



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

South Dakota
Department of Veterans Affairs
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Message from Secretary Whitlock

It is my pleasure to submit to you the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) annual report for 2018.

Our Department continues to maintain its commitment to serving our veterans and their families. This year's report provides the opportunity to share successes and ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families.

We're proud of our partnerships with stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels—all helping honor those who served.

Our dedicated staff members, many of whom are veterans themselves, take our goals and responsibilities to heart.

Regardless of service era, we take an all-inclusive approach to ensure all veterans have access to their benefits.

Operation CARS (Calling all Returning Servicemembers), has been a great opportunity for us to reach out to all returning servicemembers by phone to thank them for their service, and make them aware of the programs and services available to them to assist in their transition back into civilian life.

Moving forward, we will be working with Governor Noem to implement Operation Rally Point. Operation Rally Point includes six components: customer service, employment opportunities for veterans, veterans transportation, digital literacy, grow Hot Springs as the Veterans town, and continue to work on state veterans cemetery.

In closing, I want to thank our partners. We could not achieve our mission of serving veterans and their families without the support and commitment from the private, public and non-profit organizations who continue to put veterans first.





Secretary Greg Whitlock

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Role of the Office of the Secretary

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

SDDVA is an agency of state government created for the purpose of advising, counseling, and assisting veterans and their families in receiving their rightful benefits under the vast and complex framework of veterans' laws.

We are extremely proud of the South Dakotans, and all who have honorably served our country over the centuries. It is now our honor to serve them.

Providing quality and effective service to veterans and their dependents is, and always will be, our number one mission.

In doing so, we pledge to stay current and adjust quickly and carefully to new laws, be diligent in their application, and continually improve our efficiency in service to veterans and their dependents. We encourage all employees in the agency to be responsible, imaginative, innovative and flexible.

Loyalty, duty, selfless service, integrity, respect for human dignity, and a sense of justice are essential elements of our identity.

We draw on the rich history of American veterans and their unique contributions to our nation for inspiration and direction.

We are committed to open and effective communication that builds trust and improves performance.

Organizational Chart for SDDVA

GREG WHITLOCK
SECRETARY

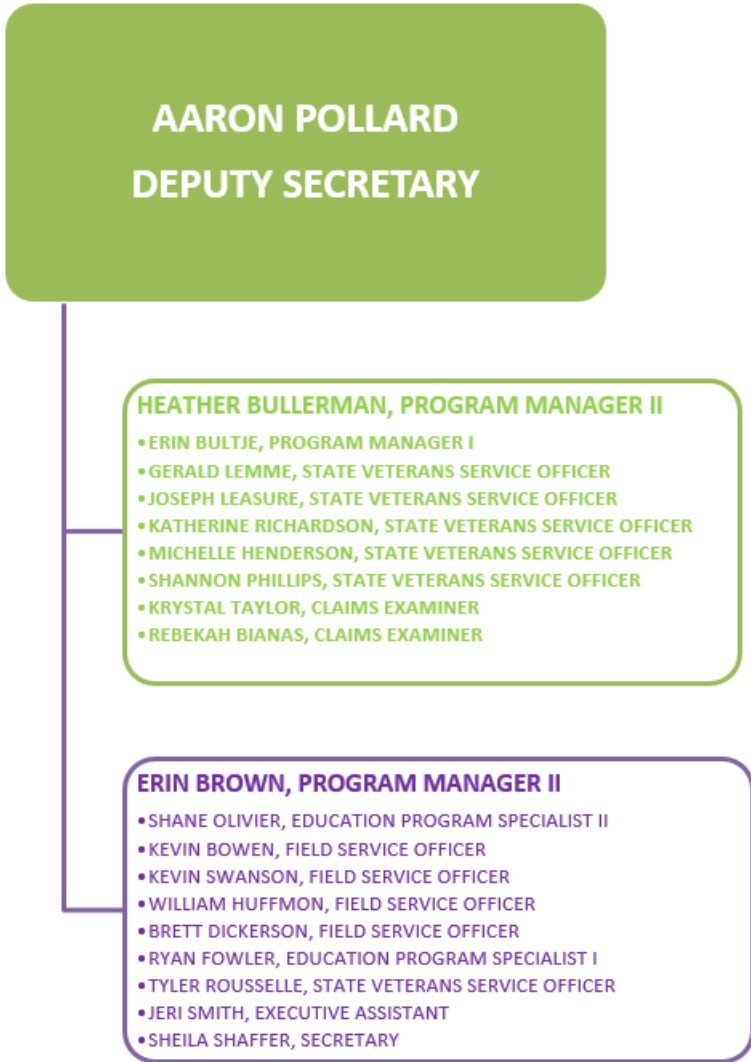
AARON POLLARD
DEPUTY SECRETARY

- HEATHER BULLERMAN, PROGRAM MANAGER II
- ERIN BROWN, PROGRAM MANAGER II
- ERIN BULTJE, PROGRAM MANAGER I
- AUDRY RICKETTS, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
- GUY ARNOLD, SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

