

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## SD Guard to relocate 6 units throughout the state

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard announced today that they will be relocating six units throughout the state.

Approximately 215 Soldiers from the Miller, Platte, Redfield, Salem, Webster and Winner units will eventually conduct their drill training at other locations. The SDARNG will go from being stationed in 28 communities to 22.

Five of the unit armories are co-located with the school districts and their lease with the SDARNG will be terminated. Exclusive control of the Salem armory will be turned over to the city. The future use of the armories' space will be determined by the respective school districts and community leaders.

The unit relocations are a result of several factors including federal budget cuts, U.S. Army restructuring and the construction of a new Regional Readiness Center in Watertown. The rebalancing being enacted at the national level has caused the SDARNG to trim its current force of approximately 3,300 Soldiers by 258 traditional (part-time) Guard positions and 19 full-time positions by Sept. 30, 2012.

Additionally, many of South Dakota's 29 Army Guard facilities are becoming obsolete. Fourteen armories are more than 40 years old, and 10 are more than 50 years old. Funding available for armory maintenance falls far short of what's needed to adequately maintain the aging facilities.

According to SDARNG leaders, the relocation and consolidation of these units to more centralized locations will save money, maximize resources, provide better training opportunities and develop more cohesive units that will be ready when a crisis or disaster strikes.

“With a mission to train for war-time operations and respond to state emergencies, it is the responsibility of the South Dakota National Guard to ensure that South Dakota's sons and daughters, who have volunteered to serve their state and nation, have the best training and facilities available,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. “By consolidating our units to regional readiness centers, we will be able to maximize our resources and training capabilities.”

The Winner and Platte units are scheduled to relocate by October to Rapid City and Wagner.

The Salem unit is scheduled to relocate by November to Yankton.

The Redfield, Webster and Miller units will relocate to the new Watertown Readiness Center when its construction is completed in 2013.

“It is with genuine sadness that I announce these unit relocations because all six of these communities have supported the National Guard in a truly outstanding manner for decades,” said Reisch. “But in the end, these changes will help the Guard be more fiscally responsible and enhance our training readiness status. The bottom line is that the federal government makes adjustments to funding, and we too must adjust our operations to ensure we can continue to respond to both our state and federal missions in a highly effective manner.”

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**NOTE:** National Guard units affected by the armory closures.

Winner: Detachment 1, 155th Engineer Company (33 Soldiers currently assigned)  
Platte: Detachment 2, 155th Engineer Company (34 Soldiers currently assigned)  
Redfield: Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion (38 Soldiers currently assigned)  
Miller: Detachment 2, Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion (13 Soldiers currently assigned)  
Salem: Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery (42 Soldiers currently assigned)  
Webster: Detachment 2, 147th Forward Support Company (54 Soldiers currently assigned)

**Op-Ed Piece from Maj. Gen. Timothy Reisch – for release April 15, 2012.**

Opinion-Editorial (390 words)

It is with much sadness that I announce the relocation of six units across the state of South Dakota. The Soldiers assigned to armories in Miller, Platte, Redfield, Salem, Webster and Winner will begin drilling in other locations at various times between the fall of this year and the spring of 2013.

These relocations are driven by several factors. Many of our armories are getting old – 14 of them were built back in the 1950s and 60s. The federal government recently announced it would no longer fund the maintenance costs of facilities with less than 55 Soldiers assigned. This impacts more than one third of our 29 armories statewide. The nationwide rebalancing of the force by the U.S. Army is going to reduce our force structure by 258 part-time and 19 full-time positions by Sept. 30. These factors coupled with the construction of the new Watertown Readiness Center, and the desirability for units to drill and train at the company and battery level, have driven us to make these tough choices.

The selection of these six particular communities has absolutely nothing to do with how the units have performed their mission in the past or the level of support received by the local communities. All six of these units have been shining stars for us for generations.

Relocating units isn't something that any adjutant general ever wants to do. This decision has been a particularly difficult one for me. I myself am a product of a small town Guard unit. I enlisted in my hometown Guard unit in Howard back in 1978. The Howard unit relocated 20 years ago. These small communities have served as the bedrock for much of the South Dakota National Guard's accomplishments over the years. If there was a viable way to keep them all here, I would.

The South Dakota National Guard has distinguished itself in remarkable ways – both here at home and overseas on deployments – over the course of the last decade. Our state and nation needs a strong National Guard now, more than any other period in our lifetimes. My commitment to you as the adjutant general is that the South Dakota National Guard will be there whenever we are needed, regardless of where our units are located. I appreciate your support of the men and women of the South Dakota National Guard.

Sincerely,

Maj. Gen. Timothy A. Reisch  
The Adjutant General  
South Dakota National Guard

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