



South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Soldiers and Sailors Building  
425 E. Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242 Fax: 605-773-5380  
<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**For more information, contact:** Audry Ricketts (South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs) at 605-773-8242 or email to: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us).

**SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's November Column – Honoring our Heroes**

Across the country and around the world; war, military, and veteran's memorials stand to honor those who served in uniform, and the battles they fought, to protect our nation's freedoms. Communities in every county in South Dakota have erected monuments dedicated to those individuals who went off to war and never came back, to those that came back in part, and to all who gave even the smallest effort to protect our freedom and serve mankind.

This nation, and this state, owe a great debt to our veterans. Whenever and wherever the nation has called, in times of darkness and danger, as well as in times of peace and prosperity, veterans have been there and have proudly carried the torch of liberty for all to see.

In answering their calls to duty these American men and women stood their ground, held back the dark forces of oppression and destruction, and advanced our founding principles, ideals, beliefs, and values.

Governor Kristi Noem has announced a new program that she has been working on with the South Dakota Departments of Veterans Affairs, Military, and Transportation to honor our fallen heroes who died while in combat. State bridges will now be named after, and dedicated to, heroes who died in combat.

Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memory lives on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state. Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen will give us an opportunity of remembrance, reflection, and respect—for honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life.

People driving over the state bridges will see the commemorative signs and will wonder who these heroes are and what conflict they served in. Many will google the name and learn of their sacrifice. SDDVA will also have bios of the heroes, the bridge that is named after them and the location posted on our website (<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/>).

South Dakota plans to dedicate six bridges each year. The application form to nominate a fallen hero will also be posted on our website.

What a great way to honor our veterans and share their respective combat story. The valiant courage, bravery, and selflessness of our South Dakota men and women who served and sacrificed will never be forgotten. Their legacy will live on.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs