



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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

SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's May Column – Let us Never Forget

As Memorial Day approaches, it is a great time to pause and consider the true meaning of this holiday. This is a day for national awareness and reverence. It's a day to honor those Americans who died while defending our nation and our values. We can never underestimate or over appreciate the costs they bore for us.

Let us never forget how fortunate we are to live in freedom. And let us always commemorate our history and honor the sacrifices these heroes gave to protect that freedom. They led colorful, vivid, and passionate lives, and we owe it to them and their families to honor and pay tribute to them.

To me, cemeteries are like libraries – rich in history with hundreds of headstones that each tell a story. I challenge you to visit a cemetery, especially a veteran's cemetery, walk down each row and capture each veteran's story. You'll read about great Americans, recognize their valor, and applaud the blessings their bravery secured. They came from all backgrounds, ages, faiths, colors, and creeds.

Books help us open our minds and increase our understanding of the world around us. Veteran's headstones tell their stories. They tell us when they served, where they served, and what their mission was. Each veteran is unique and exploring their memoirs will leave a lasting impact.

Never forget that our veterans sacrificed their future and their dreams, and it is our duty to keep their legacy fresh in the memories of future generations.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs