



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



DAVISON COUNTY HOSTS ANOTHER KOREAN AMBASSADOR PEACE MEDAL CEREMONY

This week during the Davison County commissioner’s meeting, one veteran and three widows were presented their Korean Ambassador Peace Medals.

Prior to this ceremony, CVSO Davidson presented the Davison County Commission with a casket flag display for the WWI Veteran and informed them that they will receive another flag for the upcoming Civil War Veteran.

Davidson and her team have been very active in securing headstones for Civil War through World War I Veterans and providing them the honors they deserve.

Kudos to Jessica and Maria for hosting numerous events to honor our Korean Veterans and their families and for growing Davison Counties outreach programs.

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MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN

Rosie's Back

All of us remember Rosie the Riveter, our American symbol, representing the women who worked in factories and shipyards during World War II.

Her motto, "We can do it," reminds me of a 21st century Rosie the Riveter - *Rosie Lopez-Torres*. Torres is the co-founder of Burn Pits 360, an entity that promotes awareness of exposures to airborne hazards such as burn pits, oil well fires and other forms of pollution that our military personnel and contractors may have been exposed to.

In 2015, Major General Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant, and I did public service announcements on the burn pit registry.

Torres saw one of them on You Tube

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f47qIPBGqiU>) and called me to share her story and her mission.

Rosie had knocked on a lot of congressional doors and had visited the United States Department of Veterans Affairs numerous times in an effort to secure legislation to establish a registry for those exposed to potentially toxic fumes. Rosie's husband, LeRoy, is one of the many veterans that has been exposed and has suffered major health complications. Even before passage of legislation, Rosie and her team implemented a burn pit registry of their own at Burn Pits 360. In January 2013 President Obama signed into law a bill requiring the VA to establish the registry.

Veterans and contractors that served in the following locations should register:

- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn
- Djibouti, on or after September 11, 2001
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm
- Southwest Asia Theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990.

Veterans can make a difference in their health and the health of fellow veterans by documenting their exposure and reporting health concerns. Only with this documentation will we have the evidence needed to address this generation's Agent Orange.

I've done it — it takes about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You can do it in one sitting or save it, have a latte, and then complete it later. You can also print it and use it to discuss concerns with your medical provider.

The more information the VA and Congress have, the easier it will be to secure medical assistance.

To all the men and women who have served our country, please visit: burnpits360.org or <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp> and register today.



Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

BEYOND GLORY

Beyond Glory, a film that portrays the remarkable stories of eight Medal of Honor recipients, will play at the Black Hills Film Festival on Saturday, May 7 at the 3:00 pm session in Hill City (Hill City High School Theater). The film stars Stephen Lang who first adapted the screenplay from Larry Smith's best-selling book, and with Director Larry Brand, Lang further shaped it into the film that will play at the Festival. Best known for his acclaimed performance as the villainous Colonel Miles Quaritch in James Cameron's AVATAR, Lang will speak to the Film Festival audience about making *Beyond Glory* following the film. Later that evening he will be featured in a special on-stage interview at the Festival's 7:00 pm session.

For *Beyond Glory*, Lang plays eight Medal of Honor recipients from World War II, Korea and Vietnam depicting first-hand accounts of the acts of valor for which these men received America's highest military honor. Lang has toured his one-man show around the world, including on military bases and as a command performance for Congress. The film offers a seamless glimpse of Lang's many performances. An accomplished actor who has appeared in the films *Men who Stare at Goats*, *Tombstone*, *Gods and Generals*, and recent television series *Into the Badlands* and *Shades of Blue*, Lang is also a Tony-nominated actor for his work on Broadway. Lang has been signed by Cameron, who calls Lang a "gifted actor," to reprise his role for three planned sequels to *Avatar*. In *Beyond Glory*, Lang dives deep into the reservoirs of emotion and pain, fortitude and courage, humility and joy for his solo performance.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force – above and beyond the call of duty – which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the U.S. Armed Services. Michael J. Fitzmaurice, now living in Hartford, South Dakota received the Medal of Honor from President Nixon for his extraordinary actions at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, during a fire-fight on March 23, 1971. Specialist Fourth Class Michael John Fitzmaurice, United States Army, smothered the blast of an enemy-thrown explosive charge with his flak vest and body to protect other soldiers in his bunker. Seriously wounded and partially blinded by the blast, he then continued to fight. After his rifle was damaged by a second explosive blast, Fitzmaurice proceeded to acquire another rifle from an enemy, defeating him with his bare hands, and continued to fight, refusing medical evacuation. His extraordinary heroism contributed significantly to the successful defense of the Army's position and saved the lives of a number of his fellow soldiers.

For more information about the Black Hills Film Festival, a full schedule or to purchase Festival passes, go to www.BlackHillsFilmFestival.org.

About the Black Hills Film Festival: The seventh annual tribute to independent films runs May 4-7, 2016. The Festival begins with an evening at the Elks Theatre in Rapid City featuring *Prophets Prey*, a film about the investigation of Warren Jeffs and the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints, including their site in the southern Black Hills. Investigator Sam Brower and victims of the church will attend the screening. The Festival continues at the Journey Museum in Rapid City on Thursday and Friday (May 5-6) with two screenings of a South Dakota-made film, *Lakota Girls*, as well as other documentaries, shorts and feature films produced by filmmakers from across the U.S. The Festival hosts more than 30 films, and several filmmakers will be on hand to lend insight into movie-making. Festival-goers may purchase session tickets for specific days (available on site only) or can buy Festival passes for entry into all films on all days at a cost of about \$1.50 per film. VIP Passes are also available with additional inclusion of several parties and receptions throughout the Festival, including one that honors Stephen Lang and Michael Fitzmaurice at Warrior's Work Gallery in Hill City on Saturday at 5pm.

114TH FIGHTER WING CAREER DAY DRAWS CROWD

Recruiters of the South Dakota Air National Guard held their bi-annual "Career Day" at Joe Foss Field, April 6. High school students, their parents, and several high school counselors attended the event to learn more about enlistment and career opportunities available in the unit.

The main focus of the day was to bring high school juniors and seniors out to show them the various shops and offices on base that have current vacancies that they could enlist in.

"We hold these career days twice a year, one in April and one in October, and our goal is to get about a 10 percent enlistment rate from attendees," said Senior Master Sgt. Brian Voges, Headquarters, SDANG recruiting and retention superintendent.

The April career day event had approximately 46 young adults, many with their parents, who had the opportunity to see first-hand how members of the unit perform their duties. After a brief welcome by Col. Nate Alholinna, 114th Fighter Wing vice wing commander, the students were escorted around the base and given demonstrations and briefings of different career fields.

Some of the benefits for young adults are the opportunity to explore different career options while gaining college credits, pay, and college tuition assistance as part-time members of the Air National Guard.

The unit truly believes that their members are the best recruiters. This was demonstrated at career day by the inclusion of young Airmen like Airman First Class Katherine French, 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, who has only been back from technical training for one week and attended the career day to speak to the young adults in attendance.

For more information on the current vacancies at the 114th Fighter Wing, please contact the recruiting staff at (605)988-5718 or email: usaf.sd.114-msg.list.recruiting-retention.



WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS CERMONY

Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender proclaimed April 9th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Rapid City.

A celebration was held at the American Legion Post 22 to say thank you and welcome home to the Vietnam Era Veterans as well as their spouses and family.

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman attended the celebration and expressed his thanks to all of the heroes and their families.

USS SOUTH DAKOTA

The keel has been laid for the future USS South Dakota, the nation's 17th Virginia-class attack submarine.

The milestone was marked in a ceremony last Monday at the Rhode Island manufacturing plant for General Dynamics' Electric Boat.

The submarine's sponsor is Deanie Dempsey, wife of former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Martin Dempsey. She says she's thrilled to start a relationship with the submarine and crew.

In a Navy tradition, Dempsey wrote her initials on a metal plate to be mounted on the submarine, which is being built in modules. It doesn't have a traditional keel running the length of the vessel.

Groton, Connecticut-based Electric Boat and Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia are building the South Dakota.

Retired COL Steve Harding from the SD Department of the Military, also a member of the USS South Dakota Commissioning Committee and Senator Corey Brown attended the event representing the state of South Dakota.



U.S. DEPT OF INTERIOR BRIEFS SDDVA

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) and the United States Department of Interior met (DOI) in Pierre this week to share briefings on settlements and large sum pay outs, land inheritance, land owner income reports, disbursing methods, income verification, POAs, guardianships, payee's, and estate planning.

Fiduciary Trust Officers James Cordry and Sheela Farmer presented DOI's briefing. SDDVA Program Manager Steve Oliva presented SDDVA's briefing.

County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers were encouraged to attend the briefing.

A similar briefing will be held in Sioux Falls on May 17 at the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office training room at 9:00 am (CT).



VA ANNOUNCES FUTURE SITE OF ARCHIVES

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that the Dayton VA Medical Center has been officially selected as the site for the National Department of Veterans Affairs Archives.

Dayton has a long history of service to our nation's Veterans and is home to one of the original United States Veterans' facilities. The Ohio community has been caring for our nation's Veterans since the Civil War era when it housed a branch of the A National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, a predecessor to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and its predecessor agencies have generated archival records and artifacts from the time before the Revolutionary War. Many of these historic materials are stored at the Washington-area facilities of the National Archives and Records Administration along with records from other federal agencies. The VA is one of the largest federal agencies and it owns more historic buildings than any other civilian federal agency. Many of its historical documents, photographs, artifacts, and other materials are spread across the country in its 150 facilities under conditions that do not meet federal curation standards. The VA Archive at Dayton will enable the VA to organize and protect its important heritage and eventually share the VA's rich history with the public.

SD ESGR PROGRAM SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program is seeking volunteers to add to their team to promote and enhance employer support for military service in the National Guard and Reserve.

Whether working behind the scenes or directly with people, SD-ESGR is in need of volunteers with leadership, public speaking or organizational skills for a variety of committees, which include employer outreach, ombudsman, public affairs, awards, and military outreach.

SD-ESGR is currently looking for volunteers for the Pierre, Brookings, Mitchell, Hermosa, Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Yankton, and Vermillion areas.

ESGR, a Department of Defense office, was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR is supported by a network of more than 4,700 volunteers in 54 committees located across all 50 states, three U.S. territories and the District of Columbia.

Volunteers, hailing from small business and industry, government, education and prior military service, bring a vast amount of experience to assist in serving employers, service members and their families. Volunteers can choose how much time they would like to be involved and in what capacity. Their efforts can improve the relationships service men and women have with their employers.

The ESGR program offers free education and training to civilian employers of service members, service members and their families.

If you are interested in volunteering, check out ESGR at <http://esgr.mil> or contact Maj. Lona Christensen, SD-ESGR program director, at 605-737-6540.

GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS MAY AS MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed May as “National Military Appreciation Month,” a time for all to honor, remember, recognize and appreciate those who have served in the past and those now serving, as well as their families.

“The vigilance of the members of the Armed Forces has been instrumental to the preservation of freedom, security and prosperity enjoyed by the people of this great nation,” the Governor’s proclamation states. “The success of the Armed Forces depends on the dedicated service of its members and their families.”

National Military Appreciation Month includes: Loyalty Day on May 1, Victory in Europe Day on May 9, Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 8, Armed Forces Day on May 16 and Memorial Day on May 25.

These days provide an opportunity to learn more about military members and the families who have given of themselves to support and defend the principles we hold dear.

“The month of May provides a great opportunity to remember, honor and pay tribute to our nation’s heroes – heroes who set aside their personal safety to defend and protect their family, their community and their nation from those who would threaten our way of life,” said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “As Americans, we could not enjoy the blessings of freedom and liberty without the service of these men and women fulfilling an extraordinary duty.”



VALANDRA JOINS VSO TEAM

Todd County has selected Ronald D. Valandra as their new veterans service officer. Valandra replaces Terry Cousin who used to cover Todd and Tripp Counties and now just covers Tripp.

Ron is a US Navy “in country” Vietnam Veteran and a former IHS administrator.

Ron will be in his office on the first and third Fridays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. His phone number and email address are as follows: 605.856.2567 and toddcountyvso@gmail.com.

Please join SDDVA in welcoming Ron to our network.



STUDENT VETERAN RESOURCE CENTER

PRESENTS

PROJECT 22

"THEY WENT SEARCHING FOR HOPE. THEY FOUND IT EVERYWHERE."

OPEN TO PUBLIC

COYOTE TWIN THEATRE
[10 E MAIN STREET VERMILLION, SD]



APRIL 18
4P & 7:30P



AGE 16+ RECOMMENDED

FREE WILL DONATION
[TO BENEFIT VETERANS]

CONTACT SVRC@USD.EDU TO RSVP
SPONSORED BY US VETERANS MOTORCYCLE CLUB

IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY AND NEED SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS TO FULLY PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CONTACT DISABILITY SERVICES AT LEAST 48 HOURS BEFORE THE EVENT AT 605-677-6389.



ATTENTION

World War II Veterans 3rd Annual Get Together Luncheon

WHERE: The Retired Men's Enlisted Association Building (TREA).
1981 East Center Street, Rapid City, SD
(Just off East Highway 44 on the way to the RC airport)

WHEN: **May 17th**, 11:00 am. until 1:00 pm.

FREE

PICNIC STYLE LUNCH!

(burgers, potato salad, beans, chips, drinks, etc.)

ENTERTAINMENT!

All WWII veterans and their spouses/guardians
are invited to attend!

Come and renew old acquaintances, make new friends,
and share memories!

RSVP PLEASE!

Call or email Bill Casper to make reservations!

Bill Casper **605-342-0893** OR **billcasper75@gmail.com**

We will look forward to seeing you again,
or meeting you for the first time!

Upcoming Events

- April 15-17—DAV Convention—Rapid City—Adoba
Apr. 20—Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls
Apr. 23—Boots to Business Reboot Program—SD Technology Business Center—Sioux Falls (8:30—4:00)
May 10—SDDVA Mini Conference—Rapid City—TREA—1981 Centre Street
May 11—SDDVA Mini Conference Pierre—American Legion Post 8—520 S. Pierre Street
May 12—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings—City/County Building—520 3rd Street—Suite 300
May 13—Improving Combat Veteran Care Conference—University Center—Sioux Falls—8:00 am (CT)
May 14—South Dakota Vietnam Veterans of America Meeting/Election—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre
(election at 11:00 am (CT) and meeting at 1:00 pm (CT))
May 14—2nd Annual PVA Poker Run and Concert—Sanford Pentagon—Sioux Falls
May 17—WWII Veterans Luncheon—TREA (1981 Centre Street—Rapid City) 11:00 am (MT)
May 18-19—SDCMF Symposium—Black Hills State University Center—Rapid City
Jun. 9-12—VFW State Convention—The Lodge at Deadwood
Jun. 16-19—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota—Watertown
Jul. 1—Buffalo Chip Annual Flag Raising Ceremony—West Gate Entrance off Ft. Meade Way—6:00 pm (MT)
Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
Jul. 23-24—Sioux Falls Air Show
Aug. 22-25—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre Ramkota
Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

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

