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WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION DAY

PIERRE, S.D. – At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of the Military, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed Sunday, Nov. 11, 2018, as “World War I Centennial Commemoration Day.” He asks that all South Dakotans participate as fully as possible in the spirit of this day, remembering all of our veterans who have served this great country, and especially those who served our country a century ago during World War I.

Over 32,000 South Dakota Soldiers served the United States during World War I, including over 1,500 South Dakota National Guard Soldiers who participated in a number of battles.

“World War I Veterans have all passed since their service,” said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “We stand in awe of their service to our country and the world. From the farms, cities, and reservations they stood up and fought for our freedoms.”

World War I was one of the deadliest conflicts in world history. Over nine million combatants and seven million civilians died as a result of the war. The United States officially entered the war on April 6, 1917. Some 4.7 million Americans stepped forward to serve during the war, two million of them were deployed overseas to fight, and 116,516 of them never made it home.

"There was a total mobilization of the South Dakota National Guard during World War I and twenty-five of our soldiers lost their lives during that war," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard. "Their families' lives were impacted in a profound manner as a result of those losses, and we are forever in their debt."

The United States World War One Centennial Commission was established by Congress in 2013 to provide education programs, public outreach, and commemorative events regarding the American involvement in the war. The Centennial Commission was also authorized by Congress to make a national-level memorial in the nation's capital, to honor the men and women who served. Information on the new National World War One Memorial can be found at www.ww1cc.org/memorial.