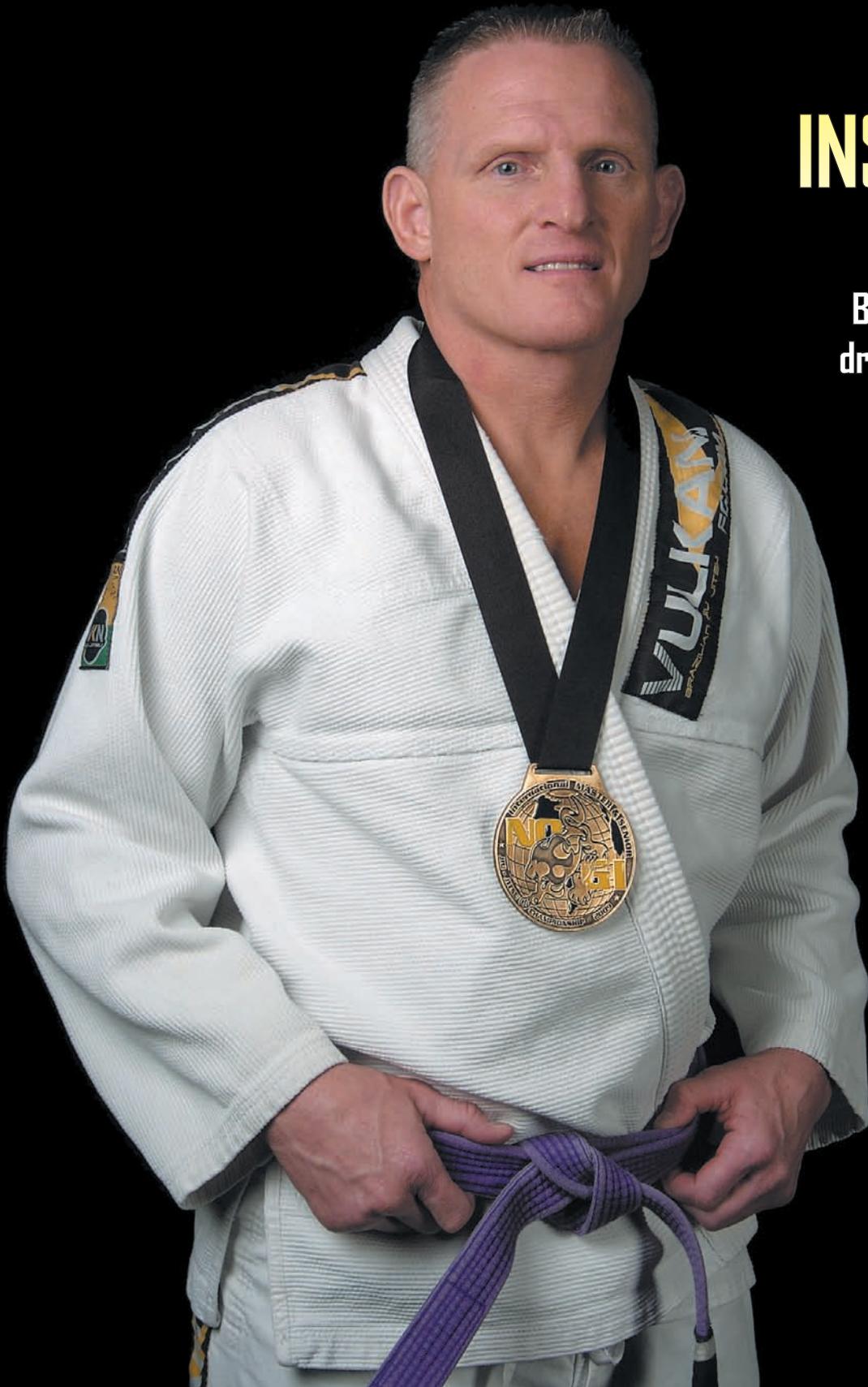


# DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • SPRING 2010



## SOLDIER INSTRUCTOR FIGHTER

Battle-focused mentality  
drives Soldier to success

### « EMERGENCY RESPONSE

SDARNG helps restore  
"Power to the People"

### « DEPLOYMENTS

211th Eng. Co.  
route clearance

### « ACHIEVEMENT

Air Guard pilot reaches  
monumental milestone

### « IN REMEMBRANCE

Banners honor fallen heroes



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Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen  
The Adjutant General

Maj. Brendan Murphy  
State Public Affairs Officer

Capt. Anthony Deiss  
Deputy Public Affairs Officer

Spc. Chad Carlson  
Editor/Layout

Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen  
Assistant Editor/Layout

CONTRIBUTORS

Airman 1st Class Jessica Green      Sgt. Jon E. Dougherty 129th  
Rescue Wing Public Affairs      203rd Engineer Battalion

Airman 1st Class Allison M. Boehm      Jomay Steen  
Capt. Byron Coward      Kristina Barker  
332nd AEW Public Affairs      Rapid City Journal

Capt. Keven Miller      Terry Vandrovec  
Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland      Elisha Page  
114th Fighter Wing      Argus Leader

Spc. Camillia M. Bloomgren      Darron Salzer  
Master Sgt. Alan P. Meyer      National Guard Bureau



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

Bob Ulin      Chris Kersbergen ▪ Darrell George  
Publisher      Advertising Sales

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

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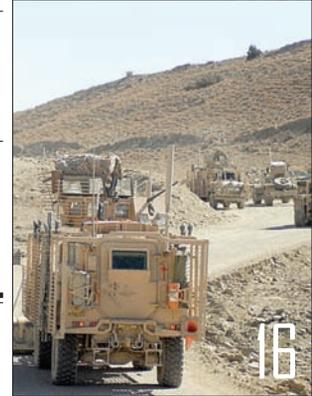


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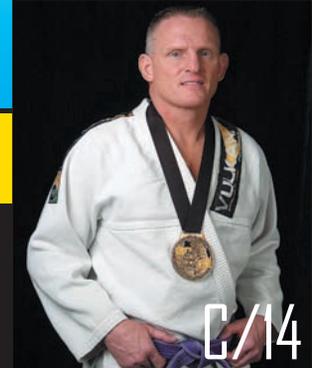
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### On the cover

South Dakota Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Mike Huitema placed third in the 2009 World Jiu-Jitsu No-Gi Championships.  
(Army photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

## From the Command...

Hello to all the Soldiers and Airmen of the SDNG. It's great to see Spring just around the corner. I'm closing in on my first year as the State Command Sergeant Major and wanted to use this medium to touch base with all of you. We are keeping busy at state headquarters and I wanted to share some information about our Army strategic goals. These goals are being worked for you and your family's future with us.



State Command Sgt. Maj.  
Larry Zimmerman

I want to share these goals to give you an idea of what's on the horizon. The following six items tell the story of what's important to your leaders and what we think will help all of us reach the maximum benefit and training for the superior effort we give here in our state and abroad. The six plans all reflect the priority we give family, training, diversity, readiness, communications, equipment and facilities. Please take a minute to read through them and realize what they hold in store for your future.

1. Make taking care of our Soldiers and their families our top priority.
2. Maximize the readiness of the SDARNG to enable quick and effective responses in support of our state and federal missions.
3. Fully embrace and value diversity throughout our organization.

4. Develop communication plans and processes that harness current technology to effectively disseminate information throughout our organization.

5. Develop and implement a strategic real-property development plan that establishes modern facilities in the communities that will best support the SDARNG.

6. Emphasize the fielding of all authorized equipment for our units in order to facilitate quality training.

As you read the goals, I hope that you saw the importance we place in your family and you. All six items will concentrate your leadership's plans to attain the highest standards for us to shoot, move, communicate and train in the best facilities with the best equipment, all while keeping our families in the know that we are safe, trained and ready for the state and federal missions that come our way on a daily basis. We have an operations tempo that keeps us busy and has had us in the front for the last eight years or more on deployments. We all know that time is precious. We, as your leaders, will do anything possible to take care of you! Please know that these six goals are set for us to grow and achieve great things. We have a fantastic history of serving and these items will do nothing but enhance our mission.

Larry Zimmerman  
State Command Sergeant Major

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## CES mobilized to Haiti

SIoux FALLS - Five members of the 114th Civil Engineering Squadron (CES), of the South Dakota Air National Guard, were mobilized to Haiti on Jan. 29. The Airmen joined expeditionary task forces composed of civil engineers from several Air National Guard units.

The CES provides critical construction skills to assist in the earthquake recovery efforts in support of Operation Unified Response.

"A recent survey of our members produced nearly 200 volunteers from the South Dakota Air National Guard willing to deploy to Haiti on short notice," said Col. Russ Walz, commander of the 114th Fighter Wing. "We are extremely proud of the leadership and talent that these first responders are providing in the initial efforts of what will be a long-term recovery process."

## Three Soldiers honored at activation ceremony

RAPID CITY - Three South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers were honored at an activation ceremony Jan. 7, on Camp Rapid, for their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Lt. Col. Jeffrey Klosterman, a member of Joint Force Headquarters, and Master Sgt. Daniel Stapleton of the Recruiting and Retention Command, are now deployed to Kuwait with U.S. Central Command in support of OIF to work with the Rapid Fielding Initiative, supplying service members equipment in theater.

Sgt. 1st Class Renae Rau of Rapid City, a full-time assistant to the Inspector General, deployed to Afghanistan with the Vermont National Guard's 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team for a yearlong deployment in support of OEF. Rau is serving as the assistant to the 86th IBCT Inspector General in theater.

## S.D. Guardsmen spend Christmas inside a plow

RAPID CITY - When meteorologists predicted more than a foot of snow, high winds and impossible travel across South Dakota in the days before Christmas, Guard members here prepared and waited to respond.

"Our job was to get snow removal equipment where it was needed, or potentially needed," said Col. Scott Jacobson, director of operations for the South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG), just before the record-breaking winter storm hit.

The SDARNG awaited the support request from state emergency management agencies as the state braced itself for a blanket of snow, wind

## JFHQ supply receives Logistics Excellence Award



The South Dakota Army National Guard's (SDARNG) Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) supply section received the Region VI Army Combined Logistics Excellence Award (CLEA) at the Duke Corning Armory on Camp Rapid, Dec. 3. The award recognizes logistics organizational achievement in the areas of deployment, maintenance and supply operations. Pictured from left are Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Steve Doohen, Staff Sgt. Brian Morgan, Sgt. 1st Class Terry Spaans, both full-time supply noncommissioned officers in JFHQ and State Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman. National Guard Bureau will announce the national winner in April, 2010. (Army photo by Spc. Chad Carlson)



More than 80 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard assisted the Department of Transportation with snow removal missions during the months of December and January.

and freezing temperatures during the Christmas weekend.

Meteorologists predicted a foot of snow or more, high winds and virtually impossible travel across the state.

Winter storm warnings and travel advisories were issued and the state's Emergency Operations Center in Pierre requested support from the National Guard. Gov. Mike Rounds issued a state of emergency Dec. 22.

Guard officials pre-positioned equipment and notified personnel to stand ready to assist with snow removal from the state's roads and highways.

The storm made its way into the Black Hills and the plains and delivered on meteorologists' predictions.

Higher elevations in the Black Hills received up to 40 inches of snow while the eastern part of the state reported accumulations ranging from one to two feet. Rapid City reported wind gusts up to 76 mph.

The Guard's Rapid City Task Force 109 (TF109) dispatched snow blowers, dozers and dump trucks. More than 80 Soldiers from TF109 assisted the Department of Transportation with snow removal missions.

