At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Governor Kristi Noem has proclaimed Sunday, August 7, 2022, as “Purple Heart Recognition Day,” calling on all South Dakotans to honor those men and women who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal.

The Purple Heart, our nation’s oldest military medal, is awarded to those service men and women who have borne the battle, sacrificing life and limb.

“August 7th is a date to honor the brave men and women who have earned the Purple Heart,” said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “It unites our country in recognizing the sacrifices of those who have risked everything in serving our great nation.”

SDDVA encourages all South Dakotans to set aside time on August 7 to pay tribute to our heroes who have been honored with the Purple Heart. It is important for all Americans to learn the history of this important military award and the sacrifices made by the recipients.

“Our military remains as strong today as it has ever been. America’s veterans have been defined by the virtues of selfless service, sacrifice, and devotion to duty,” said Whitlock. “These men and women, who serve and have served, are the flesh and blood of American exceptionalism.”
SD BRIDGE TO BE DEDICATED IN HONOR OF U.S. ARMY SERGEANT JAMES HAIDER

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony next month to honor U.S. Army Sergeant James Haider.

The ceremony will be held Saturday, August 13, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. (CT) at the BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in Watertown (1951 N. HWY 20).

The Big Sioux River Bridge on US HWY 212 will be dedicated to SGT Haider.

Haider was killed on June 9, 1968, as the result of fatal fragment wounds he received when his unit came under intense enemy mortar attack near the village of Nuoc Dang (approximately 32 miles south of Quang Ngai City in Quang Ngai Province, Republic of South Vietnam).

Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died while serving their country is an initiative of Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs.

“Whenever and wherever this nation has called, in times of darkness and danger, as well as in times of peace and prosperity, veterans have been there and have proudly carried the torch of liberty for all to see,” said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

“Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memories live on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state,” said Whitlock. “Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen gives us an opportunity of remembrance, reflection, and respect—for honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life.”
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR
PROMISES TO BE A GREAT TIME

Some people love the swirling and twirling midway rides. For others it’s the livestock show, 4-H projects, concerts, bull riding, or just to renew old friendships. Some can’t wait to taste those great treats on the midway—caramel corn, walking tacos, funnel cakes, cotton candy, cheese curds, corn dogs, deep fried pickles, the pulled pork sandwiches and you can’t forget that corn on the cob!

Whatever the reason for attending, the South Dakota State Fair in Huron promises to be fun for all. Fair dates are September 1-5. Visit https://www.sdstatefair.com/ to learn more about the schedule of events, fees, concerts, parking, camping, etc.
VETERANS EVENTS AT THE SD STATE FAIR

In support of our veterans, military personnel, and their families, the South Dakota State Fair offers numerous events throughout the week honoring our heroes.

The Red Wilk Construction Tuff Hedeman Bull Bash kicks off the 2022 South Dakota State Fair grandstand lineup with two nights of high energy and fun Wednesday, August 31, and Thursday, September 1. The Red Wilk Construction American Hero Awards will be presented during their honoring ceremony.

Thursday, September 1, is Veterans Day at the State Fair and all veterans and military personnel will receive free gate admission. At 10:30 am (CT), the SD State Fair will host a “Salute to Veterans” program on the Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage.

On Friday, September 2, Fairgoers are encouraged to wear red in support of our troops deployed. At 1:45 pm (CT) they are encouraging everyone wearing red to meet at the Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage to take a group photo that will be sent to the troops.

Throughout the week fairgoers are encouraged to stop in at the Prostrollo Motors Building (just west of Flag Avenue and 2nd Street) and sign a “thank you” sign for the troops. After the Fair, the signs will be sent to our deployed troops (1742nd Transportation Company 125 and the 235th Military Police Company 108) along with the photos.

Staff from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be at the fair all week. Look for us in the Expo Building (Booth# 5A). The SDDVA team will be manning the booth from 9:00 am—8:00 pm Thursday—Sunday and from 9:00 am—5:00 pm on Monday. This team will be able to update veterans on state and federal benefits, programs and services. We encourage all veterans to stop by the booth and meet our team.

Members of the South Dakota Veterans Council will be on hand Thursday, September 1, at the Veterans Building on Flag Avenue.
SOUTH DAKOTA HOSTS HOMECOMINGS FOR AMERICAN LEGION LEADERS

Veterans, families, and community leaders gathered in Chamberlain and Chester this weekend for homecoming celebrations for State Commander Doug Feltman and State Auxiliary President Joyce Smith.

