

# DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • SPRING 2011

## Physicians bring service to the National Guard



### » TRADITIONS

History and customs of a military dining-out

### » ACHIEVEMENT

S.D. church receives Department of Defense Award

### » HUMANITARIAN

Physicians help Afghan girl get life-saving surgery



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Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen  
The Adjutant General

Maj. Brendan Murphy  
State Public Affairs Officer

DC Chad Carlson  
Editor

Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen  
Design/Layout

Ist Lt. Michael Bierle  
Public Affairs Office

CONTRIBUTORS

Tech Sgt. John Orrell  
National Guard Bureau

Capt. Anthony Deiss  
196th MEB

Sgt. Rebecca Linder  
196th MEB

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Meecker  
241st MPAD

Bryan Ripple  
DEOMI

Nick Penzenstadler  
Rapid City Journal

Sgt. Charlie Jacobson  
129th MPAD

Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson  
114th Fighter Wing



8537 Corbin Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507  
907.562.9300 • Toll Free: 866.562.9300  
www.AQPpublishing.com

Bob Ulin  
Publisher

Chris Kersbergen • Carl Kingsman  
Advertising Sales

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**How to reach us:** Questions or comments for Dakota Pack should be directed to the SDNG Public Affairs Office: 2823 West Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57702, 605.737.6721, fax: 605.737.6264, [pao@sd.ngb.army.mil](mailto:pao@sd.ngb.army.mil).

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# DAKOTA PACK

Magazine of the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard



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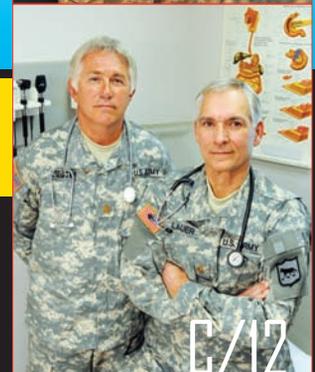
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### On the cover

Maj. Curtis Liedtke and Maj. David Lauer commissioned into the SDARNG in 2010 bringing more than 30 years of medical service to the organization. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

# Dooohen: Thank you and farewell

Greetings everyone,  
 I wanted to take this opportunity to thank each of you for the great honor of commanding this great organization as your adjutant general. I am retiring with 40 wonderful years and wish to bid you farewell. It has truly been a special privilege, one that I will carry with me always.

I appreciate your trust and vote of confidence while serving as your 20th adjutant general. Working for you these last three and a half years, since September 16, 2007, has been amazing and a true learning experience for me. I know the workload you carry every day for our great state and for the nation, and I know your days and your nights are extremely busy. Your dedication and work ethic have played a prominent role in our stateside duties and have provided for our national security.

It is amazing how fast time passes by when you love what you do. From the moment I joined the South Dakota National Guard, in January of 1971, I have considered myself extremely fortunate. I have been doing what I love most, serving my country within the greatest organization.

You are in the business of protecting and saving lives both here at home and while serving abroad. So many people are counting on you. You have given much of yourselves, whether providing disaster relief efforts like assisting our communities during ice and snow storms, major flooding throughout the state, devastating forest fires or providing recent aid to countries like Haiti and Afghanistan.

In addition to your call to state active duty, you have served exemplarily in many parts of the world, including deployments to: Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Italy, Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, Haiti, Jordan, Spain, Panama, South Korea, Germany, Honduras, Turkey, Canada and our state partnership country of Suriname.

You should take justifiable pride that you make it look so easy, and trust me when I say I know it's not. I'd ask each of you to do me a favor and pray for our fellow members who are deployed away from their families, many of whom are in harm's way.

There are several deployments in the upcoming months, so I ask that each of you remain vigilant in your training. I look forward to the safe return of each one of you called away to support our freedom.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, we have seen the largest mobilization of the National Guard since World War II. And our country found out it could not go to war without you... members of the National Guard.

Those of us who wear the uniform know that the most important part of our lives, the most important source of strength and support, is our families - so I understand and appreciate the personal sacrifices that your family has made. Their support has been vital to our success.

In addition to the phenomenal family support you have received, you cannot forget the amazing support from our employers throughout the state. You are able to perform your duties knowing that your job will be there when you come home. You cannot do that without tremendous employer support.

I believe our South Dakota National Guard is one of the best places to be in the country, and it is because of your professionalism, hard work ethic and patriotism that makes you shine. You are an inspiration, continually going beyond what is required, and for that I am indebted. I am truly proud to have served as your adjutant general and grateful for the many enduring friendships, for your service, sacrifice and for making this state and nation what it is today. God bless you all.

*Steven R. Dooohen*



# Reducing suicide rate among highest priorities

Story by Tech. Sgt. John Orrell  
National Guard Bureau



Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Orrell

## Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter

WASHINGTON, D.C. - One of the highest prioritized issues in the Army National Guard is dealing with the increase in suicides, the acting director said at the 2011 Reserve Officer Association National Convention.

"We have doubled the suicide rate inside the Army National Guard in one year," said Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter. "The reported number of suicides in the Army National Guard in 2009 was 62; the reported number in 2010 was 113."

Carpenter spoke during the Reserve chief panel, hosted by Secretary Dennis M. McCarthy, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve affairs, about some of the 2010 statistics.

"There wasn't a singular event that caused the rate to double," Carpenter said:

- More than half of the Army National Guardmembers who committed suicide in 2010 had never been deployed.
- Only about 20 percent had unemployment issues or economic problems.
- 8 percent came to the Army National Guard through waivers.
- Between 60 percent and 70 percent had relationship issues.
- 103 of the 113 were male.

Suicides are not just an issue within the Army National Guard, but a societal one

as well, Carpenter said.

"The Army and the Army National Guard are held accountable for this huge increase in suicides, and I tell you it's not necessarily just the Army, it's society at large," he said.

"It's a generational problem, and it's a resiliency problem.

"If you look at your hometown newspaper, you see stories about high school kids who commit suicide and about college kids who commit suicide."

Carpenter shared examples.

"Two Soldiers [one] in January and [one] in February last year committed suicide, both were 18 years old, neither one of them

had been to basic training or [advanced individual training]," he said.

"In December we had a Soldier that joined the National Guard the 10th of December, committed suicide on the 27th. He was in a car with two girls and another guy, pulled out a gun and shot himself. He had not been to a drill with the National Guard yet."

He pointed out that when he went to find statistics for the number of suicides in high school-age and college-age children, the latest statistics were from 2007.

"As you go out and try and find statistics on suicides in high schools or colleges on the Internet, you can't find them," Carpenter said.

"We know someone is keeping track of them, but they're not available."

"You know whose statistics are available? The Army's and the [Department of Defense's]," he said.

"My take on that is we need to build a more resilient force, and we need to become more resilient as a nation," he said.

Carpenter closed his comments with a plea to his fellow servicemembers.

"If you find somebody that's struggling and is considering ending their life as an option, engage them, help them, and then we'll get through this, and we'll build a more resilient nation and a more resilient force," he said.

## ENLISTED SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Eric Flatmoe

UNIT: 842nd En. Co.

AGE: 35

FULL-TIME POSITION:  
Business manager  
at Sturgis  
Motorsports

HOMETOWN:  
Sturgis

FAMILY: Single

PETS: None



SGT. 1ST CLASS ERIC FLATMOE

**WHEN I'M NOT AT WORK YOU'LL FIND ME:** With my hands in something involving motorsports. I'm a self admitted motorhead so whether it's motorcycles, snowmobiles or cars, if it has an engine I'm into it! During the summer, I race 360 Sprint Cars on a weekly basis at Black Hills Speedway.

**THE ONE THING I TREASURE THE MOST:** After my first deployment I realized that there isn't just one thing in life to treasure. Every day holds a lot of small things to value no matter how bad a day you may be having. It's just a matter of opening your eyes to see them.

**HEROES:** My dad, World War II veterans

**NOBODY KNOWS THIS ABOUT ME BUT:** I wish I was as organized as everyone thinks I am.

**THE ONE PERSON (ALIVE OR NOT) I'D MOST LIKE TO HAVE OVER FOR DINNER & WHY:** My mom. She passed away when I was 11 years old, so there are a lot of things that I would love to sit down and talk to her about. Even if it was just over a fried egg sandwich and a glass of milk.

**IF HE/SHE ISN'T AVAILABLE:** My Grandpa Flatmoe. I have heard such great stories about him, and I think that I have inherited a lot of his traits/characteristics. It would be nice to see what he thinks.

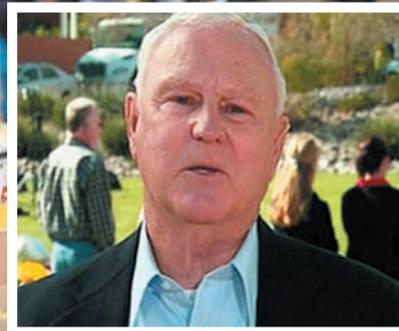
**IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TOMORROW I'LL:** Go to work as usual, but I would take more time off to do the things that I enjoy that I have to work for now.

**THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT:** Was from my dad, he always told me "If you start something, you finish it; there's no quitting part of the way through it."

**THE BEST ADVICE I HAVE TO GIVE:** Stay flexible no matter how much gets thrown at you. If you're too rigid, you're not going to bend but break.

# Former Guardsman among heroes in Ariz. tragedy

Story by Nick Penzenstadler  
Rapid City Journal



Retired Army Col. Bill Badger

TUCSON, Ariz. - When bullets began flying in Tucson, Jan. 8, retired Army Col. Bill Badger said he relied on lessons learned in a 26-year military career that began with the South Dakota National Guard, to help him subdue the attacker and survive the chaos.

Badger was among several bystanders who acted quickly to tackle 22-year-old Jared Loughner, the alleged shooter in an incident that claimed six lives and wounded 14 others in the Tucson shopping center. Badger had been waiting in line to talk to the congresswoman when the attack occurred.

By the time Badger realized the firecrackers he thought he heard were gunshots, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, a 9-year-old girl, and a federal judge had already been shot.

He dropped to the ground but was grazed in the head by a bullet.

"I dropped down all the way to the ground, and I lowered my head about six inches. I felt this burning, stinging sensation right in the back of my head," Badger told the press in Arizona.

When the shooting stopped, a disoriented Badger saw another man hit the gunman over the head with a chair. Before Loughner could reload his Glock 9 mm, Badger and several others wrestled Loughner to the ground. The 74-year-old got the shooter in a choke hold while another man forced his knee into the suspect's neck.

"The guy's face was in the cement, and every time he would move, I would tighten my grip on his throat, and this individual would push harder with his knee, and all he

(the gunman) said was, 'Ow, ow, ow, ow,'" Badger said.

After holding Loughner down until police had him in handcuffs, Badger was taken to a hospital and discharged later that day. In the moment, Badger said he had not realized the extent of the injury.

"I didn't know the blood was coming from me because I saw all the blood on the sidewalk, the walkway from the store, on him (Loughner) and all over the back of my hand and my arm," Badger said.

Badger's son, Tim of Pierre, said he was attending a peewee hockey game for his son, Landon, in Mitchell when he heard the news.

"Somebody called my daughter, Shelby, at the game," Tim Badger said Tuesday. "She had tears in her eyes, and she pulled the news up on the Internet on her phone and said, 'Grandpa's been shot and was involved in that.'"

Badger's wife, Sallie, said the couple had been inundated with hundreds of interview requests from media from all over the world. They also received a call from the White House.

"It's been a little overwhelming, but everyone has been respectful and appreciates what he did," Sallie Badger said in an interview with the Journal.

Her husband was unavailable for an interview.

The heroic action came as no surprise to Bill Bacon, also a retired colonel, who lives in Rapid City and greeted Badger when he arrived Friday, Jan. 14.

"He definitely doesn't get rattled. He's a good old South Dakota boy. Real level headed," said Bacon, who joined the Guard with Badger in 1953 while attending high school in Redfield. "I'm real proud of him, and the whole state will welcome him home and celebrate what he's done."

Badger lived in Pierre from 1965 to 1973 and has children who live in Pierre and Sioux Falls. He will look for life to slow down a bit at his grandson's peewee hockey tournament this weekend.

"The trip's been planned for a long time now, and I know he'll be ready to get away and come up," Bacon said.

News of Badger's actions spread quickly among South Dakota Guardsmen.

"It goes to show you the caliber people we have not only in the National Guard but also in the state," Guard spokesman Maj. Brendan Murphy said. "He just went back to his instincts and obviously this guy was hurting a lot of folks and he helped make it stop. He did a heroic act and it'll live on for a long time." But Badger said he gives more credit to the people that helped him that day than to himself.

"No, I don't consider myself a hero. I did what anybody would do. I think my military background made me react, and the timing was essential," Badger said.

The Arizona Daily Republic and Sioux Falls Argus Leader contributed to this report. Reprinted with permission from the Rapid City Journal.

## Sixth CW4 promoted to CW5

RAPID CITY, S.D. - Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ken East was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer 5, Dec. 5 at the Army Aviation Support Facility at the Rapid City Regional Airport.

The South Dakota National Guard is only authorized to have six officers in the state with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 5. East became the sixth one. Chief Warrant Officer 5 is the highest rank a warrant officer can reach.

## Deputy Commander of Clinical Services named

RAPID CITY, S.D. - Kim Schlecht, of Whitewood, has been promoted to rank of colonel in the South Dakota Army National Guard's Medical Command.

Schlecht has been a member of the SDARNG for 30 years. The promotion brings a new position, that of Deputy Commander of Clinical Services, with responsibilities for overseeing medical services.

In civilian life, Schlecht works at Regional Rehab Institute as a case manager.

## Guard to celebrate arrival of helicopter with Lakota Nation

RAPID CITY, S.D. - Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's aviation community and members of the Lakota Nation will be celebrating the arrival of the state's newest helicopter, named "Lakota" by the U.S. Army, at a ceremony scheduled to be held at the Crazy Horse Monument near Custer May 14, 2011.

Four UH-72A "Lakota" Light Utility Helicopters, the newest aircraft in the U.S. Army's inventory, will begin arriving later

this spring at Delta Company, 1st/112th Security and Support Battalion. Soldiers in this newly forming SDARNG aviation unit will utilize the Lakota's non-combat capabilities to conduct their primary mission of medical transportation of the sick and wounded.

## 155th En. Co. builds addition to ballpark

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The 155th Engineer Company, Rapid City, built a second story on the crow's nest at McKeague Baseball field, just south of Camp Rapid. The addition added two elevated lookouts. One of the lookouts will be for the announcer and scoreboard operator and another for media. McKeague Baseball field is home to Rapid City Stevens, Central and St. Thomas More.

The 155th Engineer Company also remodeled the ground level of the crow's nest and built a wall to create a storage room.

Sgt. Ben Von Eye, Rapid City, said that this is good training for the Soldiers to be able to get some hands-on work.

## Black Hills Stock Show thanks Soldiers and Airmen

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The Black Hills Stock Show Foundation (BHSSF) recognized ten Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and ten Airmen from Ellsworth Air Force Base Feb. 1, for the eighth consecutive year during their Military Appreciation Day at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City.

## OFFICER SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Jon Murphy

UNIT: C Co 1/189th GSAB

AGE: 37

FULL-TIME POSITION: State Army Aviation Officer



HOMETOWN: Omaha, Neb.

Maj. Jon Murphy

FAMILY: Wife, Natalie; son, Brennan, 2

PETS: Three horses, two dogs and a cat

WHEN I'M NOT AT WORK YOU'LL FIND ME: At home, outside working on projects. Fixing fence, updating our barns, hauling hay and the endless process of keeping the automatic waterers working. Basically, anything that involves using my hands.

THE ONE THING I TREASURE THE MOST: Time with family and going pheasant hunting with friends.

HEROES: My dad and my pastors, John Williamson and Bill Meirose.

NOBODY KNOWS THIS ABOUT ME BUT: I had hair once! I never wanted to become a pilot growing up, I always wanted to be a veterinarian and still do.

THE ONE PERSON (ALIVE OR NOT) I'D MOST LIKE TO HAVE OVER FOR DINNER & WHY: Tom Osborne. Being born and raised in Nebraska, I have followed the Cornhuskers my whole life. I have always respected Coach Osborne both on and off the field for his accomplishments and the approach he took to get there.

IF HE/SHE ISN'T AVAILABLE: George W. Bush. He was president during a very interesting time in our nation's history. I admire him for his beliefs and sticking to them when times were tough for him and our country.

IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TOMORROW I'LL: Resign my position and buy a ranch.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT: As a leader, if someone asks you a question, it is all right to say I will get back to you, rather than giving them an incomplete answer immediately.

THE BEST ADVICE I HAVE TO GIVE: In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. Matthew 7:12

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# Air Guard enlisted leaders tackle issues

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Meeker  
241st Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

NEW ORLEANS - The regional representatives from the Air National Guard's Enlisted Field Advisory Council met at Louisiana National Guard's headquarters to discuss critical issues that affect all enlisted Air National Guardsmembers, Jan. 24 to 28.

On the agenda: improving the lives and mission capabilities of 94,000 enlisted Air Guardsmen.

According to its mission statement, the EFAC's purpose is to propose solutions, changes and other policy actions that impact enlisted members of the ANG.

The attending ANG senior enlisted leaders from the seven regions that represent 54 states and territories, tackled a wide-ranging agenda with more than 30 issues of concern that have percolated up through state and regional chains of command.

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Michael Dalton, chairman of the EFAC, described the council as the problem-solving element in the ANG that is committed to improving the support base - the health, morale and welfare - of all enlisted Airmen.

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Chris Muncy, command chief master sergeant of the ANG, extended Dalton's description by highlighting the fact that the EFAC process provides a "field-based focus on Airman issues."

This means that the EFAC's work is designed to translate to measurable improvement in an Airman's ability to do his or her job meaningfully and effectively.

The senior enlisted leader to the chief of the National Guard Bureau, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Denise M. Jelinski-Hall, emphasized that the EFAC does more than just tackle problems; it also evaluates successful activities from the field and determines their relevance to all enlisted Airmen in the force.

"While we get great direction and guidance from our officers, it's the enlisted corps that executes. So if there's an issue or concern that affects the entire enlisted force on a national level, it comes to this body. An issue brought to the council could also be a best practice that someone wants to share, something that is working right and working well," said Jelinski-Hall.

Some of the topics on this year's agenda included providing better access to distance learning programs, implementing effective PTSD training, properly supervising physical fitness training and testing, as well as improving compensation, retirement and VA benefits.

Dalton said that not all agenda items are new business; in fact, one or two agenda items stretch back to the early 90s, he said - illustrating that issues deemed critical by the EFAC continue to be worked until some form of resolution is realized.

One such issue that was successfully resolved to ANG satisfaction was the implementation in 2009 of the Hometown Heroes Salute program



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Meeker

**Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Chris Muncy, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, (right), leads discussion at the ANG's Enlisted Field Advisory Council conference, Jan. 24, 2011, at Louisiana National Guard headquarters, Jackson Barracks. Also pictured are Chief Master Sgt. Michael Dalton (center), chairman of the EFAC and Chief Master Sgt. James Downing (left), command chief master sergeant of the LA ANG. The EFAC meets three to four times a year in various locales to propose solutions, changes and other policy actions that impact all 94,000 enlisted members of the ANG.**

which recognizes eligible Air Guardsmen who deployed for more than 30 consecutive days for contingency operations such as Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

"The Hometown Heroes Salute program is a success story, and it's modeled after the Army's Freedom Salute program," Muncy said.

"It was proposed to the Air Guard at the same time the Army program was proposed to the Army Guard, but the Air Guard initially said, '... We don't need it.' Now it's the greatest thing in the world - leadership sees it, Airmen see it, commanders see it. But it took enlisted focus to help Air Guard leaders understand that this is what you'll need, this is what your families and your community will need. Hometown Heroes was a win."

The Hometown Heroes Salute program emerged as one of four or five top concerns that emerged through the EFAC process several years ago.

The same will occur as a result of this year's EFAC activities - the top concerns will be routed via Muncy, in his capacity as command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, to the director of the Air National Guard, Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, for his review and guidance, Dalton explained.

The significance of holding this particular EFAC conference at Jackson Barracks, recently rededicated as the headquarters of the LANG following its emergence from the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, was not lost on Army Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard.

Landreneau opened the EFAC conference by recalling that many of the senior elected leaders present were directly involved in assisting the citizens of Louisiana after the catastrophe caused by Hurricane Katrina.

"It [the National Guard's response] was something to behold ... and I thank you for your part in it," said Landreneau.

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Photo by DC Chad Carlson

**Cmdr. Hiram Johnson, Military Liaison Officer for the U.S. Embassy in Suriname, Lt. Col. John Weber, SDNG Deputy Directorate of Plans, Brig. Gen. Wayne Shanks, SDNG Air Assistant Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG Army Assistant Adjutant General, Justice Hew A Kee, Lt. Col., Suriname's Ministry of Defense and Head of Strategic Planning and Education, and a representative for the People's Republic of China take part in Suriname's National Day in November 2010.**

# Leadership attends Suriname National Day

**Story by DC Chad Carlson**  
Public Affairs Office

PARAMARIBO, Suriname - The South Dakota-Suriname State Partnership Program was formally established in August 2006 to develop mutually beneficial partnerships between the two entities. The partnerships were selected based upon similarities in population size, land mass, agricultural-based economies and lack of significant language barriers.

In the past five years the South Dakota National Guard has conducted 45 exchanges and directly interacted with over 1,000 Surinamese government officials, educators, military personnel and business officials, said Capt. Allen Godsell, Suriname State Partnership coordinator.

"Involved in each one of these exchanges is a friendship and an ever deepening respect for our two countries, said Godsell. "Whether it is sharing research on PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), understanding the complexities of disaster management, or kicking a soccer ball with school kids, it is really about putting a face to a place and taking the time to understand that people are people no matter where they are from."

In 2010, there were 200 individuals who directly participated in the SPP. Participants included key leaders throughout South Dakota and Suriname's government, education system, military, private business, tourist industry and communities.

In November, members from both the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard which included the Army Assistant Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Timothy Reisch, and the Air Assistant Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Wayne Shanks, attended National Day, as Suriname celebrated their 35th year as an independent nation.

"The generals' attending the Suriname National Day was very significant in that this is the first time we have ever had that level of leadership attend this event," said Lt. Col. John Weber, SDNG Deputy Directorate of Plans. "As it turned out, it being the 35th National Day for Suriname, it was even more significant since it was a very important event for them also. But most importantly, our attendance represented

our care for the relationships and friendships we have developed through this partnership. This partnership is important to South Dakota, and we will continue to develop that relationship. It was an honor to attend such a prestigious event for Suriname."

South Dakota also sent Army National Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman and Air Command Chief Master Sgt. James Welch.

"Upon receipt of the invitation from the government of Suriname our leadership felt that it was very important that we attend this year's National Day celebration with senior leadership from the South Dakota National Guard, due to the continued development of the relationships within the State Partnership Program," said Weber.

"Since 2006, we have worked with the same leadership in the government in Suriname. This trip also marked the first meetings between the new leaders of the government of Suriname and the leadership of the South Dakota National Guard. These meetings will lay the foundation for continued collaboration between South Dakota and Suriname with the new leadership in place. During our meetings, the new leadership embraced the State Partnership Program and the South Dakota delegation by expressing their commitment to continue the work we have already begun and looking at new ways to work together in the future," said Weber.

The South Dakota National Guard also sent public affairs representatives, from both the Army and Air National Guard, to conduct a public affairs subject matter expert exchange, where they trained Surinamese military and civilian media.

"The State Partnership Program is a great way for our Soldiers and Airmen to gain valuable experience working with foreign militaries," Weber said. "As a result, our people use those experiences to benefit the South Dakota National Guard by translating what they learned into their everyday operations here at home and overseas."

# Equitable treatment of all a “moral imperative”

Story by Bryan Ripple  
 Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

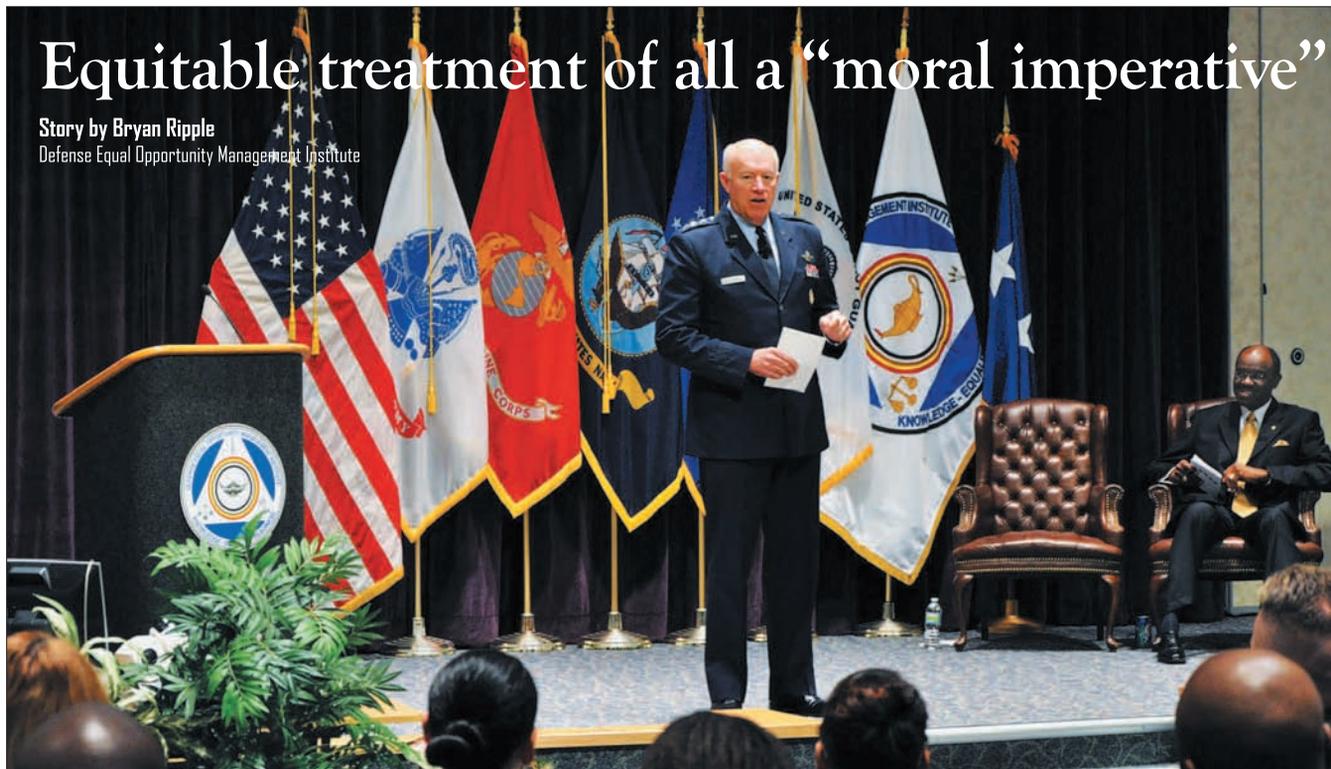


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brian G. Rhodes

Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, addresses Guard and Reserve graduates of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute's Equal Opportunity Advisor Reserve Component Program on Feb. 4, 2011, at the Institute. The EOARCP curriculum develops a base of knowledge and skills that allow graduates to assess human relations climates in the organizations they serve, and to provide advice and assistance to commanders to prevent, reduce or eliminate discriminatory practices.

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - Equitable treatment of all people is a moral imperative, the director of the Air National Guard told newly minted equal opportunity advisors at a graduation ceremony here Feb. 4.

“Our servicemembers in the National Guard and Reserve are indeed our most valuable asset,” Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry “Bud” Wyatt told 87 National Guard and Reserve graduates of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute’s Equal Opportunity Advisor Reserve Component Program.

“As leaders we owe them our very best efforts - and it cannot be with closed minds that we undertake this endeavor. We cannot meet mission success without the expertise and dedication of our equal opportunity specialists and advisors.”

EO programs have made important contributions to all Department of Defense servicemembers and civilians serving in an environment of dignity, equality and respect, Wyatt said.

Wyatt highlighted a photo of Army National Guard Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, vehicle commander, 617th Military Police Company, Richmond, Ky., who received the Silver Star at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Hester is the first female Soldier since World War II to receive the Silver Star.

New and evolving legislation may change to allow full equal opportunity for women, including in combat, Wyatt said.

“DEOMI graduates are the ‘change agents’ that help to educate people on the need - the moral imperative - to be equitable in our treatment of all people,” Wyatt said.

“Equal Opportunity Advisors recognize the responsibility to speak the truth in the face of adversity and injustice and are representatives of their commanders,” he said.

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# A new opportunity

## S.D. National Guard physicians help Afghan girl get life-saving surgery

Story by Capt. Anthony Deiss  
196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

For a 13-year-old Afghan girl, Safoora, a new opportunity at life is one gift that came just in time for the Islamic celebration of Eid al-Adha. Suffering from a tumor in the middle of her brain, Safoora was able to get the surgery she needed to remove the life-threatening mass.

While the holiday of Eid al-Adha is similar to that of Christmas for Americans, Safoora's gift did not come from a jolly, fat man in a red suit, but rather two men wearing green camouflage.

Col. Ashok Kumar, a physician, and Capt. Regan Norgaard, a physician's assistant, both deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, with the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, coordinated the surgery Safoora needed in order to have a chance at living a healthy and normal life.

"I am very thankful for Col. Kumar and Capt. Norgaard and their efforts to help my daughter," said Ishmael Mohammad, Safoora's father. "I am hopeful she will live a long and happy life."

Mohammad, an Afghan worker at Camp Phoenix, brought Safoora to the 196th's brigade surgeon's office in October after she began exhibiting symptoms of dizziness, headaches and difficulty concentrating in school.

"We knew she had a tumor removed in June 2008 in Pakistan," said Kumar, of Rapid City, S.D. "The father told us the doctor who performed the surgery had died since and was wondering if there was anything we could do to ease the suffering of his daughter."

Through a non-Department of Defense volunteer program called Operation Outreach Afghanistan, Safoora was able to receive assistance for her first surgery.

The OOA program is a humanitarian organization that provides assistance to needy Afghan families through donations of money, clothing, school and medical supplies. The program also provides medical assistance to Afghan children with special needs by referring them to hospitals in Kabul, neighboring countries or even in the United States.

"After Safoora's first surgery in 2008, she recovered well and exhibited no problems until June 2010 when she started to have headaches and dizziness," said Kumar, a 20-year employee of the Veterans Affairs hospital in Sturgis, S.D. "A scan of Safoora's brain done in June at a NATO military hospital in Kabul showed a mass in the same area of her previous surgery."

"The doctors at the coalition hospital said her life was in danger and without surgery soon, she would most likely die," added Norgaard, of Brookings, S.D. "Unfortunately, the surgery she needed could not be performed anywhere in Afghanistan due lack of medical resources - we needed to look at other options."

With limited time, options and money to pay for a second surgery, Mohammad was only hoping Kumar and Norgaard could do something to make Safoora's last days as comfortable as possible. However, Kumar and Norgaard were not going to settle with only treating her pain.



Photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder

Thirteen-year-old Safoora is seen here in October 2010 in Kabul, Afghanistan, before her trip to India to remove a brain tumor that was threatening her life.

Using some monetary donations from OOA, along with their own financial resources and medical contacts, Kumar and Norgaard acted quickly to try and make arrangements to save Safoora's life. Kumar, who was born and raised in India, contacted his cousin who arranged for her medical care at a university hospital in India.

While Kumar made the necessary arrangements with a neurosurgeon in India, one of the best in the country, Norgaard made the travel arrangements to get Safoora and her father there.

On Oct. 29, Safoora's second brain surgery was conducted, and a few weeks later, Safoora and her father returned to Afghanistan where Kumar said she seems to be recovering very well.

