

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

235th MP Company prepares for second tour to Afghanistan

FORT CHAFFEE, Ark. - The South Dakota Army National Guard's 235th Military Police Company sent 124 Soldiers to Fort Chaffee, Ark., from Dec. 2 -14 to complete pre-mobilization training for the unit's upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in February.

The 235th, based out of Rapid City with a detachment in Sioux Falls, has a mission to provide security for U.S. military and coalition forces, force protection of installation and facilities and to guard prisoners of war and civilian internees.

This will be the 235th's second tour to Afghanistan since 2007, when the unit performed a similar mission to what they will be responsible for this deployment.

The unit first received a mobilization-alert notification in November 2011, and since April, Soldiers have been preparing and training hard for their upcoming mission. According to the unit's leadership, the training opportunities offered at Fort Chaffee were second to none, allowing the unit to complete their required training to standard.

"Our Soldiers arrived with their game faces on and have completed the tasks set before them with excellence," said Capt. Thadius Schmit, commander, of Rapid City. "This has been a very productive annual training and we look forward to serving our country."

"This has been good-quality training that has improved our overall readiness and confidence as a unit for our upcoming mobilization," said 1st Lt. Scott Dirkes, platoon leader, of Hermosa.

While at Fort Chaffee, Soldiers completed their weapons qualification on the M9 pistol and M4 rifle, land navigation, hand-to-hand combat and battle drills training. The unit had 48 of the 124 Soldiers qualify expert with a 98 percent first-time go on the M9 and 94 percent first-time go on the M4.

"I have been in the National Guard for 16 years and this has been the best annual training I have ever been a part of," said Sgt. Corey Virtue, of Custer. "It was a great opportunity to prepare for the unit's upcoming deployment."

Some unit members were able to showcase some of that training to their employers, as the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, provided an opportunity for 11 employers to attend a Boss Lift, Dec. 11-12. While at Chaffee, employers observed Soldiers conducting counter-IED (improvised explosive device) training, vehicle convoy-lane training and detainee operations.



121207-A-AB123-001: Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, fire their M4 rifles on the weapons range at Fort Chaffee, Ark, Dec. 7, 2012, in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. The unit, based out of Rapid City with a detachment in Sioux Falls, is scheduled to deploy 124 members in February. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)



121208-A-AB123-002: Soldiers of the 235th Military Police Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, negotiate an obstacle course at Fort Chaffee, Ark, Dec. 8, 2012, in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. The unit, based out of Rapid City with a detachment in Sioux Falls, is scheduled to deploy 124 members in February. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)



121212-A-AB123-003: Spc. Ty Larson, of the 235th Military Police Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, shows an employer a hand-to-hand combat technique 235th Soldiers are learning while at Fort Chaffee, Ark, Dec. 12, 2012, in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. The South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, provided an opportunity for employers to attend a Boss Lift to see firsthand the training their employees undergo. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)



121212-A-AB123-004: Staff Sgt. Taylor Sperle and Spc. Darrell Rice, of the 235th Military Police Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, show employers land navigation and map reading techniques during the 235th's pre-mobilization training while at Fort Chaffee, Ark, Dec. 12, 2012. The South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, provided an opportunity for employers to attend a Boss Lift to see firsthand the training their employees undergo. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)



121212-A-AB123-005: Employers pose in front of a South Dakota Army National Guard C-23 aircraft used to transport them to observe 235th Military Police Company pre-mobilization training at Fort Chaffee, Ark, Dec. 12, 2012. The South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or ESGR, provided an opportunity for employers to attend a Boss Lift to see firsthand the training their employees undergo in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)(RELEASED)

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