Both had the opportunity to outline their mission and goals for the next year.

SDDVA Benefits Division Director Brett Dickerson and Field Service Officer Kevin Bowen attended on behalf of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.
FALL RIVER FREEDOM RIDE

RIDE THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTHERN BLACK HILLS
AND HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR AREA VETERANS.

AUGUST 7, 2022

1 HAND $15.00
2 HANDS $20.00

TIME
CHECK IN 8:00 AM

KICKSTANDS UP 10:00 AM - RIDE PINS FOR THE FIRST 50 REGISTRANTS

PLACE
STATE VETERANS HOME, 2500 MINNEKAHTA AVE, HOT SPRINGS, SD

FOOD, FUN AND SILENT AUCTION AFTER THE RUN AT THE BATTLE MOUNTAIN
AMERICAN LEGION POST #71.

RIDE MAP AND CARDS SHEETS AT REGISTRATION
FOR MORE INFORMATION DOR_RWR@MSN.COM

SPONSORED BY THE BATTLE MOUNTAIN AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY
USS South Dakota (BB 57)

Crew Member Reunion

80th Anniversary of Ship Commissioning

Saturday, August 13, 2022, 10 am

Book signing to follow at 2 pm

Battleship South Dakota Memorial - West 12th St & Kiwanis Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD

Public is invited—free admission

Guest Speaker at both events:

Paul Stillwell

author of
Battleship Admiral: The Life of Vice Admiral Willis A Lee Jr. AND The USS South Dakota, A Historical Review of the Famed "Battleship X"
UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug 6—9—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 6—SSG Dan Cuka Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Yankton High School—1:00 pm (CT)
Aug 13—SGT James Haider Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center—Watertown—10:30 am (CT)
Aug 14—19—Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention—Rapid City
Aug 15—17—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre
Aug 17—Sioux Falls VA Car Show (2501 W. 22nd Street)—5:30 pm—8:30 pm (CT)
Aug 18—23—USS Iowa Veterans Association Reunion—Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center—Rapid City
Aug 20—PVT August E. Otto Bridge Dedication—Claire City Community Hall—11:00 am (CT)
Aug 22—The Barrel House Day of Giving fundraiser for Midwest Honor Flight—Sioux Falls
Aug 27—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 11 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:30 pm (CT)
Sep 1—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair—Huron
Sep 2—RED Day at the State Fair—Group Photo at the Freedom Stage in Huron at 1:45 pm (CT)
Sep 1—5—South Dakota State Fair—Huron
Sep 3—727th/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center (824 32nd Avenue)—Brookings—10:00 am (CT)
Sep 5—Labor Day
Sep 9—11—PVA Annual Trapshoot—Crooks Gun Club
Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 12 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:30 pm (CT)
Sep 10—Heroes Helping with Horsepower Military Appreciation Event—W. Main Street—Ethan—Festivities begin at 8:00 am (CT)
Sep 12—PVA Doug Brown Memorial Hunt—Howard
Sep 14—17—Black Hills Veterans March
Sep 17—CPL Martin Fluegel Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—McCook Central High School—Salem—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 23—Veterans Stand Down—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
Sep 28—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion—Rapid City—9:00 am—noon (MT)
UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 1—PVT Frederic Schroeder Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—VFW—Madison—1:00 pm (CT)
Oct 1—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 13 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:30 pm (CT)
Oct 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Oct 10—Native American Day
Oct 15—Midwest Honor Flight Fifth Annual Hangar Dance—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Oct 21—PVA Duelling Pianos Fundraiser—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Nov 5—We’ve Got Your Six Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Nov 11—Veterans Day
Nov 11—Capt Tommy Callies Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Howard High School—9:30 am (CT)
Nov 11—S2 Wayne Bridge Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Wagner High School—2:00 pm (CT)
Nov 16—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Pierre
Nov 24—Thanksgiving Day
Dec 6—Governor’s Budget Address
Dec 17—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
Dec 25—Christmas

2023 Events

Jan 10—Governor’s State of the State Address
Jan 11—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting
Feb 10—12—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Huron
Mar 22—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting
May 17—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting
Jun 8—11—American Legion State Conference—Oacoma
Jul 19—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting

2024 Events

Feb 16—18—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Deadwood
Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre

2025 Events

Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military https://military.sd.gov/
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs https://vetaffairs.sd.gov
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