



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SD DEDICATES TWO MORE FALLEN HERO BRIDGES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs hosted two more fallen hero state bridge dedication ceremonies.

On Friday, August 2, the SD28 bridge over the Big Sioux River, west of Estelline, was dedicated in honor of U.S. Army Private First Class John Tuin.



Tuin was reported missing in action October 6, 1952, while fighting the enemy in Korea. Tuin's remains are still unaccounted for.

On Monday, August 5, the US 12 westbound bridge over the railroad three miles west of Groton was dedicated to honor three brothers, U.S. Navy Radio Man Second Class Ordien F. Herr, Naval

Air Force Lieutenant LeRoy M. Herr, and U.S. Navy Radio Man Second Class Eugene L. Herr.

Eugene was first reported as missing in action when he was serving on the USS Johnston, which was sunk at the Battle of Samar. Eugene survived the sinking, but died two days later, October 25, 1944, from exhaustion and exposure.

Having completed over 38 missions during the war, LeRoy's PV1 Ventura bomber crashed while flying over Catalina Island September 25, 1945.

On June 8, 1943, a transport carrying personnel to Sydney, Australia crashed leaving Tontouta Airfield, New Caledonia. Approximately three minutes after takeoff, the plane was seen going into a low turn and disappeared from sight. During the initial climb, one of the engines failed. The pilot tried to return to the airfield, but the aircraft stalled and crashed. The wreckage of the plane was in the water of St. Vincent's Bay about 100 yards from shore. A total of 24 men were killed, one of which was Ordien Herr.



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FUNERAL SERVICES TO BE HELD FOR CPL BARTLETT

Funeral services will be held Saturday, August 10, at 1:00 pm at the Little Methodist Church in Blunt for U.S. Army Corporal Robert A. Bartlett.

Bartlett was killed during World War II and recently accounted for by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

In July 1944, Bartlett was assigned to Company A, 744th Tank Battalion, as a crew member of an M5A1 Stuart light tank. His unit was engaged in battle with German forces at Saint-Germain-d'Elle, France, on July 26 when his tank was struck by an enemy shoulder-fired rocket. Two crewmembers were able to escape the vehicle, but Bartlett and another soldier were never seen or heard from again. Due to strong enemy artillery fire and intense combat, surviving crewmembers were unable to examine the tank afterwards. Bartlett was declared missing in action, but the Germans never reported him as a prisoner of war. In September 1950, with no evidence Bartlett survived the fighting, the Army Quartermaster Corps determined his remains were non-recoverable.



More information can be found at [Isburg Funeral Home](#) in Pierre.

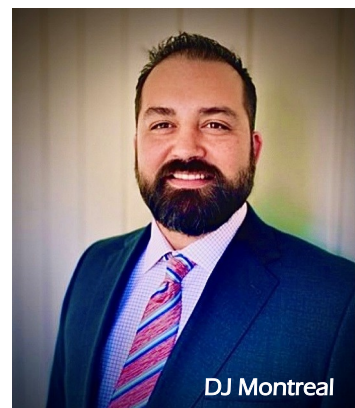


SDDVA UPDATE

DJ Montreal has transitioned into a new role with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. In his new position, Montreal will serve as training / outreach coordinator in the benefits division. He will be working closely with our benefits division and with the county and tribal veterans service officers.

DJ has been with the Department for 15 months. Prior to that he worked as the McCook County VSO.

Four new members have joined our staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.



DJ Montreal



Jana Bolter

Jana Bolter, a native Californian, moved to Hot Springs eight years ago and fell in love with the quiet and peaceful community. She and her husband love to travel. Jana will be working as a dining assistant in the Old Glory neighborhood.

Debbie Suter, another California native, will serve as a CNA in Old Glory and Veterans Lane neighborhoods. When not at work, Debbie loves to cook, travel, and collect carousel horses.

Lori Dunn, a native Iowan, will serve as a nurse on the day shift. Lori served in the Air Force. She and her husband are kept busy these days with remodeling projects at their home.

