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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

‘Rocking’ the Hills: Engineers perform demolition projects for Golden Coyote

By Spc. Britney Bodner, 103rd Public Affairs Detachment

HILL CITY, S.D. – Army National Guard engineers ‘rocked the hills’ as they performed a demolition exercise Thursday, June 12, at Slate Creek Dam near Hill City, S.D., as part of this year’s Golden Coyote training exercise.

Members of the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), from DeSmet and Madison, S.D., practiced their skills in detonating Composition-4 explosives, and at the same time, assisted the U.S. Forest Service with its project to remove potentially hazardous rock formations from an area frequented by hikers.

“It’s not a mission we typically get an opportunity to do,” said Capt. Trent Bruce, commander of the 211th. “It allows us to gain more experience in utilizing demolitions, and it gives us the opportunity to perform a real-world mission.”

The demolition project began with an examination of the area and a determination of the most strategic points to set the charges. Once this was accomplished, the charges were connected to the explosives and run back to a central location where they were attached to a time-delayed fuse.

Upon ignition of the fuse, the Soldiers had approximately five minutes to get to a predetermined ‘safe zone’ – which is a distance of at least 700 meters – to protect themselves from the blast.

“Until that fuse is lit, the charges are virtually safe,” said Bruce. “When the Soldiers understand this and are comfortable with the process, they are less likely to make mistakes.”

Real-world projects like this offer the unit invaluable training opportunities. Knowing the proper procedures for setting explosives is instrumental in getting the job done in a safe, confident and efficient manner, Bruce said.

“This is probably one of the best annual training exercises I’ve been to,” said Sgt. Ryan Hanson, a squad leader in the 211th. “We actually get to use our skills in a real-life project.”

-30-

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

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

Photo Cut Lines:

080612-F-1665S-064.JPG: Sgt. 1st Class John Dornbusch, a combat engineer with the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), South Dakota Army National Guard, explains how the fuse for C-4 fits inside an M81 Fuse Igniter Thursday, June 12, at Slate Creek Dam near Hill City, S.D., during the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. The timed M81 Fuse Igniter initiates C-4 components, giving Soldiers approximately five minutes to get from the blast to the safe zone, which is a distance of approximately 700 meters. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua J. Seybert) (RELEASED)

080612-F-1665S-059.JPG: Sgt. 1st Class John Dornbusch, a combat engineer with the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), South Dakota Army National Guard, explains how the fuse for C-4 fits inside an M81 Fuse Igniter Thursday, June 12, at Slate Creek Dam near Hill City, S.D., during the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. The timed M81 Fuse Igniter initiates C-4 components, giving Soldiers approximately five minutes to get from the blast to the safe zone, which is a distance of approximately 700 meters. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua J. Seybert) (RELEASED)

080612-F-1665S-050.JPG: Spc. James Wait and Pfc. Jonas Hendrickson, combat engineers with the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), South Dakota Army National Guard, wire the fuses for C-4 as Lt. Col. Michael Werdel, 153rd Engineer Battalion Commander, supervises Thursday, June 12, at Slate Creek Dam near Hill City, S.D., during the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. This training ensures Soldiers know how to properly wire and detonate C-4. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua J. Seybert) (RELEASED)

080612-F-1665S-004.JPG: Soldiers from the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), South Dakota Army National Guard, wire a component of C-4 Thursday, June 12, at Slate Creek Dam near Hill City, S.D., during the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. The training mission was also used as a community service project to make the area a safer place for civilians to collect slate. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua J. Seybert) (RELEASED)

080612-F-1665S-098.JPG: Spc. James Wait, a combat engineer with the 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), South Dakota Army National Guard, pops an M81 Fuse Igniter to initiate a C-4 fuse Thursday, June 12, at Slate Creek Dam near Hill City, S.D., during the 2008 Golden Coyote training exercise. After ignition, the Soldiers have approximately five minutes to get from the blast to the safe zone, which is a distance of at least 700 meters. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua J. Seybert) (RELEASED)

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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.