



NEWSLETTER

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



MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT SETS DATES FOR MISSIONS 21-23

Midwest Honor Flight has set their dates for Fall missions as follows:

- September 25—Mission 21
- October 8—Mission 22
- October 15—Mission 23

Each of the respective tours will consist of a visit to The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to witness the Changing of the Guard located in Arlington National Cemetery, Iwo Jima (Marine), the Air Force Memorials, Navy Memorial, and the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials.

Welcome home celebrations will be held for each respective mission at 9:30 pm at the Sioux Falls Arena (1201 N. West Avenue). Doors open at 7:30 pm.

More information on Midwest Honor Flights can be found at:

<https://www.midwesthonorflight.org/>.

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SD TO DEDICATE BRIDGE HONORING TWO VETERANS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Army Lieutenant Donald R. Harms and Sergeant Fred H. Harms.

The ceremony will be Saturday, June 29, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. (CT) at the Jelkin-Harms American Legion Post 142 in Tripp (102 S. Main Street).

The US 18 bridge three miles west of SD 37 will be dedicated to LT and SGT Harms.

On February 25, 1945, Fred was killed in action in battle near Einruhr, Germany.

On May 18, 1945, Donald was commanding his company on the battle line east of Manila. His company was holding a position near the top of a ridge when the enemy started a counter-attack. Artillery and mortar fire were used to attempt to break the American position. The attack was repulsed, but Don was killed by flying shrapnel.

Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died while serving their country is an initiative of Governor Kristi No-

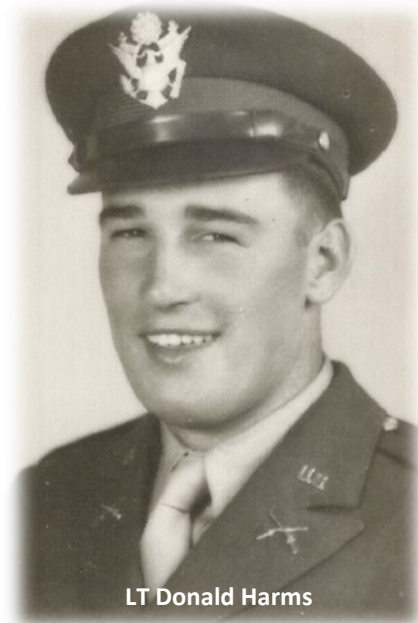
em and the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs.

“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 — for honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough 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.”



SGT Fred Harms



LT Donald Harms

US 85 BRIDGE OVER BELLE FOURCHE RIVER TO BE DEDICATED

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Army Sergeant Lelund M. Kahler.

The ceremony will be Wednesday, July 3, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. (MT) at the REC Center in Belle Fourche (1111 National Street).

The US 85 Bridge over the Belle Fourche River will be dedicated to SGT Kahler.

On April 8, 1969, Kahler was on a recon mission with his platoon crossing a river in sampans in Dinh Tuong, South Vietnam. Lelund, who was in the middle of the pack and carrying a M60 machine gun, was killed by enemy fire.



Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died

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NEW LAWS IMPACTING VETERANS

SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock shares this message with veterans in South Dakota.

As an advocate for veterans, it is the responsibility of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to review all legislative bills that will impact veterans. This year, the department introduced two bills and monitored 29 pieces of proposed legislation.

Here's a look at veteran related legislation that was approved and will become law July 1:



- State tuition assistance benefit for the airmen and soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard was expanded to allow them to utilize this benefit at an in-state private, nonprofit post-secondary university;
- March 25 has been designated as a state Medal of Honor Recognition Day;
- Veterans that are eligible for a disabled veteran plate and the benefits that accompany the issuance of the plate, but do not wish to have to have the designation of being disabled, now have the option to receive the same fee schedule for regular plates on their vehicle;
- The exempt value of property tax relief for disabled veterans and surviving spouses was increased to \$200,000. This will apply for the 2025 assessment for taxes payable in 2026;
- A special motor vehicle license plate is now available for recipients of the Legion of Merit award;
- Residency requirements for admission to the State Veterans Home were removed; and,
- Counties and tribes who encounter prolonged veterans service officer vacancies can contract with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to provide those services.

As always, we encourage all veterans to visit their county or tribal veterans service officers (CTVSO's) to learn more about all benefits. These men and women have worn the boots, walked the trenches, conducted maneuvers, commanded troops, sustained missions, and protected our freedoms. Who better to have on your team? To locate the CTVSO nearest you visit: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>

Now, more than ever, we need to continue to deliver on our promise to take care of our veterans. We will keep our sleeves rolled up and work collectively to ensure our veterans have a successful journey after their service.

