

**South Dakota National Guard
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Guardsmen bring boats, bridges, brotherhood to Missouri River banks

By Pfc. Phil Regina, 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CHAMBERLAIN, S.D. – Mobile transport rafts ferried over 150 Army National Guardsmen for the mile-long trip over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, in Chamberlain.

Soldiers of the 1140th Engineer Battalion and the 1438th Engineer Multi-Role Bridge Company of the Missouri Army National Guard and the 200th Engineer Company of the South Dakota Army National Guard took part in the river-crossing exercise.

The exercise consisted of the movement of over 20 military vehicles and over 150 National Guardsmen across the Missouri River by means of floating rafts.

“Our mission today was to move units moving from the east side of the state to the west,” said Capt. Nathan Jolley, company commander of the 200th. “We provide assistance through our rafts, which shuttle the vehicles from the east bank of the Missouri to the west.”

The float bridges are huge, steel ramps (known as bays) that, when pieced together, can be crossed by whole divisions at a rate of 200 tanks, armored fighting vehicles and humvees every hour. The bays, weighing 1,200 pounds apiece, float on water, are locked together, and maneuvered by power boats. A completed bridge can support the weight of an M1 Abrams tank.

Capt. Kelly Messerli, assistant operations officer of the 1140th, said the mission serves as a simulation for situations that may arise on battlefields or in emergency relief situations.

“This exercise assumes that the actual bridge being used has been destroyed, and it is our mission to provide transportation across the river,” said Messerli.

Messerli was quick to point out the benefits of Guardsmen from different places working together for this exercise.

“This is a combined-arms exercise, and it’s a great opportunity for all units involved. It allows Guardsmen from various units to train together, work together, and when the time comes, be ready to hit the battlefield together,” added Messerli.

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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:

080607-A-8311R-108.JPG: Staff Sgt. Shane Olivier of the 200th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, serves as a guide for the transport raft during a river-crossing exercise over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, at Chamberlain, S.D., as part of the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army Reserve photo by Pfc. Phil Regina)

080607-A-8311R-104.JPG: Spc. Garrett Gellner of the 1438th Engineer Multi-Role Bridge Company, Missouri Army National Guard, looks intently to the horizon for possible dangers while riding on a transport raft during a river-crossing exercise over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, at Chamberlain, S.D., as part of the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army Reserve photo by Pfc. Phil Regina)

080607-A-8311R-081.JPG: Members of various engineer elements from Missouri and South Dakota Army National Guard units conduct a river-crossing exercise over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, at Chamberlain, S.D., as part of the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army Reserve photo by Pfc. Phil Regina)

080607-A-8311R-117.JPG: Spc. Lathan Moore of the 1438th Engineer Multi-Role Bridge Company, Missouri Army National Guard, pulls a lever that lowers the hydraulic ramp for the transport raft during a river-crossing exercise over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, at Chamberlain, S.D. (Army Reserve photo by Pfc. Phil Regina)

080607-A-5202T-056.JPG: Members of various engineer elements from Missouri and South Dakota Army National Guard units transport military vehicles over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, at Chamberlain, S.D., as part of the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

080607-A-5202T-110.JPG: Members of various engineer elements from Missouri and South Dakota Army National Guard units transport military vehicles over the Missouri River Saturday, June 7, at Chamberlain, S.D., as part of the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. (National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

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.