They formed "blade teams" consisting of various heavy equipment that worked statewide in snow removal operations.

Guard teams also delivered six 20-ton truckloads of firewood to the citizens of the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations.

## Army Guard selects Command Sgt. Maj.

Story by Darron Salzer  
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va., - Command Sgt. Maj. Richard J. Burch of the Nebraska National Guard has been named the new command sergeant major of the Army National Guard (ARNG), Guard officials announced Jan. 14.



**Command Sgt. Maj. Richard J. Burch**

"It's a huge honor for me to be selected by the leadership of the Army National Guard," said Burch. "With that honor comes responsibility. I've never been one to shirk responsibility. I've probably always sought out more responsibility."

Burch, who has been in the ARNG for more than 30 years, has worked in several career fields, including quartermaster, recruiting and retention, human resources and with an area support group.

"I've got a diverse background that I can bring forward and be able to positively impact the future of the Army National Guard, the future of the Soldiers and the challenges that they may face as they meet their career goals," he said.

Burch said he looks forward to working with the Soldiers and noncommissioned officers of the ARNG nationwide, because "we have a lot to offer this great nation."

As the top enlisted Soldier in the ARNG, Burch is in a position to continue the ARNG's success and ensure that all members are continuing their own success.

## Change of command ceremony for Medical Command

BROOKINGS - Capt. James Sideras, Sioux Falls, assumed the role as unit commander within the Medical Command, South Dakota Army National Guard, during a change of command ceremony Dec. 5, at the Brookings Army.

Sideras took over responsibilities from former unit commander Maj. Jonette Murphy, Black Hawk, who served in the command position since September 2007. Murphy is an Operation Desert Storm veteran with 20 years of service who retired in March.

The mission of the Medical Command is to plan, program, provide and sustain health force protection and medical and dental support to meet operation, training and mobilization medical readiness requirements of assigned units and Soldiers throughout the state.

## Training Site Command change of command

RAPID CITY - The South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG) honored Lt. Col. James Peterson, Hill City, as he passed the command responsibilities of Training Site Command (TSC) to Lt. Col. Daniel J. Iverson of Heron Lake, Minn., at a change of command ceremony Jan. 10, at Camp Rapid.

Peterson commanded the TSC for the past two years. He is being assigned to the Joint Force Headquarters, branch chief environmental section.

"The people who work in the training site are professional and take their mission seriously," said Peterson. "I commend them for the work they have done over the past two years."

The TSC's new commander, Lt. Col. Iverson, has spent more than nine years as a member of Joint Force Headquarters, branch chief collective training. He also works full time as the Golden Coyote exercise coordinator for the SDARNG.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge of providing the best training support possible," said Iverson. "Providing the best support is my number one goal."

## DD-214s are now online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following Web site for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online: <http://veterecs.archives.gov>

This may be helpful if a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site.

Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.

Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.

## What's a JFSAP MFLC?

RAPID CITY - Joint Family Support Assistance Program Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) are Master's or PhD level, licensed and credentialed clinical providers that offer services and support to all military members and their families. The goal of the MFLC is to provide on-site, mobile, and/or telephonic, confidential (no records are kept), non-medical, solution-focused counseling for everyday issues such as parenting, relationship conflicts, stress, personal loss, deployments and reunions.

Their goal is to support operational readiness for military members and their families throughout the state and reach people in geographically dispersed areas. Support is offered through training and education programs as well as individual and family counseling.

Education for service members, their families and leadership about non-medical counseling options is available. MFLCs can also assist leadership with normalizing the use of non-medical counseling and advocating for the psychological health of their troops.

The Department of Defense is actively taking steps to increase education about counseling and mental health. They are working to decrease the stigma of seeking counseling. Early intervention to cope with the added stress of deployment can enhance the outcome. Both Military OneSource and Military & Family Life Consultants provide up to 12 free sessions per person, per issue.

Renee Oler is the JFSAP MFLC for South Dakota. Renee is a native of South Dakota. Her undergraduate degree is a BS in nursing from Montana State University, and she is a registered nurse in Calif. Renee was an active-duty Air Force nurse, a former dependent wife and also a single parent. Renee obtained her master's in counseling and human resource development from South Dakota State University. She is an experienced licensed professional counselor, a nationally certified counselor and a qualified mental health professional.

### Renee L. Oler

Joint Family Support Assistance Program  
Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC)  
2823 West Main Street  
Rapid City, SD 57702-8186  
Phone: 605-393-5953  
Cell Phone: 605-393-5953  
E-mail: [renee.l.oler@mhn.com](mailto:renee.l.oler@mhn.com)

# Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay

About 185,000 veterans who were forced by wartime "stop-loss" orders to serve on active duty after enlistment contracts had expired, or past their approved retirement dates, are due a retroactive special payment of \$500 for each extra month they served.

But these veterans must apply by Oct. 21, 2010, to get the extra money set aside in appreciation for the extra time they had to serve. Payments could total \$640 million.

Through December, only about 15,000 veterans and current members had applied for "Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay." The average lump sum payment made to eligible Army veterans so far is \$4,500, said Army spokeswoman Jill Mueller. That suggests an average stop-loss period of nine months, considerably longer than was needed by any other service.

The universe of veterans eligible for retroactive stop-loss pay was narrowed Dec. 19, 2009 by as much as 10 percent. On that date, at the Army's urging, Congress ended eligibility for retroactive stop-loss pay for veterans who, while in stop-loss status, had reenlisted or extended their service obligation voluntarily and received a reenlistment or extension bonus.

The narrowing of eligibility "is viewed as a correction to the program," explained Samuel Retherford, director of officer and enlisted personnel management for the office of deputy under secretary of Defense.

Army officials had advised that some Soldiers with deployment orders in hand intentionally delayed reenlistment while stateside because bonuses paid there are taxed. Knowing they would be deployed anyway under a stop-loss order to preserve unit readiness, these Soldiers waited to reenlist because bonuses earned in a combat area are exempt from federal taxes.

The Army told Congress last spring that these soldiers shouldn't be eligible for the retroactive stop-loss payment nearing congressional approval. But language to limit payments this way was left out of the Fiscal Year 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act in June. As of Oct. 21, the services began processing retroactive stop loss payment applications.

Congress corrected the oversight in the appropriations bill, but not before at least a few

hundred veteran Soldiers and some Airmen who had reenlisted while in stop-loss status got retroactive stop-loss pay. Marine Corps and Navy officials had anticipated the change in law and, by policy, never allowed retroactive payments to go to members who had reenlisted or extended their service obligations while under stop-loss.

The Army and Air Force had suspended processing retroactive stop-loss pay applications from Dec. 19 until Jan. 5 when Defense officials verified the policy change with revised rules. They will not recoup any payments already made. But Retherford said the narrowing of eligibility was justified.

"Members who voluntarily reenlisted with bonuses after a period of stop-loss most likely did not intend to separate," he explained. The revised law allows stop-loss back payments to go only to "those former service members whose lives were most disrupted" because their involuntary extension truly "delayed their plans to separate."

Army is the only service that still uses stop-loss. As of Dec. 1, about 8700 Soldiers were serving in stop-loss status, derisively referred to as a "back door" draft. The stop-loss breakdown was 4,723 active duty Soldiers, 3,694 Army National Guard members and 279 Army Reserve personnel.

The Army no longer expects to have to deploy units using stop-loss orders. Army Reserve and Guard units began mobilizing without stop-loss last August and September. The last units with stop-loss soldiers should return from combat theaters in 2011.

For claims from Sept. 11, 2001, through Sept. 30, 2008, service members must provide documented proof that they were stop-lossed as part of their claim.

Apply at: <https://www.stoplosspay.army.mil>

If you have additional questions which are not addressed by the information on the Web site, e-mail: [RetroStopLossPay@CONUS.Army.Mil](mailto:RetroStopLossPay@CONUS.Army.Mil)

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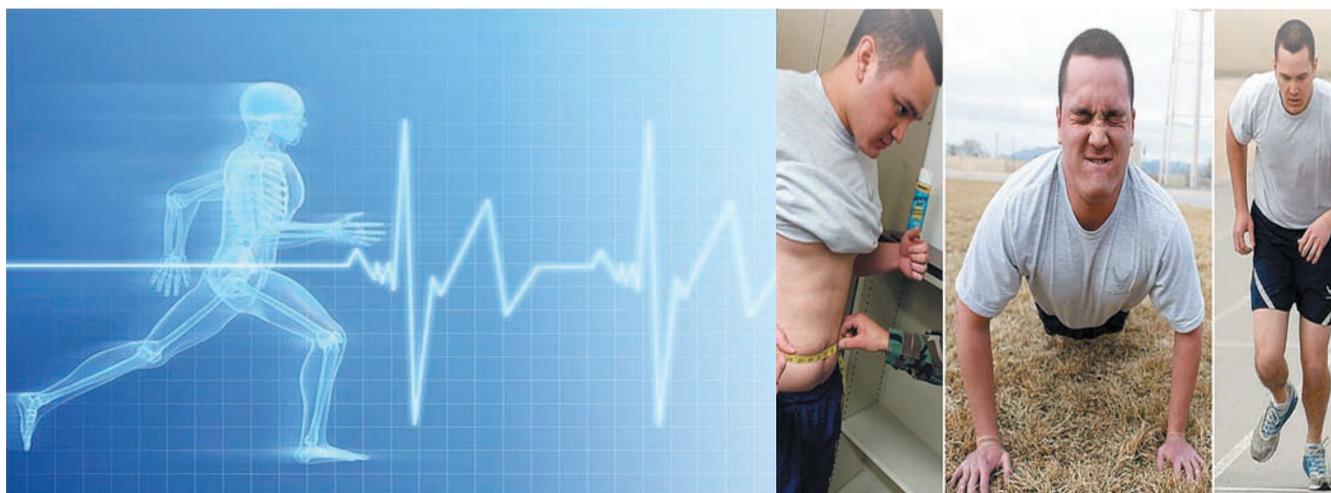
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UNITED CONCORDIA

# Air Force changes physical fitness standards



**Story by Airman 1st Class Jessica Green**  
129th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

MOFFETT FEDERAL AIRFIELD, Calif. - Effective July 1, 2010 all Airmen fitness testing will be scored under new Air Force fitness standards in compliance with Air Force Instruction 36-2905, Fitness Program.

AFI 10-248, Fitness Program, will be redesignated AFI 36-2905, Fitness Program.

The AFI indicates that Air National Guard Airmen, including active duty and traditional Guardsmen, will fitness test 12 months after their last calendar year test date, then repeat once a year requiring a minimum passing score in each component to receive a total score of at least 75.

ANG Title 10 service members assigned to the National Guard Bureau on statutory tour will test under the provisions of AFI 10-248, Para 2b, "bi-annual physical fitness testing."

According to AFI 36-2905, Fitness Program, the major changes also include the establishment of a Fitness Assessment Cell to centralize and standardize the administration of fitness assessments, and a revised weighting and scoring component based on a health-fitness hierarchy.

Test components are scored on a 0 to 100 scale based on age, gender and the following maximum component scores: 60 points for aerobic, 20 points for body composition, 10 points for push-ups and 10 points for sit-ups.

Airmen testing through June 2010 under the present scoring standards will receive two score cards. The first score card will be calculated using present score charts and will be loaded into the Air Force Fitness Management System. This score will be used to document evaluation reports as "meets" or "does not meet" standards or "exempt."

