NOVEMBER 17, 2016

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

# MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE - ONE OF SOUTH DAKOTA'S SUPER HEROES

When most people think about the Medal of Honor, images from Hollywood action films often come to mind and those larger-than-life heroes written for the silver screen. But in reality, most of those who earned the medal are more like Clark Kent than Rambo – seemingly ordinary people who have accomplished extraordinary acts.

Michael "Mike" Fitzmaurice, born 1950 in Jamestown, North Dakota, is one of these people. He did not want to go to college and joined the Army out of family tradition more than anything else. He enlisted with some buddies at the height of the Vietnam War and later found himself in Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

When he landed, he thought he was going to have it made, but that fantasy was short lived. Reality reared its ugly head and reminded Fitzmaurice that war is no picnic – it's hell.

His actions speak volumes to his intestinal fortitude, tenacity and devotion to his fellow soldiers.

Since his tour of duty, Mike has led a relatively quiet life, but he has continued to serve — finishing out his Army career with the South Dakota National Guard and also working for the VA as a plumber from 1987 until his retirement in 2011.

The South Dakota Veterans Home is named in Mike's honor. We thank Mike for his service and encourage all to view this link:
http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/32564/north-dakota-man-earned-medal-of-honor-in-vietnam/
(this story courtesy of the VA)

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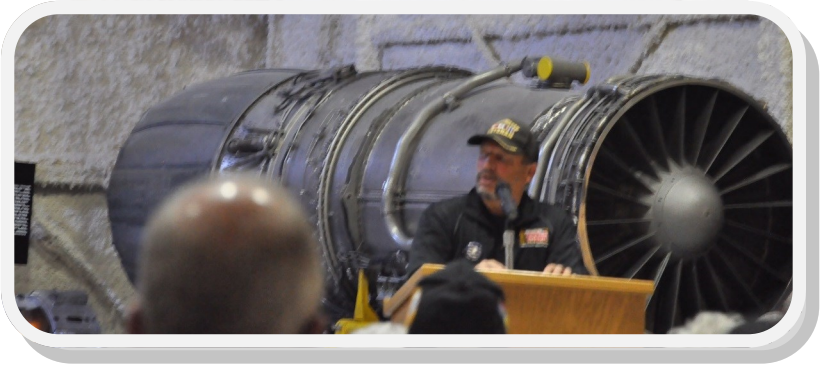
# ZIMMERMAN MESSAGE

SDDVA staff delivered Veterans Day messages in Newell, Spearfish, Huron, Milbank, Kimball, Black Hill State University and Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Although in different corners of the state, the message was the same — THANK YOU VETERANS!

Since 1775, the United States has had 41,892,128 soldiers step up and serve during war times. In an effort to strengthen the need to record the stories of our heroes, SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman shared this analogy in his message. With 41,892,128 serving during war times, can you imagine 41.8 million stories!!! How many books would that be? 41.8 million stories with five pages for each hero, that is 209,460,640 pages!!! If each book has 250 pages, that's 837,843 books!!!!



# VABHHCS FINAL EIS AVAILABLE

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) announces the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding the proposal to reconfigure their health care system. The document carefully evaluates the possible environmental effects of the VA's preferred alternative to reconfigure as well as six alternatives. The final EIS identifies the measures to mitigate adverse effects. It also addresses the comments received from veterans, stakeholders, government agencies and members of the public during the comment period that was open from October 2015 to June 2016.

"The document is not a final decision; however, it is an important and necessary tool for making a final determination on the proposed reconfiguration of services and resources to provide high-quality, safe, accessible, and cost-effective care closer to where veterans live", said Sandra Horsman, Director, VABHHCS. "It has taken a lot of work and public involvement to get to this point".

As a result of consultation and public input, the VA changed its preferred alternative to maintain a presence on the historic Hot Springs campus by providing outpatient care through a Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Building 12.

The document is available on the website www.blackhills.va.gov/vablackhillsfuture/.

# DREAM OF FLYING, SERVING OTHERS INSPIRE SD GUARD SOLDIERS TO BECOME PILOTS

South Dakota Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Damon Lappe knew from an early age that he wanted to be a pilot. Growing up, he dreamed of attending the Air Force Academy to fly the planes he had seen in the skies over Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Then one day, when he was 12 years old, Lappe saw several HH-60M Black Hawk helicopters fly over his house. The whirring of the blades, the stealthy shadows that swept across the ground and the sudden wind stirred his determination, and he decided he was going to do whatever it took to become a Black Hawk pilot.

Lappe wasn't the only one who was enchanted by the idea of becoming a pilot. Capt. Brittany Pearson, who was already enlisted in the SDARNG, was approached by a Reserve Officer Training Corps recruiter. For Pearson, one conversation with an aviation officer changed her life and planted the seed that started her dream of becoming a pilot.

Attending the ROTC program in college is one way to start the path to becoming a South Dakota Army National Guard pilot. Lappe chose another path and attended Warrant Officer Candidate School.

Once graduated, both Pearson and Lappe attended Army Aviation School to specialize in flying the Black Hawks of the Rapid City-based Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment. The 189th's primary mission is to provide aerial medical evacuation during natural disasters or emergency operations and to support U.S. military personnel in a theater of war or during peacekeeping operations.

Pearson and Lappe said the unit is looking for more soldiers for their pilot program and currently has several openings for qualified applicants.

In order to attend Army Aviation School, applicants must meet a rigorous list of requirements in order to apply. An applicant considering becoming an aviator must take several tests, including the Selection Instrument for Flight Training test, a flight physical examination, and achieve a high enough score on the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery.

After almost two years of intense training, Pearson and Lappe were finally ready to own the sky. Although flying is their passion, both Pearson and Lappe also have demanding civilian careers.

Lappe works as a police officer for the Rapid City Police Department. When he's not fighting crime, Lappe has to ensure he makes time to meet his flight hour requirements. Between the long hours at the department and even longer flight hours, Lappe spends as much time as he can with his wife and two kids.

During her time away from the flight line, Pearson works as a 7th grade school teacher. She also commits her time to coaching various middle school sports including basketball and volleyball. She spends long hours preparing lesson plans and game plays in order to make time to get her flight hours in every other week.

For the 189th pilots, flying isn't just about accomplishing a dream. The aviators play an important role serving the state of South Dakota and the nation. Often times, the Black Hawk crews are called in by the state to rescue stranded or wounded hikers. The Black Hawks are also able to fly, carrying loads of water to provide fire suppression support when forest fires break out over the Black Hills. The flight crews use the same skills they use to rescue hikers to rescue wounded service members in battle.

Saving lives is what the 189th pilots do. It took innumerable hours, incredible amount of hard work and dedication, and many sacrifices along the way, but in the end they accomplished their dreams of becoming pilots.

Support Siouxland Soldiers
Presents
Holidays
FOR OUR HEROES!
Tues. December 13
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Liberty Elementary
1623 Rebecca St, Sioux City, IA 51103
For Veterans & Military Families!
Holiday Meal & Groceries Provided by Support Siouxland Soldiers
Gifts provided by Santa, Mrs. Claus, Elves and Reindeer!
Haircuts by Becky and Massages by Main Street Massage
Resource Fair organized by Operation Engage America
Gently Used Clothing provided by The Micah Project!
Thank You Event Partners!
Elks usa
ISEA
Great Education. It's An Iowa Basic.
Sioux City Musketeers
OPERATION ENGAGE AMERICA
American Red Cross
RockTenn
the path to healing
Main Street MASSAGE
SUPPORT SIOUXLAND SOLDIERS
SupportSiouxlandSoldiers.com Email: siouxlandtroops@gmail.com

# Military Family Assistance

## What is Military Family Assistance?

Military Family Assistance provides a focal point of information through Six Essential Services. Family Assistance Centers are critical in providing help to all military families. This holds especially true for geographically dispersed families who are unable to access services at a local base, installation, or fort. In other words, Family Assistance personnel are the "*Easy Button*" for assistance and referral for families.

