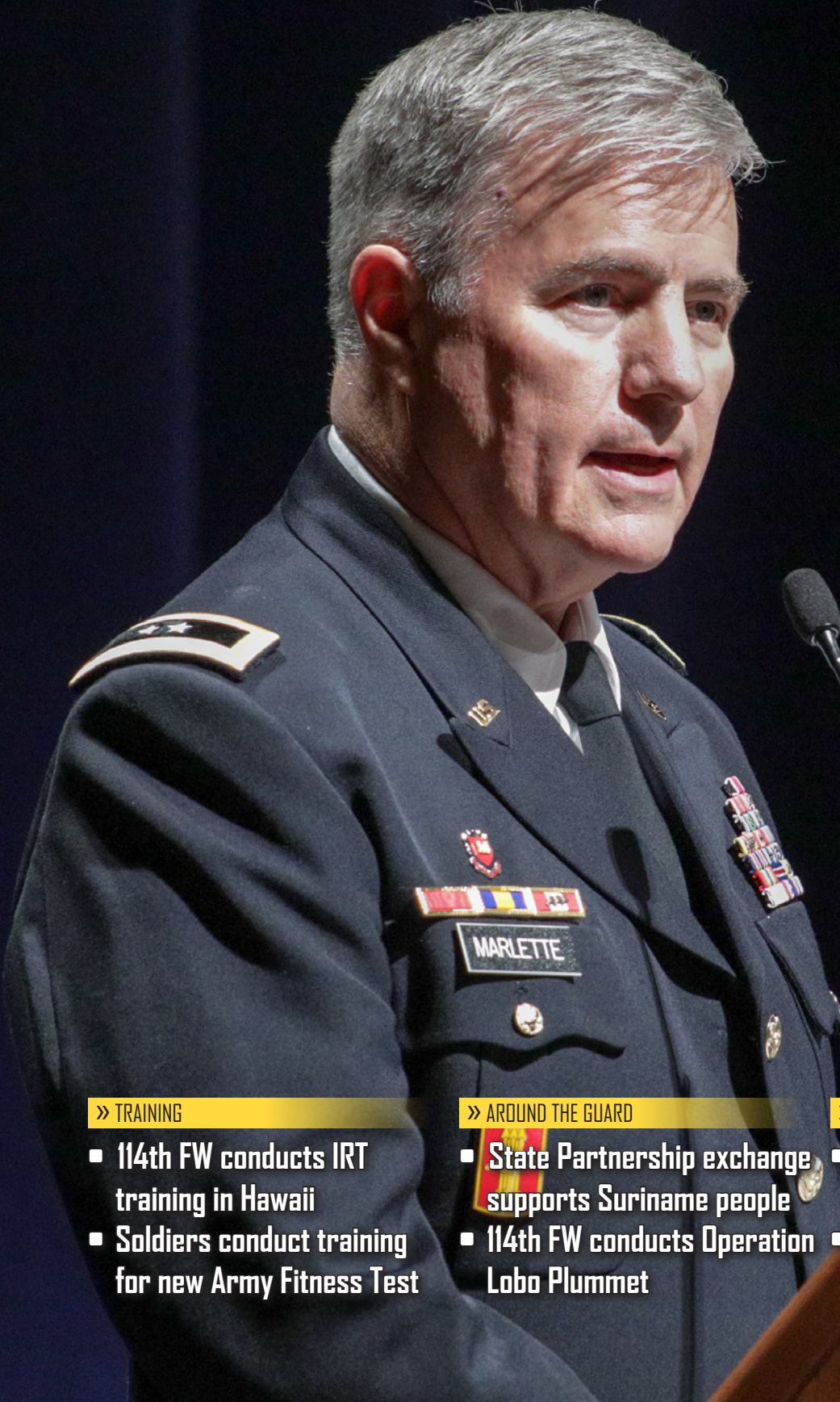


DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • SUMMER 2019

SD GUARD CHANGES COMMAND

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey
Marlette named
state's 22nd
adjutant general



» TRAINING

- 114th FW conducts IRT training in Hawaii
- Soldiers conduct training for new Army Fitness Test

» AROUND THE GUARD

- State Partnership exchange supports Suriname people
- 114th FW conducts Operation Lobo Plummet

» READINESS

- Soldiers provide water to Pine Ridge communities
- Combat readiness creates camaraderie for Airmen



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The Adjutant General

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On the Cover

Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, the new adjutant general for the South Dakota National Guard, addresses the crowd at his change of command ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, June 8. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Heather Trobee)

Message from the Adjutant General

As you will see in this publication, the summer of 2019 will definitely go down in history as a time of change for the South Dakota National Guard. On June 7th, we witnessed the retirement of Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch and acknowledged the remarkable career of a truly outstanding Soldier and leader. Maj. Gen. Reisch's eight years as adjutant general will long be remembered as an era of tremendous growth and pursuit of excellence for the South Dakota National Guard. Under his leadership, our organization truly became the most professional, competent and reliable National Guard in the United States of America. Thank you Maj. Gen. Reisch for your service.

On June 8th, we witnessed the adjutant general change of command and the beginning of a new era. As the new adjutant general, I am honored and excited to have the opportunity to serve in this role and to lead such an outstanding organization. I look forward to working together to continuing to see the South Dakota National Guard perform at the highest levels, always prepared to provide combat ready forces and always there when our governor calls upon us to meet the needs of South Dakota's citizens.

On June 15th, we saw the retirement of another outstanding Soldier. Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Hoekman performed his duties as the senior enlisted leader in an excellent manner. His over three years as the SEL, he made an impact in our organization which will be long felt. Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser was selected to be the next senior enlisted leader for the South Dakota National Guard and has already made his presence felt. I am truly excited to watch this great NCO lead in this position.

Across both the Army and Air National Guard, we have leaders who have served our organizations well, retiring. At the same time, we have new, high quality leaders stepping forward to continue the mission. I am excited about the NCO and officer leadership that is in place as we start this new era. I have complete trust and confidence in each of them and I look forward to seeing where we can go together.

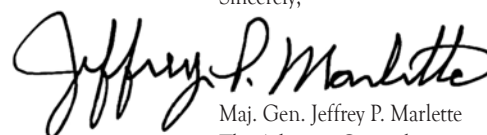
As we all know, membership in our organization comes with a sizeable price tag. We ask a great deal of our Soldiers, Airmen and families. I believe we must acknowledge the stresses and challenges of the high operations tempo we are driving our force under. We must strive to find

ways to improve their quality of life and service experience. I look forward to finding more ways to invest in our Soldiers, Airmen and their families.

To all the Soldiers and Airmen of our organization, I promise you this. I will always do my very best to serve you and your families. I will work tirelessly to insure we have competent, capable leaders in the right positions and that your leaders lead with character, integrity and your best interest in mind. I will insure you are properly trained, resourced and prepared to do your mission. I will challenge you to always give your very best to your teammates, your family and yourself. I will expect the highest standards from you at all times and I will support you when you need supporting.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you. Thank you for serving your country and your state. God bless you and God bless this great country.

Sincerely,



Maj. Gen. Jeffrey P. Marlette
The Adjutant General



Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette welcomes home Soldiers from Detachment 1, Company B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion from their deployment to the Middle East, along with Gov. Kristi Noem and Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser, July 21, in Rapid City.

Message from the Senior Enlisted Leader

My military career started as a birthday gift from my mother. When I turned 17, I was asked what I wanted for my birthday. I told my mother I wanted her to take me to the recruiter and sign for me so I could join the South Dakota Army National Guard. We lived on a farm 17 miles north of Aberdeen (Columbia, S.D.) and I was ready to do something different with my summer rather than working on our farm.

I joined Detachment 1, 740th Transportation Company. It was March of 1982 and the unit was just getting started. I was one of about 15 high school students from various small communities around Aberdeen that joined the new unit. We were the first group from Det. 1 to come back from Basic Training wearing the new BDUs. It was a big deal at the time. That was over 37 years ago and never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I would be at where I am today.

Throughout my career, I have belonged to several great units: 740th Transportation Co., 1742nd Transportation Co., 88th Troop Command, 727th Transportation Co., 665th Maintenance Co., 881st Troop Command, 196th RTI and 109th RSG. Each unit has had an impact on my career and growth as a NCO.

I have been on two deployments: Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I have also had the opportunity to do other various overseas exercises in Korea, Panama, the Netherlands and Egypt.

That is the short version of my long story. What is your story? I will be getting out visiting units and armories across the state in the next few months, and I look forward to visiting with you and your leaders. I want to hear your stories, where you are from and where you want to go from here. I am extremely humbled at being selected as the SDNG senior enlisted leader/state command sergeant major and look forward

to serving all the Soldiers and Airmen in the SDNG. I would also like to thank Com. Sgt. Maj. Jim Hoekman for his 30 plus years of superior service and dedication to all the Soldiers and Airmen of the SDNG. His hard work and dedication left me a great place to start my journey as the 3rd senior enlisted leader and the 10th Army Guard state command sergeant major. Please take the opportunity to spend some quality time with your families this summer and be safe. Thank You for all that you do!



Sincerely,

Pat Couser

Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser
Senior Enlisted Leader



Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser poses with former South Dakota Army National Guard state command sergeants major, from left, Mike Birnbaum, Mike Bekaert, Larry Zimmerman and Jim Hoekman, at his change of responsibility ceremony, June 15 at Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City.

South Dakota National Guard changes command



(Photo by Sgt. Carl Johnson)

Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, the new adjutant general for the South Dakota National Guard, addresses the crowd at his change of command ceremony, June 8.

Story by Spc. Tyler O'Connell – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – South Dakota Army and Air National Guardsmen welcomed their new commander at a ceremony at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, June 8. Maj. Gen. Jeffrey P. Marlette took command as the next adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard and succeeds Maj. Gen. Timothy A. Reisch, who served in the position since April 2011.

“Today we recognize and we honor two great men,” said Gov. Kristi Noem. “We say goodbye to Maj. Gen. Reisch, who has served with distinction as adjutant general over the past eight years, and we welcome Maj. Gen. Marlette, as he steps into his new position and assumes command of this great organization.”