In the maintenance department, we welcome Nick Bell to our team.

Our heartiest welcome to all of the new members of our team. We are fortunate to attract dedicated employees who share our passion for supporting veterans.



Lori Dunn



Debbie Suter



Nick Bell

VA ACCEPTING PROPOSALS FOR NEW GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs launched the [online application portal](#) to accept applications for the new [Pilot Program for Graduate Medical Education and Residency](#), aimed at expanding health care access for veterans across the country.

Through this pilot program, the VA will reimburse salaries and benefits for at least 100 physician residents who rotate to covered health care facilities — prioritizing facilities in rural and underserved areas, Indian Tribe or Tribal organizations, and Indian Health Service facilities. Other covered facilities include Federally Qualified Health Centers, Department of Defense facilities, and other facilities deemed appropriate by the VA.

One of the priorities of the VA is making sure that veterans have access to the world-class care they deserve, regardless of where they live. Over the past year, the VA has expanded access to care for veterans in many ways — including adding night and weekend clinics, increasing the number of veterans scheduled in daily clinics, partnering with DOD facilities, hiring new clinicians, and much more.

“This program will place physician residents where they are needed most — in rural and underserved communities across America,” said VA Chief Academic Affiliations Officer Marjorie Bowman, M.D. “For veterans, this program will make it easier to access the health care they need and deserve.”

The VA has played a major role in educating the next generation of health professionals for almost eight decades. Nearly 70% of all U.S. physicians have trained at VA facilities, and approximately 120,000 clinicians train at the VA each year. Overseen by its Office of Academic Affiliations, VA educates health professions trainees across 60 health care disciplines at more than 1,000 VA health care facilities. These training opportunities serve as a workforce pathway for the VA and the nation.

Academic institutions and programs interested in participating in this new pilot program must apply by September 30, 2024. The selected programs will be notified in November 2024, for residency rotations in the July 2025 – June 2026 academic year. An online public information session will be held at 2 pm (ET) on Wednesday, August 21.

The pilot program was established under Section 403 of the MISSION Act. For more information on the upcoming information session and the program itself, visit [the Office of Academic Affiliations](#).

BROWN COUNTY TEEN DEDICATES TIME TO RAISE FUNDS FOR VETERANS

Aberdeen's Esten Foss, whose dream is to gain admission to the United States Military Academy at West Point, recently hosted a carwash to raise funds to benefit veterans. Centennial Homes of Aberdeen agreed to match the amount he raised.

Esten attended the Brown County Veterans Service Officer's "Coffee with Veterans" this week and presented a check for over \$4,000 to Brown County VSO Aaron Walberg.

Funds raised will go toward the purchase of the batteries required for motorized wheelchairs used by veterans. Any additional funds will be directed towards other United Way veteran oriented programs.

In developing his fundraiser, Esten worked closely with United Way of Northeastern South Dakota and Jesse Milbrandt from the Brown County Veterans Service Office.



AARP SOUTH DAKOTA TO HOST VETERAN TELE-TOWN HALL

AARP South Dakota is hosting a free tele-town hall conversation on Tuesday, August 20, at 12 pm (CT), to help connect veterans to important resources available to them.

The tele-town hall will feature state leaders who work daily to connect veterans and their families to valuable programs. Panelists include:

Erik Gaikowski, AARP South Dakota State Director

Aaron Pollard, Deputy Secretary of the SD Department of Veterans Affairs

Brett Dickerson, Benefits Division Program Manager, SD Department of Veterans Affairs

Shawn Bohn, Dakotas Regional Office Director, Veterans Benefits Administration

In addition to hearing from the guest speakers, callers will have the opportunity to ask questions live on air. To participate, anyone can connect at 12:00 p.m. Central Time on August 20 by calling toll-free at 1-866-654-9470 or listen live on the AARP South Dakota Facebook page.



