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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Rapid City aviation unit begins operations in Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – Just three weeks after being activated, South Dakota’s fixed-wing aviators find themselves engaged in daily missions throughout the skies of Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The seven members of Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command, arrived in Afghanistan on Feb. 14 and began hauling passengers three days later. The National Guard unit is currently stationed at Bagram Air Base located about 27 miles north of Kabul.

“We completed our local orientation flight right away and got our first mission on Feb. 17,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jerry Duba, commander. “For now, we are operating with a detachment from Vermont.”

Detachment 48, comprised of five pilots and two operations specialists, provides aviation support by flying two high-performance C-12R Huron aircraft. Each aircraft is capable of transporting up to eight personnel or other types of high-value cargo.

The C-12R is a pressurized fixed-wing aircraft and powered by a twin-engine turboprop system. The pilots 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.

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

Photo cut line – Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jerry Duba and Staff Sgt. Williamson are shown raising the South Dakota State Flag outside of Detachment 48’s operations building on Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Seven members arrived on Feb. 14 and, within three days, assumed the mission from the previous unit. Detachment 48 provides

transportation for personnel and cargo throughout the Operation Enduring Freedom area of operations. Detachment 48 personnel schedule, plan and execute flights using the C12R Fixed Wing Aircraft. (Courtesy photo from the National Guard) (RELEASED)

Link to Photo:

https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/Det_48_raise_the_colors_in_Afghanistan.jpg

NOTE 1: 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.

The 114th Security Forces Squadron, South Dakota Air National Guard, will deploy over the next couple of weeks to Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The 31 assigned Airmen will conduct security missions and law-enforcement duties as well as provide force protection for U.S. and coalition forces during the six to 12-month deployment. This is the unit’s second rotation to Southwest Asia since 2006.

NOTE 2: Since the Sept. 11 attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 730 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terrorism. More than 250 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas throughout Southwest Asia. More than 4,000 National Guardsmen are serving in a non-active duty status in South Dakota and continue to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.