The second score card will be calculated using the new score charts that become effective in July 2010 and serves as a means for Airmen and commanders to gauge performance under the new scoring system.

The intent of this AFI is to encourage Airmen to be physically fit to properly support the Air Force mission. The goal of the Fitness Program

is to motivate all members to participate in a year-round physical conditioning program that emphasizes total fitness, to include proper aerobic conditioning, strength/flexibility training and healthy eating.

The fitness assessment provides commanders with a tool to assist in the determination of overall fitness of their military personnel.

## New fitness standard frequently asked questions

**Q: When does the new Fitness Program take effect?**

A: If you test between Jan. - June 2010, you will test under the current AFI 10-248 standards. All members testing July 1, 2010 and after will test under the new AFI 36-2905 standards.

**Q: Will members be required to test twice a year?**

A: All ANG members (except Title 10, State Tour) will test annually.

**Q: Will Unit Fitness Program Managers (UFPM) still utilize the Air Force Fitness Management System (AFFMS)?**

A: Yes, AFFMS is going to calculate scores under the current standards through June, 30 2010.

**Q: How will we know if we are prepared under the new fitness standards if we test between Jan. to June 2010?**

A: PTLs should manually calculate scores for members under the new standards during this time frame.

**Q: How do we manually calculate the step test?**

A: There is no way to manually calculate the step test. Step tests have been removed from the new program. Members will have to practice/prepare for the aerobic portion of the FA unless exempted by medical authority.

# Freedom Salute Campaign honors Guardsman

Story by Spc. Chad Carlson  
Public Affairs Office

Soldiers returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom indicated that recognition for their service and sacrifice was one of the most important factors in their decision on whether or not they would continue to serve in the National Guard, according to a recent survey by the Freedom Salute Campaign.

The South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG) not only honors its returning Soldiers, but recognizes their family members and employers for the sacrifices they make throughout each Soldier's deployment.

Capt. Daniel Janssen, a physician assistant with Medical Command of Rapid City, along with his family and employer, was recognized with a Freedom Salute ceremony Jan. 9, on Camp Rapid.

"The Freedom Salute Campaign recognizes National Guard Soldiers for their service and sacrifice while deploying in support of various Overseas Contingency Operations and state active-duty missions following Sept. 11, 2001," said Sgt. Maj. Jay Duetscher, Recruiting and Retention Command sergeant major with the SDARNG.

Janssen returned to Rapid City on Nov. 9, after spending six months in Afghanistan with the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Georgia Army National Guard.

**"Some people may disagree with me, but I truly believe it's more of a sacrifice for the spouse than the Soldier."**

**— Capt. Daniel Janssen**

To honor returning Soldiers is of the highest importance, said Duetscher.

"Recognizing our Soldiers with such an award publicly puts them on a pedestal to thank them for their service and recognizes the sacrifice of leaving their family and civilian jobs to support and defend the Constitution," Duetscher said. "This is why they take the oath."

"It was my honor to go do it," said Janssen.

"I was only there for six months though. There are Soldiers going over there for 18 months routinely. So it's not like I did anything above and beyond what Soldiers are doing every day."

While family members may not take an oath, the SDARNG and the Freedom Salute Campaign also recognize and honor the sacrifices they make during each deployment.

"The families of our Soldiers are a very critical part of our service," said Duetscher.

"Without the support of the family, our Soldiers would not be able to do what they do."

Janssen said his wife, Jessica, did an incredible job while he was gone and feels the National Guard honoring family members is of the utmost importance.

"I really believe that my wife had a harder job than I did during my deployment," Janssen said. "There were things about my job that she wouldn't want to have to do or go through, but I don't know that I'd ever want to go through or do what she had to when I was gone."

"Some people may disagree with me, but I truly believe it's more of a sacrifice for the spouse than the Soldier."

Janssen's three children, Natalie, 7, Rachel, 6, and Blake, 10 months, were also recognized.

The Freedom Salute ceremony also honors the employers of service members who must also adapt when their citizen-Soldier employees leave the workplace for deployments or active-



**Capt. Daniel Janssen returns to South Dakota after spending six months in Afghanistan with the Georgia Army National Guard. His wife, Jessica, and children, Rachel (left), Natalie and Blake, greet him at the Rapid City Regional Airport. (Army photo by 2nd Lt. Sam Otto)**

duty missions.

"Here in South Dakota, our employers are awesome," said Duetscher. "They're willing to give up an employee for up to a year or more and welcome that employee back once they redeploy."

Janssen, employed by the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center at Fort Meade, said without support from their employers, Soldiers simply couldn't serve in the National Guard.

"It's not just the people I work for, but the people I work with who made big sacrifices," said Janssen. "My co-workers picked up my everyday responsibilities, treated my panel of patients and did all of this in addition to their regular workloads," Janssen said. "I can't even begin to tell you how much everyone sacrificed."

# SDNG Marathon Team runs in Suriname race

Story by Spc. Chad Carlson  
Public Affairs Office

Members of the South Dakota National Guard (SDNG) Marathon Team joined Surinamese in celebrating their 34th year as an independent nation on Nov. 25 by running in the Srefidensi Independence Marathon as part of the State Partnership Program with Suriname.

The marathon, held in the capital city of Paramaribo, coincides with numerous independence day festivities including a multi-cultural parade, live music, and business and cultural expos.

The State Partnership Program between Suriname and S.D. focuses on building relationships within the economic, tourism, education, military, emergency response and medical sectors of the state and country. Information exchanges allow subject-matter experts in a variety of fields from both the civilian community and the National Guard to share information, ideas and experiences.

“This event worked out nicely in the sense that the Soldiers we send to Suriname primarily go as part of information exchanges or subject-matter experts doing military-to-military exchanges,” said Capt. Allen Godsell, State Partnership Program coordinator. “With this event they were able to conduct an additional military-to-civilian exchange by running in the marathon. We are very fortunate that some of our recruiters are also marathoners and volunteered for this.”

Suriname’s Minister of Defense Ivan Fernald visited S.D. last February and during his visit learned that the SDNG had a marathon team. He then informally laid down the challenge of sending the team to Suriname to run in their Independence Day Marathon, according to Godsell.

This year’s marathon involved not only Surinamese and S.D. runners, but runners from around the world including the Caribbean, Africa and Europe. Master Sgt. Mary Higgins, Sgt. 1st Class John Mallinger and 1st Lt. Eliann Carr represented the South Dakota National Guard Marathon Team.

Higgins, Recruiting and Retention Command’s West River noncommissioned officer in charge and marathon team captain, said they wanted to run and finish as a team and were able to do just that.

“The trip was about so much more than running the marathon,” said Higgins.



(From left) First Lt. Eliann Carr, Master Sgt. Mary Higgins and Sgt. 1st Class John Mallinger represented the South Dakota National Guard Marathon Team in the Srefidensi Independence Marathon in Paramaribo, Suriname, as part of South Dakota’s State Partnership Program.

“We were able to visit with the U.S. ambassador to Suriname John Nay, in fact, the ambassador had signs hung up at his home cheering on S.D.,” Higgins said. “We also met with Defense Minister Fernald and visited with the recruiting and retention manager of the military in Suriname.

“Our recruiting efforts are completely different,” said Higgins. “They are a progressive country with many struggles, and the military provides a stable job. So their recruiting really consists of running an ad in the paper and then narrowing down applicants based on them meeting the physical and moral requirements. They fill in their military needs based on the remaining qualified applicants.

“So we didn’t spend a lot of time discussing specific recruiting techniques, explained Higgins.

“We instead spent that time discussing incentives that go beyond recruiting that Suriname does not yet have in place. Benefits that impact not only their service members but include retirees and their families as well; programs and incentives that hopefully the Suriname military can work toward.”

“They were able to so much more than talk recruiting and retention issues with the Surinamese military,” said Godsell. “They were true ambassadors of South Dakota to Suriname.”

The State Partnership Program was formalized in August of 2006 and has executed more than 30 exchanges with more than 750 subject-matter experts both here and in Suriname.

*Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
Washington, DC  
November 19, 2009*

*On behalf of President Obama and the people of the United States, I congratulate the people of the Republic of Suriname as they celebrate 34 years as an independent nation on November 25. Our two nations are united by enduring links of culture and commerce, and by our shared commitment to advance peace, democracy, and human rights across the Americas and the world. Our partnership is based on mutual respect and mutual interest, and we are working together to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century – from spurring economic growth and protecting the environment to promoting public health and regional security.*

*This is an occasion to honor Suriname’s cultural heritage and reaffirm our faith in its people and its future. I offer warm wishes to everyone participating in the festivities, especially the runners in the Suriname Independence Day Marathon. I am proud that several U.S. National Guardsmen from South Dakota will represent the United States in the race as participants in the Suriname-South Dakota Partnership, an example of the powerful bonds between our people.*

*Hillary Rodham Clinton*

Maj. Wyatt Hansen of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Sioux Falls, is part of a 10-person biathlon team out of Camp Rapid. The sport is popular in Europe but still is catching on here.

# BIATHLON

## A look into the unique sport

Story by Terry Vandrovec  
Photo by Elisha Page  
Argus Leader Staff

**S**now-covered spaces and rifles: South Dakota has no shortage of either. Yet this Olympic sport that combines the two - biathlon - isn't all that popular here.

"In the three, almost four years that I've been here, I haven't had any questions about it," said Keaton Sturtz, a floor manager at Scheel's, the largest sporting goods store in the state.

That would take you back to the previous Winter Games - so much for creating momentum. What's more, you have to go all the way to the Black Hills to find any biathletes of consequence in the Mount Rushmore State.

The South Dakota National Guard has been sponsoring a 10-person team out of Camp Rapid since the mid-1980s, according to Maj. Wyatt Hansen. The group has fared well, too, placing second in the National Guard Central Regional Championship this past January in Minnesota, a relative hotbed for the sport. Individually, team members and West River residents Mike Scharn and Andrew Busse have earned invitations to compete in what amounts to the European military biathlon

championships in Italy and Germany.

The sport is much more popular across the pond, where it began in the late 1700s in Norway. Like curling, it draws surprisingly high television ratings during the Olympics.

What, exactly, do Europeans tune in to see? Oversimplified, biathlon is cross country skiing mixed with target shooting. Each competitor skis one lap or loop and then - from a prone position - fires five rounds from a .22-caliber rifle at a metallic target located 50 meters away. Misses are penalized with additional ground to cover or time tacked on at the end.

Next, there's a second loop and another five-shot round, this time while standing. The race concludes with a third loop. The goal is to complete the course, usually 10 kilometers, as quickly as possible.

Got that?

"It's just not a sport that anybody just says, 'Hey, I'm going to do biathlon this year,'" Hansen admits.

Why isn't the sport, a part of the Winter Olympics in one form or another since 1928, more popular in South Dakota?

For starters, it's expensive. Hansen estimated the cost of equipment for one biathlete - rifle, harness, skis, boots and poles - to be about \$4,000. Most of that comes from the rifle, a precision instrument usually made in Germany. Fortunately, the South Dakota National Guard has accumulated some equipment over the years.

Plus, facilities aren't easy to come by. There are plenty of rifle ranges and snow-covered spaces in the state, but zero legitimate biathlon courses, according to Hansen. The National Guard team is forced to hone the two disciplines separately or travel early to competitions in order to practice.

In other words, biathlon is about as easy as it is popular in these parts.

"What makes biathlon fun is that there are a bunch of variables," said Hansen, a team member for 21 years. "You don't have to be the best skier, and you don't have to be the best shooter - you just have to do the end result of both."

