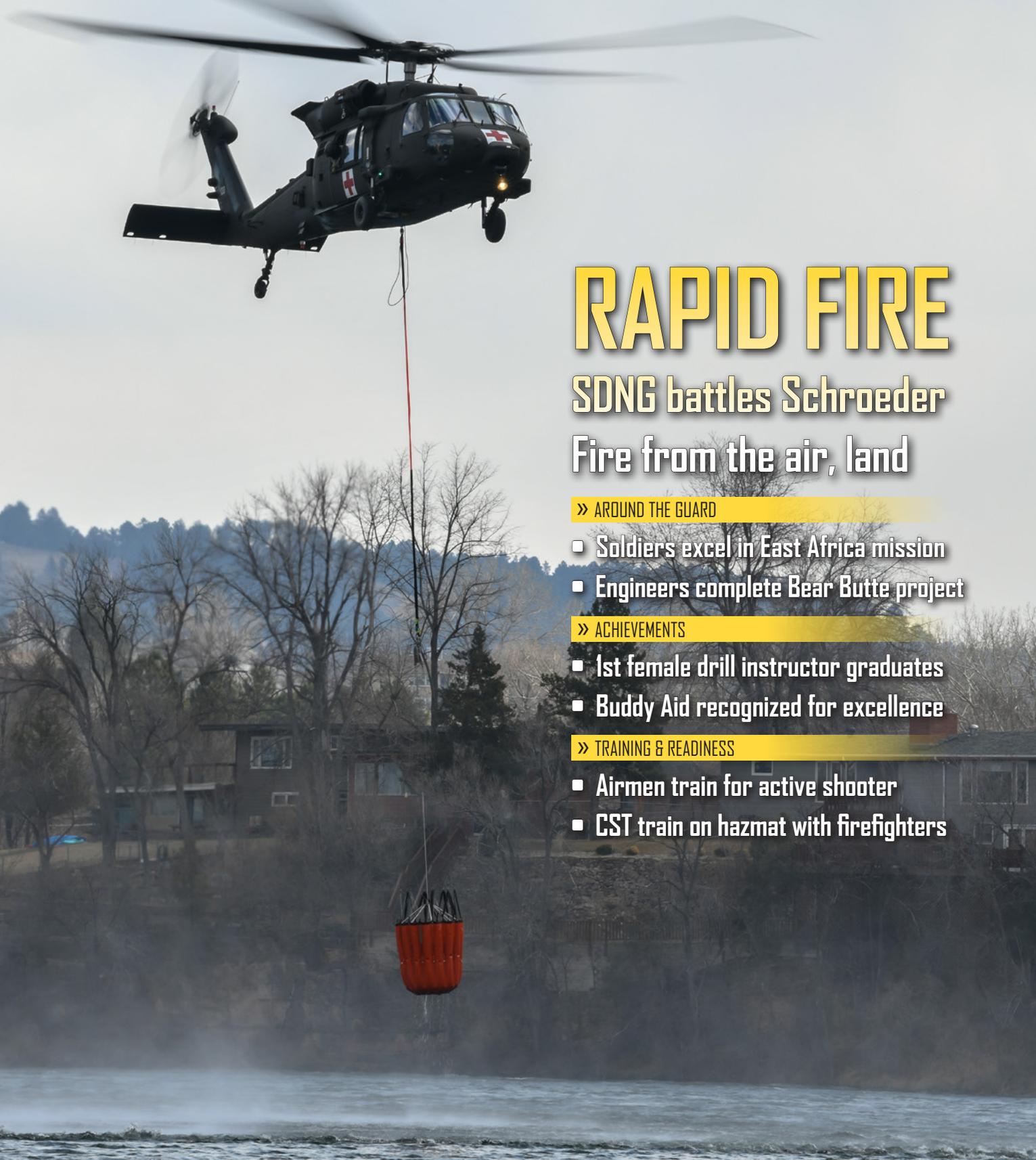


# DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • SUMMER 2021



## RAPID FIRE

SDNG battles Schroeder  
Fire from the air, land

### » AROUND THE GUARD

- Soldiers excel in East Africa mission
- Engineers complete Bear Butte project

### » ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1st female drill instructor graduates
- Buddy Aid recognized for excellence

### » TRAINING & READINESS

- Airmen train for active shooter
- CST train on hazmat with firefighters

# South Dakota NATIONAL GUARD



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The Adjutant General

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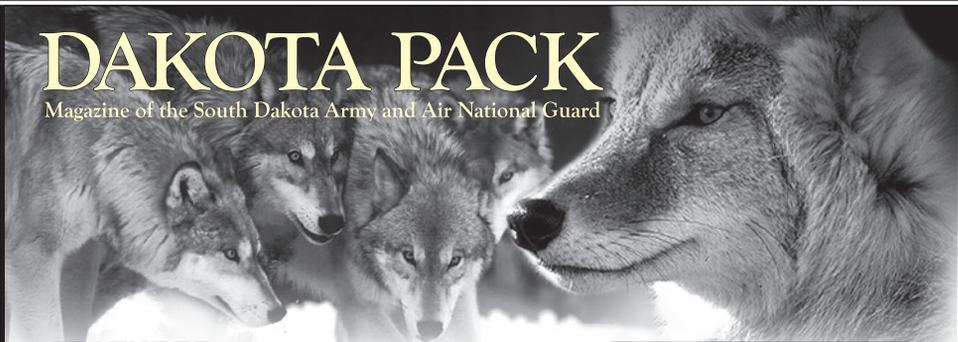
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**Submissions:** Print and photo submissions of general interest to members of the SDNG, their families, civilian employees, veterans and retirees are invited and encouraged. Please send article and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, and comments to: [ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil](mailto:ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil), 605.737.6978. Submissions are subject to editing. Electronic submissions are preferred and digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

# DAKOTA PACK

Magazine of the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard



## FEATURES

- 15 196th MEB Soldiers perform key mission in East Africa
- 17 842nd engineers complete IRT construction project at Bear Butte
- 19 SD Guard members battle Schroeder Fire from air, land



## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 ALPHA CORNER
- THE GUARD STORY
- 4 SDNG names Lieutenant of the Year
- 4 SDARNG names Warrant Officer of the Year
- 5 Buddy Aid recognized for sexual assault prevention
- 6 Military Police Company trains for state, federal missions
- 7 SDNG supports IHS/DST vaccination events on Pine Ridge
- 8 82nd CST, RCFD train together for hazmat response
- 9 SDARNG graduates first female drill instructor
- 9 Soldiers compete to join All-National Guard Marathon Team
- 10 Training to save more lives
- 11 SDNG units host recruitment event near Lake Dahe
- 12 152nd CSSB welcomed to Brookings community
- 13 Employer support integral to SD National Guard mission
- 14 1742nd TC supports annual munitions readiness exercise
- 21 FAMILY FOCUS
- 22 CHAPLAIN'S CORNER
- 23 MENTORSHIP FOCUS

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### On the Cover

A South Dakota National Guard HH-60 Black Hawk helicopter dips its water bucket into Canyon Lake to help fight the Schroeder Fire in Rapid City, March 30, 2021.  
 (Photo by Sgt. Tyler O'Connell)

# Message from the Adjutant General

Can you feel it? I am talking about the energy and excitement as we head into summer. Kids are out of school, people are out and about enjoying life and each other, tourists are pouring into South Dakota, Annual Training is gearing up and best of all, COVID seems to be steadily fading into the background, as South Dakota's COVID infections are now barely present across our communities. It finally feels like we are moving back to normal. Not a "New Normal" as some want to call it, but truly back to normal.

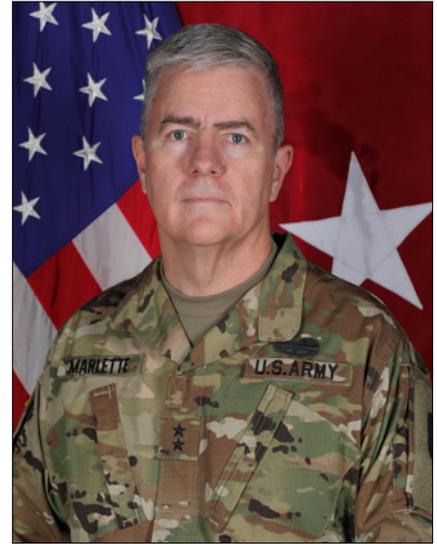
I am also excited for you to have this edition of the Dakota Pack Magazine in your hands. It graphically captures the multitude of things our organization is involved in and how outstanding the men and women who serve in the South Dakota National Guard truly are. You cannot help but swell with pride as we see all the SDNG has been accomplishing over the past few months. Thank you to the entire team who put it together.

As this publication goes out, we are sending off the 641st Aviation Detachment for its deployment to Djibouti. We just completed a ribbon cutting ceremony, symbolizing the completion of our new Army Aviation Readiness Center in Rapid City and we are only days away from welcoming home the 196th MEB from their deployment to Djibouti. The Air National Guard is ramping up for a major exercise with NORTHCOM, geared at defending threats from the polar cap region. Golden Coyote is in full swing and our Officer Candidate School at our 196th Regional Training Institute (RTI) has just kicked off Phase 1 with students from all across the country. Each of these events are continued testimony to the great things happening in the South Dakota National

Guard.

As we head into summer, this is a good time for me to stress safety in all you do. This includes safety in training events, work tasks, time with family and recreation. It only takes a careless moment to change lives forever. Each year, as our force becomes more active in the summer, we see an increase in safety incidents. I urge you to factor safety into all that you do. As leaders, always set the standard, always insist on strict adherence to our safety practices.