Erik Gaikowski, AARP South Dakota State Director



Aaron Pollard, South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



Brett Dickerson, South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



Shawn Bohn, Veterans Administration

**Teletown Hall:
Supporting Veterans
and Military Families**



**Tuesday, August 20
12 Noon Central**

**Dial in at:
1-866-654-9479
or listen live on
our Facebook page.**





FREEDOM festival



Kaleb Austin



Cam Allen



Cole Hartley



SDFREEDOMFESTIVAL.ORG

9.21.24 HUSET'S SPEEDWAY

GATES OPEN AT 4PM

SDFreedomFestival@gmail.com



VETERAN STAND DOWN STANDING ROCK

SERVICES OFFERED

Lunch
Clothing
VA Benefits
Housing Referrals

Employment Services
Legal Assistance
Readjustment Counseling
Much More!

* Resource fair and outreach event for Veterans.
VA programs and VA benefits staff will be there to answer questions

*Please bring a copy of your DD214, dependent information, and identification to the event. Documentation is needed so we can fully serve you and your needs.

Date: Wednesday, Aug 14th, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Central Time

Location: Grand River Casino and Resort, Mobridge, SD

For Questions contact VA Black Hills:

Clay Thompson at: (605) 206-0046

Clay.thompson@va.gov

Chelsea Taken Alive at: (605) 490-1765

Tribal POC: Claudette Walking Elk

claudette.walkingelk@standingrock.org

Work phone (701) 854-8527

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
2025-2026

HEROES

HEROES



VETERAN STAND DOWN EAGLE BUTTE



Date: Wednesday, Aug 21st, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Mountain Time

Location: Veterans Building, W. Highway 212. Eagle Butte, SD

SERVICES OFFERED

Lunch	Employment Services
Clothing	Legal Assistance
VA Benefits	Readjustment Counseling
Housing Referrals	Much More!

*** Resource fair and outreach event for Veterans.
VA programs and VA benefits staff will be there to answer questions**

**For Questions contact VA Black Hills:
Clay Thompson at: (605) 206-0046
Clay.thompson@va.gov**

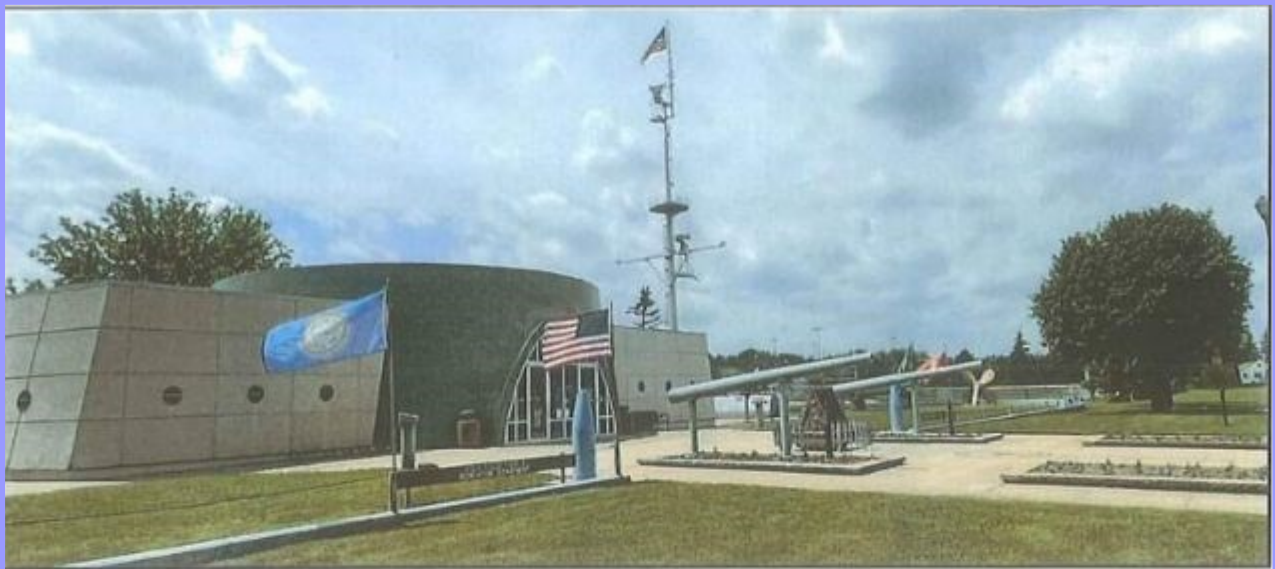
**Tribal POC: Robert Dunsmore Tribal VSO
robert.dunsmore@crstmail.com
Work phone (605)200-9012**

