



South Dakota Department of the Military
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



LET'S LIGHT UP THE SKY THIS FOURTH OF JULY!

As a little boy, the Fourth of July was all about going to the beach, baseball games, the parade, cookouts, and fireworks. I remember saving my money from my paper route and helping my dad with his milk route for months so I could buy a bunch of snaps, bottle rockets, firecrackers, snakes, poppers and sparklers. I remember gorging on hotdogs, burgers, fried chicken, and watermelon. It's safe to say, I had no clue what the Declaration of Independence was and why this celebration was so important to Americans.

This Fourth of July, I will stand proud and join all Americans in celebrating our independence. With vision and courage our founders stated, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The truths set down in our Declaration of Independence are binding, and they continue to illuminate the course for future challenges. We have strived through decades of challenges to continue down the path our founders envisioned. As we continue to meet those challenges let us work together to ensure America remains the strongest force for peace, justice and freedom. Let us work to ensure our dreams can come true.

Our brave heroes are returning to the land of the free in need of our help and support to transition back into civilian life. President Theodore Roosevelt once said, "A man who is good enough to share his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards." Our men and women continue to shed blood to protect our freedom, and for this we owe them a great debt of gratitude for their service. Take time this Fourth of July to thank veterans for their service and encourage them to visit their county or tribal veterans service office. Freedom is not free and only because of the bravery and service of our armed forces does it ring loud and clear in our nation and around the world.

This Independence Day, let us all celebrate the brave spirit of those who founded the United States of America and the men and women who continue to ensure our freedom.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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WESTERN DAY AT STATE VETERANS HOME

Residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home got to enjoy a little taste of the “West” during Western Day at the Home.

Residents enjoyed “Cowboy Coffee and Donuts” in the morning and a “Chuck Wagon” at lunch.

Residents and staff donned cowboy hats and bandannas to show their spirit.

While waiting for lunch, residents and staff participated in some old wet competition — team penning, roping the horse, boot toss, a stick pony relay and a water balloon toss.



FALOR/FALOR TEAM WORK IHS HEALTH FAIR

Ron Falor (Aurora and Brule County VSO) and Nancy Falor (Buffalo County/ Crow Creek Tribe VSO) attended the IHS Health Fair on June 23.

Their booth provided veterans with an opportunity to discuss benefits provided for veterans and their families.



FALOR CONTINUES TO HONOR MORE KOREAN WAR VETERANS

Ron Falor, County Veterans Service Officer for Aurora and Brule Counties, continues his path to honor as many Korean War Veterans as he discovers.

During their community Memorial Day programs he honored veterans in Kimball, Chamberlain, White Lake, Plankinton and Stickney.

Thanks Ron for your dedicated efforts.



109TH GROUP WINS EISENHOWER TROPHY, NAMED STATE'S TOP SUPERIOR UNIT

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 109th Regional Support Group of Rapid City was awarded the coveted Eisenhower Trophy, June 22, for superior performance during training year 2015.

The 109th was selected as the top ranked unit in the state in a field of 15 units who received the National Guard Bureau's Superior Unit Award. The SUA is awarded annually to units who meet highly-enforced military standards in the areas of personnel, training and readiness.

The award was presented by Brig. Gen. Kevin Griese, SDARNG assistant adjutant general, who applauded the unit for their outstanding performance.

"About one-third of our units in the state won a Superior Unit Award, and that's quite an accomplishment for our organization," said Griese. "But if you look at all the units that qualified for the award, the Eisenhower Trophy is given to the most outstanding unit of all of them. This is a tremendous accomplishment for your unit and for all of you to be proud of."

"We were very pleased to achieve the SUA, because the HHD (Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment) 109th worked very hard to accomplish all of the requirements for the award," said Col. Marshall Michels, 109th commander. "When we found out that we received the Eisenhower Trophy the team was ecstatic. Being the best of the best is truly and honor."

In order to earn the award, units must achieve 95 percent in: assigned personnel strength, monthly drill and annual training attendance, and weapons qualification. Units must also attain 90 percent in soldiers passing the Army Physical Fitness Test and being fully qualified in their occupational specialty. Unit inspections also factor into award requirements.

"Each member of the HHD, 109th RSG, has made a commitment to this unit and made it a priority to do their best," said Capt. Marie Strang, 109th detachment commander. "They put drill attendance above numerous personal activities, made weapons qualification a priority, worked hard on their physical fitness and personal readiness and made a lot of sacrifices over the last training year to be here for the unit."

This is the first time the 109th RSG has received a SUA since converting from its legacy unit, the 109th Engineer Group.

"I'm very proud and honored

to be a member of this unit at a time when everyone came together to earn this award," said Strang. "It really exemplifies each member coming together to work as a team."

The 109th joins the other 14 SDARNG units in continuing a third straight year of training excellence – with three units receiving the SUA award for the second time in a row and five units for a third straight year. The 211th Engineer Company has earned the SUA four years consecutively and 1742nd has received it four out of the last five years.



(continued on next page)

109TH (CONTINUED)

This year's recipients of the Superior Unit Award include:

- HHC, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion - Watertown
- Battery A, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion** - Aberdeen
- Battery B, 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion - Yankton
- HHC, 153rd Engineer Battalion** - Huron
- Forward Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion** - Huron and Parkston
- 155th Engineer Company** - Rapid City and Wagner
- 200th Engineer Company** - Pierre, Mobridge and Chamberlain
- 211th Engineer Company*** - Madison and De Smet
- 842nd Engineer Company - Sturgis & Belle Fourche
- Training Center Command* - Rapid City
- Medical Command* - Rapid City
- 82nd Civil Support Team* - Rapid City
- 730th Area Support Medical Company - Vermillion
- 740th Transportation Company - Milbank and Aberdeen

* Denotes second straight year for receiving the award.

** Denotes third straight year for receiving the award.

*** Denotes fourth straight year for receiving the award.



RAPID CITY, WAGNER SOLDIERS TO RETURN FROM KUWAIT DEPLOYMENT

A welcome home ceremony for more than 150 soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company is scheduled for Saturday, July 2, at 2 p.m. (MT) at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center's Barnett Arena.

The Rapid City and Wagner-based unit is returning from a 10-month deployment to Kuwait.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds, U.S. Representative Kristi Noem, Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG, are planned speakers for the ceremony.

The 155th deployed to Kuwait with a mission to improve survivability, remodel and complete new construction of base infrastructure in the U.S. Army Central area of operations. As a vertical engineer company, the unit has a wide variety of occupational specialties, which include carpentry, plumbing, electrical and masonry.

The unit returned to the United States on June 19 and has been completing demobilization requirements at Fort Bliss, Texas, before returning to South Dakota.

This is the second mobilization for the 155th, which deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Noble Eagle in 2002-2003.



MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS BRING ARTILLERY CLASSROOM TO SOLDIERS' BACKYARD

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) is bringing the field artillery classroom to soldiers throughout the Midwest through its Mobile Training Teams.

Based out of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the 2-196th RTI provides MTT instructors who travel to teach a variety of 13M and 13P basic, advanced and senior leader field artillery courses, which allows units to train their soldiers at, or close to, their home station.

The MTTs specialize in the Multiple Launch Rocket and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems.

Instructors and students of the course say it enhances training, saves money and allows for better networking among soldiers looking to further develop their artillery skills.

"The 13M MTT has taught more than 650 hours of NCOES (noncommissioned officer education system) instruction alone," said Sgt. 1st Class Neal Stratman, 13M instructor and MTT member. "I enjoy going out to different states and instructing. Not only do we meet great students along the way, we are able to network with others in the field artillery community, which only builds and expands our force."

"These courses create about an 80 percent cost savings for the unit and it drives retention and readiness," 1st Sgt. Micheal Seefeld, senior operations NCO, Field Artillery Subject Matter Expert cell. "Soldiers get to train closer to home and many of them get to see their families and sleep in their own bed at night."

In June, MTT members traveled to Fort McCoy to train soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery Regiment, Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Recently back from a deployment in Afghanistan, the course was an opportunity for soldiers of the 1-121st to continue to train together in their home state, alongside those they served in combat with.

"Training in a familiar environment with the people I deployed with and the equipment we used makes the classes that much more enjoyable – the class is more cohesive this way," said Staff Sgt. Matthew McIntyre, resupply vehicle ammunition section chief with the 1-121st. "Many of us have worked together for the past six years, which means we can jump right in and start training without any icebreakers."

This request is one of eight that the 2-196th has fulfilled within the last year from requests within the state and MTTs outside the state. Nearly 130 soldiers, in addition to the schoolhouse's forecasted requirements, have been trained by the 2-196th RTI in the 13M and 13P military occupational specialties.

Besides Wisconsin, instructors from the 2-196th have conducted courses in Wyoming, Kansas, Colorado, and throughout South Dakota.



MOBILE TRAINING (CONTINUED)

States are also using a training strategy to increase the amount of soldiers they can put through schools per year by conducting courses during their annual training periods in relation to their deployment cycle.

One of the units who took advantage of this cost-saving approach, the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, was able to allow 55 Soldiers to receive training in professional military education during their annual training in the unit's deployment cycle reset year.

"If I had it my way, this would be the way of the future," said Seefeld.

"The cost efficient methodology of MTTs should be how courses are conducted in order to maximize fiscal responsibility while establishing the ability to keep the force trained at many levels," said Stratman.

More than 300 field artillerymen across the nation have been trained this fiscal year from instate requests and MTT requests.

The amount of training has gone above and beyond the projected number and field artillery schoolhouses are projected to train approximately 450 by the end of the year, said Seefeld.



SDNG CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH SURINAME

Members of the South Dakota National Guard and Suriname Defense Force celebrated 10 years of partnership as they gathered together to attend an anniversary ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid, June 22.

The event recognized the 10th anniversary of the formation of the State Partnership Program between Suriname and the SDNG.

In coordination with U.S. Southern Command, Suriname and South Dakota established a successful security cooperation relationship in 2006 under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. The partnership has flourished during the past decade, becoming a model for mutual security cooperation.

