



# NEWSLETTER

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



## AG MORRELL VISITS THE TROOPS

South Dakota National Guard's Adjutant General, Air Force Maj. Gen. Mark Morrell, conducted his battlefield circulation in June with U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, Suriname partners as they visited SDNG Soldiers.

Battlefield circulations are conducted to visit troops and subordinate leaders. Its purpose is to allow commanders opportunities to see if his or her intent

is being met, determine if subordinates and their teams needed any resources and get a true picture of what was happening.

Maj. Gen. Morrell visited the A Battery 1/147th Field Artillery at Camp Ripley, the 200th Engineer Company at Oahe training area near Pierre, the 451st & 216th Engineer Detachments firefighters at Ellsworth Air Force Base, the 153rd Engineer Battalion and the 109th Engineer Battalion at Camp Guernsey; as well as the local aviation units at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City and the 196th Regiment at Fort Meade.



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# SD TO DEDICATE HERR FALLEN HERO BRIDGE

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony 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.

The ceremony will be Monday, August 5, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. (CT) at the High School Gym in Bristol (500 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street).

The US 12 Westbound bridge over the railroad three miles west of Groton will be dedicated to RM2, LT, and RM2 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.

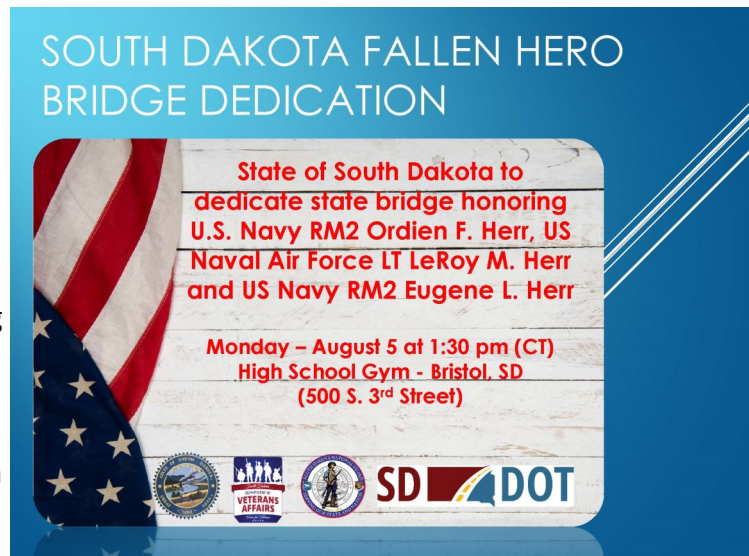
Having completed over 38 missions during the war, LeRoy's PV1 Ventura bomber crashed while flying over Catalina Island September 25, 1945.

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.

Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died while serving their country is an initiative of Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs.

"Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memories live on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen gives us the opportunity for remembrance, reflection, and respect. It helps us to honor the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom so much, they were willing to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life."

"We can never underestimate, or over appreciate, the costs they bore for us," said Whitlock. "We must never forget that our fallen sacrificed their future and their dreams. Their memories can only live through the accomplishments to present and future generations."



# SD TO DEDICATE TUIN FALLEN HERO BRIDGE

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Army Private First Class John Tuin.

The ceremony will be Friday, August 2, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. (CT) at the American Legion Post 184 in Estelline (222 Main Street).

The SD28 bridge over the Big Sioux River, west of Estelline, will be dedicated as the PFC John Tuin Bridge.

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

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"We can never over appreciate the costs they bore for us," said Whitlock. "We must never forget that our fallen sacrificed their future and their dreams. Their memories will live on for generations."

# TWO YEARS SINCE LAUNCH OF DIAL 988

Two years ago, the launch of Dial 988 then Press 1 made it easier than ever for veterans and their loved ones to access lifesaving support via the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Crisis Line. In these past two years, VCL has answered more than 1,638,138 calls, representing a 22.7% increase in calls per day since the launch. This means that more veterans than ever are getting the support they need from caring, qualified responders during times of crisis.

Dial 988 then Press 1 provides an easy-to-remember number to quickly connect veterans, service members, and their loved ones to the Veterans Crisis Line's lifesaving services. Since the launch of the shortened number, VCL has maintained an average speed to answer of 9.17 seconds. In addition to the increase in calls answered, VCL has also received a 76.7% increase in texts and 27.5% increase in chats per day over the same two years.

Since launching in July 2022, more than ten million total calls, texts, and chats to 988 have been answered, including 1,179,129 calls answered by VCL via Dial 988 then Press 1.

