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SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's May Column – Let Us Never Forget!

Memorial Day was born of compassion and empathy for those who courageously gave their lives to safeguard us and our way of life.

Let us all pause this Memorial Day to remember great and brave Americans – to recognize their valor and applaud the blessings their bravery has secured.

Throughout our nation's history, the freedoms we enjoy have been won and protected by an elite group who understand the greatest and most selfless love.

Remembering those sacrifices and what they have meant to our nation is the duty of the living. Hundreds of thousands young American lives were lost on the battlefields and the concept of Memorial Day became a tradition renewed by each generation's sacrifice.

Our records reflect South Dakota military casualties by wartime period were: World War I – 1,038; World War II – 1,614; Korean – 177; Vietnam – 192; and Gulf War – 35.

On this Memorial Day, let us all pledge to renew our dedication to the true meaning of Memorial Day. Let us all enjoy the lives we lead because of the generations of young Americans who gave their lives so that all of us could live in freedom and prosperity. Let us continue to educate our children about the price paid for their freedom.

Our greatest duty to the men and women who have died in service to our country is to never, ever forget what they have done for each of us – and what they have done for us as a nation. They led colorful, vivid, and passionate lives and we owe it to them and their families to honor and pay tribute to their sacrifice.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs