

**South Dakota National Guard
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Soldiers honor the fallen

By Spc. Britney Bodner, 103rd Public Affairs Detachment

FORT MEADE, S.D. – Soldiers attending Officer Candidate School at Fort Meade participated in a ceremony honoring South Dakota’s fallen service members Sunday, June 8.

“This ceremony is held once a year to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom,” said Capt. Florante Manaloto, a public affairs officer at Fort Meade.

It has also become part of the school’s training schedule. Officer candidates volunteer for the honor of placing bricks – small memorials bearing the individuals’ names, service branches and dates of loss – along a pathway known as the Memorial Walk.

“Being officer candidates – future officers – it (the ceremony) brings it all into perspective as far as holding Soldiers’ lives in your hands,” said Candidate Randy Dunning of Oklahoma.

“It really makes me understand the gravity of the situation that I’m trying to achieve here,” said Candidate Eric Tobin of South Dakota. “I’m trying to be the leader of these troops; I’m possibly making decisions that can put other Soldiers’ lives on bricks.”

Though the candidates had different reactions to attending the ceremony, they agreed on one thing: They were proud to pay homage to their fallen comrades.

“I felt honored, and awed at the same time,” said Candidate Dennis Nall of Texas. “I think most of us have participated in these ceremonies before, but it always seems to make the hair stand on the back of your neck. It’s a serious thing to be involved in.”

The 17 members honored this year were: Chief Warrant Officer Hans N. Gukeisen, Pfc. Michael R. Deuel, Chief Warrant Officer Scott A. Saboe, Pfc. Sheldon Hawk Eagle, Capt. Christopher F. Soelzer, Lance Cpl. Joseph T. Welke, Pfc. Gunner D. Becker, Staff Sgt. Jason Montefering, Spc. Daniel D. Bartels, Cpl. Brett L. Lundstrom, Sgt. Jeremiah Boehmer, Spc. Patrick William

Herried, Staff Sgt. Rob Lura Rolfing, Staff Sgt. Zacher Blaise Tomczak, Cpl. Tanner James O'Leary, and Mr. Roland C. Barvels.

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High resolution photos will be available at the following Web site:

LINK: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/sites/GC2008/default.aspx>

Photo Cut Lines:

080608-A-4806Y-007.JPG: Officer Candidate George Strable participates in a ceremony Sunday, June 8, at Fort Meade, S.D., honoring South Dakota service members who made the ultimate sacrifice during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Daniel Yarnall)

080608-A-4806Y-092.JPG: Officer Candidate Chance Shaffner carries a memorial brick to be dedicated during a ceremony Sunday, June 8, at Fort Meade, S.D., honoring South Dakota service members who made the ultimate sacrifice during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Daniel Yarnall)

080608-A-4806Y-100.JPG: Officer Candidates Brett Campbell and Randy Dunning render a salute to their fallen comrades during a ceremony Sunday, June 8, at Fort Meade, S.D., honoring South Dakota service members who made the ultimate sacrifice during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Daniel Yarnall)

080608-A-3871S-096.JPG: Officer Candidate Eric Tobin carries a memorial brick to be dedicated during a ceremony Sunday, June 8, at Fort Meade, S.D., honoring South Dakota service members who made the ultimate sacrifice during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Lance Schroeder)

Location of South Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Office:

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MEDIA WISHING TO EMBED are asked to RSVP with Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753 or via E-mail at orson.ward@us.army.mil.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION about the South Dakota National Guard, please visit our Web site at <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/default.aspx>

NOTE: The South Dakota National Guard will host the annual Golden Coyote exercise from June 7 – 21 in the southern Black Hills. More than 4,000 service members from 92 units

representing 27 states and four foreign nations are participating in the exercise. The Golden Coyote exercise has been conducted for the past 24 years. The exercise provides relevant training opportunities in support of the war on terror and homeland defense.

Residents should be aware of an increase in military traffic throughout the Black Hills and an increase in the level of noise due to military operations. Aviation activity will be operating out of Camp Rapid and the Army Aviation Support Facility next to the Rapid City Regional Airport.

Aircraft will be primarily training on equipment and personnel transport missions as well as medical evacuation. Aircraft will respond to real-world emergencies during the exercise and remain in an all-hours-ready status during the exercise.

Spectators to military training are welcome, however caution is warranted and spectators are asked to remain at a safe distance from all moving military vehicles and aircraft to prevent injury to personnel or damage to property.