MILITARY APPRECIATION BANQUET

The third annual McBride Military Appreciation BBQ Banquet will be held Friday, July 12, 2024, from 5:00 pm—8:00 pm (MT). The event will honor seven people from the South Dakota National Guard and seven from Ellsworth Air Force Base.

The event is being held at the Nerdy Nuts Building (shown as Soule/Bridger Steel on the [map](#)) at the Central States Fairgrounds (800 San Francisco St., Rapid City, SD 57701).

This event is free and open to the public and includes several activities for children and teens. The 147th Army Band will be performing on the Nerdy Nuts stage and Life Flight will have their helicopter on display.



JULY 12TH, 2024 • 5-8 PM
NERDY NUTS BUILDING CENTRAL
STATES FAIRGROUNDS

ENTERTAINMENT INCLUDES 147TH ARMY BAND, SOUTH
DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD

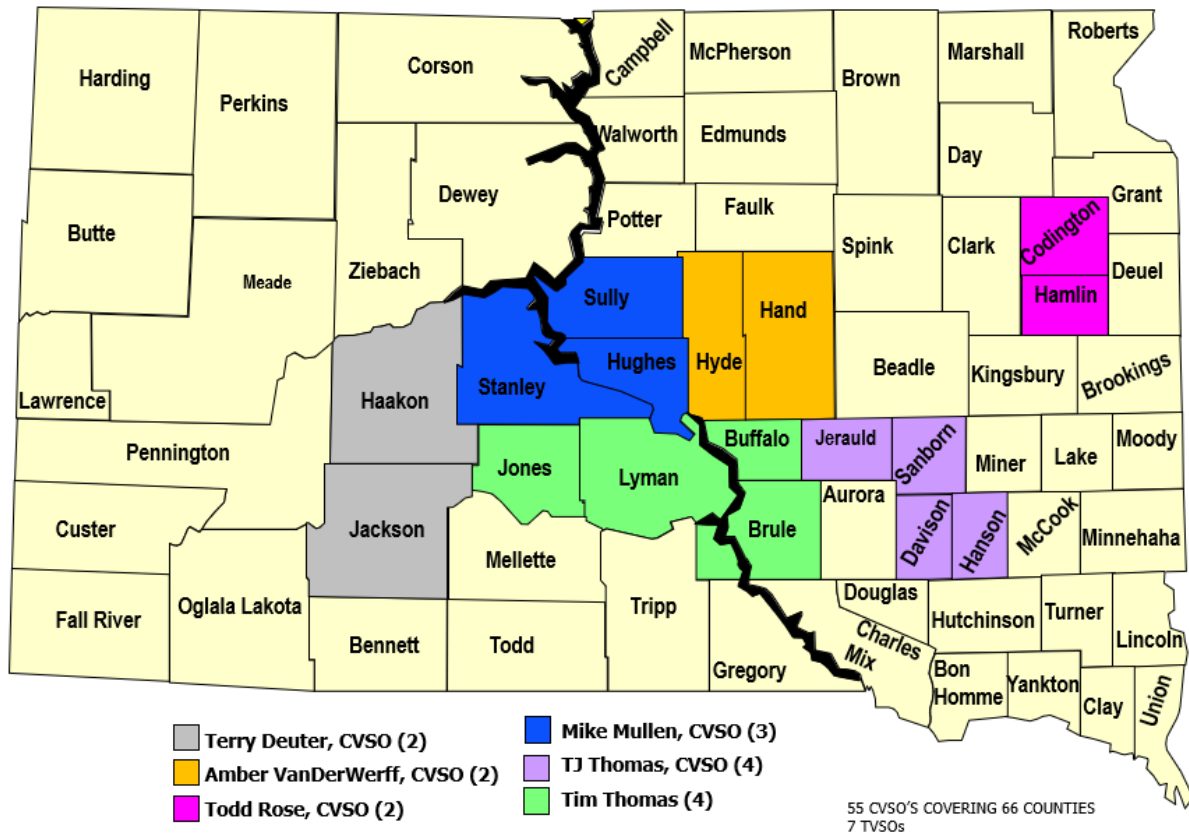


CODINGTON AND HAMLIN COUNTY PARTNER ON VSO

Codington County and Hamlin County have entered into a partnership to provide joint services for their veterans. County Veterans Service Officers Todd Rose and Jay Roberts will serve as CVSOs for both counties and will be working with over 2,340 veterans, their dependents, and survivors as they navigate the complex world of VA benefits.

South Dakota currently has 17 counties that have formed partnerships to share veterans service officers.

2024 County VSO Partnerships



MJFSVH UPDATE

A big shout out and thank you to the Salvation Army Donut Lassies for the treats they provided the residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home last week.

They say life is meant to be an adventure, and I think it's safe to say the residents from the State Veterans Home had a great adventure last Friday with their ATV rides! A big shout out to the ATV/UTV Association, MJFSVH Activities Director Laura Inman and the MJFSVH staff for giving the residents a day of mud, dust, speed, and pure happiness!!!! The residents had the opportunity to live on the "wild side" as they conquered the trails and enjoyed the great outdoors.





6th Annual Golf Event
Arrowhead Country Club | Rapid City, SD

Tee It Up for the Troops

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, July 15th, 2024

Opening Ceremonies: 845am

The local proceeds from this event will benefit veterans of all branches through:



WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

94¢
OF EVERY DOLLAR

GOES TO HELPING VETERANS HEAL

We encourage you to “step up to the tee” to help us honor, remember, respect, and support our Veterans by becoming an event sponsor, volunteer, or donor of our event.

Divots can be replaced.
Freedom cannot!™

For more information, please contact:
Tom Vallette-BlackHills@teeitupforthetroops.org

VA UPDATES VETERANS HOME LOAN PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that eligible veterans, active-duty service members, and surviving spouses who use the VA-guaranteed home loan benefit can pay for certain real estate buyer-broker fees when purchasing a home.

This will help ensure that veterans remain competitive and are not disadvantaged on the homebuying market due to changes that may result from a key class-action settlement involving the National Association of REALTORS®, which is slated to take effect later this summer. Until today, veterans could not pay their buyer-broker fees when using their home loans benefits.

The VA home loan program, which celebrates its 80th anniversary later this month, is a critical benefit for eligible veterans interested in becoming homeowners. Created in 1944 as part of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act — also known as the “G.I. Bill of Rights” — this program has provided over 28 million loans to veterans to date. Last year, veterans obtained over 400,000 home loans through this program.

“We always want to put veterans and their families in the best possible position to buy the homes they want, and that’s what this update is all about,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs.

“Veterans using VA home loan benefits can now pay reasonable and customary amounts for certain charges — including commissions and other broker-related fees — thus ensuring that they remain competitive in the rapidly changing housing market.”

The temporary measures announced today will help ensure that veterans are not negatively impacted by the class-action settlement. The VA will continue to monitor how the settlement affects the brokerage market and looks forward to pursuing a rulemaking.

The VA encourages veterans using the VA-guaranteed home loan benefit to remember that they can and should still negotiate their buyer-broker fee. In addition, nothing in the settlement prevents veteran home-buyers from asking sellers to pay the fees at closing, which has long been and continues to be, a viable practice under the VA’s rules. In addition to other safeguards, all buyer-broker fees charged to veterans using the home loan benefit must be reasonable and customary within local markets. As the landscape of the real estate market evolves, the VA will continue to monitor for changes, as well as new models of realtor commissions that may emerge and help lower costs, boost competition, and increase avenues to home ownership.

For more details about this new update and its impacts, visit this [FAQ](#) in VA News and [Circulars: Calendar Years 2021 to Present – VA Home Loans](#).



MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT FUNDRAISER

Save the Date! Midwest Honor Flight's Third Annual Elvis Night will be held October 12 at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street) in Sioux Falls.

MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT presents:

THE BEATLES

SANDY RATTLE & ROLL!

\$25 ADVANCED TICKETS

\$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 GERDES * BOB GOODMAN

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre
- Jun 29—LT Donald R. and SGT Fred H. Harms Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—American Legion Post 142—(102 S. Main Street)—Tripp— 2:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 30—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—Registration—1:00 pm/Ride Begins at 2:30 pm (CT)
- Jul 3—SGT Lelund M. Kahler Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Rec Center—(1111 National Street)—Belle Fourche—2:00 pm (MT)
- Jul 10—T/5 Harald Haraldsen Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Lions Civic Center—(210 State Road 20)—Buffalo - 2:00 pm (MT)
- Jul 15—6th Annual Tee it up for the Troops Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—Arrowhead Country Club—(3675 Sheridan Lake Road)—Rapid City—7:15 am (MT)
- Jul 17—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 17—(802 S. Main St)—Aberdeen
- 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)
- 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 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. Kirchgessler Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—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)

(Continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 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—(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
- Jun 12—15—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre
- Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron
- Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

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