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May 16, 2011

For immediate release

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WyMD-11A-15

Wyo. Guard builds bridges across Fontenelle

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FONTENELLE RESEVOIR, Wyo. - On the banks of the Fontenelle Reservoir, Wyo., Combat Support Boats assemble Improved Ribbon Bridges, while hulking machines employ Dry Span Bridges by Wyoming Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1041st Multi-Role Bridge Company, May 12-15.

For years the members of the 1041st MRBC have used the Flaming Gorge Reservoir as a training site until this year. This year the unit gained the opportunity to use the Fontenelle near Kemmerer, Wyo., as a company training site.

The 1041st MRBC is split up into three units spread over the western part of the state. The parent company of the 1041st MRBC is located in Rock Springs, Wyo.; the 1st Detachment, 1041st MRBC is located in Afton, Wyo.; and the 2nd Detachment, 1041st MRBC is located in Evanston, Wyo.

“Originally, when the unit utilized Flaming Gorge as a training site, the unit

located in Afton had to travel approximately 250 miles to get the training area,” said Cpt. Amir M. Pezeshki, commander of the 1041st MRBC. “During a drill weekend traveling 250 miles seemed really unrealistic.”

"Fontenelle Reservoir is somewhat of a middle ground," said Pezeshki.

Fontenelle Reservoir is approximately 80 miles from Rock Springs, 100 miles from Evanston and 140 miles from Afton.

“With the units spending less time traveling, it allows the units to spend more time training as a company, which enables them to use the limited time they have more effectively,” said Sgt. Floyd E. Whiting, a bridge crew member for the 1041st MRBC.

"The unit can come together," said Whiting. "No one is technically at home station. We are all out, we are all in the field, and we are all together."

Another advantage of Fontenelle Reservoir is the company is able to train on the Dry Span Bridge and the Improved Ribbon Bridge simultaneously, according to Pezeshki. In addition to being able to train different aspects of bridging, the company now has a training site for fast water training; therefore it is a multi-training site, he said.

"We are in one training site which allows us to utilize all our training," said Pezeshki.

The Wy ARNG currently has a land use permit for the use of Fontenelle Reservoir that is good through December 2012, said Lt. Col. Guy Beaudoin, facilities maintenance officer for the Wyoming Army National Guard. The Wyoming Military Department has intentions to obtain a long range permit, five to ten years.

"We want to see if the land is compatible for the training necessary for the unit's mission," said Beaudoin. "If the commander says it is a good fit, we will contact the

Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation to obtain a long range permit."

"We really appreciate all the civilian support we get," said Pezeshki. "They have been very supportive, so we would like to pass that thank you back to them for all the support."

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