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SDDVA Secretary Whitlock’s May Column – Honoring our Heroes Legacy

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. The men and women of our armed forces risk the ultimate sacrifice to protect fellow Americans and citizens of the world from tyranny and oppression. Every time they put on the uniform, these heroes renew their commitment to pay any price, to bear any burden, so that we might be free.

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

Oliver Wendell Holmes called this “our most sacred holiday,” and he urged that “we do not ponder with sad thoughts the passing of our heroes, but to rather ponder their legacy – the life they made possible for us by their commitment and their pain.”

They paid the ultimate price for freedom, and it is our duty to keep their legacy fresh in the memories of future generations.

This Memorial Day, veterans service organizations, community leaders and the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host hundreds of services across the state.

With pride and gratitude, let us attend one of these programs to remember great and brave Americans -- to recognize their valor and rejoice in the blessings their bravery secured. We know nothing of their individual thoughts and feelings as they met their fate. But we know they died for a cause greater than self.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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SDDVA Memorial Day programs - Monday, May 30:
Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Memorial Day program will be held in Hot Springs (2500 Minnekahta Avenue) - 10:00 am (MT).

South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day program will be held in Sioux Falls (25965 477th Avenue) at 10:00 am (CT). River Cities Public Transit will be providing transportation to and from the program originating from the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street) starting at 8:30 am and will return attendees to the Alliance following the ceremony. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs with them.