

# South Dakota National Guard

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Guard announces Warrant Officer of the Year**

The South Dakota Army National Guard is pleased to announce Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Schoenfelder, of Mitchell, is this year's recipient of the CW4 Michael F. O'Conner award, naming him the SDARNG's Warrant Officer of the Year.

The CW4 Michael F. O'Conner award was established to recognize the most outstanding warrant officer in the South Dakota Army National Guard. Selection is based on exceptional qualities of technical knowledge, leadership, dedication and initiative.

Schoenfelder, who serves as the commander of the 927th Survey and Design Team of Sioux Falls, was selected as the most exceptional warrant officer within the 153rd Engineer Battalion and 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

"CW4 Schoenfelder is deserving of this award and has executed the duties and responsibilities of his position in an exemplary manner," said Lt. Col. Patrick Parady, battalion commander, 153rd Engineer Battalion.

"CW4 Schoenfelder is the epitome of the Warrant Officer of the Year," said CW5 Darla Crown, state command chief warrant officer. "He is a leader, advisor, mentor, and technical expert. As the commander of the 927th Survey and Design Team preparing to deploy, he knows what it means to 'focus on the people and take care of the troops.' He represents our SDARNG Warrant Officer Corps well."

"It's really humbling and a huge honor to be selected for this award," said Schoenfelder. "I was very surprised when it was announced, especially since we have such high-quality warrant officers in the South Dakota National Guard."

Schoenfelder took command of the 927th in October 2009. As one of the newest units in the SDARNG, the 927th and its 14 members are preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in July. The unit's mission is to prepare, conduct and provide planning studies and tests for identified engineer work projects.

"Preparing a unit to deploy is a lot of work, but I have a great readiness NCO and non-commissioned officers that help," said Schoenfelder. "All the Soldiers in the unit have a tremendous attitude and everyone is there to train, learn and become more proficient in their skills to make this a successful deployment. I'm very fortunate to have the best bunch of Soldiers as a commander."

Schoenfelder is no stranger to mobilizations, he has deployed twice to Iraq. Over the course of his 31 years of service in the Guard, Schoenfelder said his career highlights are his service in Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, becoming warrant officer and being selected for the year's O'Conner award.

In addition to his responsibilities as a unit commander, Schoenfelder also serves as a foreman for Northwestern Energy in Mitchell, where he works in the natural gas department managing construction and maintenance of their distribution systems in nine communities.

“Northwestern has been really supportive of me in the Guard, especially with my deployment coming up,” he said. “I have a great manger and engineer, and they have been receptive to giving me time off to complete training.”

Schoenfelder said his family – wife, Michelle, son, Kyle, 22, and daughter, Haylee, 13 – have also been a big supporter of him during his career and deployments.

“My family has been wonderful through the years, and I can’t do what I do without them,” he said.

Schoenfelder commented that any one of the candidates for the O’Conner award were just as deserving to receive it.

“All the warrant officers I was competing against were outstanding individuals and equally deserving of this award,” said Schoenfelder. “We are very fortunate in the South Dakota Guard to have high-quality warrant officers in our ranks – any of them are deserving of this honor.”

Other warrant officers representing their major commands for this year’s award competition were CW4 Christian Frank, 109th Regional Support Group, CW2 Chad Vickers, Joint Force Headquarters, and CW2 Christian Johnson, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute).

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**120417-A-RN486-002:** Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Schoenfelder  
(Courtesy photo) (RELEASED)

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