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Black Hills Health Care System





USS South Dakota Day of Honor

Crew Member Reunion and Commemoration of
Armored Cruiser (ACR 9)
Battleship (BB 57)
Attack Submarine (SSN 790)

Saturday, August 10, 2024

10 am - Concert by Sioux Falls Municipal Band Brass Quintet

11 am - Ceremony with guest speaker, Matt Michels

Former LCDR United States Naval Reserve

Former Lt. Governor of South Dakota and Speaker of the House



Battleship South Dakota Memorial
West 12th St. & Kiwanis Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD

605-366-3291 / 605-367-7141

info@southdakotabattleship.org

Public is invited-*free admission*



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 10—SGT Terry G. Rada Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Multi Purpose Center—(409 Michigan Avenue)—Geddes—12:00 noon (CT)
- Aug 10—CPL Bartlett Funeral Services—Little Methodist Church—Blunt—1:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 14—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Grand River Resort—(27903 US 12)—Mobridge—10:00 am (CT)
- Aug 17—SGT Dennis D. Lawver Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—American Legion Post—(402 S. Broadway Avenue)—Miller—2:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 17—VCP 2nd Annual Poker Run—Indian Motorcycles—(4800 N. Westport Avenue)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
- Aug 17—Homecoming Celebration for American Legion State Commander Kevin Morello—Old Auditorium—16159 2nd Street—Piedmont—1:00 pm (MT)
- Aug 18—PFC Gunnar D. Becker Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Sanborn County 4-H Building—(23237 405th Avenue)—Forestburg—2:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 21—Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Veterans Building—(W HWY 212)—Eagle Butte—10:00 am (MT)
- Aug 21—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 791—(209 S. Cedar)—Yankton—1:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 21—1LT Daniel J. Kirchgesler Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Security First Bank Court of Champions located in St Thomas More High School—(300 Fairmont Blvd)—Rapid City—2:00 pm (MT)
- Aug 26—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 28—Sep 2—SD State Fair—Huron
- Aug 29—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair—Northwest Energy Freedom Stage—Huron
- Sep 3—5—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
- Sep 18—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 22—(818 E. Saint Patrick Street)—Rapid City—9:00 am (MT)
- Sep 20—Sioux Falls VVA POW/MIA Recognition Day Program—Veterans Memorial Park—(1021 W. Bailey)—Sioux Falls—6:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 25—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 21—Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- Oct 8—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 22—Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- Oct 12—Midwest Honor Flight “Shake Rattle and Roll” fundraiser—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
- Oct 15—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 23—Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- Oct 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 74—(1229 Western Ave)—Brookings—1:00 pm (CT)

(Continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 9—Fifth Annual Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair We've Got Your Six—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 9—Third Annual Day County Veterans Banquet—Webster Armory—5:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 11—1LT Josef Thorne Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Beresford High School Gym—(301 W. Maple Street) —Beresford—1:30 pm (CT)
- Nov 18—Wreaths Across America Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV—(1519 W. 51st St)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls—12:00 noon (CT)
- Nov 21—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—American Legion Post 17—Watertown
- Nov 22—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—American Legion Post 22—Rapid City
- Nov 23—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—American Legion Post 8—Pierre
- Dec 3—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm
- Dec 14—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

2025 Events

- Jan 14—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm
- Jan 14—Legislative Session starts
- Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Pierre
- Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
- Apr 27-30—VFW Proficiency Training Conference—Annapolis, MD
- Jun 12—15—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre
- Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron
- Aug 9-13—National VFW Convention—Columbus, OH
- Sep 21-26—VFW National Skill Level and Basic Training Conference—Annapolis, MD
- Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
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