Since the trust-building process began in 2006, soldiers from both countries have had the opportunity to visit each others' homelands to gain knowledge and experience in both military operations and civilian culture.

"The skills learned by service members, both in South Dakota and Suriname, have been invaluable," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG. "This partnership provides the best venue to experience working with a foreign partner."

The two entities have conducted over 100 engagement activities in support of USSOUTHCOM cooperation objectives with Suriname, including defeating transnational criminal networks, promoting response capacity for natural disasters and providing humanitarian relief, building partnership capacity for peacekeeping operation missions, enhancing regional access and advancing security sector reform.

Col. Adolf Jardim, Suriname Defense Force deputy commander, said both military forces benefit when subject matter experts from each country are able to share their knowledge on military topics, such as training in a jungle environment and building relations with local communities.

Suriname and the SDNG conduct about 10 subject matter expert exchanges a year on a variety of military related topics to include: field leadership and NCO development, logistics operations, military police crowd control training and procedures, medical and communications training, and women serving in the military seminars, to name a few.

Every year, hundreds of individuals from the SDNG, SDF, U.S. State Department and USSOUTHCOM directly participate with the experts during the exchanges.

Several days prior to the ceremony, Jardim and other officials from the SDF had the opportunity to observe various units working on projects and training being conducted during the 32nd annual Golden Coyote training exercise. Jardim said the exercise and yearly exchanges help to facilitate new ideas and ways of expanding the partnership into the future.

While the ceremony was short, the relationship between the SDNG and Suriname will continue to grow for many years to come.



From left, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard, Col. Adolf Jardim, deputy commander of the Suriname Defense Force, and retired U.S. Army Col. Tracy Settle, the first SDNG director of the State

American Legion Riders

Freedom Ride Aug. 7, 2016



**A BEAUTIFUL RIDE THROUGH THE BLACK HILLS OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
HOT SPRINGS – KEYSTONE – HILL CITY – CUSTER**

**8:30 TO 11:00AM – REGISTRATION
\$15 A HAND \$20 FOR 2 HANDS
(CASH PRIZES FOR 1ST, 2ND, 3RD PLACE)
10:00AM RIDE STARTS
STATE VETERANS HOME
2500 MINNEKAHTA AVE. HOT SPRINGS, SD**

**6:00 PM DINNER & AUCTION
American Legion Post 71
1045 JENNINGS AVE. HOT SPRINGS, SD**

**BENEFIT FOR SD STATE HOME VETERANS & VETERAN PROGRAMS IN
SOUTH DAKOTA**

LAKE COUNTY RECOGNIZES MORE KOREAN WAR VETERANS

Approximately 40 Lake County residents came out to the Madison VFW Post Tuesday night to honor Veterans of the Korean War. These heroes received the Korean Ambassador Peace Medals.

One recipient was quite surprised when he found out his wife had requested the award without his knowledge. All of the recipients expressed their appreciation to the Republic of Korea for this recognition.



SDDVA STAFF PARTICIPATES IN OUTREACH PROGRAMS

SDDVA's Kevin Bowen and Kevin Swanson sponsored a benefit briefing for residents at the Edgewood Senior Living facility in Pierre this week. Swanson briefed the residents on compensation, VA pension and survivors pension, burial benefits and headstone setting fees.

SDDVA's Will Huffmon and Ryan Fowler hosted a booth at the Black Hills Veterans Job Fair in Rapid City this week.

With over 80 vendors and businesses participating, veterans were provided a great opportunity.

This job fair provides veterans a great opportunity to learn about benefits and make connection with employers.

Huffmon used this opportunity to brief veterans on their benefits and Fowler briefed veterans on their educational benefits, the on-the-job training program and the apprenticeship program.



Kevin Swanson



Will Huffmon and Ryan Fowler

Upcoming Events

- Jul. 1—Buffalo Chip Annual Flag Raising Ceremony—West Gate Entrance off Ft. Meade Way—6:00 pm (MT)
 Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
 Jul. 13—SD Veterans Council—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
 Jul. 23-24—Sioux Falls Air Show
 Aug 4—VABHHCS Hero and Patriot Night—Main Street Square—Rapid City—6:00—9:00 pm (MT)
 Aug. 7—Purple Heart Memorial Dedication - Capitol Lake—Pierre—1:00 pm (CT)
 Aug. 7—American Legion Freedom Ride—State Veterans Home—Hot Springs 8:30 am (MT)
 Aug. 22-25—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre Ramkota
 Sep. 1—Veterans Day at the State Fair—Huron - Program at 10:30 at the Freedom Stage
 Sep. 3—DAV Brookings Chapter 22 and 727 Transportation Unit Poker Run—Brookings National Guard Armory—10:00 am (CT)
 Sep. 9—Veterans Stand Down—Wagner Armory
 Sep. 16—National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park—6:30 pm (CT)
 Sep. 23—Veterans Stand Down—VFW—Sioux Falls
 Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
 Oct. 8—DAV Fall Conference—DAV—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- 2017**
- Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
 Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown



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