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SD Department of Veterans Affairs  
Secretary Zimmerman April 2017 Column

“Days of Spring and What They Bring”

As children we always heard our mothers saying “April showers bring May flowers,” while under our breath we were saying “rain, rain, go away, come again some other day.” Now, as an adult and as a veteran, I know that landscapes and weather conditions have played a role in every conflict we have fought. Weather and terrain shaped the experiences of our troops and directly dictated their actions.

The next time you get caught outside in windy conditions, a rain storm, hail storm, dust storm or ice storm, please remember our service members are out in these very elements defending our freedoms every day.

Weather conditions can make it uncomfortable to train and defend. Uniforms and boots are soaking wet, tents and creek beds are flooded, and roads and bridges are washed out. I can still vividly see a vehicle belonging to the 211<sup>th</sup> Sapper Company that was caught in a raging river bed which had been dry days before.

Wet, damp, and miserable conditions give soldiers an extra sense of hardship while observing or defending the enemy, or relocating their unit and equipment.

As you begin to mow your lawn, pick your tulips, and trim your hedges, please remember to keep our troops in your thoughts. They are the prime guardians of our national integrity and security. They are widely respected for their bravery, discipline, and unconditional patriotic values and they have fought adversities and locked horns with intruding enemy forces to ensure freedom, safety and security for all of us.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary  
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