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# Guard helps get food to Haiti



Sailors assigned to the guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill distribute food from the non-profit organization, Kids Against Hunger, to Haitian citizens in La Gonave, Haiti. Bunker Hill, the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and Carrier Air Wing 17 are conducting humanitarian and disaster relief operations as part of Operation Unified Relief after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake caused severe damage near Port-au-Prince on Jan. 12.



1742nd Soldiers set up side panels on their trailer to secure the Kids Against Hunger meals for delivery from Sioux Falls to Mankato, Minn., Jan. 10.

**Story by Spc. Chad Carlson**  
Public Affairs Office

**S**outh Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers with the Sioux Falls-based 1742nd Transportation Company lent a helping hand to the Kids Against Hunger

organization by moving food to be sent to earthquake victims in Haiti.

The Guard unit hauled 15 pallets of food Jan. 10 from the Kids Against Hunger Sioux Falls branch (satellite) to their Mankato, Minn., satellite. The pallets were moved to Minneapolis and loaded onto a Navy plane, and eventually placed

on a Navy ship and finally dropped into the Caribbean nation by helicopter.

Kids Against Hunger packages highly nutritious, life-saving meals for starving children and malnourished children and their families in developing countries and the United States. They ship millions of meals

to Haiti every year and are now making extra shipments.

The meals are made from four readily available, dry ingredients that are easy to package, keep for long periods, and require only boiling with water to prepare.

The shipment was scheduled to reach Haiti within two weeks, providing nearly 107,000 meals.

Staff Sgt. Aaron Olson, training non-commissioned officer with the 1742nd said, "This mission was a real morale boost for the unit. Getting involved as soon as we were able to allowed our Soldiers to see the impact their work is having."

"We're very thankful for all of the support the National Guard and the 1742nd were able to provide," said Art Wienke, Kids Against Hunger Sioux Falls satellite operations manager.

"The transportation provided alone saved us our normal freight charges, which in turn, allowed us to reinvest that money into more food," Wienke said. While the shipment cleared out the Sioux Falls warehouse, Wienke said Kids Against Hunger satellites across the country will continue to package and ship meals to Haiti.

# 147th participates in oil spill response exercise in Kuwait

Story and photos by Master Sgt. David Largent

An Oil Spill Response Exercise was conducted at Camp Patriot, Kuwait, Jan. 14 to ensure the response team here would be able to contain and clean up an oil spill should it ever happen.

Participants included members of the camp command cell of the 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery out of South Dakota, Coast Guardsmen from Port Security Units 301 and 312, Soldiers from the Harbormaster Operations Detachment, 396th Transportation Company, contractors from Combat Support Associates, Environmental Department, several Kuwaitis and members of Camp Patriot Fire Department. It was the first time many of the participants have ever been involved in an oil spill exercise.

It's necessary to get all of the departments together that would be involved and determine what responsibilities fell to which department and how to coordinate and communicate throughout the response.

"The goal is to have the ability to respond here in Kuwait as we would anywhere back in the U.S.," said Kirk E. Davis, environmental department manager from CSA, the company that is under contract with 3rd Army to provide oil spill and hazmat response to the U.S. Military in Area Support Group Kuwait's area of responsibility.

Prior coordination and practice is required to put a team together from so many different groups.

"Our intent was to provide personnel and equipment to contain a spill from a U.S. vessel up to 1,000 gallons of fuel within the harbor and notify CSA spill response for the cleanup," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brett K. Anderson, environmental officer for Camp Patriot Command Cell, 1/147th Field Artillery. "The first response is to contain the spill, then the contractors come in to do the cleanup," he added.

During the exercise the simulated spill was reported to the Joint Operations Center, manned by South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers from 1/147th FA, who spread the word to the other organizations involved. Each quickly responded to the call and did their piece to contain the spill.

The fire department was first on the scene and ensured the area was safe for other workers and checked for injured personnel while the Quick Reaction Force from the 1/147th secured access to the pier.

The harbormaster ensured radio communications functioned properly as a Coast Guard team delivered the trailer with the oil

containment boom and prepared to guide the boom into the water where a boat crew operating a 25-foot Transportable Port Security Boat guided the boom out into the water to contain the oil until it could be removed.

Throughout the exercise a small group of Kuwaitis observed each stage of the operation so they will know the steps in case there is an oil spill.

While there was no oil spilled this time, the exercise allowed all the participants to get their hands on equipment for the first time and learn how it operates, test communications and learn how best to make their radios work throughout the different groups involved and an opportunity for everyone to meet the others that they will be working with should a spill ever occur.

"I think it's going to open doors and build bridges to more and better joint training," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Glen A. Spence, harbormaster, 396th Transportation Harbor Master Operations Detachment, 180th Transportation Battalion, 593rd Sustainment Brigade.



The 1st Battalion 147th Field Artillery pull security during an oil spill exercise Jan. 14 at Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

# Soldiers help restore "power to the people"



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen  
Public Affairs Office

The South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG) was called to state active duty a second time this year due to a winter storm. State Guardsmen were activated in late January to assist utility companies in restoring power.

The second major winter storm swept across South Dakota in late January, taking down 6,300 utility poles across the state, leaving 11,500 residents without power. Ice from the storm weighed down utility lines causing the poles to snap in half.

Cooperative crews, made up of Guardsmen and utility company personnel, made quick progress dropping the total number of rural South Dakotans without power to nearly 3,000 residents within a few days.

"The Guard put more than 70 personnel on state active duty, nine bulldozers were used for power restoration, eight heavy expanded mobility tactical trucks (HEMTT) wreckers and a loader," said Maj. Aaron Jordan of Sturgis, director of military support at the Emergency Operations Center located in Pierre. "We also used support equipment such as generators, fuel trucks and mechanics out there to sustain our operation."

During a state emergency, Jordan, liaison officer for the SDARNG, matches up the Guard's resources to meet the needs of the state.

"The National Guard has some unique assets that other agencies within S.D. do not possess," said Jordan. "For example, the HEMTT wrecker, which is something they use to pull the electrical companies out of the snow and pull them to the places they need to go. We have a lot of bulldozers and qualified operators out there to help."

Soldiers from the 153rd Engineer Battalion of Huron volunteered to work in north central South Dakota. The Soldiers were teamed up with utility companies to help speed up the process of restoring the power to the public.

"Our purpose was to assist the power companies by helping them replace the poles and clear the paths for the trucks," said Sgt. Michael Young of Pierre, 200th Engineer Company. "We also pulled them out if they get stuck. It's quite an experience to be here. I have seen powerlines down before but not miles upon miles just snapped off like toothpicks. You don't realize how bad it is until you get up here and see it for yourself."

The weather caused some challenges for the troops and utility companies. The first two days the wind blew in snow causing low visibility and filling in the paths the Soldiers had already cleared for repair crews.

"It was hard to tell what was beneath the snow," said Sgt. Joshua Diede of Hullett, Wy., a member of the 842nd Engineer Company. "It looks like a field, but then it's actually a pond. I was pulling a truck out of the snow and the next thing you know I was five-feet under water, still hooked up to the truck."

The Soldiers worked 12-hour shifts with the Custom Powerline Construction Company (CPCC) from Woodward, Okla.

"The National Guard helped us tremendously," said Robert Garrett, the operations manager for the CPPC. "We were getting stuck in the snow with our trucks and that was keeping us from being able to get near the damaged poles. Without the Guard members using their bulldozers to clear the route we would have been at a standstill."



**Spc. Karen Berger, from the 842nd Engineer Company of Spearfish, South Dakota Army National Guard, operates a bulldozer Jan. 26, as state active-duty crews worked to get utility companies to the fallen power poles.**



**Spc. Donald Meyer, from the 200th Engineer Company of Moberge, South Dakota Army National Guard, pulls out a utility truck from Custom Powerline Construction Jan. 27 near Ipswich. The SDARNG assisted the Oklahoma based powerline company with each utility pole they replaced.**

# SOLDIER INSTRUCTOR FIGHTER

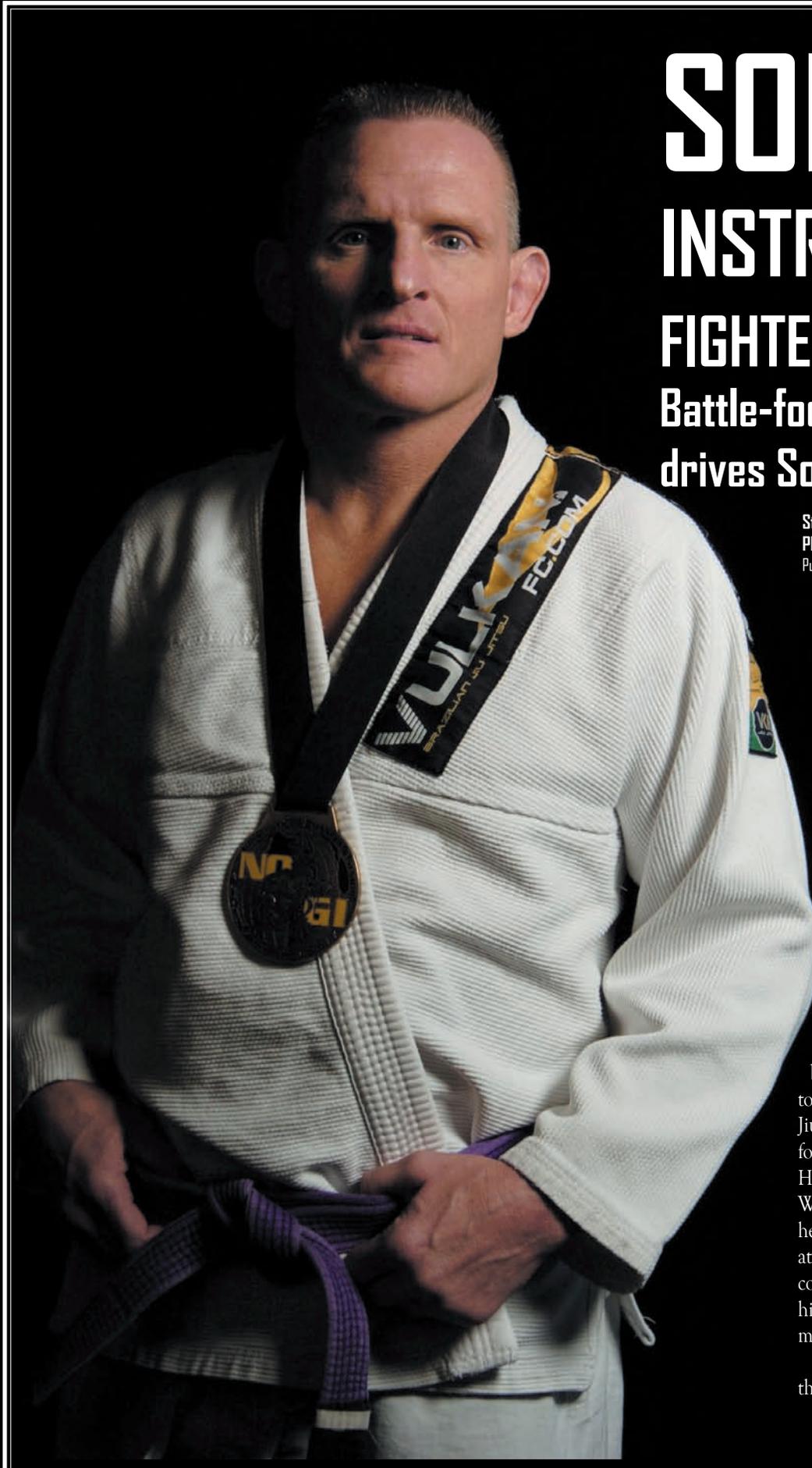
## Battle-focused mentality drives Soldier to success

Story by Spc. Chad Carlson  
Photos by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen  
Public Affairs Office

**W**hen Staff Sgt. Mike Huitema returned in 2004 from his deployment to Iraq with the South Dakota Army National Guard, he was looking for an activity that would allow him to maintain his physical fitness level. A fellow Soldier and former Army Ranger introduced him to the sport of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Five years later, Huitema not only benefits from the physical conditioning the sport provides, but he trains Soldiers in hand-to-hand combat, coaches Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and competes in martial-arts for titles in world-class competitions. Huitema placed third in the 2009 World Jiu-Jitsu No-Gi Championships held in Long Beach, Calif., and attributes his success to his physical conditioning, competitive drive and his battle-focused approach to his martial arts training.

Huitema, a supply sergeant with the 109th Regional Support Group



in Rapid City, was encouraged by his Jiu-Jitsu instructor to enter the World Jiu-Jitsu No-Gi Championships as a way of continuing to push and challenge himself.

"You're going against people you've never seen before, opposed to rolling with the same guys at the gym," said Huitema. "Some of the competitors are highly ranked throughout the world, so it forces you to be as physically and mentally prepared as possible."

After committing himself to the tournament, Huitema increased the intensity of his already demanding training schedule by adding a strength and conditioning coach.

"We emphasized core strength," said Huitema. "Hip strength and flexibility is key in Jiu-Jitsu. The training helped both my cardio and strength."

"I knew my cardio was good. I knew I could go as hard as I needed to go and stay with my competitors," he added.

"The competition was tough," Huitema said. "There were probably 10 past or present Pride champions either competing or coaching, as well as most of the very best Jiu-Jitsu competitors in the world."

Huitema said after losing his final bout, he was both surprised and pleased when he found out that he had placed as high as he did.

"It was a great experience and a very emotional one for me," he said.

Huitema has already penciled in a busy 2010 with more training and competitions. The month-long Army Combatives Level 4 Course, the All-Army National Guard, the All-Army Combatives Tournaments and the Jiu-Jitsu World Tournament in June, are a few of the events he's looking forward to.

"I just love to compete," said Huitema. "I always have. Whether it's something I might achieve or seeing the achievements of the guys I work out with."

"Their success is my success. I love

competing with them and keeping up with them. It keeps me young," he said.

"His age is truly deceptive," said Josh Usera, owner and instructor at Dynamic Martial Arts. Usera said 45-year-old Huitema is usually facing competitors half his age.

"He is just as strong, athletic and as fast as the younger guys. He's an inspiration to a lot of the younger guys here and is testimony to the fact that if you take care of yourself and stay active, you can continue to compete at a very high level for a long time."

**"With the world's situation the way it is, I would think every service member would want to be trained in hand-to-hand combat."**

**— Staff Sgt. Mike Huitema**

Beyond the competitions, awards and accolades, Huitema said he sees martial arts and combatives as highly beneficial to his overall training as a Soldier. He said he encourages his fellow service members to get involved with the training as well.

"With the world's situation the way it is, I would think every service member would want to be trained in hand-to-hand combat," Huitema said. "I don't care what your job or specialty is, you never know what kind of situation you're going to find yourself in."

Huitema instructs the Modern Army Combatives Program

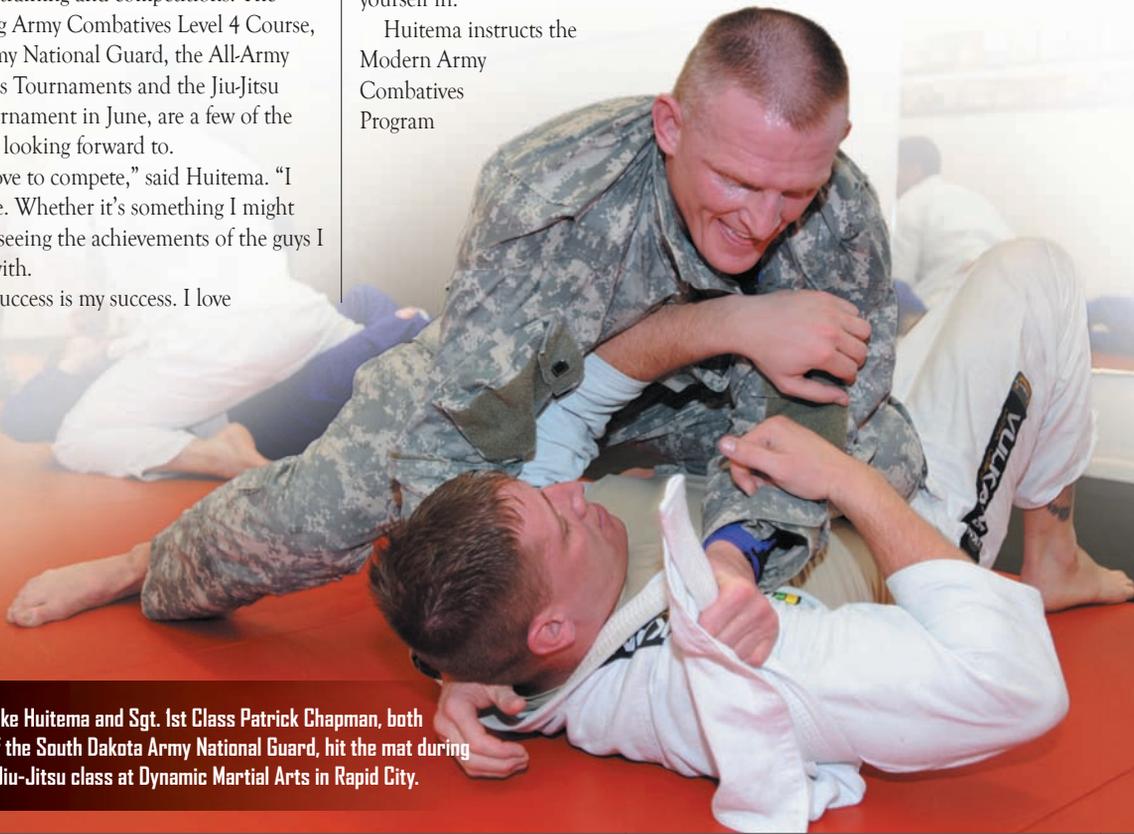
for the SDARNG. When encouraging fellow Soldiers to go through the physically demanding courses, he often uses a point-blank approach as the reason every Soldier should complete the training.

"There are a lot of Soldiers who have never been punched in the face," explains Huitema. "Why would you wait until you're on the battlefield to find out how you're going to react to being punched or taken down to the ground, where the enemy is trying to take your life? Why would you wait for that to happen as opposed to getting the most realistic training you can get, in a safe environment?"

"To me, it would be a shame to lose any Soldier in combat because we failed to train them in hand-to-hand combat," he said.

Huitema has deployed twice and knows it's a matter of time before he'll be called to deploy again. He said martial arts and Army Combatives keep him physically ready for such an occasion.

"It's putting as many tools as I can in my tool box," Huitema said. "My whole focus has always been if I go back to Iraq or go to Afghanistan, I have these tools to take with me. "I know that if I have to deploy next week, I won't have to get into a routine of getting myself into shape to prepare," Huitema continued. "I could go next week and know that I'm in the best shape possible that I can be in."



Staff Sgt. Mike Huitema and Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Chapman, both members of the South Dakota Army National Guard, hit the mat during a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu class at Dynamic Martial Arts in Rapid City.

# INTO THE ABYSS

## 211th Engineers push through to stay on mission in Afghanistan



Members of the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper) of Madison and De Smet, bow their heads in prayer before heading out on a route clearance mission.

Story and photos by Sgt. Jon E. Dougherty  
203rd Engineer Battalion

The pre-mission brief concluded, combat engineer Sgt. Darrin Lewno of Wilmot, S.D., called together the assembled route clearance crew, all members of the 211th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, stationed near Sharan, Afghanistan.

“Our Father, who art in Heaven...” began Lewno, as the surrounding citizen Soldiers instinctively bowed their heads and began to pray with him in unison.

To the observer, their recitation of the Lord’s Prayer appeared comfortable and familiar, not uptight or staged. For their mission to keep routes clear of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) - one of the most hazardous in Afghanistan - the Guardsmen’s appeal to the Almighty didn’t at all seem inappropriate. And, as some of them would soon discover, it could be argued that their prayers were answered.

As he ordered crews to their vehicles, mission commander 1st Lt. Chris Long, of Sturgis, reflected the mentality and professionalism of his men. His confidence was infectious, and by his words of instruction, it was obvious neither he nor his crews were under any illusions about the risks they were soon to face - again.

They all knew, for instance, the route they were preparing to take - the name of which is classified - was “active,” or known to be targeted often by enemy insurgents. They were preparing to depart with the knowledge that their own convoys had been attacked before along the very same route.

All in all, however, they would encounter “nothing we haven’t seen before,” Long told his men, prior to ordering them to their vehicles.

And yet, driving headlong into the abyss that is Afghanistan’s hinterlands is never an easy thing to do, especially for route clearance combat engineers - even if the veterans of the 211th make it look that way.

Still, there was little opportunity to contemplate the matter. As the morning chill of the approaching winter season persisted, the mission’s start time was quickly approaching and there was no time to waste.

The crews had a long way to go. And they had a mission to complete.

Master Sgt. John Dornbusch settled into his seat in the massive Buffalo MRAP (mine resistant armor-protected) vehicle, strapped on his seat belt, and toggled the electronic communications equipment he would be manning throughout the mission.

Meanwhile Spc. Lee Weber, of Pierre, the vehicle’s driver, checked gauges and prepared to move out as his right seat passenger and truck commander, Sgt. Jeffrey Dufek, of Sturgis, performed a radio check as he also strapped himself into his seat.

Over the headset, rock band AC/DC’s “Thunderstruck” played to the delight of the vehicle’s Classic Rock fans.

“Oh, I’ve got lots more of that good stuff,” Dufek boasted. “Just wait until I play some John Fogerty.”

The ex-Creedence Clearwater Revival front man’s tune, “Centerfield,” is the “greatest song ever written,” Dufek assured everyone.

“You’ve heard of that one before, haven’t you, Weber?” Dufek teased, a rip on the MRAP driver’s tender age of 26.

Weber took the good-natured ribbing with a shake of his head and a smile.

The convoy began making its way past the forward operating base's entry control point (ECP), onto a rare paved section of Afghan highway. Crews were bound for a destination which, on a good day, was just over seven hours away.

But distances and travel time in Afghanistan can be misleading, by American standards, in that they are wildly out of proportion. Most roads are just barely that - dusty, cratered dirt pathways barely large enough for a single vehicle. Add to that the ever-present danger of an IED strike or ambush, and one can easily see why travel times can be lengthy, even if distances between bases are often minimal.

Besides, to the veteran Guardsmen, a "good day" is one they have defined as devoid of enemy contact, which can often delay a convoy for hours.

A few miles down the road, the vehicle drivers wound way through the enclave of Sharan, which - at an early hour - was already teeming with Afghan locals engaged in various activities and commerce. Many of them stopped and stared, as they often do, at the lumbering MRAPs while they passed, the low throaty rumble of their diesel engines echoing off the various storefronts and mud-and-wood residences.

