

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guard announces Officer of the Year

The South Dakota National Guard is pleased to announce 1st Lt. Cody Becker, of Brookings, is this year's recipient of the Lieutenant Colonel John J. Steele award, naming him the SDNG's Lieutenant of the Year.

The Lieutenant Colonel John J. Steele award was established in 1968 to annually recognize the most outstanding lieutenant in the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard. Selection is based on exceptional qualities of leadership, values and performance.

Becker, who serves as the executive officer for Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery in Aberdeen, was selected as the most exceptional lieutenant within the battalion and the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

"Becker is an extremely qualified officer that has received many accolades from his battery leadership," said Lt. Col. Bruce Carter, 1-147th battalion commander. "He is well deserving of this prestigious honor."

"I feel very honored and privileged to receive this award," said Becker. "A lot of great officers in the past have received this award, and it is very rewarding to be recognized with them."

Becker has served as Battery A's executive officer since August 2011. With more than 10 years of service in the military, Becker has served seven of those years as an enlisted Soldier in the Fire Direction Command section as a battery display operator. In 2009, he delayed an officer commission to support his battalion during a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. There, he said he served as a sergeant and squad leader to enhance his experience in leadership and character in a combat zone.

"I valued my deployment experience as a NCO," said Becker, who also deployed to Iraq in 2004 with Battery B, 2-147th Field Artillery. "I wanted to see how decisions from leaders affect Soldiers at the lowest level in a combat environment, so I could use that experience as a leader in the future."

In addition to his responsibilities in the National Guard, Becker also serves as a production supervisor for Daktronics in Brookings. Here, he works in the electronic assembly factory on the high-mix flow line.

"I'm very lucky to be employed by Daktronics, especially during my deployments," said Becker. "They have been nothing but supportive of me and my Guard career, as well as many other Guard members they employ. They are a great company."

Becker said his family – wife, Melissa, and sons, Logan, 3, and Trey 2 – have also been a big supporter of him during his career and deployments.

"My wife has been very supportive through my deployments and continues to be to this day," he said.

“I also want to thank all the people, enlisted Soldiers and officers that have mentored me and taught me things in my career,” said Becker.

Becker commented that any one of the candidates for the Steele award were just as worthy to receive it.

“I was surprised when I was selected. Any one of the officers up for the Steele award were just as deserving of the honor,” said Becker. “They are both outstanding individuals.”

Other officers representing major commands for this year’s award competition were 1st Lt. Nicole Franklin, 114th Fighter Wing, and 2nd Lt. Bridget Flannery, 109th Regional Support Group.

-30-

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120417-A-RN486-002: 1st Lt. Cody Becker
(Courtesy photo) (RELEASED)

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