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For Immediate Release

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SDDVA Secretary Schneider's June Column – Remember, Reflect, and Renew Our Commitment

Service does not end when the uniform comes off. For South Dakota's veterans, it continues in our communities every day with service to families, workplaces, and quiet acts of leadership that often go unseen.

Across the state, veterans represent every generation and every corner of South Dakota. They returned home to become leaders, neighbors, parents, and volunteers. They continue to strengthen our communities in meaningful ways. Their lives remind us that service is not just something worn; it is something lived.

As we observe Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) Awareness Month, we are reminded that invisible wounds are real. Seeking help is a sign of strength, and supporting those who struggle is a shared responsibility. No veteran should ever feel alone. In addition to PTSI Awareness Month, here are some other dates of significance in June:

- June 6: D-Day Anniversary
- June 11-14: The Wall That Heals – Brookings
- June 11-14: VFW State Convention – Mitchell
- June 12: Veterans Stand Down – Pine Ridge
- June 12: Women Veterans Day
- June 14: Flag Day and U.S. Army Birthday
- June 18-21: American Legion State Convention – Aberdeen
- June 19: Juneteenth – State Offices Closed
- June 21: Father's Day
- June 23: Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- June 24: Veterans Stand Down - Antelope
- June 27: National PTSD Awareness Day

These events highlight a simple truth: connection saves lives. Whether through a conversation, access to resources, or a shared moment of remembrance, every interaction matters. I am continually inspired by the veterans, families, service officers, and community partners who support this mission each day. Their work may be quiet, but its impact is lasting.

As we also recognize Father's Day, we honor the fathers whose service and sacrifice helped shape the next generation. Their example reminds us that service is defined not only by duty, but by character.

Our mission remains clear: to honor, serve, and advocate for South Dakota's veterans and their families. This June, remembrance must lead to responsibility, and gratitude must lead to action as we stand alongside those who have served.

To every veteran, your service matters, your story matters, and you are not forgotten.

Jeremiah J. Schneider, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs