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Secretary Schneider's September Column – A Season of Change, A Constant Commitment

September brings cooler mornings, golden fields, and the first signs of fall across South Dakota. As the seasons change, it reminds us that the values learned through military service remain constant.

Duty. Honor. Courage. Sacrifice. Family.

For veterans and their families, life after service often brings transitions: new careers, raising children, moves, retirement, and new routines. Even so, service continues in the way veterans lead, support their communities, and care for one another.

September offers many opportunities to remember our history and connect with communities, from honoring service and sacrifice to recognizing moments of remembrance and support:

- September 2: Victory over Japan Day
- September 3: Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair – Huron
- September 7: Labor Day – State Offices Closed
- September 11: Patriot Day
- September 15-18: Annual C/TCVOs Benefits School – Sioux Falls
- September 18: United States Air Force Birthday
- September 18: Veterans Standdown – Sioux Falls
- September 18: National POW/MIA Recognition Day Program – Sioux Falls
- September 21-25: Veteran Buddy Check Week
- September 24: Veterans Standdown – Rapid City
- September 27: Gold Star Mothers and Families Day

These observances remind us of the lives lost, the first responders who ran toward danger, the service members who answered our nation's call, and the families who continue to carry the weight of sacrifice, showing how each event reflects the same commitment and loss.

When we serve a veteran, we serve a family. Spouses, parents, children, and loved ones share in the challenges, sacrifices, and pride of military service. At the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, supporting veterans and their families remains at the heart of our mission, and every effort reflects that share.

I encourage every South Dakotan to reach out to a veteran, reconnect with an old friend, and hear the stories of those who served, so these moments of remembrance continue through our communities. The seasons may change, but the legacy of service endures. Let us carry that legacy forward, together.

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