DAKOTA PACK

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

REMEMBERING 9|II

20 YEARS LATER

SD Guard members reflect on service, impacts of 9/11 on 20th anniversary

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- 211th engineers conduct explosive training



Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Marlette The Adjutant General

Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser Senior Enlisted Leader

> Lt. Col. Anthony Deiss Director of Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Dustin Jordan Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sqt. Austin Pearce Staff Sgt. Daniel Ward Sgt. Breanne Donnell Sgt. Tyler O'Connell

114th Fighter Wing

Tech. Sgt. Duane Duimstra Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart Senior Airman Taylor Solberg

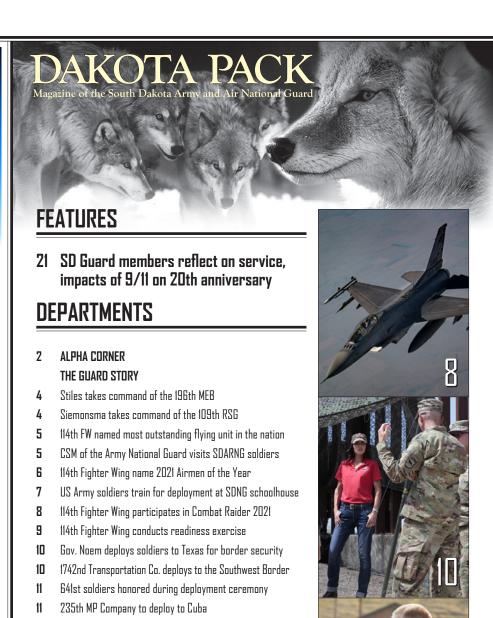
Chaplain, Maj. David Stimes - JFHQ Sgt. 1st Class Barb Jensen - 109th RSG Sgt. Brandon Julson - 196th MEB

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How to reach us: Questions or comments for Dakota Pack Magazine should be directed to the South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office: 2823 West Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57702, phone: 605.737.6721, email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil.

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, 605.737.6978. Submissions are subject to editing. Electronic submissions are preferred and digital



Priscilla Harki - ESGR-SD

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DAKOTA PACK MAGAZINE

Message from the Adjutant General

The Role of the National Guard

oldiers and airmen deploying around the world, soldiers protecting our southwestern border, airmen assisting with Afghanistan resettlement, support to medical facilities, support to law enforcement, running call centers, fighting fires, reducing drugs on our streets, protecting our Nation's Capital, all are missions we have seen the South Dakota National Guard recently engaged in.

Around the nation, we are seeing National Guard members driving school busses, assisting food distribution sites, working hospitals and nursing homes, assisting with elections, fighting fires and cleaning up after major hurricanes. At times it seems the National Guard is the answer to all of the challenges facing our country today. We are like a Swiss Army knife. Sturdy, ready for use, bringing many tools and easily adaptable to the situation at hand. What is the Role of the National Guard? Obviously, all of the above and more.

The defined role of the National Guard is threefold. First, we must prepare for and when called, deploy to fight our nation's wars around the world. Second, we must be prepared to protect the homeland if attacked and to support our state's and nation in times of need. Third, through the use of our State Partnership Programs, we will utilize diplomacy, military exchanges and humanitarian support to engage with nations around the world. In South Dakota's case, we have partnered with Suriname for the past 15 years.

In our first, or federal mission, the South Dakota National Guard has time and time again answered the call. Every day since September 11, 2001, the SDNG has had members deployed or about to deploy in support of our nation's wars. We have deployed over 9,500 soldiers and airmen and as this is written today, we have over six deployments in process or preparing for deployment. With the U.S. now out of Afghanistan and Iraq drawing down, we are hopeful this pace will start to slow down, but so far we are not seeing it.

Our second mission to protect the homeland and support our state and nation in times of need has never been more demanding than today. All across our country and here in South Dakota, the National Guard is being thrust into action. Time and time again we have deployed on very

short notice and have delivered every time. It is here our members display the wide assortment of military and non-military skills they can provide. It is here they quickly prove why no other military force is more ready or more capable to answer the call.

Our third mission, though sometimes overlooked by some, is a tremendously important mission. China has without a doubt begun to



lay down roots in nations all around the world. Their goal is to entice nations to see China as the go to world leader, instead of the U.S.

On continents like South America, where Suriname is located, they are actively building ports, lending large sums of money to nations, actively engaging in oil exploration, mining, timber harvesting and even giving free education scholarships to study in China, all in an effort to make nations more dependent upon China. In many countries, such as Suriname, our State Partnership Program is one of the major diplomatic efforts the U.S. has going in that nation. With a recent change in Presidency in Suriname, they are seeking a stronger relationship with the U.S. and the SDNG will play a major role.

I will leave you with this final thought. Never in the history of the United States has the National Guard been more ready, more relevant and more relied upon than today. Each and every day, the SDNG is answering our nation and state's call. We can only do this because of the service and sacrifice each and every one of you are making. Thank you for being part of our team.

Sincerely,

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey P. Marlette The Adjutant General

Message from the Senior Enlisted Leader

ommand Sgt. Maj. John Sampa, the 12th senior enlisted advisor of the Army National Guard visited the South Dakota Army National Guard this past July drill weekend. This was Sampa's first trip to South Dakota and the first time I can remember an Army National Guard CSM holding a town hall meeting with South Dakota Army National Guard soldiers.

Command Sgt. Maj. Sampa had the opportunity to introduce his new 3×5 card initiative to all the soldiers present in Building 802 theater and multiple armories that video conference in. The 3×5 card initiative talks about the corrosives that he feels are present in our formations that we need to eradicate.

The intent of the initiative is for soldiers and leaders to have conversations about: 1. Suicide and 2. Sexual harassment/Sexual assault. Additionally, Sampa wants soldiers to have the ACFT (number 3) on their 3 X 5 card as well. The ACFT is not just about fitness, it also involves diet and other aspects about soldiers taking care of themselves. Soldiers and leaders should carry the index card with them at all times.

The 3×5 initiative reenforces the framework of This is My Squad (TIMS). I have been talking about TIMS for awhile and the main goal of TIMS is to continue to strengthen our teams and squads and create

Good NCOs are not just born-they are groomed and grown through a lot of hard work and strong leadership by senior NCOs.

Former Sergeant Major of the Army, William

DESARCE

cohesion among all soldiers. This means being able to talk to each other about those corrosives that affect us and our Guard family.

I ask that everyone carry the 3 X 5 card in their pockets. I also ask that everyone continues to talk about and practices the principles of TIMS. Most importantly, we need to always treat each other with dignity and respect. Please be safe and thanks for everything that you do!



Sincerely,

Saluck Couser

Command Sgt. Maj. Pat Couser Senior Enlisted Leader

Stiles takes command of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

By Sgt. Brandon Julson - 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

SIOUX FALLS - Col. Phillip Stiles, of Rapid City, took command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade during a change of command ceremony in Sioux Falls, Oct. 2.

Stiles assumed command from Col. David Dailey, of Sturgis, who served in the position since March 2019. As commander, Stiles is responsible for the command and control of three battalions, which are comprised of 12 units totaling more than 1,600 soldiers in 15 communities throughout



Col. Phillip Stiles

South Dakota. The 196th assists assigned units in meeting training, administrative, and logistical requirements to maintain the units' readiness in support of state and federal missions.

"I appreciate everyone's efforts, stepping up to the plate, and I could not have asked for a better group soldiers to lead," said Dailey. "I cannot wait to see what this unit accomplishes in the future."

"I want to thank Col. Dailey and all the other staff officers for setting me up for success in this command," said Stiles "I will work as hard as I possibly can to make this unit successful."

Stiles joined the Army in 1986 as a tank crewman and subsequently served in the Arkansas and Nebraska National Guard prior to joining the South Dakota National Guard in 1993. He received his commission from the ROTC program at the University of South Dakota.

Stiles education includes a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of South Dakota. Stiles is a licensed attorney in South Dakota and is the managing partner of Costello Porter Law Firm in Rapid City.



(Photo by Sqt. Brandon Julson)

Incoming 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade commander, Col. Philip Stiles, right, accepts the brigade colors from Brig. Gen. Michael Oster, assistant adjutant general, South Dakota Army National Guard, at a change of command ceremony in Sioux Falls, Oct. 2.

Siemonsma assumes command of the 109th Regional Support Group

By Sgt. 1st Class Barb Jensen - 109th Regional Support Group

RAPID CITY - Col. Steve Siemonsma, of Rapid City, took command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 109th Regional Support Group during a change of command ceremony on Camp Rapid, Oct. 2.

Siemonsma assumed command from Col. Jeffrey Norris, of Rapid City, who served in the position since April 2019. The 109th RSG provides command and control for two battalions, which are comprised of 16 units totaling more than 1,200 soldiers in nine communities throughout South



Col. Steve Siemonsma

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

"I am humbled, honored and excited to be leading the 109th RSG as the next commander," Siemonsma said. "I couldn't think of a better command to take in this stage of my career."

"It's been an honor to serve in such an outstanding unit as the 109th RSG," Norris said. "I wish you all the best!"

Siemonsma began his military career in December 1995, enlisting into the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion in Sioux Falls. He attended the Officer Candidate School at Fort Meade, gaining his commission in September 1998. Siemonsma served as the battery commander for Bravo Battery, 2-147th FA, and served as the battalion commander for both the Recruiting and Retention Battalion and the 1-147th FA Battalion.

Siemonsma earned a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and minor in Criminal Justice from South Dakota State University in 1996. He earned a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College in 2021.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Barb Jensen)

Incoming 109th Regional Support Group commander, Col. Steve Siemonsma, left, accepts the brigade colors from Brig. Gen. Michael Oster, assistant adjutant general, South Dakota Army National Guard, at a change of command ceremony in Rapid City, Oct. 2.

114th Fighter Wing named most outstanding flying unit in the nation

By SDNG Public Affairs Office



Members of the 114th Fighter Wing accept the Spaatz Trophy during the National Guard Association of the United States General Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, Aug. 30. The Spaatz Trophy is presented to the overall outstanding flying unit in the Air National Guard each year. Presenting the award are Lt. Gen. Michael Loh, director ANG and Maj. Gen. Doug Farnham, NGAUS vice chair for Air. Receiving the award on behalf of the members of the 114th are Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, Brig. Gen. Greg Lair, Col. Mark Morrell and 1st Lt. Andrew Dellman.

SIOUX FALLS - The South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing received recognition as the top flying wing in the nation and was presented the Spaatz Trophy at the 2021 National Guard Association of the United States annual conference in Las Vegas, Aug. 30.

The Spaatz Trophy is presented to the most outstanding flying unit in the Air National Guard each year. This is the fifth time the 114th Fighter Wing has won the prestigious award. The 114th has consistently been recognized as one of the top Air National Guard wings in the nation and received a national award from NGAUS every year since 2014.

"We are extremely proud of the men and women of the 114th Fighter Wing," said Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general. "Time and time again, they have demonstrated their professionalism and ability to accomplish the mission. No other fighter wing in the Air National Guard has been recognized more times than the 114th Fighter Wing for their outstanding service."

Selection for the Spaatz Trophy is based on overall combat readiness and the unit's performance with respect to all other Air National Guard flying units. Factors included in the evaluation are mission execution, safety and accident prevention, aircraft maintenance scheduling and effectiveness, unit manning and retention, resource utilization, inspection ratings, outstanding accomplishments and exercise involvement.

During the past year, the 114th Fighter Wing deployed over 400 Airmen to 19 countries providing forces to support stateside and global operations. The 114th also supported civil authorities by providing personnel for the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, augmenting law enforcement agencies, and continuing its commitment to NORAD's Aerospace Control Alert mission assuring 24/7 homeland defense.

Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard visits SDNG

By Staff Sgt. Daniel Ward - 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. John Sampa holds an open forum town hall meeting with soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard at Camp Rapid in Rapid City, July 11.

RAPID CITY – The senior enlisted advisor of the Army National Guard visited South Dakota Army National Guard soldiers at Camp Rapid, July 11. Command Sgt. Maj. John Sampa met with the soldiers in an open forum town-hall meeting to address any concerns that soldiers might have, as well as to reinforce key areas that are critical to soldier well-being through a new initiative.

Sampa is the 12th command sergeant major of the ARNG and provides advice to senior leaders on Army Guard policies and actions affecting enlisted soldiers across the 54 National Guard states and territories.

"My three by five card initiative talks about the corrosives within our formation that we want to eradicate," said Sampa. "Those corrosives are suicide, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Those are things that do not belong in the formations of the Army National Guard."

The three by five card initiative involves soldiers carrying an index card with them at all times in uniform. On the card soldiers write the words "suicide" and "sexual assault."

"What this does is it engages leaders and soldiers to have a conversation about those things. To eradicate them from our formations by having a conversation one-on-one," said Sampa. "Additionally, soldiers should write ACFT [Army Combat Fitness Test] on their cards, it's not just about the fitness test, it's about what soldiers are doing to prepare themselves by taking care of themselves physically, as well as proper dieting."

Sampa addressed new changes to the Army uniform standards, and addressed soldiers concerns over promotions, maternity care, and pay issues. Sampa was accompanied by Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser, the SDARNG's state command sergeant major.

"I wanted him [Sampa] to talk to us about his three by five card initiative and the three issues that face Guardsmen," said Couser. "To hear it directly from the Army National Guard command sergeant major is huge, what better way to get it through our forces here himself."

114th Fighter Wing name 2021 Airmen of the Year

SrA Tyler J. Thill

114th Security Forces Squadron fire team member

As a 114th Security Forces fire team member, Thill is responsible for the safety and security of personnel and sensitive assets assigned to the 114th Fighter Wing.

Thill served during Operation Inherent Resolve with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. He served as machine gunner, external response team member and as an interior response team leader.



AIRMAN OF THE YEAR





CMSgt Jessica Meyers

114th Fighter Wing Munitions Systems Superintendent

CMSgt Meyers ensures compliance with policies, directives and procedures related to munitions production, inspection and transportation.

She oversees a shop of 60 personnel and is responsible for the training and leadership development of the flight.

SENIOR NCO 👸 OF THE YEAR





114th Maintenence Squadron aircraft armament systems specialist

Ahlschlager is a certified member of a three person weapons load crew.

Ahlschlager also schedules flight debriefs and coordinates plans in Maintenace of Certification. She plays a crucial part in communication throughout the Maintenance Squadron.

NCO 🜷 OF THE YEAR



Capt Steven Miller

114th Equipment Maintenance Flight Officer in Charge

As the Officer in Charge of the 114th Equipment Maintenance Flight (EMF), Miller leads EMF to maintain the mission readiness of 65 Airmen and 212 pieces of aerospace ground equipment.

Miller served in Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel as the Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Operations Officer. He lead Airmen to provide safe and effective aircraft, equipment, and munitions maintenance.

CGO OF THE YEAR



1st Lt. Andrew Deliman

114th Operations Group intelligence analyst

As an intelligence analyst within the 114th Operations Group, 1st Lt. Dellman directly supports daily flying operations.

Dellman has served multiple overseas tours, to include South Korea and in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Resolute Support.



LIEUTENANT OF THE YEAR



US Army soldiers train for deployment at SDNG schoolhouse

By Staff Sgt. Dustin Jordan - SDNG Public Affairs

SIOUX FALLS – Soldiers with the U.S. Army's 4th Battalion, 4th Security Forces Assistance Brigade received field artillery training from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) in Sioux Falls, Aug. 16-31.

Eight soldiers from the Fort Carson, Colorado-based Bravo Battery, 4-4th SFAB attended a Combined Duties Training Course to receive instruction on the U.S. Army's Multiple Launch Rocket System and High Mobility Artillery Rocket System to prepare for their upcoming deployment to Europe.

The 44th SFAB is a specialized field artillery team which conducts training, advising, assisting, enabling, and accompanying operations with allied and partner nations.

"We came upon a mission recently to work in EUCOM (European Command) and one of their main focuses is the Multiple Launch Rocket Systems," said 1st Sgt. Bradley Beavers, Bravo Battery first sergeant. "We realized we had a capability gap in our unit, as our unit is a majority cannoneers, and have limited experience with the MLRS."

The 4th SFAB was directed to the 196th RTI to complete training to bridge the capabilities gap that they had identified.

"We made a call and we were pointed in the direction of the 196th. They were hand selected by the National Guard as the premier training unit for MLRS," said Beavers. "We called them and they were ready to accommodate our unit and create a program of instruction for us...which turned into a great training event."

The course covered all aspects of the MLRS and HIMARS systems, from the basic, entry-level duties to the more advanced duties.

"We've been able to run through skill-level one tasks (the duty of the gunner and the driver), skill-level two and three tasks (the duties of the section chief) and skill-level four tasks (the duties of the platoon sergeant)," said Maj. Joshua Howard, Bravo Battery, 4-4th SFAB commander. "None of us have done any of this before, and I would assess that we are trained more than enough now to go and preform this mission."

Learning the duties at all levels of a HIMAR unit was very important to Bravo Battery leadership. They made the commitment to get the best training possible before deploying.

"Without this training we would be unable





to advise the Romanians. We would have no experience and have no knowledge on the HIMARs," said Howard. "You can't advise somebody on something that you don't have any knowledge or experience on."

The training was invaluable to members of Bravo Battery. They were able to cover multiple topics, even some that were not on the schedule.

"The instructors here at the RTI were really good at gauging where we were at in the training," said Beavers. "They gave us some great opportunities to go as far as we wanted to go during the training, because of that we were able to learn more throughout the training than we expected."

The course allowed the team to expand their knowledge and understand the difference between the different types of artillery units. "The training has been going very well, I have learned a lot more than I expected," said Staff Sgt. Anthony Letts, Bravo Battery team leader. "I realize the difference in the way we fight with cannons and rockets, and I'm going to try to mix it all up to complete the mission."

The training that the 196th provided for Bravo Battery went above and beyond what anybody expected when creating and organizing the training.

"This event has exceeded expectations 10 times over," said Beavers. "I was an instructor at the Fort Sill NCO Academy for three years, and I will tell you this is one of the best group of instructors that I have ever seen. Their knowledge has been amazing, the training event that they put on for us has been amazing and speaking for my unit we appreciate everything these guys have done for us."

114th Fighter Wing participates in Combat Raider 2021

By Senior Airman Taylor Solberg - 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE – Airmen from the 114th Fighter Wing participated in Combat Raider 2021 hosted by the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Airforce Base, July 20-22.

Combat Raider allows the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard to come together and train to test the cohesion and coordination between multiple airframes in a large-scale exercise to assess integrated combat mission readiness in a simulated wartime scenario. The annual training event is designed to train aircrews in a realistic setting that support a full range of operations against modern threats and replicate today's contingency operations.

The exercise brings together units from across the United States, demonstrating the capability and reach of aircraft; such as B-1B bombers, F-15E Strike Eagles, F-16 Fighting Falcons, KC-135 Stratotankers, and KC-46 Pegasus. These aircraft and others, participating in the exercise over the Powder River Training Complex, covering portions of South and North Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana, keep aircrew and supporting units proficient for combat, and testing their inter-operability in an ever-changing battlefield environment.

"We're here with a lot of other assets the Air Force has and it's a rare opportunity for our pilots to train in an integrated environment like this and see how we would actually go to war."

> Lt. Col. Joe Schenkel, 114th Fighter Wing — Combat Raider 2021 DIC

The 114th Fighter Wing is one of 34 different flying units that participated this year.

"There's three reasons we are here at combat raider," said Lt. Col. Joe Schenkel, 114th Fighter Wing Combat Raider officer in charge. "One is to train the pilots in integrated combat employment scenarios with dissimilar aircraft. We're here with a lot of other assets the Air Force has and it's a rare opportunity for our pilots to train in an integrated environment like this and see how we would actually go to war."

Schenkel says the other reasons to participate in the exercise is to give pilots an opportunity to complete their upgrade training and for 114th Airmen to continue practicing the Agile Combat Employment and Multicapable Airmen concepts.

"Agile Combat Employment is taking a minimal group of people and deploying them to another location to accomplish the mission with the smallest footprint possible," Schenkel said.

"The Multicapable Airman concept is where Airmen perform other duties outside their normal duties," added Senior Master Sgt. Andy Mager, 114th Fighter Wing Combat Raider non-commissioned officer in charge. "We're training them to assist the areas that are short on personnel."

Mager also says that he likes to see these training opportunities push airmen to step out of their comfort zones by helping others and learning to ask for help themselves.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart

Capt. Guy Bauermeister, a F-16 fighter pilot with the 114th Fighter Wing, flies over the Power River Training Complex during Combat Raider, July 22.



(Photo by Tech. Sqt. Jordan Hohenstein)

Master Sgt. Jeff Satrang and Staff Sgt. Nash Eickholt, aircraft crew chiefs, 114th Maintenance Squadron, perform maintenance on a landing gear door of an F-16C from the 114th Fighter Wing during Combat Raider on Ellsworth Air Force Base, July 21.

114th Fighter Wing conducts readiness exercise

By Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

JOE FOSS FIELD - The 114th Fighter Wing executed a unique two-week readiness exercise that tested their ability to stand up an Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) sight, test Agile Combat Employment (ACE) skills on short notice, and facilitate Multi-Capable Airmen (MCA) training at Joe Foss Field and the surrounding area, Aug. 3-13.

"We're looking for a way to build better airmen each and every day," said Col. Mark Morrell, 114th Fighter Wing commander. "The two week readiness exercise helps us focus on dynamic environments and problem solving for our airmen at the very lowest level and also helps to build their foundational skills in basic weapons, basic emergency medicine survivability, as well as a broader category of possessing the ability to survive and operate in all environments."

In part one of the exercise, the 114th stood up ACA sites that operated 24/7 at Joe Foss Field and surrounding areas to evaluate their ability to defend the mid-section of North America on short notice and to test ACE skills with realistic combat scenarios to train for current and future contingencies. The concept of ACE is having the ability to deploy with minimal equipment and airmen to accomplish the flying mission.

"By the end of this exercise, we will have a strong mental picture of what it looks like to stand up an alert site here in Sioux Falls, which certainly increases our readiness to defend our homeland," said Lt. Col. Karl Palmberg, 114th Operations Group deputy commander and the 2021 readiness exercise planner. "It's been very beneficial to get the training in for the primary mission as well as bolster our capabilities here at home."

In part two of the exercise, the 114th challenged airmen to step outside their comfort zones and complete MCA training on tasks outside of their normal jobs through Warrior Breakout Sessions. These sessions consisted of numerous classes ranging from hand-to-hand combat to aircraft recovery and maintenance familiarization to Tactical Combat Casualty Care, among others. Many of these sessions were taught by combat readiness instructors from Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

"I think that the nature of warfare in the



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson)

Tech. Sgt. Derek Adams, 114th Security Forces Squadron combat arms instructor, teaches airmen from the 114th Fighter Wing how to handle, fire, and clean a 9mm pistol during Multi-Capable Airmen training at Joe Foss Field, Aug. 13.



(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Luke Olson)

Airmen from the 114th Fighter Wing participate in a Combat Readiness Casualty Care class during Multi-Capable Airmen training at Joe Foss Field, Aug. 11.

future is likely to be very unpredictable," said Morrell. "It's likely to be in austere locations, and it's likely to require airmen to make their own risk management decisions in order to accomplish the mission. This MCA training gives our airmen an increased warrior ethos so they can feel confident they can handle themselves mentally and physically, as well as professionally in any sort of environment, peacetime or in combat."

Currently there is a push within the Air

Force to transition airmen from being focused solely on their primary jobs to building multifunctional mission essential skills so airmen are able to jump into the fight no matter where it is.

"We are committed to building the most ready and resilient force that we can," said Morrell. "Part of that is building people who can deal with unpredictable and dynamic environments and problem solve quickly and confidently."

Gov. Noem deploys SDNG soldiers | 1742nd Transportation Company to Texas for border security

By SDNG Public Affairs Office



Gov. Kristi Noem visits with South Dakota Army National Guard soldiers along the U.S.-Mexico border, near McAllen, Texas, July 26.

TEXAS - Gov. Kristi Noem activated 48 South Dakota National Guard soldiers for state active duty in Texas to help the secure the border between the United States and Mexico. The soldiers served from July 6 - Sept. 13 to support the Texas Military Department and the Texas Department of Public Safety in support of Operation Lone Star.

Gov. Noem deployed the SDNG in response to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's request for help to respond to ongoing violations of state and federal law by illegal aliens crossing the border. The Texas DPS, along with partnering local civil authorities in the region, reported a marked increase of individuals and groups attempting to illegally cross into the United States, as well as activity from transnational criminal networks along the Texas-Mexico Border.

The TMD has approximately 700 service members mobilized in a state active duty status under Task Force Salerno to assist DPS with ground and air surveillance operations on the border. Soldiers from the SDNG's Task Force 153 served for 10 weeks along the border, enhancing the Texas DPS's "eyes and ears" on the ground. Eight additional soldiers rotated in and out of the mission, bringing the total number to 56 soldiers who provided more than 13,400 mandays of support.

Noem traveled to McAllen, Texas, July 26, along with SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, to visit the SDNG troops stationed on the southern border and to receive an update on the mission.

"Our South Dakota National Guard is proving they can serve with excellence at the southern border. Border Patrol and the Texas National Guard made clear the soldiers we sent are providing critical support for this border mission," said Noem.

During the visit, Noem was briefed on the situation at the border by the SDNG troops, as well as the Texas National Guard and Border Patrol. During the briefing, both Texas and SDNG members made clear the deployment is having a positive impact addressing the crisis. The governor surveyed three observation posts manned by the SDNG and witnessed Border Patrol intaking migrant families at the border wall.

"I am grateful to these soldiers, who have volunteered for this deployment. The message I have received is clear: this deployment is working, and our Guard is committed to strengthening our border security," Noem said.

deploys to the Southwest Border

By SDNG Public Affairs Office



Soldiers with the 1742nd Transportation Company stand for the unit role call during the unit's deployment ceremony at the University of Sioux Falls, Oct. 3.

SIOUX FALLS - About 125 members of the 1742nd Transportation Company were honored during a deployment ceremony at the University of Sioux Falls' Stewart Center, Oct. 3, as the unit deploys for a yearlong federal mission along the Southwest Border. Hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters came out to bid farewell to the soldiers as they depart on their mission to support U.S. Customs and Border Patrol in securing the border between the United States and Mexico.

"Our South Dakota National Guard is the very best in the country, and they are prepared for the sustained response the national security crisis at our southern border requires," said Gov. Kristi Noem.

The soldiers will provide non-law enforcement support to CBP agents as part of the government's Southwest Border mission, which involves security along the Mexican border in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The request for South Dakota Guard members came from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Guard Bureau. About 3,000 Guard members from several states are involved in this federal mission.

The ceremony included remarks from several state and local government leaders, including Gov. Noem, U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, Congressman Dusty Johnson, Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken, Flandreau Mayor Dan Sutton, and SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette.

"I think it's an opportunity for the community to come out and support members of our South Dakota National Guard who, seems like, get called up all the time to different places and this particular place to the southern border," Thune said. "So, they're going to go down there, try and reinforce the border, bring some order and stability and obviously do it in a humanitarian and compassionate way."

"We want them to know that we have their back," Johnson said. "We understand that they're going to be sacrificing a lot, their families are going to be sacrificing a lot over the next year. But we're going to do the kind of things that we can do in Washington to make sure that they have the proper training, the proper equipment, but also in our communities to make sure their families are taken care of during the difficult time."



Photo by Sot. Breanne Donnell)

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Wayne Walker, commander of Detachment 5, Company C, 2/641st Aviation Regiment talks to his soldiers and their families during a deployment ceremony at the Army Aviation Readiness Center in Rapid City, June 11.

