



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO HONOR CITIZEN WARRIORS

The South Dakota National Guard extends their sincere thanks to Black Hills Wire and the Central States Fair for hosting the recent Military Appreciation BBQ and for their ongoing support of our soldiers, airmen, veterans, and civilian supporters.

Events like this reflect the strong bond between our service members and the communities we proudly serve. Your support not only strengthens our mission but reminds us why we do what we do — to protect and serve the people of South Dakota.

Thank you to everyone who hosted, sponsored, volunteered, and attended this special event. Your commitment and recognition mean so much to our citizen-warriors and their families.

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RUNNING WITH PURPOSE: HONORING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This past weekend, 91 incredible individuals laced up their shoes and ran with a mission — to honor every survivor of sexual violence. Every mile covered and every step taken was a powerful tribute to the strength, resilience, and courage of survivors who continue to break the silence and reclaim their stories.

To all survivors: We see you. We believe you. Your experience matters, and you are never alone.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to each participant for standing alongside survivors and showing unwavering support. Together, we raise awareness, foster hope, and remind all survivors that this community stands firmly with them.



BRIDGE DEDICATED IN HONOR OF PFC FRED D. LARSON

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs proudly hosted a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony honoring U.S. Army Private First Class Fred D. Larson on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at the Pollock Community Center.

The SD10 bridge over Lake Pocasse, just east of Pollock, will now stand as the PFC Fred D. Larson Bridge — a lasting tribute to a local veteran who gave his life in service to our nation.

Larson was born on June 22, 1949, and grew up in Pollock, South Dakota. He was drafted into the U.S. Army on August 19, 1969, and deployed to Vietnam with the 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery, C Battery on January 15, 1970. On April 24, 1970 — his mother's 55th birthday — PFC Larson was killed in action near Lang Dong Ban in Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam. He lost his life while bravely volunteering to search a suspected enemy dwelling, where he triggered a land mine.

SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard served as the emcee for this meaningful ceremony, which brought together family, friends, and community members to honor PFC Larson's sacrifice and ensure his legacy will never be forgotten.



SDDVA SUPPORTS TEE IT UP FOR THE TROOPS FUNDRAISERS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs was honored to be part of this year's Tee It Up for the Troops fundraisers, held July 14 in both Rapid City and Sioux Falls.

SDDVA Secretary Jeremiah Schneider attended the Rapid City event, connecting with veterans, families, and supporters. In Sioux Falls, SDDVA Southeast Veteran Field Service Officer Dave Denison hosted an outreach booth, sharing valuable information with attendees about the services and resources available to South Dakota's veterans.

A special thank you goes out to Pennington County Veteran Service Officer Tom Vallette for his efforts in coordinating the Rapid City event.



Both events provided outstanding opportunities for SDDVA to visit with veterans and strengthen relationships with the many community partners dedicated to supporting those who served.

SDDVA TO HOST THREE MORE WHAT'S BREWING EVENTS

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) will be hosting “Coffee and Conversation” events in De Smet, Yankton, and Wessington Springs. These gatherings are part of the Department’s “What’s Brewing” program—an outreach effort to connect directly with veterans, hear their stories, and provide updates on services and benefits available to them.

Date: Monday, July 28, 2025

Location: The Ward’s Store (127 Calumet Avenue SE) – De Smet, SD

Time: “What’s Brewing” conversation begins at 10:00 am (CT)

Date: Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Location: VFW Post 791 – (209 Cedar Street) - Yankton

Time: “What’s Brewing” conversation begins at 10:00 am (CT)

Date: Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Location: Jerauld County Court House Day Room – 205 Wallace Avenue S., Wessington Springs, SD

Time: “What’s Brewing” conversation begins at 10:00 am (CT)

“The ‘What’s Brewing’ series serves as an important platform for meaningful conversations with our veterans,” said SDDVA Secretary Jeremiah Schneider. “These gatherings not only allow us to better understand the concerns and challenges veterans are facing, but also provide a forum to share updates on benefits, services, and resources available to them. It’s our duty as advocates to stay connected to their experiences and honor the sacrifices they’ve made in service to our country.”

Secretary Schneider, members of the SDDVA team, and CVSOs will be available to answer questions and provide information on a wide range of veterans’ benefits and services, including compensation, education, pensions, healthcare, burial benefits, the State Veterans Cemetery, and the State Veterans Home.

All veterans are encouraged to attend. For those unable to make it, the SDDVA remains just a call or click away. Reach the Department at 605.333.6869 or locate your county or tribal Veterans Service Officer at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>



**Veterans,
See
What's
Brewing!**



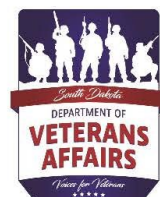
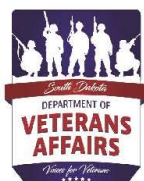
**We invite all veterans to join us for a
“Veterans Coffee and Networking.”
Free coffee and treats while you chat with new and old friends
alike and learn more about veterans benefits from the South
Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.**

Monday—July 28, 2025

10:00 am (CT)

The Ward's Store

(127 Calumet Avenue SE—De Smet SD)





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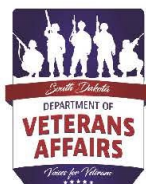
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Jerauld County Court House Day Room
(205 Wallace Avenue S, Wessington Springs, SD)**



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jul 18—FHBD—SP4 Thomas Zeigler—American Legion Post 169 (133 W. 3rd Street)—Winner—2:00 pm (CT)
Jul 19—Veterans Information Day—BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center—(1951 N. HWY 20)—Watertown—
10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Jul 26—3rd Annual Korean War Veterans Appreciation Day—Brookings Outdoor Adventure Center—(2810 22nd
Avenue S)—Brookings—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Jul 26—FHBD—S/SGT Ervin Rieck—Community Hall (11 W. Main Street)—Warner—2:00 pm (CT)
Jul 26—Homecoming for American Legion State Auxiliary President Susie Learing—Irene Community Center—
(Main Street)—Irene—11:00 am (CT)
Jul 27—Homecoming for American Legion Department Commander Kevin Hempel—Chester School Gym—(102
2nd Avenue)—Chester—1:00 pm (CT)
Jul 28—SDDVA What's Brewing—The Ward's Store—(127 Calumet Avenue SE)—De Smet—10:00 am (CT)
Jul 29—SDDVA What's Brewing—VFW Post 791—(209 Cedar Street)—Yankton—10:00 am (CT)
Jul 30—Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Sinte Gleska Multipurpose Building—(White Horse Blvd.)—
Antelope—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
Jul 30—SDDVA What's Brewing—Jerauld County Court House Day Room—(205 Wallace Avenue S)—Wessington
Springs—10:00 am (CT)
Aug 1—FHBD—PFC Mark Shields—Community Center—(1021 Central Circle)—Fort Thompson—1:00 pm (CT)
Aug 2—FHBD—PFC Ronald Dexter—4-H Grounds (517 Flynn Drive)—Milbank—11:00 am (CT)
Aug 4-5—Your Journey Matters 2025 Behavioral Health Conference—Sioux Falls Sheraton Convention Center
Aug 7—Purple Heart Day
Aug 9—FHBD—1LT Larry Barbee—American Legion Post 92—(612 Main Street)—Redfield—2:00 pm (CT)
Aug 9-13—National VFW Convention—Columbus, OH
Aug 11—Barrel House Day of Giving for Midwest Honor Flight—(4701 E. 54th Street)—Sioux Falls
Aug 13—DAV Golf Tournament—Prairie Green Golf Course—Sioux Falls
Aug 13—Sioux Falls VA Show and Shine Car Show—Sioux Falls VA—(2501 W. 22nd Street)—5:00—8:00 pm (CT)
Aug 14—FHBD—CPL Henry Kluess—VFW Post 2118—(520 Main Avenue)—Brookings—10:00 am (CT)
Aug 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)
Aug 21—Cheyenne River Veterans Stand Down—Eagle Butte Vet Center Building—Eagle Butte—10:00 am (MT)
Aug 27-Sep 1—South Dakota State Fair
Aug 28—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
Aug 30—FHBD—SP5 Richard Miller—Silo Market—(120 Main Street)—Plankinton—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 1—State Offices Closed—Labor Day
Sep 9-12—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School
Sep 17—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Yankton VFW Post—(209 S. Cedar Street)—Yankton—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 17—FHBD—PVT Elmer Albertson—Harding County School—(12474 Tipperary Street)—Buffalo—2:30 pm (MT)
Sep 18—FHBD—PFC Peter Ommen—(243 Central Main Street)—Central City—1:00 pm (MT)
Sep 19—POW/MIA Day
Sep 20—FHBD—PVT Frank Holcombe—American Legion Post 43—(921 Main Street)—Centerville—10:00 am (CT)

(continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sep 23—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 27
Sep 25—Rapid City Veterans Stand Down—DoubleTree by Hilton Rapid City Downtown Convention Center—
(505 N. 5th Street)—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Oct 3—FHBD—SGT Dirk Abbas—Event Center—(1203 3rd Street)—Britton—2:00 pm (CT)
Oct 7—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 28
Oct 8—FHBD—PVT Leroy Goosen—Sully Buttes High School—(500 S. 8th Street)—Onida—1:45 pm (CT)
Oct 13—State Offices Closed—Native American Day
Oct 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)
Oct 18—Derr Gala—Monument Lacroix Hall—Rapid City—5:00 pm (MT)
Oct 18—4th Annual Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell
Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Nov 7—MWHF Bingo—Severance Brewing—(701 N. Phillips Avenue)—Sioux Falls—7:00—9:00 pm (CT)
Nov 8—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—
11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Nov 8—Day County Veterans Banquet—Webster Armory—5:00 pm (CT)
Nov 10—Barrel House Day of Giving for the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery WAA—(4701 E. 54th Street)—
Sioux Falls—11:00 am—Midnight (CT)
Nov 11—State Offices Closed—Veterans Day
Nov 11—Regional FHBD—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—2:00 pm (CT)
Nov 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters (1519 W. 51st Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
Nov 27—State Offices Closed—Thanksgiving
Nov 29—Side by Side MWHF Poker Run—Pilot Mikes Roadhouse—(4901 N. Ellis Road)—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)
Dec 2—Governor's Budget Address—SD State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)
Dec 25—State Offices Closed—Christmas Day

2026

Jan 13—South Dakota Legislative Session Opens
Jan 13—Governor's State of the State Address—SD State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 14—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)—Pierre—2:00 pm (CT)
Jan 14—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)—
Pierre—5:30 pm—7:30 pm (CT)
June 10-14—State VFW Convention—Mitchell
July 18-19—Sioux Falls Air Show
Sep 15-18—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School

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