

# South Dakota National Guard

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September 21, 2011

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **842nd Engineer Co. deploys for war**

By Capt. Anthony Deiss  
SDNG Public Affairs Office

SPEARFISH, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard’s 842nd Engineer Company was activated for federal service today during a ceremony at the Donald E. Young Center on the Black Hills State University campus in Spearfish.

The Northern Hills-based 842nd mobilized nearly 160 Soldiers for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“For your courage, for your persistence and determination to resist terror, wherever it may be found, and to take the war on terror to the enemy, we thank you,” said Gov. Dennis Daugaard, during the ceremony.

The 842nd’s mission will be to provide horizontal construction and engineering support such as building and maintaining roads, developing airfields, and providing limited clearing operations.

“The unit is also capable of building entry and traffic control points, as well as building up the bases the Soldiers live on to improve the quality of life of our service members,” said Capt. Allen Godsell, 842nd commander. “We are also able to take our mission out into the communities of Afghanistan – working to improve the quality of life of the Afghans – and share that knowledge with them so they can take part in building their own country.”

The 842nd is located in three Black Hills communities with their headquarters located in Spearfish and two detachments in Sturgis and Belle Fourche. They are equipped with bulldozers, scrapers, cranes, loaders and 20-ton dump trucks.

Along with their military equipment and specialties, Godsell said the Soldiers’ civilian lives also play a role in their mission. With careers as police officers, jailors, or as teachers, these skills provide an additional capability if asked to perform detainee operations or on humanitarian missions.

“It isn’t just their job in the military that makes them great as National Guard Soldiers, but also the civilian skills sets they bring to battlefield that makes them more of an asset when we serve with the active-duty Army,” said Godsell. “The members of the 842nd are high-quality individuals that bring a wealth of experience to this deployment.”

This is the second mobilization for the 842nd, having deployed to Iraq for 16 months in 2003-2004. The unit contains 43 veterans, and it's this experience the unit's leadership will rely on to help develop the younger Soldiers.

"You've got to take care of your Soldiers in order to accomplish your mission over there," said 1st Sgt. Marcus Stacey, 842nd senior noncommissioned officer, who also mobilized with the unit to Iraq. "We have fantastic leadership in our NCOs who deployed the first time, and we have gone a long way to push some of that knowledge down to the younger enlisted Soldiers."

The 842nd has spent nearly 20 months training and preparing for mobilization. From engineering tasks to common Soldiering skills, Stacey said the unit has especially focused on training that will keep the Soldiers safe.

"Our training has focused heavily on survivability and communications, which is critical to bringing our Soldiers home successfully," he said.

Now that the unit is finally activated, the unit leadership said the Soldiers are ready.

"We have been on notice for nearly two years now and the unit is ready to go," said Godsell. "It's a blessing to have the time to prepare, because it did change our mindsets and gave us the ability to work with a unit on the ground there and to know exactly how to take care of Soldiers when we arrive."

"Now that the activation is over, the Soldiers are ready to climb on that bus and fly down to Fort Bliss to complete our mobilization training," added Stacey. "It has been a long process, but we are ready to begin our tour in Afghanistan."

The 842nd members will depart for their mobilization station at Fort Bliss, Texas, on Friday, where they will spend another month in-processing into the active-duty Army and conduct more theater-specific training before departing to Afghanistan.

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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)



**110921-A-9937D-045:** Spc. Tiffany Hamilton caresses her daughter Taliyah during the activation ceremony of the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, Sept. 21, 2011, at the Donald E. Young Center on the Black Hills State University campus in Spearfish, S.D. The 842nd mobilized for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan. (SDNG photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss) (RELEASED)



**110921-A-9937D-069:** Sgt. Corbin Peterson holds his infant daughter Blakeley, as his wife Krista watches, during the activation ceremony of the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, Sept. 21, 2011, at the Donald E. Young Center on the Black Hills State University campus in Spearfish, S.D. The 842nd mobilized for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan. (SDNG photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss) (RELEASED)



**110921-A-9937D-019:** Pvt. Hauk Uhrig stands during “role call” along with other Soldiers from the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, during the unit’s activation ceremony Sept. 21, 2011, at the Donald E. Young Center on the Black Hills State University campus in Spearfish, S.D. The 842nd mobilized for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan. (SDNG photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss) (RELEASED)



**110921-A-9937D-079:** Capt. Allen Godsell, commander of the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, speaks to his unit and several hundred family and friends gathered at the Donald E. Young Center on the Black Hills State University campus in Spearfish, S.D., during the unit’s activation ceremony Sept. 21, 2011. The 842nd mobilized for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan. (SDNG photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss) (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).