"I'm so thrilled Safoora didn't have any complications, infection or significant brain damage, and she is functioning like a normal child," said Kumar, after a recent examination. "She's completely without any neurological deficiencies and her memory is pretty good. We are hopeful she will not have any reoccurrence of the tumor."

While Kumar and Norgaard are happy to help Safoora as medical professionals, both of them wanted to help for other reasons.

"As a doctor, you are a part of a team to save a life under normal circumstances. This experience is different in a personal way," said Kumar. "The first time I saw Ishmael, I was

looking at a father who loved his daughter and had not given up - given the dire circumstances.

"As a father myself, I thought about how much I love my daughter," continued Kumar, who is married with two children. "He came into my office and said 'she is dying can you do anything?' - I had to do something."

"It feels really great to help children like Safoora and help to make their life better," said Norgaard, an employee at the Sanford Health clinic in Brookings. "Being a part of the Operation Outreach program is so rewarding - it is something I will cherish about my deployment experience here."

For Kumar, helping Safoora and her father has also made an impact in other aspects.

"I always felt that being in Afghanistan, I am serving two countries at the same time - the country of birth and the country that adopted me as a citizen," said Kumar, a U.S. citizen for 20 years. "Doing something for the Afghans is helping in the COIN [counterinsurgency] operation of U.S. forces fighting the insurgents, and at the same time, contribute in a small way to India's efforts in fighting the same enemy."

It is making a difference said Kumar, many of the Afghans he sees around the camp and at the bazaars stop to thank him, "They are talking in the community and it's raising our image," he said.

"For the last seven years I worked here on Camp Phoenix. My daughter got sick and I was thinking we are losing her - that she was going to die, but the U.S. Army helped my daughter," said Mohammad.

"I am very hopeful for her future. Her father said she was a very bright girl in school, and that's one of the reasons why we are here - to help this country so that children, especially girls, can get an education," said Kumar, who is on his third deployment. "The people are tired of war; they want peace and a place for their children to grow up. To see just one child have this opportunity is all I need to make this deployment worth it."

**"As a father myself, I thought about how much I love my daughter," said Kumar, who is married with two children. "He came into my office and said 'she is dying can you do anything?' - I had to do something."**

**-Col. Ashok Kumar**



Col. Ashok Kumar, a physician with the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, examines Safoora, 13, as her father, Ishmael Mohammad, looks on at Camp Phoenix medical clinic in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss



# Physicians bring service to the National Guard

Story by DC Chad Carlson  
Public Affairs Office

Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

**Maj. Curtis Liedtke (left) reads the Oath of Office as Maj. David Lauer commissions into the South Dakota Army National Guard on Nov. 24, 2010. The physicians, who have served side by side in the medical community for more than 30 years, will now serve together as newly commissioned officers.**

**T**wo physicians, both in their late fifties, who have worked side by side in the medical field for more than three decades, join their wives at a downtown restaurant after a long week at their clinic. They order wine and start to discuss the future of the medical practice they've built, the direction the industry seems to be going and what changes might lie ahead.

How much longer will they keep their clinic open? How much longer will they practice medicine? Is it time for change? Is it time to start planning for life after work?

A guest will be joining them for dinner. It won't be a financial planner discussing retirement accounts or a real estate agent selling condos in a warm weather retirement community. It will be someone who will offer them each a unique opportunity late in their medical careers.

He walks their clean-cut guest carrying a briefcase and paperwork. He's there to meet with the physicians and their wives and discuss opportunities in the medical field that will allow them to serve throughout the state and on occasion, perhaps even internationally.

He's wearing an Army combat uniform and is there to discuss

commissioning the physicians into the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Curtis Liedtke, 60, and David Lauer, 58, have each served their community for more than 30 years and have since taken their service to a higher level by raising their right hands in service to their country.

Liedtke and Lauer, both Black Hills area physicians, began their commissioning process with the South Dakota Army National Guard in November 2009.

Joining has been on both of their minds for a couple of years. Lauer says he got the inspiration to join the Guard after he went on the Honor Flight trip with his father, a World War II veteran.

"The experience I had there was just an inspirational trip, and it got me thinking about my life and my situation at this time in my career. I was looking for something more I could offer as a physician," Lauer said.

"I started talking to a neighbor who serves in the National Guard as a physician assistant," he added. "He was deploying to Afghanistan and talking about the work he'd be doing there. He had nothing but good things to say about his experience with the National Guard."

Lauer shared these stories and experiences with Liedtke.

"It sounded fascinating," said Liedtke. "Dr. Lauer had decided to meet with a recruiter to find out more, so I joined them." Maj. Steve Siemonsma, former executive officer of the SDARNG's recruiting and retention battalion, interviewed Liedtke and Lauer.

"I was impressed with both of them from day one," said Siemonsma. "They're at the tail end of their careers, and while others are thinking about slowing down and retiring, they're pursuing avenues that will allow them to continue to use their talents and experience to serve others."

While they might be getting closer to the end of their careers, neither man is thinking about retirement. Regardless, Siemonsma still needed to inform them that because of their ages, they wouldn't be eligible to collect retirement benefits.

"They were fully aware of that right away and wanted to move forward," said Siemonsma. "They just want to do their part."

That want comes during a time of need for the SDARNG, said Siemonsma.

"There's a real need for medical providers in the National Guard, not only in South Dakota but nationwide," Siemonsma said. "The South Dakota Army National Guard currently has six physicians, and we have 20 positions we'd like to fill. This shows just how short we are right now."

This need is one that Liedtke and Lauer hope to help with.

"After just a few conversations with Major Siemonsma, I realized what a small number of physicians are serving in our armed forces, and it just doesn't seem right to me," said Liedtke. "The more I thought about the service I could provide to men and women who are heading to war, the more determined I became that if I had the physical and mental capacity at my age to join, then I was going to do just that."

Service in the medical field isn't always limited to treating injuries or illnesses and Liedtke said he most looks forward to treating Soldiers physically, mentally and spiritually.

"When I see our men and women deploying, I see an opportunity to serve them, not only medically, but even as a form of ministry," Liedtke said. "I've lived long enough, and taken care of enough people and dealt with difficult cases, that I probably have something to offer them, in terms of both a spiritual and physical perspective."

Liedtke said he was a little concerned about the reaction from his family and friends.

"I thought people would think I was crazy," Liedtke said. 'What is the matter with you? People your age retire.' But I have no desire to retire. To me, this is expanding my horizon in

the practice of medicine."

Reactions and opinions from two people would have a lot to do with the decisions for both men: their wives.

"My wife, Lorie, has been supportive and is excited about the possibilities and challenges serving will bring," said Lauer. "I've practiced in Sturgis for almost 30 years now and we both think the change will only add to the experiences I've had in medicine."

Liedtke said his wife also sees opportunities the National Guard will provide and said she feels like this is what he should be doing.

"I didn't move forward with anything until my wife, Jan, gave me the green light," Liedtke said. "If she would've been uncomfortable or hesitant, I would not have pursued this."

"It's a unique period in my life. My kids are grown, out of the home, and there's really nothing holding me back from serving in this capacity," said Liedtke.

Dr. Liedtke took his officer oath of service June 6, 2010 in Sturgis, and as an officer, had the pleasure of "swearing in" his long-time friend and colleague, Dr. Lauer, Nov. 24, 2010.

Now that they have completed the commissioning process the two doctors will once again serve side by side, which is nothing new to them.

They attended elementary school through high school together in Brandon Valley, college at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, medical school at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, Mo., and have been working in Sturgis together since 1982. They have both been assigned to the 730th Area Support Medical Company, based out of Vermillion.

"They're attending drill, becoming familiar with the Army way and will eventually attend a 25-day course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, that will teach them military lingo, acronyms, forms and paperwork, regulations and information that will help them adjust and function in a military setting," said Siemonsma.

The physicians, of course, plan on attending the course together this spring.

"I'm looking forward to bringing my background and experience to the National Guard and using them to help Soldiers here or anywhere else I might be asked to go," said Lauer.

"I feel a desire and somewhat of an obligation to serve the country, Liedtke added. "It's truly exciting. I have a new energy. I'm looking forward to the opportunities to serve others and serve our country."

**"WHEN I SEE OUR MEN AND WOMEN DEPLOYING, I SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THEM, NOT ONLY MEDICALLY, BUT EVEN AS A FORM OF MINISTRY. I'VE LIVED LONG ENOUGH, AND TAKEN CARE OF ENOUGH PEOPLE AND DEALT WITH DIFFICULT CASES, THAT I PROBABLY HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER THEM, IN TERMS OF BOTH A SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL PERSPECTIVE."**

**-MAJ. CURTIS LIEDTKE**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

# DINING-OUT A CHANGE OF PACE

Story by 1st Lt. Michael Bierle  
Public Affairs Office

The life of a Soldier is not always spent training and working in the elements preparing for combat. Soldiers also have a chance to kick off their combat boots, clean up and enjoy each other's company in a formal setting.

The dining-out is one example of these formal settings. Dining-outs are formal dinners where military members go to socialize with each other outside of the work place. It gives commanders a chance to meet socially with the people that they are in charge of and gives all ranks a chance to build friendships and bonds for better working relationships. A dining-out is meant to be a nice, relaxed meal and is used to take the stress and pressure off day-to-day work. It also gives Soldiers a chance to meet their co-workers' families and get to know each other on a different level.

"A dining-out is where families get to see how the military operates," said Capt. Duston Mullen, Mr. Vice at the 2011 Legislative Dining Out. "It lets them know that the military is not always a lot of work. It's also a chance for family members to feel like a part of the unit and lets them meet other Soldiers in the unit."



Many suggest the dining-out concept came from monasteries or early universities before being adopted by the military. Others suggest it dates back to the Viking traditions of formal ceremonies celebrating heroism and great battles won. As with any tradition, the origin is hard to pinpoint, but formal military dinners are a part of all military branches.

Regardless of when and where the dining-out originated, the British Army incorporated the custom into their regimental mess. The close association the U.S. had with the British during World Wars I and II, influenced the U.S. to adopt the ceremony.

A dining-out also showcases the service and heroism of military members. It shows Soldiers are still ready to place themselves in harm's way to protect and preserve the freedoms and rights that we have today.

"It includes remembering those who have brought us to where we are today," said State Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman. "It's a key part of our military history which helps us remember those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom and well being."

One of the ways a dining-out remembers the fallen is by the setting of a table reserved for them.

As you walk into a dining-out you may see a small table set at a place of honor, usually near the head table, with no one sitting at it. This table is set to remember those who paid the ultimate price and recognize them for their heroism. Everything set on the table is there for a reason, from the salt on the bread to symbolize the tears of the families who have lost a loved one, to the inverted glass symbolizing the fact that those who gave all will not toast.

It's not only those that have paid the ultimate price, but also those who have answered the call and served overseas that should be remembered at a dining-out.

"Remember that the number one rule of a dining-out is to have fun," South Dakota National Guard adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen told legislators and servicemembers at the 2011 Legislative Dining out in Pierre in February.

A dining-out crowd favorite, unique to the dining-out, is the grog bowl ceremony.

The grog bowl is for means of punishment for infractions of the mess, such as arriving late or improper toasting procedures. It also serves as a remembrance for Soldiers who are presently serving and those who have served in past conflicts.

Everything placed in the grog bowl also has meaning, usually unique to each organization. Examples might include Sky Blue Vodka to represent the big sky of a battlefield or brown sugar to represent the sand in a Soldier's boots.

The bottom-line is that dining-outs are about cohesiveness as a group and bringing a team together to celebrate and build a stronger bond. So the next time you're at a dining-out, stop and remember those overseas and those who can't be with us. Remember the sacrifice of those who have fallen and of those who are currently serving in harm's way. Remember that you are a part of something bigger than yourself. And of course, have a good time with those around you.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

**ABOVE:** Master Sgt. Jackie Voneye (left) and Maj. Orson Ward (right) look on as State Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman mixes the grog at the 196th RTI Dining-Out Jan. 22, 2011, at Fort Meade. The grog bowl is a dining-out tradition used as a means of punishment for infractions of the mess, such as arriving late or improper toasting procedures. It is meant to add humor and fun to the formal setting.

**RIGHT:** State Representative Kristen Conzet, District 32, and husband, Steve, stand along with legislators for recognition during the 2011 Legislative Dining-Out, Feb. 10. The annual Legislative Dining-Out brings South Dakota Army and Air National Guard leadership and state legislators to Pierre for a chance to meet socially and give the National Guard an opportunity to thank the legislators for their support.

# Legislative Dining-Out '11



Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

Lt. Col. Kevin K. Callies, Sioux Falls, and his family received the Outstanding Support to a Military Member Award Thursday, Feb. 11, during the annual Legislative Dining-Out in Pierre. The award is typically presented to a family member of a deployed Soldier or Airman, but this year an entire family was recognized for their collective efforts as a family. Pictured left to right are South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen, Casey Callies, Lt. Col. Kevin K. Callies, Joyce Callies and Gov. Dennis Daugaard.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

Amy Meert Farr, Sioux Falls, received the Williamson Militiaman Award, Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011, during the annual Legislative Dining-Out in Pierre. The award was established in 1987 by Maj. Gen. Ronald F. Williamson (Ret.) to recognize an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier as shown by their community leadership, their support of the National Guard and the defense of our country. The award consists of a U.S. Army Saber and Scabbard. Farr is the first female recipient of the award. From left to right are State Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman, Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen, Maj. Gen. Ronald Williamson (Ret.), Mrs. Amy Meert Farr, Gov. Dennis Daugaard, and Command Chief Master Sgt. James Welch.



Photo by OC Chad Carlson



# St. John's Lutheran Church Receives Department of Defense Award

Story by DC Chad Carlson  
Public Affairs Office

Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

**Pro Patria Award: St. John's Lutheran Church accepts the Department of Defense Pro Patria Award on behalf of the Yankton's church congregation at the Legislative Dining-Out in Pierre, Thursday, Feb. 10. The church was nominated for the award for going above and beyond their responsibility as an employer of a deployed servicemember. South Dakota National Guard adjutant general Maj. Gen. Steve Doohen (left), Don Kelpin, ESGR State Chair, Pastor Steven Weispfenning, John Marquardt, Dan Conkling, P.R. Olson and Gov. Dennis Daugaard (right) presented members of the church with the award.**

The nation's Reserve components, the total of all National Guard members and Reserve forces from all branches of the military, comprise approximately 48 percent of our total available military manpower. The current National Defense Strategy indicates that the National Guard and Reserve will be full partners in the fully integrated Total Force. Our Reserve forces will spend more time away from the workplace defending the nation, supporting a demanding operations tempo and training to maintain their mission readiness.

In this environment, civilian employers play a critical role in the defense of the nation by complying with existing employment laws protecting the rights of workers who serve in the Reserve component.

On Feb. 10, one South Dakota employer was recognized at the annual Legislative Dining-Out in Pierre, for going above and beyond their responsibility as an employer of a deployed

servicemember and recognized with the Department of Defense Pro Patria Award.

The Pro Patria Award is presented annually by each ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) Committee to the one employer in their state or territory that has provided the most exceptional support of our national defense through leadership practices and personnel policies that support their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

"The Pro Patria Award is the highest statewide award presented by ESGR," said Don Kelpin, S.D. ESGR state chairman. "We had 20 excellent nominations this year. And St. John's Lutheran Church in Yankton stood head and shoulders above all of them. It was phenomenal."

St. John's is a congregation dedicated to Bible-based preaching and teaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ. They value family life and caring for people of all ages with the love of Jesus. "Growing Together in Christ by

Sharing the Gospel with All People" is their mission. St. John's Lutheran Church employs nine people.

One of those employees, the church's pastor, who also serves as a chaplain in the South Dakota Army National Guard, is Lt. Col. David Gunderson. Chaplain Gunderson deployed to Afghanistan with the Sioux Falls-based 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in May 2010.

When Gunderson made the decision to mobilize he asked the church if he should resign from the call and the answer was "no" and they took his military mission in Afghanistan on as one of the church's ministry missions. They asked him to stay on and ensured he would have a job upon his return.

In fact, St. John's Lutheran Church continues to pay servicemembers while they are deployed. Gunderson elected not to accept his pay from the church. It was at that time the church decided to use this money to support

Chaplain Gunderson's military mission in Afghanistan.

Upon his arrival in Afghanistan, Chaplain Gunderson's chapel only had 10 hymnals, which was not enough for those who were coming to the chapel service. These hymnals happened to be the same hymnals used by St. John's Lutheran Church. Gunderson shared the need with the church and they immediately responded by sending two dozen additional hymnals to him.

When he arrived in country, Gunderson realized they didn't have the materials to deal with grief. There was an immediate need for grief counseling items and ordering through the Army system can sometimes take a long time. Again, he shared the need with the church that sent over several grief counseling books and in two weeks they were gone. Within another 10-14 days, the church had responded to yet another call and sent over more counseling materials.

"The church has provided a timely response to any need we have shared with them," Gunderson said.

The church has also supported Operation Outreach in Afghanistan (OOA).

OOA empowers the Afghan people through compassionate humanitarian assistance. St. John's Lutheran Church fellowship groups and Vacation Bible School Care Committee have collected donations and sent over several care packages containing school supplies, clothes and more than 1,000 pairs of shoes. Several groups made blankets and baby quilts, which were also sent over to support OOA.

The church has sent numerous personal care packages to Gunderson. Many care packages have been sent so servicemembers are also benefiting. Extra items are placed in the Soldier Care room and servicemembers are able to pick up much needed comfort items. He stated it is not unusual to receive two or three dozen letters at a time from the church congregation.

The congregation at St. John's prays for the well-being of Chaplain Gunderson and all servicemembers on a regular basis.

St. John's small fellowship groups make an extra effort to ensure Gunderson receives contact from them on a regular basis as well.

On the church website, they have a banner in red that reads: "God bless Pastor Dave during his one-year deployment as an Army Chaplain to Kabul, Afghanistan."

Members of the congregation and pastoral staff attended the mobilization ceremony for Chaplain Gunderson.



Lt. Col. David Gunderson, KBC command chaplain, 196th MEB performs the Lutheran Service Sunday Oct. 10, 2010, at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew Nedved

He shared that when a pastor leaves, there is a burden placed on the congregation. The pastor misses many of those "one-time events" such as weddings, funerals, baptisms or births.

"The church decided to make a sacrifice by holding my job, rather than hiring a new pastor," said Gunderson.

He explained that his wife is a very independent and self-reliant person. He said the most important thing the church has done is provide emotional and spiritual support for her during this deployment. This emotional and spiritual support has come from various small fellowship groups within the church. Prior to the deployment, the church formed a small group which meets with Mrs. Gunderson every drill weekend for fellowship and continues to check in on a regular basis. Between the pastoral staff and the small fellowship groups, the church ensures that none of her needs go without support.

The youth group has offered to mow the yard during the length of the deployment. She was working on a project, which required some carpentry work, and the church was there to provide for her need. The church ensures that she is aware of and encouraged to go to the community pastoral functions and gatherings. They are always checking with her and providing outstanding support.

St. John's dedicates a Sunday service to Armed Forces Day. During that service, all servicemembers, past and current, are encouraged to wear their uniform to church. They are all asked to stand for recognition. They also have a question and answer session

about Chaplain Gunderson's mission as a military chaplain so they could best understand and support his mission.

During his deployment, he was able to give a couple of sermons. The church worked with him, and he recorded sermons on a DVD, which were played for the congregation. Each month he sends an update on his mission in Afghanistan, which is printed in the newsletter to keep the congregation abreast of what his mission is and how their support is appreciated and needed. The church has truly embraced his mission as their own.

When the local Guard unit in Yankton, Charlie Battery, 147th Field Artillery, which is not Gunderson's unit, was deployed, unit members were killed or severely injured during an IED blast. The church opened its doors to the military and allowed them to work with families at the church. St. John's was able to help connect community pastors affected by this, through Gunderson's military background and training.

St. John's formed a committee to share their services and help provide for the needs of Charlie Battery and ensured that all families knew they were welcome to receive help from the church whether they were members of the church or not.

One of the unit members, Corey Breist, survived the IED blast, but has suffered from blindness and traumatic brain injuries from the explosion. When Operation Opening Doors, an organization which worked to build a suitable home for the Breist family, asked for community support, St. John's Lutheran Church was one of the organizations that provided support to this effort, despite the fact that this family was not a member of this congregation. St. John's held a fundraiser and all funds raised were donated toward the cost of building the new home.

Chaplain Gunderson summed up the church's military support by saying, "As a chaplain over here, I see many churches sending care packages, and St. John's continues to do that but they took it one step further. They took their pastor and wrapped him up as a care package for the men and women serving over here risking their lives for the freedom of others."

St. John's truly deserves this award. And it's because of these various reasons that I join St. Paul in his words to the Philippians where he says, "I thank the Lord for your partnership with me and the ministry of the Gospel."

Information from [www.esgr.gov](http://www.esgr.gov) was used in this story.

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# Learning Institute of Excellence

Story by OC Chad Carlson  
Public Affairs Office

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Regional Training Institute received accreditation evaluations of their Officer Candidate School, Warrant Officer Candidate School and Field Artillery courses. Both OCS and the Field Artillery courses received the highest level of accreditation, the "Learning Institute of Excellence."

"Almost 30 different standards from the training and training material to the instructor qualifications and facilities are evaluated in the accreditation process," said Freddie Manning, Total Army School System evaluator. "Numerically speaking, the 196th scored 95 to 100 percent in each of the categories in the OCS and Field Artillery courses, naming each one as an Institute of Excellence, the highest level of accreditation."

"South Dakota's RTI has a long history of training our organization's future leaders," said Col. Kevin Griese, 196th Regiment commander. "Receiving the highest level of accreditation possible reinforces the fact that the regiment continues to conduct training to the highest standards possible preparing Soldiers for today's operating environment. Being accredited as a 'Learning Institute of Excellence' is a tremendous accomplishment. It is a goal every Regional Training Institute in the country strives for, but only a few ever obtain."

Griese said the success of the 196th RTI is directly related to the caliber and dedicated efforts of the Soldiers.

"The 196th Regiment is staffed with the best Soldiers in the South Dakota Army National Guard who are totally committed to the regiment's mission ~ Train the Army Warrior," Griese said.

This theme was a common one among members of the regiment's chain of command when speaking of the attributes that made their programs so successful in the accreditation process.

"It all comes down to teamwork," said Maj. Orson Ward, administrative officer for the 196th Regiment. "We have a great team of NCOs and officers who enjoy working together and take great pride in providing the best training environment possible for students. We have a talented crew who simply know how to get things done right."

The regiment is staffed with approximately 50 Soldiers who oversee the management of all the courses offered by the Regional Training Institute at Fort Meade and Sioux Falls.

"The Institute of Excellence rating is the culmination of years of hard work by the staff of the 196th, the South Dakota National Guard and all of the states that support the training efforts of the South Dakota OCS program," said Lt. Col. John Weber, former commander of 1st Battalion. "The success of this accomplishment should be shared by all



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Carter

Col. Kevin Griese, commander of the 196th Regiment (left to right), Lt. Col. John Weber, former commander of 1st Battalion, 196th RTI, and Lt. Col. Charles Blasdel, commander of 1st Battalion, 196th RTI, display their Learning Institute of Excellence certificate Jan. 22, 2011, at the regiment's dining-out at Fort Meade.

in the National Guard as the success would not be possible without the dedication and support of many Soldiers at all levels in the Guard.”

The 196th also acknowledges that without the continued support of units throughout the South Dakota Army National Guard their programs wouldn't have the success they do.

“What makes the regiment such a successful organization is the generous support from our other major commands in the state, said Ward. “Without their willingness to provide equipment, staff, instructors, and platoon trainers we would not have the quality programs we offer at Fort Meade and Sioux Falls.”

The 196th brings on approximately 450 staff members each year from more than 25 states to serve as cadre and support staff during the conduct of training.

Although this is the first time OCS and the field artillery course received such a high rating, this is not the first time the 196th Regiment (RTI) has received an “Institute of Excellence” rating.

“When the regiment used to conduct Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course Common Core it also received the highest rating during its accreditation inspection in 2009,” Ward said. “Listening to the accreditation teams, they were not surprised that we did so well - however, it is not the case around the country - so we have a lot to be proud of with this accomplishment.

“The students coming to the RTI can expect quality training that is relevant to the operational environment. One of our goals is to ensure the training provided goes beyond the basic program of instruction, including tactics, techniques, and procedures that can help students with the upcoming state emergencies as well as the current and future fight.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Carter

Col. Kevin Griese, commander of the 196th Regiment (left), and Lt. Col. Douglas Bogenhagen, commander of 2nd Battalion, 196th RTI, display their Learning Institute of Excellence certificate Jan. 22, 2011, at the Regiment's dining-out at Fort Meade.

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# Drug Demand Reduction program among the best

Story by DC Chad Carlson  
Public Affairs Office



Courtesy Photo

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The South Dakota National Guard's Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) program was awarded the Secretary

of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C., October 22.

Lt. Col. John Holter (left to right), Maj. Bob DeJong, Sgt. 1st Class Kristi Palmer, John Morse, Chief Functional Officer TRICARE Management Activity, Staff Sgt. David Hughes and Staff Sgt. Matt Hurney display their Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C., Oct. 22.

The award recognizes the best drug demand reduction program within each Service, the National Guard, and defense agencies in an effort to promote its support of outreach and prevention programs within its communities.

The SDNG Counterdrug program started in 1996, as a one Soldier operation, with the mission of teaching the negative effects of bad choices and decisions in regard to tobacco use, alcohol use, marijuana use and meth use. The program has since grown to five Soldiers, who are placed throughout the state to focus on the rural population east of the Missouri River.

"This is a wonderful honor for the DDR," said Sgt. 1st Class Kristi Palmer, DDR non-commissioned officer in charge. "We have a small staff covering the state, and receiving this award is a great way to validate that we are making a difference in South Dakota."

"I couldn't be more proud of our Drug Demand Reduction team," said Maj. Robert Dejong, Counter Drug Coordinator for the SDNG. "They've done a marvelous job of getting to as many schools as possible and spreading the drug-free life style message."

In 2009, the DDR presented Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program Training (ADAPT) to 75 different schools, which allowed the staff to reach more than 4500 students in 5th-9th grades.

"It is clear that the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug Program has implemented many activities that enable the program to help keep our young children drug and alcohol free," said Dejong, "from the numerous activities during Red Ribbon Week to the awards given to our program for these efforts, to the follow-up efforts of youth rallies to the coalition meetings that keep our unique leadership on the forefront."

"Although awards give some meaning to our efforts with the students, the lasting award comes from the smiles on the faces of the youth, showing a Soldier or Airman made a difference."

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# Army Guardsman named top enlisted recruiter

Story by Sgt. Charlie Jacobson  
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Paulson (left) and Lt. Col. Joseph Jacobson (right) award Staff Sgt. Rachel Hangman the 2010 Director 54 trophy.

Photo by Sgt. Charlie Jacobson

SIoux FALLS, S.D. - For recruiters of the South Dakota Army National Guard, putting on the uniform is an opportunity to be the best, regardless of the situation, while sharing their passion and experience to help recruits find a home within the organization.

Staff Sgt. Rachel M. Hangman, a recruiter based out of Sioux Falls, has made the most of her opportunity to work with new recruits to the SDARNG, as she was named the winner of the 2010 Director 54 award in October. Hangman was honored at the SDARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion's Dining-Out Banquet, Jan. 8, 2010 in Sioux Falls.

The Director 54 award is given annually to the top enlisted recruiter in the state. In 2010, Hangman led all recruiters in successful enlistments with 35, making her the second female recruiter to win the award in South Dakota.

"It means a lot to me to win this award," Hangman said. "I have always been a competitive person and winning the Director 54 was definitely a goal of mine for my military career."

Winning the award did not come without adversity for Hangman. In May of 2010, Hangman's husband deployed overseas with the SDARNG, leaving Rachel at home with their three young children, she said.

"In recruiting and the National Guard in general, you have to be willing to roll with

the punches and be flexible," Hangman said. "The last year was very difficult, but it's most important to carry a positive attitude going forward."

According to leadership within her battalion, Hangman possesses a combination of competitiveness and determination which has carried her through the stressful events of the past year.

"We are so proud of what Sgt. Hangman has been able to accomplish," said Lt. Col. Joseph Jacobson, Commander of the SDARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion. "Her competitive spirit is second to none, and she consistently uses any hardships that come her way as extra motivation to prove she can get the job done."

As Hangman's career continues to unfold, her achievement in 2010 symbolizes how her military career has traveled full circle.

In 2002, Hangman enlisted in the SDARNG under the guidance of recruiter John Mallinger. Eight years later, 1st Sgt. John Mallinger is her supervisor and the person she gives much credit to for her success and motivation in the Guard.

"Sgt. Mallinger has been like a dad to me as well as being my boss," she said. "It's almost like I wanted to win this award for him more than myself. He gave me my opportunity to be in the Guard, and I wanted to show him that I was going to make the most out of it."

Mallinger was quick to point out the value that Hangman brings to the recruiting force in South Dakota.

"What makes her so special is that she follows up on every detail with the recruit and their families," Mallinger said. "She makes the families of her recruits feel comfortable with the entire process and that is a key to her success."

Another key to her success, Hangman said, is that she is passionate about the Guard and finds fulfillment in her duties as a recruiter.

"I have a passion to make people better and give them a road map to an opportunity," she said. "There is nothing more rewarding than to watch a Soldier succeed and grow after they came to me not knowing what they were going to do with their life."

By winning the Director 54 award, Hangman will be rewarded for years to come knowing her passion and experience have set her recruits on a path to growth and success within the SDARNG.

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# SNAPSHOTS

## A look at South Dakota's Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen on the go...



Photo by Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson

Brig. Gen. Dave Holman (Ret.), Dacotah chapter president (left), Maj. Chuck Nelson (Ret.), past national treasurer of the Air Force Association (second from right) and Col. Russ Walz, commander of the 114th Fighter Wing (right), welcome Rep. Kristi Noem and Sen. John Thune to Joe Foss Field on Jan. 21, 2011, for the Air Force Association's Dacotah Chapter Legislative Forum.



Photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Williams, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, poses in front of the mural he painted called, "Freedom Over Tyranny," after a dedication ceremony Dec. 1, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Williams, now 32, has been painting since 14. He painted the mural that symbolizes the relationship between U.S., coalition and Afghan coalition forces serving together in order to help the Afghan people.



Photo by OIC Chad Carlson

First Lt. Duston Mullen (left), of Sturgis, was promoted to the rank of captain Dec. 2, aboard the USS Missouri stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Mullen works as the senior platoon trainer for the Officer Candidate School (OCS) at the Regional Training Institute at Fort Meade. Each year officer candidates from the South Dakota Army National Guard have a consolidated drill with other states, where they visit Pearl Harbor as part of their military training. Maj. Orson Ward (right), administrative officer for the 196th Regiment, presents Mullen with his new rank.



Photo by DC Chad Carlson

Brig. Gen. Wayne Shanks, SDNG Air Assistant Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Timothy Reisch, SDNG Army Assistant Adjutant General, and Justice Hew A Kee, Lt. Col. with Suriname's Ministry of Defense, and Head of Strategic Planning and Education, stand to recognize passing Suriname servicemembers during Suriname's National Day parade and celebration Nov. 25, 2010.



Photo by DC Chad Carlson

Maj. Gen. Steve Doohen, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard, presented Gov. Dennis Daugaard an Air National Guard bomber jacket during the 2011 Legislative Dining-Out in Pierre in February.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen

Members of the Black Hills Stock Show Foundation recognized 20 servicemembers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and Ellsworth Air Force Base during the eighth annual Military Appreciation Day luncheon Feb. 1, at the 2011 Black Hills Stock Show.



Photo by Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson

Lt. Col. Joel De Groot congratulates Senior Airman Jeffrey Beil upon his selection as the Airman of the Quarter for the 114th Maintenance Group of the South Dakota Air National Guard. Beil serves as an aircraft mechanic assigned to the Phase Docks of the 114th Maintenance Squadron.



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