



Voices for Veterans

2016 Annual Report

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



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Message from Secretary Zimmerman

I am very honored to submit the 2016 Annual Report for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. Watching over and advocating for our state's veterans and their families affords us the distinct privilege of serving the men and women whose service in the Armed Forces has secured our freedoms.

We work in concert with County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers and Veterans Service Organizations to advocate for veterans and their families and survivors, ensuring that they receive quality and timely care, support, benefits, and recognition for their service and sacrifice.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs exists to serve South Dakota's veterans. I'm extremely proud of our staff for carrying out our mission.

Now, more than ever, we need to continue to deliver on our promise to take care of our veterans. We need to keep our sleeves rolled up and work collectively to ensure our veterans have a successful journey after they return home.

South Dakota has a legacy of supporting those who have sacrificed and served our country. We are proud of this history and the partners that have shared in our success.

We honor the service of our veterans. Let us never forget their sacrifices.





Secretary Larry Zimmerman

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The Role of the Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary drives the Department's overall strategy and long-range planning initiatives and oversees the operation of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA).

The Secretary works closely with the Governor's Office, other heads of South Dakota State agencies, the directors of the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System and the VA Black Hills Health Care System, South Dakota's Congressional delegation, and state legislators to ensure the Department's overall mission and goals provide value to South Dakota's veterans. The Secretary oversees the state veterans home, the claims office, the benefits service and education office, and many other programs and services for our state's veterans.

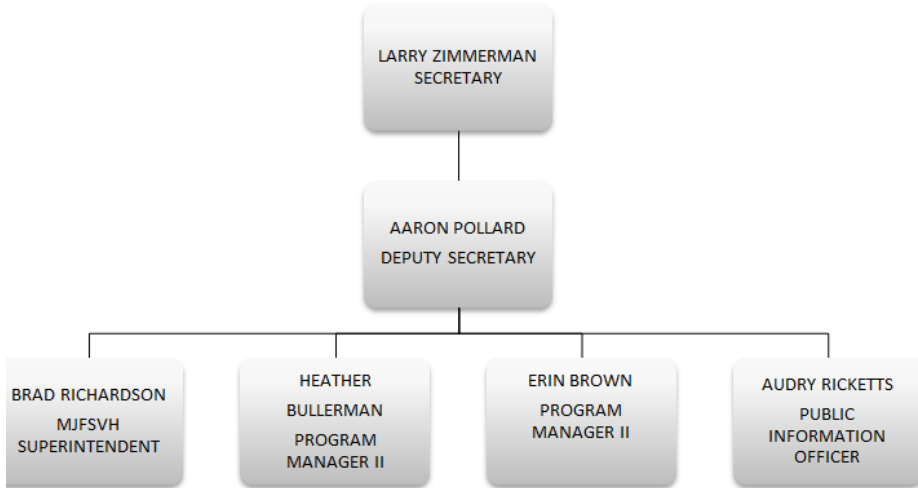
The Deputy Secretary serves as a surrogate for the Secretary and is responsible for the day-to-day internal operations of the department including the department's budget, resolution of all critical issues and oversight of major contracts.

The main administrative office for the Secretary is located in Pierre with satellite offices in Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Hot Springs.

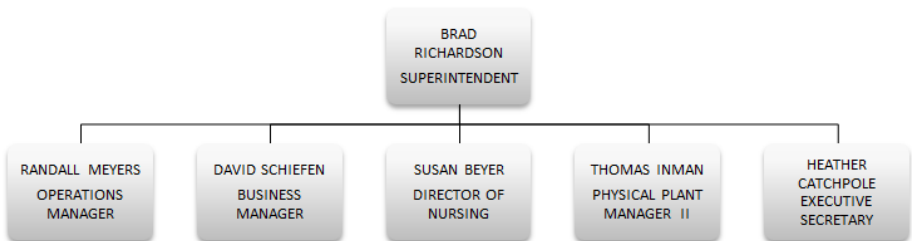




Organizational Chart for SDDVA

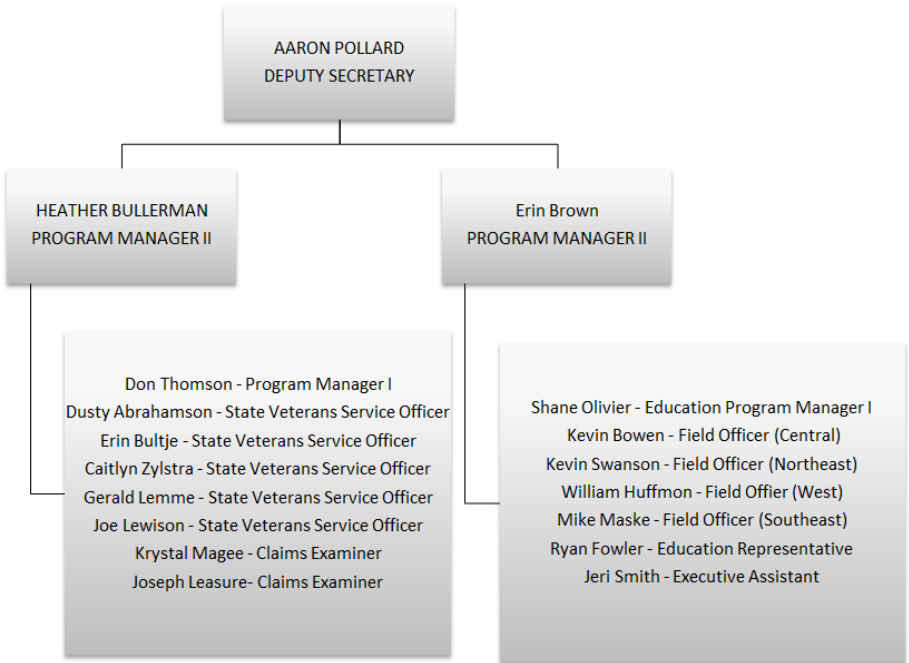


Organizational Chart for State Veterans Home





Organizational Chart for SDDVA Benefits Team



Voices for Veterans



Budget and Finance

The Office of Budget and Finance works to develop, monitor, and manage the Department’s annual budget. This team is responsible for maintaining effective working relationships with the Bureau of Finance and Management, Legislative Audit and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Connie Hohn serves as the Budget/Finance Director for the Department.

Department of Veterans Affairs	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	Change from Prior Fiscal Year
Personal Services	\$ 5,103,609	\$ 5,747,485	\$ 6,027,616	4.87%
Operating Expenses	\$ 3,321,049	\$ 4,782,654	\$ 3,613,569	-24.44%
Headstone & Burial				
Grants	\$ 36,764	\$ 44,600	\$ 44,300	-0.67%
Funeral Honors			\$ 35,050	
Special Funds				
Bonus Claims	\$ 172,460	\$ 152,220	\$ 92,470	-39.25%
Receipts				
Medicaid Collections	\$ 676,124	\$ 911,495	\$ 1,009,616	10.76%
VA Per Diem	\$ 2,726,197	\$ 2,828,801	\$ 2,469,898	-12.69%
Resident Rents	\$ 2,048,187	\$ 2,255,214	\$ 2,152,721	-4.54%



Who We Serve

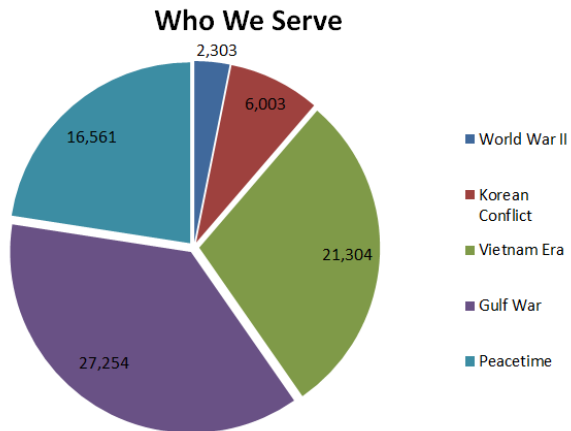
Almost a quarter of South Dakota’s veteran population served honorably during a very unique and relatively conflict-free time in our history. Many of these veterans do not seek benefits, mistakenly believing that if they did not serve in combat they do not qualify for veteran benefits and programs.

World War II Veterans were among the nation’s first to participate in modern warfare. Their services also coincided with major advances in modern medicine, resulting in an extraordinary survival rate.

We have seen an increase in disability claims filed on behalf of Vietnam Veterans due to diseases brought on by exposure to Agent Orange.

Urban warfare has changed not only the face of war, but also what our veterans face after the war. With advances in technology and medicine, more service members are surviving injuries incurred in war that would have killed them in previous eras.

Research on veterans suggests that 18% of our service members are likely to have Post-Traumatic Stress after they return.

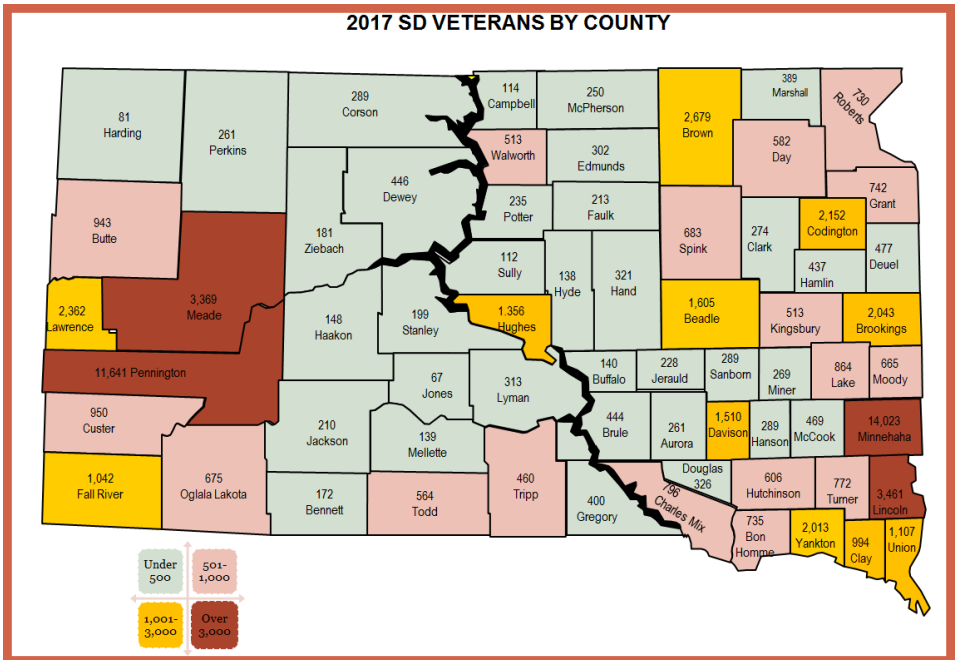




Veterans Count

South Dakota’s efforts to honor and support our Nation’s veterans are a testament to its commitment to the men and women who served in uniform.

Veterans are one of this country’s most valuable assets and SDDVA is on the front line of providing assistance to over 70,000 veterans and their families.



Legislative Highlights

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs monitored many pieces of legislation this year. In a state founded on values, ethics, and dedication, it is only fitting that we work with our legislators to improve the lives of our veterans. Working together we do make a difference.

HB 1056: Revise certain provisions relating to the veterans' preference in employment.

HB 1163: Revise the periods of time during which veterans may use tuition benefits at institutions under the control of the Board of Regents.

HB 1203: Pay off bonds and make certain other changes necessary to effectuate a tuition freeze by the Board of Regents and the technical institutes.

HB 1226: Make a special appropriation to continue funding the military funeral honors stipend.

HC 1005: Honoring the fifth anniversary of Operation Black Hills Cabin, and recognizing the board of directors, volunteers, and community leaders as outstanding caretakers of those who served.

SB 71: Revise the provisions regarding the issuance of small game licenses and fishing licenses to certain veterans at reduced fees and to authorize certain nonresident veterans to get nonresident small game licenses at a reduced fee.

SB 122: Require that fees collected for military specialty license plates be distributed to county veterans' service officers.

SB 148: Authorize additional nursing facility beds for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home and to declare an emergency.

SB 149: Provide for certain reduced state park entrance fees for veterans.





Benefit Services

The Benefits Services team provides professional assistance to South Dakota's veterans and their dependents in an effort to obtain veteran's benefits and health care quality from the USDVA. We measure successes by working tirelessly to assist the greatest number of veterans and their loved ones as we can, while ensuring they receive the maximum benefits they have due to them.

We also strive to resolve any issues that veterans and their families encounter within, and outside, the realm of veterans benefits. It is estimated that for every state dollar expended for Benefits Services, more than \$440 of federal monies are brought into South Dakota.



The State Veterans Services Officers (SVSO) are trained in the myriad of issues facing veterans who served in World War II through today's conflicts, with each era having unique issues and challenges. Each day finds our field officers assisting South Dakota's veterans in gaining access to the benefits to which they are entitled through their service and sacrifice. Among these benefits and services are compensation for service-connected disability or death, income-based pensions, health care, educational benefits, and the VA home loan guaranty program.



Benefit Services

Outreach is conducted at job fairs, stand downs, home shows, congressional forums, Veteran's Day programs, Vocational Rehab conferences, SD Coalition of Military Family symposiums, South Dakota State Fair, Memorial Day programs, Yellow Ribbon events, South Dakota County Officials and Commissioners conferences, Department of Social Services Adult and Aging conference and numerous veteran-related events around the state.

Our outreach team works actively to inform veterans about employment opportunities and educates employers on the benefits of hiring veterans. During the past two years South Dakota has rewritten veterans preference laws and meets annually with leaders of the state, counties, municipalities, and schools to ensure they understand the law.

SDDVA currently holds Power of Attorney (POA) for over 55,000 veterans, which authorizes our team to represent and provide necessary assistance and advocacy to veterans and their families.





Education

The education team for the Department assists in administering various federal and state education benefits to the veterans of South Dakota. They work hard to make sure every eligible veteran is awarded the benefit that applies to their situation. Some of their responsibilities include: conducting site visits when approving education programs and job training facilities throughout the state using State and Federal criteria, conducting compliance surveys to ensure accuracy in GI Bill use, assisting veterans with state and federal education benefits, and conducting outreach activities to inform veterans of the benefits available to them. In South Dakota, veterans can choose to use their GI Bill from 21 institutes of higher learning (colleges and universities), 13 non-college degree institutions (vocational and technical schools), 78 apprenticeship programs, 234 on-the-job training programs, and two flight training schools.



Our team also works with the state benefits which include: free tuition for veterans, free tuition for children of veterans who died during service, free tuition for dependents of POW/MIA's, reduced tuition for S.D. National Guard members, free tuition to children or spouse of a S.D. National Guard member disabled or killed in the line of duty, and honorary high school diploma.

Our team has one dream - to make real differences in the lives of our veterans.



Education

2016 Stats at a Glance —

Approved 296 new Institute of Higher Learning (IHL), Non-College Degree (NCD) and Flight programs at colleges, tech schools, and flight schools across the state and approved two new Vocational Flight Schools for Veterans Flight Training.

Currently have 119 training programs across the state that have veterans enrolled in them. We have 309 total approved programs.

Currently have 105 employers that have veterans enrolled into a training program.

Conducted compliance audits at 13 schools.

Conducted compliance audits at 21 employers.

Have 42 active colleges, high schools, and technical schools providing education to GI BILL recipients.

Have 40 other approved schools that did not have any GI Bill recipients, but retained approval.

Approved 12 new employers for GI BILL use for OJT/APP.

Currently have 242 GI Bill recipients enrolled in OJT/APP programs.

Currently there are 2,162 GI Bill recipients enrolled in schools across South Dakota.





Claims Services

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) Claims Office is located within the USDVA Regional Office on the VA Medical Center campus in Sioux Falls. The Claims Office is staffed with the following professionals: two claims examiners, five state veterans service officers, a program manager I and a program manager II. The Deputy Secretary and a program manager offices are also located in Sioux Falls.

The Sioux Falls Claims Office is responsible for all claims that fall under one of the seven Veterans Service Organizations that SDDVA is accredited through to represent and advocate for veterans and their families before the USDVA.

South Dakota Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Veterans of Foreign Wars
American Legion
The Retired Enlisted Association
Non-Commissioned Officers Association
American Ex-Prisoners of War
Military Order of the Purple Heart

In 2016, the Claims Office saw and filed claims for 2,352 veterans in the Sioux Falls office. The total amount of claims filed with the VA through the Claims Office was 5,745.



Claims Services

Our Department's goal is to obtain the maximum benefits that are earned by veterans and their eligible family members through their service to our country. These benefits range from monthly monetary payments for disabilities incurred in or caused by the veteran's military service, monthly non-service connected pension payments for lower income veterans/widows/widowers/dependent children or helpless children, dependency and indemnity compensation payments for widows/widowers/dependents or helpless children of veterans whose death was related to their military service. The range of benefits available to eligible veterans and their families is vast.

The Claims Office personnel works directly with the decision resources in the USDVA Regional Office to expedite claims and to influence, through proactive advocacy, the most positive and beneficial outcomes. To this end, SDDVA Claims Services provides a quality control function by reviewing completed USDVA benefits rating decisions, and VA awards for benefits.

Both the Claims Services and Benefits Services are charged by statute to train and certify county and tribal veterans service officers. To maintain proficiency with the rapid changes in veterans' programs, the Department provides training opportunities at least three times a year in a formal setting, and on a daily basis as we traverse the state.



Economic Impact

Through the efforts of the employees within the Department of Veterans Affairs and with our County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers and other partners, the Department has seen significant gains in the amount of benefits that clients whom we've assisted and represented receive.

In total, South Dakota veterans garnered a total benefit of \$666, 733,000 in 2016. It is easily assumed that the federal monetary benefits received by South Dakota residents are being largely spent within the boundaries of South Dakota helping to support our strong economy.

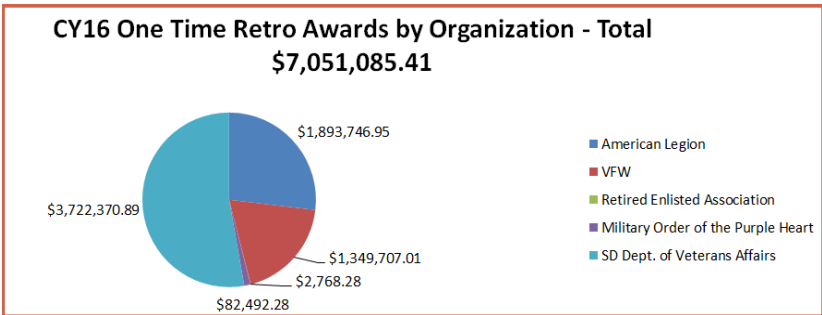
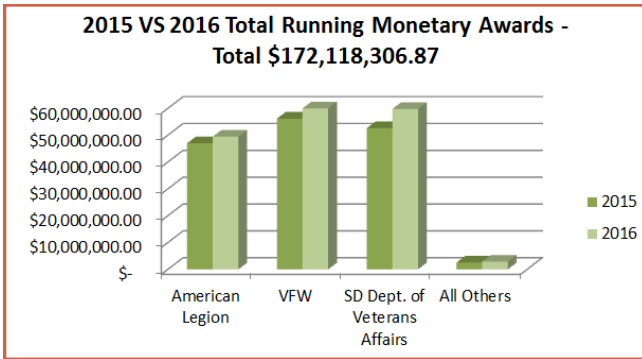
Our team works diligently to ensure that our clients receive excellent customer service and the maximum benefits that they have earned through their military service.

In 2016, the VA implemented three new programs to enhance the time it takes to process a claim. Digits to Digits and the Direct Upload Tool to allow our staff to electronically file claims straight to the VA. This reduces the need to scan documents at a third party vendor saving 10-30 days of claims processing time. The National Work Que was developed and implemented to enhance the timeliness in which claims are processed for veterans nationally. This has created a reduction in the amount of time it takes to complete a claim on a national level.

There are many variables that can and do effect the monetary awards that are reported above. If the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs has slow production months this will effect how sharply our monetary numbers increase.



Economic Impact/Brokered Claims



The Federal VA has vowed to reduce and eliminate the backlog of compensation claims that were pending within the VA. To accomplish this, the VA brokered claims from Regional Offices with backlogs to Regional Offices that did not have backlogs and could support an increased workload. The Sioux Falls VA Regional Office was one of these offices that were identified to broker claims.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs vowed to treat and provide the same excellent level of customer service and expertise to these claims as well as maintaining excellent customer service to our South Dakota veterans.



Appeals

Another facet of our staff's duties is their participation in the VA Appeals Process. The appeals process within the VA is complex, lengthy, and comes with its own set of laws, rules, regulations and processes.

Our staff assists veterans in preparing their appeal, as well as arguing their case through the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). Throughout this process, our staff researches complex VA laws and compiles legal briefs to aid in the likelihood of getting veterans and their eligible dependents the benefits sought.

Our clients have the opportunity to have two hearings, one at the local level with a Decision Review Officer and one at the national level with a BVA Law Judge. Hearings are held at the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office.

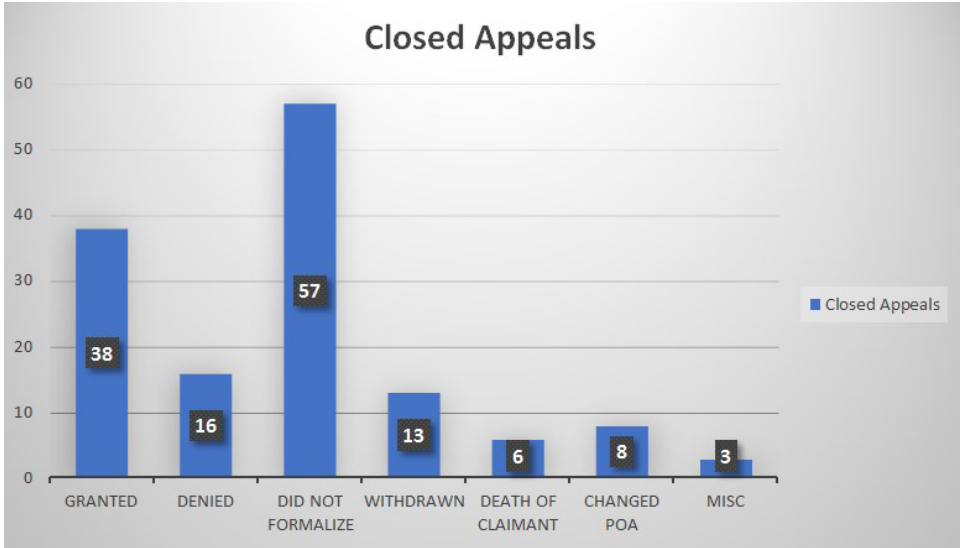
An appeal decision is usually made several months or even years later, and the veteran is awarded a monthly monetary benefit from the date of the claim, until the receipt of the benefit, resulting in a retroactive benefit. Retroactive benefits and monthly compensation represent dollars that are directly infused into South Dakota's economy.

Our team strives to resolve appeals at the earliest step in the process while ensuring the greatest benefits to the claimant.



Appeals

In 2016, we charted





Bonus

South Dakota honors its active duty and veteran residents in many ways, including by offering various veteran benefits. One of those is the bonus program.

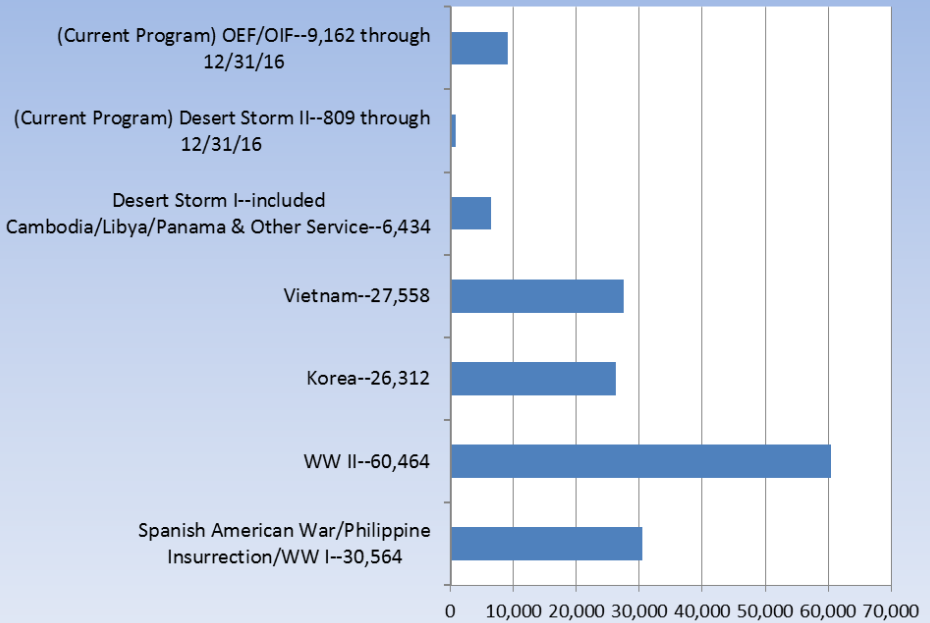
About 95 years ago, one of the state's earliest bonus programs was enacted through the 1921 Soldiers Compensation Act. In the years that followed, the legislature also appropriated funds to pay bonuses to veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and for veterans of Desert Storm, the Persian Gulf and other combat operations. More than 150,000 veterans received bonuses between the start of the WWI bonus program--through the end of the first Desert Storm program--which was enacted in 1991.

Most recently, in 2004, funds were allocated to pay a bonus to those with honorable service during the current War on Terrorism. A year later, the state legislature reopened the bonus program for those who served during Desert Storm who did not get a stipend through the original bonus program or who are still eligible for a bonus payment for service from August 2, 1990 to December 31, 1992. Under the current program, hostile area service qualifies for a payment of up to \$500 and non-hostile area service qualifies for a payment of up to \$240. Veterans with a service connected disability of 10% or higher automatically receive the maximum payment of \$500. From 2004 to 2016--over 9,970 South Dakota service men and women had received bonus payments through the current Desert Storm/Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom programs --totaling over \$4.5 million dollars.



Bonus

of Veterans Receiving Bonuses--1920's to 2016





Headstones, Burial Allowance and Military Funeral Honors

In 2015, state lawmakers approved funding for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to use for reimbursing veterans' organizations which provide honor guard detail at the funerals of deceased veterans. SDDVA pays a \$50 military funeral honors reimbursement for each funeral honor performed. The SDDVA pays the stipends to posts quarterly and tracks the names of veterans honored to ensure that only one post is paid an honors fee. The reimbursements were processed for the first time in the fall of 2015 for honors performed after July 1 of that year. In 2016--the first full calendar year of the SDDVA program--approximately \$44,000 in funds were paid to veterans service organizations for an estimated 880 funeral honors conducted.



The SDDVA also pays a \$100 stipend to help offset the cost of setting a government furnished headstone or marker at the graves of veterans who meet certain qualifications. The deceased heroes must have been a resident of the state for one year immediately prior to entering military service or one year immediately prior to death.

In addition, the SDDVA provides a burial allowance of \$100 to be used toward the funeral expenses of any veteran--and in some cases the veteran's spouse--when there are not enough funds available to pay the funeral costs.

In calendar year 2016, a total of 403 separate claims were processed for the headstone stipends and four for the burial allowance for an approximate total of \$40,300.



Public Affairs

The office of Public Affairs is responsible for overseeing and managing the SDDVA public information activities and media relations. This office also develops and implements communications and public relations strategies with regard to priorities of the department.

The Office is also accountable for planning statewide public events such as press conferences, listening sessions, and special ceremonies.

The Department's website (<http://www.vetaffairs.sd.gov>) is designed to offer veterans a centralized clearinghouse of valuable resources accessible from anywhere in the world. The Department has a mobile website, making it easier for veterans to access information from their smartphones or tablets. Our website is a repository of information about veterans benefits, including the most up-do-date version of the Welcome Home Book.

The Department continues to disseminate a weekly newsletter electronically to all within our veteran network as well as post it on our website. The newsletter and job postings can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/News%20Updates.aspx>.

We distribute a monthly column to the media on timely issues relating to veterans and the benefits and services available to enhance their lives.

The Department maintains a master calendar of events throughout the state relating to veterans. This list can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/upcomingevents>.

The public affairs office also tracks all bills introduced and committee hearings during legislative session and informs our department and partners of the status.



Homeless Veterans

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is an active member of the South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium. The consortium was formed more than 15 years ago. The organization has utilized funding it receives from the federal government to help benefit homeless programs across the state.

Information from the 2016 Statewide Homeless Count conducted by the SDHHC revealed that just over 1,180 individuals were homeless in the state. That represents a 14 percent increase from the count conducted in 2015. The data also showed that 106 of those individuals counted in 2016 were veterans; compared to 176 veterans in the 2015 report.



Another study, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2016 Homeless Assessment Report, estimated 120 homeless veterans in South Dakota counted on one single day in January 2016. 9.2% of those heroes were classified as unsheltered homeless veterans. Like the state report, the federal count pointed to a rise in the overall rate of homelessness in South Dakota between 2015 and 2016.

A complete list of homeless shelters and facilities available for veterans in South Dakota can be found on the SDDVA website at <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/>



Veterans Courts

Veterans Courts are a collaborative process that includes prosecutors, defense counsel, Judges, federal and state's Department of Veteran Affairs and other community-based support organizations. The goal of Veterans Court is to rehabilitate and restore veterans as active, contributing members of their community.

Veterans Court programs typically focus on veterans who are currently in, or entering, the Criminal Justice System. The Court creates and supervises treatment plans to address the underlying causes of the veteran's behavior and/or substance abuse issues. Issues commonly addressed by the such treatment programs include: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, anger issues, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse.



By focusing on the root problems that contribute to involvement with the criminal justice system and providing specific rehabilitation programs, the Veterans Court provides an opportunity for the veteran to return to the community in a more advantageous and beneficial manner.

SDDVA has representation on both the Minnehaha and Pennington Counties Veterans Court Advisory Boards. Our staff works closely with the Courts and the veterans to ensure the veteran is aware of all benefits, provide more structure, serve as a mentor and assist in setting the veteran up for success.



Veterans Justice Outreach

SDDVA staff have taken an active role in partnering with the Department of Corrections to work with incarcerated veterans.

Members of our team participated in a two-week correctional officer training program to allow them access to veterans within the walls of South Dakota penitentiaries.

Our team assists veteran prisoners in completing paperwork to suspend or file for benefits. Staff also assist when service treatment records are needed in support of appeals.

SDDVA also plays a role in re-acclimating veteran prisoners back into society. They work closely with

the veteran on such issues as benefits claims process, readjustment counseling, crisis intervention, housing, clothing, job readiness, job placement, securing a drivers license, opening bank accounts and support services.

It has been a very rewarding partnership for our department and we continue to learn about more avenues to assist our veterans that have been incarcerated.





South Dakota Joining Forces

South Dakota Joining Forces was formed jointly by the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the South Dakota Department of the Military, and was created in response to *Joining Forces* (a White House Initiative).

The mission of SDJF is to enhance and synchronize community-based networks of support to all current and former service members and their families, with a potential outreach of 276,517 people.

The vision of SDJF is that every current and former service member or their family receives the support that they have earned.

At this time, SDJF is actively engaged in 20 communities to acquaint partners on the initiative, strategize, identify resources, and establish a “no wrong door” approach to meeting the needs of those who have served in the military through a coordinated effort of those who live within their communities. We will do what we can to help all those who raised their right hand.





State Veterans Home

2016 was a great year at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. In December of 2015 we received the keys to the new Home and in January of 2016 we moved our heroes into their modernistic Home. In March we held our ribbon cutting ceremony. During the 2016 Legislative Session, the number of nursing beds was increased from 52 to 76, and residential beds were changed to 24.



In Early Spring of 2016, the STAR Academy was closing its facilities in Hot Springs and with the change in staffing requirements for the additional nursing beds, our agency was able to offer over 30 positions to existing state personnel from the STAR Academy.

Our management team encourages our staff, volunteers, and partners to embody the mission to honor and serve our heroes, now and for generations to come. We provide high quality resident directed long term care by maintaining excellence in personal services and treatment through professional collaboration, innovation, dedication and respect, in a setting that promotes dignity, independence and a home like environment.

Every year, many selfless individuals and organizations volunteer their time at the Home. These volunteers improve the quality of the home like atmosphere. During 2016, sixty-two volunteers logged in over 2,154 hours.



State Veterans Home

The State Veterans Home is home to World War II Veterans, Korean War Veterans, Vietnam Veterans and Gulf War Veterans.

When residents venture outside their neighborhoods, they can visit the town square, library, post office, pharmacy, mini mart, get a haircut or manicure at the barbershop/beauty salon, or stop in the Bistro for a cup of coffee and a snack.

Our State Veterans Home provides a variety of services that include: twenty-four hour professional nursing staff, on site pharmacy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, meal service, social services, pastoral care, transportation for medical or dental appointments, and planned supervised recreational programs and activities.

At the close of 2016, the State Veterans Home had 17

World War II heroes, 18 that served during the Korean Conflict, 20 that are Vietnam Era Veterans and 16 that served during peacetime.

Currently, there are over 800 veterans buried at the State Veterans Cemetery on our Hot Springs campus.





Partners

Veterans Service Organizations

South Dakota is fortunate to have immense groups of people that have dedicated their energies to improving the lives of veterans and their families. These heroes are the veterans service organizations. Veterans Service Organizations are the backbone of veterans rights for our state and nation. They strive tirelessly to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

Collectively they provide advocacy, educate veterans on benefits, lobby congress and legislators and provide a network for veterans.

- Air Force Sergeants Association
- American Legion
- American Legion Auxiliary
- Disabled American Veterans
- Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
- Korean War Veterans Association
- Marine Corps League
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- National American Indian Veterans
- National Guard Association of South Dakota
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- National Guard Enlisted Association
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc.
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
- Vietnam Veterans of America



Partners

South Dakota Veterans Commission

The South Dakota Veterans Commission consists of six members appointed by the Governor. Members of the commission shall be citizens of the United States and of South Dakota, and shall be veterans who have been discharged from the armed forces honorably or under honorable conditions. Annual appointments shall be made for terms of six years.

Commissioners have the responsibility of communicating the Governor's veteran-related public policy positions to the veterans of South Dakota and returning to the Governor those concerns and viewpoints of the veteran constituency

Current members of the Commission are:

- Chairman Helen Parr (Sioux Falls)
- Vice Chairman Lori Vosika, (Hot Springs)
- Commissioner James Ross (Whitewood)
- Commissioner Mike Birnbaum (Rapid City)
- Commissioner Daryl (KC) Russell, (Aberdeen)
- Commissioner Kella With Horn, (Aberdeen)



Partners

South Dakota Veterans Council

The purpose and objectives of the South Dakota Veterans Council are to develop a statewide, intelligent, aggressive and serviceable Council for the purpose of promoting all activities found to be for the good of all veterans and their dependents and to provide a practical means by which veterans service organizations throughout the state can effectively contribute to the betterment of all veterans.

The South Dakota Veterans Council is comprised of congressionally chartered veterans' service organizations which include: American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America. Membership consists of three members from each veterans service organization.

Council leadership:

President—Terry Paulsen (PVA)

Vice President—Gary Henle (American Legion)

Secretary/Treasurer—Ken Laughlin (DAV)

Judge Advocate—Terry Hawk (VVA)



Partners

County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers

The Department maintains a statewide partnership with counties and tribes. Our County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers (CTVSOs), serve as the store front for the Department and have the local contact with veterans and their families. Today it is an effective network of 62 trained VSOs.

The VSOs ensure veterans have access to the benefits they have earned. VSOs are not supervised by the Department however, the Department provides training, certification, accreditation, counseling and outreach to the VSOs. The Department holds initial on-site training for all new VSOs, as well as annual conferences and two mini-conferences a year. The Department has four field officers that visit the VSOs on a monthly basis. (A listing of the CTVSOs can be found on the next two pages.)





Partners—CTVSOs

Aurora County—Ron Falor
Beadle County—Michael Lueck
Bennett County—Don Larson
Bon Homme County—Eric Elsberry
Brookings County—Michael Holzhauser
Brown County—Aaron Walberg
Brule County—Ron Falor
Buffalo County—Vacant
Butte County—Robert Wagner
Campbell County—Lester Goehring
Charles Mix County—Todd Breen
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe—Robert Dunsmore
Clark County—Larry Jones
Clay County—Cindy Aden
Codington County—Alvin Janzen
Corson County—Loyson Carda
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe—Vacant
Custer County—Kenneth Irwin
Davison County—Jessica Davidson
Day County—Kevin Bohn
Deuel County—Dennis Evenson
Dewey County—Robert Dunsmore
Douglas County—Fred Kuil
Edmunds County—Ron Hoffer
Fall River County—Dan Cullen
Faulk County—David Huss
Grant County—Scott Malimanek
Gregory County—Marvin Gies
Haakon County—Terry Deuter
Hamlin County—David Schaefer
Hand County—Dave Johnson
Hanson County—Harry Huffman





Partners—CTVSOs

Harding County—Vacant
Hughes County—Charles Quinn
Hutchinson County—Glenn Hartman
Hyde County—Bob Sheffield
Jackson County —Terry Deuter
Jerauld County—Roger Dwyer
Jones County—Gary Sletto
Kingsbury County—Gary Schumacher
Lake County—Douglas Huntrods
Lawrence County—Bill Locken
Lincoln County—Susan Irons
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe—Vacant
Lyman County—Gary Sletto
Marshall County—David Daberkow
McCook County—Keith Aden
McPherson County—Darrell Pfeifle McPherson
County—Harvey Schaible
Meade County—Angela Sutton
Mellette County —Gary Sletto
Miner County—Terrance Lee
Minnehaha County—David Sorenson
Moody County—Jim DeLay
Oglala Lakota County —Denver American Horse
Oglala Sioux Tribe —Jerlene Arredondo
Pennington County —Alexander Purcell Perkins
County—Loyson Carda
Potter County—Donald Herricks
Roberts County—Larry Goette
Rosebud Sioux Tribe—Orlando Morrison
Sanborn County—Michael Lueck
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate—Geri Opsal
Spink County - Gordon Richard



Partners—CTVSOs

Stanley County —Charles Quinn
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe—Manaja Hill
Sully County—Charles Quinn
Todd County—Ronald Valandra
Tripp County—Terry Cousins
Turner County—Thomas Sparrow
Union County—Susan Irons
Walworth County—Leo Rookey
Yankton County—Michael McDonald
Yankton Sioux Tribe—Dennis Rucker
Ziebach County—Harold Veit





2016 Top SDDVA Accomplishments

Formation of the South Dakota Joining Forces.
Leadership on the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition.
Expanded partnership with Department of Corrections to assist incarcerated veterans
Afforded employment to 32.5 FTE positions from STAR Academy personnel.
Honored over 1,000 Korean War Veterans with the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal.
Opened the doors of the new State Veterans Home.
Transitioned to 76 nursing beds.
Working with tribal leaders to secure housing for Native American Veterans.
Compensation and pension awards for CY16 exceeded \$179 million.
Grew our involvement in veterans courts.
Co-hosted Tribal Veterans Day at the Legislature
Honored Vietnam Veterans during the ten-year anniversary of the dedication of the memorial.
Worked with the VA to secure nursing beds for veterans in eastern South Dakota.
Participated in 178 outreach events.
Have 200 veterans participating in On-the-Job training programs.
Paid \$118,550 in veterans bonuses.
Reimbursed \$40,300 for military funeral honors stipends.

(300 copies were printed at the cost of \$6.00 each)



Soldiers and Sailors World War I Memorial Building
Home to the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

South Dakota
Department of Veterans Affairs
425 E. Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501
605-773-3269
<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

