

# South Dakota National Guard

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Future Guard leaders learn from the past**

By Sgt. Andrew Turner  
196th Regiment (RTI) Public Affairs

FORT MEADE, S.D. – Soldiers traveled from Fort Meade to the Little Bighorn Battlefield near Garryowen, Mont., July 4, to study the successes and failures of both sides of the battle known as “Custer’s Last Stand.”

An analysis of the historic battle is one of the major events required for students to graduate from the 58-day commissioning program and become 2nd lieutenants in the Army National Guard.

The Little Bighorn Battlefield is the location where the more than 260 Soldiers and attached personnel of the U.S. Army’s 7th Cavalry, led by Lt. Col. George A. Custer, made their famous “Last Stand” against the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians in 1876.

Numerous studies in recent years have uncovered a great deal of information about the locations where Custer’s men formed skirmish lines at the site, allowing their tactics to be studied.

“Studying military history teaches junior military leaders to think in terms of terrain and tactics,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Wall, an instructor at the 196th. “This leads to rapid and effective decision making.”

Wall said the art of tactics starts with applying a scientific formula specific to the situation. Military leaders then need to be able to think imaginatively and out-think the enemy in terms of time and space.

Studying the Little Bighorn Battlefield provided students with the opportunity to see how decisions made on the battlefield were impacted by terrain.

“I liked the opportunity to go out and check out the battle site that we’ve been studying,” said Officer Candidate Justin Ollerich, of Sioux Falls.

Ollerich said the terrain caught his eye and how the maps they’ve been studying didn’t show the harshness and extremes of the landscape.

The visit taught the candidates many lessons that can be applied to modern-day military operations, Ollerich added.

“You have to make sure your troops are trained and don’t underestimate the enemy,” he said.

Students will now apply what they have learned in the classroom, as well as the battle site in order to present a military information brief to complete their academic requirements.

High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard)  
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**120704-A-FY577-009:** Master Sgt. Michael Herrin, Montana Army National Guard, describes equipment used by U.S. Army 7th Cavalry more than 100 years ago to officer candidates of the Officer Candidate School Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), during a staff ride at the Little Bighorn Battlefield near Garryowen, Mont., July 4, 2012. Students visited the Little Bighorn Battlefield as part of their professional education to become commissioned officers in the Army National Guard. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Andrew Turner)(RELEASED)



**120704-A-FY577-058:** Officer Candidate Patrick Clark, Illinois Army National Guard, points to an area of the Little Bighorn Battlefield after finding it on a map at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument near Garryowen, Mont., July 4, 2012. Students visited the Little Bighorn Battlefield as part of their professional education to become commissioned officers in the Army National Guard. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Andrew Turner)(RELEASED)



**120704-A-FY577-086:** Sgt. 1st Class Grant Serna, South Dakota Army National Guard, describes what happened at the Little Bighorn Battlefield near Garryowen, Mont., July 4, 2012, where Lt. Col. George A. Custer made his "Last Stand" against the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians in 1876. Students visited the Little Bighorn Battlefield as part of their professional education to become commissioned officers in the Army National Guard. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Andrew Turner)(RELEASED)



**120704-A-FY577-134:** Officer Candidate Christopher Brill looks at the uniform displays at the Little Bighorn Battlefield visitor's center near Garryowen, Mont., July 4, 2012. Students visited the Little Bighorn Battlefield as part of their professional education to become commissioned officers in the Army National Guard. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Andrew Turner)(RELEASED)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Please contact 1st Lt. Aaron Gatzke at (605) 737-6460.