It is a privilege and an honor to serve with each and every one of you. Thank you for your service to our State and Nation and thank you for choosing to be a member of the best National Guard in the nation. The South Dakota National Guard.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey P. Marlette".

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey P. Marlette  
The Adjutant General

# Message from the Senior Enlisted Leader

During the early American Revolutionary War, there was very little standardization or guidance for the duties and responsibilities of the noncommissioned officer. The Continental Army lacked strong central command and was made up of state-run militias operating independently of each other. Each militia operated by its own rules and regulations.

In 1777, a Prussian officer named Friedrich Von Steuben volunteered to help. General Von Steuben's influence almost instantly helped to establish the identity of the U.S. Army.

In 1779, Von Steuben's publication, "Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States," was ready to be printed. Due to the war, however, there was a scarcity of paper. The first printer decided to bind the book with the blue paper he had on hand. This is how the book got the nickname: The Blue Book. In March of 1779, Congress endorsed it and ordered it to be used throughout the Army. Many of the state militias also adopted The Blue Book. In 1792, Washington pushed through the Uniformed Militia Act, which included the use of Von Steuben's regulations.

The Blue Book's guidelines on personnel management replaced the British model of class and station. Instead, Von Steuben melded all the ranks into a unified force, founded on an inflexible but even-handed chain of command. Von Steuben simplified his writings, putting in plain language what needed to be learned, how to teach it, and why. The U.S. Army's discipline nearly matched that of the best professional European armies.

The Blue Book remained the official guide to military training and maneuvers until it was replaced in 1812. Many of Von Steuben's writings are still in use in today's manuals, such as TC 3-21.5 Drill and Ceremony.

The usefulness of The Blue Book led to the publication of



the first official Noncommissioned Officer Guide in 1904. The latest edition of the guide, TC 7-22.7, was published in April 2015.

The current guide provides important information, such as the history of the NCO Corps and the importance of NCO professional development, and defines the roles of the NCO. Duties and responsibilities of the NCO in 1779

compared to now have largely remained the same. Prior to The Blue Book, NCOs were selected, but received no formal training for the positions they held. With clear-cut guidance, NCOs could accomplish what was expected of them.

In 1779, there was no formal method of selecting qualified people to serve as NCOs. Regimental commanders noticed certain traits in people and promoted on this merit alone. The Blue Book emphasized the importance of selecting quality Soldiers for the NCO Corps.

From the Revolutionary War to World War II NCOs received their promotions directly from the regimental commander. This meant NCOs that transferred regiments would lose their rank as an NCO, unless special permission was granted by the general in chief of the Army. This allowed the stripes to stay with the regiment.

Today there is a selection process (EPS). NCOs are evaluated on the whole Soldier concept. A board establishes a base line & the Soldier's record is evaluated. This allows for the selection of the best of the best and changing units does not take the NCO's stripes away.

There have been many changes in the NCO Corps since The Blue Book was first written in 1779. Rank structure, the selection process and training of the NCO have greatly changed as well. Yet the majority of the responsibilities remain the same. NCOs continue to train and take care of Soldiers and their families (This is My Squad). The South Dakota National Guard has recognized the importance of a strong, professional NCO Corps. As long as the SDNG continues to select and train quality NCOs, we will remain the "Backbone of the Army."



Sincerely,

*Patrick Couser*

Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser  
Senior Enlisted Leader

## SD National Guard names Lieutenant of the Year

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota National Guard selected 1st Lt. Andrew Dellman as its Lieutenant of the Year and recipient of the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award. Dellman, who serves as a full time intelligence officer with the 114th Operations Support Squadron in Sioux Falls, received the award as the most exceptional lieutenant after competing against officers from several of the SDNG's major commands.

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

"Lieutenant Dellman is an immense talent and invaluable member of the 114th Fighter Wing," said Lt. Col. Jon Friedman, commander 114th Operations

Support Squadron  
"He is a foundational officer and airman capable of serving and leading at the highest levels. It is a privilege to have him on my team and expect nothing but great things from him throughout his career."

Dellman enlisted in the South Dakota Air National

Guard in 2008 as an aircrew egress systems mechanic – achieving the rank of staff sergeant. In 2014, he began working for the SDANG as an accounting technician in the finance office. He received a commission as a second lieutenant in 2017 after completing Total Force Officer Training and assigned as an intelligence officer.

Dellman has served on multiple tours overseas, to include duty in South Korea in 2013 and he is currently deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Resolute Support. He also is a 2013 graduate of the University of South Dakota and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in history education – where he spent several years teaching social studies and mathematics and coached boys basketball at Lyman High School in Presho.

Other officers representing their major command for this year's award competition were 1st Lt. Drew Gillogly from the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, and 1st Lt. Tyler Gregor from the 109th Regional Support Group.



1st Lt. Andrew Dellman

## SD Army National Guard names Warrant Officer of the Year

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota Army National Guard selected Chief Warrant Officer 4 Clinton Store as its Warrant Officer of the Year and recipient of the Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael F. O'Connor Award. Store, who serves as an instructor for the Warrant Officer Candidate School with 1st Battalion, 196th Regional Training Institute in Sturgis, received the award as the most exceptional warrant officer after competing against warrant officers from several of the SDARNG's major commands.

The CW4 Michael F. O'Connor Award was established in 2000 to recognize the most outstanding SDARNG Warrant Officer of the past year. Criterion for the award is based on exceptional qualities of technical

knowledge, leadership, dedication and initiative.

"CW4 Store has been a member of the SDARNG for more than 20 years, with 28 years total (military) service. The experience and knowledge from his years of service definitely make him an asset to our regiment and the entire organization,"



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Clinton Store

said Col. Deb Bartunek, commander of the 196th Regiment (RTI).

Store enlisted in the Illinois National Guard in 1993 as a transport operator. From 1995 to 2000, he served on active duty and transferred to the SDARNG's 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion. In 2006, Store attended Warrant Officer Candidate School and was assigned as a signal warrant. He served in roles as an information systems analyst, technician, and network systems manager for Joint Force Headquarters, 115th Signal Company, 152nd Combat Sustainment Battalion and 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. Store is also a combat veteran and deployed to Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011. In his civilian career, Store works for the U.S. Department of the Interior as a cyber-security specialist. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems from Baker College and a Master of Science degree in cyber security from Dakota State University. Other warrant officers representing their major command for this year's award were CW2 Steven Fritch with the 109th Regional Support Group and CW2 Ryan Peterson with the 196th MEB.

# Buddy Aid recognized for excellence in sexual assault prevention

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – Establishing an organization that is optimized to support and sustain the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive sexual assault prevention program can be a long-term undertaking. However one South Dakota Army National Guard Soldier has made it her mission to not only develop an effective program but also create a culture change toward prevention in units.

The training program is called Buddy Aid, and it aims to operationalize the response to sexual assault and build a culture where no victim walks alone. Developed by Maj. Bridget Flannery, SDARNG sexual harassment, assault, response and prevention master trainer, Buddy Aid is a basic Soldier-skill training program that teaches a first responder-style approach to sexual assault.

“Sexual assault in the military is currently treated differently than other kinetic threats. This has left Soldiers unprepared to respond when someone discloses that they’ve been the victim of sexual assault – and because sexual assault is a threat on- and off-duty, in combat and at home station, it is categorically the most likely threat faced by uniformed Soldiers,” said Flannery. Buddy Aid operationalizes the response to sexual assault within the Army National Guard, meaning Soldiers treat it like any kinetic threat from any adversary.

“Just like we train for medical first aid, all Soldiers need to know their ‘actions on contact’ for someone who has just disclosed having been sexually assaulted,” Flannery said.

“Buddy Aid is the right training to ensure we absolutely take care of Soldiers,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Oster, assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG. “It addresses the uncomfortable truth that we may very well have to deal with the aftermath of sexual assault, because the enemy gets a vote, and like any type of first aid, we want to make sure our Soldiers are prepared to render immediate and effective care.”

Buddy Aid has become so effective, it received the National Guard Bureau’s 2020 Promoting Excellence in Prevention Award for its comprehensive and innovative approach.

Flannery, a unit victim advocate for 15 years, first developed Buddy Aid in 2013 while serving as a tactical intelligence officer, and as

her unit’s unit victim advocate in Afghanistan. Understanding how well-prepared Soldiers were to respond to different types of enemy attacks, she came to appreciate how differently sexual assault and other threats were treated. To mitigate the threat, they needed to first recognize and then treat sexual assault like a kinetic threat, like all other threats faced on the battlefield.

“Predators seek soft targets, and this training prepares Soldiers at all levels to present hard targets by destigmatizing the conversation around sexual assault and by incorporating sexual assault into daily operations,” Flannery said. “Buddy Aid helps to shrink predators’ hunting grounds within our formation.”

Buddy Aid is a one-hour course designed for Soldiers of all ranks. Flannery also built a

briefs, pre-combat checks, and scenario injects during field and staff training exercises.

“Operationalization of the sexual assault fight will positively impact readiness and retention,” said Flannery. “Fewer victims will leave our ranks when they recognize that the operating environment is safe to disclose, get help and report. And incorporating prevention and response into daily operations increases the likelihood that predators will hunt elsewhere.”

Upon returning from Afghanistan, Flannery continued her efforts to develop the first-responder style training. She began working with mental health professionals specializing in military sexual trauma, or MST, from the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center, the Sioux Falls Veterans’ Center and full time SDNG SAPR

personnel. In its earliest stages in Afghanistan, convoy commanders, company commanders and first sergeants also provided key inputs that informed Buddy Aid’s methodology, said Flannery.

By 2014, Buddy Aid training was validated with the support of mental health professionals and began to see implementation in SDARNG units. Since then, Flannery has continued to train SDARNG units and multiple Regional Training Institute classes, impacting Army National Guard units nationwide.

In 2019, the National Guard Bureau’s Warrior Resilience and Fitness Innovation Incubator selected Buddy Aid as one of eleven inaugural projects, and the Institute for Defense Analyses recognized

it as a promising practice on the continuum of evidence of effectiveness. The Buddy Aid Train the Trainer course is now being offered to National Guard victim advocates nationwide.

Brig. Gen. Oster, who also served as the battalion commander in Afghanistan when Buddy Aid was in its infancy, said he is excited about the nationwide application of the training.

“In my experience, the impact of this training is the provision of immediate care which increases the likelihood of recovery for victims and in some cases, saves lives,” said Oster. “Buddy Aid’s candid approach creates an environment where people feel safe to get help. I’ve seen first-hand the climate-change this creates in a unit, and that’s certainly good for the victims we serve alongside. It’s also good for readiness. If we have the opportunity to get this in front of every formation in the country - we should seize that opportunity.”



(Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard)

**Maj. Bridget Flannery, SHARP master trainer and developer of Buddy Aid, leads victim advocates through training on the program designed to help respond to sexual assault, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia, March 2.**

Train the Trainer program to insure quality of implementation throughout units.

Because of its innovative approach in treating sexual assault like any other kinetic threat, Buddy Aid negates the training fatigue that can sometimes accompany Soldiers attending a ‘mandatory’ sexual assault brief.

“Buddy Aid changes the conversation about sexual assault,” said Flannery. “It’s built on the premise that when we talk to Soldiers in a language they understand – an operational, tactical language – they’re able to respond with a mission-oriented, muscle-memory mind-set. That’s good for readiness, and it’s good for the victims in our ranks.”

After receiving the training, Flannery says Soldiers recognize how sexual assault prevention and response is operationalized; by including it in deliberate risk assessments, battle drills, mission

# 235th Military Police Company trains for state, federal missions

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

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota Army National Guard’s 235th Military Police Detachment Company conducted a field training exercise April 10 at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City to prepare for its state and federal missions.

The primary mission of the 235th is detainee operations, but is also capable of conducting internal and external security operations for facilities. The field training exercise, or FTX, prepares Soldiers by rehearsing tactics, techniques and procedures, coordination and team building.

“This is a great experience to get outside and get back to the basics of Soldiering,” said Capt. Pat Moran, commander of the 235th. “There’s a little bit of chaos so they can think on their feet and so the junior enlisted are looking to their leaders for advice in an uncomfortable situation.”

Soldiers rehearsed combat patrols, enemy prisoner of war operations and detainee operations and transports.

“The training we’ve done is a culminating event to take some of our mission essential tasks we have to do as an MP company and put them all into one big exercise,” said Sgt. Derek Malone, a squad leader for the 235th. “This way we’re able to train on multiple aspects of a mission that we will eventually be assigned and enable us to fine-tune our skills.”

The 235th has deployed three times since the formation of the unit in 1999, and has recently converted from a law enforcement company to a detention company.

“The thing I’m looking forward to most is growing in my squad leader role and being able to be a good leader to the Soldiers I’ll have under me,” said Malone. “To get hands-on and have that first-line level of leadership with your Soldiers is a great experience to get.”

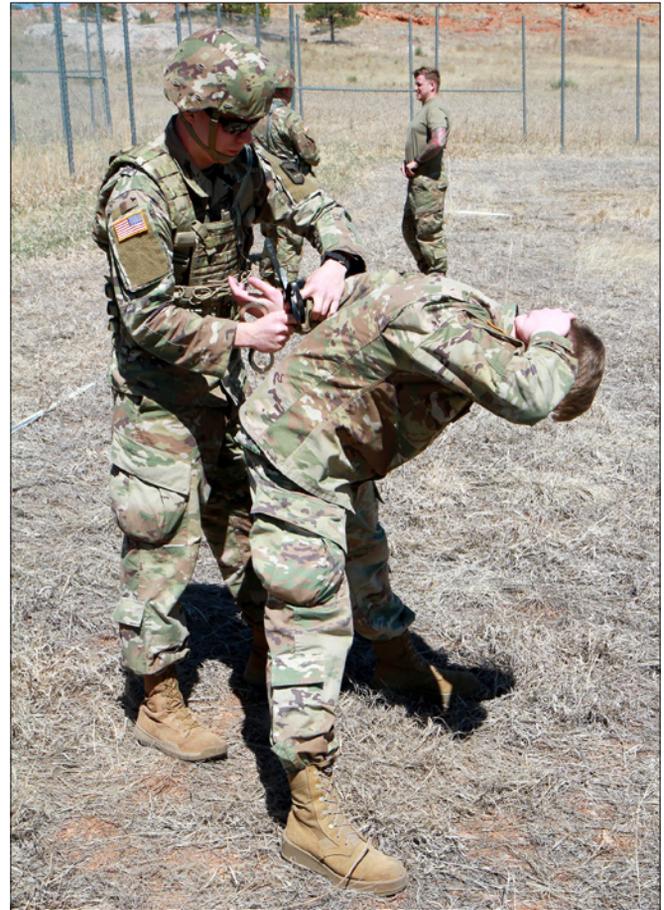
There are two detachments for the 235th, one in Rapid City and the other in Sioux Falls, and they come together for training only a couple times a year. This FTX was the first time they’ve trained together since Moran took command in October.

“One purpose of this FTX is team cohesion; we mixed up the squads so the Rapid City and Sioux Falls sides (platoons) are actually blended together, they’re not just their organic squads,” said Moran. “Team cohesion is important to make sure we work together in an austere environment where people are put out of their comfort zone of seeing and training with the same people every drill.

“The second purpose is for leadership evaluation,” Moran continued. “We are a detention correction facility company, but it’s important to see leadership aspects out in the field and to see basic Soldiering skills so junior enlisted Soldiers can look up to their squad leaders and see that they’re the authoritative role.”

While the FTX provided all members of the unit the opportunity to rehearse and train on mission essential tasks, the main priority was to hone leadership skills by placing Soldiers in uncomfortable situations so they learn from their experiences.

“The intent for this FTX wasn’t to evaluate tactics of Soldiers, it was to evaluate leadership,” said Moran. “I wanted to see how the platoon sergeants conducted operations uncomfortably and get them back to basic Soldiering skills so they’re ready for anything.”



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

**Spc. Bryce Charlton with the 235th Military Police Company conducts detainee operations April 10 at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City.**



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

**Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Company respond to direct fire April 10 at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City.**

# SD Guard supports vaccination events on Pine Ridge



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

**Sgt. Hien Nguyen, a medic with the 730th Area Support Medical Company, gives the COVID-19 vaccine to an Oglala Sioux Tribe member during a COVID-19 vaccination and health fair event in Kyle, April 16.**

## By Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce - 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KYLE - The South Dakota Army National Guard provided support to Indian Health Services and the Oglala Sioux Tribe during two COVID-19 vaccination events on the Pine Ridge Reservation, April 16-17.

IHS in partnership with the OST requested the support of the SDARNG for vaccination events in Kyle and Pine Ridge to create an additional opportunity for members of the community.

“We want to provide multiple options for community members to receive the COVID-19 vaccine,” said Dayle Knutson, chief nurse of the Great Plains Area for IHS. “This is another event that we can host in conjunction with our tribal partners to ensure we provide adequate accessibility to COVID-19 shots.”

“We are pleased to be partnering with IHS and the Oglala Sioux Tribe to support these vaccination events and assist the Native American communities on Pine Ridge,” said Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general. “During the past year, the South Dakota National Guard has provided a historic level of support to our state during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to this opportunity to continue to serve our communities.”

The SDARNG’s 730th Area Support Medical Company out of Vermillion provided medical personnel to assist in administering the vaccine and to provide administrative support.

“It’s nice to feel meaningful and that we’re doing something good for

the community, not just our own Guard members but for civilians as well - it’s a good purpose,” said Spc. Shelby Roda, a combat medic with the 730th.

Vaccines were available for residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation and patients of the Pine Ridge IHS Service Unit - aged 16 years and older. The events also included a health fair to offer information and provide small health program items for community members.

Events like these make the COVID-19 vaccine available for community members that may not be able to receive it yet elsewhere.

“I’m currently a college student, and they’re not offering the vaccine as much as they are here, so I thought it was important to get it at home rather than wait,” said Emily Knutson, an OST member and student at South Dakota State University. “I’m here to get the vaccine because I haven’t been able to hug my grandma in over a year, and my best friend has type I diabetes and I haven’t been able to see her in over a year.”

Providing community members the opportunity to improve and learn about their wellbeing has multiple effects on overall health.

“The more people we can vaccinate and bring in to educate on the scientific facts, the better we can stop COVID-19,” said Maj. Josh Paull, a physician’s assistant for the SDNG’s Medical Command. “COVID-19 has obviously impacted the physical health of our communities, but it’s also had devastating effects on the mental health of many. By offering vaccines and a path to normal, it not only helps the health of our communities but also the mental health by bringing us back together.”

# 82nd CST, Rapid City firefighters train for hazmat response

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY - The South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team trained alongside personnel from the Rapid City Fire Department for their annual hazardous materials training in Rapid City at Fire Station 4, April 28-29.

The joint training provides both organizations the opportunity to refresh skills and knowledge of hazardous materials, apply techniques and tools used to safely contain them, and share best practices when responding to hazmat incidences.

"We train with civilian agencies quite often, and our goal is to train with them almost every time we do a collective exercise, which can be about once a month or every other month," said Capt. Jodi Mack, 82nd deputy commander. "All members of the 82nd CST are hazmat technician certified, and this training brings it down to the basics of what you need to know as a hazmat technician."

"We go through a lot of the techniques that we don't do every day and then catch up on anything that is new or coming out," said Lt. Tammy Stadel with the RCFD. "It's awesome for us! We don't run very many hazmat calls annually, so this is a good refresher to train with the personnel who do this on a little bit more regular basis."

The 82nd CST is an all-hazards response team capable of detecting chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) agents and substances. The team provides technical assessment, advice and assistance to civilian authorities and agencies when responding to emergencies and disasters involving CBRNE materials.

The training involved about two dozen CST members and firefighters from the RCFD's Station 4 and 6, which includes personnel that specialize in decontamination and hazmat.

"The fire department is going to be the primary local response to anything that happens in the Rapid City area, and we specialize in some things that they don't necessarily train in all the time," said Staff Sgt. Drew Haffner, 82nd survey team chief. "We like to work with Stations 4 and 6, since they specialize in hazmat, and that is right in our wheelhouse."

The training involved CST members and firefighters teaming up in small groups and rotating through a series of stations to work with



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

**Members of the 82nd Civil Support Team and the Rapid City Fire Department use a Betts valve on tanker simulator during their annual hazardous material training in Rapid City, April 29.**



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

**Capt. Russ Reed checks the protective equipment of Staff Sgt. Jerico Witte as members of the 82nd Civil Support Team and the Rapid City Fire Department conduct their annual hazardous material training in Rapid City, April 29.**

simulators, substance sampling and site characteristics. The stations included several kits and simulators to address leaks with different types of cylinders: 150 pound, one ton, and railcar-type cylinders.

"We have simulators that we can go through and actually put the kits on what we would simulate in handling a leak situation," said Stadel. "We are also using a Betts valve to mitigate a leak, so we can off load on a tanker truck that's tipped over, and that would be for some type of flammable gas or liquid.

"We are also doing sampling and site characteristic, where we are looking at what kind of chemicals or solutions there may be, so we can get a sample to take back to the science personnel or try to identify it in the field," Stadel continued.

The training also involves the teams wearing their hazmat protective suits with a self-contained breathing apparatus. Haffner, who served as a RCFD firefighter for five years before joining the CST, says training together like this enhances communication between the teams.

"Iron sharpens iron, everybody coming together and working together is extremely important...that way if we were to get called onto a scene, they know how we work and we know how they work" he said.

Another advantage of the training is to strengthen relationships and coordination between both organizations.

"These types of training events are so essential to our team, because it builds relationships with our local first responders," said Mack. "When we respond, we're a support role to them, so it's important we get to know each other and know our capabilities - because the faster we can respond and sync together, the more effective we are."

"It builds a lot of the relationships we need, so when we do arrive on a big scene we know what the CST expects and what they need from us prior to arrival to help the whole scene go a little bit better," added Stadel.

## SD Army National Guard graduates first female drill sergeant

By SDNG Public Affairs

RAPID CITY - The South Dakota Army National Guard graduated its first female drill sergeant from the U.S. Army's Drill Sergeant Academy at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on April 10.

Staff Sgt. Erin Fagnan, of Rapid City, becomes the first female from South Dakota to attend and graduate from the academy while serving as a SDARNG



Staff Sgt. Erin Fagnan

Soldier. Fagnan also graduated with honors in the course - achieving the Commandant's List - placing her in the top 10 in her class out of 107 students. Fagnan is a member of the SDARNG's Recruiting and Retention Battalion and serves as a drill instructor for the Recruit Sustainment Program - which prepares new enlisted recruits for Basic Combat Training.

"You shouldn't let other peoples' expectations define what you're able to do in your life," Staff Sgt. Erin Fagnan said. "If you have a goal to become a drill sergeant, or whatever it is with your life whether you're male or female, you have to understand that in order to achieve that goal, you have to be willing to get out of your comfort zone. And you might be the only one doing it."

Fagnan has over 11 years of service in the SDARNG and has served as a bridge crewmember with the 200th Engineer Company and as a Service Member and Family Support Program liaison with Joint Force Headquarters. She is also a combat veteran, deploying with the 200th to Afghanistan from May 2011 to May 2012.

In her civilian career, Fagnan is an engineer III with the SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources' Drinking Water Program in Rapid City. Erin has been with DANR since 2010. She is also the statewide rule manager for the Safe Drinking Water Act's Lead and Copper Rule, conducts sanitary surveys at water systems, and serves as South Dakota's Capacity Development coordinator.

A native of Aberdeen, Fagnan attended Northern State University, graduating Magna cum Laude with a double major, earning Bachelor of Science degrees in chemistry and environmental science. She holds a Master of Science in civil/environmental engineering from the S.D. School of Mines and Technology.

She has also completed the John Maxwell Team Leadership, Coaching, Speaking, and Training Development Program, and is a U.S. Army Level 1, Master Resilience Trainer. Using these certifications, Fagnan has developed her own company, Powerfully Equipped, LLC., and uses her military and civic sense of duty along with her professional achievements to promote resiliency through speaking engagements.

## SDNG Soldiers compete to join All National Guard Marathon Team



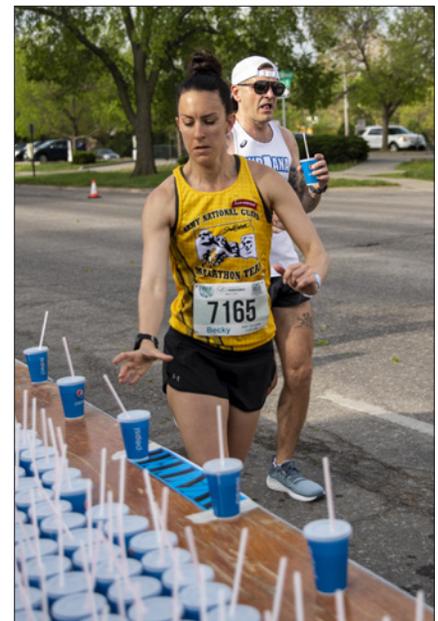
LINCOLN, Neb. - Seven Soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard compete to earn a spot on the All-Guard Marathon Team during the Lincoln Marathon time trials in Lincoln, May 2.

Each May, hundreds of Air and Army National Guard athletes from each state and territory compete in the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Nebraska in an attempt to earn a spot on the All-Guard Marathon Team. The All-Guard Team proudly represents the National Guard at several major running events across the nation and has proven to be an outstanding recruiting and retention tool as members serve as warrior-citizen-athlete.

Richard Langdeaux, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Joel Engle, 152nd

Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Rebecca Linder, 1742nd Transportation Company, made the All-Guard Marathon Team. Linder also placed 2nd overall in the female category.

Four other Soldiers also competed in the time trials: Louis du Randt, 152nd CSSB, Kenny Maas and Jacob Hernandez, 153rd Engineer Battalion, and Amber Gustafson, 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.



(Photo by Nebraska National Guard)

**Rebecca Linder, 1742nd Transportation Company, grabs water off a table during the Lincoln Marathon time trials in Lincoln, Neb., May 2.**

# Training to save more lives

By Tech. Sgt. Duane Duimstra  
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



(Photos by Tech. Sgt. Duane Duimstra)

**114th Fighter Wing security forces Airmen clear a building during an active shooter training on March 6, in Sioux Falls. The main goal now is to lessen the number of casualties and injuries by sending two or even a single officer to respond immediately and enter the building.**

SIOUX FALLS - Protecting everyone at Joe Foss Field is what the 114th Fighter Wing security forces Airmen prepare and train for. This is why active shooter training is important and held on a regular basis. The 114th recent active shooter training showed the changes to their procedure to protect the life of others.

The training was set up to be as realistic as possible with two simulated shooters and civilians. This allowed them to practice the updated response to active shooter incidents. The main goal now is to lessen the number of casualties and injuries. This means that two or even a single officer will respond immediately and enter the building.

"In the past, officers who respond to active shooter incidents are supposed to contain and assess the situation and wait for SWAT or a special unit to go in. We are now responding as fast as possible," said Tech Sgt. Cody Lowe, 114th Security Forces squad leader.

The training added a full-scale team that included the incident commander, team leads, and team members. The goal is to have proper communication and execute the orders given by the commander. Simunition rounds and weapons were used to make it more realistic for SFS Airmen and allow them to engage and take down the shooters. Along with this, they needed to overcome any issues that might arise including radio malfunctions and uncooperative civilians.

"We wanted Airmen to think independently but still follow the incident



commander's orders and overcome any issues that may arise safely," said Lowe.

Active shooters or other attacks is something we don't want to happen but the 114th Security Forces Airmen are ready to respond and act quickly.

"It is critical training because we need to act to ensure limiting the injuries and loss of life," said Lowe.

# SDARNG units host recruitment event near Lake Oahe



(Photo by Sgt. Breanne Donnell)

Potential and new recruits to the South Dakota Army National Guard stand by a HH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a recruiting event near Lake Oahe Dam, April 24.

**By Sgt. Breanne Donnell – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

FORT PIERRE – Potential future South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers participated in a recruiting event held at Oahe Dam, near Fort Pierre, April 24.

South Dakota recruiters coordinated with the 153rd Engineer Battalion and the 200th and 211th Engineer Companies during their units’ field training exercise to host a recruiting event that demonstrated Soldier tasks and skills for different military occupational specialties (MOS), giving potential recruits and newly enlisted Soldiers a chance to get close and personal with equipment and operations.

“This is an opportunity for us to get into the field and do some rehearsals for our upcoming annual training,” said Lt. Col. Jason Thomson, 153rd Battalion commander. “We exercised a lot of different things and tied in really good MOS training with a recruiting event to give back to the community and to show our families what we do out in the field.”

This event was also supported by Company C, 1/189th Aviation Regiment who brought in HH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to support

both the training units and the recruiting event with air support for medical evacuations and to display the helicopters for the community.

Units provided weapons training with blanks, dismounted foot-patrol training with paint balls, and hands-on weapon and equipment displays.

“This event makes me feels like I’m part of something bigger, seeing that I can be out their building bridges and helping the community,” said Joshua Strand, recent recruit to the SDARNG. “I’m very excited.”

These events provide exposure to daily operations and military procedures, and helps those thinking about joining the National Guard see what a day in the life of a Soldier would be like.

“This event has been tremendous and it helps to put the civilian right into the middle of the action of training operations. This is often their first experience in the military, and they are saying it is amazing,” said Sgt. 1st Class Dan Heil, SDARNG recruiter. “Often events are static displays of equipment and weapons to show them how they work, but they aren’t as good as this. For them to see this in full play is what makes this opportunity truly tremendous.”



(Photo by Sgt. Breanne Donnell)

Potential and new recruits to the South Dakota Army National Guard, alongside their families, were able to float on a floating bridge segment on Lake Oahe during a coordinated event near Fort Pierre, April 24.



(Photo by Sgt. Breanne Donnell)

Potential and new recruits to the South Dakota Army National Guard were lead on foot patrol training with paint ball guns during a coordinated event near Oahe Dam, Fort Pierre, April 24.

# 152nd CSSB welcomed to the Brookings community

By Maj. Bridget Flannery – Joint Force Headquarters

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I don't know if the Guard makes people



(Photos by Spc. Mikaela Birath)

**A ribbon cutting and open house was held by the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Brookings, May 1.**

better or you just find better people in the Guard, but I've found a lot of nice people here," added Larsen.

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

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

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

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

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

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



(Photos by Spc. Mikaela Birath)

**Soldiers from the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion visit with community members during a unit open house in Brookings, May 1.**



(Photos by Spc. Mikaela Birath)

**A Soldier from the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion explains the operation of a .50 caliber machine gun during a community open house in Brookings, May 1.**

# Employer support integral to SD National Guard mission

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – Civilian employers of National Guard members provide an integral level of support to the South Dakota National Guard mission. Employers add to a strong national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support employees serving in the National Guard.

Businesses and organizations support the readiness of their National Guard employees by providing time off work, schedule flexibility, and other assistance, in order for them to complete their monthly and annual trainings periods, or when activated in support of domestic operations and wartime missions.

“Employers provide a pivotal role in their support to the National Guard and their Guard member employees,” said Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general. “Without their support, it would make it more difficult for our service members to be ready when they are called upon.”

Of the SDNG’s more than 4,200 members, over 3,100 of them serve on a part-time basis while pursuing a civilian career or higher education goals.

“The majority of Guard members are part-time soldiers and airmen who have fulltime civilian jobs and careers,” said Jim White, state chair for the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve of South Dakota. “The support of employers whose employees are away for military training or deployments add to the success of the National Guard preparing for and accomplishing its missions.”

This employer supports provides National Guard member with the peace of mind and flexibility they need to leave their civilians jobs to prepare and focus on their military training and job duties or when activated for a state or federal mission.

Just last year, the SDNG deployed 490 service members in support of federal deployments to more than a dozen countries worldwide. The SDNG also activated nearly 400 soldiers and airmen for state response to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing over 35,000 man-days of support, and over 200 provided support to wildland fire, search and rescue, and civil unrest events.

“The SDNG provided a historic level of support to the state and nation in 2020, and employers equally provided a tremendous level of support,” said Marlette. “Our employers had to adjust having their employees deployed



(Courtesy photo)

**Over the last 15 years, more than a dozen businesses and organizations from South Dakota have been nominated for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, with five receiving the award.**

for extended periods of time away from their business. We cannot appreciate and thank them enough for their sacrifices.”

Service members’ knowing they still have their job to return home to adds to their peace of mind and sense of security, allowing them to focus on this mission.

“Being deployed away from their family, home and job can often create a sense of anxiety and worry for service members – wondering if everything is going to be okay while they are away,” said Capt. Chad Carlson, ESGR-SD program director. “The support and reassurance employers provide to their employees, knowing they will still have a job to return to, helps to ease any concerns.”

Employers also add to that peace of mind by ensuring their employees receive re-employment rights or any additional pay, benefits, or promotions they would of otherwise been granted or eligible for while away serving their state and country.

The relationship between employers and their service members is vital to a successful partnership, and communication and understanding is key. Service members need to ensure they provide advance notice to their employers about upcoming military training or pending deployments, and if deployed, both need to understand what their employment and re-employment rights are by law.

To ensure effective relationships exist

between employers and the National Guard and their employees, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is there to help. ESGR is the lead U.S. Defense Department program promoting cooperation and understanding between civilian employers and their National Guard and Reserve employees.

Through ESGR, the level of South Dakota employer support has been recognized throughout the state and nation. Over the last 15 years, more than a dozen South Dakota businesses and organizations have been nominated nationally for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, with five receiving the award. The Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their outstanding support of their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

“Recognizing employers for their support and contributions of their service members strengthens our nation’s military,” said White. “Fostering the relationship between employers and the soldiers and airmen who work for them is vitally important, and employers understanding what they do and how their employees fit into that equation, is critical to their success.”

If employers or service members have questions about ESGR, please contact them at 605-737-6540 or [chad.j.carlson.mil@mail.mil](mailto:chad.j.carlson.mil@mail.mil).

# 1742nd TC supports annual munitions readiness exercise



(Courtesy photo)

By Sgt. 1st Class Rebecca Wood – Blue Grass Army Depot

RICHMOND, Ky. – South Dakota National Guard members from the 1742nd Transportation Company found themselves a long way from home this week, getting their M915 long-haul tractor trailers loaded with munitions at Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) in Richmond, Kentucky, for subsequent transport to Crane Army Ammunition Activity (CAAA) in Indiana.

The 1742nd is just one of several Army National Guard units partnering with ammo storage locations around the country as part of an Army Materiel Command (AMC) initiative called, Operation Patriot Press 2021 (OPP-21). OPP-21 provides units real-world mission work throughout AMC subordinate commands to improve Army strategic objectives in readiness and total force integration.

“Besides directly impacting overall Army Readiness,” said BGAD Commander Col. Steve Dorris, “Operation Patriot Press addresses other strategic objectives, including Total Force Integration. The exercise provides opportunity for actual missions to and from designated locations, transporting conventional munitions as required. OPP-21 provides Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers real-world evolutions that are both challenging and enable assessment of internal training objectives for these transportation organizations.”

While waiting to complete his vehicle inspection at the BGAD shipping center, truck driver Pfc. Grayson Irvine said he loved participating in OPP-21.

“I chose this job occupation in the Army because I love to travel,” said Irvine. “I participated in this mission last year and looked forward to doing it again during this year’s annual training. It’s exhilarating to go

**Soldiers in M915 trucks from the 1742nd Transportation Company haul munitions from the Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond, Kentucky to Crane Army Ammunition Activity in Indiana during Operation Patriot Press.**

through big cities, see new environments, and talk to different people at the truck stops. I would never have this opportunity without being a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard.”

Besides the individual positive experiences and retention benefits for the 1742nd Transportation Company, Sgt. First Class Megan Krahn, the unit’s readiness noncommissioned officer (NCO) and assistant truck master said OPP-21 provides a long-term measurement of unit readiness other annual training experiences just can’t provide these soldiers.

“Any time our soldiers can get behind a wheel, they are happy and they get the hauling experiences they need,” said Krahn. “Last year during OPP-20, the unit had many new soldiers, but most of them are back again this year, better-timed on conduct of downloads, quicker vehicle inspections, and a better understanding of what an Army transportation unit needs to do to be successful.”

According to OPP-21 Liaison (LNO) Sgt. First Class Paulie Porche, many of the Guardsmen who worked alongside the DA civilians at BGAD were impressed by their level of professionalism, technical competence, and speed of action.

“This is the fastest I have ever seen operations completed. Everyone at BGAD has been very accommodating and thorough in their work,” said Porche. “All of the soldiers I have talked to said they would like to do this mission again because of how smooth the operations went, as well as the cleanliness and effectiveness of the facilities.”

Some of those BGAD civilians work for Jeffrey Pelfrey, an ammunition quality inspector at BGAD. Pelfrey and other inspectors examined all ammo-related vehicles prior to loading, post loading, and all paperwork associated with transporting the outbound / inbound cargo – conventional munitions. Pelfrey said each year’s OPP is always a win-win situation for both the military units and the partnering Depots. He said even though the soldiers are getting the training and new experiences, the civilians are getting a chance to support the warfighter in and hone their internal processes and procedures.

“Many of us are retired or former military and this gives us a chance to work closely with service members once again,” said Pelfrey. “We support the warfighters by shipping conventional munitions and equipment throughout the world, but right now we are supporting the warfighter through good quality training.”

OPP-21 will continue at BGAD for a total of six weeks, during which more than 1,000 short tons of munitions will be moved. The 1742nd Transportation Company was responsible for hauling more than 30 containers of munitions from BGAD to CAAA, while another ARNG unit from the state of Michigan conducted transport of conventional munitions between BGAD and McAlester Army Ammunition Plant.

“The professionalism demonstrated by the participating units and team BGAD really stood out to me,” says Col. Dorris. “I’m very proud of the entire effort and the intense focus placed on safe execution of the mission.”

# 196th MEB Soldiers perform key mission in East Africa

By Staff Sgt. Dustin Jordan – 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

**S**outh Dakota National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB), are deployed to Camp Lemonnier, as the core staff for Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA).

“The 196th MEB is the nucleus of Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa,” said Maj. Gen. Lapthe Flora, commanding general, CJTF-HOA. “Their mission is to support U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and forces here in East Africa.

AFRICOM’s mission is to counter transnational threats and malign actors, strengthen security forces, and respond to crises in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.

“The MEB comprises 80 percent of the headquarters but the other 20 percent are individuals from around the country that bring the missing talent the headquarters needs to succeed,” said Col. David Dailey, Commander, 196th MEB. It is amazing what this diverse group of people can accomplish in this small area of Africa.

This is the first time in the history of CJTF-HOA that the staff has been made up of primarily one unit.

“The 196th MEB’s mobilization marks a pivotal moment for strategic, operational and tactical operations under AFRICOM,” said Col. William Robertson, director of logistics, CJTF-HOA. “The 196th MEB’s arrival marked a paradigm shift from individual augmentation to a unit centric sourcing solution for CJTF-HOA’s enduring Combined Joint Task Force.”

The 196th MEB brings many unique talents to CJTF-HOA that benefit day to day operations.

“We have service members who come with many diverse work backgrounds that enables them to contribute experience from those jobs to some of the duties they do here,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Meyer, senior enlisted leader, 196th MEB. “Also, those civilian jobs they have back home sometimes correlate specifically to duties they are assigned here. That gives the service member the flexibility to work outside of their assigned military job specialty at a very high level.”

“Every day presents a new challenge as we work our way through what it means for a unit-



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Missy Sterling)

**196th MEB Soldiers Sgt. 1st Class Joel Nelson, left, and CW2 Dave Goodwin discuss the updated capabilities of the African Data Sharing Network with soldiers at the Burundi National Defense Headquarters, May 19.**

based headquarters solution to assume such a large portion of the headquarters structure,” added Dailey. “What worked in the past is not necessarily the best approach today, but we find solutions and work together to continue the mission. It helps knowing the majority of team and what they bring to the problem solution.”

Robertson continued, “In short, the CJTF-HOA staff now has ‘unit integrity’ which enables unity of effort and unity of support. Communication in any organization is critical and the innate, internal dynamics of the 196th MEB increased staff continuity and communication exponentially.”

The 196th MEB arrived in East Africa last September and began replacing individual augmentees on the CJTF-HOA staff.

“The unit’s personnel are integrated across every element of the staff – from the command group, every joint directorate, special staff, etc. to include interning with national intelligence agencies,” said Col. Deitra Trotter, director of intelligence, CJTF-HOA. “They are conducting, facilitating and enabling HOA’s mission every single day.”

The mission that the MEB has in East Africa is a unique and complex one, spread out across the entire region.

“As the principle sourcing for the entire HOA staff, the 196th MEB owns the CJTF-HOA mission to respond to crises, ensure

strategic access and influence in Djibouti, support operations in Somalia, and serve as the senior command of the Djibouti Base Cluster,” said Robertson. “How well this mission is executed determines the U.S. and its partners overall objective as the partner of choice for Djibouti.”

The 196th MEB has been at the center of everything strategic that is occurring in East Africa. If they were not executing it, they were planning it. From the moment they arrived on ground the MEB began planning and executing exercises for base defense. Three indirect fire drills were planned and conducted during the deployment.

In addition to exercises to enhance base defense, the MEB led a bunker hardening mission from January through April. During this time the MEB along with other units at Camp Lemonnier filled thousands of sandbags and reinforced numerous bunkers.

One of the major responsibilities of CJTF-HOA is to maintain a ready East African Response Force (EARF). The MEB planned exercises, ensuring the EARF was ready to deploy to assist anywhere in Africa.

A major shift in U.S. policy happened late in 2020 when President Donald Trump ordered the repositioning of all troops from Somalia. A large portion of the mission fell upon CJTF-HOA to complete in support

Special Operations Command Africa.

“The team is working on some amazing projects and doing things at a four star general combatant commander level,” said Dailey. “An example of what they have done is the repositioning from Somalia. The team was a huge part of making that happen from planning the security, the logistical, the engineering, processing of personnel, publishing and tracking media, managing the COVID environment, opening of a support location in Kenya, to coordinating with AFRICOM and SOCAF.”

The MEB’s mission took its members all over East Africa conducting training and surveys. The crisis planning team conducted site surveys in several different countries including Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. Making sure that if the EARF had to deploy to these areas they had a clear picture of what it would be like.

The MEB’s presence in Africa did not stop in East Africa. Training was conducted as far west as Timbuktu, Mali. The trip to Mali was no easy feat, troops and cargo had to be transported by air over 4,800 miles round trip.

While in Timbuktu members of the MEB trained with French counterparts and conducted operational assessments. Partnerships in East Africa is a priority and the MEB had continually fostered good relationships between the U.S. and its allies in the region. There have been several exercises with the French, Italians, and Japanese including casualty evacuation, artillery demonstrations and emergency response planning.

The 196th MEB also trained with our Djiboutian partners during the deployment. The signal section (J6) held a several month training that culminated in the first combined three-day exercise with the Djiboutian military. During this training they worked with a Djiboutian signal company on setting up signal equipment.

In February, the information operations cell hosted the first cyber-defense exchange between CJTF - HOA, the Djiboutian military and the French. This exchange allowed the partners to learn from each other the best practices for cyber security.

The MEB not only worked with partner nations while in Djibouti they also worked closely with the State Department. The public affairs office and the information operations section attended weekly meetings with Ambassador Andre and Ambassador Prate,

ensuring that communication between CJTF-HOA and the embassy is fluid.

The protocol section was busy throughout the deployment taking care of the commanding general’s guests needs, but the Thanksgiving holiday was especially busy.

CJTF-HOA simultaneously hosted Gen. Stephen Townsend, the commanding general of AFRICOM and the Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller. This was quite a challenge, but once again, the MEB was up to the task.

No matter what the MEB did in Africa there was always one constant - the presence of COVID-19. The 196th continued the mission despite the downgraded environment. Even though COVID-19 changed the way business was conducted it never stopped the mission from getting done.

The MEB surgeon cell continued to support the mission while battling COVID-19. In early February, the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine arrived on camp and the surgeon cell immediately worked on a plan and distributed vaccines, to everyone who elected to receive it, dramatically impacting the effect that COVID-19 had on the mission.

The 196th MEB left its mark and South Dakota’s mark on CJTF-HOA and East Africa. The 196th has accomplished so many missions here that should make everyone at home proud of their service member,” said Meyer. “Not only does their day to day work impact people

on this continent but it builds a foundation of trust and improvement for the follow-on units to continue strengthening.”

Meyer added, “Everything that has been asked of them they have accomplished at an extremely high level. It is amazing to see your Soldier work tirelessly to accomplish any mission put before them. They work long days as a team to benefit the African people and other service members and they do it without complaint and with little recognition. Your Soldier is selfless and dedicated to others and they represent South Dakota and their families extremely well.”

South Dakota Soldiers shared a variety of South Dakota culture with the non-South Dakota members of CJTF-HOA.

“I knew absolutely nothing about South Dakota before encountering the 196th MEB. I’m still puzzling over tomato beer, jackelopes, scotcheroos and so much more, that I’ll have to visit and see for myself (in the summer, though!),” joked Trotter. “The 196th MEB has brought boundless energy, enthusiasm, team spirit, willingness to learn, grow, and improve daily and made this headquarters and our mission is exponentially better.”

Maj. Gen. Flora added, “The MEB members are doing an excellent job here in support in our national security. As a commander, I am very appreciative of their dedication and sacrifice.”



(Courtesy photo)

**Lt. Col. Heath Abraham, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa deputy director of operations, talks with French partners at Timbuktu, Mali, March 19. This exercise allowed CJTF-HOA to exercise its ability to travel to West Africa in the event of a crisis.**

# 842nd engineers complete IRT project at Bear Butte



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

Members of the 842nd Engineer Company receive a pallet of lumber sling loaded by members of Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment, to the summit of Bear Butte State Park, near Sturgis, April 26.

## By SDNG Public Affairs Office

**S**oldiers with the South Dakota National Guard's 842nd Engineer Company refurbished the observation deck near the summit of Bear Butte as part of an Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) project, April 24 to May 2.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and Bear Butte State Park officials partnered with the SDNG to replace the weathered platform decking and stairs with new treated wood.

"The need to repair, replace or upgrade aging infrastructure is always a major need in any state park," said Jim Jandreau, BBSP park manager. "Most projects can be handled by the district that a park is located in. However, our observation deck is in a very inaccessible location when it comes to stocking material to do such a project."

The SDNG participated in the project through its IRT program, which partners with

organizations on projects that provide a benefit to communities while providing hands-on, readiness training for Soldiers.

"Project size, location and man power, where the three deciding factors (for the project)," said Jandreau. "After observing the Mickelson Trail Bridge projects for quite awhile now, it was very apparent that the National Guard could meet all these needs."

"These types of projects facilitate goodwill and service to our local communities and state parks," said Capt. Nate Livermont, 842nd commander. "This is also an excellent opportunity to showcase our technical skills."

Bear Butte was established as a state park in 1961 and attracts thousands of visitors each year. Also known as Mato Paha or "Bear Mountain," the geological laccolith formation is an important landmark and religious site for the Lakota and other Native American tribes.

"It's awesome to work up here and make

a better place for the visitors and Native Americans to this site," said Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Hartle, 842nd platoon leader. "It's great to actually do projects that we know support the community - it makes the project more meaningful."

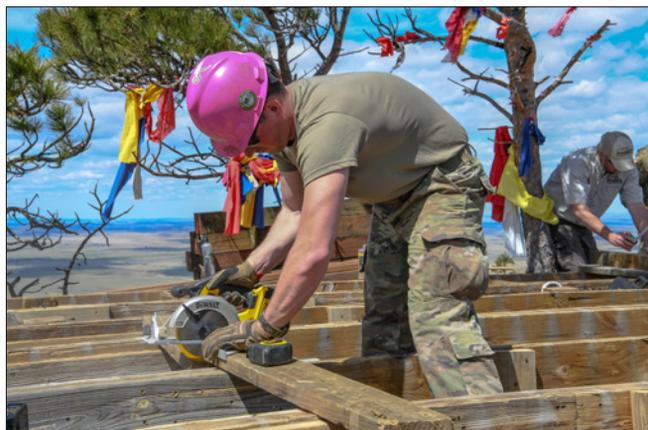
About 15 Soldiers from the unit's vertical construction platoon worked on the project as part of their two-week annual training. They replaced the deck boards on the foundation of the 30-by-16 foot structure, as well as installed new railings and about 40 feet of stairs leading up to the platform.

One of the unique challenges of the project is Bear Butte's elevation and rugged, steep terrain. The trail has a vertical climb of nearly 1,000 feet from the base to the summit and is 1.85 miles long. In order to deliver the lumber, equipment, and supplies safely and efficiently, the SDNG's Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment provided assistance with a HH-60



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

**Sgt. Jordan Theisen, with the 842nd Engineer Company, and Jayme Severyn, with S.D. Game, Fish and Parks, review a materials list while the unit works on rebuilding an observation deck at Bear Butte State Park, near Sturgis, April 28.**



(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

**Spc. Bailey Lawrence with the 842nd Engineer Company saws through a board while the unit works on rebuilding an observation deck at Bear Butte State Park, near Sturgis, April 28.**

Black Hawk helicopter to sling load in the heavy materials.

“This project was unique in that it encompasses a tactical application with the nuances of the dismounted movement up Bear Butte, along with the coordination of sling load operations with the 1-189th Aviation,” said Livermont. “It’s an experience that will resonate with our Soldiers for years.”

“It’s an awesome opportunity to work with the aviators,” said Hartle. “They saved us a lot of work for sure, and it’s good to work with other units and see how they do things.”

In addition to providing skills training for the unit’s carpenters and other job specialties, the project also helped the Soldiers work through problem solving and project management.

“The constraints that we have with tools and equipment, it helps the Soldiers get better at managing projects, as far as what we need to do a project, timelines - we only have a limited amount of time to complete the project - it really helps them grow in their skills,” said Hartle.

“The sheer planning, coordination and risk mitigation that the Bear Butte project entailed afforded our project NCOs to exercise their leadership skills on another level,” added Livermont.

Both Livermont and Jandreau credit the partnership on making the project a success.

“With facilitation from Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Shay (IRT manager), our partnership with GFP has been seamless,” said Livermont. “Several factors contributed to the success of this mission; we were blessed with beautiful weather, thoroughly engaged partners from GFP, and consummate professionals from the 1-189th Aviation.”

“The experience has been all positive, who isn’t impressed by a helicopter to do the heavy lifting and all the guys from the 842nd power walking their way up the mountain for 10 days and putting it all on the line to achieve a quality outcome,” said Jandreau. “It was a pleasure and I thank all of them very much.”



**Members of Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment prepare to sling load a pallet of lumber to summit of Bear Butte State Park, near Sturgis, April 28.**

(Photo by Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss)

# SD Guard members battle fire from air, land



(Photo by Sgt. Tyler O'Connell)

**A South Dakota National Guard HH-60 Black Hawk helicopter dips a 370-gallon water bucket into Canyon Lake to help fight the Schroeder Fire in Rapid City, March 30.**

**By SDNG Public Affairs Office**

**S**everal dozen South Dakota National Guard Soldiers and Airmen helped local, state and federal agencies battle the Schroeder Fire near Rapid City March 29 to April 3.

The SDNG responded with HH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, a fire fighting ground crew, and other support personnel to help fight the fire, which burned 2,224 acres before it was fully contained April 5.

The fire started March 29 four miles west of Rapid City off Schroeder Road near Nemo Road. Fueled by extremely dry conditions and high winds, the fire moved quickly to the western edge of Rapid City, forcing the evacuation of residents in a number of neighborhoods.

Gov. Kristi Noem activated the National Guard to assist civilian authorities working to contain the fire. The SDNG's Joint Operations Center began calling in personnel for state active duty and coordinating equipment from Rapid City and Black Hills area units.

"The Schroeder Fire is another example of the South Dakota National Guard answering

the call to support our state in an emergency. In a short amount of time, we had people and resources available to the incident commander," said Lt. Col. Dale Gadbois, SDNG director of military support to civil authorities.

Two helicopter crews from Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment, were ready and on standby, waiting for the sustained 50 mph winds and 75 mph gusts to subside. With wind conditions safe enough to fly, the aviation crews began aerial water suppression support by mid afternoon, dropping 370-gallon buckets of water on the fire.

"Our mission was to support ground crews who were creating hand and dozer lines, as well as knocking down smoldering areas that could create more problems and affect neighboring houses," said Sgt. Trent Eddy, a crew chief with Co. C, 1-189th. "We made many bucket drops in hopes to slow the rapidly increasing fire. Many of the drops were within 100 yards of homes and some as close as 20 feet."

"Our pilots are exceptional! Communicating is essential to line the aircraft up on a desired fire line and for us in the back seat to press the release button at the right moment, to drop the

water exactly where the firefighters and ground crews needed it," said Sgt. Sean Knutson, crew chief, Co. C, 1-189th.

Several members of the SDNG's 216th and 451st Firefighting Detachments also assisted on the ground.

"We had Soldiers coming in ... with no hesitation. They just told their boss, 'I'm leaving now, I have to go,' said Staff Sgt. Jason Besmer, readiness NCO, 216th/451st. "It was the employers being supportive of that, and it was good that we have Soldiers that were willing to drop everything they had going on in their personal lives to respond to the fire and to do what we've been training for."

The SDNG positioned heavy engineering equipment and bulldozer operators from the 842nd Engineer Company. Other Guard members helped with logistics, administrative support and security at road checkpoints near West Camp Rapid.

The SDNG crews worked from the air and ground to assist about 250 civilian firefighters and support personnel.

"We basically improved the firing line. We went through and did a lot of mop-up type of operations," said Besmer. "We wet down a



A HH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment drops water from its bucket to help fight the Schroeder Fire in Rapid City, March 30. (Photo by Sgt. Tyler O'Connell)

lot of stuff that was still on fire and decreased the chances of that fire jumping the road and taking out structures. We also did some water-tender operations where we filled other trucks that were working within the same division.”

Aviation crews flew over 21 hours, dropping more than 48,000 gallons of water to assist firefighters on the ground.

“Training is paramount. There is no way that we could perform at the level we do without communication to and from all authorities and entities and the cross-organizational training we do,” said Knutson.

“A lot of crew coordination within the aircraft goes into fire support. From initially deploying our bucket to coming in and out of the dip site, and most importantly getting a good drop line to be as effective as possible for the crews on the ground,” said Eddy. “Unfortunately, we seem to get a lot of repetitions here in the Black Hills every year with the constant high fire danger, but it keeps us prepared and ready to support the community at any instant.”

“Training is essential in our line of work. What you know and what you don’t know is the difference between life and death,” said Besmer. “It’s having that overall awareness of what’s going on around you at all times. We were in it and we could have easily had trees fall on people, which almost happened. You have to make sure you look up and look around.”

While the firefighters on the ground were often unseen, the helicopters flying in the air became a common fixture over Rapid City, as



(Photo by Sgt. Tyler O'Connell)

**Firefighters from the 216th and 451st Firefighting Detachments break up the ground to help alleviate hot spots from the Schroeder Fire in Rapid City, March 30.**

crews drew water from nearby water sources like Canyon Lake. For Eddy seeing the fire from above, the sight hit close to home.

“It felt great to be part of the effort of saving people’s homes. Being in a small community such as Rapid City, we all probably knew someone that was being evacuated,” said Eddy. “I grew up on the west side of town and personally knew multiple families that were affected. It definitely hits home knowing that I

was a small part of the great effort that allowed for these people to have homes to go back to.”

By April 3, with the fire almost fully contained, most National Guard members transitioned off state active duty.

“Even though there were properties lost in this fire, many were saved and no lives were lost,” said Gadbois. “The National Guard always takes pride in any supportive role to local and state agencies.”

# Meet a member of the Psychological Health Team

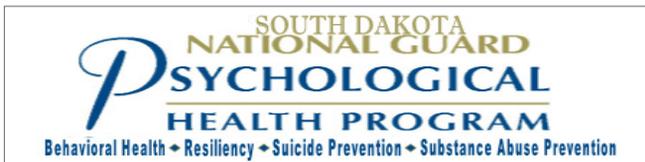
This month we are showcasing a valued member of our team, please take a moment to get to know Sue Keller. She is no stranger to the South Dakota National Guard, as she served 30 years in the South Dakota Army National Guard prior to her retirement in 2011. Raised in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, she attended Ohio State University, earning a Bachelors of Science in Education. She moved to the Rapid City area with her husband Glenn and two children Matt and Shannon in 1993. She held positions in the 109th Engineer Group, Joint Force Headquarters, and Medical Command. Prior to her retirement, she was the Trauma Crisis NCO, where she served as the SPPM and worked closely with the SARC. She is ambitious, caring, and excited about reaching out to Soldiers, units and families to help educate them about suicide prevention and intervention. She is an asset for the Soldiers and their families. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask questions or get help. She can be reached at 605-737-6954 or at [susan.d.keller.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:susan.d.keller.ctr@mail.mil).



**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Call:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255), can press 1 for the Military Crisis Line.

**Text:** 838255

**Online chat:** <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>



**Lt. Col. Amber Heinert** - 605-737-6582  
Director of Psychological Health & Resiliency Programs

**Maj. Sarah Jensen** - 605-737-6948  
R3SP Coordinator

**Jeffrey Hurst** - 605-737-6521  
Psychological Health Coordinator

**Kristi (Cricket) Palmer** - 605-737-6973  
Alcohol and Drug Control Officer

**Paul Brosz** - 605-737-6990  
Prevention Coordinator

**Sue Keller** - 605-737-6954  
Suicide Prevention Program Manager

**Sgt. Shaun Kuharski** - 605-737-6566  
Drug Testing Coordinator

**A** **Ask your buddy**

- Have the courage to ask the question, but stay calm
- Ask the question directly, e.g. Are you thinking of killing yourself?

**C** **Care for your buddy**

- Remove any means that could be used for self-injury
- Calmly control the situation; do not use force
- Actively listen to produce relief

**E** **Escort your buddy**

- Never leave your buddy alone
- Escort to the chain of command, a Chaplain, a behavioral health professional, or a primary care provider

# Report concerning behavior you see on social media

If someone you know posts messages of suicide or self-harm on social media, you can contact the safety teams who will reach out and connect them with the help they need.

If you see a direct threat of suicide on social media, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline immediately or call 911. Report suicidal behavior via a social media platform:

**Instagram** - To report posts about suicidal behavior or self-harm on Instagram: Tap “...” below the post, Tap Report Inappropriate, Select This Photo Puts People at Risk > Self-Harm.

**Snapchat** - To report a safety concern, press and hold on that Snapchatter’s name and tap the gear button. Then, tap ‘Report’ and reach out to Snapchat, and follow the prompts.

**YouTube** - To report suicide or self-harm, click “More.” Highlight and click “Report” in the drop-down menu. Click “Harmful dangerous acts,” then “Suicide or self-injury.” YouTube will review the video and may send a message to the uploader with the Lifeline number.

**Facebook** - To report suicidal content, go to your settings, click on “Support Inbox” and the Facebook Help Center search bar will appear in the box to the right of the page or type <https://www.facebook.com/help/> in the search bar on Facebook or Google.

**Twitter** - You can report directly from an individual tweet, list or profile for certain violations, including: spam, abusive or harmful content, inappropriate ads, self-harm and impersonation. To report a violation, open the profile you’d like to report, select the overflow icon, select report and then select the type of issue you’d like to report.

For more specific information regarding how to help someone who is suicidal or to learn more about social media reporting please reference the article this information was borrowed from.

[www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention/pages/IWantToHelpSomeone.html?fbclid=IwAR2wbTmkbgf8MxgJjVVBxsDxLzVqXzPyhUuVSBQauhD6D9JSBLxfjy6kjw](http://www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention/pages/IWantToHelpSomeone.html?fbclid=IwAR2wbTmkbgf8MxgJjVVBxsDxLzVqXzPyhUuVSBQauhD6D9JSBLxfjy6kjw)



# "Am I Trustworthy?"

By Chaplain, Maj. David Stimes – State Chaplain, Joint Force Headquarters

I wanted to share with you a small piece of another Strong Bonds curriculum entitled, "The Speed of Trust For Strong Soldiers/Strong Couples/Strong Families." This material was developed by Stephen M.R. Covey in his book, "The Speed of Trust; The One Thing That Changes Everything."

Trust essentially means a reliance or firm belief in the character, integrity, strength or truth of someone or something. Putting our confidence in someone else can put us in a vulnerable position on one hand or deepen a good relationship on the other. Trust is very important in our military world.

We spend lots of time away from our spouses and families, expecting each other to be loyal and faithful even when apart. On duty we depend on one another in life and death situations to each do our part to protect the team and accomplish the mission. We have to.

How do we know that someone is trustworthy? In his book, Stephen Covey lists 13 behaviors of high trust people. He then spells out not only what the opposite of trustworthy is, but what the counterfeit, or deceptive approach looks like. Here are the 13 behaviors of high trust people and their opposites:

- Talk Straight – tell the truth and demonstrate integrity. Opposite – To lie or deceive.
- Demonstrate Respect – Show that you genuinely care; show kindness in little things. Opposite – To not respect or have concern for other people.
- Create Transparency – Be genuine, open, and authentic. Don't hide information. Opposite – To hide; to cover up; to obscure.
- Right Wrongs – Apologize and make restitution. Do the right thing. Opposite – To deny or justify wrongs; to rationalize wrongful behavior.
- Show Loyalty – Give credit to others and be loyal to those absent. Opposite – To take credit yourself; to betray others.
- Deliver Results – Accomplish what you commit to do. Don't make excuses. Opposite – To perform poorly or fail to deliver.
- Get Better – Learn to improve. Be thankful for feedback and act upon it. Opposite – To deteriorate, to be content with past knowledge and performance; to fail to improve.
- Confront Reality – Meet issues head on; address the tough stuff directly. Opposite – To ignore reality or act as though it doesn't exist; to be "in Denial."
- Clarify Expectations – Reveal, discuss, and validate expectations. Opposite – To leave expectations undefined or unclear.
- Practice Accountability – Take responsibility for the results; communicate how others are doing. Opposite – To not take responsibility or "own up; it's not my fault."
- Listen First – Listen before you speak and don't make assumptions. Opposite – To speak first and listen last; to not listen at all.
- Keep Commitments – State your intent and then do what you say you'll do. Don't break confidences. Opposite – To break commitments or violate promises.
- Extend Trust – Don't withhold trust because risk is involved. Opposite – To withhold trust.



How many of these behaviors or qualities do others see in you? Make it your goal to achieve most or all of these behaviors, perhaps one at a time. Then watch your relationships grow and flourish.

Blessings to your from your state chaplain.



# Mentoring by Modeling

By Maj. Carol Jordan - Mentorship Committee Chair, Diversity Council, JFHQ

We hear a lot about mentorship and are asked frequently if we mentor someone or if we have a mentor. You may have visions about what mentorship is or what it means to you. Within this last year, we have learned the value of facial expressions once we were able to see each other again without the masks and are now able to communicate face to face with social distances being of our choosing. But did we lose our mentoring relationships as a casualty of crisis?

Let us just review many of the common mentorship models and decide:

**ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING:** In the traditional mentoring type, a senior mentor serves to guide a junior mentor along their career path. These can be formal or informal relationships, pre-assigned pairings by a department or self-selected by the mentee. They can last for decades or have a pre-defined time limit.

**MENTORING PANEL OR COMMITTEE:** A junior service member has a panel of 2-5 mentors who meet together every 4-12 months. This structure offers the mentee a wide range of guidance from several experienced mentors in one setting.

**FUNCTIONAL MENTORING:** This involves a project-oriented mentoring relationship in which the mentee finds a mentor for a specific skill acquisition or pre-defined project. For instance, writing a grant proposal, instituting a clinical program, setting up a fellowship program or writing a focused manuscript.

**PEER MENTORING:** This is typically a group setting in which service members at the same level of training, rank or experience meet to share experiences, work on a project or gain feedback. These can be informal lunches, peer support groups, career counseling sessions run by an expert or writing support groups.

**GROUP MENTORING:** This can involve several layers of mentors and mentees who vary by rank and experience. Often 1-3 senior service members mentor several junior service members in a group setting. They engage in a flow of conversation to share experiences, ideas, and tips. It serves well to offload the mentoring demands on the few senior service members.

**MOSAIC MENTORING:** In order to achieve the multi-dimension guidance needed, service members often require a number of different mentors during their career. Mosaic mentoring can be viewed as a longitudinal landscape of career mentoring for an individual service member or it can refer to a specific type of group mentoring. In mosaic group mentoring, a diverse range of individuals of different ranks, ages, genders, races, skills and experience come together in a non-hierarchical community. Benefits include collaboration, reduced pressure on mentors, merging small pools together, and success in both gender and minority mentoring.

Reference: <https://faculty.medicine.iu.edu/let-us-help/mentoring/mentoring-matters/models-of-mentoring/>

I also want you to consider another style that has not been widely discussed, mentorship by modeling, which may also be considered leading by example. This model is one that will work well especially in resilience for stressful environments and tasks. How we manage our emotions and behaviors especially under stress is impactful to individual and unit readiness.

Stressful situations give us the benefit of shared experiences and our willingness to share those experiences from personal perspectives can help people grow in empathy and compassion and comradery, not found as often in times of relative ease. Often people are much more willing to model behaviors of someone who has experience in the field or situation and willing to show what right looks like, even if it means asking for help when you need it.

So as we move forward into annual training events and more community activities than many are used to...especially visitors to our area from more restricted areas. Let consider mentoring by modeling in training and real life, because we are still in this together.