BRAD RICHARDSON
MJFSVH SUPERINTENDENT

- TERESA PHILLIPSON, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
- JEFF HAIER, BUSINESS MANAGER
- SUSAN WILCOX, DIRECTOR OF NURSING
- TOM INMAN, PHYSICAL PLANT MANAGER
- HEATHER CATCHPOLE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Organizational Chart for SDDVA Benefits Team



Budget and Finance

Connie Hohn serves as the Budget/Finance Director for the Department, as such she develops and monitors the Department's annual budget. She works closely with the Bureau of Finance and Management, Legislative Audit and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

FUNDING SOURCE:

Veteran's Affairs	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
General Funds	\$ 3,853,779	\$ 2,490,440	\$ 4,009,421	\$ 4,113,689
Federal Funds	\$ 1,066,155	\$ 1,200,628	\$ 3,051,237	\$ 3,232,545
Other Funds	\$ 5,610,206	\$ 5,950,117	\$ 4,470,699	\$ 4,465,735
	<u>\$ 10,530,140</u>	<u>\$ 9,641,185</u>	<u>\$ 11,531,357</u>	<u>\$ 11,811,969</u>

Veteran's Benefits	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
General Funds	\$ 1,404,655	\$ 1,517,246	\$ 1,573,088	\$ 1,620,231
Federal Funds	\$ 162,927	\$ 162,425	\$ 149,379	\$ 183,053
Other Funds		\$ 983	\$ 1,898	\$ 23,145
	<u>\$ 1,567,582</u>	<u>\$ 1,680,654</u>	<u>\$ 1,724,365</u>	<u>\$ 1,826,429</u>

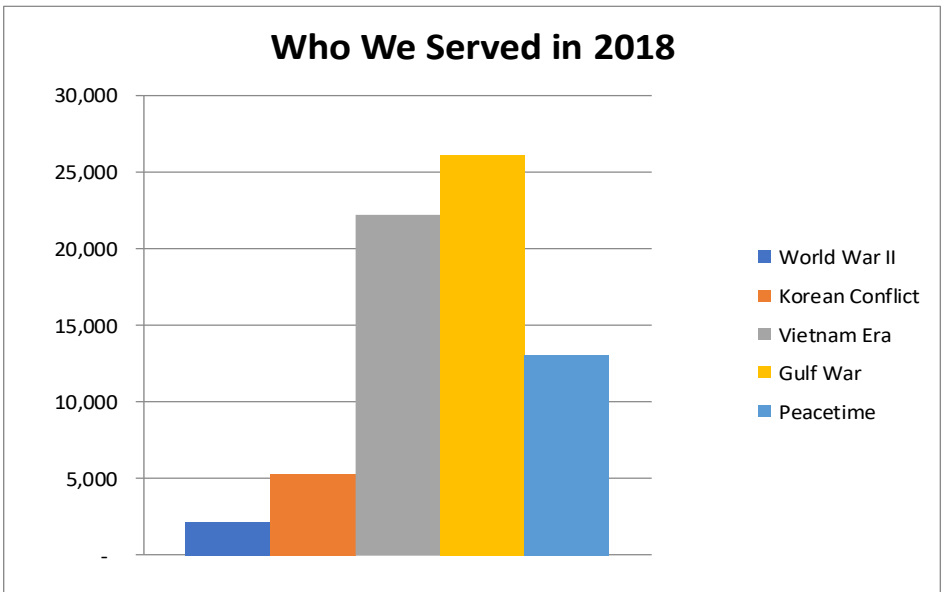
Veteran's Home	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
General Funds	\$ 2,449,125	\$ 973,194	\$ 2,436,333	\$ 2,493,458
Federal Funds	\$ 903,228	\$ 1,038,204	\$ 2,901,858	\$ 3,049,493
Other Funds	\$ 5,610,206	\$ 5,949,134	\$ 4,468,801	\$ 4,442,590
	<u>\$ 8,962,559</u>	<u>\$ 7,960,532</u>	<u>\$ 9,806,992</u>	<u>\$ 9,985,541</u>

EXPENDITURE DETAIL

Veteran's Affairs	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services	\$ 5,747,485	\$ 6,027,616	\$ 8,062,876	\$ 8,189,771
Operating Services	\$ 4,782,654	\$ 3,613,569	\$ 3,468,481	\$ 3,622,198
	<u>\$ 10,530,139</u>	<u>\$ 9,641,185</u>	<u>\$ 11,531,357</u>	<u>\$ 11,811,969</u>
Veteran's Benefits	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services	\$ 1,143,231	\$ 1,197,449	\$ 1,245,782	\$ 1,313,496
Operating Services	\$ 424,351	\$ 483,204	\$ 478,584	\$ 512,933
	<u>\$ 1,567,582</u>	<u>\$ 1,680,653</u>	<u>\$ 1,724,366</u>	<u>\$ 1,826,429</u>
Veteran's Home	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services	\$ 4,604,255	\$ 4,830,167	\$ 6,817,094	\$ 6,876,275
Operating Services	\$ 4,358,303	\$ 3,130,365	\$ 2,989,898	\$ 3,109,265
	<u>\$ 8,962,558</u>	<u>\$ 7,960,532</u>	<u>\$ 9,806,992</u>	<u>\$ 9,985,540</u>

Who We Serve

South Dakotans have a history of military service. SDDVA is committed to serving all veterans and their dependents, whether they reside in South Dakota, a neighboring state or anywhere in the world.



Legislative Highlights

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs monitored many pieces of legislation during the 2018 legislative session. 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 make a difference. Some of the veteran-related bills before lawmakers in 2018 included:

HB 1009: Include National Guard Form NGB 22 as a means of identification to obtain veterans designation on driver's license or non-driver identification card.

HB 1010: Extend employment protections for all South Dakota Guard members who serve Guard units in other states.

HB 1244: Simplify the process for members of the United States Armed Forces and their families to renew their driver's license when stationed out of state.

SB 83: Open access for certain patriotic societies to have better access to address public schools.

SB 91: Receive authorization to provide for the design, construction, and

equipping of a state veteran's cemetery in Minnehaha County and to create a veterans cemetery operating fund.

SB 97: Provide for special motor vehicle license plates for female veterans.

SJR 8 and SCR 15: Raise awareness for the need to change enrollment criteria for the Veterans Health Administration to include World War II and Korean War Veterans and for eligible veterans in need of assisted living services.



Claims Division

The claims office epitomizes our department motto of Voices For Veterans. Our staff consists of two managers, five state veteran service officers and two claims examiners. Their primary responsibility is to assist veterans, their dependents, and our county and tribal partners in filing claims for disability compensation, nonservice-connected pension, death benefits, education, and healthcare.

The claims office is located at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office in Sioux Falls. This gives our staff the unique opportunity to work directly with the federal Veterans Affairs staff to ensure claims are being worked correctly and expeditiously on behalf of the claimants we represent.

The five state veteran service officers meet with over 3,000 veterans and dependents per year to assist them with benefits they are seeking, and many other issues they face. Of those visits, over 2,000 claims were filed and 1,000 follow-up meetings performed. They are also responsible for reviewing around 6,000 claims per year that are submitted through the claims office by the county and tribal veterans service officers throughout the state. Prior to the 8,000 annual claims being submitted to the Veterans Benefits Administration for processing, the two claims examiners are responsible for reviewing all documentation for accuracy. Once filed, they work claims until complete.

Our staff also takes an active role in the training of department, county and tribal veterans service officers. This includes two mini-conferences, a formal week long school and various skype trainings throughout the year—over 70 hours. This helps with training new personnel as well as updating the constant changes implemented by the Veterans Benefits and Health Administrations.

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. 2018 brought many changes to the appeal process due to the VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP). This program is ever changing and our department has worked diligently to remain knowledgeable of the current and future steps of the program so we can advise the veterans we represent with their best course of action.

Our staff assists veterans in preparing appeals, 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 held at the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office, and one at the national level with a BVA Law Judge in Washington, DC, or in person at the regional office via video teleconference.

Appeal decisions are made several months or even years after a notice of disagreement is filed. The veteran may be awarded a monthly monetary benefit from the date of the claim even if filed years earlier. 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 benefit to the claimant.

Benefits Division

Field service officers (FSOs), who are also state veterans service officers, provide assistance and services to veterans, their spouses, their family members, and county and tribal veterans' service officers by counseling, interviewing, obtaining records, and researching evidence to respond to veteran's inquiries and support veteran's benefits claims and appeals.

We work tirelessly to assist the greatest number of veterans and dependents as we can, while ensuring they receive the maximum benefits they are entitled to. We strive to resolve any issues that veterans and their families encounter within, and outside the realm of veteran's benefits.

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

Field service officers travel the state training and educating tribal and county veteran service officers in VA laws, policies, and procedures. Our goal is to meet and assist as many veterans, family members, and others as is possible through outreach events and daily encounters. Our staff has developed a 334-page training manual for county and tribal veteran service officers to reference when working with veterans.

Education

The education team for the Department assists in administering various federal and state education benefits to South Dakota veterans and their families. They work hard to make sure every eligible veteran is awarded the benefit that applies to their situation. Some of these benefits include: GI Bill® (Chapter 1606, 30, 31, 33, & 35), on-the-job-training and apprenticeship programs, free tuition for veterans, free tuition for children of veterans who died during service, free tuition for dependent of POW/MIAs, reduced tuition for SD National Guard members, free tuition to children or spouse of SD National Guard member disabled or killed in the line of duty, and we can help obtain an honorary high school diploma.

