

South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Black Hills physician will deploy to Afghanistan

By 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Family, friends and fellow Soldiers of South Dakota Army National Guard’s Maj. David Lauer gathered at Camp Rapid today for an activation ceremony prior to his deployment to Afghanistan for 90 days in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lauer, a Sturgis resident, serves as a physician in the 730th Area Support Medical Company of Vermillion.

Coincidentally, he will serve overseas with the unit the 730th is scheduled to replace when they deploy in July. He will deploy as an individual augmentee, serving as a field surgeon with the 684th ASMC of the Ohio Army National Guard.

Individual augmentee refers to an individual being deployed opposed to an entire unit. Their pre-mobilization process is typically condensed to 7-10 days and they fall in with another unit once they arrive in country.

“Physicians deploy for shorter periods, typically 90 days, so they’re not away from their full-time practice and their patients for a year,” said 1st Lt. Billi Bierle, training officer with the 881st Troop Command. “Because of the shorter deployment time, there is higher turnover and a greater need for physicians.”

This need is met at the National Guard Bureau level, where they reach out to physicians serving in the Guard from across the country.

Lauer said he knew about the increased demand for medical providers prior to joining the Guard and once he was commissioned actually called National Guard Bureau himself to volunteer to deploy.

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“I told them about my situation and that I wanted to volunteer to deploy; within a minute on the phone they told me about this opportunity,” Lauer said.

His 30 years of medical experience will not only benefit the Soldiers he treats on a daily basis, but the timing of his deployment will benefit his home unit as well.

“He will be at the same medical facility basically six months before the 730th shows up,” Bierle said. “He will be able to let them know the specifics they’ll be falling in on, the types of injuries and illnesses that he’s seeing the most, and really give them an idea of the areas they can focus on as they prepare for their deployment.”

Lauer said he has also volunteered for a second 90 day deployment with the 730th, which he anticipates would be around this same time period next year.

While most service members are ending their military careers at the age of 60, Lauer, 59, has now been in the National Guard a little more than a year.

“I went on the first Honor Flight out of South Dakota with my father; I was a guardian for him,” Lauer said. “The time I had with him and the other World War II veterans on the Honor Flight inspired me to pursue service in the military.”

He accepted his commission into the SDARNG on Nov. 24, 2010, and was “swore in” by his longtime business partner, colleague, and friend, Maj. Curtis Liedtke, 61, a Sturgis physician who had also decided to serve in the military and joined the National Guard alongside Lauer.

He thanked those in attendance, especially his wife, Lorie, for all of the support he’s received in both joining the National Guard and volunteering for the deployment.

“It seems like kind of a crazy idea at this stage in life to do something like this, but she’s been behind me 100 percent the whole time,” Lauer said of his wife. “I look forward to this opportunity to serve not only my state but my country. This is going to be a good chapter in my life and I look forward to the service and mission ahead.”

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



120105-A-CW157-019: South Dakota Army National Guard’s Maj. David Lauer (left), of Sturgis, receives support and appreciation from family, friends and fellow Guard members at his activation ceremony at Camp Rapid, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012. Lauer, volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan with the 684th Area Support Medical Company, Ohio Army National Guard. Also pictured are Lt. Col. Barry Whitney (center), state maintenance manager and Col. Bill Freidel, 109th Regional Support Group commander. (SDNG photo by Staff Sgt. Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)

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