

**South Dakota National Guard**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
2823 West Main St.  
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721  
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**200th Engineer Company changes command**

PIERRE, S.D. – First Lieutenant Nathan Jolley, Sturgis, will take command of the 200th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, during a change of command ceremony at 10 a.m. CST on Saturday, July 28, at the local armory.

“It’s an exciting time to be taking command,” said Jolley, who works full time as co-owner of Sacrison Paving Inc. in Whitewood.

Jolley said he plans to focus training on increasing the unit’s proficiency on the Army’s newest piece of bridging equipment, the M18 Heavy Dry Support Bridge, as well as the Improved Ribbon Bridge.

“The Soldiers are ready to jump into training and are excited to get into the new Army Warrior Training Tasks,” said Jolley, who is currently serving as the operations officer for the 842<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Company, Spearfish.

Capt. LeeJay Templeton, Pierre, is the outgoing commander and will be assigned as the assistant operations officer for the 153<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion, Huron, and works full time as a civil engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers at the Oahe Project in Pierre.

In 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Templeton served as the 1st bridge platoon leader but was moved to the company executive officer position half-way through the deployment, according to Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Bill Dunbar, the unit’s operations noncommissioned officer.

“This move was very beneficial to the company,” said Dunbar. “He did an outstanding job in both positions and has been an outstanding commander since our return.”

While in Iraq, the performance by the Soldiers of the 200<sup>th</sup> earned the unit the Army Valorous Unit Award. This award is presented to units of the Armed Forces of the United States for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy of the United States while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force. The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of the Silver Star to an individual.

Templeton, who has been in the unit since 1993, said he is extremely proud of the unit's recent increase in personnel strength from 84 to 100 percent since returning from Iraq.

"Our success in recruiting and retention, as well as the emphasis placed on developing our leadership, will help us move forward," said Templeton. "The stability we have created has allowed us to experience some great training and the Soldiers love it."

Templeton said he was also very proud of the unit's ability to distinguish itself as one of the Army's best multi-role bridge companies. He believes this distinction resulted in the recent procurement of the Army's newest bridging equipment.

"This just tells us that the Army believes we are one of the best, and they treat us as such," he said.

The 200<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company is currently headquartered in Pierre with detachments in Chamberlain and Mobridge with approximately 188 assigned personnel. The mission of the 200th is to provide support with bridge assets and haul capability to active duty military units during humanitarian or military support missions and to county, state and federal emergency management agencies in the event of a natural disaster or state emergency.