In South Dakota, veterans can choose to use their GI Bill® from 35 institutes of higher learning (colleges and universities), 14 non-college degree institutions (high schools, welding schools, and trade schools), and two flight training schools. In 2018 there were 63 active on-the-job training programs, 21 active apprenticeship programs, 225 active trainees, 71 active employers, and 1,781 total GI Bill® students in schools.

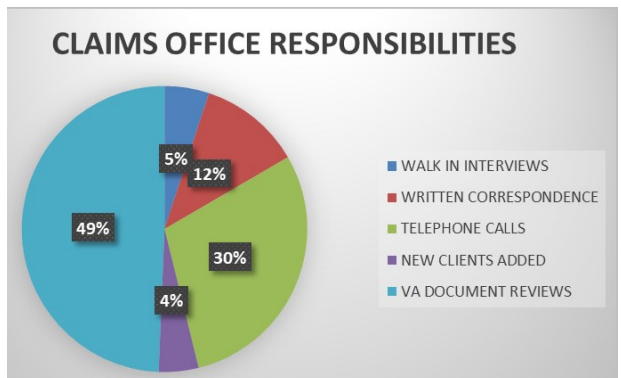


The mission of the State Approving Agency (SAA) is to provide technical assistance and expertise to educational and training establishments and to ensure quality programs are available to veterans and other eligible persons. Not only do we assist the students, we also assist the schools and training establishments. Some of the responsibilities of the SAA are: approve institutional programs, licensing, and certificates, approve apprenticeships and on the job training programs, conduct site visits, conduct compliance survey visits. We are a liaison to State and Federal agencies, veterans, or anyone using these benefits. Our team has one dream – to make a real difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

Economic Impact/Out-of-State Claims

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has vowed to reduce and eliminate the backlog of compensation claims that were pending within the VA. To accomplish this, the VA has created the National Work Que (NWQ). NWQ allows claims to flow electronically to any available VA Veteran Service Representative throughout the country who is currently available to complete the work. The Sioux Falls VA Regional Office receives many brokered claims through NWQ.

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



In 2018 the claims office reviewed over 3,100 out-of-state claims that were worked in the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office through the National Work Que.

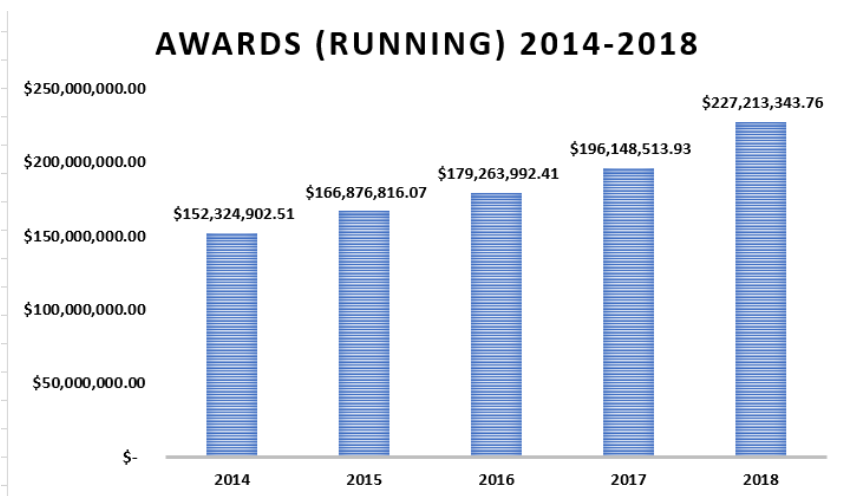
Through the efforts of our employees, our County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers and other partners, the Department has seen significant gains in the amount of benefits that clients whom we've assisted and represented receive. We also work with other service officers with the same accreditations in assisting their veterans.

In total, South Dakota veterans garnered a total benefit of over \$227 Million in 2018. One-time retro payments for 2018 totaled \$10,037,065. Running awards were \$217 Million.

Economic Impact

Our claims office continues to seek ways to expedite the claims process and provide the best customer service for our clients. For compensation and pension claims, our claims examiners process many of them through Digits to Digits or Direct Upload 360. These systems electronically submit the application documents directly into the VBA's National Work Que so the claims can start processing within one to three days versus the traditional mail route which adds an extra ten to thirty days.

For claimants adding dependents, we utilize the Stakeholders Enterprise Portal. This process can add dependents in one business day. Regular processing for these non-rating claims would normally take four to twelve months to process. Our claims examiners have also developed a way to submit healthcare applications to the Sioux Falls VAMC eligibility office, which has significantly reduced the wait time for veterans trying to enroll in VA Healthcare.



Bonus

The state of South Dakota awards a bonus to both active duty military members and to veterans who meet certain service qualifications. To be eligible for the bonus, veterans must have been a legal resident of South Dakota for at least six months immediately preceding entry into the armed forces. To be eligible for payment, a veteran must have honorable service during the following qualifying period(s):

- August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 - All active service counts for payment.
- March 4, 1991 to December 31, 1992 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.
- January 1, 1993 to September 10, 2001 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for any United States campaign or service medal awarded for combat operations against hostile forces counts for payment.
- September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined - All active service counts for payment.

No veteran may receive a bonus payment of more than \$500.

However, a veteran who was eligible for a bonus for service prior to December 31, 1992 and is also eligible for a bonus for service after January 1, 1993, may receive two separate bonuses. Active Duty for training is not allowed for Bonus purposes.

Veterans who are eligible for a bonus payment and who have a service connected disability rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as 10% or more disabling, will receive the maximum payment of \$500. In 2018, a total of \$97,390 was paid out to bonus applicants. More information can be found on our website at:

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/benefits/State/Veterans%20Bonus.aspx>

Headstones, Burial Allowances, Military Funeral Honors and Homeless Veterans

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) awards payments of \$100 for setting a government headstone or marker at the veteran's resting place. The fee can be paid out to the veterans' survivors, funeral homes, memorial companies, or an individual or organization that permanently set the headstone or marker. In 2017, we processed over \$38,600 for the setting of headstones throughout the state.

SDDVA also provides a \$100 Burial Allowance to help defray the burial and funeral expenses of any honorably discharged veteran or spouse, widow or widower of a veteran when the estate, or immediate family, of the deceased is lacking in funds to pay funeral expenses. In 2018 we paid out \$500 for this program.

Military Funeral Honors program is a program that reimburses veteran service organizations \$50 for each military funeral honor ceremony conducted. In 2018, we processed \$48,050 for Funeral Honors.

In recent years, SDDVA has been represented in efforts to assist homeless veterans. Department staff members have attended various homeless organization meetings to include the South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium and the South Dakota Housing Development Authority's statewide Homeless Summit. A comprehensive list of homeless shelters and facilities available for veterans in South Dakota can be found on the SDDVA website at <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/docs/SD%20Homeless%20Housing%20Resources%20by%20Regions%20and%20Project.pdf>. More information is also available through the South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium website.

Veterans Courts and Justice Outreach

Veterans Courts are a collaborative process that includes prosecutors, defense counsel, judges, federal and state Departments of Veteran Affairs and other community-based support organizations. The goal of Veterans Court is to reduce recidivism, facilitate participant sobriety, increase compliance with treatment and other court ordered conditions, improve access to veteran's benefits and services, improve family relationships and social support connections, and improve life stability.

Veterans Court programs 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 commonly addressed by the treatment programs include: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, anger issues, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse.

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

SDDVA staff have taken an active role in partnering with the Department of Corrections to work with incarcerated veterans. Our team assists veteran prisoners and their family members in completing paperwork to suspend or file for benefits. It has been a very rewarding partnership for our department and we continue to learn about more avenues to assist our veterans that are incarcerated.

South Dakota Joining Forces

South Dakota Joining Forces has continued to expand in 2018. In the last year, the initiative has grown with the help of the evolving website, social media presence, outreach, community network, collaboration and media interviews. The website (<http://sdjf.sd.gov/>) allows stakeholders to find Military, Veterans and Family (MVF) focused events, community support at the following levels: county, tribal, state, and national. The site has established a detailed outline of what each county/tribe has to offer for their constituents.

This past year, SDJF collaborated to create a new form of outreach to incarcerated veterans in South Dakota. The new program has provided education and awareness about VA benefits and community resources for veterans and their dependents. The program has received positive feedback in the community after being highlighted in the media.

In 2018, SDJF participated in 49 outreach events and had 28,305 website hits.

SDJF goals for 2019 are:

- continue to grow relationships,
- build a database of contacts,
- conduct outreach events, and
- grow our website and social media content.

We continue to grow our outreach efforts and know this is the best avenue to nurture our partners and our resources.

Our SDJF mission remains “To serve veterans, military and family members in South Dakota and help them navigate the maze of programs and services to get them through the right door at the right time.”



Public Affairs

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs public relations staff oversees and manages the Department's public information activities and media relations.

The Office is also accountable for planning statewide public events such as press conferences, listening sessions, commission meetings, 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. This year we incorporated the state's three memorial websites (World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War) into the SDDVA site, making it easier for anyone to locate.

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>.

In addition to our press releases, the Department distributes a monthly column to the media on issues relating to veterans.

The Department maintains a statewide web calendar at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/upcomingevents>.

The public relations office also tracks all veteran-related bills introduced, along with committee hearings during each legislative session and updates department staff daily.

We continue to use social media to share our messages.

State Veterans Cemetery

With the passage of Senate Bill 91, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs was authorized to submit a pre-application for a federal state cemetery grant, which we did. SDDVA was notified in October that we were selected for a grant opportunity.

The City of Sioux Falls has gifted approximately 60 acres of land for this project.

Stockwell Engineers was selected to design the cemetery. The Environmental Assessment has produced no significant findings. The SD Historical Society has concurred that there are no culturally significant artifacts on the property.

Our Department, Bureau of Finance and Management, Bureau of Administration, Office of State Engineer, Stockwell, and staff from the Veteran's Cemetery Grant Program (VCGP) hold bi-weekly meetings.

Due to the fixed grant amount, the uncertainty of tariffs, and state laws, we have selected a Construction Manager at Risk for the project.

The cemetery design process is at 35% complete. So far, a general cemetery layout, building designs, and a proposed project budget have been produced and finishes are being selected. Summer 2019 we anticipate final submission of all necessary grant application documents to the National Cemetery Administration to secure the grant funding for the cemetery.

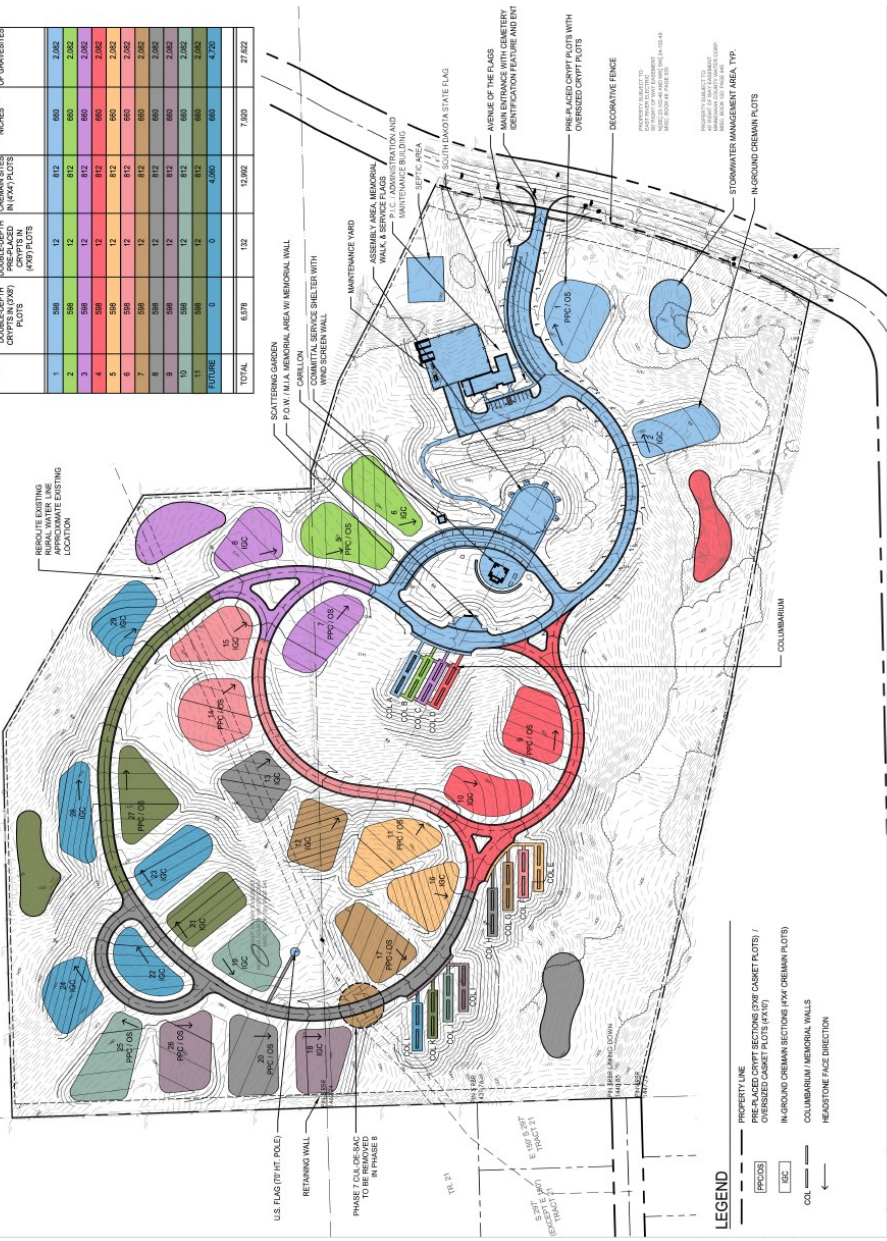
While we don't have a confirmed ground-breaking date, we anticipate this will be sometime late 2019 or early 2020. Construction will likely take between twelve to eighteen months.

Again, we don't have any confirmed dates and our timelines will likely remain flexible and fluid and change slightly as we progress through this project.

State Veterans Cemetery

GRAVESITE YIELD SUMMARY

PHASE	CASSET PLOTS		CREMATION PLOTS		TOTAL NUMBER OF GRAVESITES
	PRE-PLACED DOUBLE DEPTH CASSET PLOTS	OVERSIZED DOUBLE DEPTH CASSET PLOTS (F&S)	IN-GROUND CREMATION SITES (F&S)	COLUMBARIUM INCHES	
1	588	12	812	660	2,092
2	588	12	812	660	2,092
3	588	12	812	660	2,092
4	588	12	812	660	2,092
5	588	12	812	660	2,092
6	588	12	812	660	2,092
7	588	12	812	660	2,092
8	588	12	812	660	2,092
9	588	12	812	660	2,092
10	588	12	812	660	2,092
11	588	12	812	660	2,092
FUTURE	0	0	4,060	660	4,720
TOTAL	6,576	132	12,096	7,820	27,622



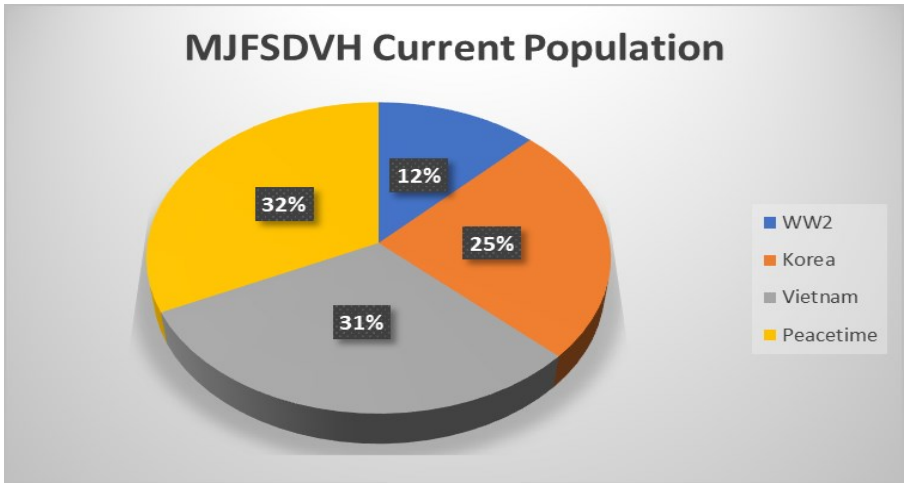
LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- PRE-PLACED CRYPT SECTIONS (EXM CASSET PLOTS) / OVERSIZED CASSET PLOT (F&S)
- IN-GROUND CREMATION SECTIONS (F&S CREMATION PLOTS)
- COLUMBARIUM / MEMORIAL WALLS
- HEADSTONE FACE DIRECTION
- PPC OS
- OS
- COL

State Veterans Home

2018 was a busy year for The Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veterans Home with activities, admissions, and many other events.

World War II Veterans comprise 12% of the residents, Korean War Veterans are 25%, Vietnam Veterans are 31%, and Peacetime Veterans from all eras are 32% of the population. The Home contains 76 nursing rooms and 24 independent living rooms.



Our VA Survey was conducted in January and the organization performed exceptionally well. Many projects finished and started with the completion in August of our new maintenance building. The one hundred thirty-year-old original building for the Soldiers Home received upgrades for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning making it an energy efficient building. The upgrades were completed in November.

We are truly grateful for all the organizations that donate to the Home. We could not accomplish our mission without their financial support and volunteer hours.

State Veterans Home

Our State Veterans Home offers many services and amenities to our residents, including: physician services, occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, pharmacy, pastoral services, library, beauty/barbershop, transportation services and bistro. We are caring for our heroes and love every minute of it!

The Home received Safety Facility Award from the Big Senior

Crime Stop-
pers pro-
gram. In
2018 we
received
LEED Silver
certifica-
tion,
achieved



national certification in Music and Merry program and partnered with the South Dakota Arts Council on the Veterans Art Initiative.



Partners

Veterans Service Organizations

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

Collectively they provide advocacy, educate veterans on benefits, lobby Congress and legislators and provide a network for veterans. SDDVA works closely with these congressional chartered veterans service organizations:

- Air Force Sergeants Association
- American Legion and Auxiliary
- AMVETS
- Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary
- Korean War Veterans Association
- Marine Corps League
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- National American Indian Veterans
- National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs
- National Guard Association of South Dakota
- National Guard Enlisted Association
- National Guard Enlisted Association Auxiliary
- Non-Commissioned Officers Association of America
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc.
- Veterans of Foreign Wars and 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. 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 Lori Vosika (Hot Springs)

Vice Chairman Kella With Horn (Aberdeen)

Commissioner James Ross (Whitewood)

Commissioner Brooks Schild (Yankton)

Commissioner Daryl (KC) Russell (Aberdeen)

Commissioner Helen Parr (Sioux Falls)



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—Ken Teunissen (MOPH)

Secretary/Treasurer—Lisa Cummings (PVA)

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 CTVSOs.

The CTVSOs ensure veterans and their dependents have access to the benefits they have earned. CTVSOs are not supervised by the Department however, the Department provides training, certification, accreditation, counseling and outreach to the CTVSOs. The Department holds initial onsite training for all new VSOs, as well as annual conferences and mini-conferences. (A listing of the CTVSOs can be found on the next three pages.)

Officers of the CTVSO Association are:

President—Doug Huntrods (Meade)

Vice President—Aaron Walberg (Brown)

Secretary-Treasurer—Susan Irons (Lincoln and Union)

Judge Advocate—Dennis Evenson (Deuel)

District 1—Courtney VanZanten (Lake)

District 2—Ron Hoffer (Edmunds)

District 3—Michael McDonald (Yankton)

District 4—David Dodson (Pennington)

District 5—Jeri Opsal (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

Partners—CTVSOs

Aurora—Ron Falor
Beadle—Taylor Jans
Bennett—Don Larson
Bon Homme—Eric Elsberry
Brookings—Michael Holzhauser
Brown—Aaron Walberg
Brule—Ron Falor
Buffalo—Vacant
Butte—Robert Wagner
Campbell—Lester Goehring
Charles Mix—Jerry Seiner
Cheyenne River Sioux—Robert Dunsmore
Clark—Larry Jones
Clay—Cindy Aden
Codington—Alvin Janzen
Corson—Christen Schneider
Crow Creek Sioux—Joseph Shields
Custer—Jana Virtue
Davison—Craig Bennett
Day—Kevin Bohn
Deuel—Dennis Evenson
Dewey—Robert Dunsmore
Douglas—Fred Kuil
Edmunds—Ron Hoffer
Fall River—Dan Cullen
Faulk—David Huss
Grant—Scott Malimanek
Gregory—Dale Reber
Haakon—Terry Deuter
Hamlin—David Schaefer
Hand—Dave Johnson



Partners—CTVSOs

Hanson—Harry Huffman, Jr.

Harding—Vacant

Hughes—Charles Quinn

Hutchinson—Glenn Hartman

Hyde—Bob Sheffield

Jackson—Terry Deuter

Jerauld—Roger Dwyer

Jones—Gary Sletto

Kingsbury—Gary Schumacher

Lake—Courtney VanZanten

Lawrence—Jesse Ketzer

Lincoln—Susan Irons

Lower Brule Sioux—Tim Felicia

Lyman—Gary Sletto

Marshall—David Daberkow

McCook—Dareus Montreal

McPherson—Darrell Pfeifle and Harvey Schaible

Meade—Doug Huntrods

Mellette—Gary Sletto

Miner—Terrance Lee

Minnehaha—David Sorenson

Moody—Jim DeLay

Oglala Lakota—Jerlene Arredondo

Oglala Sioux—Shawnee Red Bear

Pennington—Thomas Vallette, David Dodson and Allan Taylor

Perkins—Loyson Carda

Potter—Donald Herricks

Roberts—Angela Beacom

Rosebud Sioux—Orlando Morrison, Sr.

Sanborn—Taylor Jans

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate—Geri Opsal



Partners—CTVSOs

Spink—Steve Wollman

Stanley—Charles Quinn

Standing Rock Sioux—Manaja Hill and David Harrison

Sully—Charles Quinn

Todd—Ronald Valandra

Tripp—Terry Cousins

Turner—Thomas Sparrow

Union—Susan Irons

Walworth—Leo Rookey

Yankton—Michael McDonald

Yankton Sioux Tribe—Dennis Rucker

Ziebach—Harold Veit



2018 Top SDDVA Accomplishments

- Continued involvement with the South Dakota Native Homeownership Coalition.
- Compensation and pension awards for CY18 exceeded \$227 million. Through the efforts of our department and our partners, we saw significant gains in the amount of total federal benefits that veterans received. Total awards for CY18 exceeded \$666 Million.
- Had over 180 veterans participating in On-the-Job training programs.
- Paid \$97,390 in veterans bonuses.
- Reimbursed \$48,950 for military funeral honors stipends.
- Continued with Operation CARS – Calling All Returning Service members—welcoming them home, thanking them for their service, and providing contacts to assist them.
- Received VA Certification for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, as well as the Platinum Award from the SD Great Plains Nursing Home Quality Care Collaborative (this group represents ND, SD, NE, and KS)
- Recognized and honored over 1,200 South Dakota World War II Veterans and presented them with a SD commemorative coin.
- Improved educational benefits for veterans.
- Legislation was passed to construct a state veterans cemetery.
- Actively involved in Veterans Courts and assisting incarcerated veterans.
- Sold some parcels of land on State Veterans Home campus.
- Utilized more Skype training for county and tribal veterans service officers.
- Worked with Western Dakota Tech and Southern Hills Economic Development Corporation to establish a new scholarship program for nursing staff at State Veterans Home.



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>