At key intersections, Afghan National Police officers stood watch, their AK47 rifles slung casually over their shoulders. Vendors peered out of their shops. Children flashed "thumbs-up" signs.

A kilometer or so out of town the road turned from relatively smooth pavement to a pothole-filled thoroughfare which caused the vehicles to buck and lurch.

"We lost our first vehicle on this route," Dornbusch said somberly, reflecting on an IED hit some weeks before.

Little did he know that, some 20 minutes later, the convoy would experience déjà vu.

The lead vehicles in each convoy - called Huskies - slowly rumbled along the bumpy route, scanning for any signs of enemy insurgents or buried IEDs. On a few occasions already, Dornbusch's Buffalo, equipped with a special powerful hydraulic "arm" that is used to "interrogate," or dig, in potential sites, had been requested to search a few areas, but so far had found nothing.

Suddenly, as the convoy inched forward, the sickening "Whoompf!" of an explosion could be seen, heard - and felt - about 300 or so feet ahead of the Buffalo.

In a flash, one of the lead Husky vehicles was violently disabled, a thick cloud of smoke and dust rising rapidly from the detonation.

Immediately radio calls went out to the Husky to determine the fate of its driver, Pfc. Brandon Eggers.

"Husky 2, Husky 2, are you okay?"

"This is Husky 2, yes - I'm all right," replied Eggers, in a strangely calm voice.

The convoy came to an abrupt halt, as other lead elements deployed to provide security, and an Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit traveling with the convoy moved in to examine the explosion site and determine if there were other IEDs present. Eggers exited his disabled Husky, and moved toward the rear of the column, where he was met and examined by a medic.

Over the next few hours, EOD personnel cleared the area and the convoy's wrecker team recovered the damaged Husky. It was time to move on.

Within a half hour, a second explosion rocked the convoy.

One of the RG-31 MRAP vehicles belonging to the combat logistics patrol struck another IED with its anti-mine rollers, disabling them but leaving the vehicle intact.



**Sgt. Poncelet from the 211th Engineer Company guides an MRAP over rocky terrain.**

Once more the convoy halted and began what had become a well-rehearsed drill: recovery of the vehicle after EOD gave the all-clear sign. Again - fortunately - there were no injuries.

"Going to be one of those days," Dufek said dryly.

In just over four hours, the convoy had traveled less than five kilometers.

There was still a long way to go. For the next several hours, the crews would be subjected not only to the dangers imposed by insurgents but also to the physical abuse of their own protective vehicles, which they knew were at the mercy of the primitive Afghan infrastructure.

Darkness comes early to Afghanistan this time of year, and it was just after 5:30 p.m. when the last bit of light left the fall sky.

As nightfall swept over the convoy, a three-quarters moon shone brightly through thin cloud cover. Crews donned night-vision devices to navigate the rough-and-tumble route. The ample moonlight provided more than enough ambient glow for the night vision devices.

For hours the convoy continued to creep along, through large expanses of rugged Afghan countryside and small villages that, save for the occasional visible resident and solar-powered streetlight, appeared all but abandoned.

There was little chatter on the radio, other than the periodic routine traffic between crews. In the Buffalo, meanwhile, all of the great rock bands and acts of the past three decades were playing - the Beatles, Eric Clapton, Bob Seger, Journey, Kansas, Boston, Chicago - even K.C. and the Sunshine Band.

"My collection is the complete collection," Dufek said.

It was nearly 2 a.m. when the convoy rolled into its destination - almost 14 hours after it had left its base near Sharan. Long ordered his vehicles into a clearing near the base fuel point then told his men to dismount.

The initial plan was to billet his Guardsmen in tents but 30 minutes later he and Dornbusch returned with bad news: There were only two available beds in the entire compound. So the men would either have to sleep outside in the 25-degree night air or in their vehicles.

There was no complaining, bickering, or discussion. Grateful just to be stopped for the night, the entire convoy had, within 15 minutes, set up cots and sleeping bags near their vehicles, or had retired inside a vehicle, and fallen sound asleep.

Crews awakened about 7 a.m. and began packing their cots and stowing their gear for the return trip. Hungry and tired, many headed first for a nearby chow hall, then back to their bivouac area where they

proceeded to ready their vehicles - and themselves - for the long trip home.

Gathered in groups of two, three or four, some of the men chatted and laughed with each other while others tended to their duties, performed personal hygiene or loaded crew-served weapons. Like a well-oiled machine, the veteran Guardsmen were prepared, fueled and ready to leave well before the planned departure time.

Long gathered his men together for a final pre-mission brief, informing them the convoy would likely take an alternate route on the way back to base, in order to hopefully avoid any more "trouble on the way home."

It was a decision that was popular with the crews.

"Sounds good to me," said Dornbusch, as he and his crewmates climbed into their Buffalo and got ready to get back on the road.

The convoy's route took it through a number of communities, both large and small, all of which were crowded with people, cars and animals during the daylight.

In the larger cities especially, street vendors peddled fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts, while shopkeepers hawked everything from clothing to cell phones.

However, the trip quickly devolved into a tedious, bumpy affair, the minutes passing into hours, often without a sound from anyone in the convoy. Crews still sore and tired from the day before seemed too worn out even to converse. Yet the crews were well aware of the nature of their missions - long, tedious stretches of time punctuated by brief, but terrifying moments of enemy contact.

Still, boring was better, because it meant no danger and, more importantly, no delays.

"I'm just hoping we can get back without any problems today," Weber exclaimed.

"That'd be best," Dufek seconded.

If only the enemy would cooperate.

About mid-afternoon the convoy moved into a target area of interest (TAI), or an area where there had been enemy activity in the recent past - and crews recognized it right away.

Suddenly, there was no activity in the villages. There were no vendors in sight, no children, no traffic. Nothing but an eerie absence of life.

"Sure did get quiet around here," Dufek said.

"I know," Dornbusch answered, recognizing a phenomenon that occurs sometimes right before an enemy strikes.

Several minutes later, as if to accentuate the drama, the convoy's rear element reported that it was taking sporadic small arms fire from a nearby location.

"We have identified where the rounds are coming from," said the commander of the rear gun truck. "Request permission to return fire, over."

Permission was granted, and a few seconds later, the rear gun truck sent its own rounds "downrange" to the site of the attack.

There was no more enemy fire after the American crew opened up. The short-lived attack was over, almost before it began. Though the attack was ineffectual, it made the point, once again, that no matter where the crews went, there was always risk.

"Let's move on," urged Long, knowing the convoy had several more hours of travel left before getting back.

Darkness had fallen by the time the worn-out and battered convoy snaked its way through the ECP leading back to their base. Long radioed in that his convoy had arrived. The Buffalo crew visibly relaxed.

As the MRAPs rolled in, Dufek dialed up a Dixie Chicks song called "Travelin' Soldier" on his MP3 player:

"...Waitin' for the soldier to come back again, Never more to be alone when the letter said, A soldier's coming home..."

For these traveling South Dakota Guardsman, the end of this day indeed meant they were one day closer to returning home.

The 211th Eng. Co. (Sapper) head out on a route clearance mission in Afghanistan.



# HIGH MILESTONE

## Pilot reaches 4,000 flight hours in F-16



Lt. Col. Gary M. Middlebrooks of the 114th Fighter Wing, Air National Guard, logged 4,000 hours of flying the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft.

**Story by Capt. Byron Coward**  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

**A** pilot with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing reached a monumental milestone while deployed to Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Lt. Col. Gary M. Middlebrooks of the 114th Fighter Wing, 175th Fighter Squadron of the South Dakota Air National Guard, logged 4,000 hours of flying in the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft on Feb. 5.

“It does feel rewarding even though it is just a number that doesn’t really mean anything,” said Middlebrooks. “I never expected to be able to keep flying this long, so it has been a real pleasure and joy for me.”

Middlebrooks reached 4,000 hours while flying close air support sorties over Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He, along with other Air National Guard members from South Dakota, New Jersey and New York make up the 332nd Expeditionary Operations and Maintenance Groups assigned to Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

This is Middlebrooks’ third deployment to Balad. During his career, he has deployed more than six other times to Saudi Arabia and

Turkey in support of Operations Southern and Northern Watch.

“The flying is about the same except that it’s much quieter this time with the drawdown in progress,” he said.

**“I never expected to be able to keep flying for this long, so it’s been a real pleasure and joy for me.”**

**— Lt. Col. Gary M. Middlebrooks**

The Greenville, S.C., native is a 1984 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He completed undergraduate pilot training at Reese Air Force Base, Texas, where he served as an instructor pilot in the T-38 talon aircraft. Initially, he was not thrilled about being an instructor.

“In the long run though, that actually worked out for the best,” said Middlebrooks. “By getting my additional duty assignment out

of the way at the beginning of my career, I was able to stay in fighters once I got in.”

Following his instructor pilot assignment, he was selected for F-16 training at MacDill AFB, Fla. As an active duty F-16 fighter pilot, he has been assigned to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, Kunsan AB, South Korea, Shaw AFB, S.C., and Langley AFB, Va.

“The F-16 is probably the best multi-role fighter built in the last quarter of the 20th century,” said Middlebrooks. “The Air Force and ANG have done a superb job of keeping it on the cutting edge of modern technology with constant improvements. When I first started flying them, back in 1989, we only carried unguided freefall bombs and AIM-9 heat seeking missiles. Now the jet can employ anti-radiation missiles, laser and GPS guided bombs and radar guided air-to-air missiles. Plus, the night vision goggles, targeting pods and GPS bombs have turned what was originally a day, Visual Flight Rules fighter, into a night, all-weather multi-role machine.”



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## Keeping fighter pilots mission-ready

Maj. Saul "Stain" Hage, 175th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, conducts an aircraft inspection before a flight in Southwest Asia on Dec. 29, 2009. Hage was part of the 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron made up of many Air National Guard members from Sioux Falls. (Air Force photos by Senior Airman Brittany Y. Bateman)

Story by Airman 1st Class Allison M. Boehm  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

**F**our small teams on Joint Base Balad, Iraq, work behind the scenes to ensure pilots have flawless flights and survival equipment for their missions.

The 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron (EFS) aircrew flight equipment (AFE) shop takes on the responsibility of personally inspecting, issuing, fitting, repairing and maintaining flight equipment that is essential to each pilot.

Technicians scrutinize anti-gravity suits, oxygen equipment, helmets, parachutes, survival kits and other critical components - equipment that, when it's needed, has to function properly.

"Our job requires us to be 100 percent focused at all times," said Senior Airman Bo Martz, 332nd EFS aircrew flight equipment technician. "We take our job seriously. There cannot be room for error when it can put

**"They give us a great peace of mind knowing if worse comes to worst and we have to use the survival equipment, it is going to work and it is going to keep us alive."**

**— Capt. Steve Shultz  
F-16 pilot**

someone's life in danger. Each time I initial off a piece of equipment that I inspect, I am held accountable."

Since pilots must depend on the members of the AFE shop to perform their duties correctly, a unique relationship forms between the two career fields.

"To successfully fly our mission in the jet, we need aircrew flight equipment for nearly everything," said Capt. Steve Schultz of Sioux Falls, F-16 pilot with the 114th Fighter Wing. "We depend on them to ensure our equipment is working and fitting properly so that we can focus on completing the mission at hand.

"They give us a great peace of mind knowing if worse comes to worst and we have to use the survival equipment, it is going to work and it is going to keep us alive," Schultz said.