As adjutant general, Marlette will command the state’s more than 4,200 South Dakota Air and Army National Guard men and women with over 1,000 full-time federal and state employees. He will be responsible for strategic planning, assignment of leaders, recruiting, training, equipping, mobilization, facilities, and public relations. He now serves as a member of Gov. Noem’s cabinet leading the Department of the Military to ensure the SDNG is trained and ready to respond to all state and federal missions.

“We celebrate Maj. Gen. Marlette as he takes command as South Dakota’s 22nd adjutant general,” said Noem. “Marlette is the right man, at the right time, at the right place to take leadership and command. This is a man who is prepared.”

Marlette not only has the experience but also the support of his family as he starts his new journey as adjutant general.

“I want to thank my family for their love and support,” said Marlette. “They are always there for me and I could not head down this road without their support.”

Marlette also had opportunities throughout his career that allowed him to meet new friends that challenged him and pushed his limits.

“I have had great career opportunities that have challenged me and have allowed me to work with some amazing teams and individuals along the way,” said Marlette.

Marlette presented his coin to one of those individuals as his first official act as adjutant general.

“As my first official act as the new South Dakota adjutant general, I want to present my very first adjutant general coin to one of the finest Soldiers I ever had a chance to serve with,” said Marlette. “Maj. Gen.



(Photo by Sgt. Carl Johnson)

Gov. Kristi Noem administers the oath of office to Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, as he assumes command as the 22nd adjutant general of the S.D. National Guard.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Heather Trobee)

Sandy Marlette, right, wife of Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, and his daughter, Callie, pin his new rank to his uniform, as other family members look on during the ceremony.

Reisch, please accept this coin as a token of appreciation for the excellent manner which you performed as the 21st adjutant general.”

Marlette began his military service enlisting in the SDNG in 1980. He received his commission through the S.D. Military Academy Officer Candidate School in 1982. Marlette’s command assignments include commander of the 235th General Supply Company; 2nd Battalion, 147th Field Artillery; Joint Force Headquarters, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and assistant adjutant general - Army.

During his 41-month tenure as commander of the 2-147th Field Artillery, the battalion successfully deployed for 14 months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Prior to Marlette’s selection as adjutant general, he served as a policy advisor and West River regional director for U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds. In that role, he supported Sen. Rounds in his committee assignments on Senate Armed Services and Senate Veteran’s Affairs. He also served many years as a superintendent of schools in South Dakota school districts.

Marlette holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education from Northern State University, an education specialist degree from the University of Sioux Falls and a master’s degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

Couser appointed as new senior enlisted leader



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Heather Trobee)

Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser, newly appointed SDNG senior enlisted leader, speaks to the audience at a ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Heather Trobee)

Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser passes the noncommissioned officer's sword to Sgt. 1st Class Matt Thorn during a change of responsibility ceremony, June 15.

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota National Guard appointed Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser to its highest ranking enlisted position during a change of responsibility ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City, June 15.

Couser replaces Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman as the organization's senior enlisted leader, and will serve as the adjutant general's personal advisor on all enlisted matters affecting training and utilization of resources, health of the force, and enlisted professional development for both the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard.

"Talk about two outstanding NCOs – you are everything that any commander or service member could wish for in their senior enlisted leader," Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general, said of both Couser and Hoekman. "Men of character and integrity, men who lead from the front, men who never lose sight that it's not about them – it's about the Soldiers and Airmen and the organization they serve."

Couser becomes the third person to hold the senior enlisted leader position since it was created in 2013. Hoekman served in the position since January 2016 and retires with 29 years of service in the National Guard.

"We as an organization look forward to your leadership Command Sgt. Maj. Couser and are greatly appreciative of yours Command Sgt. Maj. Hoekman," Marlette said.

"Maj. Gen. Marlette, thank you for instilling your trust and faith in me in selecting me as the next senior enlisted leader of this great organization," Couser said. "Command Sgt. Maj. Hoekman, the South Dakota National Guard is a better organization because of you. Thank you for your commitment and selfless service."

"I want to congratulate Pat. He and I both had similar career paths... served in many of the same companies and commands, and I can tell you he is going to do a great job," Hoekman said. "It's about taking care of Soldiers and Airmen, and he is a servant leader if I've ever seen one."

Couser has over 37 years of service to the United States Army and South Dakota Army National Guard.

He first enlisted into the SDARNG in March 1982 as a heavy vehicle

driver with Detachment 1, 740th Transportation Company. Throughout his career, Couser served in nearly every key noncommissioned officer position from team leader to command sergeant major.

"When I joined Det. 1, 740th in Aberdeen in 1982, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would be in the position I am in," Couser said. "I am looking forward to working for all the Soldiers and Airmen in the South Dakota National Guard. I absolutely love visiting with our service members, hearing their stories and letting them know how important they are."

Couser served in many key NCO positions during his career such as 1742nd Transportation Company truck master, 727th Transportation Company platoon sergeant, 88th Troop Command senior maintenance supervisor and 665th Maintenance Company first sergeant.

Couser's command assignments include serving as a command sergeant major with the 881st Troop Command, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) and 109th Regional Support Group.

Couser also completed two combat deployments to the Middle East – one with the 740th Transportation Company during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm from November 1990–July 1991, and the second with the 727th Transportation Company during Operation Iraqi Freedom from January 2002–March 2003.

Couser is 1983 graduate of Aberdeen Central High School. He received a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State University in 1994 and a master's degree with the University of Texas at El Paso in 2008 while attending the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Prior to his selection as senior enlisted leader, Couser worked as the shop supervisor for the SDARNG's Field Maintenance Shop #8 in Brookings.

"I need to thank my family for all their support and patience over my career," Couser said. "I also need to thank all the officers and NCOs I have served with. Thank you so much for your guidance, your leadership, and your balance you provided me – helping to develop and mold me into the leader I am today."

"I am extremely grateful and excited for this tremendous opportunity," Couser added. "I am ready to get started and make a difference in our great organization."

Walz selected for PACAF dual-hat assignment

Story by Maj. Amy Rittberger – 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SIOUX FALLS – Brig. Gen. Russ Walz, assistant adjutant general for the South Dakota Air National Guard, has been selected as the Air National Guard assistant to the director, Air and Cyberspace Operations, Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

According to PACAF's website, PACAF is one of nine U.S. Air Force major commands and the air component of U.S. Pacific Command. Their primary mission is to provide ready air and space power to promote U.S. interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. PACAF's area of responsibility is home to 60 percent of the world's population in 36 nations spread across 53 percent of the Earth's surface.

"It's a very busy AOR, so that makes it pretty exciting work," said Walz. "It is an opportunity in another part of the world I really have not had a lot of exposure to, and an opportunity to see some new places and meet a lot of new people."

In his new position, Walz will be directly supporting the director of air and cyberspace operations.

"The position oversees three numbered air forces and 10 wings that have about 46,000 Airmen under it," said Walz. "Basically we provide all the space and cyberspace operations for PACAF in support of commanders' objectives for the Pacific theater."

There's a lot more to the job than just the technical aspect of space and cyberspace operations. Building and maintaining relationships around the world is also vital to mission success.

"Another big part of the position is about uniting allies and partners to basically enhance regional stability and security," said Walz. "A big part of the job is a lot of engagement with partner countries and allies."

Walz was selected for this position from a pool of Air National Guard general officers. His specific skill sets and experience are what led to his selection. He will be dual-hatted, meaning he will maintain this new position in PACAF as well as his position as assistant adjutant for the SDANG and will travel back and forth fulfilling his duties.

Maintaining two significant jobs will certainly come with challenges, but it's all a part of one of the Air Force's core values, service before self; a core value Walz embodies well.

"I'm excited to contribute in any way I can," he said.



Brig. Gen. Russ Walz

Oster promoted to brigadier general, next ATAG selected

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota Army National Guard promoted Michael Oster to the rank of brigadier general during a ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters, April 30. With the promotion will come a new duty assignment as the assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG. Oster's official appointment to the position will take place at a later date.

Oster will be responsible to the South Dakota National Guard's adjutant general for strategic planning, strength management, troop readiness and mobilization support of the state's more than 3,100 Army National Guard Soldiers.

"Promotions at this level are more about the people and opportunities you have had on your way here," said Oster. "So many things have to line up to get these opportunities, and when they do you just hope to be qualified and ready to go."

"I could not be more excited about this, and I'm absolutely honored by the privilege to serve in such an important capacity for such an amazing organization," Oster added.

Former SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, expressed his confidence in selecting Oster to maintain the relationships and readiness for South Dakota.

"Leaders, especially at the general officer level, are chosen based on potential not on achievements," said Reisch. "General Oster is a great leader and will serve the South Dakota National Guard well."

"One of my goals is to re-establish effective use of mission command re-establishing mutual trust, allowing leaders at all levels the ability to take prudent risk, exercise disciplined initiative and command at the appropriate level," said Oster. "Clearly we will continue to focus on readiness, and I believe by creating clear objectives, setting the expectation of excellence."

Oster is also looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that come with the position.

"Knowing that you serve each and every Soldier in the Army National Guard is an amazing responsibility," said Oster. "I am excited to take that on and work as an advocate to ensure our Soldiers their families, and their employers have what they all need to continue to the level of excellence that has become the standard in our organization. The Soldiers have my trust, loyalty and complete commitment to them. I will spend every day in this position earning the same from them."



Brig. Gen. Michael Oster

Reisch retires after 40 years of service in the SDNG



(Photo by Spc. Breanne Donnell)

Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch speaks to attendees at his retirement ceremony at Camp Rapid. Reisch retires with over 40 years of service in the S.D. National Guard.

Story by Spc. Breanne Donnell – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch retired from the South Dakota National Guard after more than 40 years of military service to his community, state and nation.

More than 200 people attended the retirement ceremony honoring Reisch at Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid, June 7.

Reisch retired as the adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard and secretary of the SD Department of the Military and held numerous key leadership positions throughout his career.

“His tremendous leadership and enforcement of standards leaves no question the performance of the South Dakota Guard was at the very best under his command,” said Gov. Kristi Noem, during the ceremony.

Reisch served as the adjutant general from April 2, 2011 – June 8, 2019, and was responsible for the preparation of more than 4,200 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen and over 1,000 full-time federal and state employees to respond in times of state or national emergency.

“My favorite part of being in the Guard is the people,” said Reisch. “Throughout your whole career you’re blessed to be assigned to units with great people and you look forward to the weekend drills so that you could interact with your Soldiers.”

During his career, Reisch served at every level of command and in nearly every staff position at the company, battalion and brigade level.

He received his commission as a second lieutenant through the South Dakota Military Academy Officer Candidate School program in 1980, branching as an engineer officer.

Reisch’s leadership positions included commander of Company B and C of the 153rd Engineer Battalion, 153rd Engineer Battalion, 109th Engineer Group, the first commander of the 109th Regional Support Group, and deputy commander of Joint Force Headquarters. He was also named the assistant adjutant general - Army in May 2009.

Under Reisch’s leadership, units and members in both the Air and Army National Guard received an astounding 159 national awards from 2011-2018 for performance in areas that included maintenance, safety, diversity, readiness, family, energy, supply, distinguished flying and many more.

“Maj. Gen. Reisch can take a lot of pride in all the awards that have been won by the South Dakota National Guard,” said Maj. Gen. Ray Carpenter, retired. “It’s unusual for a state to have won 30 awards in one



(Photo by Sgt. Brandon Julson)

Gov. Kristi Noem presents the Distinguished Service Medal to Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch during his retirement ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters, June 7.

year and to do that consistently puts South Dakota head and shoulders above many other states across this nation.”

“I want to thank every Soldier and Airman in the South Dakota National Guard for the way that they’ve made me look good and more importantly made the South Dakota National Guard look good,” said Reisch. “We take a back seat to nobody here in South Dakota.”

Reisch’s ability to provide ready forces to support global and domestic emergency requirements were also evident while in command.

From 2011 through 2018, the SDNG had more than 1,850 Soldiers and over 950 Airmen deployed to 12 different countries in support of federal contingencies. Reisch also led the organization during many state active duty missions and other military support to civilian authorities.

In 2011, 1,957 Guard men and women supported Missouri River flood operations in the Pierre and Dakota Dunes areas from May 27th through August 30th. Other notable state active duty missions include Winter Storm Atlas in 2013, Union County flooding in 2014, tornado recovery operations in Wessington Springs in 2014 and Delmont in 2015, and Pine Ridge flood support in 2019. From 2011 through 2018, the South Dakota National Guard provided emergency helicopter response to support 37 wildland fire suppression missions in the Black Hills and western South Dakota, as well as nine emergency aerial extractions.

Reisch earned a Bachelor of Science degree in public administration from Upper Iowa University, a master’s degree in administrative studies from the University of South Dakota, and a master’s in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.

In 2010, Reisch was one of 40 emerging state leaders from across the nation selected for the prestigious Toll Fellowship Program sponsored by the Council of State Governments. During Reisch’s tenure, he was elected to three different national positions of leadership by his peers: board of directors of the National Guard Association of the United States, secretary of the Adjutants General Association of the United States and treasurer of the AGAUS.

He was also appointed by the chief of the National Guard Bureau as the chair of the Joint Diversity Executive Committee on two separate occasions. The director of the Army National Guard also appointed Reisch as the chair of the Army Guard End Strength and Force Structure Readiness Advisory Committee.

Croymans retires after 43 years of service to South Dakota



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

Brig. Gen. Tom Croymans speaks to the audience during his retirement ceremony.

Story by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Brig. Gen. Thomas Croymans retired from the South Dakota Army National Guard after more than 43 years of military service to his community, state and nation. Croymans retired as the Army assistant adjutant general and held numerous key leadership positions throughout his career. Croymans served as the assistant adjutant from May 1, 2018 – April 30, 2019, and was responsible for strategic planning, strength management, troop readiness and mobilization support for the state's nearly 3,200 Army National Guard Soldiers. He was honored for his service during a retirement ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid, May 4.

"To all the members of the South Dakota Army National Guard, I can't tell you how proud I am for the tremendous work you do; you've earned a reputation for excellence not only here in the United States, but around the world, and rightfully so," said Croymans. "For me personally, I couldn't ask for anything more than to have the opportunity to be a part of all the good things this organization does."

His military career began in October 1975, enlisting in the 740th Transportation Company in Milbank; he spent the first 14 years of his career as an enlisted Soldier, attaining the rank of staff sergeant.

He received his commission as a second lieutenant through the South Dakota Military Academy Officer Candidate School program in December 1989, branching as a transportation officer.

"I had some personal conflicts and setbacks in my career that really made me think I was close to the end, so I had to make some difficult decisions about whether I wanted to stay in the military," said Croymans. "I hung in there, though, worked hard and was able to make it through OCS to receive my commission."

Croymans held numerous command and staff positions within the 1742nd Transportation Company, 88th Troop Command, 139th Brigade Support Battalion and 109th Regional Support Group. He also served as the land component commander, chief of staff and director of the joint staff for Joint Force Headquarters.

"His dedication to this organization is on a level that's simply unheard of," said former SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch.

"He served for over four decades and leaves us leading the finest Army National Guard state in the nation."

New commander leads the 114th Operations Group



(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Duane Duimstra)

Col. Cory Kestel, right, takes the 114th Operations Group guidon from Col. Nate Alholinna, 114th Fighter Wing commander, during a change of command ceremony.

Story by Tech. Sgt. Duane Duimstra – 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SIOUX FALLS – The 114th Operations Group has a new commander leading them. Col. Cory Kestel took command of the 114th Operations Group from Col. Mark Morrell who assumed the 114th Fighter Wing vice commander position during a change of command ceremony at Joe Foss Field, March 2.

Kestel has been in the military for over 22 years who recently held the 175th Fighter Squadron commander position before taking on this new role. He also pinned on the rank of colonel immediately after the ceremony.

As the 114th Operations Group commander, Kestel's role involves representing both the Operations Group and 175th Fighter Squadron.

"My job is to advocate for resources and training opportunities that will allow Airmen to accomplish the mission," said Kestel.

Kestel's goals are to continue the tradition and reputation of excellence that the South Dakota Air National Guard has built over several decades of flying fighters and performing the mission.

He is looking forward to stepping out of the fighter squadron since he has spent his entire career there.

"I am really looking forward to getting involved more with the rest of the wing and getting to know more Airmen and the roles they play in executing the mission"

109th Regional Support Group changes command



(Photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)

Col. Jeff Norris, incoming commander for the 109th Regional Support Group, speaks to audience members during his promotion ceremony at Camp Rapid, April 5.

Story by Pfc. Alexis Stevens – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Col. Jeff Norris took command of the 109th Regional Support Group during a change of command ceremony on Camp Rapid, April 6. Norris assumed command from Col. Michael Oster, who served in the position since July 2016.

The 109th RSG provides command and control of 18 units totaling more than 900 Soldiers in nine communities throughout South Dakota.

The 109th assists assigned units in meeting training, administrative and logistical requirements to maintain the units' readiness in support of state and federal missions.

"I was granted the honor of receiving the commander's job, and I would like to continue the tradition of excellence that Col. Oster set in place," Norris said during the ceremony.

"He's going to do a great job with the RSG. He's earned the opportunity to be the commander of the 109th," said Brig. Gen. Tom Croymans, former assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG. "I have every confidence that he's going to do a fantastic job."

Norris said his focus will be on individual Soldier and unit readiness – preparing them for future deployments overseas and missions in South Dakota for natural disasters and emergency operations – and ensuring Soldier care and maintaining their technical and tactical proficiency.

Norris has over 33 years of military service, 10 years of that being enlisted before receiving his officer commission from the South Dakota Military Academy Officer Candidate School in 1994.

As an officer, he served in various duty assignments in the 88th Troop Command, 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 196th Regional Training Institute, 109th Regional Support Group and Joint Force Headquarters.

He also served as the commander for the 1742nd Transportation Company and the 139th Brigade Support Battalion.

Norris is a veteran of the wars in Iraq, where he served during Operation Desert Shield/Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On the civilian side, Norris serves as a chief court services officer with the Unified Judicial System Seventh Circuit in Rapid City.

114th Fighter Wing named top recruiting and retention team in the nation

Story by 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

GULFPORT, Miss. – The 114th Fighter Wing earned the Golden Eagle Award, presented during the Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention Annual Training Conference in Gulfport, Miss., in March.

The Golden Eagle Award recognizes the top state recruiting and retention team in the Air National Guard. The 114th was recognized as number 1 of 54 states and territories across the entire ANG for superior recruiting and retention programs.

The Recruiting and Retention Team was judged on leadership and job performance, significant self-improvement, as well as base and community involvement.

The 114th achieved a historical 106.3 percent overall end strength, the highest recorded end strength in the history of the wing. They also achieved a 96 percent retention rate, highest of 90 wings across the nation.

"I am extremely proud of our recruiting and retention team, but without the support of the entire unit, we could not have achieved this award," said Senior Master Sgt. Rebecca Langloss, 114th FW recruiting and retention superintendent. "There are so many people within the unit that work hard day-in and day-out that have an impact on our recruiting and retention efforts."

This is the first time the 114th has received the Golden Eagle Award at



(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Duane Duimstra)

114th Fighter Wing Recruiting and Retention Team members: From left: Tech. Sgt. Jordan Snyder, Senior Master Sgt. Rebecca Langloss, Master Sgt. Eric Tidemann, Master Sgt. Brian Johnson and Tech. Sgt. Bo Ellefson.

the national level. The 114th was also awarded top honors at the regional level by earning the Golden Eagle Award for the top state, as well as the Patriot Team Award for the top wing in Region II, which includes nine states and 16 wings.

New commander for 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Story by **Spc. Sam Mayo** – 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

SIOUX FALLS – Col. David Dailey took command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade during a change of command ceremony in Sioux Falls, March 2.

Dailey assumed command from Col. Douglas W. Bogenhagen, of Omaha, Nebraska, who served in the position since October 2017.

"I appreciate everyone's efforts and wish for the unit to continue being prepared for future deployments," said Bogenhagen.

The 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade is one of several major commands in the SDARNG.

"I am looking forward to keeping the MEB prepared and raising the standards of readiness," said Dailey.

As commander, Dailey is responsible for the command and control of three battalions, which are comprised of 16 units totaling nearly 1,900 Soldiers in 18 communities throughout South Dakota.

Dailey is a registered professional engineer in South Dakota and Wyoming and is the assistant vice president and heavy highway division manager for Heavy Construction, Inc. in Rapid City.

Dailey received his commission as an engineer officer from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology's Reserve Officer Training Program in 1993. He is a graduate of the engineer officer basic and

advanced courses, Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College.

Dailey's civilian education includes a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering and a Master of Science in construction management from the SDSM&T. He has previously served in a variety of roles with the state of South Dakota, including the 153rd Engineer Battalion, 881st Troop Command, 109th Engineer Battalion, and Joint Force Headquarters. He also deployed to Iraq in 2003.



Col. David Dailey

SD Guard Soldier sky dives with US Army Golden Knights



Story by **Sgt. Dustin Jordan** – SDNG Public Affairs Office

HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE, Fla. – The South Dakota Army National Guard's Master Sgt. Casey Baumgarn preformed a tandem sky dive with the U.S. Army Golden Knights at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, March 7. Baumgarn, a team leader with the SDARNG's Recruiting and Retention Battalion, earned the jump opportunity after receiving the Expert Seven Award for Region VI for recruiting excellence.

The Expert Seven is given annually to recognize the most outstanding recruiting team leader in the region's Strength Maintenance Advisory Group that exemplifies superior leadership and strength maintenance skills in all functions of recruiting and retention.

Baumgarn received instructional training and watched a video before being driven to the airfield and preforming the tandem jump.

"They drive you out to the airport and you get on a plane, that's the nervous part of it," said Baumgarn. "Then you just jump out the door. It was a phenomenal experience. The first second out of the plane was nerve racking, then it was probably the coolest thing I have ever done."

Aberdeen, Watertown National Guard Soldiers to deploy to Europe



Story by **SDNG Public Affairs Office**

ABERDEEN – About 115 Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion and the 147th Forward Support Company have received a mobilization order for an eight month deployment to Europe beginning in September. The units will deploy within European Command's area of responsibility in support of allied nation partnerships and regional security and stability goals.

The Aberdeen-based Alpha Battery is equipped with the Multiple Launch Rocket System, or MLRS, and is capable of providing artillery support to a brigade, division, corps or coalition task force. The Watertown-based Forward Support Company is a multifunctional logistics unit which provides supply and maintenance support.

Soldiers from Alpha Battery and the FSC will follow currently deployed members of Bravo Battery and the FSC that are supporting Operation Atlantic Resolve in Europe. Operation Atlantic Resolve builds readiness, increases interoperability and enhances the bond between ally and partner militaries using multinational training events.



Capt. Guy Bauermeister



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steve Nelson

SDNG Lieutenant and Warrant Officer of the Year

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

SIoux FALLS – The South Dakota National Guard selected Capt. Guy Bauermeister and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steve Nelson as its Outstanding Lieutenant and Warrant Officer of the Year during its annual officer's conference in Sioux Falls, April 27.

Bauermeister, a mission planning officer with the 175th Fighter Squadron, received the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award as the most exceptional lieutenant, and Nelson, a warehouse supervisor for Joint Force Headquarters, received the Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael F. O'Connor Award as the most exceptional warrant officer.

BAUERMEISTER – STEELE AWARD

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

"Bauermeister is an outstanding officer who has established himself as my number one, go-to junior officer in the 175th Fighter Squadron," said Col. Nathan Alholinna, 114th Fighter Wing commander. "He embodies the ethos of service before self and continually demonstrates nothing short of excellence as a leader to the Airmen of the 175th Fighter Squadron."

"Being selected for the Steele Award is a huge honor for me," said Bauermeister. "In the fighter pilot world we hold ourselves to exceptionally high standards, so it can be easy at times to lose perspective on what you have accomplished."

"The majority of our time is spent analyzing the mistakes we made and developing lessons learned, so we can avoid that situation again and pass lessons learned to others," Bauermeister continued. "Ultimately, it's a nice reminder to me that hard work always pays off."

Bauermeister, who has nearly 11 years of service in the Air National Guard, enlisted in 2008 and attended Tactical Aircraft Maintenance Technical Training, where he graduated the top of his class. He was later selected to serve as a crew chief. By 2014, he was selected to attend pilot training and received his commission as a second lieutenant from the U.S. Air Force Academy of Military Science at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Since then, Bauermeister attended the Euro NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training at Sheppard AFB, Texas, where he flew the T-6 Texan II and T-38 Talon. He earned his wings in May of 2016 and went on to complete the Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Course at Sheppard AFB, followed by the F-16 Basic Course at Luke AFB, Arizona, where he graduated with honors.

"From day one, I've always known that I've wanted to be a fighter pilot," said Bauermeister. "Getting to this point is a very humbling experience, and I always try to keep things in perspective."

Bauermeister is also a combat veteran, deploying to Southwest Asia in 2018, where he flew 45 combat missions with over 190 hours of flight time – employing joint direct-attack munitions and 20 millimeter high-explosive rounds.

"Our recent deployment to Afghanistan was very busy, and we were able to do some good work for the Soldiers on the ground, and I consider it to be one of my greatest accomplishments," said Bauermeister. "When 9/11 happened, I was only 11 years old, and to be able to be there and make a difference has always been something that I wanted to get the opportunity to do."

Bauermeister is a 2014 graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in secondary

education. Upon graduation, he taught 7th and 8th grades at Elkhorn Valley View Middle School in Omaha before being selected into a pilot position with the 114th Fighter Wing. Although receiving Lieutenant of the Year honors is a huge accomplishment for Bauermeister, he is also proud of what the award represents beyond himself.

"The Steele Award is a great opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of the 114th Fighter Wing as a unit over the past year," added Bauermeister. "If you were to look at any of the individuals in the South Dakota Guard, both Air and Army components, who participated in deployments last year, you could without a doubt put any of them in my position. It's great that I have the opportunity to represent the 114th Fighter Wing and 175th Fighter Squadron."

NELSON - O'CONNOR AWARD

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.

"To know that being selected by your command and going forward to the state level gives me a sense that my accomplishments have been noticed," said Nelson, a native of Redfield. "It's a pretty special feeling to be selected and added to the list of names of those who have won the CW4 Michael F. O'Connor award in the past."

"Chief Nelson has exhibited the exceptional qualities, technical knowledge, leadership, dedication and initiative that is required of this award," said Col. Todd Bartunek, deputy chief of staff U.S. Property and Fiscal Office. "Many of these exceptional qualities have been instilled in him through his passion and commitment to Soldiers."

Nelson, who has over 41 years of military service, enlisted in the SDARNG in 1977 and was assigned as a mechanic in Battery C, 2-147th Field Artillery Battalion in Redfield. Over the next 10 years, he worked his way up to the rank of sergeant first class. By 1989, he was selected for a maintenance warrant officer position and soon graduated from Warrant Officer Candidate School.

Over the next 30 years, Nelson would go on to serve as a maintenance warrant in several units to include: Battery C, 2-147th Field Artillery, 1742nd Transportation Company, 147th Field Artillery Brigade, 842nd Engineer Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and Joint Force Headquarters.

Nelson also completed a deployment to Iraq in 2003-2004 with the 842nd Eng. Co., and two tours in Afghanistan with the 147th FAB Embedded Training Team in 2007 and the 196th MEB in 2010-2011.

"I've had a great career. If I had to make any changes over the last 41 plus years, I would have become a warrant officer sooner," Nelson said. "What a great way to take what you know and use it to help others - to be that technical expert and to teach both the enlisted and officers."

Nelson has received a number of accolades over the course of his career to include: Soldier of the Year, Artilleryman of the Year, SDNG Technician of the Year, and the General Douglas A. MacArthur Leadership Award.

In addition to his full-time duties, Nelson is a member and avid volunteer in a number of veteran organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Rolling Thunder and Patriot Guard Riders, and both the National Guard Associations of the U.S. and South Dakota, to name a few.

"This year's warrant officers in the running for the O'Connor Award were the best of the best," Nelson said. "I felt really grateful to be among the list of four and give thanks to all the hard work that [they] put forward to be selected by their commands."

SD Guard breaks ground on Army Aviation Readiness Center



(Photo by Sgt. Dustin Jordan)

Members of the South Dakota National Guard, RCS Construction and state and local government officials take part in the groundbreaking celebration at the future site of the South Dakota National Guard Army Aviation Readiness Center, May 22.

Story by Sgt. Dustin Jordan - SDNG Public Affairs

RAPID CITY - The South Dakota National Guard broke ground, May 22, on a new \$20 million Army Aviation Readiness Center, which will enhance training and readiness for National Guard forces for decades to come.

The 58,714 square foot readiness center will be adjacent to the SDNG's Army Aviation Support Facility and will feature training classrooms, administrative offices, equipment storage space and military vehicle parking.

"This ceremony represents a decade of planning to bring this facility to a reality," said Lt. Col. Martin Yost, Construction and Facilities Management Officer for the SDNG.

Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden, Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, former adjutant general for the SDNG, as well as senior SDNG officials and local government and business leaders, were on hand for the ceremony.

"Having the right sort of facilities in place for our Soldiers is important," said Reisch. "It's a real pleasure to be here to help break the ground for this new facility."

"The South Dakota National Guard on a global scale is a big deal and it's certainly a big deal in South Dakota and Rapid City," said Allender.

Funding for the new facility is a shared cost with \$15 million from the federal government and \$5 million from the state.

"One of the biggest ways that we can support the National Guard is with readiness," said Rhoden. "This project is an enhancement to an already outstanding organization."

"I hope the (South Dakota National Guard) sees this project as a sign that this state believes in you, and that we value the work that you do," added Rhoden. "You are the best option that South Dakota has in protecting its liberties and we will continue to support you."

In addition to providing better training and readiness capabilities for Soldiers, the state-of-the-art facility is also designed to meet LEED Silver criteria - making the building energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

The readiness center will also include a geothermal heat exchanger for heating and cooling, automated temperature control monitor, anti-terrorism/force protection measures, security fencing and site lighting.

