

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: pao@sd.ngb.army.mil

Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **SD Guard flood response efforts come to an end**

RAPID CITY, S.D. – For the past three months, the South Dakota National Guard has worked alongside local, state and federal agencies, as well as volunteers and impacted residents, to battle this summer’s historic Missouri River flooding.

On May 27, the first Soldiers arrived in the communities of Pierre and Fort Pierre to begin filling sandbags. And on Sept. 2, the last Airmen stepped off the levees at Dakota Dunes. The Guard officially ended its response efforts that day in one of the most significant floods to hit the state.

With the exception of the 1972 Rapid City Flood, at no other time in its history has the SDNG activated in such numbers and duration for a state emergency. Approximately 2,000 Soldiers and Airmen served on state active-duty orders during the course of flood operations. At the height of flood operations, nearly 1,300 SDNG men and women were on orders at a single time.

“Our Guard members performed brilliantly during the historic Missouri River flood of 2011,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general for the SDNG. “I believe what we accomplished demonstrates the true quality of our organization. Despite having little notice and more than 300 Soldiers deployed overseas, it speaks volumes about the caliber of Soldiers and Airmen serving in the South Dakota National Guard.”

While Guardsmen served varying lengths of time during the 99 day operation, a total of 41,721 work days have been attributed to response efforts, which included coordination with state agencies, filling and emplacing sandbags, building levees, conducting levee patrol and repair, and providing area security, to name a few.

While the Guard’s flood operations have concluded and the flood waters receded, the impact left behind by the Guard will be felt long afterward.

“The National Guard played a major role in flood prevention efforts,” Gov. Dennis Daugaard said. “The Guard’s disciplined personnel and skill in operating heavy equipment were godsend in those riverside communities that survived ominous odds in the face of record flooding.”

Overall cost estimates for SDNG involvement totaled more than \$8 million, with more than \$6 million associated with personnel payroll and \$2 million associated with logistical support.

At the height of operations, sandbagging crews at more than 20 sites were producing nearly 500,000 sandbags per day. National Guard dump trucks were used to help distribute sand to sandbagging sites.

Also contributing to the sandbagging fight along the Missouri River were aircrews from the National Guard. Two UH-60 Black Hawks and one CH-47 Chinook helicopter were used to emplace 6,500 one-ton sandbags at key locations along the river.

Aircrews also provided aerial reconnaissance of the Missouri for government officials. Because South Dakota's UH-60 helicopter unit was deployed to Iraq, aircrews and aircraft from Guard units in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Utah and Oklahoma assisted with the efforts. Additionally, North Dakota and Wyoming provided much needed equipment for the aircraft. In all, more than 200 flight hours were accumulated during flight operations.

To help keep the Missouri at bay, the SDNG assisted with the construction of levees with scrapers, loaders dump trucks and bulldozers. These efforts helped to contain the record three month water releases (ranging predominately from 150,000 cubic feet per second up to 165,000 cfs) at various dams along the river.

Guard members conducted foot patrols on 12-hour shifts, 24-hours a day, to monitor the levee systems for problematic areas. Quick reactionary forces were on hand to respond to integrity issues with the levees or critical infrastructure in a timely fashion.

"I am especially grateful for the National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who mobilized when we faced flooding on the Missouri River," Gov. Daugaard said. "I saw their hard work myself sandbagging, managing traffic, building levees, patrolling levees. They were the watch guards. The National Guard inspired us. They inspired me."

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

- 99 days of duration for flood operations (May 27 – Sept. 2)
- 2,000 personnel supporting flood response through the National Guard for at least one day (May 27-Sept. 2)
- 1,279 Guardsmen – largest number of Guardsmen on duty at one time during flood ops
- 41,721 work days (calendar days multiplied by number on duty for each specific day)
- 20 sites were producing nearly 500,000 sandbags per day
- 200.8 aviation hours flown by aircrews in support of flood operations
- 6,500 one ton sandbags emplaced by National Guard helicopters
- 7 number of National Guard states who contributed to operations (Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Utah and Oklahoma, North Dakota and Wyoming)

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**PHOTOS:** High-resolution photos for this release are available upon request or at: [www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard)



**DSC\_1208:** Soldiers of the 842nd Engineer Company construct a levee March 31, 2011, in Pierre. The state called Soldiers from the 842nd who were conducting annual training at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., to Pierre to assist with flood relief operations. The 842nd helped construct a levee system near the Ramkota in Pierre to offer flooding protection to low-lying areas of Pierre and Ft. Pierre. (SDNG photo by Spc. Tiffany Hamilton)



**110604-F-SA348-003:** Senior Airman Brandon Muhs (right), a 114th Fighter Wing crew chief from Mt. Vernon, and Senior Airman Dusty Abrahamson, a 114th Civil Engineer heavy equipment operator from Sioux Falls, walk a levee in Pierre June 4, 2011. The primary mission of the 114th Fighter Wing Detachment was levee patrols and security. (SDNG photo by Capt. Michael Frye) (RELEASED)



**DSC\_2869:** Pfc. Brian Smith (right), of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Company B, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, Mitchell, places sandbags on a levee at the city Water Reclamation Plant to protect the facility from flood waters in Pierre in June. (SDNG photo by OC Chad Carlson)



**20110531-F-SA348-032:** Maj. Laurie Tidemann, 114th Air Guard Headquarters, works alongside Maj. Steve Volk and Capt. C.J. Willems, both of the Combat Service Support Battalion, at the South Dakota National Guard Mission desk in the Emergency Operations Center in Pierre May 31, 2011. (SDNG photo by Capt. Michael Frye) (RELEASED)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Please contact Maj. Brendan Murphy at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail [brendan.murphy1@us.army.mil](mailto:brendan.murphy1@us.army.mil).