This year, the two-year anniversary of Dial 988 then Press 1 coincides with the 2024 VA/DOD Suicide Prevention Conference in Portland, Oregon. This biannual event — a major platform for advancing the [Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide](#) public health strategy — will bring together over 2,000 VA and DOD care team members, leaders, allies and subject matter experts from across the country to share leading-edge research, evidence-based clinical and community approaches, and improved data methods.

Ensuring veterans and their loved ones know how to reach VCL in their time of need, as well as continuing to advance broader efforts to prevent veteran suicide, are top VA priorities. Today, more than 1,000 responders — many of whom are Veterans themselves — ensure that every veteran has somebody to call for support in time of crisis.



# 114TH FIGHTER WING WELCOMED HOME



Family, friends, elected officials, and community leaders gathered in Sioux Falls recently to welcome home 273 SD Air National Guardsmen returning home from their deployment to the Indo-Pacific Region. Welcome Home!



# RATTLE AND ROLL

Step back in time to the fabulous 1950s with "Shake, Rattle, & Roll" - an electrifying concert and dance event that promises to transport you to the era of rock 'n' roll, poodle skirts, and greased-back hair! Get ready to twist and shout as we celebrate the iconic music and style that defined a generation. Don't miss out on this nostalgic blast from the past! Whether you're reliving fond memories or discovering the magic of the 50s for the first time, Midwest Honor Flight promises a night of music, dancing, and timeless fun. Grab your saddle shoes and slick back your hair!

Ticket sales and a silent auction throughout the night will benefit future Midwest Honor Flight Missions.



**MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT presents:**

## Shake Rattle & ROLL!

**\$25 ADVANCED TICKETS**

**Special Concert & 50's Dance  
Honor Flight Annual Fundraiser**

Jerry Lee Lewis - Elvis Presley - Roy Orbison - Chubby Checker  
Brenda Lee - Buddy Holly - Paul Anka - Bill Haley - Patsy Cline  
Bobby Darin - Patti Page - the Drifters - Everly Brothers  
the Crickets - the Beatles - CCR - Brenda Lee the Monkeys

**SURFIN SAFARI • THE FABULOUS FITTY**  
JOHN MOGEN \* CHUCK CASE \* CLAYTON HARTLEY DELAYNE  
DAVE VANDERLINDE \* KENNY YOUNG \* RICK BURKHARDT  
KATIE WREDE \* DAWN NELSON \* ZON TRAN \* PAM HOFFMAN  
JORDAN HOFFMAN \* TODD CERDES \* BOB GOODMAN

Visit [www.midwesthonorflight.org/dance](http://www.midwesthonorflight.org/dance) for all details and to get tickets for Saturday, October 12 in Sioux Falls.

# SD CODE TALKER MEMORIAL HIGHWAY DEDICATED

Nearly 106 miles of U.S. Highway 18 has been designated as the Sicangu Lakota Code Talker Memorial Highway. The Memorial Highways application was approved by the Transportation Commission at their June 29, 2023 meeting.

The highway designation runs through Todd, Tripp, and Gregory counties, along with the Rosebud Indian Reservation. The Sicangu Lakota Code Talker designation on Highway 18 is from just east of the Todd-Bennett County line to the Fort Randall Dam near Pickstown; and runs through the communities of Bonesteel, Burke, Gregory, Colome, Winner, and Mission.





# The outdoors will see you now

## Side Effect: Better Patient Outcomes

It's no secret that a healthy dose of fresh air provides actual medical benefits for the human body. Now, your health care practitioner can write you a Park Prescription, which is redeemable for a **free 1-day pass** to any South Dakota state park or a **discounted annual pass** for year-round activity.

## Side Effect: A Healthier South Dakota

Regular outdoor exercise is proven to **benefit both physical and mental health**, and it doesn't take a big investment of time to make a big difference. Not only does it get the heart pumping and the body moving, even light outdoor exercise can improve cognitive development, reduce stress and improve your mood.





## Ask your doctor about the best treatment on earth

“ Talk to your doctor today to see if they participate in the South Dakota Park Prescription program. If not, it’s easy for them to sign up and start writing prescriptions. Just visit [Park-Rx.com](http://Park-Rx.com) or scan the QR code to learn more. ”



### Conversation starters for doctors and patients:

#### 1. Weekly Physical Activity

This is a chance for patients to share their current activity level and for doctors to suggest some small, simple changes to help people get more active.