### The Six Essential Services:

**Crisis Intervention and Referral**

- Provide assistance with the following:
  1. Domestic Abuse
  2. Child Abuse/Neglect
  3. Danger to Self and/or Others
  4. Abuse/Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult

**Legal Resource and Referral**

1. Assistance with Power of Attorney/ Wills
2. Information and assistance with Service Members Civil Relief Act
3. Assistance with referral for ESGR

**Financial Resource and Referral**

1. Understanding Military Pay
2. Assistance with financial assistance and loan applications through the American Red Cross
3. Referral to the availability of outside grants
4. Provide referrals for budgeting classes

**TRICARE Resource and Referral**

1. Provide general information on insurance benefits
2. Assist with TRICARE Medical and Dental applications
3. Assist with finding local participating providers
4. Assist with writing letters to challenge claim denials

**Military ID Cards and DEERS**

1. Provide information on DEERS Rapids Centers
2. Assist with obtaining an ID card

**Community Information and Outreach**

- Provide a list of local Community resources, including but not limited to the following:
  1. Assist with Child Care resource and referral
  2. Assist with referral to local financial resources
  3. Assist with finding a local FRG to assist with Family Readiness

# Military Family Assistance

**Who is the team?**

**1.800.658.3930**

**Kim Chase**
Brookings
Family Assistance Center
Specialist
Contractor - HRCI
605.696.5416 ~
605.415.1013
kimberly.k.chase.ctr@mail.mil

**Corinne Mahlen**
Watertown
Family Assistance Center
Specialist
Contractor - HRCI
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**Sarah Neugebauer**
Rapid City ~ Part time
Family Assistance Center
Specialist
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605.737.6970 ~
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**Sheri Bartunek**
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Coordinator
Contractor - HRCI
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LIKE US ON facebook
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**Ruth Ragels**
Mitchell
Family Assistance Center
Specialist
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ruth.e.ragels.ctr@mail.mil

**Rickkie Martinmaas**
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Specialist
Contractor - HRCI
605.737.6970 ~
605.415.0471
rickkie.m.martinmaas.ctr@mail.mil

Please take a few minutes and complete our survey at: http://go.usa.gov/3WEsO

## US DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS SMARTPHONE APPS, FOR USE *WITH THERAPY*

**The ACT Coach App** helps you work with a mental health professional during Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT aims to help you live with unpleasant thoughts and feelings without avoiding them or being controlled by them. ACT Coach is not a self-help tool and should only be used while in therapy with a provider.

**The CBT-i Coach App** helps you get the most out of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-i) so that you can develop good sleep habits and sleep better. CBT-i Coach is best used while in therapy with a provider.

**The CPT Coach App** helps you work with your therapist during Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). CPT is used to reduce symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by helping you work through your thoughts and feelings about your trauma, and decrease avoidance of difficult memories. The App helps you track your progress, appointments and PTSD symptoms. CPT Coach is not a self-help tool and should only be used while in therapy with a provider.

**The PE Coach App** helps you work with a mental health professional during Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy. PE therapy is used to reduce symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by helping you decrease distress about your trauma by engaging with reminders of the experience (triggers). The App helps you track your progress, appointments and PTSD symptoms. PE Coach is not a self-help tool and should only be used while in therapy with a provider.

## NON-VA, FREE, MENTAL HEALTH SMARTPHONE APPS

**MindShift** is an app designed to help people cope with anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxiety, you can make an important shift and face it. MindShift will help you learn how to relax, develop more helpful ways of thinking, and identify active steps that will help you take charge of your anxiety.

**Relax with Andrew Johnson Lite** teaches relaxation techniques, which have helped with ME, pain control, insomnia, posttraumatic stress disorder and many other stress symptoms. It provides a great guided meditation session for relaxation, helpful with anxiety and stress as well as a sleep aid.

**OneHealth Mobile App** allows users to join health communities, connecting with peer support to achieve better health and wellbeing. Support communities exist for a wide range of chronic behavioral and medical conditions, including addiction, tobacco cessation, depression, stress reduction, pain, PTSD, sexual trauma, diabetes, obesity, respiratory conditions, and caregiver/family support.

**The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Wellness Tracker** allows you to keep track of your emotional, mental, and physical health. The tracker reports give you an at-a-glance summary of your health trends. This can help you better recognize potential health problems and mood triggers in your daily life, as well as help you better partner with your clinician on treatment plans.

## FREE MENTAL HEALTH SMARTPHONE APPS FOR VETERANS

### US DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS, SMARTPHONE APPS

**The Mindfulness Coach App** provides you with tools and guided exercises to help you practice mindfulness, which means paying purposeful attention to the present moment without passing judgment on it or your feelings. Mindfulness Coach can be used alone, but is not intended as a substitute for therapy.

