



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



## IT'S ALL ABOUT WHERE TO SHOP FOR VETERANS

Someone once said, "If men liked shopping, they'd call it research!" I don't like shopping, never have and never will. It frustrates me when you walk in the stores in August and they are already pulling the "back to school supplies" and stocking shelves with Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas supplies and decorations.

In South Dakota we are fortunate to have a great store that veterans can shop at year around! It's called the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and we have some great partners that run the store front. They are the county and tribal veterans service officers.

Although each of their facades are different, their design and their workmanship are the same. A full list of these storefronts can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>.

Walking into their storefronts, veterans will be able to do some window shopping for benefits they might qualify for. The aisles of benefits and services are endless, but some of the important ones are: healthcare benefits, veteran's preference, compensation, pension, veteran's bonus, GI Bill apprenticeship, on-the-job training, environmental hazards, and awards and medals.

It's a store veterans should continue to shop at and the best part is there is no charge!

No matter how complicated war might be, it always comes down to the ones who shoot, move, and communicate. And our country's military has left a legacy like no other fighting force ever assembled. The uniform they wear, and the flag they carry, are held in esteem wherever they have served. Every man and woman who wears America's uniform is part of a long, unbroken line of achievement and honor and they have earned the right to shop for the benefits and services that are provided.

They are America's veterans and they are still the pride of our nation. They have fought our wars, defended our shores and kept us free.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary  
 South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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## VA PROPOSES RULE TO CONSIDER CERTAIN DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CONTAMINANTS IN THE WATER SUPPLY AT CAMP LEJEUNE

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published proposed regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases affecting military members exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The presumptive illnesses apply to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served for no less than 30 days at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with the following conditions:

- adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndrome
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

Environmental health experts on the VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science.

Military members with records of service showing no less than 30 days of service, either concurrent or cumulative, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period can already be granted veteran status for medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene, a dry cleaning agent (PCE), as well as benzene, and vinyl chloride were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. These systems served the housing, administrative, and recreational facilities, as well as the base hospital. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

The VA acknowledges that current science establishes a link between exposure to certain chemicals found in the water supply at Camp Lejeune and later development of one of the proposed presumptive conditions. However, the VA experts agree that there is no scientific underpinning to support a specific minimum exposure level for any of the conditions. Therefore, the VA welcomes comments on the 30-day minimum exposure requirement and will consider other practical alternatives when drafting the final rule. The VA also notes that the proposed 30-day requirement serves to establish eligibility for service connection on a presumptive basis; nothing in this proposed regulation prohibits consideration of service connection on a non-presumptive basis. The 30-day public comment period on the proposed rule is open until Oct. 10, 2016.

