



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



ENGBRETSON BACK WITH THE SDDVA TEAM

“We are excited to welcome back Caitlyn Engbretson from her four month deployment with the Air National Guard,” said SDDVA Program Manager Heather Henderson. “She has received all of her accreditations and is working hard with the Claims Office team to get all of her training complete.”

Henderson noted that she is pleased to be fully staffed with a team that takes great pride in taking care of our veterans and their families. “It is my goal to ensure that everyone in the claim’s office is fully qualified, trained and helping veterans before the holidays,” said Henderson.

Caitlyn returned from Korea on September 18 and was back at work with SDDVA on October 9. She was deployed to Kunsan AB, South Korea for just over 120 days.

“The deployment was amazing overall and I am very glad I went. It was different on so many levels from my previous deployments and TDY’s, especially Afghanistan,” said Caitlyn. She added, “this time we were allowed a high amount of freedom to explore the country and culture and I made sure to take full advantage of that. Overall, the whole experience was very worthwhile and a great time BUT there is nothing better than being home. I look forward to settling into my role as a VSO and representing the veterans of our great state!”

Engbretson noted that although she did miss Korea a lot, she is very glad and grateful to be home and reestablishing a normal routine; and stated it was nice to not have to calculate a 14-hour time difference when making a phone call!

Inside this issue:

Black Hills Powwow	2
SDNG Helps Scouts Sharpen Their Skills	3
Federal Benefits Books	4
Boots to Business Reboot	5
Sen. Rounds Challenges VA	6
Code Talkers Exhibit	7
State Veterans Home Update	8
Derr Foundation Gala	8
Upcoming Events	9

Fourth of July weekend outside of Yonsan Station



ZIMMERMAN ATTENDS BLACK HILLS POWWOW

This past weekend, SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman had the great opportunity to attend the 29th annual Black Hills Powwow at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

There were thousands of talented and colorful dancers, singers and artists performing. This year's theme was "Come Dance With Us."

"Attending the powwow was both an opportunity and an obligation to reflect on the accomplishments of American Indians," said SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman. "American Indians have a long and proud history of service to country in battle."

Zimmerman had the opportunity to visit with the Lakota Women Warriors and thanked them for their service. "Native Americans have served our Nation, and theirs, in uniform with loyalty, patriotism, honor, courage, and sacrifice—for more than two centuries, in every war fought by the United States," said Zimmerman.



SOLDIERS HELP BOY SCOUTS FIND STRENGTH WITHIN

The crisp air matches the participants' anticipation as dawn breaks over Lewis and Clark Scout Camp near Yankton. Over 250 boy scouts and more than 60 South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers stand at attention as the flag ceremony begins. In the background the bugle plays as the children's eyes follow the crew of four soldiers cradling the neatly folded red, white and blue flag. A picturesque scene with a pink and gold hewn sky stretches out over the crowd.

After the solemn moment fades, soldiers and scouts began their busy weekend, Oct. 2-4, a joint opportunity allowing soldiers to instruct while scouts sharpen their survival skills.

Multiple National Guard units from across South Dakota were involved to include: the 730th Area Support Medical Company; Battery B, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery; 842nd Engineer Company; 211th Engineer Company (Sapper), and the 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute provided training support. The event gave the soldiers the opportunity to provide inspiration to young men.

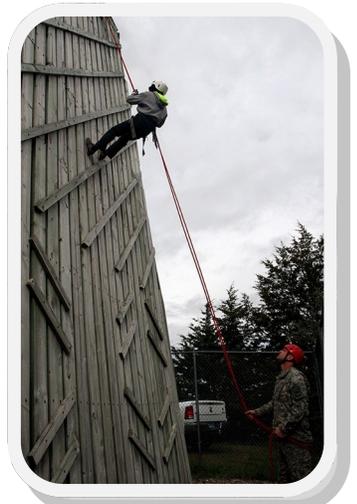
The soldiers were able to improve the scouts' knowledge in several areas: gun safety, fire building, survival techniques, rappelling, military communication, physical fitness, land navigation, flags and military customs, first aid, map reading and exposure to military equipment. At the gun safety station, an electronic target system allowed scouts to test their marksmanship skills on an electronic target system. The weapons are not actually fired but a laser is released by the pull of the trigger and the target senses where the laser lands. The scores were recorded and friendly competition ensued.

Several scouts could also be seen exploring the various Humvees and track vehicles. The scouts showed particular interest in the different weapon systems that were on display. Soldiers explained how each system functioned and in what warfare situation they would be used. During the obstacle course, soldiers guided the scouts through step swings, cargo nets, slide poles and climbing walls. While the scouts and soldiers worked on their skills, leadership saw how the training was benefiting both organizations.

"The National Guard helped us attract a lot more youth to this event," said Tom Smotherman, the executive director for the Sioux Council Boy Scouts of America. "It brought nearly 300 kids out here. We would have expected around 100 normally. We had to cap it at 300 because that is all the dining hall could handle."

"The Boy Scouts provided a realistic training experience for us," said 1st Sgt. Brooks Schild, of Battery B, 1/147th FA. Schild went on to say that training young people tested the soldiers' knowledge, as the scouts had numerous questions.

Staff Sgt. Michael Schwans, training NCO for the 147th, was in charge of securing resources for the event. Humvees, various track vehicles, a wide assortment of weapons, and even a MRE (meal ready to eat) lunch were available to the scouts and scout leaders.



FEDERAL BENEFITS BOOKS FOR VETERANS

The Federal Benefits Book for Veterans (VA Pamphlet 80-XX-01) has been compiled by VA for years in consultation with the various administrations. The 2015 version of the product is a limited sixty-page addendum to the 2014 two hundred page product. This year each VA facility will receive 10% of the number of benefits books distributed last year. The VA has, however, received posters and business cards, both of which provide a web address and a QR code leading veterans to the benefits books in digital form.

The VA notes this decision reflects concerns about the accuracy of the documents due to delays in product development and usefulness of printing, given alternative media and concerns about the value of hard copies. The VA believes the posters and business cards will be used to provide better information at a reduced cost in VA facilities and the facilities of their community partners. This strategy is in line with Presidential Directive on printing, is green, and offers a cost savings to the department while providing better services to their stakeholders. Any questions or concerns can be addressed to [VHA CO 10B4 Actions](#).

As a reminder, the information contained in the benefits book is provided through several avenues. Digitally, the benefits books can be found

http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp; information about VA programs and services can be found at <http://www.va.gov/>, and up to date locations and contact information can be best found on facility respective sites or on the VA facility locator found on VA's home page. For those who do not have access to a computer or the internet, the Chief Business Office sends each enrolled veteran a detailed, personalized explanation of his/her benefits in the Veterans Health Benefits Handbook. Generic information about VHA services and benefits may also be found in CBO's Health Care Benefits Overview that is both printed and available digitally on <http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/resources/epublications.as>



STARTING OR GROWING A VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS



Sign up for Boots to Business Reboot, an entrepreneurship training program for veterans and their spouses

OWNING A VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS

Veterans have the character, discipline and skills needed to succeed as small business owners and entrepreneurs. Wondering what it takes and how you can prepare? Enroll in Boots to Business Reboot.

ABOUT BOOTS TO BUSINESS REBOOT

Part one will be a one-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship course eligible to Veterans of all eras, Servicemembers, including members of the National Guard and Reserves, and their spouses. This course is instructed by SBA and its partners who are skilled business advisors.

Part two is an eight-week online Foundations of Entrepreneurship course instructed by a consortium of professors and practitioners led by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University.

Note: A participant must complete the one-day course to be eligible for the eight-week course.

Boots to Business Reboot is provided nationally in cooperation with: First Data Corporation and The Marcus Foundation, Inc. and



LEARN MORE AT

WWW.SBA.GOV/BOOTSTOBUSINESS

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 4, 2015

8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

PIERRE AMERICAN LEGION

520 S. PIERRE STREET

Lunch and Materials will be provided.
Attendees are asked to pre-register by
October 21st.

For More Information and to Register
Call the South Dakota U.S. Small Business
Administration District Office
(605) 330-4243, ext. 11
Email: michele.arends@sba.gov

BROUGHT TO YOU LOCALLY BY:

- American Legion Post 8**
- City of Pierre**
- Fort Pierre Development Corporation**
- Governor's Office of Economic Development**
- Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce**
- Pierre Economic Development Corporation**
- South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs**

AND FOLLOW US AT

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BOOTS2BUSINESS

ROUNDS CALLS ON VA SECRETARY TO HOLD BENEFITS BUREAUCRATS ACCOUNTABLE FOR 'SHOCKINGLY UNETHICAL' MISUSE OF FUNDS

U.S. Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), along with other members of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, called on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert McDonald to hold accountable senior bureaucrats who participated in a "shockingly unethical" scheme at the Veterans Benefits Administration to increase pay for high-level employees by transferring them to other positions within the administration.

According to a VA Office of Inspector General investigation requested by the committee, the Veterans Benefits Administration, or VBA, spent nearly \$2 million over the past three years to transfer 22 VBA employees to different positions, using the transfers as justification for increasing their pay and offering exorbitant relocation incentives. In one case, a VBA bureaucrat used her authority to create a position for herself that required less responsibilities and the VA paid \$274,000 in relocation expenses in addition to retaining her previous salary.

Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey was aware of the scheme and allowed it to continue under her watch.

In a letter to McDonald, the committee members called on the secretary to hold all the senior-level bureaucrats involved accountable, noting that "there is no indication that these transfers were in any way based on merit or intended to serve the best interests of veterans."

"Now more than ever, the VA needs leaders committed to changing the culture and old way of doing business," wrote the senators. "During your confirmation hearing, you told this Committee that 'those employees that have violated the trust of the Department and of veterans must, and will be, held accountable.' More recently, at a field hearing in Gainesville, Georgia, you testified that you have the tools you need to do just that. So, we call on you now to live up to your commitment and to hold accountable those who orchestrated, participated in, or benefitted from the unethical practices outlined in this report, including but not limited to the Under Secretary for Benefits."

In addition, the committee members asked that the secretary review all pending relocation efforts for senior level employees and provide a plan for reforming the approval and reimbursement of relocation expenses at the VA.

The letter was signed by U.S. Senators Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), chairman and ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, respectively, Dean Heller (R-Nev.), and committee members Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), Jerry Moran, (R-Kan.), John Boozman, (R-Ark.), Bill Cassidy, (R-La.), Thom Tillis, (R-N.C.), Dan Sullivan, (R-Alaska), Patty Murray, (D-Wash.), Sherrod Brown, (D-Ohio), Jon Tester, (D-Mont.), and Mazie Hirono, (D-Hawaii).



CODE TALKER EXHIBIT

Leaders from the South Dakota National Guard and the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs have created a traveling exhibit honoring South Dakota's Code Talkers. The traveling exhibit came about as a way to honor Native Americans in the month between Native American Day on Oct. 12 and Veterans Day on Nov. 11.

The exhibit included tribal flags and the seven medallions currently available, honoring the Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Oglala, Rosebud, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Standing Rock and Yankton tribes. Another medallion, honoring the Lower Brule, is still being designed and was not available for the exhibit. The medallions were authorized by Congress in the Code Talker Recognition Act of 2008. A gold medal was awarded to each of the tribes who provided code talkers. Individual code talkers or next of kin received silver medals, while bronze duplicates are available for sale.

The United States first used Native American code talkers during World War I when Choctaws transmitted messages confounding to the Germans. The concept was reintroduced during World War II when the Marine Corps recruited several hundred Navajos to serve in the Pacific campaign." The use of Native languages by code talkers was a fundamental tactic that saved countless American lives and helped win both World Wars. South Dakota tribes provided 67 code talkers during World War II.

Secretary Zimmerman said he was honored to be a part of this day of recognition and appreciation. "Code talkers played a pivotal role in the successful U.S. efforts throughout the wars," said Zimmerman. "It is important that we honor and highlight the memories of what they accomplished and ensure this history is not forgotten. Their code saved lives and gave the military a way to secretly convey its battle plans on America's way to victory."

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Exhibit Dates are:

Oct. 21—Watertown: Lake Area Technical Institute—1201 Arrow Ave., Student Event Center (level 4) (10-3 CT)

Oct. 28—Sioux Falls: University Center, 4801 N. Career Ave., Admin Bldg. (commons area) (10-3 CT)

Nov. 11- Crazy Horse Memorial (10-3 CT)



STATE VETERANS HOME UPDATE

There are many new things happening on the campus of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. New furniture is arriving, window treatments are being hung, and last minute touch ups are being finished.

The MJF State Veterans Home staff has had a busy couple of years (probably five to be exact). From vision development, securing funding, groundbreaking, construction and now the actual move. And through it all they have kept the needs of our veterans as their first priority.

Move-in day will be November 10 and if all goes as planned, our heroes will be eating lunch in their new home.

One of the special things you will see in the new home's chapel is a special stained glass window depicting St. Anthony of Padua holding the baby Jesus. This special glass was donated by Tom Inman's family. Tom is the physical plant manager at the Home. The glass was in the St. Anthony's of Padua Catholic church (built in 1927) and given to the Inman's when the church was being torn down. The Inman's had the glass in their home for over 40 years and when Tom's mother Violet decided to move from the home, their family thought that the State Veterans Home Chapel was the perfect place for this piece of art to be displayed.



DERR FOUNDATION GALA

Sergeant Colton Levi Derr
FOUNDATION

Gallantly Forward
2015 Gala
SATURDAY, October 24

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
LaCroix Hall | Doors Open at 5pm

Tickets \$35
Buy for veterans if you can't attend!

Social | Dinner | Silent & Live Auction
Guest Speakers | Battle Buddy Award
Live Music by The Potter Family

SGT Derr battled with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following his combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. We honor Colton by helping his fellow veterans.

The battle does not end when the war is over.

The Sergeant Colton Levi Derr FOUNDATION would like to thank Print Mark-It

Get your ticket to support OUR HEROES

Just call or go online! 605.545.2505

SergeantDerrFoundation.org

The annual Sergeant Colton Levi Derr Foundation Gala will be held on Saturday, 24 October 2015.

Foundation sponsors use this event to elevate awareness about the issues facing our warriors: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), veteran suicide, homelessness, multiple deployments and the effect they have on our veterans and their families.

The gala fundraiser will be held at The Rushmore Plaza Civic Center - LaCroix Hall, Rapid City, SD. Doors will open at 5:00 p.m. with event ceremonies kicking off at 5:45 p.m.

Tickets are \$35 and must be purchased in advance. The gala will feature a social hour, dinner, a silent/live auction and live music from The Potter Family.

A business evening attire is recommended but not required.

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 21—Code Talker Medal Exhibit—Watertown: Lake Area Technical Institute—1201 Arrow Ave., Student Event Center (level 4) (10-3 CT)
- Oct. 24—VVA Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting—1519 W. 51st St—Sioux Falls—9:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
- Oct. 28—Code Talker Medal Exhibit—Sioux Falls: University Center, 4801 N. Career Ave., Admin Bldg. (commons area) (10-3 CT)
- Nov. 4—Boots to Business—Starting or Growing a Veteran-Owned Business—Pierre Post 8 American Legion (520 W. Pierre St) - 8:30 am—3:30 pm (CT)
- Nov. 7—Vietnam Veterans of America State Council Meeting—Pierre Post 8 American Legion—Noon (CT)
- Nov. 11- Code Talker Medal Exhibit—Crazy Horse Memorial
- Nov. 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Hot Springs—10:00 am
- Nov. 16-17—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—Redrossa—Pierre 1:00 pm (CT)
- Nov. 17—Women Veterans Honoring Ceremony—SRST Admin Bldg—Ft. Yates, ND 11:00 am
- Nov. 18—Veterans Council Leg. Round Table—Sioux Falls—(DAV —1519 W. 51st St) 11:30 am (CT)
- Nov. 19—Veterans Council Leg. Round Table—Watertown—(Amer. Leg. Post—1412 9th Ave. SW) 1 pm (CT)
- Nov. 21—Veterans Council Leg. Round Table—Rapid City (VFW Post 1273—420 Main Street) 10 am (MT)
- Dec. 1—SDDVA Mini Conference—Rapid City TREA—1981 Centre Street—10:00 am (MT)
- Dec. 2—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre—American Legion Post 8 —520 W. Pierre Street (CT)
- Dec. 3—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings—American Legion Post 74—1229 Western Avenue (CT)
- Dec. 8- Governor's Budget Address—Pierre
- 2016
- Jan. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
- Jan. 12—SD Legislative Session Opens—Pierre
- Jan. 14—Veterans Legislative Breakfast—Pierre
- Jan. 27-28-State Tribal Relations Days—Pierre
- Apr. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
- April 15-17—DAV Convention—Rapid City
- Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
- Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

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