The readiness center is expected to be complete in the spring of 2021.

SD Governor visits SDNG Soldiers during Golden Coyote



(Photo by Spc. Breanne Donnell)

Soldiers from the 153rd Engineer Battalion greet Gov. Kristi Noem in Custer State Park at Base Barnes Canyon during the Golden Coyote training exercise, June 14.

Story by Spc. Breanne Donnell – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CUSTER STATE PARK – Gov. Kristi Noem visited Soldiers from across the state at the 35th annual Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills, June 14. The exercise provided an opportunity for Noem, the commander-in-chief of the South Dakota National Guard, to get on the ground and reach out to the Soldiers face-to-face.

“Going there to visit them, while they are training to be the best prepared individuals to take on challenges that we will see, was a very special experience for me,” said Noem. “I just thank them for taking the time to let me come.”

Noem visited Base Barnes Canyon, a training site in Custer State Park, where she was given a tour of the camp. Soldiers explained day-to-day operations, equipment, communications, tactical protocols and how these skills can be applied to expand upon their basic soldiering skills.

“My dad was in the National Guard, so I grew up always honoring the service of men and women who voluntarily defend our freedoms and liberties,” said Noem. “I’ve had the opportunity to interact with them throughout my lifetime, and I’m just so proud of the service they give.”

Golden Coyote exercise is one of the largest in the country, with Soldiers coming in from across the United States, Canada and Denmark to participate in the tactical and technical training opportunities.

“As a congresswoman, I served on the Armed Services Committee, so I understand how I impact their life with policy,” said Noem. “I recognize the sacrifices that they and their entire families make.”

Prior to the camp walkthrough, Noem, Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden and some of their staff were briefed by the SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Marlette on the exercise as a whole, and the impact it has on not only the Soldiers involved but the different service projects across the state and in the communities that are a part of the exercise.



Soldiers from the 109th Regional Support Group talk with Gov. Kristi Noem and Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden on operating procedures of the M2HB machine gun at Base Barnes Canyon in Custer State Park, June 14. (Photo by Spc. Breanne Donnell)

“The chance to see what they are doing to be prepared to do the job we are asking them to do, it’s hard work and they are not getting much sleep, but this is what they do to prepare for the extreme situations they may be in,” said Noem.

“I look to the National Guard to be leaders and to set the example,” said Noem. “I would ask them to be leaders in every area of their life and realize that people are watching and recognize that, because we need good leaders and role models in this world.”

Soldiers conduct training for new Army Combat Fitness Test



(Photo by Sgt. Brandon Julson)

Soldiers from the Army Combat Fitness Test validation and certification, level one and two class, work together to properly administer the hand-release push up the right way during the Golden Coyote training exercise at Camp Rapid, June 14.

Story by Sgt. Brandon Julson – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Instructors from 2nd Battalion, 196th Regional Training Institute, participated in training related to the new Army Combat Fitness Test during the Golden Coyote training exercise, June 14, at Camp Rapid in Rapid City.

Throughout the day, Soldiers conducted the ACFT validation and certification, level one and two for ACFT graders.

“We are going through both the level one and two training validation,” said Sgt. 1st Class Burton Glover, master fitness trainer with the 2-196th RTI. “This allows Soldiers who achieve level one and level two ACFT certification to evaluate Soldiers participating in ACFT to the proper standard.”

The ACFT provides a better link to combat related fitness for all Soldiers than the previous Army Physical Fitness Test. The overall goal of the new test is to improve readiness, fitness culture, prevent injuries and enhance mental toughness.

The test will consist of six combat fitness test events, the three repetition maximum deadlift, standing power throw, hand-release push-up, sprint-drag-carry, leg tuck, and two-mile run.

“We need to start implementing material now to get Soldiers ready,” said 1st Sgt. Tamara Carlini, first sergeant, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 198th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Illinois National Guard. “Preparing every drill weekend and practicing exercises will be crucial in our unit success.”

The Army National Guard is currently in an Army-wide trial. Sixty-three units across the nation have been selected to field test the ACFT. As modifications occur with the ACFT, it will be crucial for the South



(Photo by Sgt. Brandon Julson)

Capt. Travis Kirshner participates in the sprint-drag-carry during the Army Combat Fitness Test validation and certification, level one and two class, June 14.

Dakota units to implement the new changes.

“As times change and we move from old conflict to new, the operational environment in which we conduct ourselves has also changed,” said Glover. “So with that, we as the Army and military have to adapt.”

Using the new six event ACFT will give a clearer assessment of Soldiers’ fitness level and their ability to shoot, move down range, and be effective in a combat environment regardless of the operational situation in which they find themselves.

“I am grateful for the South Dakota National Guard, and the people involved in Golden Coyote training exercise, for training us on the new ACFT, because learning this is important for our future,” said Carlini.

SD Guard Family Readiness Group receives national award

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

ARLINGTON, Va. – For the sixth time in seven years, the Department of Defense awarded a South Dakota Army National Guard unit with the Reserve Family Readiness Award for the Army National Guard.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs presented the Rapid City-based Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment with the award for 2018 at the Pentagon, March 29.

The award is presented to one unit from each of the seven Reserve components that demonstrate excellence in engaging with and supporting their members' families. Units represented come from the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and the Coast Guard Reserve.

The award recognizes the top unit Family Readiness Groups with the best programs that support new and impactful ways to connect with families – especially while a unit is preparing to deploy, on deployment and after they return home.

Charlie Company deployed to the Middle East from September 2017-October 2018 and provided rapid response medical evacuations throughout the Middle East. Before the deployment, the FRG ensured that volunteer orientation and training was completed for key unit leadership, and support services were in place.



(Courtesy photo)

Members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment and its Family Readiness Group accept the 2018 Reserve Family Readiness Award for the Army National Guard from Department of Defense officials at a ceremony, March 29, at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes.

During the deployment, many different forms of communication were utilized to keep the families connected including: phone tree, e-mail and mailing lists, monthly newsletters, weekly email updates and monthly meetings. After the deployment, the FRG provided the Yellow Ribbon post-mobilization event with childcare and fun activities for the children.

SD Guard COMET team implements a new training method

Story by Pfc. Alexis Stevens – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CUSTER STATE PARK – The evaluators of the Command Maintenance Evaluation and Training team with Joint Force Headquarters assessed the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion, at Custer State Park, June 13.

The COMET is used for training and inspection of a unit's maintenance program. If a unit deploys, everyone within the unit is expected to know everything about their assigned equipment.

"Maintenance is important, because if you get called to go at a moment's notice, you're going to want to know your equipment," said Master Sgt. Brian Gessner, a member of the COMET team.

The previous COMET process was administratively focused. The new style incorporates more one-on-one training with Soldiers to ensure they know how to maintain and use their assigned equipment.

"The new COMET is beneficial because it teaches our youngest enlisted Soldiers things that even our more experienced Soldiers might not know about it," said Sgt. Katie Price, new supply sergeant with the 153rd.

The COMET for the unit took place during field operations, so the inspectors were able to do inspections of the equipment while it was actively being used.

"It allows us the opportunity to evaluate the units during PMCS (Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services) operations, which is something we don't usually get to do at the armories," said Lt. Col. Tim Schlotterback, COMET officer in charge.

The COMET team is comprised of subject matter experts in their fields; this means they're knowledgeable and able to help elevate Soldiers to a new level of readiness.

"The COMET team is an outstanding team," said Schlotterback. "They work full-time in a lot of their positions and they do an amazing job of sharing that knowledge and experience with the Soldiers."



(Photo by Pfc. Alexis Stevens)

Spc. Nicholas Shields takes corrective action by tightening a bolt on a vehicle during a COMET inspection at Custer State Park, June 13.

The Command Maintenance Discipline Program has been implementing a new method of inspection for the COMET team, which allows for more one-on-one training between the individual Soldiers and the inspectors.

"We actively engage the individual Soldiers by completing a basic operator level PMCS with them," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jess Schreurs, COMET team chief. "It's better for the units because it is a training enhancer instead of just an inspection."

"There's value added with the training aspect because the individual Soldiers are learning more," said 1st Sgt. Jason Lothspeich, first sergeant of the HHC, 153rd En. Bn. "They're learning more about their equipment and they're getting more training out of it."

SD Guard, Suriname soldiers partner to provide medical, dental services

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

ALBINA, Suriname – Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard traveled to the South American country of Suriname to provide medical and dental services to the local population of Albina, April 10-12.

The mission was part of a medical/dental readiness education and training exercise to assist with ongoing efforts of improving systemic and oral health in the region.

Nine Soldiers from the SDARNG's Medical Command and 730th Area Support Medical Company worked alongside Suriname Defense Force medics, a local doctor and pharmacy personnel to provide services to residents in the rural community.

The mission was conducted as part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, which seeks to strengthen ties through engagement activities and share experiences and best practices through a variety of military training exchanges.

"A significant need for rural dental care, as well as medical care, was identified as part of an ongoing exchange with South Dakota's partner country," said Maj. Ronovan Ottenbacher, a field surgeon in the 730th ASMC and provider in Medical Command. "This was a first-ever 'ground-up' mission for the SDARNG medical-dental community in Suriname."

The SDARNG team was comprised of two medical providers, two medics, three dentists and two dental technicians, some of which have been to Suriname before.

"This is now my third trip to the area and working with the SDF has always been very rewarding," said Col. Murray Thompson, a dentist and officer in charge of SDARNG team. "We were able to see different methods of medical care unique to that area. We do not get a lot of exposure to jungle medicine in South Dakota, so I know the medical team learned and saw unique and challenging situations."

Once the team arrived to Suriname's capital city of Paramaribo, they had only one day to plan and prepare equipment and supplies for the daily trips to Albina, about 90 miles away.

"This mission was put together in a hurry," said Thompson. "In fact, we were not exactly sure of which equipment we had available as it had to be shipped down early without us being able to look at it due to a blizzard and moving drill that weekend."

