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SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's April Column – We're in This Together!

For many of us the month of April has challenged us, but being the resilient South Dakotans that we are, we have saddled up and are ready for the long ride. We took control of the reins as we knew we were on this ride for the long haul. We stayed connected with those around us using many forms of social media and technology. We've shaped our character and we have found numerous ways to make each day meaningful.

These have not been easy times in our community, our state, our nation, and even our world as we met the challenges COVID-19 dealt us. We have been challenged to meet new challenges, adapt to change, and most importantly, to continue to care for one another.

Perhaps Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

As April comes to a close, and May is just around the corner, I want to take this opportunity to remind you that we have thousands of people who once again demonstrated their resilience by serving and defending this great country. May is Military Appreciation month, a month that provides us great opportunities to remember, recognize, and appreciate those who have served in the past and those now serving, as well as their families.

National Military Appreciation month includes: Loyalty Day (May 1), Victory in Europe Day (May 8), Military Spouse Appreciation Day (May 8), Armed Forces Day (May 16); and Memorial Day (May 25).

Each of those days provides an opportunity to learn more about military members and the families who have given of themselves to support the principles we hold dear and the freedom we enjoy. Heroes, who set aside their personal lives and safety, to defend and protect our families, our communities, and our nation from those who would threaten our way of life.

This pandemic has challenged us in ways we never thought possible. We have found new ways to work, to teach, to celebrate, to serve the Lord, to shop, and so much

more. Through it all we have grown and we have created a new legacy. I challenge each of you to find new ways to honor our heroes during the month of May.

This is an amazing state. Leaders are making good decisions and partners are working together for the common good.

As we have been saying — we are in this together, we will get through this together.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs