

**South Dakota National Guard
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Rapid City Guard unit will be honored at deployment ceremony

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Soldiers from Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command, South Dakota Army National Guard, will be honored during a deployment ceremony at 3 p.m. (MST) on Wednesday, Jan. 30, at the Army Aviation Support Facility near the Rapid City Regional Airport.

The public is encouraged to attend.

Soldiers from Detachment 48 received orders in December, 2007, to deploy for a six to 12-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Detachment 48 is based in Rapid City at the Army Aviation Support Facility next to the Rapid City Regional Airport. The unit is comprised of five pilots and two operations specialists, who will travel to Fort Benning, Ga., in early February to complete the mobilization process prior to deployment to Afghanistan.

The detachment will provide aviation support to units throughout Afghanistan by flying two high-performance C-12 Huron aircraft. While overseas, the unit expects to be stationed at Bagram Air Base, 27 miles north of Kabul, where the detachment will operate the two aircraft that are already in place.

Each aircraft is capable of transporting up to eight personnel or other types of high-value cargo. The C-12 is a pressurized fixed-wing aircraft and powered by a twin-engine turboprop system. The Soldiers who fly this aircraft provide a rapid-response delivery system to units throughout the region, delivering various cargos including personnel, vital repair parts, or lifesaving medical supplies.

Since Sept. 11, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 700 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

About 200 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 4,000 National Guard men and women are serving in a non-

active duty status in South Dakota and continue to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.

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MEDIA: All media representatives are encouraged to arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the ceremony. This is to ensure media are allowed enough time to clear the security gate with an escort as well as get an opportunity to interview prior to the start of the ceremony. Media should call the point of contact below ahead of time and enter at the Army Aviation Support Facility Security Entrance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, or cell (605) 431-8753.

NOTE: South Dakota National Guard units currently deployed.

The South Dakota Embedded Training Team (ETT) was activated for a one-year deployment on Tuesday, Jan. 22, during a ceremony held at Fort Meade, Sturgis, S.D. The 16-member team, known as “Coyote One,” departed South Dakota yesterday, Jan. 23, for Fort Riley, Kan., to train for two months prior to deployment to Afghanistan where the unit will train and mentor the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, South Dakota Army National Guard, is currently stationed at Convoy Support Center Cedar II near An Nasiriyah, Iraq, which is approximately 193 miles southeast of Baghdad. The 180 Soldiers of Battery B arrived in Iraq in early January and will conduct various security missions for the next 10 months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Detachment 3, Company A, 641st Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard, is currently stationed at Balad Air Base, Iraq, which is located 42 miles north of Baghdad. The 10-member unit began providing airlift support to units throughout the region on Nov. 1, 2007, and has already flown more than 330 missions transporting more than 3.5 million pounds of cargo and 7,650 personnel. This is the unit’s second rotation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since 2004.