



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## SDDVA MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAMS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host its annual Memorial Day programs on Monday, May 26, 2025.

The first will be held at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, located at 2500 Minnekahta Avenue, Hot Springs. The program will begin at 10:00 a.m. (MT).

MJFSVH Superintendent Danny Tiger will be the keynote speaker.

The second program will be held at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, located at 25965 477th Avenue, Sioux Falls. The program will begin at 12:00 p.m. (CT).

Former District 18 Senator Jean Hunhoff will be the keynote speaker. Hunhoff is a distinguished South Dakotan known for her lifelong commitment to public service and advocacy for veterans and their families.

“Memorial Day is a solemn reminder of the brave heroes who gave their lives for our freedom,” said South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Jeremiah Schneider. “It’s a privilege to gather as a state to honor their sacrifice and reaffirm our commitment to remembering those who served.”

Ceremonies will include guest speakers, patriotic music, the laying of wreaths, and the traditional playing of Taps. Local veterans organizations, service members, and community leaders will take part in paying tribute to our fallen heroes.

These programs serve as a solemn reminder of the cost of freedom and provide an opportunity for all citizens to reflect and express their gratitude.

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# MESSAGE FROM SDDVA SECRETARY SCHNEIDER

May is a month rich with meaning and significance as we take time to honor and recognize our veterans, their families, and the many individuals who currently contribute to the strength of our military community. Before diving into these important observances, it's only fitting to begin by acknowledging the remarkable mothers in our lives. Their unwavering dedication and love form the foundation for so many of us. On a personal note, I owe my own mother a deep debt of gratitude—and, admittedly, more than a few apologies—for the challenges I put her through. Thanks to her strength and resilience, I like to think I turned out just fine. This month, I encourage everyone to take a moment to say a heartfelt “I love you,” and reflect on the gifts, guidance, and support your mother has provided. She deserves every bit of that recognition.

May is also recognized nationally as Month of the Military Caregiver and National Military Appreciation Month (NMAM). While the Month of the Military Caregiver is not a federal holiday, it plays a crucial role in raising awareness of the sacrifices made by both wounded warriors and the dedicated caregivers who support them. These often-unsung heroes embody resilience and devotion, quietly ensuring the well-being of those who have given so much.



(continued)

# **SECRETARY MESSAGE**

## **(CONTINUED)**

National Military Appreciation Month, formally established in 1999 through legislation introduced by the late Senator John McCain, serves as a time for all Americans to reflect on the contributions of service members past and present. While many military-related holidays have evolved into extended weekends with diminished focus on their origins, NMAM reminds us of the significance behind our freedoms. Throughout May, military installations and communities are encouraged to participate in local engagements that foster connection and gratitude between service members and the public.

May 9th is Military Spouse Appreciation Day—a moment to honor the essential role spouses play in the lives of service members. Their steadfast support allows us to meet the demands of military service with focus and confidence. Military spouses are the backbone of our families and communities, often enduring long periods of separation, relocation, and uncertainty with grace. Please take time to recognize and appreciate their ongoing commitment and strength.

May 12–17 marks Armed Forces Appreciation Week, culminating in Armed Forces Day on May 17th. First observed in 1950, Armed Forces Day was created to celebrate the men and women serving in all branches of the military following the unification of the services under the Department of Defense. Though each branch still observes its own individual day, Armed Forces Day symbolizes our collective gratitude to those who serve in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and now, the Space Force. As you encounter your fellow service members this week, take a moment to express your appreciation, offer a word of encouragement, and reflect on the shared bond we all hold.

Finally, May 26th is Memorial Day—a day of solemn remembrance for those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation. While many of us may enjoy time with family, barbecues, or community events, let us not lose sight of the true purpose behind this day. The freedoms we cherish were secured through the bravery and loss of those who never returned home. I urge every member of our veteran family and the wider community to look beyond the symbolic gestures and reflect deeply on the cost of our liberty. Share stories, honor the fallen, and pass along their legacy to future generations. In doing so, we preserve not only their memory but the values they fought to protect. I encourage everyone to attend a Memorial Day program within their community. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the communities and service organizations that work diligently to organize and host these meaningful events.

May we continue to grow stronger as individuals, families, and communities through shared reflection, appreciation, and unity.

God bless our current servicemembers, veterans, their families, the great state of South Dakota, and our beloved nation.

Jeremiah J. Schneider, Secretary

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# SDDVA HOSTS TRAINING CONFERENCES FOR CTVSO'S



Last week, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) hosted three regional mini conferences in Rapid City, Pierre, and Sioux Falls for county and tribal veterans service officers (CTVSO).

These training sessions focused on key topics such as addressing the growing issue of claims consultants, ethics for veterans service officers, updates from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and a briefing from the state claims office. The goal was to ensure CTSOs and TVSOs are equipped with the latest information and tools to better assist South Dakota's veterans.

The next major training event will be the SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School, scheduled for September 9–12.





# **STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE VETERANS STAND DOWN**

**THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025**

**GRAND RIVER CASINO & RESORT**

**1000 HRS - 1400 HRS**

**(10AM - 2PM CST)**

**LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED**

**RESOURCE FAIR AND OUTREACH EVENT FOR VETERANS.**

**VA PROGRAMS AND VA BENEFITS STAFF**

**WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.**

**PLEASE BRING A COPY OF YOUR DD FORM 214, DEPENDENT  
INFORMATION AND IDENTIFICATION TO THE EVENT.**

**DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED SO  
WE CAN FULLY SERVE YOU AND YOUR NEEDS.**

## **SERVICES OFFERED**

**CLOTHING  
LEGAL ASSISTANCE  
READJUSTMENT COUNSELING**

**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
VA BENEFITS  
HOUSING REFERRALS**

**MUCH MORE!**

**POC: CLAUDETTE WALKING ELK, DIRECTOR  
SRST DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (701) 854 8527**

**POC: VA BLACK HILLS  
CLAY THOMPSON (605) 206 0046 [clay.thompson@va.gov](mailto:clay.thompson@va.gov)  
CHELSEA TAKEN ALIVE (605) 490 1765 [chelsea.takenalive@va.gov](mailto:chelsea.takenalive@va.gov)**





# **AVERA HEALTH HOSTS PINNING CEREMONY HONORS ARMY VETERAN GENE DERDALL**

Avera Health, in partnership with the Brule County Veterans Service Office, recently held a heartfelt pinning ceremony to honor Gene Allen Derdall for his dedicated service in the U.S. Army.

The ceremony, coordinated by Brule County Veterans Service Officer Tim Thomas and Avera staff, brought together family, friends, and community members to recognize Gene's contributions to our nation.



During the event, both Tim Thomas and South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard gave special presentations honoring Gene's military service and legacy.

The pinning ceremony is part of an ongoing effort to recognize and celebrate the sacrifices made by our veterans, offering a meaningful moment of gratitude and respect.

# **HONORING SERVICE AND SACRIFICE: ARMED FORCES DAY**

Armed Forces Day is a national observance dedicated to honoring the men and women who serve in the United States Armed Forces. Celebrated annually on the third Saturday of May, this day recognizes the dedication, bravery, and commitment of those serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force.

Established in 1949 by President Harry S. Truman, Armed Forces Day was created to unify the separate celebrations held by each military branch. It serves as a public reminder of the sacrifices made by service members and their families, as well as an opportunity for civilians to express their appreciation.

Across the country, communities commemorate the day with parades, military displays, educational events, and tributes to veterans and active-duty personnel. It is a time to reflect on the critical role the armed forces play in safeguarding national security and upholding the values of freedom and democracy.

Armed Forces Day is more than just a celebration—it's a solemn thank-you to those who stand ready to defend the nation at home and abroad. Whether through attending events or simply offering words of gratitude, Americans are encouraged to show their support for the heroes who wear the uniform.





*A Day to Remember and Honor  
SDDVA Memorial Day Program  
South Dakota Veterans Cemetery  
Monday—May 26, 2025  
12:00 Noon*



*25965 477th Avenue  
Sioux Falls*





*A Day to Remember and Honor  
SDDVA Memorial Day Program  
Michael J. Fitzmaurice State  
Veterans Home*

*Monday—May 26, 2025  
10:00 am (MT)*



*2500 Minnekahta Avenue  
Hot Springs*



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

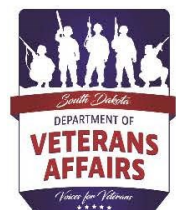
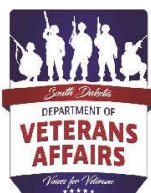


**We invite all veterans to join us for a  
“Veterans Coffee and Networking.”  
Free coffee and treats while you chat with new and old friends  
alike and learn more about veterans benefits from the South  
Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.**

**Wednesday—May 21, 2025**

**11:00 am (CT)**

**Kool Beans Coffee and Roasterie  
(225 Main Avenue—Brookings)**



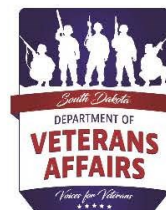
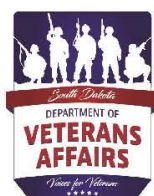




**Veterans,  
See  
What's  
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Free coffee and treats while you chat with new and old friends  
alike and learn more about veterans benefits from the South  
Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.  
Thursday—May 22, 2025  
1:00 pm (CT)  
Chamberlain Community Center  
(112 N. Main Street—Chamberlain)**







# DAV **DRIVE TO VICTORY** Golf Tournament • August 13th

**PRAIRIE GREEN**  
**GOLF COURSE • SIOUX FALLS**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13**  
**4 PERSON SCRAMBLE**  
**9am SHOTGUN START**

**REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 1**  
**\$150 PER PLAYER**

**AUCTION & RAFFLE**  
**FOLLOWING TOURNAMENT**

Includes 18 holes of golf,  
green fees, cart rental,  
breakfast and lunch.



**MORE  
INFORMATION  
HERE!**

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
ARTHUR H. MUCHOW CHAPTER NO. 1  
Sioux Falls, SD • 605.332.6866  
[davdrivetovictory@gmail.com](mailto:davdrivetovictory@gmail.com)



# UPCOMING EVENTS

May 16—SDDVA What's Brewing—American Legion Post 311 (101 Pine Street)—Piedmont—10:00 am (MT)  
May 17—Armed Forces Day  
May 20—Mission 25 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Sioux Falls Arena—(1201 N. West Avenue)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)  
May 21—SDDVA What's Brewing—Kool Beans Coffee (225 Main Avenue)—Brookings—11:00 am (CT)  
May 22—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Grand River Casino—Mobridge—10:00 am (CT)  
May 22—SDDVA What's Brewing—Community Club (112 N. Main Street)—Chamberlain—1:00 pm (CT)  
May 26—State Offices Closed—Memorial Day  
May 26—SDDVA Memorial Day Program at State Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)  
May 26—SDDVA Memorial Day Program at State Veterans Home—10:00 am (MT)  
May 29—SDDVA What's Brewing—James Valley Community Center (300 W. 1st Avenue)—Mitchell—10:00 am (CT)  
Jun 3—Mission 26 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Hawthorne Aviation—(5815 Mitchell Street #1207)—Sioux City, IA —9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)  
Jun 6—Pine Ridge Veterans Stand Down—Pine Ridge Pow Wow Grounds—10:00 am (MT)  
Jun 7—Rich Schild Memorial Poker Run—The Keg—Tabor—12:00 noon (CT)  
Jun 10—MWHF Day of Sweetness—Chick-Fil-A—(4005 W. 41st Street)—Sioux Falls—6:30 am—10:00 pm (CT)  
Jun 13—SDDVA What's Brewing—BHSU Joy Center (1351 S. Joe Street)—Spearfish—1:00 pm (MT)  
Jun 14—8th Annual MWHF Pars and Pubs—Downtown Sioux Falls—11:00 am—4:00 pm (CT)  
Jun 17—SDDVA What's Brewing—Community Center (701-709 Main Street)—Timber Lake—1:00 pm (MT)  
Jun 19—State Offices Closed—Juneteenth Day  
Jun 19-22—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre  
Jun 19-22—American Legion State Conference—Huron  
Jun 26—SDDVA What's Brewing—FEM Electric (800 5th Avenue)—Ipswich—1:00 pm (CT)  
Jun 29—MWHF Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—1:00 pm (CT)  
Jul 4—State Offices Closed—Fourth of July  
Jul 11—SDDVA What's Brewing—Harding County Courthouse (408 Ransland Street)—Buffalo—10:00 pm (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 19—Veterans Information Day—BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center—(1951 N. HWY 20)—Watertown—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)  
Jul 24—Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Sinte Gleska Multipurpose Building—Antelope—10:00 am (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)  
Aug 4-5—Your Journey Matters 2025 Behavioral Health Conference—Sioux Falls Sheraton Convention Center  
Aug 7—Purple Heart Day  
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 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

(continued)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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 19—POW/MIA Day  
Sep 21-25—NVS Accredited Representative Skill Training—Annapolis, MD  
Sep 21-26—NVS Basic for New Accredited Representatives—Annapolis, MD  
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 13—State Offices Closed—Native American Day  
Oct 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)  
Oct 18—4th Annual Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell  
Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm  
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 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 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—South Dakota 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)  
July 18-19—Sioux Falls Air Show  
Sep 15-18—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer ([audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us))  
South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue—Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242