"We had to find and borrow local dental instruments, supplies and disposable gloves," continued Thompson. "Basically, everything we were doing had never been done before in that area. We did not even know exactly what the facility looked like until one hour before we began seeing patients."



Lt. Col. Eric Unkenholz, a dentist with the South Dakota National Guard, examines a young girl as a Suriname Defense Force medic assists in Albina, Suriname.



Staff Sgt. Samantha Wempe and Spc. Kirstin Gortmaker, both dental technicians with the South Dakota National Guard, examine a young girl's oral health as a Suriname Defense Force medic assists in Albina, Suriname, April 12.



Staff Sgt. Matthew Hanson, a medic with the South Dakota National Guard, applies a bandage to a patient with severe lymphedema in Albina, Suriname.

"This was an excellent exercise in mission planning on the fly and execution of that mission with minimal supplies," he added.

According to Ottenbacher, each day they linked up with the Surinamese team at the local military base then traveled together to a newly constructed medical facility in Albina, a town of approximately 5,000 people.

"The local military would assist in organizing the patients and sorting those who needed dental vs. medical care," said Ottenbacher. "There were lines waiting for the team every morning. Organization was a critically necessary step."

Over the three days, the team saw nearly 300 patients for a variety of medical needs – from minor body aches and pains to more severe cases.

"One of the last and strangest patients I seen was a middle aged gentleman who came with an extremely swollen leg, walking in on sandals expanded and held together with rope," said Ottenbacher. "The patient had severe lymphedema (swelling), which may have been secondary to elephantiasis, a condition which can be caused by parasites living in the lymphatic system."

"The patient had a large ulcer on his leg related to the swelling and was infested with [parasites]," continued Ottenbacher. "These were removed and then the wound bandaged by the team's medic. The patient had future surgical care arranged via the Surinamese team."

In contrast to these unusual cases, Ottenbacher said the vast majority of patients came for simple complaints such as head to toe body pain for many years. Others simply wanted to be seen and get vitamins. Many parents also requested anti-parasite/de-worming medication for their children.

Common viral illnesses and skin conditions were also some of the most frequent concerns.



Col. Murray Thompson, a dentist with the South Dakota National Guard, poses with a young girl about to receive a dental examination, April 10.

"Other patients had relatively atypical and long-standing symptoms and wanted a review by an American doctor," said Ottenbacher. "The translators played a critical role in helping the Dutch and local-dialect speaking Surinamese."

However the main emphasis for medical care was for oral health. The dental team performed nearly 400 adult and pediatric tooth extractions.

"The dental team undoubtedly saw a tremendous dental need," said Thompson. "Like the rural population of South Dakota, Suriname also struggles with accessing a dental provider, ability to pay for treatment and challenges in traveling long distances for dental care."

"As the community had almost no access to dental care, the dentists had an immediate impact on the patients' pain and issues," Thompson added. "Although restorative dental care is something important to dentists, we recognized the utility of extractions in a mission like this. The time required for extractions is significantly less than other dental work and the reduction in pain can be tremendous."

In addition to the medical and dental care, the mission created a collaborative multi-national team.

A key member of the South Dakota-Suriname team was Dr. Paul Aikman, medical director of the Paramaribo Military Hospital. For this mission, he was the lead Surinamese doctor on site, as required by their Ministry of Health. Aikman advised the team on treatment options and effects common drugs and medications can have on the local populous.

"Due to certain infections and GI (gastro-intestinal) parasites, Dr. Aikman noted that Surinamese providers will not use over the counter medication from the United States at the full dose," said Ottenbacher. "As he put it, the aspirin can potentially make the patients die! This was one of several examples where common medical treatments had to be tailored to the local needs."

"I think [the mission] went very well – the medical and dental care were very helpful," said Aikman. "There was a need for the care, because in the case of dentistry there isn't much availability because of the local conditions with no dentist on location."

"We saw some interesting patients, like one we suspected of lung cancer," added Aikman. "What was notable was that we as medical personnel think alike, and we approach patients more or less the same way."

Even with the mission's successes, the teams had their challenges. While the dental team was able to take some unit equipment and use some local dental school equipment, this needed to be set up and tested.

On-site sterilization was another obstacle that needed to be accounted for, said Ottenbacher. Although known issues such as electrical outlet types and voltage were taken into consideration, other difficulties arose.

"During set up, there did not seem to be enough electrical power to run the sterilization equipment sufficiently to achieve appropriate temperatures," Ottenbacher said. "Thankfully, when the equipment was used at the newer facility in Albina with better electrical wiring, everything went well."

Overall, the mission was an experience that all members of the team, and likely the hundreds of people who were helped, will not soon forget, said Ottenbacher and Thompson.

"As a physician and as a Soldier my goal is to help others, and with this population, many times that could be accomplished with the simplest of things," said Ottenbacher. "Handing out bags of vitamins, giving patients the opportunity to discuss their problems, handing out stickers and small toys such as sunglasses for girls and cars for boys – all these impacted their lives. Seeing a young child leave the clinic smiling from ear to ear holding a new toy car is an amazingly rewarding experience!"

"No matter where you go in the world, even in the U.S., people need medical and dental care," said Thompson. "Providing care to local citizens is very rewarding."

"The providers, dentists, technicians and medics that were brought on this mission are some of South Dakota's finest civilian providers outside of the National Guard," Thompson added. "Being able to put on the U.S. Army uniform and provide top-notch professional care to those in need shows the world that the U.S. and the SDARNG cares for humanity and desires a world where pain decreases and dignity and comfort increases."



Local residents wait to be seen by South Dakota Army National Guard and Suriname Defense Force medical and dental personnel in Albina, Suriname, April 12.



South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers and Surinamese civilian medical personnel sort and organize medications in Paramaribo, Suriname, April 9.



The S.D. National Guard medical/dental team with Suriname military and civilian medical personnel. Pictured left to right: Sgt. Lori Meyer (medic), Staff Sgt. Matthew Hanson (medic), Maj. Katie Urban (physician assistant), Capt. Betsy Suhr (Suriname liaison), Lt. Col. Eric Unkenholz (dentist), Staff Sgt. Samantha Wempe (dental tech), Col. Murray Thompson (dentist), Maj. Ronovan Ottenbacher (physician), Maj. Kevin Donlin (dentist) and Spc. Kirstin Gortmaker (dental tech). Also pictured is Dr. Paul Aikman, second from left, medical director, Paramaribo Military Hospital, and U.S. Ambassador to Suriname Karen Williams, center.



114th Fighter Wing conducts Operation Lobo Plummet

(Photo by Capt. Jessica Bak)

Tech. Sgt. Emma Stevens, armament systems specialist with the 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, waits to conduct a post-flight review of F-16Cs during Lobo Plummet at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, in March. Lobo Plummet is a deployment for training that enables the 114th Fighter Wing to conduct force integration training with fourth and fifth generation fighter aircraft.

Story by Capt. Jessica Bak – 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

MIRAMAR, Calif. – The 114th Fighter Wing deployed 180 Airmen, F-16 Fighting Falcons, and associated equipment to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, for Operation Lobo Plummet.

Pilots from the 114th Fighter Wing conducted force integration with Marine F-35s and F-18s, as well as Air Force F-15s while training at MCAS Miramar. As a multi-role fighter, the F-16 can perform a variety of mission sets, explained Lt. Col. Jeremy Doochen, Lobo Plummet project officer and F-16 pilot.

“We’ve had a lot of experience fighting the close air support missions with our Army and Marine counterparts on the ground,” said Doochen. “The training during Lobo Plummet is necessary because it continues to challenge the air-to-air mindset, allows pilots to work on their tactics, and broadens their abilities as a multi-role fighter.”

Training with Marine F-35s is not something the 114th Fighter Wing gets to do very often; however, Doochen emphasized it’s common to operate in a joint environment during a contingency operation, so training deployments like Lobo Plummet give Airmen the opportunity to learn how to work with different branches of the military.

“It gives us realistic mission planning and execution of what it would be like if we had to deploy to a contingency that would force us to fight air-to-air,” said Doochen.

Doochen explained flying around the San Diego area is different than



(Photo by Capt. Jessica Bak)

Senior Airman Collin Ries, Tech. Sgt. Davis Oetken, and Senior Airmen Andrew Staufer, structural repair specialists with the 114th Maintenance Squadron evaluate the nose gear of an F-16C Fighting Falcon during Lobo Plummet.

what he is used to back in South Dakota. The environment gives pilots experience operating in a busier airspace as well as flying over unique geographic features like the coastal hills and the ocean.

“It gets us out of our element and out of our comfort zone,” stated Doochen. “It helps you when you deploy, because you’re going to



(Photo by Capt. Jessica Bak)

Maj. Ryan Stott, a pilot with the 114th Fighter Wing, exits an F-16C Fighting Falcon during Lobo Plummet at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, in March. Lobo Plummet is a deployment for training that enables the 114th Fighter Wing to conduct force integration with fourth and fifth generation fighter aircraft.

locations that you're not familiar with, but you feel like you've had practice doing it already."

Chief Master Sgt. Dan Johnson, Lobo Plummet noncommissioned officer in charge and 114th munitions flight chief, explained that Lobo Plummet has provided valuable training for the 114th Maintenance Group as well. Training consists of packing up necessary equipment, deploying to an unfamiliar location, conducting operations, repacking everything, and returning home. In over 17 years, the electronic countermeasure shop has never had the opportunity to practice deploying with their test equipment. Lobo Plummet gave those Airmen the valuable training necessary to tear down, pack, and rebuild their equipment.

The Lobo Plummet leadership team also arranged for Airmen to participate in a variety of opportunities to gain a broader perspective



(Photo by Capt. Jessica Bak)

Master Sgt. Matt Lee, tactical aircraft maintenance specialist with the 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, prepares to jack an F-16C Fighting Falcon during Lobo Plummet at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, in March.

of the unit's mission, and the military as a whole. Airmen were able to team up with crew chiefs for an F-16 launch, tour different aircraft assigned to MCAS Miramar, tour a military working dog facility, and participate in military operations in urban terrain exercises hosted by the 114th Security Forces Squadron. "Sometimes we forget that Airmen are so focused on their own area, that they don't see all the things that go into making an aircraft work," said Johnson. After 30 years in the Air National Guard, Johnson admits that he still learns a lot from every deployment.

