



# *South Dakota Legislative Research Council*

## *Issue Memorandum 94-14*

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### **RESTRUCTURING OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD**

The South Dakota National Guard spans this state's history, with the Guard's first combat involvement after statehood coming in the Philippine Insurrection in 1899 as the 1st South Dakota Infantry Regiment. The South Dakota Guard performed combat duty on the Mexican Border in 1916-17, in France during World War I, in both Europe and the Pacific during World War II, in Panama in 1989, and in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Units of the South Dakota Guard were activated federally during the Korean War and during the 1961 Berlin Crisis and performed major relief operations during the disastrous 1972 Rapid City flood. Since the 1960s, the South Dakota National Guard has included an Air Guard fighter unit and Army Guard units in the following major functional areas: artillery, engineers, medical, and transportation, as well as headquarters and administrative units.

The South Dakota National Guard, which includes approximately 1,000 Air National Guard members and 3,600 Army National Guard members, has undergone major restructuring during recent years resulting mainly from two national developments: reduction in the size of the U.S. armed forces and the reserve component (which includes the Guard) with the end of the Cold War, and changes based on experience in the Persian Gulf War. South Dakota's Guard, like its counterparts in other states, has been significantly affected by these events.

#### ***Background***

Before the current reorganization, the National Guard was engaged in nationwide efforts to upgrade its effectiveness and to address earlier problems, some of which were not necessarily of the Guard's making.

First, the legacy of the Vietnam War has been a persistent problem for the Guard. Because the Johnson and Nixon administrations chose not to use Guard and Reserve units in Vietnam in anything more than token numbers, service in the reserve component became known as a way to avoid duty in Vietnam; and morale, pride, reputation, and effectiveness of many Guard and Reserve units around the nation suffered accordingly. It is important to note that the Guard's participation in the Persian Gulf did much to erase the Vietnam stigma, and that the overwhelming majority of today's Guard members are too young for Vietnam, while many of the Guard's senior officers and noncommissioned officers are themselves Vietnam veterans. The fact remains, however, that Vietnam had a damaging impact on the Guard for many years.

Second, the reserve component in the 1980s needed to upgrade its effectiveness in order to implement the Defense Department's "Total Force Policy," which sought to enable the U.S. to fight a numerically superior Soviet army in Europe by making the reserve component an integral part of U.S. forces that

would be ready for combat at an early stage. The Total Force Policy leaves extremely large percentages of American combat and support units in the reserve component, making it impossible for the U.S. to again enter a large-scale war without significant mobilization of Guard and Reserve units.

Responding to these problems, reserve component units in fact made substantial improvements during the 1980s. The sufficiency of these improvements and the state of readiness of the reserve component remain hotly debated questions in the defense establishment, but the improvements were real, nonetheless.

In the South Dakota Guard, these efforts have included the following: more training with Regular Army units, longer annual training sessions, more overseas training deployments, specialized combat training for some units at the Army's National Training Center in California and Joint Readiness Training Center in Arkansas, more winter training, longer periods in the field during annual training without the traditional middle weekend off, banning or restricting alcohol in the field, completion of formal and more stringent NCO school coursework as a prerequisite for promotion, doing away with "on-the-job training" and requiring completion of formal school training to hold any military job slot, stricter adherence to physical fitness and weight requirements at all levels, and more emphasis on professionalism and attention to Regular Army training standards.

Even though some members of the public may be unaware of these efforts and judge the Guard by earlier stereotypes, it is a fact that the South Dakota Guard has made significant strides during the last ten to

fifteen years. It is likely that the South Dakota units sent to the Persian Gulf were better prepared to deal with the combat environment because of those efforts.

### *State Mission Versus Federal Mission*

Another complicating factor that affects the Guard's organizational structure is the inherent conflict between the Guard's state and federal missions. In peacetime the Guard is under the Governor's control, and in addition to preparing itself for combat, the Guard is expected to be available for state tasks, such as flood and disaster relief, construction of public facilities, riot and crowd control, and even drug interdiction. South Dakota Guard units over the years have responded to numerous local emergencies such as floods, fires, blizzards, tornadoes, and hazardous materials spills.

However, increased pressures on the Guard to be combat-ready on short notice place time and resources for combat training at a premium and make it more difficult for the Guard to perform its state role. For example, South Dakota's 153d Engineer Battalion, as part of an Army-wide revamping of combat engineer units based on Persian Gulf experience, was recently changed from a "wheeled" to a "mechanized" engineer unit. This means essentially that the 153d's five-ton trucks have been replaced by armored personnel carriers (tracked vehicles that resemble tanks). As a mechanized unit, the 153d's combat effectiveness and ability to survive in war will improve substantially, but its ability to carry out civilian relief or construction tasks with its own equipment is severely curtailed. (Tracked vehicles damage roads and cannot be operated in most areas in peacetime.)

To carry this example further, lack of public

understanding of military roles sometimes leads to political pressure to use Guard units for state purposes, which may detract from combat training. Such pressure is often felt by certain engineer units, based on the assumption that engineers are trained for construction tasks. Although South Dakota has construction engineer units, such as the 842d Engineer Company, a heavy equipment unit in the Black Hills area, the 153d Engineers is a combat engineer unit, not a construction unit. The 153d is trained to emplace mines, use explosives to breach lanes through minefields and wire obstacles to allow infantry troops to pass through, destroy bridges and roads, conduct road and river reconnaissance, and perform other combat-related tasks. These tasks directly support the infantry, involve serious, front-line risk during actual combat, and often require a high degree of maneuvering and coordination under fire, similar in many respects to small-unit infantry tactics. Proficiency in these tasks requires much drill and involves more than simply knowing how to use and maintain the unit's equipment.

Construction activities by the 153d are appropriate in some situations, but the 153d is not specifically trained for construction and often needs specialists and equipment from other units to accomplish construction projects. However, because of the engineer designation, units like the 153d are often asked to use training time and resources to carry out construction duties, even though combat training is vital to their wartime survival.

Unfortunately, the prospect of South Dakota Guard units being involved in combat is not as remote as it once seemed. South Dakota units participated in combat operations twice in the last five years: the Air Guard in

Panama in 1989 and various Army Guard units in the Persian Gulf during 1990-91. In the current climate, it is problematic to emphasize state projects at the expense of combat proficiency.

### ***Contingency Force Pool***

The new Contingency Force Pool (CFP) concept is another federal initiative that will improve Guard combat capabilities but could make state missions more difficult because of the increased demands for combat training. CFP units will receive more modern equipment, more intensive and lengthier training, and increased supervision from Regular Army observers. In return, these units will maintain a higher state of readiness and must be able to deploy to the combat theater in less than forty-five days after federal activation. In the event of war, they will be among the first to go. The following South Dakota Army Guard units have been designated as CFP units: the entire 153d Engineer Battalion, the entire second battalion of the 147th Field Artillery, the 129th Public Affairs Detachment, 152d Quartermaster Company, 777th Transportation Detachment, 109th Engineer Group headquarters, 211th Engineer Company, 109th Engineer Battalion headquarters, 200th Engineer Company, 842d Engineer Company, 740th Transportation Company, 1742d Transportation Company, 57th Transportation Detachment, and 747th Transportation Detachment. (See Table 1 for unit locations.)

### ***South Dakota National Guard Reorganization -- 1993-94***

It is against this background of striving for improvement during the 1980s and '90s and continued stress on federal combat mission requirements that the current restructuring

must be considered.

One of the units most strongly affected is the 153d Engineer Battalion. When the 153d was changed from a wheeled (truck) to a mechanized (tracked) unit, as discussed above, it was also reduced from four line companies to three. These changes were part of a nationwide change in Army combat engineer units based on Gulf War experience. Wheeled engineer units simply could not keep up with tracked mechanized infantry and armored units in the desert. The change to tracks and the elimination of one company makes combat engineer units faster, more maneuverable, and better prepared for their combat (rather than construction) role of direct support for infantry troops.

When this change in policy for combat engineer units reached South Dakota, it had the effect of reducing the size of the South Dakota Guard by reducing the 153d from approximately 750 to 500 members. However, this reduction was not directly related to the regular cutbacks in units and personnel, although the South Dakota Guard is experiencing these types of reductions as well. Had the 153d Engineers remained as a wheeled unit, it would probably have been deactivated in the next round of federal cutbacks as an obsolete unit.

The reorganization of the 153d Engineers, deactivation of other units, and other reductions in strength made it necessary for South Dakota Guard officials to analyze the proper locations for the remaining units and provided an opportune time to relocate units based on geographic proximity of parent units, local population and recruiting potentials, transportation resources, and armory and training facilities. Changes

made based on these criteria are aimed at enhancing the Guard's federal combat role by making unit training and mobilization more manageable, while absorbing federally-mandated reductions.

### ***Reorganization Issues***

One drawback to reorganization is that it involves dislocation for existing units, even units not directly involved in federal reductions or restructuring. The 1993-1994 restructuring actually closes three armories (Springfield, Woonsocket, and Hot Springs), leaving no Guard units in those towns, which has tangible economic and social impacts on those communities. Since 1990, however, twelve armories have been closed in South Dakota, including those in Lead, Wessington Springs, Howard, Tripp, Philip, Canton, Clark, Britton, and Clear Lake. The decision to close an armory is difficult and usually comes with hard feelings and political ramifications.

In addition to armory closings, numerous other units were deactivated or consolidated and replaced by units transferring from other locations. Ultimately, the transfers involved a large number of South Dakota Army Guard units, with a shift in one location necessitating shifts in other locations. Part of the rationale in locating units was to keep parent units close to their detachments, which simplifies training and mobilization tasks, and ends situations in which platoons from single companies were spread across the state and only saw each other during annual training camp. During the late 1980s, for example, C Company of the 153d Engineers had platoons located in Parkston, Tripp, and Philip.

Changing unit locations, however, causes disruption for individual Guard members.

Those who move with their units must drive long distances to monthly drills, while those who transfer to new units moving into their communities in many cases must change their military job duties, which requires formal military schooling, rather than on-the-job training with the local unit. Also, many Guard members who change their military jobs will lose their previous job slots, which can mean reduction in rank and pay. Personnel turnover will eventually solve most of these problems, but the short-term disruption can be difficult on all sides, as individual members and communities adjust to the new situation and Guard units struggle to maintain required unit strengths and proficiency levels during the transition period.

Whether these decisions were correct or whether other alternatives were available is beyond the scope of this paper. Some decisions were forced by federal reductions and innovations; other decisions were at the discretion of state officials. It is fair to say, however, that most of the 1993-94 reorganization was at least set in motion by action at the federal level.

### ***South Dakota Air National Guard***

The South Dakota Air National Guard, located entirely in Sioux Falls and consisting of approximately 1,000 members, has not been significantly affected by force reductions and reorganization. The Air Guard units include a combat fighter group and squadrons and their supporting units. The Air Guard has modern jet fighter aircraft and participated in combat operations in Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989-1990. The Air Guard by coincidence was in Panama for annual training when hostilities broke out, and the training exercises turned into combat operations.

The Air Guard, because it essentially has a more cohesive, single-mission focus and one physical location, is able to avoid many of the administrative and training problems faced by the Army Guard, with its variety of units and locations.

### ***Artillery Units***

South Dakota's Army National Guard artillery units are located in eastern South Dakota and include a field artillery brigade headquarters and two field artillery battalions of three firing batteries each. One battalion has 155mm howitzers and the other has eight-inch howitzers. The main impact of reorganization on the artillery has been the relocation of the brigade headquarters from Pierre to Sioux Falls. That unit was originally scheduled for federal deactivation, but state officials were able to retain the unit. Other changes since 1990 have included shifting an artillery battery from Watertown to Aberdeen, closing armories in Canton, Britton, and Clark and consolidating those units with units in larger towns. Vermillion's 730th Medical Company, which served in the Persian Gulf, has been attached to the artillery brigade. Table 1 has a more complete listing of unit changes.

The artillery is one of the Army's combat branches, and the artillery's combat role is well-recognized by the public, although South Dakota's artillery units possess some vehicles and equipment that lend themselves to civilian relief functions.

### ***Transportation Units***

South Dakota's Army Guard transportation units are located mainly in the eastern part of the state under the 139th Transportation Battalion in Brookings and have not been significantly affected by recent

reorganizations, with the exception of the 1742nd Transportation Company, in which the Clear Lake armory was closed and the Watertown unit was transferred to Sioux Falls. Also, a detachment of the 740th Transportation Company was transferred from Aberdeen to Brookings. The 1742nd and 740th Transportation Companies and the 57th and 747th Transportation Detachments are veterans of the Persian Gulf War.

Reserve component transportation units are especially useful to the Regular Army because they are versatile and are probably easier to train for wartime duty than combat maneuver units such as infantry or armored units. Even though transportation units do not serve front-line combat duty, they can be expected to be mobilized and deployed to the combat zone early in time of war, as was the case in Operation Desert Storm. Transportation unit vehicles can also be very useful in civilian relief operations.

### ***Engineer Units***

Engineers, like the artillery, are an Army combat branch, although there is public confusion over the role of military engineers. The combat role of South Dakota's 153d Engineer Battalion has been discussed earlier, along with recent changes in the 153d, primarily the switch to tracked vehicles and the loss of one company (located in Springfield and Sioux Falls). The 153d has undergone major reorganization in unit location, and since 1990 has seen armories closed in Howard, Wessington Springs, Springfield, Woonsocket, Tripp, and Philip.

Bridge companies are another common combat engineer unit. They typically possess one of the Army's various tactical bridges, which can be quickly assembled and

disassembled. Depending on the situation, bridge companies may or may not find themselves close to front-line areas. South Dakota has three bridge units, the 211th of Rapid City and Custer, the 854th of Mobridge and Lemmon, and the 200th of Pierre and Chamberlain. The 214th Engineer Company of Hot Springs and Custer, which had a World War II vintage Bailey bridge, was deactivated during the 1993-94 reorganization, and the Hot Springs armory was closed.

South Dakota also has construction engineer units, primarily the 842d Engineer Company located in the Black Hills. The 842d specializes in "horizontal construction" and has heavy equipment similar to that used for civilian road or airfield construction. Rapid City's 155th Engineer Detachment consists of construction specialists such as carpenters, electricians, and plumbers. Construction engineer units are useful in civilian relief operations and can sometimes work with other units who supply additional manpower.

The bridge and construction units are located administratively within the 109th Engineer Group and 109th Engineer Battalion but are not "organic" to those two headquarters units and would not necessarily be activated with them in case of war, unlike the 153d Engineers, which would only be activated as a complete unit. The 109th Engineer Group was activated separately and served in the Persian Gulf as a headquarters element for units from other parts of the country. The 137th Engineer Battalion headquarters was deactivated in 1993 and its subordinate units transferred to other units in the state. Table 1 summarizes reorganization of South Dakota's engineer units.

### ***Other Units***

South Dakota has several other units associated with state National Guard headquarters (STARC) and located mainly in Rapid City. These include headquarters and administrative units, medical units, transportation and supply units, a public affairs unit, a band (located in Mitchell), and three aviation units, one of which is a medical helicopter evacuation unit.

### ***Summary***

The South Dakota National Guard has been involved in long-term efforts to enhance its effectiveness. These efforts result from several factors but are usually related to improving the Guard's ability to perform its

federal combat role. Recent changes have also been driven by federal budget cuts and military force reductions. Since 1990, twelve South Dakota Guard armories have

closed, leaving thirty communities with Guard units and a reduction in the Army Guard from approximately 4,000 to 3,600 members. There have also been major reorganization efforts. Future prospects are uncertain and depend on federal actions, although it is likely that more change in the U.S. military will occur and that South Dakota's Guard will be impacted.

Table 1 -- S.D. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD UNIT MISSIONS, STRENGTH, AND LOCATIONS - 1990, 1994

UNIT	MISSION	STRENGTH-1994 **	LOCATION-1994	LOCATION-1990
<u>Headquarters/Administrative/Miscellaneous</u>				
STARC/TROOP CMD	State Headquarters	305	Rapid City/Ft. Meade	Rapid City/Ft. Meade
HQ/175th Med	Medical	5	Rapid City	Rapid City
HQ/2/137th Avn	Fixed Wing Aircraft	21	Rapid City	-----
A/2/147th Avn	Scout Helicopters	11	Rapid City	-----
129th PAD	Public Affairs	13	Rapid City	Rapid City
1085th Med	Medical Helicopter Evac	82	Rapid City	Rapid City
147th Army Band	Band	41	Mitchell	Mitchell
152d QM Co	Supply	140	Rapid City	-----
235th Gen Sup Co	Supply	--	(Redesignated as 152d QM)	Rapid City
777th Transp Co	Highway Regulatory Team	7	Rapid City	-----
1087th Med	Medical Dispensary	10	Rapid City	Rapid City
<u>Engineers</u>				
109th Engr Gp (HQ)	Engineer Group Headquarters	77	Rapid City	Rapid City
211th Engr Co	Medium Girder Bridge	107	Rapid City/Custer	Mobridge/Lemmon (109th Bn)
155th Engr Det	Construction Utilities	56	Rapid City	Rapid City (109th Bn)
109th Engr Bn (HQ)	Engineer Battalion Headqtrs	36	Sturgis	Sturgis
200th Engr Co	Ribbon Bridge	175	Chamberlain/Pierre	Chamberlain/Platte (137th Bn)
854th Engr Co	Medium Girder Bridge	92	Mobridge/Lemmon	Wagner (137th Bn)
214th Engr Co	Bailey Bridge	--	(Deactivated)	Custer/Hot Springs*
842d Engr Co	Construction Engineers	211	Spearfish/Belle Fourche/ Sturgis	Lead*/Spearfish/Sturgis/ Belle Fourche
137th Engr Bn (HQ)	Engineer Battalion Headqtrs	--	(Deactivated)	Wagner
200th Engr Co	Ribbon Bridge	--	(to 109th Battalion)	Chamberlain/Platte
730th Med Co	Medical Clearing Hospital	--	(to 147th Brigade)	Vermillion/Winner
854th Engr Co	Medium Girder Bridge	--	(to 109th Battalion)	Wagner
153d Engr Bn (HQ)	Combat Engineer Headquarters	133	Huron	Huron/DeSmet
A Co	Combat Engineers	126	Wagner/Winner	Brookings/Woonsckt*/WessSprings*
B Co	Combat Engineers	126	Madison/DeSmet	Madison/Pierre/Howard*
C Co	Combat Engineers	126	Parkston/Platte	Parkston/Tripp*/Philip*
D Co	Combat Engineers	--	(Deactivated)	Springfield*/Sioux Falls
<u>Artillery</u>				
147th FA Brigade (HQ)	Artillery Brigade Headqtrs	118	Sioux Falls	Pierre
730th Med Co	Medical Clearing Hospital	127	Vermillion	Vermillion/Winner (137th Bn)
1st Bn/147th FA (HQ)	Artillery Battalion Headqtrs	107	Sioux Falls	Sioux Falls
A Battery	Field Artillery	95	Mitchell	Mitchell
B Battery	Field Artillery	95	Salem/Sioux Falls	Salem/Sioux Falls
C Battery	Field Artillery	95	Yankton	Yankton
Svc Battery	Field Artillery	70	Sioux Falls	Canton*/Sioux Falls
2d Bn/147th FA (HQ)	Artillery Battalion Headqtrs	110	Watertown	Webster/Clark*
A Battery	Field Artillery	85	Sisseton	Sisseton/Britton*
B Battery	Field Artillery	85	Aberdeen	Watertown
C Battery	Field Artillery	85	Redfield/Miller	Redfield/Miller
Svc Battery	Field Artillery	61	Webster	Aberdeen
<u>Transportation</u>				
139th Transp Bn (HQ)	Trans Battalion Headqtrs	50	Brookings	Brookings
740th Transp Co	Semi-Trucks	181	Milbank/Brookings	Milbank/Aberdeen
1742d Transp Co	Semi-Trucks	181	Sioux Falls/Flandreau	Watertown/Flandreau/Clear Lake*
57th Transp Det	Movement Control Team	7	Brookings	Brookings
665th Maint Co	Vehicle Maintenance	112	Mitchell	Mitchell
747th Transp Det	Highway Regulatory Team	4	Brookings	Rapid City
State Total		3568		

\*Indicates towns in which armories were closed, leaving the town with no Guard unit.

\*\*Approximate mission strength, June 30, 1994; indicates the authorized unit strength, not necessarily actual strength.

Note: Unit abbreviations are altered slightly for clarity and do not distinguish between parent units and detachments.

Source: South Dakota National Guard.

Table 2. S.D. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD UNITS BY CITY -- 1990,1994

<u>City</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1990</u>
Aberdeen	B/2/147th FA	Svc/2/147th FA 740th Transp Co
Belle Fourche	842d Engr Co	842d Engr Co
Britton	*****	A/2/147th FA
Brookings	HQ/139th Transp Bn 57th Transp Det 747th Transp Det 740th Transp Co	HQ/139th Transp Bn 57th Transp Det A/153d Engr Bn
Canton	*****	Svc/1/147th FA
Chamberlain	200th Engr Co	200th Engr Co
Clark	*****	HQ/2/147th FA
Clear Lake	*****	1742d Transp Co
Custer	211th Engr Co	214th Engr Co
DeSmet	B/153d Engr Bn	HQ/153d Engr Bn
Flandreau	1742d Transp Co	1742d Transp Co
Ft. Meade	STARC	STARC
Hot Springs	*****	214th Engr Co
Howard	*****	B/153d Engr Bn
Huron	HQ/153d Engr Bn	HQ/153d Engr Bn
Lead	*****	842d Engr Co
Lemmon	854th Engr Co	211th Engr Co
Madison	B/153d Engr Bn	B/153d Engr Bn
Milbank	740th Transp Co	740th Transp Co
Miller	C/2/147th FA	C/2/147th FA
Mitchell	147th Army Band A/1/147th FA 665th Maint Co	147th Army Band A/1/147th FA 665th Maint Co
Mobridge	854th Engr Co	211th Engr Co
Parkston	C/153d Engr Bn	C/153d Engr Bn
Philip	*****	C/153d Engr Bn
Pierre	200th Engr Co	HQ/147th FA Bgde B/153d Engr



Rapid City	STARC/Troop Cmd HQ/175th Med HQ/2/137th Avn 129th PAD 1085th Med 1087th Med 109th Engr Gp 155th Engr Det 152d QM Co 777th Transp Co 211th Engr Co A/2/147th Avn	STARC/Troop Cmd HQ/175th Med HQ/2/137th Avn 129th PAD 1085th Med 1087th Med 109th Engr Gp 155th Engr Det 235th Gen Sup Co 747th Transp Co
Redfield	C/2/147th FA	C/2/147th FA
Salem	B/1/147th FA	B/1/147th FA
Sioux Falls	HQ/147th FA Bgde HQ/1/147th FA B/1/147th FA Svc/1/147th FA 1742d Transp Co	D/153d Engr Bn HQ/1/147th FA B/1/147th FA Svc/1/147th FA
Sisseton	A/2/147th FA	A/2/147th FA
Spearfish	842d Engr Co	842d Engr Co
Springfield	*****	D/153d Engr Bn
Sturgis	HQ/109th Engr Bn 842d Engr Co	HQ/109th Engr Bn 842d Engr Co
Tripp	*****	C/153d Engr Bn
Vermillion	730th Med Co	730th Med Co
Wagner	A/153d Engr Bn	HQ/137th Engr Bn 854th Engr Bn
Watertown	HQ/2/147th FA	B/2/147th FA 1742d Transp Co
Webster	Svc/2/147th FA	HQ/2/147th FA
Wessington Springs	*****	A/153d Engr Bn
Winner	A/153d Engr Bn	730th Med Co
Woonsocket	*****	A/153d Engr Bn
Yankton	C/1/147th FA	C/1/147th FA

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Note: Unit designations have been abbreviated and no distinction is made between detachments and parent units.

Source: SD National Guard.

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**This issue memorandum was written by Tom Magedanz, Principal Research Analyst for the Legislative Research Council. It is designed to supply background information on the subject and is not a policy statement made by the Legislative Research Council.**