Not only does AFE help ensure safety among the pilots in flight, they also provide pilots

with training in emergency ground egress, ejection and post-ejection procedures, plus both land and water survival training.

“It is imperative that the aircrew is given refresher training for all possible events,” said Chief Master Sgt. James Bradshaw, superintendent of the AFE shop. “The training we give the pilots reinforces their actions and reactions to be instinctual - there isn’t always time to reference a checklist when your life depends on quick action.”

The AFE Airmen have another important role - if an aircraft accident occurs, a team is assembled to inspect the site and find the cause of the mishap.

“If an accident occurs, we are responsible to find the cause and to make policy and equipment changes to prevent it from happening again,” said Bradshaw.

The chief said he considers working in the AFE shop both a weighty responsibility and a significant honor.

“Knowing that if a pilot ejects, they can count on their survival equipment working and being a major part of their recovery keeps us doing our best,” said Bradshaw. “We are the link between the pilot in the aircraft and his survival and recovery.”



**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq - Senior Airman Bo Martz, 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron aircrew flight equipment technician, performs an inspection on life-support gear before a flight. Equipment technicians inspect and maintain equipment such as the pilot’s helmet, anti-gravity suit, survival vest and parachute.** (Air Force photos by Senior Airman Brittany Y. Bateman)

## Legislative Dining Out '10



**Denise Vanden Berg (center), receives the Outstanding Support to a Military Member Award from Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen (left) and Governor M. Michael Rounds Feb. 11, during the annual South Dakota National Guard’s Legislative Dining Out hosted in Pierre.**

(Army photos by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen)



**Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Birnbaum (Ret.), (third from left) was awarded the 2010 Williamson Militiaman Award. The award recognizes an individual who exemplifies the spirit of the citizen-Soldier through community leadership, support of the National Guard and the defense of the nation. From left to right are Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Steven Doohen, Maj. Gen. Ronald Williamson (Ret.), Command Chief Master Sgt. Lane Munger, State Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman and Gov. M. Michael Rounds.**



**Mr. Tom Simmons (center) accepts the 2010 Pro Patria Award on behalf of Midcontinent Communications, from Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve State Chairman Mr. Donald W. Kelpin (center left), Gov. M. Michael Rounds (center right) and Maj. Gen. Steven R. Doohen (far left). The award is given periodically to an individual, company or organization that has supported employees who are members of the Guard and Reserve. Staff Sgt. Chad Westrum (right of Gov. Rounds) was the nominator for the award.**

# Banners honor South Dakota's fallen heroes



**Story by Jomay Steen**  
**Photo by Kristina Barker**  
 Rapid City Journal Staff

**Adriane Rooks views the Fallen Heroes Tribute Banners at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, Jan. 17. The banners honor men from South Dakota for their sacrifice in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.**

In the four years since Staff Sgt. Cory Brooks' death halfway around the world, Marilyn Brooks of Rapid City said she still mourns for her only son. Only a week after the South Dakota National Guard member witnessed his best friend killed in action, his family received word that he, too, had died in Iraq.

"The hole in my heart has never healed," she said.

Marilyn and Darral Brooks attended The Journey Museum's opening program of the South Dakota Fallen Heroes Banners display on Jan. 17. The program was part of a traveling exhibit of banners commemorating those killed during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The free display, sponsored by the VA Black Hills Health Care System, showcases 28 banners with the 28 South Dakota men's photographs, their names, rank, service branch, date of birth and date of death.

During the 30-minute program, Lt. Col. John Weber of the South Dakota Army National Guard spoke of the banners as way of paying tribute to the bravery the men had so clearly demonstrated as well as South Dakota's appreciation of the sacrifice to the families left behind.

"I personally know many of the fallen heroes that we recognize here today. Their sacrifice will always be recognized and always remembered," he said.

Family members and friends were asked to stand while the names of the fallen were read.

Marilyn and Darral Brooks were among the handful who stood. Staff Sgt. Patrick Heltne of Ellsworth Air Force Base was another.

He stood for his friend, Staff Sgt. Bryan Berky, who died Sept. 12 in Afghanistan. He thought the program and banner display would provide a way for many to find closure.

"I think this is very well done and heartfelt," Heltne said.

He said it was tough when Berky died. Berky's wife had a 9-month-old son, and they had lived in South Dakota for little more than a year when it happened.

Heltne was deployed at the time but they weren't at the same location, so it took a while before he got word of Berky's death.

"It really hit home," he said.

After the program, Darral Brooks said he had wondered about attending the ceremony, but after seeing the turnout of about 60 people, he was glad they had agreed to come.

He said his family has become part of a circle of supporters joined by circumstances most people haven't experienced.

At Cory Brooks' burial at Black Hills National Cemetery, his parents met Pfc. Sheldon Hawk Eagle's relatives and received a star quilt from Hawk Eagle's family.

"Over the years, we received a dozen quilts," Darral Brooks said. "We belong to a club that nobody wants to be a member of."

Marilyn Brooks said she appreciated the program and the people who honored her son by attending. "We think about our loved ones every day, and to have something like this is very helpful," she said.

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Chief Warrant Officer Hans N. Gukeisen, Lead,  
US Army - May 9, 2003

Pfc. Michael R. Deuel, Nemo,  
US Army - June 18, 2003

Chief Warrant Officer Scott A. Saboe,  
Willow Lake, US Army - Nov. 15, 2003

Pfc. Sheldon Hawk Eagle, Eagle Butte,  
US Army - Nov. 15, 2003

Capt. Christopher F. Soelzer, Sturgis,  
US Army - Dec. 24, 2003

Sgt. Dennis Morgan, Valentine, Neb./Winner,  
SDARNG - April 17, 2004

Staff Sgt. Cory W. Brooks, Philip,  
SDARNG - April 24, 2004

Lance Cpl. Jeremy L. Bohlman, Sioux Falls,  
USMC - June 7, 2004

Lance Cpl. Joseph T. Welke, Rapid City,  
USMC - Nov. 20, 2004

Pfc. Gunnar D. Becker, Forestburg,  
US Army - Jan. 13, 2005

Staff Sgt. Jason Montefering, Parkston,  
US Army - July 24, 2005

Chief Warrant Officer Paul J. Pillen, Keystone,  
SDARNG - Oct. 17, 2005

Spc. Daniel D. Bartels, Huron,  
US Army - Oct. 19, 2005

Sgt. 1st Class Richard L. Schild, Tabor,  
SDARNG - Dec. 4, 2005

Staff Sgt. Daniel M. Cuka, Yankton,  
SDARNG - Dec. 4, 2005

Cpl. Brett L. Lundstrom, Black Hawk/  
Detroit, Mich., USMC - Jan. 7, 2006

Sgt. Jeremiah Boehmer, Parkston,  
US Army - Feb. 5, 2006

Spc. Patrick William Herried, Sioux Falls,  
US Army - Feb. 6, 2006

Sgt. Allen D. Kokesh Jr., Yankton,  
SDARNG - Feb. 7, 2006

Staff Sgt. Gregory Allen Wagner, Mitchell,  
SDARNG - May 8, 2006

Staff Sgt. Robb Lura Rolfing, Sioux Falls,  
US Army - June 30, 2007

Staff Sgt. Zachary Blaise Tomczak, Huron,  
US Army - Sept. 25, 2007

1st Lt. Thomas M. Martin, Huron,  
US Army - Oct. 14, 2007

Cpl. Tanner James O'Leary, Eagle Butte,  
US Army - Dec. 9, 2007

Senior Airman Jonathan Antonio Vega Yelner,  
Ellsworth, US Air Force - April 29, 2008

Spc. Estell Lee Turner, Sioux Falls,  
US Army - July 2, 2008

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Dean Vrooman, Sioux Falls, US  
Army - July 15, 2008

Staff Sgt. Leroy Otis Webster, Harley, Iowa/Sioux  
Falls, US Army - Apr 25, 2009

Staff Sgt. Bryan D. Berky, Box Elder,  
US Air Force - Sept. 12, 2009



# Post-9/11 Chapter 33 GI Bill

By Spc. Camillia M Bloomgren

Incentive/GI Bill Manager

**T**his article focuses on your own personal use of the Post-9/11 Chapter 33 GI Bill. It does NOT focus on transferring this benefit to a dependent (page 25 will have additional information about transferring GI Bill benefits).

Are you considering converting your current GI Bill Benefits to the Post 9/11 GI Bill? Make an informed decision to convert your current GI Bill Benefits to the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Prior to making a decision, there are a few things you should consider.

## What type of training do you plan to take?

Associate, bachelor and graduate degrees are covered under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Your degree program must be from an institution of higher learning, so technical schools may not be covered. The programs must be accredited and approved by a state approving agency. Non-college degree training is not covered under the Post-9/11 GI Bill if it is not completed at a college or university. Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, you will be eligible for only one licensing or certification test not to exceed \$2,000.

## Where will you take classes?

If you're only taking distance or online classes, you won't qualify for the monthly housing allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, but you can still receive the basic education allowance under the Montgomery GI Bill. If you're taking at least one course on campus and your rate of pursuit is greater than half-time you qualify for the monthly housing allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

## Do you currently have any time left under another education program such as Chapter 1606, Chapter 1607 or Chapter 30 GI Bill?

If you have remaining entitlement under the Montgomery GI Bill, you can exhaust that entitlement (use up all that time) and then get up to 12 months of benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. You may want to use 12 months of entitlement under another chapter prior to transferring.

## Where will you be living?

Tuition, fees and your monthly housing allowance are state specific. How much you receive depends on what state you will live in. Your tuition and fees paid under the Post-9/11 GI Bill are based on the maximum allowed in your state. Your monthly housing allowance is based on the basic allowance for housing for the zip code in which your school is located. Currently, the maximum monthly housing allowance in South Dakota is \$998.

## How many classes will you take?

If you study full-time and take at least one in-residence course, you qualify for the monthly housing allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. If you study at



greater than the half-time rate, you qualify for the monthly housing allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. You will not qualify for the monthly housing allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill unless you are pursuing training greater than the half-time rate.

## Which is best for me?

As a general rule, Chapter 33 of the Post-9/11 GI Bill may not be the most beneficial program due to housing rates, types of schools/programs eligible or number of mobilizations you have completed. To help you make an informed decision, the VA has created a tool that will give you a rough estimate of the benefit you will receive under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Estimator <http://gibill.va.gov/CH33Estimator> will ask you to enter some data, and will use that information to provide you with an estimate of your payments. It would be very beneficial to look at all of your GI Bill programs side-by-side to determine which benefits will be of greater value, as it will vary from Soldier to Soldier.

# Transferring GI Bill benefits to your family

By Master Sgt. Alan P. Meyer  
Tuition Assistance Manager

Please note that you must have been a member of the Armed Forces on or after August 1, 2009, to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill to transfer your benefits. You cannot transfer benefits after you separate from the Armed Forces.

The transferability of the GI Bill to spouses and dependents is an important benefit available to Soldiers. In my case, I decided to transfer the GI Bill to my children. Since my oldest child was attending college this fall, I started the process right away in August.

There are a number of steps a Soldier must follow when transferring the GI Bill.

The first step was going on the VA Web site at: [http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/CH33/Transfer.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Transfer.htm) to find out my eligibility, then following all of the steps in agreeing to transfer benefits.

Once you decide to transfer benefits, your decision is irrevocable and there are a series of statements you must agree to on the Web site in regarding this.