"I've learned so much on this trip from different people and the different jobs they do." He added that his favorite part of the entire deployment is always getting to know the people. "I believe in people first, and if you take care of the people, the people will take care of everything else."

Soldiers provide water to Pine Ridge communities



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

Soldiers with Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, provide drinkable water to residents of Sharps Corner on the Pine Ridge Reservation, March 25.

Story by SDNG Public Affairs Office

PINE RIDGE - Thirteen members of the South Dakota Army National Guard helped distribute drinkable water to communities on the Pine Ridge Reservation after flooding damaged a main waterline in Oglala County that left more than 8,000 residents without water in March.

Gov. Kristi Noem activated the National Guard on March 22 to provide water distribution support, and within 24 hours Soldiers from the Watertown-based Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, were onsite providing water to those in need in the communities of Red Shirt, Manderson, Porcupine, Evergreen and Wounded Knee.

"Our mission is to provide water to five local communities here on the reservation who are out of water," said Sgt. Joe Meyer, 139th noncommissioned officer in charge of operations, of Beresford. "It always feels good to help out local communities when they are in a time of need."

"The people have been without water for several days," said Sgt. David Fuegen, 139th water distribution specialist, of Aberdeen. "It's been pretty much a non-stop flow of people coming in trying to get water."

"A lot of the people are just so happy the Guard came to help us out with our water situation," said Jim Miller, of Porcupine. "A lot of the people here can't use their bathrooms, can't shower. Especially for our elderly and people who live off road. We are really grateful for the Guard coming and doing their part."

The Soldiers deployed with five Load Handling System vehicles equipped with five Compatible Water Tank Racks, or "hippos." The



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

Spc. Tracy Lennick, Sgt. David Fuegen and Lt. Col. Lew Weber fill containers with drinkable water for residents of Sharps Corner on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

hippo has the capability to receive, store and distribute up to 2,000 gallons of potable water per system.

"We are part of a bigger team with efforts happening down here. Distributing water is just one part of it," said Lt. Col. Lew Weber, SDARNG support operations officer, of Rapid City. "The emergency management people here are doing a fantastic job and they have been great to work with. We are just happy we can be an enabler to help them complete their mission."



Spc. Keith German, with Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, helps residents of Wounded Knee fill plastic bottles with drinkable water, March 25.
(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

Jim Miller, a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran, thanks Sgt. Seth Greenough, Spc. Roderick McRae and Spc. Bailey Toering, members of Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, as they provide drinkable water to residents of Porcupine.

The National Guard members provided water from a central location in each community until the waterline was restored. Residents brought in bottles, containers, coolers and even tanks to receive the water.

"We've filled up numerous different sizes of containers, tanks - from one gallon all the way up to 200 gallons," said Meyer.

By the second day of the operation, the need for water quickly expanded to the communities of Kyle and Sharps Corner. Many

residents have been picking up water to help deliver it to community members who are unable to reach the distribution points due to flooding conditions.

"There have been a lot of community members that get water for other people," said Meyer. "There are a lot of elders that can't make it to our water points."

"We've seen neighbors helping neighbors, families helping families - everyone is coming together," said Weber. "We've seen people come here and take water out to people who can't get out of their homes themselves."

By the third day of the Guard's mission, the county waterline was repaired. During their three days providing support, the Soldiers distributed nearly 9,500 gallons of water.

The Soldiers said the community was appreciative of their help and were happy to provide assistance.

"We are really grateful to all of you," said Miller. "I'm so humble and grateful and honored to meet all of you and thank you for your service. It means a lot to our community and all of us here."

"The community has been overwhelming with thank yous, we're glad you're here, and keep up the good work," said Spc. Tracy Lennick, 139th water distribution specialist, of Rapid City. "It feels great to be down here. A remote location such as this is why I believe the Guard definitely has its place. They absolutely needed us. They called, we came."

"I have a family at home and they know why I wear this uniform, and when people need help I go," said Fuegen. "I joined the Guard to be able to help, and that's why I'm here."



Girl Scouts of Hawaii provides training opportunity for the 114th Fighter Wing

Tech. Sgt. Casey Hupp, 114th Civil Engineer Squadron, pavement/construction equipment specialist, bow floats the concrete after placement to provide a smooth surface for the walkway. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson)

Story by Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson – 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

CAMP PAUMALU, Hawaii – Airmen from the 114th Fighter Wing deployed to Hawaii to complete Innovative Readiness Training at Camp Paumalu Girl Scout Camp, May 24-June 6.

“The 114th’s mission here was to gain valuable innovative readiness training while fulfilling an approved community need identified by the National Guard Bureau,” said Maj. Todd Mergen, 114th Civil Engineer Squadron project officer in charge. “This included obtaining key training within the Airmen’s specific career fields, cross-training outside of their career fields and leadership development for the NCOs and officers.”

IRT is a Department of Defense program that provides real world training opportunities for service members and units to prepare them for wartime missions. It is exclusive to the U.S. and its territories and includes opportunities for active duty, National Guard and Reserve service members to integrate as a joint and whole-of-society team.

“The end goal with this IRT program integration is to provide an important training opportunity with regards to not only the Airmen’s specific skill sets, but also work on that leadership foundation and in turn help provide the Girl Scouts with a new facility at Camp Paumalu,” said Mergen.

Camp Paumalu has a two year partnership with the Girl Scouts of Hawaii to rebuild and modernize the science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, based Girl Scout camp, upgrade the surrounding camp roads and construction of living quarters.

During their portion of the construction project, members of the

114th CES had the opportunity to support the Girl Scouts of Hawaii and sharpen many different skills throughout their Air Force specialties to include: project management, pavements and grounds, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, carpentry, HVAC, utilities, power production, surveying and structural.

“Deploying outside of our home station to conduct training while being able to give back to the Girl Scouts has been an amazing experience,” said Tech. Sgt. Cody Reese, 114th CES HVAC technician. “It’s great being able to cross-train on different jobs and work with different shops and units because it provided us with some good training.”

Another key training element the 114th FW experienced while on site was working with the other units and engineers to blend into the STEM project.

“Integrating into the existing team that [are] on the ground is something that we so often see when we deploy,” said Mergen. “It helps with the continuity of the project and it’s good training to help develop the right leadership and followership skills to be able to have mission effectiveness.”

Ms. Shari Chang, Girl Scouts of Hawaii CEO, 4th generation Girl Scout, applied for the IRT program knowing they could partner with a skilled labor force that would have the capabilities and expertise to make the project happen. The estimated completion date is September 2020.

“We are so thankful for the support from the military on this project,” said Chang. “The whole process is now coming to fruition and it has been an amazing opportunity for both of us.”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
Members of the 114th Civil Engineer Squadron work together to place concrete in a pillar footing which will later provide support for the second story of a new structure at Girl Scout Camp Paumalu.

Tech. Sgt. Joshua Ulring, 114th Civil Engineer Squadron structural specialist, performs a measured cut as he builds a form for a concrete footing.

Airmen from the 114th Civil Engineer Squadron clean out transit-mix truck on site at Camp Paumalu, Haleiwa, June 3

Maj. Todd Mergen, 114th Civil Engineer Squadron project officer in charge, and Chief Master Sgt. Daniel McNeil, 114th Civil Engineer operations superintendent, oversee on-site operations.





(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart)

Members of the 114th Security Forces Squadron throw smoke grenades prior to entering a village during their military operations in urban terrain training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. The Defenders deployed in support of Operation Lobo Plummet and took advantage of several unique training opportunities.

Story by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart – 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Approximately 35 Security Forces personnel from the 114th Security Forces Squadron deployed in support of the 114th Fighter Wing's Lobo Plummet, held in southern California.

The Defenders conducted flightline security for the F-16 Fighting Falcons at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar while also taking advantage of several unique training opportunities at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

The expeditionary skills training consisted of annual weapons qualifications, night fire utilizing laser sights, weapon familiarization, land navigation and an emphasis on military operations in urban terrain, or MOUT, training.

All of the combined training strengthened the Defenders' skills and teamwork as they prepared for a final simulated mission in what security forces refers to as a MOUT village.

"MOUT training is urban building clearing while implementing Simunition rounds, a non-lethal training ammunition, force on force scenarios, as well as shooting at targets inside the buildings at close range," said Master Sgt. Dustin Buhl, 114th Security Forces Squadron training manager. "This is a possible tasking we could have if we deploy overseas, as well as one of our many home station trainings. It's part of our combat readiness."

There are several components involved in preparing squads for a large-scale training scenario conducted in an unfamiliar setting.

"Initially, we'll go over some basic team movements in the classroom,

basically how the book says we should do it. Then we do a crawl, walk, run pace of the training. Yesterday, we did some of the crawl-type training with small teams of four entering and learning buildings. By afternoon, we took it up a notch so the teams were moving from building to building with Simunitions. Today, we had squads of 13-plus people working an entire village in unison. It's an annual requirement so each year we restart with the basics, and build up to the big day like we did today," said Buhl.

The squads, consisting of approximately three fire teams, each with four people, were given a modified operations order prior to embarking on their mission. During an operations order, the squads are given information about the scenario they will be entering, as well as their objectives to complete during the mission.

"The ops order provided there were 15-20 hostiles in the village, and they were to accomplish their objective of reaching the target building and to eliminate the threats as they move through," said Buhl.

Targets were positioned inside buildings and throughout the village to simulate hostile forces. As the teams encountered them, they were to engage and eliminate the enemy. Defenders wore additional protective gear such as face masks, helmets, groin and neck protection while in the village due to the Simunition rounds used.

"Those rounds hurt. They'll definitely break the skin and leave marks," added Buhl.

The training conducted while in southern California had a two-fold effect on the entire Security Forces Squadron. The combat readiness training created a sense of camaraderie that is difficult to establish



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart)

A squad from the 114th Security Forces Squadron tactically moves through a mock village designed for military operations in urban terrain at Camp Pendleton, California.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart)

A Defender with the 114th Security Forces Squadron gives commands to an individual simulating an oppositional force during MOUT training.

during a regular guard drill.

