

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SD Guard names new senior enlisted leader

By Staff Sgt. Michael Beck
SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY, S.D. – South Dakota Air National Guard Chief Master Sgt. James Welch, of Sioux Falls, is the state’s first senior enlisted leader for the South Dakota National Guard. Welch is the first noncommissioned officer from either the South Dakota Army or Air National Guard to be named to the new position.

Welch was appointed to the position during a ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Joint Force Headquarters building on Camp Rapid. Welch will serve as an advisor to the state’s adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, on all enlisted matters concerning the Guard’s 4,300 Soldiers and Airmen, including health, morale, welfare and readiness.

“My duties and responsibilities are to provide leadership for the total enlisted force of the South Dakota National Guard, both Army and Air,” said Welch. “Whether this position is held by an Air or Army National Guardsmen should not matter. It comes down to taking care of our Soldiers and Airmen, doing the right things and leading by example.”

Prior to the position of senior enlisted leader, Welch served as the noncommissioned-officer-in-charge of operations for the 114th Civil Engineer Squadron, the 114th Fighter Wing command chief and state command chief for the South Dakota Air National Guard.

“Chief Master Sgt. Welch has a long record of exemplary service, which includes time in the regular Air Force, the South Dakota Army National Guard and the South Dakota Air National Guard,” said Maj. Gen. Reisch. “He is exceptionally well prepared to perform the duties and responsibilities of this position and I look forward to working with him in this new capacity.”

Welch said one of his priorities is to ensure the best for the Soldiers and Airmen working in the SDNG.

“With the cost cutting measures taking place, it’s high on my list to make sure that our Soldiers and Airmen do not lose the level of readiness and training they presently have,” said Welch. “They need to be mission capable and support the war fight, as well as support South Dakota,”

Welch enlisted in the Air Force in 1975 as a cable splicing specialist and was stationed at Griffis Air Force Base, N.Y. He obtained the rank of buck sergeant (E-4) and was honorably discharged in 1979. In 1981, he enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guard as a 12B (engineer) and obtained the rank of sergeant (E-5).

In October 1982, Welch transferred to the South Dakota Air National Guard as a refrigeration and air-conditioning technician. By January 2000, he rose to the position of noncommissioned officer-in-charge of operations in the 114th Civil Engineer Squadron, and later assumed the 114th Fighter Wing command chief position in October 2006. He served as the state command chief for the SDANG since March 2010.

Welch is married to Mary, of Sioux Falls. They have two children, Nicholas, of Sioux Falls, and Amy, 27, of Denver.

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130203-Z-AB123-005: The South Dakota National Guard's new senior enlisted leader, Chief Master Sgt. James Welch, speaks during a ceremony Feb. 2, 2013, at the Joint Force Headquarters building on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. Welch is appointed as the state's first senior enlisted leader for the South Dakota National Guard. Welch is also the first noncommissioned officer from either the South Dakota Air or Army National Guard to be named to the new position. He serves as an advisor to the state's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, on all enlisted matters concerning the Guard's 4,300 Soldiers and Airmen. (SDNG photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee) (RELEASED)



130203-Z-AB123-006: South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, left, presents an appointment certificate to new senior enlisted leader, Chief Master Sgt. James Welch, during a ceremony Feb. 2, 2013, at the Joint Force Headquarters building on Camp Rapid, Rapid City, S.D. Welch is appointed as the state's first senior enlisted leader for the South Dakota National Guard. Welch is also the first noncommissioned officer from either the South Dakota Air or Army National Guard to be named to the new position. He serves as an advisor Maj. Gen. Reisch on all enlisted matters concerning the Guard's 4,300 Soldiers and Airmen. (SDNG photo by Staff Sgt. Heather Trobee) (RELEASED)



CMS Welch Command Photo: Chief Master Sgt. James Welch. (SDNG file photo) (RELEASED)

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