By Sgt. Breanne Donnell - 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Family, friends and soldiers gathered at the Army Aviation Readiness Center for a deployment ceremony for seven soldiers with Detachment 5, Company C, 2/641st Aviation Regiment, June 11.

The Rapid City-based unit is deploying for nine months to Djibouti to provide transportation and air movement of critical equipment, supplies, parts and personnel in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Thank you for stepping up to serve and doing it in a way that is inspirational," said Gov. Kristi Noem. "You've been trained with excellence and you have what it takes to get the job done. We have full confidence in you."

The unit will deploy in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa to provide aviation support in the region. The 2/641st is a fixed-wing aviation unit comprised of pilots and operations specialists, and operates the C-12, King Air.

"You are patriots; time and time again you step forward to serve and so thank you to each of you for what you've done and what you are about



(Photo by Sot Breanne Donnell

Soldiers from Detachment 5, Company C, 2/641st Aviation Regiment stand for the unit roll call during the unit's deployment ceremony at the Army Aviation Readiness Center, Rapid City, June 11. to do," said SDNG Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, "This coyote patch is revered across the world and we are very proud of you."

This will be the unit's first deployment to the Horn of Africa. The 2/641st has three previous deployments to Afghanistan, which include passenger and cargo transport missions in 2008, as well as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions in 2011 and 2015.

The detachment commander, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Wayne Walker, says these deployments help in the development of their newer pilots.

"In one way, these deployments really help because it takes a lot of time to build a pilot up from new to being a pilot in command, so we get a lot more hours and a lot more experience on newer pilots on these deployments – that helps keep the unit seasoned," Walker said.

235th MP Company to deploy to Cuba



RAPID CITY - The South Dakota National Guard's 235th Military Police Company has received a federal mobilization order for a 12-month deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, beginning in January 2022.

About 115 Soldiers with the Rapid City and Sioux Falls-based unit will provide detention operations support to Joint Task Force Guantanamo. The unit will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete several weeks of training prior to deployment overseas.

Soldiers activated to support Monument Health in COVID testing efforts

By SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – Nine soldiers with the South Dakota National Guard were called up for state active duty to support Monument Health in their COVID-19 testing efforts beginning in late August through the month of September. The soldiers primarily assisted with sample collection at Monument Health's drive-through locations in Rapid City, Spearfish, Belle Fourche, Sturgis and Custer.

With an increase in COVID-19 infections quickly spreading across western South Dakota, Monument Health asked the South Dakota National Guard to assist with the COVID-19 test collection. Gov. Kristi Noem approved the request for support and the soldiers are activated under FEMA Title 32 status and federally funded.

"Since the start of the pandemic, the state of South Dakota has worked with our hospital systems to manage hospital capacity so that we can help those who need elevated levels of care," Gov. Noem said in a press release announcing the activation. "Testing efforts help us to identify and isolate cases to slow the spread of the virus. I had conversations with all three South Dakota hospital systems and asked them what they needed as cases start to rise again. Monument asked for the National Guard to assist them in their testing efforts, and we are happy to help."

Emily Leech, director of the Monument Health Laboratory Services, said in a press release that assistance from the National Guard will allow Monument Health to test more patients and fully utilize testing equipment and is one of several steps they are taking to meet rising demand for medical services.

"So right now we are doing four tests every 15 minutes and yes it has been busy. We have 170 tests today so it gets pretty busy out here," said Andre Crow Eagle, SDNG member. "A lot of people have felt grateful for us to come out and help, which has been great for us."

According to health officials at the Rapid City testing site, with help from the National Guard, Monument Health was able to test 175 patients versus 75 in a day. At all of the different Monument Health



South Dakota National Guard member Dylan Kasma collects a sample from a patient at the drive-through testing site at the Monument Health Urgent Care Clinic on Jackson Boulevard in Rapid City.

testing sites throughout the Black Hills, 400 to 500 people were able to receive COVID-19 tests in a day with help from the SDNG. Several soldiers came off orders Oct. 3 as the need for testing dropped in several communities, while the other soldiers continue to support the mission.

114th Fighter Wing celebrates 75 years

JOE FOSS FIELD – The 114th Fighter Wing is celebrating 75 years of Aviation heritage in 2021. To commemorate this event, an F-16 was painted using several historical facts about the aviation heritage of the 114th Fighter Wing.

-The distinctive tail flash showcases the patch utilized by the 114th Tactical Fighter Group from early 1970-1991 and features a cigar in the mouth of the Wile E. Coyote character reflecting the cigar used in the original Joe's Jokers patch and the trademark of Joe Foss.

-The 12-inch red tail stripe features "175th Fighter Squadron" on one side and "114th Fighter Group" on the other. The three red stripes replicate the distinctive markings on one of the first aircraft flown by the SDANG, the F-51.



-Heritage AF Stars located under the left and right wings include the last names of all the 114th Fighter Wing members, signifying the efforts of members giving 'lift' to the F-16 and its joint mission.

- #53 on left and right ventral fins highlights the original tail number of SDANG Founder, airfield namesake, Medal of Honor recipient, and WWII flying ace, Joe Foss.

- Mount Rushmore is pictured on the exterior of the NLG door, which calls back to a portion of the tail flash used from 1977-1991 and recognizes the distinctive SD landmark.
- "S DAK AIR GUARD" is painted on the wing tanks and was the font used on the F-89 and F-102s from 1960-1970.
- The blue paint scheme represents the blue background of the SD state flag and sky.

114th Fighter Wing airmen honored during welcome home ceremony



By Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart - 114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

JOE FOSS FIELD – A welcome home ceremony for more than 400 airmen who deployed from the 114th Fighter Wing was held at Joe Foss Field, Sept. 11. Throughout the past year, several airmen deployed overseas as part of a Reserve Component Period (RCP) where they supported a multitude of different operations. During this RCP, South Dakota airmen deployed to 19 different countries where they supported ongoing U.S. military operations around the globe.

Some unit members were deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, for a period of approximately 180 days, while other unit members were attached to joint operations in areas throughout central and west Asia, Europe, Africa and the Pacific.

In addition to the RCP tasking, the 114th Fighter Wing was tasked with providing homeland defense in the United States through a National Special Security Events (NSSE) deployment.

Regardless of the length or method of deployment, Air National Guard members normally deploy in small groups or individually, and at different times throughout the year. The nature of the deployment cycle makes it difficult to hold formal send off and homecoming ceremonies. For this reason, it was significant to be able to recognize the contributions of these service members at the ceremony, which fell on the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

Several South Dakota dignitaries were in attendance to welcome the unit members home on this fateful day.

"For two decades since, many of you in this room have answered the call with great resolve and great resilience," said U.S. Sen. John Thune. "For two decades, Americans have been safe because the American military stepped up and did what it always does – protect Americans to keep this country safe."

Thune was joined on stage by other notable guests including Gov. Kristi Noem, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, Sioux Falls Mayor Paul



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorrie Hart)

Master Sgt. Cynthia Major claps after a speech while embracing her daughter during a welcome home ceremony for 114th Fighter Wing members held at Joe Foss Field, Sept. 11.

TenHaken, and South Dakota National Guard leadership: Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Marlette, adjutant general, Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser, senior enlisted leader, Col. Mark Morrell, 114th commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Troy Erlandson, 114th command chief.

For many service members and the family that accompanied them in the audience, the ceremony was a reminder of the sacrifices our country has made since that day and continues to make daily.

"I'm incredibly grateful for all that you do," said Noem. "Not just by the brilliance of how you serve, but you serve with honor and distinction, and it means the world to me and my family."

The ceremony concluded with the names of the more than 400 service members who deployed being read aloud and each standing to be recognized for their dedication and selfless service.



SIOUX FALLS - Hundreds of family, friends and community members welcomed home over 190 soldiers with the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade at the Augustana University's Elmen Center in Sioux Falls, July 1.

The soldiers returned home after serving on a 10-month deployment to Djibouti, where the unit provided support to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and conduced operations to enhance partner nation capacity, promote regional security and stability, dissuade conflict, and protect U.S. and coalition interests in the region.

The ceremony included a number of state leaders and special guests who praised the unit for their accomplishments and thanked them for their service, including Gov. Kristi Noem, U.S. Sen. John Thune, Sioux Falls Mayor Paul Tenhaken, and South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette.

"We've been waiting a long time for all of these soldiers to come home so this was a special day today we recognize the fact that when they leave, they're on an important mission and we're so thankful that they did what they always do," said Noem.

Unit members are glad to be home and thankful for the support they had while deployed. "I don't know if there's a whole lot of words for it, it's awesome though. It's good to see everybody still together," said Staff Sgt. Bradley Poncelet.

"When you wear the uniform every day and you're amongst everyone who does the same thing, you often forget how much you're appreciated from the community and from





your family members," Capt. Ellen Bramblee said. "This experience here coming home with everything that the community and the FRG and everyone has done really reminds you of how humble, how humble it is to wear the uniform."



Yankton School District named 2021 Secretary Of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award recipient

By Priscilla Harkin, ESGR-SD

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III named Yankton School District one of the 15 recipients of the 2021 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, in recognition of the organization's exemplary support for its National Guard and Reserve employees.

"I am proud to salute the outstanding employers who have earned the distinction of being named Freedom Award recipients as we mark the 25th year of this highly coveted recognition," said Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III. "The men and women of the National Guard and Reserve make significant contributions to our communities and our national security through their civilian and military careers. We owe a debt of gratitude to these exemplary employers, who by valuing and supporting

their employees' military service, enhance the strength, readiness, and diversity of our National Guard and Reserve forces."

Yankton School District along with 14 other recipients



were selected from 3,382 nominations received from Guardsmen and Reservists highlighting how their civilian employers went far beyond what the federal law requires to support them. Celebrating its 25th year, the Freedom Award began in 1996 under the auspices of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to recognize exceptional employer support, with 310 honorees to date.

Yankton School District supports their military employees with programs for National Guard and Reserve service members. The company ensures uninterrupted pay, compensation and benefits during deployments; and goes above and beyond in its compassionate support of service members and their families.

""The Yankton School District (YSD) continually strives to contribute to the well-being and success of the citizen-soldiers they employ as well as those that reside within the community," said Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Zachary Campbell. "YSD's devoted encouragement and support allows me to pursue opportunities and experiences that grow me as a leader within the South Dakota Army National Guard."

"We are honored by this nomination acknowledging Yankton School District's commitment to our military personnel," said Dr. Wayne Kindle, Superintendent Yankton School District. "We take great pride in supporting our staff in uniform. We hope this nomination highlights the importance of employers standing with the Guard and Reserve in our community."

Soldiers compete in shooting competition in Arkansas



By SDNG Public Affairs Office

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Four soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard competed in the 50th annual Winston P. Wilson marksmanship competition at the National Guard Maneuver Training Center, Aug. 28 through Sept. 3.

The Winston P. Wilson Championship is conducted annually at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas and involves the rifle, pistol, machine gun and combined arms disciplines.

The objective of the competition is to promote the growth and development of state-level marksmanship training, as well as evaluate individual and collective tasks pertaining to that training.

The SDARNG soldiers competed as a team and individually during the competition, which brought together teams from 49 different states. Two SDARNG soldiers were recognized with individual awards during the matches.

Staff Sgt. Jory Rogers was awarded the U.S. Army Distinguished Rifleman's Badge for his continued excellence in competition matches. Rogers is one of only three active SDARNG members to earn this badge.

First Sgt. Clint Sandness received the Chief's 50 Marksmanship Badge, providing evidence and public recognition of his outstanding marksmanship abilities. Sandness became one of only 22 South Dakota Guardsmen to ever receive this award.

Other soldiers competing on the SDARNG team included Sgt. Eli Donnell and Spc. Arie LaCroix.





Gov. Kristi Noem, S.D. Rep. Dusty Johnson, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Marlette, and construction managers officially cut the ribbon for the new Army Aviation Readiness Center.

RAPID CITY – The South Dakota National Guard officially opened its newest facility, June 11. Crews began construction of the Army Aviation Readiness Center in 2019, which will provide training, administration, and logistical support space for over 150 Soldiers in four Army aviation units. With over 58,000 square feet, the new facility also attained the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design silver certification.

"This was designed under LEED 4.0 and was one of the first facilities in the nation to reach silver" said Cullen Jorgensen, engineering manager for the SDNG. "It's very hard to reach silver under this version of LEED and this building almost made the gold certification.

The new readiness center utilizes geothermal heating, daylight harvesting, passive solar panels, and other green technologies. The center will help enhance the readiness of National Guard Aviation units based in Rapid City.

"Whenever you have the ability for a unit to be better organized, better equipped, and have the space to train appropriately, it's going to increase their readiness," said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Marlette, the SDNG adjutant general. "Additionally when you have facilities like this, it attracts new members, and one of the key components of readiness is recruiting."

The cost of the new center was \$20 million, which included \$5 million in state funds and \$15 million in federal dollars. Planning for the new facility began in 2019.

"A project this size usually takes about 18 months to start construction. We were able to do this in nine," said Lt. Col. Martin Yost, SDNG construction and facilities management officer. "This was a total team effort between the adjutant general directing the staff of the CFMO and the team working very hard to get this plan to the end result of a great building for our Soldiers."

"It's a wonderful testimony to the work ethic of South Dakota, the



Soldiers and community members gather on the drill floor of the new Army Aviation Readiness Center to celebrate the opening of a new Army Aviation facility.



The opening hallway of the newest facility for the South Dakota National Guard, the Army Aviation Readiness Center which officially opened in Rapid City, June 11.

partnership that happens here in this state," said Gov. Kristi Noem. "We support our troops, and we back them by making sure they have the tools they need for the job. Only the best for the National Guard, because our National Guard are the best."

211th Engineer Company conducts explosive training

By Sgt. Tyler O'Connell - 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



(Photo by Sqt. Tyler O'Connell)

A soldier with the 21th Combat Engineer Company trains on the grenade range in Guernsey, Wyo., June 19, during the 2021 Golden Coyote training exercise.

GUERNSEY, Wyo. - The 211th Combat Engineer Company conducted training with demolition explosives and grenades during the Golden Coyote training exercise, in Guernsey Wyo., June 19.

Soldiers from the 211th were able to hone their skills in C4, Bangalores, shape charges, cratering charges and grenades.

"Essentially what we are is a breaching platoon," said 2nd Lt. Christian Trainor, platoon leader for first platoon. "If there is concertina wire or any type of obstacle that we have to get through, then we use explosives to get through that obstacle.

Soldiers prepare the explosives depending on the obstacle or mission and then carry the explosives to the blasting zone where they then prime the explosives.

"We have a main line that is made of detonating cord," said Trainor. "Each soldier brings their explosive and ties it into the main line. The knot that is used to tie to the main line is then taped to make sure it cannot be undone and has strong contact points to the main line."

Each explosive is checked for proper placement and set up by team leaders, squad leaders and the platoon sergeant before a detonator can be connected to the main line.

"Once everything is checked, everyone then



(Photo by Sgt. Tyler O'Connell)

Sgt. Michael Knudson and Spc. Tyler Hein with the 21lth Combat Engineer Company prepare a block of C4 explosive with a blasting cap during Golden Coyote training exercise in Guernsey, Wyo., June 19.

clears out," said Trainor. "We then hook up a secondary time fuse and the primary detonator, and we'll walk back to a safe standoff point. A soldier will then pull the safety pin off the initiator, then twist and pull the initiator which creates the explosion."

Trainor stated that everyone gets pretty

excited for demo day and that it is one of the biggest highlights of annual training.

"Blowing stuff up never gets old, every time we come out here it is always fun," said Trainor. "It is something you don't always do and if you don't use it you lose it."

1-189th Aviation Regiment conducts live hoist training

By Sgt. Breanne Donnell - 129th Mobile Public Affairs

FARMINGDALE - Soldiers with Charlie Company, 1/189th Aviation Regiment conducted live hoist training from a HH-60 Black Hawk in response to a wounded soldier scenario near Farmingdale during the Golden Coyote training exercise, June 19.

The Black Hawk is the Army's utility tactical transport helicopter, providing air assault, general support, aeromedical evacuation, command and control, and special operations support to combat, stability and support operations.

"The hoist is a complex and dangerous operation, but when we stay in practice it lowers the risk factor, especially here in the hills where we do get real missions- if search and rescue can't get a patient out safely or timely and they will call us up to help," said Sgt. Trent Eddy, crew chief with the 189th.

"The hoist is a complex and dangerous operation, but when we stay in practice it lowers the risk factor."

- Sgt. Trent Eddy, 1-189th crew chief -

The HH-60 comes equipped with an external hoist and the status of the patient will dictate if the litter, basket or rescue seat method will be best for the mission that is received. The rescue seat is preferred as it maximizes time that the patient is with the medic during the operation.

"Hoist is the culmination of all the training that we complete. As we go through progression, the hardest and most dynamic thing that we can do within MEDEVAC itself is a hoist mission," said Warrant Officer 1 Dillon Dell, 1-189th pilot.

"Golden Coyote allows us to bring it all together, having the area and terrain in the hills allows us to get almost any simulation of what you'd get overseas," said Sgt. Fochtman, 1-189th medic. "Playing through the scenarios, getting MEDEVAC calls and getting new experiences in areas that we don't normally use for training."

"We train a lot for missions like these; we train on our emergency procedures so when the time does come we just act and it's second nature, and we rely on all the training we do," said Sgt. Jason Oconnor, 1-189th crew chief.



(Photo by Sgt. Breanne Donnell)

Soldiers with the 1-189th Aviation Regiment conduct hoist training during near Farmingdale, June 19.



(Photo by Sgt. Breanne Donnell)

Soldiers with the 1-189th Aviation Regiment treat a simulated wound on a patient during hoist training, June 19.

Engineers complete humanitarian missions for annual training

By Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce

129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

HILL CITY - The 842nd Engineer Company participated in several humanitarian missions throughout western South Dakota for their annual training requirements in 2021.

The projects included road improvements for a washed out area on Richardson Cutoff outside Custer and rebuilding a bridge on the Mickelson trail near Hill City during the Golden Coyote training exercise June 13-21.

"During this AT, we wanted to focus on survivability tasks while balancing our soldiering skills," said Capt. Nate Livermont, commander of the 842nd. "Working on these projects creates some operator proficiency that can improve our readiness."

The projects were coordinated by the SDARNG's Innovative Readiness Training program led by Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Shay who worked with S.D. Game, Fish and Parks, Custer Stake Park and the U.S. Forest Service to identify which missions could be accomplished by the unit.

"At drill, we typically do inventories and/ or we have a booth where we do electrical, plumbing and construction work – putting things in and taking them out – but it kind of gets monotonous," said Sgt. Anna Bingham, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Mickelson Trail bridge project for the 842nd. "We're actually doing our job which is nice and it's out in the public so it's making a difference in our community."

The Mickelson Trail runs approximately 109 miles from Edgemont to Deadwood and has nearly 130 bridges throughout. The SDARNG attempts to improve or rebuild two to three bridges a year.

"We're extremely grateful for the Guard, for the service that they do, and for their time and effort coming out here," said Jayme Severyn, Custer State Park development manager. "If you look at the bridge, this is a professional job that's been done and it's going to be here for another 50 years and people get to experience that."

Livermont also wanted a project that incorporated some of their heavier equipment that hadn't been used in nearly four years, and the road improvement on Richardson Cutoff gave them that opportunity.

"One of the requirements we were asking for was something to use our bigger equipment on, our scrapers," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brandon Voss, 842nd construction warrant



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

Staff Sgt. Samuel Sorcic, construction engineer supervisor with the 842nd Engineer Company, carries a wooden post for the new handrails at the Mickelson Trail bridge project June 20, near Hill City.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Austin Pearce)

Soldiers with the 842nd Engineer Company dig out old posts on the handrails at the Mickelson Trail bridge.

officer. "The Forest Service found this road a ways out in the middle of nowhere that's been washed out for many years and it needed to be built up, regraded and shaped to where the drainage and water wouldn't wash it out again."

"It's great to actually do projects that we know support the community – it makes the project more meaningful," said Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Hartle, 842nd platoon sergeant.

The 842nd also had a platoon embedded

with the 153rd Engineer Battalion in Wyoming, creating more dispersion among the unit throughout this year's training.

"We farmed out our 1st platoon to Camp Guernsey to strictly do survivability tasks with the 153rd Engineer Battalion," said Livermont. "In a deployed situation, that same thing would likely happen where a platoon would be tasked to support another maneuver element."

1-147th Field Artillery Battalion trains at Camp Ripley

By Spc. Jorden Newbanks
Camp Ripley Training Center

CAMP RIPLEY, Minn. - The 1-147 Field Artillery Battalion conducted a two-week long annual training at Camp Ripley Training Center, Minnesota at the end of July.

The 1-147 uses the M270A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System. The unit's goal during this annual training was to practice their main mission, which is to deliver long range precision fire to destroy the enemy accurately and on time

"Our mission is to deliver precision long range fire on the enemy both near or far. We can shoot from up close to all the way up to 300 kilometers, if need be," said Sgt. First Class Aaron Walberg, a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System crewmember and the master gunner for the unit. "So that's our job, really, long range precision artillery fire when needed on time."

The master gunner within a field artillery unit is responsible for planning and helping assist the battery commanders with unit table certifications and qualifications, which is exactly what the 1-147 is completing here.

"The whole mission during this AT is to come as an artillery battalion and to exercise our (Mission Essential Tasks), get out and exercise our equipment and to get crew familiarity because there's always change over with crews," said Walberg. "So you got to get that crew cohesion through the tables and then you culminate it with the table six, which is our crew qualifications, that's where we get to fire the live rounds. That's kind of the big event for the battalion every year."

During the two weeks of training, the soldiers of the 1-147 remained down range here for most of the time. The unit completed multiple training events that led up to one large M270A1 Rocket Launcher live fire event on July 20. This AT is more important than the last two as all of the batteries within the battalion are home from previous deployments and can train together.

"So this year is a little different. We haven't had a battalion level exercise like this in about three years," said Walberg. "We had Bravo Battery deploy and then Alpha deployed behind them. So we haven't had a chance to get the battalion out exercise the equipment since before then."

During the live-fire event, the M270A1 launches a M28 reduce range practice rocket



(Photo by Spc. Jorden Newbanks

M270A1 MLRS from the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion fire M28 Reduced Range Practice Rocket Rounds during a live fire event on annual training at Camp Ripley Training Center, Minnesota on July 21.



(Photo by Spc. Jorden Newbanks)

An M270A1 MLRS from the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion conducts a practice field reload during their annual training at Camp Ripley Training Center, Minnesota on July 15.

rounds here and can hold twelve rockets at a time. It's important for crewmembers to get some live practice with their vehicles as it doesn't happen very often.

"It's a perishable skill. When you haven't been on the equipment a few years and haven't gotten out as a battalion, it takes a little time to get that flow back," said Walberg. "Every year you've got to stay qualified and right now we're going to end AT with this table six qualification for these crews and shoot some live rockets."

Other than train with the M279A1's, the soldiers of the 1-147 also completed multiple

weapons qualifications, like the M4A1 and M16 rifle qualification, the 50 Caliber and M240 machine gun qualification and the MK-19 grenade launcher qualification. Each event, including the live fire event, is meant to keep the soldiers within the 1-147 ready for their mission and to keep soldiers up to date with new standards and training.

"It's just overall to exercise all of this equipment, to get familiarity, and to get troops spun up on things and to make sure they're ready to go and that they know how to do their job and how to handle their stuff and be proficient on it," said Walberg.

SD Guard members reflect on service, impacts of 9/11 on 20th anniversary



n the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Capt. John Weber was serving on a temporary duty assignment for training in the Boston area. Like many South Dakota National Guard members, Weber started his day like most others with nothing out of the ordinary.

While picking up breakfast at a drive-thru restaurant, he first learned of some disturbing news. "The server mentioned that a plane had flown into the World Trade Center. Since I didn't have the radio on at that point, I turned it on and it was being reported," Weber said.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jerry Duba, a C-12 pilot, was preparing his aircraft to transport Air National Guard leaders from South Dakota to Washington D.C. "We saw the first plane hit the tower and thought it was a terrible accident," he said. "We proceeded to load the passengers, and I was just pulling the door shut when the engines shut down and (the co-pilot) informed us of an air traffic shutdown."

Shortly after arriving to his training location, Weber and his fellow classmates learned a second plane hit the other tower of the World Trade Center. "Nobody at class

really knew what was going on after the first plane hit the tower. It seemed at that point that it could have been an accident," Weber said. "When the second plane hit the tower, it was clear at that time it was a terrorist attack."

Staff Sgt. Richard Bauman was working and living in Chicago, Illinois, at the time. "It was the largest traffic rush I have ever been involved in, as downtown Chicago evacuated in the belief that tall buildings in large U.S. cities were being targeted," he said.

Fiona Berndt was a 1st grader at New Hampton Elementary School in Iowa when she first heard of the events unfolding. "They released everyone from school," said Berndt. "When I got home, my mom had brought the TV into the kitchen and it was all over the news. At the time, my brother was in boot camp for the Navy, and my mom was worried with what was going to happen with him."

"Good Morning America was playing on our bedroom TV as I was getting ready for work," said Beth Walker, wife of a SDNG soldier. "Our three-month-old daughter was lying in her crib. Charles Gibson and Diane Sawyer were on TV reporting the first tower had just been struck! I picked up my daughter, held her close and as the second plane took out the second tower, I started to cry and said this is going to change everything for your daddy Sydney!"

Staff Sgt. Grant Serna was supervising one of his cable technicians install an outlet in a home overlooking the Missouri River west of Yankton when he first heard the news. "(We) got the TV working just after the first tower was crashed into," Serna said. "The homeowner, my tech and I watched coverage for an hour or so. I called my unit repeatedly, with only a busy signal, as most in the unit were doing the same."

Confusion, worry, sadness, anger, and what will come next were just a few of the thoughts and emotions racing through the hearts and minds of everyday Americans and those serving in military uniform. In the wake of the attacks, SDNG units would be put on high alert, with soldiers and airmen activating for statewide missions providing security on military installations, airports and other potential targets.

"That started a spiral of events leading to



(Photo by U.S. Air National Guard)

A 114th Fighter Wing airman fuels an F-16 Fighting Falcon at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, in September 2001. Following the 9/11 attacks, crews from the 114th were on alert for possible immediate missions to support the country's air defenses.

armed soldiers and airmen assisting at airports with security all over the nation, including South Dakota," said retired Maj. Gen. Robert Bray. "Our nation would soon be at war."

Bray, a colonel and commander of the 147th Field Artillery Brigade in Sioux Falls at the time, says orders came quickly from the governor to provide security at the Sioux Falls Airport. "Before the day was out, we had established and trained on the Rules of Force, conducted elementary building security, conducted weapons qualification, and deployed soldiers to the airport," he said.

Additional SDNG units would alert their soldiers and airmen to help secure airports in Rapid City and five other S.D. cities. Crews from the 114th Tactical Fighter Wing in Sioux Falls were also put on alert for possible immediate missions. The Air National Guard was primarily responsible for the country's air defense. The 114th's F-16 aircraft were loaded with munitions and ready to fly, if the call came.

The nation and the world would soon come to learn 19 al Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial aircraft; crashing two of them into the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and Flight 93 into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The attack took the lives of nearly 3,000 people, making it the worst attack on American soil since the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

On the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the SDNG reflects on how the events that day impacted the lives of its members and the organization they serve. The 9/11 terrorist attacks triggered major U.S. initiatives to combat terrorism across the globe. For the next two decades, more than 9,300 SDNG soldiers and airmen from dozens of units would be called up time and time again for federal service in support of various stateside missions and overseas deployments.

The U.S. officially began military operations in Afghanistan in October 2001 to remove the Taliban regime and destroy Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda terrorist network based there. Over a year later, the U.S. would also turn its attention to Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein as another main threat to national security.

By early 2003, SDNG units would be federally mobilized to support homeland security missions and overseas contingency operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism. These deployments began with hundreds of soldiers and airmen from several units mobilizing in support of Operation Noble Eagle, providing security operations at Ellsworth Air Force Base and Joe Foss Field in South Dakota, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and



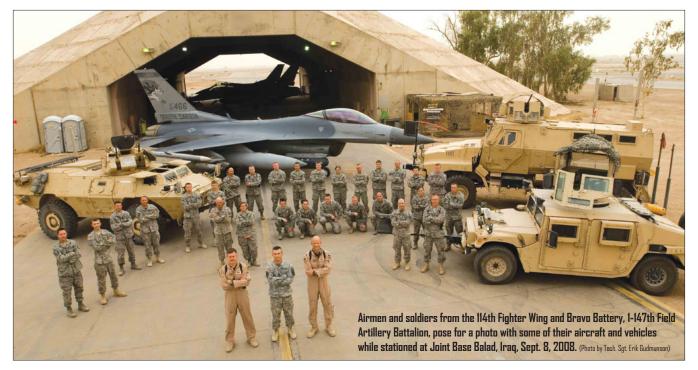
(Photo by U.S. Army National Guard)

Soldiers with the South Dakota National Guard stand guard near Mount Rushmore, in July 2002. After 9/11, extra security precautions were taken the following year for various events, locations and national holidays. Mount Rushmore was considered a potential target for terrorists on America's Independence Day.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Bryan Bouchard)

Senior Airman Eric Kloster with the South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Security Forces Squadron stands his post at an entry control point into the Sather Air Base in Iraq, July 21, 2006.



Fort Carson, Colorado.

At the same time, more than a dozen SDNG units would also deploy for operations throughout Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East, with dozens more deploying in the following years. During this period, the SDNG had not seen such deployments on a large and continuous scale since the organization experienced a full mobilization of its forces during World Wars I and II and the Korean War

"I've always been proud to be part of the one percent of this country's population that steps up to protect our country," said Duba, who retired after 32 years as a chief warrant officer 5 and a veteran of the war in Afghanistan. "Most of the adult males in my life, including my father, were on active duty during World War II, so it just seemed natural that I would go into the military."

"When I joined the military, I never thought I would be called to serve in combat," said Weber, who also served in Afghanistan and retired as a colonel after 34 years of service. "The National Guard was very different back then, prior to 9/11. We trained and prepared for combat...but the possibility seemed very remote. The attacks on 9/11 changed everything."

The operational tempo of the SDNG to recruit, train, equip, and deploy units and service members for various operations affected the SDNG in a number of ways.

"Soldiers who joined or stayed as part of the organization to continue to serve knew



(Photo by Maj. David Parker)

Lt. Col. Harvey Fitzgerald visits with an Iraqi man, Sept. 29, 2007, near Al-Taji, Iraq, as he and fellow Provincial Reconstruction Team members assist provincial and local governments to develop a transparent and sustained capability to govern while supporting economic, political, and social development and respect for the rule of law.

that they would deploy," Weber added. "They wanted to deploy and joined for that specific reason."

"I think 9/11 impacted my decision to serve because I witnessed so many people (friends and family) sign up for the military shortly after the attacks," said Berndt, who later joined the SDNG and serves as a staff sergeant. "I saw people step up and serve their country, and I felt like it was my duty to do the same thing."

"Just prior (to 9/11), I had nearly decided to get out of the Guard and pursue my civilian

job aspirations," said Serna, who currently serves as a sergeant first class and readiness NCO. "After that, there was no chance that was happening. The burst of patriotism was incredible and stands in stark contrast to today."

One of biggest impacts to the National Guard stemming from 9/11 was a greater shift from a domestic emergency and homeland security force to an operational force fully integrated into active-duty deployments and missions.



The SDNG was largely known for their role to support the state and assist civil authorities when responding to wildland fires, floods, tornadoes and winter storms. The South Dakota blizzard of 1965, Rapid City Flood of 1972, 1998 Spencer Tornado, and Jasper Fire of 2000 are just a few of the state's major natural disasters the SDNG was called on to support. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began, and continued, the SDNG experienced a steady state of mobilizations for federal deployments.

"That moment the first plane crashed into that building, you just felt in your gut that the whole world was changing," Serna said. "The Guard morphed into a force that keeps the peace; takes the fight to the enemy; supports national and state missions directly and more often federal missions."

"After 9/11, the National Guard shifted to an operational force," Weber said. "Units were placed on a rotational deployment schedule." National Guard forces were needed to meet the demands of the Department of Defense to support a war on multiple fronts and engage in warfighting functions, conduct security and stability missions, and support multi-national partnerships.

"The American citizen realized how important our military is," said Bauman, now a captain in the SDNG who served three tours in Iraq. "Traditional, active-duty components realized they could no longer do their primary mission at any sizable scale without the National Guard."

South Dakota Army Guard engineer,



Soldiers of the 21th Engineer Company detonate a roadside improvised explosive device used by the Taliban during a route clearance mission in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 4, 2010.

artillery, logistics, medical, and aviation units would see the majority of rotational deployments into the Afghanistan and Iraq theaters of operation. The Air Guard would also see the regular deployment of its airmen from its 114th Fighter Wing, including its security forces, F-16 pilots, engineers, logistics and many other support personnel.

These units supported the war effort in a variety of capacities by providing command and control of units, force protection, security and air support, clearing roads of IEDs, medical services and evacuation, logistical coordination and maintenance, transportation of supplies and equipment, engineer and base

construction projects, detainee operations, and more.

Many SDNG members would also support embedded training teams and other security focused missions – to train Afghan and Iraqi army and police forces. These missions were part of a broader multi-national effort to help stabilize and secure the countries, deny terrorist organizations a safe haven from which to operate, and provide freedom and liberties to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan... where our men and women in uniform were deployed in harm's way," said Bray, who took an assignment at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, as the

National Guard liaison and subsequently as the deputy commanding general, assisting in the preparation, deployment, and redeployment of thousands of soldiers to and from Iraq, Afghanistan, and all over the globe.

"On those journeys, I observed a transformation in both Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2006, I observed no lights at the homes of the people as I flew over (Afghanistan). No commerce. Few schools, especially for girls," Bray continued. "By 2010, I observed lights at night at their homes. I observed bustling commerce on the roads. Most importantly, girls were going to school. Progress was being made because Americans were there to advise and support."

Over the last 20 years, 4,600 SDNG soldiers and airmen deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, Spartan Shield and Inherent Resolve; nearly 2,300 deployed in support of operations Enduring Freedom and Freedom's Sentinel; and over 1,100 would provide support to Operation Noble Eagle.

SDNG deployments were not limited to the Middle East. Over 1,300 service members would support other active-duty rotational deployments stateside and overseas; largely supporting regional security and support operations in over two dozen countries throughout Europe, Southwest Asia and more.

As the SDNG kept up with federal deployment requirements, they also maintained their ability to support state missions. This included a variety of assistance and recovery support to Hurricanes Katrina and Maria, Haiti earthquake, Missouri River flood, Wessington Springs and Delmont tornados, Winter Storm Atlas, COVID-19 pandemic, Black Hills wildland fires and more.

"The Guard proved its worth once again and continues to do so for both its state and federal missions. Our nation and our Department of Defense learned, again, the Guard is essential," Bray said. "Additionally, a new generation of veterans has been born in conflict. A veteran can and will never forget the duty, sacrifice, and honor they experienced and earned."

In the early 2000s, the SDNG resided in 30 communities across the state, today it is in 21 communities. Every one of those South Dakota communities would experience a unit mobilization – with many units, and service members, deploying multiple times. With the deployments came challenges and sacrifices, not just for the service members, but for families as well.

"One of the biggest challenges was the time spent away from my family," said Weber. "Not just for deployment but also in training



(Photo by H.S. Army National Guard)

Soldiers from Charlie Battery, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion, administer first aid to an Iraqi civilian, July 2006, in Iraq.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Darnell Hubbard)

South Dakota National Guard Embedded Training Team member Staff Sgt. Adam Herman provides weapons training to an Afghan policeman in August 2008 near the village of Gorwach in northwest Afghanistan.

and preparation. The other probably even greater challenge occurred upon return from deployment. Not only was I different but my family was different. They helped me adjust back into life and dealt with many of the issues related to my deployment that continued to surface overtime."

"I was fortunate to have employers that were supportive of my military service," Duba said. "I was also blessed to have a wife and family that stepped up and kept the home fires burning on my frequent periods of being away."

"I had tremendous support from my family, community, and employers through each of my three deployments to Iraq," said Bauman. "The greatest sacrifices come from children and spouses at home."

"Being in the military, you miss out on birthdays, anniversaries, and important moments in your loved ones lives," Berndt added. "They are the ones that keep everything moving and take care of things when you're at training or deployed."

"The time these events has caused our service member to be apart from our family has been challenging," said Walker, whose husband, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Wayne Walker, has been deployed five times since 9/11. "However, we have both seen positive changes in how the National Guard has been able to make this time



(Photo by Staff Sot. Theanne Tangen)

The South Dakota Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Team holds the United States flag over Spc. Dennis Jensen's casket during his interment at the Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis. Aug. 26, 2011.