#### 2. Family Activities

What does the patient’s family like to do together on a regular basis? If quality time more often than not means TV time, the physician can offer tips to get the whole family more active. What if commercial breaks turned into a fitness break?

#### 3. Aspirational Activities

What are the patient’s goals? Run a 5K? Climb stairs easily? Longer playtimes with grandkids? When physicians understand their patients’ motivations, they can work together to set achievable goals and a plan to reach them.

**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
Game, Fish & Parks

**HEALTHYSD.GOV**  
Live better. Grow stronger.

**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

**Park-Rx.com**

The Park Rx program is administered by the South Dakota Department of Health in partnership with South Dakota Game Fish & Parks and SDSU Extension.



## Let's get moving: **PRESCRIBE EXERCISE!**

The SD Departments of Health, Game, Fish and Parks, and SDSU Extension are teaming up to *help you motivate your patients!*

**Healthcare providers can prescribe a FREE 1-DAY PASS to any South Dakota State Park. This 1-day pass can also be turned in for a discounted annual pass.**

Regular outdoor exercise is proven to benefit both physical and mental health. Encourage your patients to take advantage of our many amazing state parks to work on wellness.

**Sign up to get your park prescription pad and encourage your patients to move more!**

For more, visit  
**[HealthySD.gov/park-rx](http://HealthySD.gov/park-rx)**

The SD Park Rx project aligns with the vision of the *Exercise is Medicine* initiative to help make physical activity a standard part of disease prevention and treatment!

# EXERCISE IS GOOD MEDICINE FOR EVERYONE!

The Park Rx program can **motivate and inspire your patients** to be more physically active. These three questions can help you start the conversation:

- 1 How much physical activity do you get in an average week?**  
Meet your patients where they are. Once you have an idea of their current activity level, you can suggest small changes to help them get more active.
- 2 What are some things your family likes to do together?**  
Does family time mean watching TV on the couch? Offer tips for getting the whole family more active, like turning commercials into family fitness breaks.
- 3 Are there activities you'd like to be able to do?**  
Do your patients want to run a 5K? Climb stairs more easily? Pick up grandkids without pain? Knowing their motivations can help you work together to set achievable goals.

## It's EASY to sign up for the Park Rx Program.

Any medical professional licensed to prescribe in South Dakota can request prescription pads by signing up for the program.



To request your prescription pads, visit  
**[HealthySD.gov/park-rx](http://HealthySD.gov/park-rx)**

# TEEING IT UP FOR THE TROOPS

For most of us, teeing it up is simple—place the tee in the ground, place the ball on tee, and take a couple of practice swings!

Pennington County Veterans Service Officer Tom Vallette has been teeing it up (making preparations for) the “Black Hills Area Tee It Up For The Troops” project for over six years. He has served as a very active board member and most recently he took on the role of the tournament director.



The Sixth Annual Black Hills Area Tee It Up For The Troops” was held Monday, July 15, at Arrowhead Country Club in Rapid City and had 144 golfers participating. This year, half of the funds raised go back to the Tee It Up For the Troops program and half of the funds will be given to Midwest Honor Flight.



Tom is very passionate about this program and believes the time dedicated to planning the event has huge rewards for veterans. He notes that plans are already being worked on for next year’s event. (Photo taken by Newscenter1)

To learn more about the program visit: <https://teeitupforthetroops.org/>.

Here is a link to a News Center news clip about the outing:

[https://www.newscenter1.tv/news/tee-it-up-for-the-troops-arrowhead-golf-course-rapid-city/article\\_7f7e76bc-42f5-11ef-b1f4-1fa81c5a7ff4.html](https://www.newscenter1.tv/news/tee-it-up-for-the-troops-arrowhead-golf-course-rapid-city/article_7f7e76bc-42f5-11ef-b1f4-1fa81c5a7ff4.html)

Sioux Falls also hosts a similar event, and over the last four years, the Tee It Up for the Troops Country Club of Sioux Falls has provided critical support for the following local organizations: DTOM 22.0 Foundation, American Legion Post 15, Wings of Valor Lodge, Hero Haven and the Midwest Honor Flight.



**BROOKINGS DAV CHAPTER 22  
BROOKINGS DAV UNIT 22  
KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION  
SOUTH DAKOTA EAST RIVER CHAPTER 194**

**2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
KOREAN WAR / DEFENSE  
VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY**

**MILITARY DISPLAY FROM 9 AM TO 2 PM**

**JULY 27, 2024**

**BROOKINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA  
BROOKINGS COUNTY OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER  
2810 22ND AVE S, BROOKINGS, SD 57006**

**THE PROGRAM STARTS AT NOON.**

**THE TOPIC WILL BE:**

**BROOKINGS COUNTY MIA SOLDIER FROM THE KOREAN WAR,  
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS FLOYD SCHULTZ**

**GUEST SPEAKER IS:**

**COLONEL (R) MARTY PENNOCK  
CHAIRMAN OF THE DAV NATIONAL INTERIM POW/MIA  
COMMITTEE**

**LUNCH WILL BE SERVED.**



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# SDNG SOLDIER WINS NATIONAL DSS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Lt. Col. Kathy Gilbert, the South Dakota National Guard (SDNG) Deputy State Surgeon (DSS), was awarded the Maj. Gen. Deborah C. Wheeling DSS Award of Excellence on April 15, 2024.

Gilbert was presented the award at the National Guard Bureau Medical Team Conference held at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, AR. She was recognized for her commitment to soldier medical readiness and leadership in the medical field.

Lt. Col. Gilbert stated, "I am deeply honored to be nominated and selected for this award. To be recognized at the national level for the work we do to take care of soldiers is humbling. The position of DSS is very rewarding and challenging, and I am excited to put South Dakota on the map as having one of the best."

The Maj. Gen. Deborah C. Wheeling DSS Award of Excellence is presented annually to one deputy state surgeon. Each nominee undergoes a thorough vetting process to ensure they are the best candidate for the award. The nominees are judged on their demonstrated inspirational performance and outstanding leadership at the state and national levels. They must also demonstrate innovation, mentorship, team building, and several other attributes.

Col. Donald Kosiak, SDNG State Surgeon, attended the conference with Gilbert and stated, "This award is a testament to her leadership and passion for medical readiness."

Gilbert is an officer in the Army Nurse Corps and has been assigned as the SDNG DSS since March 2020. Gilbert's duties include planning, coordinating, and directing all SDNG medical readiness programs, military medical training and standardization, coordinating medical education training for providers, and supporting continuous medical readiness for SDNG forces. She directly contributes to SDNG soldiers being able to deploy in response to state emergencies or in support of combatant commanders across the globe when needed.

"Lt. Col. Gilbert's dedication to excellence in the medical mission exemplifies the SDNG culture of our citizen-warriors," stated Maj. Gen. Mark Morrell, SDNG Adjutant General. "Her unwavering support to medical readiness is vital for the SDNG to remain a ready force and able to defend the homeland, deter aggression, and fight and win our nation's wars,"

Gilbert's performance and pursuit of excellence is an excellent example of the SDNG's culture of citizen-warriors who live a life of service to others.



# **22nd Annual Show & Shine**

***Car & Motorcycle Show***

***Aug. 14, 2024 | 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.***



***Sioux Falls VA  
2501 W 22nd St  
Sioux Falls, SD***

**HAVE QUESTIONS? [vhasuxvoluntary@va.gov](mailto:vhasuxvoluntary@va.gov) | 605-333-6806**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jul 19—CPL Russell N. Ferdig Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—United Parish—(2102 E. Main Street)—Elk Point—2:00 pm (CT)
- Jul 24—CPL John C. McDowell Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Travel Plaza—(HWY 281 and Main Street)—Corsica—11:00 am (CT)
- Jul 27—2nd Annual Korean War/Defense Veterans Appreciation Day—Brookings County Outdoor Adventure Center—(2810 22nd Avenue S)—Brookings—12:00 noon
- Jul 27—Homecoming Celebration for American Legion State Auxiliary President Annamae Warnier—Morning-side Event Center—Alcester—3:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 1—2—South Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls
- Aug 2—PFC John Tuin Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—American Legion Post 184—(222 Main Street)—Estelline—1:30 pm (CT)
- Aug 5—RM2 Eugene L., RM2 Ordien F., and LT LeRoy M. Herr Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—High School Gym—(500 S. 3rd Street) Bristol—1:30 pm (CT)
- Aug 10—SGT Terry G. Rada Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Multi Purpose Center—(409 Michigan Avenue)—Geddes—12:00 noon (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—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—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 791—(209 S. Cedar)—Yankton
- Aug 21—1LT Daniel J. Kirchglesler 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—Rapid City
- 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

(Continued)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

- 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—(1229 Western Ave)—Brookings
- 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
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls
- Nov 21—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown
- Nov 22—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City
- Nov 23—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—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)

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