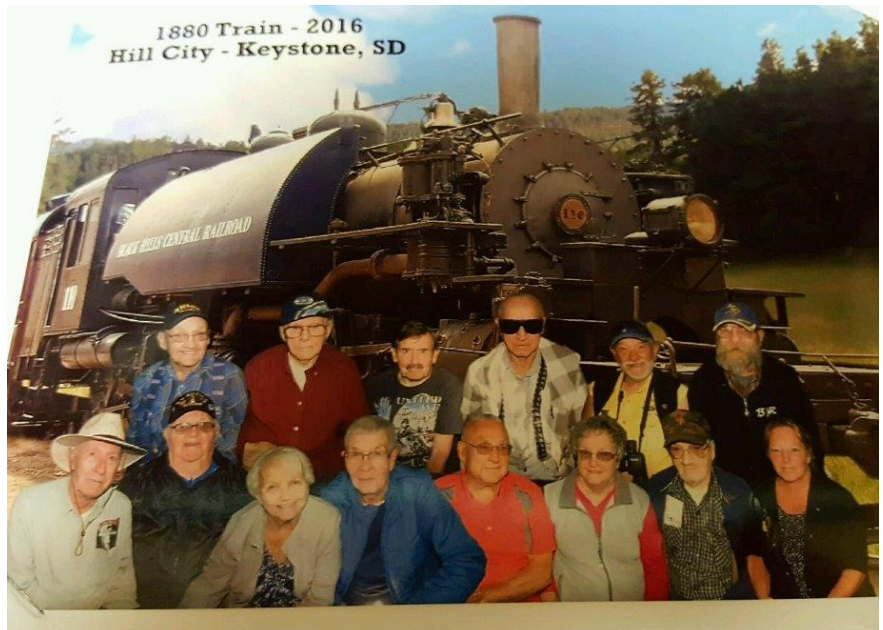
## WAGNER STAND DOWN

SDDVA;s Kevin Bowen and County Veterans Service Officers Fred Kuil (Douglas), Eric Elsberry (Bon Homme), and Glenn Harman (Hutchinson) worked the VA Stand Down in Wagner last Friday. Newly appointed Charles Mix VSO Todd Breen participated in the afternoon portion of the Stand Down. From the looks of all the photos sent in, Mr. Bowen was busy breaking in his new selfie stick!!!



## RESIDENTS RIDE THE 1880 TRAIN

Last week residents of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home had the opportunity to venture out and ride the 1880 train in Keystone. Looks like a great time was had by all of the group.



## HUNTING SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER — REMIND YOUR HEROES OF THIS LAW CHANGE

During the 2016 Legislative Session, legislation was secured to change the window of availability for the reduced fees for the resident small game license and resident fishing license. Applicants must be a resident of South Dakota and meet at least one of the following conditions

\*A copy of a letter from the VA indicating they have received the K Award or they receive a veterans allotment for a 40% or greater disability which is deemed a service-connected injury and will meet eligibility as established in state law SDCL 41-6-10, OR,

\*A verification letter from the Social Security Administration indicating that they are receiving Social Security disability and verification that they have served on active duty in the armed forces or as a member of the armed forces reserve or national guard, (the SSA verification letter is available on line at: <http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/> OR,

\*A copy of the discharge papers verifying the Prisoner of War status.

If the veteran has received a prior reduced fee license and papers as described above have been submitted, there is no need to submit them again unless there has been a status change.

Application and verification papers, along with the \$10 fee, must be submitted to: South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, ATTN: Disability License, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Ft. Pierre, SD 57532. To complete the application visit <http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/accessibility/reduced-fees.aspx>. Upon completion of this form and verification of eligibility, South Dakota residents will receive a Reduced Fee Hunting & Fishing License. This license (card) will be a replacement for the resident small game license and resident fishing license. The license is valid for a four-year period.

You can access the application form at:

<http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/docs/VeteranDisabilityAppl.pdf>.

## WWII VETERAN HONORED IN ABERDEEN

Last week veterans and community leaders in Aberdeen gathered to honor one of South Dakota's World War II heroes.

Dell Burt Hall was recognized for his role in the battle of Okinawa.

September 7 was declared "Del Burt Hall Day" in Aberdeen and the state of South Dakota.

SDDVA presented Mr. Hall with a certificate honoring his service to this great county. SDDVA's Kevin Swanson represented the Department at this celebration. Kudos to Brown County VSO Aaron Walberg for recognizing these heroes.



## VETERANS WHO NEED ROUTINE AUDIOLOGY AND OPTOMETRY APPOINTMENTS WILL SOON BE ABLE TO SCHEDULE DIRECTLY

Veterans receiving care at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Medical Centers will now be able to schedule routine ear and eye appointments at local VA Audiology and Optometry clinics without a primary care referral – a move that eliminates multiple steps and gets veterans into appointments quicker.

Before now, veterans seeking appointments with audiologists or optometrists had to first make an appointment with a primary care physician for a referral for a routine clinic consult visit. A clinic representative would contact the patient to set up the consult appointment, which could result in a several weeks'-long lag between the appointment and when the veteran was actually seen. The new process, the Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative, which began as a successful pilot at three sites in 2015, is being expanded to all VA Medical Centers.

The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is one of a number of efforts underway at the VA to improve veterans' access to care and wait times. Among those recent accomplishments:

- VA and Choice contractors created more than 3.1 million authorizations for veterans to receive care in the private sector from May 1, 2015 through Apr. 30, 2016. This represents an 8-percent increase in authorizations when compared to the same period in 2014/2015.
- In FY 2015, 12 percent of all veterans enrolled for VA care received telehealth-based care. This includes more than 2 million telehealth visits touching 677,000 Veterans; 45 percent of these veterans live in rural areas.
- In FY 2015, more than 6,300 veterans accessed VA care through live interactive video telehealth from home.
- VA has activated over 3.9 million square feet of space in the past two years.
- They've increased authorizations for care in the community 46% in the past two years.
- Clinic production is up 10 percent as measured by the same productivity standard used by many private-sector healthcare systems. This increase translates into roughly 20 million additional hours of care for veterans.
- As we improve access to care, more and more veterans are choosing VA care – for the quality, for the convenience, or for the cost-savings so even though we're completing millions more appointments, we continue to have more work to do.

The VA has increased salaries for physicians and dentists to close the pay gap with the private sector and to make the VA an employer of choice. With more competitive salaries, the VA will have to be better positioned to retain and hire more health care providers to care for veterans.

The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is expected to be fully operational within all VA Medical Centers by the end of 2016.

## 114TH FIGHTER WING PARTICIPATES IN BILATERAL TRAINING EXERCISE IN POLAND

Four F-16 Fighting Falcons from the South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing arrived at Lask Air Base, Poland, Sept. 3, to participate in a bilateral training exercise between U.S. and Polish forces.

More than 100 members of the unit are deployed in support of Aviation Detachment 16-4, a training exercise which aims to foster defense ties between the two countries.

The Polish have been flying the F-16 for 10 years, allowing this exercise to incorporate a wide range of flying missions.

While English remains the de facto standard among aviators, both National Guard and Polish service members work to recognize each other's various terms and expressions.

JTACs provide ground support to pilots by directing aircraft to designated locations to deliver close air support in a fight.

The 114th FW has been deployed to many different parts of the world and is looking forward to adding Poland to its list.



## POW/MIA WEEK PROCLAIMED

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed Sept. 18-24, 2016, as "POW/MIA Recognition Week," calling on all South Dakotans to honor those men and women who fought bravely for our freedoms.

"While we are grateful to all of those who have served our nation, this week is designated to remember and recognize the sacrifices endured by those members of the Armed Forces of the United States who were held as prisoners of war or remain missing in action," the Governor said. "The state of South Dakota continues to support efforts to account for every service member classified as Missing in Action."

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, encourages all South Dakotans to set aside time during Sept. 18-24, to honor the POW/MIAs who fought to protect our freedoms and lost theirs, as well as remember those engaged in today's struggle to guard our way of life for future generations.

Zimmerman invites all veterans and their families to attend the re-dedication ceremony of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Pierre on Sat., Sept. 24. The ceremony includes a tribute to South Dakota's POW/MIAs. The agenda for the day can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/Vietnam%20Veterans%2010-year%20event.pdf>.

"In their service to our country, former prisoners of war and those missing in action have sacrificed mightily to maintain the promise of liberty that we hold dear," said Zimmerman. "POW/MIA week affords all of us a great opportunity to reaffirm our vow to never forget the courage of our nation's staunchest defenders – our former POWs and MIAs. We owe them and their families our gratitude."

## WATERTOWN READINESS CENTER TO BE RENAMED

The South Dakota Army National Guard will host a ceremony to rename its Watertown Readiness Center after a local man and retired brigadier general Sunday, Oct. 2 at 10 a.m. (CDT) located at 1951 N. Hwy. 20.

The facility will be renamed in honor of Brig. Gen. Ernie Edwards, 81, for his years of dedicated service to the SDARNG, as an educator and his civic work within the Watertown community.

Planned speakers for the ceremony will include Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG and retired Maj. Gen. Donald Goldhorn, former adjutant general of the Guam National Guard and former assistant adjutant of the SDARNG.

Edwards served as the 17th assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG and retired with over 37 years of service. He spent more than 39 years as an educator in South Dakota and served the majority of his career as a teacher, coach, principal and superintendent in Watertown.

Edwards first enlisted in 1957 and served as an artillery officer for most of his career until his retirement in July 1994. He held nearly every key command and staff leadership position including service as a battery, battalion and brigade commander within the 147th Field Artillery.

Even after his retirement, Edwards was a prominent figure within the Watertown community and served on many state and local civic organization boards that support military and veterans affairs and invest in the future of today's youth.

Edwards was also instrumental in the planning, development and implementation of the Watertown Readiness Center, which opened in the summer of 2013.



## SFVAHC FLU SHOT SCHEDULE

It's not too early to get a flu shot! Below is the schedule for the Sioux Falls VA Health Care Systems' flu shot schedule for the medical center and the CBOCs:

**Medical center flu shot clinics all take place on ground floor, Rm. A-53, X-ray Dept.**

Sept. 29, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Oct. 5, 7:00 AM-4:00 PM

Oct. 13, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Oct. 20, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Oct. 25, 3:00-6:00 PM

Nov. 4, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Nov. 14, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Dec. 1, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Dec. 14, 8:00 AM-12N

**Spirit Lake CBOC:**

Oct. 12, 8:30 AM – 12N

Oct. 19, 12N-3:00 PM

**Watertown CBOC:**

Sept. 30, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Oct. 14, 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

Oct. 28-8:30 AM-4:00 PM

**Aberdeen CBOC:**

Oct. 4, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Oct. 19, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

**Sioux City CBOC:**

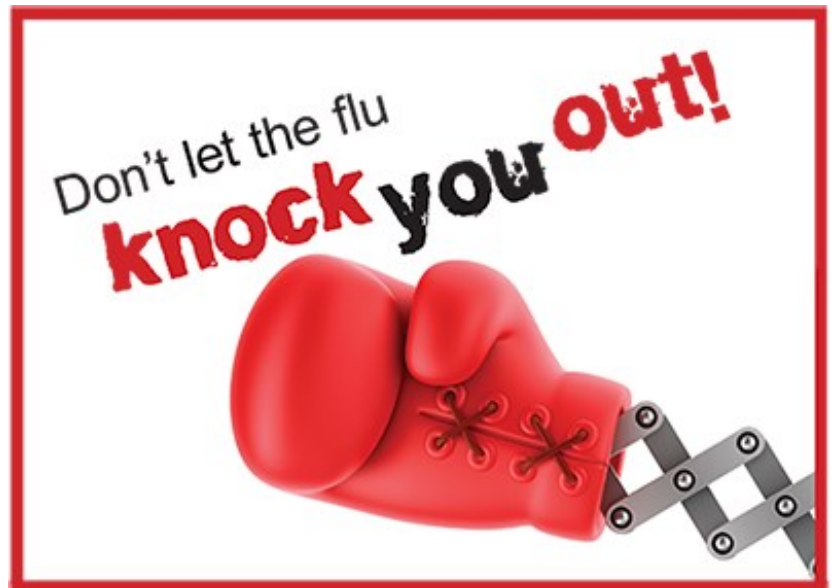
Oct. 5, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Oct. 19, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

**Wagner Outreach Clinic:**

Oct. 7, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Oct. 21, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM





# Upcoming Events

- Sept. 15—Veterans/First Responders Appreciation Day—Watertown City Park—5:00 pm—9:00 pm (CT)  
 Sept. 16—VA Black Hills Military Legal Clinic—VA Black Hills Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs—9:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)  
 Sep. 16—National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park—6:30 pm (CT)  
 Sept. 23—Veterans Memorial 10th Anniversary Block Party—Pierre Street—Pierre—5:00 pm –2:00 am (CT)  
 Sep. 23—Veterans Stand Down—VFW—Sioux Falls (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue) - 9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)  
 Sept. 23-25—VFW Fall Council of Administration and State Commander and Auxiliary President Homecoming—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre  
 Sept. 24—Veterans Memorial 10th Anniversary Parade—Pierre 9:30 am (CT)  
 Sept. 24—Veterans Memorial 10th Anniversary Dedication Ceremony—Capitol Lake Visitors Center—Pierre—12:00 noon (CT)  
 Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
 Oct. 8—DAV Fall Conference—DAV—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- 2017**
- Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)  
 Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma  
 Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown



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