(Photo by U.S. Air National Guard)

Airmen from the 114th Fighter Wing are greeted by their families, Nov. 3, 2018, in Sioux Falls, as unit members returned from a deployment to Southwest Asia.

apart easier for all to handle."

Another impact to the National Guard was the creation of the Yellow Ribbon Program, Family Readiness Groups and other support programs to assist service members and their families during deployment periods and throughout their military service. These programs help ensure service member and family readiness by providing information and resources on healthcare, education, employment, and financial and legal benefits.

"The Yellow Ribbon events, the Family Readiness Groups, Military One Source, has provided so much support for both service members and their families during the separation," Walker said. "Our family has learned we are more resilient than we ever imagined we could be. We are so proud of all our soldiers and the sacrifices we all have had to make to still keep us all safe!"

Although the greatest sacrifice came from those service members who suffer from the physical and mental wounds of war, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their nation. Thirty-six of South Dakota's sons and daughters across the various branches of the military have given their lives over the past 20 years in support of the Global War on Terror. Eight of those are SDNG soldiers: Sgt. Dennis Morgan, Staff Sgt. Cory Brooks, Chief

Warrant Officer 2 Paul Pillen, Sgt. 1st Class Richard Schild, Staff Sgt. Daniel Cuka, Sgt. Allen Kokesh, Staff Sgt. Gregory Wagner and Spc. Dennis Jensen.

As the nation marks the 20th anniversary of 9/11, these SDNG members, and many who wore and continue to wear this country's uniform, are proud of their service to their nation, the people they served with, and the missions they performed – to protect and defend America and what it stands for.

"It was truly an honor to have served with some of the greatest women and men, soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines from South Dakota, all over these United States and around the world," said Weber. "We served together in peace and in combat – during some of the most trying times and seemingly dire experiences."

"Since 9/11, I've had the unique opportunity to train thousands of soldiers who eventually were deployed to the conflicts that the U.S. Army has been engaged with since," Serna said. "I can only say it was a privilege to have seen their resolve and patriotism having joined the military service of a nation at war. These folks had no doubt that they were likely to be asked to deploy, and still enlisted into the Guard."

"I've been asked, 'Was it worth it?' many times during my military career since that fateful day. I've been asked it by grieving parents and spouses, by colleagues, and by friends and acquaintances." Bray said, who served over 41 years in uniform. "I've come to realize there is no real way to adequately respond without leaving some doubt, something yet unanswered.

"Marine Gen. John Kelly once said, 'It didn't matter what I thought. It doesn't matter what the living think,'" Bray continued. Gen. Kelly's son was killed in Afghanistan. "What mattered was what his son had thought. And he was doing what he wanted to do – leading Marines in combat. 'Was it worth his life?' Kelly asked. 'It's not for me to say.' Was it worth it? Americans ask this question so flippantly – it seems they forget the sacrifice behind those words or what it would mean to our nation if the answer was 'no.' If Americans don't think that's worth fighting for, then I fear for the future of our country.

"While I still have no personally satisfying response for that question, 'Was it worth it?' I believe Gen. Kelly came as close to what should console loved ones and American's alike, 'It's not for me to say,'" Bray added. "Is fighting to keep our country safe and bring stability and democracy to a country that was once ruled by terror? That is worth fighting for!"

Afghanistan... Emotions are raw. Grief is real. Help is Available.

Common Reactions

In reaction to current events in Afghanistan, you may:

- · Feel angry, betrayed, frustrated, sad, helpless, grief or distressed
- Experience an increase in mental health symptoms like symptoms of PTSD or depression
- Sleep poorly, drink more or use drugs
- You may question the meaning of your service or whether it was worth the sacrifices made
- · Feel like you need to expect and/or prepare for the worst

Feeling distress is a normal reaction to negative events, especially ones that feel personal. It can be helpful to let yourself feel those feelings rather than try to avoid them. Often, these feelings will naturally run their course. If they continue without easing up or if you feel overwhelmed by them, the suggestions below can be helpful.

Coping Strategies

Consider more general coping strategies that you may want to try including:

- Engage in Positive Activities. Try to engage in positive, healthy, or meaningful activities, even if they are small, simple actions. Doing things that are rewarding, meaningful, or enjoyable, even if you don't feel like it, can make you feel better.
- Stay Connected. Spend time with people who give you a sense of security, calm, or happiness, or those who best understand what you are going through.
- Practice Good Self Care. Look for positive coping strategies that help you manage your emotions. Listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing routines, spending time in nature or with animals, journaling, or reading inspirational text are some simple ways to help manage overwhelming or distressing emotions.
- Stick to Your Routines. It can be helpful to stick to a schedule for when you sleep, eat, work, and do other day-to-day activities.
- Limit Media Exposure. Limit how much news you take in if coverage is increasing your distress.

If you develop your own ways of adapting to ongoing events and situations, you may gain a stronger sense of being able to deal with challenges, a greater sense of meaning or purpose, and an ability to mentor and support others in similar situations.

The Psychological Health Team, as well as many other resources, are available to help. YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!

- 1-800-273-TALK (8255), Press 1 for the Military Crisis Line
 - Confidential support, available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- MILITARY ONE SOURCE: 1-800-342-9647
- Consider one of VA's self-help apps (see https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile
- PTSD Coach Online https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/default.htm
 - A series of online video coaches will guide you through 17 tools to help you manage stress. PTSD Coach Online is used on a computer, rather than a mobile device, and therefore can offer tools that involve writing.



LTC Amber Heinert
Director of Psychological Health
(DPH) & Resiliency Programs
Amber I. heinert mil@mail. mil
605-737-6582

MAJ Sarah I Wetzler R3SP Coordinator (Resiliency, Risk Reduction, Suicide Prevention) R2 Coordinator (Ready and Resilient) Sarah.i.wetzler.mil@mail.mil 605-737-6948

Mark Francisco
Psychological Health
Coordinator
mark.j.francisco2.mil@mail.mil
605-786-2922

Kristi (Cricket) Palmer Alcohol and Drug Control Officer (ADCO)

Risk Reduction Coordinator (RRC) Kristi.l.palmer.civ@mail.mil 605-737-6973

Sue Keller Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC) Susan.d.keller.ctr@mail.mil 605-737-6954

Paul Brosz Prevention Coordinator (PC) Paul.a.brosz.ctr@mil.mil 605-737-6990

SSG Shaun Kuharski Drug Testing Coordinator Shaun.d.kuharski.mil@maiil.mil 605-737-6566

> State Chaplain: 605-431-5182

SD Family Assistance Center: 1-800-658-3930



The Golden Rule

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

ne team one fight! Really? What about the un-vaccinated?
Are they still one of the team or should they be flown to
Afghanistan and dropped off for good, or denied all healthcare,
all rights, and anything else we can think of. Those are some of the
comments from mainstream media and from many in the political realm.

I would point out negative comments from the other direction but they don't seem to get a voice in the matter, so I don't know what they are. I'm not suggesting members of the Guard are going this extreme, but I'd like to challenge all of us to control our emotions and be respectful to one another.

If we believe the voices I mentioned here, then we also must believe the withdrawal from Afghanistan was a complete success and all the Americans are safe. Hmm, if you believe everything you hear, I would recommend studying the concept of critical thinking. If you don't believe everything you hear, except when it comes to COVID, or a particular view on COVID, you might want to analyze why. If you rationally and analytically examine what you hear, apply logic, objective thinking and research, then you are probably in a good place.

Can we have a civil conversation about a topic that we don't see or understand in the same way? There are well grounded personal beliefs associated with diverging views of the COVID mandate. As a chaplain, I have heard a good number of them. Many on our "One Team" are struggling and division is growing, even in families. Can we learn from one another as iron sharpens iron? (Proverbs 27:17). Can we ask ourselves if the judgement we assigned to the others is really fair? Can we disagree without invoking the Fallacy of Logic referred to as Ad Hominem?

This basically means you attack the arguer instead of the argument, which essentially sums up the vast majority of the main stream media today. If we all studied the many Fallacies of Logic and had to eliminate them all, we would either be very quiet or we would have exquisite conversation. Until then...urgh! Keep in mind time will reveal much, but we still have to live together.



What if we took it a step further and we all invoked the golden rule, "Treat others as you would want them to treat you?" (Matthew 7:12). That would certainly help us to remain one team one fight. I'm not suggesting the SDNG is acting like many on the national level, but I have seen some minimizing, marginalizing, judgement, disrespect and name calling over the different views and understandings surrounding COVID and its implications. It's not pretty...and it doesn't build a team.

One thing I do know, the Evil One wants us divided, and he is the one that is most happy right now. The next few months will be challenging. Let's work together and eliminate the wedges. The future of our country and many others will depend on it. Please feel free give me a call any time. I will do my best to let my two ears work harder than my one mouth.

- Blessing to all from Chaplain (Maj.) David A. Stimes

Strong Bonds FY22



Strong Bonds is conducted in an offsite retreat format in order to maximize the training effect.

The retreat or "get away" provides a fun, safe, and secure environment to enhance our relationships and to address the impact of relocations, deployments, and military lifestyle stressors.

Strong Bonds for Couples - PREP 8.0

20-21 November 2021 - Rapid City

Strong Bonds for Couples - Laugh Your Way To a Better Marriage

19-20 February 2022 - Chamberlain

Strong Bonds for Families – Active Military Families

23-24 April 2022 - Sioux Falls

For additional Information contact Chaplain (MAJ) Stimes at 605-737-6009 or

david.a.stimes.mil@mail.mil