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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Soldier enlists into family tradition

By 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – On Sept. 16, Alexandra ‘Alex’ Lovett, of Pipestone, Minn., raised her right hand and swore the Oath of Enlistment into the South Dakota Army National Guard. Alex became the third Lovett girl to join the Guard, following in the footsteps of her older sisters into a long and proud legacy of service to their country, state and community.

“I joined because of all the opportunities offered to not only myself but also for the benefits it has for my daughter (Annie, 2),” said Alex, who enlisted as a truck driver in Milbank’s 740th Transportation Company. “The National Guard will teach me job skills I couldn’t get anywhere else and those skills will help me in every aspect of my life. I also want to show my daughter loyalty to your country, strength to stand up and do the right thing, and the importance of giving back to our country.”

Alex joins her sister, Spc. Christina Lovett, of Sioux Falls, who enlisted July 13, 2010, and serves as a flutist in the 147th Army Band in Mitchell.

“I had just graduated with a music degree from Winona State and was having a difficult time finding full-time employment as a teacher in South Dakota. My sister, Beth, told me that the Army Band was looking for a flute player and could help me with my student loans, I owed about \$35,000. I visited the unit before I made a decision and saw how accepting and nice they were. I felt that this could really be a home for me.”

Alex’s recruiter is another sister, Sgt. Beth Lovett, who joined in 2001 and now works full time for the National Guard in Watertown.

“I had anticipated joining the military at some point, but wasn’t sure what I wanted to do after high school, so I started college at SDSU,” said Beth. “After one semester there, I realized I couldn’t afford to continue paying for school myself. I walked into the office of Sgt. 1st Class John Albers and asked to join the Guard.”

While it isn’t often that three sisters serve at the same time in the SDARNG, family members serving together is something seen in many units throughout the state.

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“The Guard has a long history of families serving side-by-side to strengthen their community and protect their country,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Paulsen, SDARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. “In South Dakota, community service becomes a family tradition. The unique situation involving the three Lovett sisters reinforce the time honored family tradition of this great organization.”

The Lovett sisters grew up in Luverne, Minn., and while three of them have enlisted into the SDARNG all six girls serve their community or country in one shape or another.

“Our sister, Julia, is in the Coast Guard in California, and our other two sisters have chosen to work in public service positions in their communities,” said Beth. “Jennifer is a pollution control specialist at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Victoria is a public defender in Sioux Falls.”

Craig Lovett, the girls’ father, said patriotism, volunteering and a sense of community were virtues that he and his wife, Christine, have instilled in their daughters throughout their lives.

“As a parent, it’s interesting to see where life takes your children and how the things you taught them translate into their decisions in life,” Craig said. “It’s very rewarding to see my girls pick careers that reflect the things that were important to our family. I can see that they took those things to heart in their adult lives, not only in joining the military, but also in the civilian careers Vicky and Jennifer chose.”

“Our daughters were brought up to be very patriotic and committed to their communities,” said Christine. “They learned to appreciate volunteerism and know the importance of giving back, I’m also very proud that the lessons they learned as children have turned into careers that help others.”

While there is justified pride in their daughters’ choices, there is also concern that all parents of service members share.

“It is sometimes heartbreaking as a mother, to know that any one of my four daughters could face conflict and war, but we are very proud, of course, and have immense respect for the decisions they have made,” Christine said.

“I worry about the unrest in the Middle East, and I worry about them facing war, as Beth did in 2003,” said Craig. “But more than that, I am just so proud that they have followed in the footsteps of the members of our family who have served.”

The Lovett sisters come from a strong military family. Their father served in the Marines, a grandfather served in the Navy and a great-grandfather was a Merchant Marine in World War II.

“Our country provides so much for us that to serve in the military is our way to give back,” said Alex. “Not only for what our country does for us but what past Soldiers have done so that we may live the lives we have. Honoring them by serving is the best way to say thank you.”

Alex, who will attend the nine-week basic combat training course at Fort Jackson, S.C., in January said that while she has not yet left for basic training, she already has a feeling of pride from belonging to such an organization.

“People have told me thank you for volunteering and serving and to me that is extremely rewarding,” Alex said. “I understand that this is a life altering commitment but it feels like the right thing to do. To be recognized for doing something I feel is my duty is rewarding. I am looking forward to future training and serving my country, so that I earn the thank yous I receive.”

Family tradition, service and pride aside, the Guard has offered the Lovett sisters the opportunity to accomplish their higher education goals.

“We come from a large family, and our parents really couldn’t afford to send six girls to college,” Beth said. “The National Guard has afforded us the opportunity to meet our goals of a quality education.”

While Alex followed in her sisters footsteps into the Guard, each is traveling on their own path.

“I find it amazing three different sisters, with different interests and dreams, can find a home in the same organization,” said Christina. “Although Alex and I followed in Beth’s footsteps joining the National Guard, we have each found the right place for ourselves. I know Beth absolutely loves helping people enlist, I love playing in the band, and Alex plans on becoming an officer through the ROTC program. The National Guard has provided each of us with a career path that just fits.”

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PHOTOS: High-resolution photos for this release are available upon request or at: www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



111021-A-5816L-084: Alexandra ‘Alex’ Lovett (center), of Pipestone, Minn., became the third Lovett girl to join the South Dakota Army National Guard when she took the Oath of Enlistment, Sept. 16 in Sioux Falls. Alex, who will join the 740th Transportation Company, is following in the footsteps of her older sisters, Sgt. Beth Lovett (left), a National Guard recruiter in Watertown, and Spc. Christina Lovett, a flutist in the 147th Army Band in Mitchell, into a long and proud legacy of service to their country, state and community. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder) (RELEASED)

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