



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## SDDVA LEADERS CONNECT WITH VETERANS AT STATE CONFERENCES

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Jeremiah Schneider and Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard attended two key veterans conferences this past weekend—the South Dakota American Legion State Conference in Huron and the South Dakota VFW State Conference in Pierre.

At both events, Secretary Schneider and Deputy Secretary Pollard provided updates on the Department's services and initiatives, sharing important information about benefits, resources, and ongoing outreach efforts. These gatherings offered a valuable platform to engage directly with veterans and veteran leaders from across the state.

SDDVA Field Operations and Program Manager Dave Huntimer also attended the VFW State Conference and provided specialized training to VFW members, helping ensure local leaders are equipped to assist veterans in their communities.

These conferences are a great opportunity for SDDVA to meet with veterans, answer questions, and hear their concerns firsthand. Our mission is to advocate for and support all veterans, and these connections are at the heart of that work.



### Table of Contents

Sec. Schneider Message .....	2
Day County Veterans Banquet ....	3
MWHF Missions .....	4
CAV Conference .....	4
MWHF Honor Ride Canceled .....	5
SDNG Soldiers Recognized .....	6
MJFSVH Flag Day .....	7
RST Veterans Stand Down .....	7
Canaries Appreciation Night .....	8
Tee it up for the Troops .....	9
Crooks Poker Run .....	10
Upcoming Events .....	11-12

# MESSAGE FROM SDDVA SECRETARY SCHNEIDER

June arrived with a whirlwind of activities for our department, as we've had the privilege of hosting our "What's Brewing Events" throughout the state. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers, whose dedication and hard work have made this invaluable venture possible. You are the heart and hands behind these gatherings, and I am truly thankful.

To every Veteran in South Dakota: your voice matters, your story is essential, and these events exist because you deserve to be heard. Thank you to all who have attended and to those who will join us in the days to come. Your willingness to share, your thoughtful questions, and the camaraderie you bring are what make these events so meaningful. It is an honor to listen, learn, and connect with each of you.

On June 6th, we paused to remember D-Day—a day that forever changed the course of history. For our WWII Veterans and their families, Omaha Beach was "The Longest Day," a day of unimaginable courage and sacrifice. Let us continue to honor the memory of the 2,000 to 4,000 US casualties. Their actions on that fateful day were pivotal in the fight for freedom and a testament to America's enduring spirit.

June 14th marked the birthday of the world's greatest Army. Happy Birthday to all Soldiers in South Dakota, past and present! From its founding in 1775 under the leadership of George Washington to its proud legacy today, the U.S. Army has stood as a guardian of the nation's freedom. Your service and dedication continue to inspire us all.

I want to acknowledge all the fathers out there, especially those who have served or are currently serving in the military. Your sacrifices and your unwavering commitment to your families, your units, our state, and our nation do not go unnoticed. You are the pillars upon which our communities and our country are built. Your legacy of strength and devotion is woven into the very fabric of our history.

June 19<sup>th</sup>, also known as Juneteenth, serves as a reminder of the ongoing journey toward justice and equality. Known by many names, including Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, and Emancipation Day, this day commemorates the liberation of 250,000 enslaved people in Texas in 1865. It serves as a profound reminder of our nation's progress and the work that remains to be done. Let's honor this day by reflecting on the importance of freedom and dignity for all.

June is Post-Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) Awareness Month, with June 27th designated as PTSI Day. Too many of our brothers and sisters return from service carrying invisible wounds. This silent battle can have lasting effects on our families and communities. Please know that if you or a loved one is struggling, you are not alone. Reach out to family, to fellow Veterans, to mental health professionals. There is help, and there is hope; together, we can walk the path toward healing.

Thank you, once again, to everyone who makes our community strong, compassionate, and resilient. Together, we honor the past, support one another in the present, and look forward with hope to the future.



# DAY COUNTY VETERANS BANQUET

Day County Veterans Service Officer Jeff Nelson is once again teaming up with community leaders and local businesses to coordinate the annual Veterans Banquet—an evening of fellowship, gratitude, and community spirit.

This year's banquet will take place at 5:00 pm (CT) on Saturday, November 8, at the Webster Armory. The event is free to all veterans and their spouses, thanks to the generosity and support of area sponsors and volunteers.

The banquet serves as more than just a meal; it's a heartfelt gathering to remind those who served that "we all wore the uniform, and we are all part of a greater team." By bringing veterans together in one space, the event fosters camaraderie and unity among those who have shared similar experiences and commitments to service.

Nelson said the evening is designed to honor and uplift

the local veteran community while strengthening the ties that bind them together. "This is about building connection and showing appreciation. Whether you served in Vietnam, Iraq, or stateside, you are part of something bigger—and you're not alone."

This annual tradition has become a meaningful way for Day County to express its gratitude and reinforce the strong network of support among veterans, families, and the broader community.

Veterans and spouses are encouraged to attend, reconnect, and enjoy an evening of celebration and shared pride in service.



# MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT ANNOUNCES FALL MISSIONS

Midwest Honor Flight has officially scheduled two upcoming missions to honor our nation's veterans. Mission 27 will take place on September 23, 2025, followed by Mission 28 on October 7, 2025. These flights provide an opportunity for veterans to visit the memorials in Washington, D.C., built in their honor and reflect on their service alongside fellow heroes.

For more information about the organization, how to support, or how to get involved, please visit [www.midwesthonorflight.org](http://www.midwesthonorflight.org).

## CAV CONFERENCE

Community Action for Veterans (CAV) will host a two-day professional development conference on September 22–23 at the Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls. This year's theme is "Building Communities of Care." The conference brings together service providers, advocates, and community leaders for meaningful conversations, practical tools, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Day One kicks off with the morning plenary: *Leading with Heart* (3.5 CEUs). This opening session features three distinguished leaders whose lives and work reflect a deep, personal commitment to veteran well-being. Their unique perspectives — from federal policy to health care leadership to tribal advocacy — will set the tone for a conference.

That afternoon, attendees will take part in three focused learning tracks (3.75 CEUs) that dive deeper into critical topics affecting military-connected communities: mental health, rural challenges, and military families and caregiving. Each track offers practical tools, promising practices, and opportunities for collaborative problem-solving across sectors.

Day Two closes with a transformative capstone: *Heart of a Warrior* (4 CEUs). Led by USMC Veteran and leadership coach [Kelley Moore](#), this four-hour interactive experience blends neuroscience, values, and Combat Brain Training™ techniques to help participants reconnect with clarity, courage, and resilience.

In addition, CAV will be sponsoring a veterans assistance expo, where VA staff, veteran service organizations, community service providers, and government partners will offer direct services, resources, and information.

For more information visit: <https://www.sdvets.org/community-action-for-veterans-conference>.



# MIDWEST HONOR RIDE CANCELLED

We regret to inform you that the Midwest Honor Ride scheduled for this weekend has been canceled due to a combination of limited board volunteer availability, uncertain weather conditions during the time of the ride, and a competing poker run happening the same day.

*"RIDING TO KEEP THEM FLYING"*



**HONOR RIDE**  
MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT



*Sunday, June 29, 2025 | 2:30 PM*

Registration begins at 1:00 PM at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (they will be open for lunch at 12:00 PM). Honor a Veteran you know and ride to raise funds for Midwest Honor Flight. Ride includes a slow salute past the Sioux Falls VA Hospital before a ceremony at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery. A meal is included after the ride.

**MORE INFORMATION:**

**MIDWESTHONORFLIGHT.ORG/RIDE**

*All proceeds from this event go directly towards future Honor Flights and more importantly, our local Veterans.*

# SDNG SOLDIERS RECOGNIZED FOR QUICK ACTIONS

Three soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 842nd Engineer Company were honored for their swift actions during a vehicle emergency on June 11 near Spearfish.

Command Sgt. Maj. Marcus Stacey presented coins of excellence to Spc. Nicole Erdman, Sgt. Tanner Johnson, and Staff Sgt. Scott Wilcox for their professionalism after a tire blew out on their vehicle during the unit's return from annual training at Camp Ripley, MN.



Erdman maintained control of the vehicle, safely steering it into the median and avoiding further danger.

Johnson secured the scene and directed traffic, while Wilcox responded with a recovery team to remove the disabled vehicle from the highway.

Their quick thinking and teamwork ensured everyone's safety and minimized disruption. Leadership praised their training, initiative, and calm under pressure.

"These Soldiers exemplify the values and readiness of the South Dakota National Guard," said Capt. Matthew McGinn, company commander.





# FLAG DAY AT STATE VETERANS HOME

A big thank you goes out to the Hot Springs Elks Lodge #380 for hosting a special Flag Day program for the residents of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Held on Flag Day, the event was a meaningful tribute to the American flag and to those who have served under it.

Residents enjoyed the patriotic program, which honored the flag's history and symbolism while celebrating the spirit of service and sacrifice. The Elks' continued support and presence at the Veterans Home is deeply appreciated.



## Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veteran Stand Down



### WHEN:

Date: Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Time: 09:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Central Time

Location: Sinte Gleska University  
Multi-Purpose Building  
White Horse Blvd. Antelope, SD

For Questions contact VA Black Hills:

Clay Thompson at (605)206-0046

Clay.Thompson@va.gov

Tribal POC: Orlando Morrison, Senior Director

rstvets@yahoo.com

(605) 747-2593

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Nellie Menard- TVSO

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Trolynn Peneaux

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(605) 319-8246

### EVENTS FOR THE DAY:

RST Medical Mobile Unit

RST Alcohol Treatment Program

RST CHR Program

TOKALA Inajinyo Youth Program

SWA -HUD/VASH Housing

### SERVICES OFFERED:

LUNCH

CLOTHING

VA BENEFITS

HOUSING REFERRALS

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

VA enrollment and Veteran

ID's, Eye exams, Dermatology

screenings and MUCH MORE!

\*Please bring a copy of your DD214, 2024/2025 tax return, photo ID, and dependent information if possible.

Documentation is needed so we can fully serve you and your needs.



TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

# MILITARY

**JUNE 28** **APPRECIATION NIGHT**

**5:35PM FIRST PITCH**

**ALL FORMER AND ACTIVE MILITARY MEMBERS GET IN FREE**

**AT THE BIRDCAGE**

BRING YOUR MILITARY ID TO THE TICKET WINDOW ON GAME DAY



If interested in free tickets in advance, please reach out to Nicole Ryan at SD Military Heritage Alliance at 605-271-7795.





7th Annual Golf Event  
Arrowhead Country Club | Rapid City, SD

# Tee It Up for the Troops

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Monday, July 14th, 2025**

*Opening Ceremonies: 845am*

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



Register Below:

<https://tiufitt-arrowhead.dojiggy.io/golf/Campaign/Details>

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**

# *CROOKS* Veterans Park

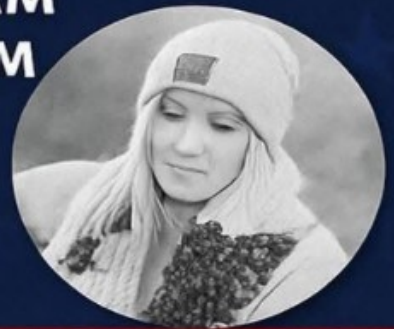
## **POKER RUN** MOTORCYCLES & ALL VEHICLES

**JUNE 29, 2025**

**REGISTRATION: 11:00 AM**

**DEPARTURE: 12:00 PM**

**START AND FINISH AT  
WINTER-GREEN ACRES  
100 SPRUCE DRIVE  
CROOKS, SD 57020**



**FOLLOWING THE POKER RUN  
FROM 5PM-8PM:**

**LIVE MUSIC**

**by Kayla Daniels  
TACO/NACHO BAR**



**ROUTES AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON  
CROOKS VETERANS PARK FACEBOOK PAGE**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Jul 4—State Offices Closed—Fourth of July  
Jul 9—SDDVA What's Brewing—El Riad Shrine (510 S. Phillips Avenue)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Jul 11—SDDVA What's Brewing—Harding County Courthouse (408 Ransland Street)—Buffalo—10:00 am (MT)  
Jul 12—FHBD—PFC Fred Larson—Community Center (916 F. Avenue)—Pollock—2:30 pm (CT)  
Jul 13—SDNG SAPR 5K—Memorial Park—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Jul 14—Black Hills Tee it up for the Troops Tournament—Arrowhead Country Club—Rapid City  
Jul 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Mitchell VFW Post—(215 N. Main Street)—Mitchell—1:00 pm (CT)  
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 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 16—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—(location and time to be determined)  
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 Fall—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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