"The best part for me personally is probably my connection with the rest of the squadron," said Senior Airman Kadin Wolff, 114th Security Forces Squadron fire team member. "Once I came back from tech school, there was a large group that was deployed. When you're deployed, you become a lot closer with the people you're with. The few of us that returned to the squadron after tech school were on the outside because two days a month during guard drill isn't enough to try and get to know each other.

"I would say the team building and morale has been the biggest and most beneficial part for me," added Wolff.

Unique opportunities like the MOUT village kept the motivation high for the Airmen, but the Defenders felt the camaraderie created within the squadron was immeasurable in comparison to the training.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart)

A fire team with the 114th Security Forces Squadron tactically moves through a mock village designed for Military Operations in Urban Terrain.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart)

Tech Sgt. Adam Smith, 114th Security Forces Squadron security forces member, takes aim at an adjacent building to provide cover during MOUT training.

Examining our own 'truths'

By Chaplain, Col. Lynn Wilson – Joint Force Headquarters

Ken May shares a story in his book "Strength for Relationships" about a man whose pain was so horrible that prior to surgery he turned to his wife and said, "If they can't fix what's wrong with me, I don't want to wake up." There are two groups of people – those who have gone through trouble, and those who one day will. It is wise to examine our beliefs from time to time, because it is possible that we can create our 'own truths' rather than what is actually true. Let's examine a few examples:

1. "No one cares about the problems I'm going through." Sometimes, to be brutally honest, there are those who don't really care about our problems. I remember several years ago bringing up a problem of a particular (now retired) toxic leader, and finding there were some who didn't care. But where we create our own truth is when we start believing "no one" cares. Not true. I do! I know our tremendous team of Lt. Col. Amber Heinert (605.390.5434) and those that work with her (Jeff Hurst, Kirsten Preston) care. In fact, you might be surprised to know just how many actually do care! They have been through some of the same hurts, and they listen not just because they have to but because they want to!

2. "It would be better if I just weren't here." Once our depression and hopelessness reaches a level to where we begin to plan to commit suicide, we need urgent care. I had an experience happen to me in April of 2011 that caused me to seriously consider taking my own life. And one of the most painful parts of that time in my life is that no one asked what was the matter. If we are truly to care for our fellow Soldiers and Airmen, we must truly live and not just say: "see something, say something." If you see someone whose behavior is drastically different than normal, ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. It's not easy to ask someone that question. Ask them anyway! And you don't have to do this all by yourself, take them to the emergency room, to a chaplain (605.431.5182 is my #), to a behavioral health provider, or call 1-800-273-TALK to reach the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

3. "No one understands the anger or frustrations that I face." In resiliency training, they differentiate "heat of the moment thoughts" that we easily tune in to versus "icebergs," core values of what you aspire to be or core beliefs of what you believe to be true of yourself. It is easy for a core value to become "no

one understands what I face." Some are going through tremendous pain (similar to the man facing surgery), and not even empathetic friends can understand everything. But there is someone who does! With God, again quoting Ken May, there is always hope for tomorrow because He can always bring something good out of the hardest of times. Not only that, but perhaps the frustrations you face now may enable you to help others face theirs tomorrow. "And the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God," (2 Corinthians 1:34).

It is easy to start believing that no one will ever face as difficult a situation as you are facing now. In response, I would conclude by saying two things. #1 Seek confidential counseling to share these thoughts. Chaplains follow their ecclesiastical and denominational training that requires them to be completely confidential in their counseling. We stand ready to help! #2 Seek perspective when you begin believing this. One of the reasons the Chaplain Corp is behind the effort to bring the "Transfer of Memory" holocaust survivor tribute to JFHQ, Sept. 9-20, is because it reminds us that even the worst of circumstances does not have to destroy hope. When we are going through our own difficulties, whatever and whenever they may be, remind yourself of the truth that was scratched on the wall of a cellar in Cologne during a time when literally millions of Jews were being annihilated . . .

I believe in the sun even when it is not shining;

I believe in love even when feeling it not;

I believe in God even when he is silent.

Remember to also keep the members and families of the 114th, 147th, 152nd and 174th in your prayers during their deployment, and gratefulness to God for the return of the 935th!



Chaplain Lynn Wilson
State/Full-time Support Chaplain



Listen to your NCOs

By Maj. Carol Jordan

Mentorship Committee Chair, Diversity Council - Joint Force Headquarters

As a former enlisted Soldier, NCO, and now as an officer, I have benefited from the mentorship I have received by the devoted NCOs in my career path. Some were in my chain of command. Many were not. But those who chose to invest in that relationship beyond rank have had a tremendous impact on my development in my military career. I only hope that I have enriched their experience and development as much as they have helped me.

As an enlisted Soldier or Aiman, look to your NCOs as trainers, teachers and stewards of institutional knowledge. You will connect with some more than others as is the nature of mentorship. Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you find a NCO that sees your desire to learn more as your initiative to become all you are capable of as a Soldier or Aiman, do your part to ensure that NCOs investment in you produces great fruit. The NCOs that really stand out in my mind are the ones that spend the time training up a whole squad to be like him/her. As a junior NCO, I had already witnessed examples that I would and wouldn't utilize as models of the type of NCO I wanted to become. The NCOs that had the biggest impact on me during that phase of

my career, were true servant leaders. I was blessed to work for a CSM during Desert Storm/Desert Shield that truly emulated the phrase in the NCO Creed, "I know my Soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own." While working for him, Command Sgt. Maj. Scott, in theater, we covered over 20,000 miles. I witnessed him ensure Soldiers in the rear had beds, not just cots; Soldiers on the border had replacement uniforms, care packages, and those ever precious phone calls home; and to order one of his first sergeant to go with us up to visit his troops closer to the front. He left a lasting impact on me and hundreds of other Soldiers under his watch.

As an officer, I had the unusual privilege to not only go back to a unit in which I had served as an NCO, but back to my old platoon. Fortunately, I had learned my lesson well about servant leadership and my success in that position as platoon leader hinged on my willingness to listen to the counsel of my platoon sergeant. He was definitely a fund of institutional knowledge. He also had an amazing skill of being an outstanding mentor not only for the junior NCOs and Soldiers in our platoon, but also for me, as a platoon leader. My relationship as a brother in arms with not only him but the other NCOs in the unit that I had served with as an NCO was critical to our success. Officers need to have an NCO advisor who's not afraid to tell them when they're on the wrong track.

"NCOs will literally either make or break your career and/or unit. For all the training that officers receive, the single most important part of it often is 'listen to your NCOs.'" February 19, 2018, by Angry Staff Officer, 7 Characteristics of Highly Successful Non-Commissioned Officer.

Diversity: It begins with self

By Sgt. Maj. Greg Jenkins (Retired) – U.S. Army Diversity Office

Diversity and inclusion initiatives are becoming more and more prevalent and it is good to see more corporate, academic and government organizations moving toward enhancing the inclusion of all people who make up our diverse organizations. This is a good thing!

There are no shortages of business cases for diversity and the opinions and explanations that illustrate the importance and need for such programs. Something not heard of as much is the importance of individual responsibility that will have to be embraced if such programs are to be successful, and more importantly, sustained. In other words, it begins with self.

Our nation is experiencing a wave of changing demographics that are occurring faster than some experts predicted. This aspect, joined with a rapidly growing world population, is resulting in subsequent increased competition for resources and market share. Couple those aspects with the global business initiatives of other countries around the world and the business case for diversity and inclusion becomes infinitely more important. Hence, we need business strategies that include the types of outcomes that diversity and inclusion programs can provide. Subsequently, these strategies are being developed.

Organizations are claiming that they are going to incorporate diversity and inclusion into their business strategies, and that their new diversity and inclusion efforts will be tied to the over arching organizational goals and objectives. The CEOs of these same organizations are claiming that they will personally lead these efforts, and will provide the necessary and adequate resources required to make these contemporary endeavors resounding successes. But without introspection, without a thorough personal inventory on the part of these leaders, of how they feel about self and other people, I fear many diversity and inclusion initiatives will fall by the wayside. Having personally experienced such a process, I can attest to the moments of realization of self and others and the awakening that such programs can provide through dedicated and serious introspection. Again, it begins with self.

Diversity and inclusion strategies provide instruction on how to measure the effects of said diversity and inclusion programs and how we must hold individuals accountable to the organization's diversity and inclusion objectives. These are key components, but without leaders and organizational members who understand the advantages of embracing and fully engaging the concepts and practices of diversity and inclusion we may never fully realize the potential of the very people who make up our organizations and communities.

Such strategies and programs borne out of the visions of contemporary and committed leaders, coupled with adequate resources while aligned with the over arching goals and objectives of the organization can be and are successful. Diversity and inclusion strategies can capture the talent we require, but again, it begins with self.



The inclusion of diverse people leads to the capture of diverse talent, talent that is in high demand around the world today. The practice of empathy, a key component of inclusion, allows for the possibility of substantial returns on investment in terms of not only the quality of life for stakeholders, but also in enhanced productivity and market share.

Furthermore, respecting and valuing the dignity of others allows people to become recognized for their talents and potential talents, instead of being prejudged on the basis of their color, race, gender, national origin, religious preference or any other description in an endless list of difference that could be cited here.

When leaders begin to embrace the exterior sights, sounds and manners of people different from themselves they can begin to see the knowledge, skills, abilities and potential that all people possess. By learning about self, one can begin to learn about others, and in doing so, leaders can learn to have those courageous conversations that are required if real progress toward inclusion is to take place. If leaders do not first take hold of their own stereotypes and biases, they likely may never get past those deeply held and often incorrect beliefs and fears that may prevent any real sustainable inclusion.

These leaders will miss the best and most important aspects of the very people they could be including on their teams and in their organizations right now.

Diversity and inclusion efforts around the nation and world are growing as leaders and organizations are realizing that advocating diversity and inclusion enhances their over arching business cases and strategic outcomes. These leaders and organizations are right! Recognizing, accepting and leveraging the talents of all peoples are important and will add value to the organization. Nonetheless, without first understanding self, any real efforts to change the organizational culture into one of full inclusion will struggle to succeed. Hence, it begins with self.