Next, you must decide the number of "benefit months" you are going to assign to each family member. Normally, a Soldier will have 36 months to assign to their child/children, and a Soldier can split those 36 months among their family members.

After all of the steps are completed on the Department of Defense Web site, the Soldier will receive an e-mail telling them if they are eligible or if the Soldier needs to send more information. Keep this e-mail because there's a possibility you may be able to use this to verify your eligibility to transfer the GI Bill with the school your family member is attending.

The next step is filling out VA Form 22-1990e on the Veterans Administration Web site. This form should be filled out by the dependent and is for family members to use transferred benefits in the VA. The VA Web site has a system called "VONAPP" which allows family members to fill out VA Form 22-1990e online. You can also print out VA Form 22-1990e and send it by mail if you choose. Once this form is received and completed by the VA, the family member will be sent a "certificate of eligibility" which verifies that the family member will be receiving benefits and has to be given to the VA certifying official at the respective school the family member will be attending. The VA certifying official will then verify the family member is enrolled for classes and process that information with the VA.

As you probably have guessed, the transfer of benefits can take some time to complete. Right now, the VA is telling Soldiers this process can take 10 to

12 weeks. Sadly, there is no guarantee when your family member will receive that first check, but the VA does provide benefits back to the time when the VA Form 22-1990e was filled out. My daughter got her first check in November, and I had sent her VA Form 22-1990e in prior to her beginning classes in September. The VA did however, provide benefits back to September, when she began classes. There wasn't a lot of complaining once that big check arrived.

My advice to Soldiers who decide to transfer benefits to loved ones: BE PATIENT! Expect the process to take a number of weeks but make sure you follow each step in the process precisely or your benefits can be further delayed. Finally, don't worry if you have questions or if this process seems daunting.

Prior to transferring your GI Bill benefits to a spouse or child, ask the same questions you would ask if you were using it personally.

Please visit the Transfer of Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits to Dependents (TEB) Web site at: [http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/CH33/Transfer.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Transfer.htm) for further details.

For additional information regarding any of your educational benefits please contact the SD Education Office 605.737.6212 or [esasd@sd.ngb.army.mil](mailto:esasd@sd.ngb.army.mil)



# Financial Fitness

By Capt. Kevin Miller

114th Fighter Wing

It's that time of year! - No, not just preparing ourselves for Physical Fitness training, but to get your personal finances back into fighting shape.

Thanks to the country's economic nosedive and the summertime fast approaching, most of us could benefit from a proven, no-nonsense financial workout plan. Below are some tips on how to improve your "Financial Fitness" program, taken from an article on the Air Force Times Web site. I have taken a sample from each category to help you improve your financial status. These tips should help you build wealth, boost credit scores and harden your core financial assets in 2010. Refer to the article online to see the rest of the tips.



The fastest ways to send your credit scores skyrocketing -- or make them crash and burn -- all have to do with credit cards.

## 1. Avoid opening new credit card accounts

Opening a new credit card will drop your credit score for many months. It's safe to open an account only if you are not financing a car or buying a home within the next 18 months.

## 2. Negotiate lower interest rates

Call the company and just ask, and do it often -- especially if you have not been late on a payment for a couple of years. If you don't get what you want on the first try, call again the next month. Credit card banks are businesses, and they have specials, too.

## 3. Pay your debts early

If you pay your credit cards, installment loans and mortgage loans as much as three weeks early for a few months' time.

## 4. Pay more than the minimum amounts

If you can, regularly pay at least \$25 per month over the minimum amount.

## 5. Spend less than you make

Without this, all the other rules have no value -- if you don't save, you can't invest. If you spend it all, you may have fun, but you will never get rich except by accident.

## 6. If you ignore money, it will ignore you

Spending it all will leave you with a pile of useless stuff that someday your relatives will be selling at a garage sale.

## 7. Teach your children about money

Instead of simply providing them with money, a financial education is one of the most valuable gifts you can give.

## 8. Give back to others some of your good fortune

It will come back to you in ways that you will not expect.

## ENLISTED SPOTLIGHT

NAME:

Staff Sgt. Dallas Vallery

UNIT: 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

AGE: 35

FULL-TIME POSITION:  
Joint Force Headquarters Training NCO



Staff Sgt. Dallas Vallery

HOMETOWN: Fort Pierre

FAMILY:

Wife Tara, son Chase, daughter Reagan

PETS: Black lab, named Chick

WHEN I'M NOT AT WORK YOU'LL FIND ME:

Close to home or out with friends watching football.

THE ONE THING I TREASURE THE MOST: Freedom

HEROES:

My wife Tara, Lewis and Clark, Jerry Rice, Ronnie Lott

NOBODY KNOWS THIS ABOUT ME BUT:

I enjoy studying American History.

THE ONE PERSON (ALIVE OR NOT) I'D MOST LIKE TO HAVE OVER FOR DINNER & WHY:

Ronnie Lott (NFL: 1981-1990 San Francisco 49ers, 1991-1992 Los Angeles Raiders, 1993-1994 New York Jets) His ability to lead from the front. His drive and determination to always be a part of the team and each individual play was remarkable. He brought out the best in everyone around him.

IF HE/SHE ISN'T AVAILABLE:

Jerry Rice (NFL: 1985-2000 San Francisco 49ers, 2001-2004 Oakland Raiders, 2004 Seattle Seahawks) hard work, dedication. A leader who used action, not words to inspire those around him.

IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TOMORROW I'M:

Retiring on the full-time side, but finishing out the last two years on the traditional side of the National Guard.

THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT:

My father told me always tell the truth, if you make a mistake, own it and learn from it.

THE BEST ADVICE I HAVE TO GIVE:

Every person that walks into your office is your customer. It might be a Soldier in your unit, or in the state. Maybe a retiree or a veteran; they have already paid - it is my job to serve them.

# 'Tricare University' offers benefit education

Story courtesy of Tricare

If you are new to Tricare and eager to learn about your health care benefits or an old hand who wants to know the latest changes, Tricare University is the place to go. Tricare University offers free online courses 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year at [www.tricare.mil/tricareu](http://www.tricare.mil/tricareu).

Of the different courses online, the Tricare Public Course provides the quickest and easiest way to get a general overview and basic knowledge of Tricare programs. There is no registration for this course, and it is accessible to anyone who wants to know more about Tricare.

The Tricare Fundamentals Course is much more in-depth as it is primarily designed for benefit counselors and family support staff who provide counseling and assistance to Tricare beneficiaries. Topics covered include Tricare eligibility, Tricare programs and plans and online resources. Registration is needed to take the course and "graduates" who pass the test at the end of the course receive a certificate from Tricare.

To take one of the offered courses, go to [www.tricare.mil/tricareu](http://www.tricare.mil/tricareu) and click "online training" for a list of options.

**WE ALL SERVE**

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 COAST GUARD RESERVE ★ AIR NATIONAL GUARD ★ AIR FORCE RESERVE

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## OFFICER SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Lt. Col. Harvey Fitzgerald  
 UNIT: J1, Joint Force Headquarters  
 AGE: 52  
 FULL-TIME POSITION: Soldier & Family Support Services Branch Chief  
 HOMETOWN: Hermosa



**Lt. Col. Harvey Fitzgerald**

FAMILY: Wife, Velva; children, Bethany (Chris), Jackie, and Harvey T; granddaughter, Ava, 16 months.

PETS: Two dogs, Boo and Wishbone.

**WHEN I'M NOT AT WORK YOU'LL FIND ME:** Working and training horses so I can compete at a rodeo or a team roping event. Also enjoy fishing, archery hunting, camping and traveling.

**THE ONE THING I TREASURE THE MOST:** Time with my family, working with livestock and traveling to rodeos. I will never get enough of this limited commodity.

**HEROES:** Our young men and women Warriors who do their duty each day because of their love of our country! They ask nothing from anyone except the respect for being professionals. They are true American patriots.

**NOBODY KNOWS THIS ABOUT ME BUT:** The family rumors that Wild Bill Hickok is a relative was confirmed.

**THE ONE PERSON (ALIVE OR NOT) I'D MOST LIKE TO HAVE OVER FOR DINNER & WHY:** My paternal grandfather who passed away before I was born. He was a rancher, owned a trucking line, flew his own airplane and was reportedly a pretty good baseball player.

**IF HE/SHE ISN'T AVAILABLE:** Peyton Manning, to ask why he didn't call a pass play on 3rd down and 2 yards to go with 1 minute left in the first half of the Super Bowl.

**IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TOMORROW I'M:** Loading a large airplane to take lots of people on an exciting and extended excursion. This trip will be to a warmer climate, perhaps a private island with some sand, blue water and no Blackberry service. I might donate a special teams coach to the Indianapolis Colts!

**THE BEST ADVICE I EVER GOT:** Always avoid working with someone over 40 years of age because they are always stopping to go to the restroom or trying to remember somebody's name. Nowadays, that describes me!

**THE BEST ADVICE I HAVE TO GIVE:** Use and manipulate "things", but never people. Recognize, appreciate and love the people around you as they make the flavors of life!

# SNAPSHOTS

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



ARIF JAN, Kuwait - Maj. Gen. Steve Doohen, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard, promotes 1st Lt. Joey Larson of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, while visiting Kuwait.

The Dakota Pack would like to share your photos from the flight line or field. Please e-mail high resolution photos for consideration, along with photo descriptions, to include names, dates, location and a brief explanation of the event to [theanne.tangen@us.army.mil](mailto:theanne.tangen@us.army.mil).



FORT MCCOY, Wis. - Brig. Gen. Timothy Reisch (left), sees off family members Spc. Tim Reisch (son), Spc. Trevor Reisch (son) and Spc. Michael Reisch (nephew) all of the 211th Engineer Company, while visiting Fort McCoy, Wis. in September. The 211th is on a one-year deployment in Afghanistan. (Army photo by Spc. Chad Carlson)



PIERRE - State Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jerry Duba of Platte, Pierre, presents Gov. M. Michael Rounds at the Legislative Dining Out in Pierre, with a South Dakota flag which flew during Duba's deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom over Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan during 2008. (Army photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen)



Past and present South Dakota generals met for the Adjutant General Association of the United States meeting held in Washington, D.C., in February. Pictured from left, Maj. Gen. Ray Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard, Maj. Gen. Don Goldhorn, Guam tag, Maj. Gen. Harold Sykora (retired), past tag of S.D., Maj. Gen. Philip Killey (retired), past director of the Air National Guard, Maj. Gen. Steve Doohen, SDNG tag and Maj. Gen. Robert Bray, R.I. National Guard tag.



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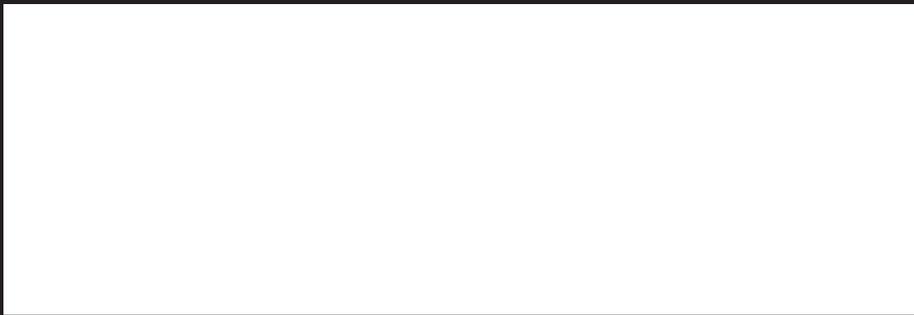
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