**The PTSD Coach App** helps you learn about and cope with the symptoms related to Posttraumatic Stress (PTS) that occur following trauma. PTSD Coach can be used alone, but is not intended as a substitute for mental health treatment.

**The Virtual Hope Box (VHB )** contains simple tools to help patients with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking. Patients and providers can work together to personalize the VHB content on the patient's own smartphone according to the patient's specific needs.

**Breathe2Relax** is a portable stress management tool. Breathe2Relax is a hands-on diaphragmatic breathing exercise. Breathing exercises have been documented to decrease the body's 'fight-or-flight' (stress) response, and help with mood stabilization, anger control, and anxiety management.

**Moving Forward App** provides on-the-go tools and teaches problem solving skills to overcome obstacles and deal with stress. It is especially helpful in managing challenges such as: returning to civilian life, balancing school and family life, financial difficulties, relationship problems, difficult career decisions, and coping with physical injuries.

**The Concussion Coach App** provides you with resources to help you manage symptoms of concussion or mild to moderate traumatic brain injury. Concussion Coach can be used alone, but may be more helpful when used along with treatment from a provider.

**Parenting2Go App** helps Veterans and Service Members reconnect with their children and provides convenient tools to strengthen parenting skills. Parents can find quick parenting advice; relaxation tools to use when frustrated or stressed; tools for positive communication; and strategies to switch gears between military life and home.

**Stay Quit Coach App** helps you "stay quit" after you stop smoking with tools to control cravings, reminder messages and support links. Stay Quit Coach is best used while in treatment with a therapist or after your treatment has ended.

**MOVE! Coach Mobile (MCM)** is a weight loss app for Veterans, service members, their families who want to lose weight. This 19-week program can monitor, track, and receive feedback regarding progress with weight, diet, and exercise goals. This app also helps teach SMART goals and problem-solving skills to overcome barriers.

# VA NATIONAL CALL CENTER

Vacancy announcements for the new Call Center can be located at www.usajobs.gov and searchable by entering Hot Springs, SD into location. Veterans and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Positions are open to all U.S. citizens. Please find below a list and link to all vacancies.

Enrollment and Eligibility Contact Representatives- https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/455887700/

Legal Administrative Specialist- https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/455519500/

Supervisory Contact Representative- https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/455988000/

Supervisory Program Specialist- https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/455997400/

Pharmacy Customer Care Contact Representatives— https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/PrintPreview/456169500

# WARRIORS NEVER GIVE UP

This past weekend, SDDVA Field Officer Michael Maske and Interim Program Manager Kevin Bowen, had the opportunity to participate in the Warriors Never Give Up—Heroes Hunting and Healing program near Pierre.

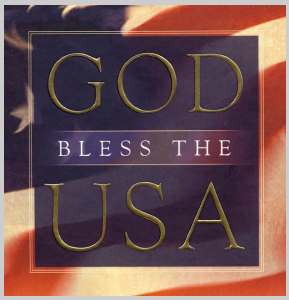
The goal of Warriors Never Give Up is to share their passion with the outdoors by providing hunting adventures for combat and/or disabled service members and their children. They hope these events will reset participants spiritual, physical, and mental journey by letting them be themselves.

More information on Warriors Never Give Up can be found at WarriorsNeverGiveUp.org or follow them on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=warriorsNGU

# Upcoming Events

Dec. 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—Hot Springs (Lower Level Conference Room)—10:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)
Dec. 6—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Dec. 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre—10:00 am—3:00 pm—(CT)
Dec. 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—VFW (209 Cedar Street) Yankton—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
Dec. 12—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony—Flaming Fountain—Capitol Lake—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
Dec. 14—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls DAV—12:00 noon (CT)
Dec. 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American legion—12:00 noon (CT)
Dec. 17—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW—10:00 am (MT)

**2017**

Jan. 10 - Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan. 11—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—5:00 pm—8:00 pm (CT)
Jan. 30—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre
Feb. 1—American Legion Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8 Cabin—Pierre (520 S. Pierre Street) - 5:30 pm (CT)
Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)
Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown

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