

**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

February 29, 2008
PAO 02-29-08

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Airmen to receive combat medals for actions in Iraq

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – Three Airmen of the 114th Logistics Squadron, South Dakota Air National Guard, will be among the nation's first to receive the recently authorized Air Force Combat Action Medal.

A medal presentation ceremony honoring Master Sgt. Dana S. Storm, of Crooks, S.D., and Staff Sgt. Luke A. Cunningham, of Vermillion, S.D., will be held at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 2, at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls.

A third medal for the late Tech. Sgt. Keith J. Fuerst, of Parkston, will be presented posthumously to his family. Fuerst lost his life in civilian motor-vehicle accident in December of 2006.

The three are being cited for their actions while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom:

“On Aug. 4, 2004, the three Airmen were operating gun trucks in northern Iraq as “Convoy Airmen” supporting the United States Army when their convoy came under attack from improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. In response, the three Airmen provided timely and extremely effective suppressive fire to protect the convoy from the enemy.”

The creation of the Combat Action Medal was approved by the Secretary of the United States Air Force on March 15, 2007, to recognize any Air Force member who actively participated in combat - on the ground or in the air. To be eligible for the medal, the Airmen must have been under direct and hostile fire while operating in unsecured space, outside the defended perimeter, or physically engaging hostile forces with direct and lethal fire.

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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Lt. Col. Reid Christopherson at (605) 988-5644, cell (605) 310-9476, Email: reid.christopherson@sdsiou.ang.af.mil or Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753.