



South Dakota Department of the Military
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



MEYERS RECOGNIZED FOR HER LIFE-SAVING ENDEAVOR

Last week, SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman had the distinct honor to recognize one of our long-time, dedicated volunteers at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home. How fitting it was for the recognition to take place in front of the statue of one of our special heroes—Michael J. Fitzmaurice.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman presented Kathy Meyers with a certificate of appreciation and read a letter from Governor Dugaard commending Meyers for her immediate actions to save the life of one of our veterans at the Home. In a time of crisis she applied her training to save a choking World War II Veteran.

The Governor commended Kathy for her immediate response, her compassion and her commitment to our veterans.

Kathy is the wife of Randall Meyers, Director of Operations at the Home.

“We are blessed to have volunteers like Kathy who dedicate themselves to our heroes,” said Zimmerman. “We have heroes taking care of heroes!”



Inside this issue:

Beadle/Sanborn County Outreach	2
SDDVA Staff Tour	2
Zimmerman Goes to Washington	3
SDNG Army Band	4
MJF Veterans Home	5
Clay County Distributes Buddy Baskets	5
PVA Poker Run	6
Message from Senator Rounds	7
Upcoming Events	8

Everyday Heroes

BEADLE/SANBORN COUNTY OUTREACH

Beadle County VSO Michael Lueck will be hosting a Veterans Benefit Forum on Friday, March 11, from 11:00 am to 4:30 pm. The forum will be held at the Beadle County Extension Center (1110 Third Street SW) in Huron.

SDDVA's field staff and education staff will be part of the team presenting information on veteran's benefits. Other presenters include the VA, Department of Labor, Vet Centers, and local bank representative.

Veterans Benefits Forum

Need information on VA loans, Education Benefits, healthcare benefits, compensation, pension,

Come in, and get all of your questions about veterans Benefits answered in one place at one Time!!!

When: March 11th **Time:** 11am-4:30pm

Where: Beadle County Extension Center, 1110 3rd Street SW Huron, SD
On the southeast corner of Lincoln and Third St.

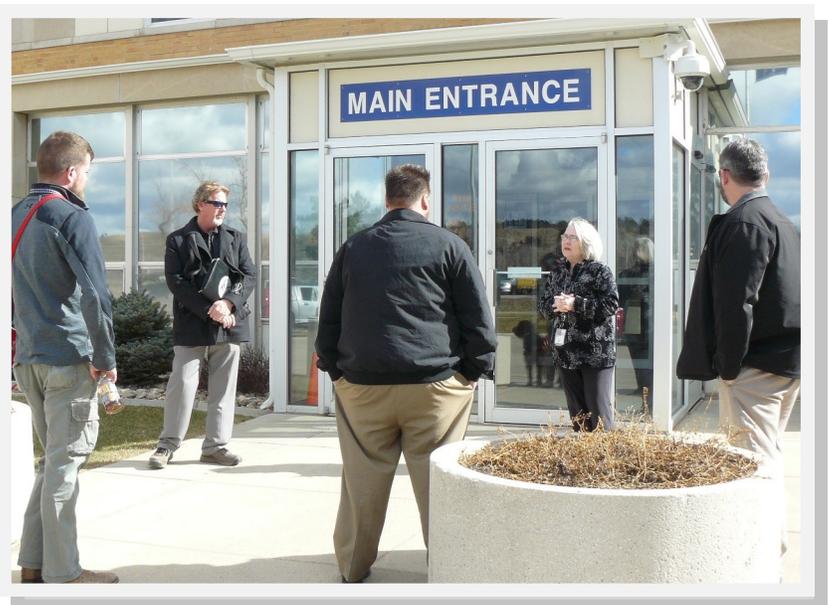
Attendees include: Beadle/Sanborn CVSO, Davison CVSO, SDDVA reps, VA Education, American Bank and Trust Loan Officers (VA Home loans), Mobile Vet Center, Dept. of Labor-Veterans Rep

SDDVA STAFF TOUR

Members of the SDDVA staff traveled west this week as part of an educational tour. The tour west provided our team with the opportunity to meet with members of the VA team that work with issues relating to veterans mental health care. Being familiar with the VA programs, their personnel and the facilities provides our staff with the knowledge to assist our CTVSOs and our veterans.

This team also had the opportunity to tour the new Veterans Home and to see first hand how the culture of care works.

Staying abreast of the ever-changing rules and regulations, services provided and making contacts with staff allows our team the opportunity to be able to assist veterans in an immediate timeframe.



ZIMMERMAN GOES TO WASHINGTON

We've all seen the movie "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," the 1939 American political comedy-drama film, starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur, about one man's effect on American politics.

Well, this week SDDVA's "Mr. Zimmerman went to Washington!" The first part of his trip was attending the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Mid-Winter Conference. This group was briefed by the VA Under Secretary for Health, USDVA Secretary McDonald, Director of MyVA Task Force, DOD staff, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs staff, VA Under Secretary for Benefits staff, VA Center for Innovation, VA Office of Tribal Government Relations and the Director of USA Vietnam War Commemoration. The NASDVA members also spent a lot of time discussing the challenges and frustrations they are experiencing with the VA with regard to the State Approving Agency programs/contracts. While the expected workload continues to increase the funding they provide continues to decrease.

Secretary Zimmerman used this trip as an opportunity to meet with our Congressional Delegation and their staff and brief them on the State Veterans Home and the upcoming open house, the Korean War Ambassador Peace Medal project, Burn Pits, Veterans Choice Act, education benefits, and the upcoming Vietnam Veterans ten-year celebration in South Dakota.

Secretary Zimmerman also had the opportunity to meet up with his interpreter from Afghanistan, Shoyab Hakimi. Hakimi has been in D.C. for seven years and has been a United States citizen for two years.



SDNG'S ARMY BAND NAMED FINALIST

The U.S. Army announced the South Dakota National Guard's 147th Army Band as one of two finalists for the Chief of Staff of the Army Supply Excellence Award.

The national award recognizes Army units who demonstrate excellence in supply operations, property accountability and resource management.

The Mitchell-based unit, whose primary purpose is to provide music throughout the spectrum of military operations, for Soldiers and civilians, will compete in the Army-wide modification table of organization and equipment unit supply category.

The 147th Army Band's submission packet, prepared by Staff Sgt. Timothy Storly, the unit supply NCO, was so well received that he was asked to allow it to be used as the standard for future Supply Excellence Award submissions.

"It's important to stress that this selection is for the unit as a whole, not an individual," said Storly, who also serves as a musician and leads the Music Performance Team: Black Ops. "It speaks to the quality of Soldiers in the Army Band, especially this unit. I have been fortunate enough to have top-notch leadership that makes it possible for me to do my job to a very high standard."

The next phase in determining the national winner is an onsite inspection by the SEA evaluation team. SEA program evaluators are scheduled to visit the unit in March and will then compare the supply operations of the band with one other National Guard MTOE unit, in order to select the top unit.

The national award winner is scheduled to be announced by September.

Chief of Staff, Army, Supply Excellence Award Program



"YOUR
HEART IS
JUST A
BEATBOX
FOR THE
SONG OF
YOUR
LIFE."
SANDI THOM

CONTRIBUTION FROM QUILTERS GUILD

Marilyn Varick from the Minnekahta Quilters Guild recently presented the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home with a check for \$1,000.

The donation will be used to pay for two new hair dryer/chairs for the new Barber/Beauty Shop at the Veterans Home, as well as purchase a CD/cassette player for the new library so residents can listen to audio books.

We are fortunate to have many friends/partners who continue to take care of our heroes. **THANK YOU!**



CLAY COUNTY RECEIVES BUDDY BASKETS

Clay County VSO Cynthia Aden received five "Buddy Baskets" to give to veterans in Clay County. In addition, the University of South Dakota (USD) Veterans Club also received Buddy Baskets and other items to distribute to veterans attending USD.

The Buddy Baskets contain household cleaning items, laundry soap and some personal hygiene products plus some odds and ends such as light bulbs, playing cards and socks. Each basket is different but the items have been sorted so each basket has a similar number and type of items.

The Buddy Basket program was started by Autumn Simunek, (Miss South Dakota,) and sponsored by American Legion Auxiliaries through out the state. SDDVA appreciates the commitment that Autumn and the Auxiliaries have dedicated to this project and to our veterans.



PVA POKER RUN

The Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter has announced that Montgomery Gentry will be performing a concert following their 2nd Annual Poker Run as a special fundraiser for their Chapter!

The Poker Run and Concert will be held Saturday, May 14, 2016, at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, SD. The pre-registration form can be found at:

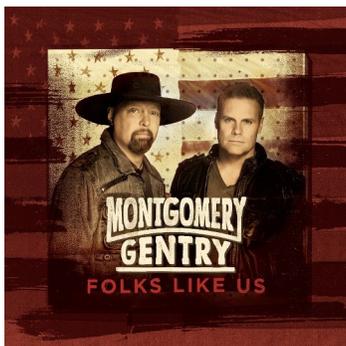
<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/2nd%20Annual%20PVA%20NCC%20Poker%20Run%20-%20Pre-registration.pdf>.

Pre-registration includes \$20 for the poker run and \$25 to attend the concert.

Proceeds from this event help support the PVA's programs and services they provide to veterans!

For more information, please contact: Lisa Cummings, Executive Director, of the Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter at: (605) 336-0494 or by sending her an email at:

LisaC@ncpva.org



PRE-REGISTRATION
2ND ANNUAL PVA POKER RUN
MOTORCYCLE & CAR RIDE
REGISTRATION FORM

SATURDAY, MAY 14, 2016
SANFORD PENTAGON, SIOUX FALLS, SD
REGISTRATION 12 P.M., RIDE BEGINS 1 P.M.
12:30 P.M. BLESSING OF THE BIKES

MOTORCYCLIST NAME: _____

NAME OF PASSENGER(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ CELL PHONE #: _____

BIKER REGISTRATION FEE: \$20.00 _____

PASSENGER REGISTRATION FEE: \$20.00 _____

PRE-SALE MONTGOMERY GENTRY CONCERT:
OF TICKETS ____ @ \$25.00 _____

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID: \$ _____

AFTER (DATE) CONCERT TICKETS WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND CAN BE PURCHASED FOR \$30.00

STOPS: J&L HARLEY DAVIDSON-SIOUX FALLS; SOUTH BAR-HARTFORD, SD; NORBY'S-DELL RAPIDS, SD; BIG ERN'S SPORTS CABIN-GARRETSON; TAILGATORS-BRANDON; UPPER CUT-SIOUX FALLS; RED EYE-SIOUX FALLS; END-SANFORD PENTAGON. (YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO GO TO ALL THE PLACES, BUT IF YOU COMPLETE ALL THE STOPS YOU BE AWARDED AN ADDITIONAL CARD FOR YOUR POKER HAND)

1ST PLACE WINNER: \$500.00 CASH AND A MEET & GREET WITH MONTGOMERY GENTRY

2ND PLACE WINNER: \$250.00 CASH

3RD PLACE WINNER: \$100.00 CASH

****ALL BIKES/CARS NEED TO BE BACK AT THE SANFORD PENTAGON AT 4:30 P.M. TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE CARD DRAWING!**

FOOD, BEER, POP & WATER WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE THROUGHOUT THE EVENT!

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, 209 N GARFIELD AVE, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57104.

04003-00334 2/18

MESSAGE FROM SENATOR ROUNDS

South Dakota is home to more than 72,000 veterans who have bravely and selflessly served our country. Making sure each veteran is cared for and receives top-notch health care has been a priority for me while working in the Senate. While there are many problems plaguing the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), addressing mental health reform is among the most important. According to the VA, 10 to 20 percent of veterans returning from Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and more than 150,000 veterans have been diagnosed with PTSD in the last 15 years.

Many returning veterans struggle with the invisible wounds of war long after they leave the battlefield. While the most recent available numbers on veterans suicide have shown improvement in recent years, even one veteran taking his or her life due to the mental and physical stresses caused by service to this nation is one too many. Physical injuries can be seen and treated, but too many veterans are suffering in silence from mental health issues that are often not visible on the surface.

Early last year, Republicans and Democrats in Congress came together to pass the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. It was one of the first bills I cosponsored as a senator, and it was signed into law by the president. This law focuses on establishing programs to help veterans with PTSD and bring more mental health care specialists into VA facilities. Still, there is much more that needs to be done to take care of our nation's heroes once they return home.

The Department of Health and Human Services says that surveillance is the first step in solving the problem of suicide at large. Accurate surveillance must then be followed by identifying risk and protective factors, which is followed by intervention strategies. Currently, there is no nationwide surveillance system in place to monitor suicide among all veterans. With the majority of veterans not enrolled in Veterans Health Administration, accurate data is hard to find. While the VA has done a decent job gleaning data from the National Death Index and developing data sharing agreements with all 50 states, surveillance still needs to be a top priority.

Many veterans today do not have access to mental health services when they need it most. I hear from veterans all across South Dakota who have trouble getting appointments at VA facilities. In fact, about 60 percent of my office's casework stems from veterans requesting help. When a veteran is struggling with PTSD and seeks mental health help from his or her VA provider but is forced to wait weeks to see a doctor, we have a major problem on our hands. I am committed to working with my colleagues on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee as well as VA Secretary Robert McDonald to address these critical issues.

The VA and our committee are committed to addressing the heartbreaking issue of veteran suicide and making sure each and every veteran gets the care he or she deserves.



Upcoming Events

Mar. 3—SFVAHCS Art Show

Mar. 11—Beadle/Sanborn Veterans Benefit Forum—Beadle County Extension Center—Huron—11:00 am

Mar. 12—SFVAHCS Variety Show

Mar. 14-20—National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans

Apr. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

April 15-17—DAV Convention—Rapid City—Adoba

Apr. 20—Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls

May 10—SDDVA Mini Conference—Rapid City—TREA—1981 Centre Street

May 11—SDDVA Mini Conference Pierre—American Legion Post 8—520 S. Pierre Street

May 12—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings—City/County Building—520 3rd Street—Suite 300

May 14—South Dakota Vietnam Veterans of America Meeting/Election—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre
(election at 11:00 am (CT) and meeting at 1:00 pm (CT))

May 14—2nd Annual PVA Poker Run and Concert—Sanford Pentagon—Sioux Falls

Jun. 16-19—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota—Watertown

Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

Jul. 23-24—Sioux Falls Air Show

Aug. 22-25—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre Ramkota

Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

