



South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SOUTH DAKOTA RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR INNOVATION

One hundred fifty years ago, during his second inaugural address in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln articulated what would become the nation’s obligation to veterans: “to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.” Next week marks the 150th anniversary of that promise.

Today, it is estimated that there are more than 21 million veterans – two-thirds of the 31 million total U.S. population in 1860. Caring for their particular needs, and their dependents’ needs, requires more innovation and collaboration between federal and state governments than even a visionary like Lincoln could have foreseen.

On Feb. 24, VA Secretary Bob McDonald announced the recipients of the 2015 Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Awards at the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) winter conference in Alexandria, Va.

The VA and NASDVA worked together to establish the Pillars of Excellence Awards to identify and formally recognize outstanding state programs that support or exemplify VA’s strategic goals and priorities. Awards were presented for programs in three categories: Elimination of the Disability Claims Backlog, Improving Veteran Access to VA Benefits and Services, and Outstanding State Programs.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs was one of the recipients of the “Outstanding State Programs” for Operation Reaching all Veterans. SDDVA designated 2014 as the year to reach an estimated 75,000 veterans living in South Dakota. Operation RAV was conceived to identify and contact South Dakota’s Veterans to make them aware of the benefits and services available to them.

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SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Pollard

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH UNIFORM EXHIBIT TO TOUR UNIVERSITIES

A Women's History Month military uniform exhibit will tour several state university campuses in March to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The South Dakota National Guard is partnering with the SDNG Museum and the Reserve Officer Training Corps and Veterans Services offices of Black Hills State University, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University to host the exhibit.

The traveling display will feature time-period uniform displays of women of various uniformed services. Visitors to the free exhibit will see descriptions of the garments and the women who wore them.

Members of the SDNG will also be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. every day during the exhibit to speak about the service of women in the military and career opportunities for those who may want to serve.

"The uniform exhibit is a great way to recognize and honor the history of women who have served and are currently serving in our military," said exhibit coordinator 1st Lt. Carstin Jerzak, SDNG equal employment manager. "Additionally, it's a great way for those who may be interested in serving in the National Guard to learn about the career opportunities and benefits of being associated with a professional, dependable, high-skilled and elite organization that represents the best of South Dakota and the nation."

Exhibit dates and locations:

- ◆ March 2-4, 7 a.m.–9 p.m.—Spearfish – Black Hills State University – Yellow Jacket Student Union
- ◆ March 5-6, 6 a.m.–7 p.m.—Rapid City – South Dakota School of Mines & Technology – Surbeck Center
- ◆ March 8-13, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.—Rapid City – Camp Rapid, Joint Force Headquarters, Bldg. 420
- ◆ March 16-20, 7 a.m.–6 p.m.—Vermillion – University of South Dakota – Muenster University Center
- ◆ March 23-27, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.—Brookings – South Dakota State University – Student Union
- ◆ March 30-April 3, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.—Pierre – SDNG Museum.

DROP IN LEGAL SERVICES FOR VETERANS

The SFVAHCS will host a "Drop-in Legal Service for Veterans" Day on Friday, March 27, 2015. The legal workshop will be held from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm in the 4th floor auditorium of the medical center.

Licensed attorneys, USD law students (student assistance does not constitute legal advice), Veterans Service Officers, VA Benefits and VA Homeless Program staff will be available to assist veterans with questions, legal forms and counsel. (The VA assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of legal services provided. This referral does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by VA.)



Wáħma Wóglakapi Omniceye

Last week, leaders within tribal government and the veteran network met in Cannon Ball, North Dakota to discuss issues relating to veterans. The conference entitled Wáħma Wóglakapi Omniceye (Talking to hide things-Code Talkers Meeting) was held at the Prairie Knights Casino.

SDDVA Field Officer William Huffmon provided an update on state benefits. Other presentations included military sexual trauma, VA copays, MOUs, justice outreach, veterans court, and healthcare.

During this conference discussions ensued regarding the proposed South Dakota "Code Talkers Memorial."



SFVAHCS TOWN HALL MEETING

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) and Dakotas Regional Office (DRO) is taking the quarterly Veterans Town Hall on the road next month (March 12).

SFVAHCS invites veterans, their family members, VSOs, community partners, and the public to a listening and learning session.

The town hall will be held at the Watertown Readiness Center at 1951 N. Hwy 20, Watertown beginning at 5:00 PM. A benefits fair precedes the town hall from 3:00-5:00 pm to give veterans an opportunity to talk to VA staff about claims for benefits, health care eligibility, the Choice Act, etc.



ZIMMERMAN RECOGNIZED FOR HIS SERVICE DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

This week during the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) winter conference in Alexandria, Virginia, Vietnam Era and Vietnam Veterans were recognized and thanked for their service to this great nation during that time period.

Larry Zimmerman, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, was one of the members recognized and thanked for his service.



ZIMMERMAN AND POLLARD BRIEF SD CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

This week during the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) winter conference in Virginia, SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard had the opportunity to meet with South Dakota's Congressional Delegation.

Zimmerman and Pollard used this opportunity to brief Senators Thune and Rounds and Congresswoman Noem on the state veterans home, Operation RAV, Operation Ketchup and upcoming recognition for Korean War, Vietnam War and World War II Veterans.

South Dakota's Congressional Delegation briefed Zimmerman and Pollard on issues relating to veterans on the federal level.



Deputy Secretary Pollard, Senator Rounds, and Secretary Zimmerman



Secretary Zimmerman, Senator Thune and Deputy Secretary Pollard



Deputy Secretary Pollard, Representative Noem, and Secretary Zimmerman

SD AIR NATIONAL GUARD ANNOUNCES AIRMEN OF THE YEAR



Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy J. Lehman

The South Dakota Air National Guard is pleased to announce its Outstanding First Sergeant, Senior Noncommissioned Officer, Noncommissioned Officer and Airman of the Year for 2014.

Congratulations to the following recipients:
Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy J. Leh-



Master Sgt. Paul E. Lupkes

man, 114th Operations Support Squadron intelligence superintendent, native of Luverne, Minnesota – Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year

Master Sgt. Shawn L. Greer, 114th Medical Group first sergeant, native of Sioux Falls – First Sergeant of the Year

Master Sgt. Paul E. Lupkes, 114th Security Forces Squadron NCOIC of plans and programs, native of Luverne, Minnesota – Outstanding NCO of the Year

Senior Airman Jorrie J.D. Hart, 114th Security Forces Squadron installation controller, native of Canton – Outstanding Airman of the Year

The selection board selected Airmen based on their superior leadership, job performance, community involvement and personal achievements.



Master Sgt. Shawn L. Greer

The 2014 Outstanding Airmen of the Year will represent the 114th Fighter Wing as they compete against other Air National Guard members nationwide to determine the overall Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year.



Senior Airman Jorrie J.D. Hart

VABHHCS ANNOUNCES ACTING DIRECTOR

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is pleased to announce Jo-Ann Ginsberg, RN, MSN as Acting Director for VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS). Ginsberg assumes the role on March 1, 2015 upon the retirement of Stephen DiStasio. Ginsberg will serve as the Acting Director during the search for a new Director.

Ginsberg joined VA Black Hills in 2011 as the Associate Director for Patient Care Services. In that position Ginsberg oversaw a variety of programs including, but not limited to, Pharmacy, Nutrition & Food Services, Tele-Health, Ward Administration, Prosthetics, Canteen Services, Supply Processing & Decontamination, Voluntary Services, Education and Nursing Practice.

Ginsberg received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master's of Science in Nursing, Nursing Administration/HIV sub-specialty from Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing in New York, NY. She has a strong clinical and administrative background, filling many leadership positions in healthcare including the past six years working in VA. She previously served as the Chief, Learning Resources at the Cheyenne VA Medical Center; the Director, Department of Emergency Medicine at the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center; and Patient Care Manager, Department of Emergency Medicine at the Brooklyn Hospital Center in Brooklyn, NY.

"I look forward to the opportunity to lead the dedicated, caring, and skilled staff at VA Black Hills. It's an honor to serve the over 19,000 Veterans who receive their healthcare with us", said Ginsberg. VA Black Hills consists of two medical centers in Hot Springs and Fort Meade and a VA staffed multi-specialty outpatient clinic in Rapid City. Community Based Outpatient Clinics are located in ten rural communities and provide care to Veterans throughout our region.

Donna Schnider will serve as Acting Associate Director for Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive, VA Black Hills Health Care System. Donna Schnider, RN, BSN, MS, was appointed Director of Organizational Improvement for the Black Hills VA Health Care System in August of 2006. Ms. Schnider received her BSN from South Dakota State University and MS in Healthcare Administration from the University of South Dakota.



BHSU NAMED TOP SCHOOL FOR MILITARY MEMBERS

Not for the first time, Black Hills State University (BHSU) is being recognized for their contributions to those in the military.

The school has been named a Top School in the 2015 Military Advanced Education Guide to Colleges and Universities. The guide ranks schools based on military culture, financial assistance, flexibility, and support.

David Dodson, BHSU's Veterans Resource Coordinator, said the university earned the recognition, in part, due to their ease of transferable credits and veteran specific scholarships. Black Hills State University has been recognized for several military friendly titles in recent years.



Upcoming Events

2015

- March 12—SFVAHCS Town Hall Meeting—Watertown 1951 N. HWY 20—5:00 pm
Mar. 13—SFVAHCS Veterans & Employees Creative Arts show
Mar. 19—DOL Job Fair—Aberdeen Civic Arena—215 S. Washington Street—12:30 pm—5:00 pm
Mar. 25—DOL Brookings Job Fair—Days Inn—2500 E. 6th Street—Noon—5:30 pm
Mar. 26—DOL Yankton Job Fair—Technical Education Center—1200 W. 21st Street—2:00 pm—6:00 pm
Mar. 29—Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Program—Pierre—1:00 pm
Mar. 31—DOL Watertown Job Fair—County Fair Banquet Hall—14 2nd St SE—1:30 pm—5:30 pm
Apr. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
May 5—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis—10:00 am
May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre—10:00 am
May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings—10:00 am
Jun. 18-21—VFW State Convention—Yankton, SD
Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Aug. 5-9—AVIT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls
Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

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