



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



MOVE IN DAY AT THE NEW STATE VETERANS HOME

The day has finally arrived and our heroes at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home are now living in their new home.



“Moving day was Wednesday, January 13. “Staff has been planning for this day for a long time,” said Superintendent Brad Richardson. “By 11:00 a.m. everyone was moved and we were serving home-made cookies.”

A big shout out to the staff, the families, and the volunteers that assisted with the move. Visitors had the opportunity to see first-hand how wonderful this new home is.

Richardson noted that the residents are getting acquainted with their new home

and were ready to check out the new beauty shop!

“We’re going to let everyone get adjusted and have some ownership of their new home and then come March or April we will host an open house,” said Richardson.

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A CEREMONY TO HONOR OUR KOREAN VETERANS

South Dakota honored Korean War Veterans with an “Ambassador for Peace” medal ceremony Tuesday in Pierre. The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), in collaboration with the Republic of Korea, hosted the event in the Capitol Rotunda. The “Ambassador for Peace” medal is bestowed in an expression of appreciation from the people of the Republic of Korea for those who served in Korea’s land, air and sea from Jun. 25, 1950 through Oct. 25, 1954.

“It has been an honor to work side by side with the Korean Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs on this ceremony,” said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “They recognize what these heroes have given and as a token of their sincerest appreciation are presenting them with an Ambassador for Peace Medal which symbolizes their adoration and appreciation for their service and sacrifice.”

The ceremony included remarks from Gov. Dennis Daugaard, SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman, and the Honorable Sungchoon Park, Minister of the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs (MVPA).

“I am proud to be a part of the ceremony to recognize South Dakota’s Korean War Veterans,” said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. “Though no amount of recognition or awards can fully compensate for the service these men and women have wrought, it will be a very special and meaningful event.”



In addition to the ceremony in Pierre, many county and tribal veterans service officers hosted events in their local communities to accommodate those heroes that could not travel to Pierre.

The MVPA Minister and his delegation visited the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center on Wednesday to present Ambassador of Peace medals to hospitalized Korean War Veterans

KOREAN WAR VETERANS—YOU WILL ALWAYS BE OUR HEROES

Over 450 South Dakota Korean Veterans received a special honor Tuesday. It's gratitude that some say is long overdue.

At a ceremony Tuesday afternoon in the State Capitol and in numerous communities throughout South Dakota, veterans were recognized for their service during the Korean War and were presented the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal.

"Jan. 12, 2016, will be remembered for our great heroes from what has been called the Forgotten War," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "It was an honor to be able to place



the medal on one of these heroes, but also to know that so many gave so much during that war."

"I thank the South Korean Government and our Governor for the great day and recognition of such a wonderful group of veterans," said Zimmerman.

"This celebration exemplified the partnership we share with the Republic of Korea,

and the brotherhood those who have served will always possess," said Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard. "It was a true honor to share this day with true heroes from the Korean War and true patriots from our great state and the Republic of Korea."

Zimmerman encourages Korean War Veterans that served in Korea's land, air and sea from June 25, 1950, through Oct. 25, 1954, to contact their local county or tribal veterans service officer.

Although over 450 veterans were recognized and honored, there are many more veterans that qualify for the medal. "We will continue to seek out those Korean War heroes for recognition, assistance, and at the very least a 'thank you' for their service," said Zimmerman.



ZIMMERMAN SERVES UP BACON, EGGS, AND A PLATEFUL OF INFORMATION

This week leaders within the South Dakota veterans network hosted legislators at the annual legislative breakfast briefing.

The breakfast, sponsored by the South Dakota Veterans Council, is a great opportunity for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to brief legislators on issues impacting South Dakota's veterans. Secretary Zimmerman reviewed legislation and updated the legislators on 2015 activities. Much of the presentation focused on the progress of the new state veterans home and Operation Korea.

"Special thanks to all the legislators that took time out of their busy schedule to participate in the briefing," said Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard. "We know their schedules are very busy and appreciate the support they have given us."



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"We are fortunate to have the support of our veteran network and our special thanks to the Veterans Council for their sponsorship of this event and for participating in this legislative educational endeavor," said Secretary Zimmerman.

SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETS

The South Dakota Veterans Commission met in Pierre this week. Commissioners were briefed on departmental activities, legislative issues and the status of the new veterans home.

Reports from the directors of the VABHHCS and the SFVAHCS were reviewed with the Commission.

Recently named to the Commission was Kella With Horn from Aberdeen.

KOREAN VETERANS AT THE MJF VETERANS HOME HONORED

A ceremony was held this week at the new Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home to honor the Korean War Veterans.

Veterans, families and staff were able to view the ceremony that was being held in Pierre. Following that program, veterans in the Home were presented Korean Ambassador Peace medals by their family members and visiting dignitaries.



Veterans who received the medal (pictured from left to right with their family members) are: Frank Bryant, Clarence Jerke, Paul Hofwolt, Orville Oster, Earl Weiss, Fred Riedel and Arthur Has No Horse.

Following the ceremony visitors were able to tour the town square and some of the neighborhoods, as well as thank our heroes for their service.

VABHHCS SEEKS ENTRIES FOR 2016 VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITION



The VA Black Hills Health Care System (VA BHHCS) is seeking entries for their annual creative arts competition. This is an exciting opportunity for veterans to display their skills and achievements in the visual arts, creative writing, and performing arts.

Veterans enrolled at VA Black Hills Health Care System or a resident in a state Veteran's Home are eligible to compete. The art must have been created after April 1, 2015 with an exception for Military Combat Experience entries. Submissions for the Fort

Meade competition must be received by February 19, 2016, and for the Hot Springs competition entries must be received by March 2, 2016.

The public is invited to view the entries at two shows on March 9, 2016 from 12:00–3:00 p.m. in Building 145, Classroom 108 at the Fort Meade VA and on March 16, 2016 from 12:30–4:30 p.m. in the Domiciliary Auditorium at the Hot Springs VA.

The competition includes 51 categories in the visual arts division that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In addition, there are 100 categories in the performing arts division including all aspects of music, dance, drama, and creative writing. A panel of local artists will judge entries based on creativity, skill, originality, and overall presentation.

Select winners are invited to participate in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival to be held October 10-17, 2016.

VA BHHCS incorporates creative arts into recreation therapy programs to further the rehabilitation environment for patients helping Veterans recover from and cope with emotional and physical illness. The purpose of the National Veterans Creative Arts competition is to recognize Veterans for their creative and artistic ability and to demonstrate the therapeutic benefits of the arts.

For rules and registration information please contact Mike Ellis or Kyle Doerges at the Fort Meade VAMC by calling 1-800-743-1070 or contact Mary Culbertson at the Hots Springs VAMC at 1-800-764-5370.

HOEKMAN NAMED NEW SDNG SENIOR ENLISTED

Army Command Sgt. Maj. James Hoekman, of Rapid City, assumed the role of senior enlisted leader of the South Dakota National Guard from Air Force Chief Master Sgt. James Welch, of Sioux Falls, during a change of responsibility ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City, Jan. 9.

Hoekman, who has over 30 years of service in the National Guard, assumed responsibility from Welch, who held the position for nearly three years.

As the senior enlisted leader, Hoekman is responsible for advising Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, on all enlisted matters affecting training and utilization of resources, health of the force, and enlisted professional development concerning the Guard's nearly 4,200 Soldiers and Airmen.

"When I got into the military, my goal was to become the state command sergeant major," said Hoekman. "Taking care of Soldiers, and now Airmen, and veterans is a passion of mine and is the biggest thing I look forward to in this new position."

"With every person that comes into a new position like this, you get new ideas and perspectives," said Reisch. "He will step right into the role and the South Dakota National Guard will not miss a beat."

Hoekman, who grew up in Platte, enlisted into the South Dakota Army National Guard in 1985. He served in various units, from engineer to transportation companies, across the state and held nearly every key noncommissioned officer position from squad leader to command sergeant major.

"You go into every unit hoping to leave a big footprint and make the unit better before you leave," said Hoekman, who also holds the position of state command sergeant major for the SDARNG. "I'm humbled to have the opportunity to take care of our Soldiers and Airmen."

Welch was the first person appointed to the SEL position within the SDNG. He will retire in March with more than 38 years of military service.

"I want to thank Welch for dedicating a lifetime to the National Guard and the Air Force," said Reisch.



Upcoming Events

- Jan. 27-28-State Tribal Relations Days—Pierre
- Feb. 6—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Pavilion
- Feb. 12-14—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Huron Crossroads
- Mar. 12—SFVAHCS Variety Show
- Apr. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
- April 15-17—DAV Convention—Rapid City—Adoba
- Jun. 16-19—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota—Watertown
- Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
- Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

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