Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

And that is exactly what Grant Roth of Sioux Falls did — there was no path and he has definitely left a trail.

In working on his Boy Scout of America Eagle Project, Roth selected the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery. After visiting with the team at the cemetery, he opted to design and build a special pad for the honor guards to use when they are performing services at the cemetery. Roth sought approval, designed, obtained materials to construct and mobilized his family and fellow scouts to help build this pad.

Roth invited Post 15 American Legion honor guard members to test the new site.

A special shout out to Grant for selecting the cemetery for his project and for his dedication to our veterans.
The community of Sturgis gathered last week as leaders, veterans, and Gold Star Families dedicated the new Gold Star Families monument.

This beautiful memorial has four panels of black granite, representing homeland, family, patriot, and sacrifice.

While the patriot panel always shows the raising of the American Flag on Iwo Jima; the homeland, family, and sacrifice panels are designed by the local community.

The homeland panels includes the Black Hills, Bear Butte, the Belle Fourche River and Mt. Rushmore.

The family panel depicts the support families provide to their loved ones serving.

The sacrifice panel illustrates the Black Hills National Cemetery and the VA Black Hills Health Care System representing the service and sacrifice of military members and families protecting our liberty and freedom.

The Community of Sioux Falls is in the process of designing a similar memorial that will be located in Veterans Memorial Park in Sioux Falls.
The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony this month to honor U.S. Army Corporal Martin Fluegel.

The ceremony will be Saturday, September 17, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. (CT) at the McCook Central High School in Salem (200 E. Essex Avenue).

The West Fork of the Vermillion River Bridge on HWY 38 will be dedicated to CPL Fluegel.

Fluegel served during both World War II and the Korean War. During the Korean War, he was a member of the 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was taken prisoner of war while fighting the enemy in South Korea on February 4, 1951, and died while a prisoner on July 24, 1951.

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.”
VA EXTENDS TEMPORARY HARDSHIP SUSPENSION FOR BENEFIT DEBTS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs is extending their financial hardship suspension on benefit debts, meaning that veterans who request assistance will not have to pay benefit debts until Dec. 31.

This relief option, which was established to help veterans through the COVID-19 pandemic, had been set to expire on Sept. 30. Benefit debts include debts related to disability compensation, non-service-connected pension, and education benefits.

Beginning in September, debt notification letters will be mailed to affected veterans notifying them of the extended hardship suspension option, as well as extended debt repayment plans, waivers and compromises.

Veterans and beneficiaries can manage their debt online, or call 800-827-0648 with questions regarding benefit overpayments.

For information about medical care and pharmacy copayment debt, veterans and beneficiaries can contact the Health Resource Center at 866-400-1238.

VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

VA national cemeteries are looking for volunteers to participate in the Sept. 9 National Day of Service to honor those who served in the nation’s armed forces in the 21 years since 9/11.

This is the fourth annual day of service, and it will take place at more than 60 cemeteries across the country, including Black Hills National Cemetery. Volunteers will clean headstones and participate in other beautification activities that honor and remember our nation’s heroes.

“We encourage all Americans to volunteer at our national cemeteries on this National Day of Service to commemorate the heroes who have served our country since 9/11,” said Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Matt Quinn. “By performing a service, cleaning a headstone and saying their names, we tell these heroes our nation has not forgotten all they sacrificed for us.”

To learn more and view a list of participating cemeteries and start times, visit the National Day of Service page.

Those wishing to volunteer should register at Carry The Load’s National Day of Service page. Cleaning supplies and other materials will be provided; there is no cost to participate, and all are welcome.
Once again this week, there's plenty of news to report from the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. For instance, maintenance crews at the home have been busy working on the flag pavilion and have relocated some of the memorials at this location; affording residents and visitors a better opportunity to view the memorials.

In addition, last weekend residents at the State Veterans Home had the chance to see the beautiful hot air balloons that were part of Hot Spring's Hot Air Balloon Fest. The State Veterans Home serves as a host for the Fest and had three balloons displayed on the campus.

In staff news, joining the SDDVA squad at the State Veterans Home are Levi Butler and Pauline Romero. Levi will serve as an electrician and Pauline as a LPN. Please join us in welcoming Levi and Pauline to our team.
UPCOMING EVENTS

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 15—Veterans Stand Down—Holiday Inn Convention Center (505 N. 5th Street)—Rapid City—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Sep 16—Sioux Falls POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony—Veterans Park (1021 W. Bailey Street)—Sioux Falls—6:30 pm (CT)
Sep 17—CPL Martin Fluegel Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—McCook Central High School—Salem—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 19—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser at Texas Road House—Sioux Falls—4:00 pm—9:00 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—Madison City Armory—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 8—Midwest Honor Flight Elvis Concert Fundraiser—Sanford Event Barn (2510 E. 54th Street N)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Oct 10—Native American Day
Oct 21—PVA Dueling 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

Contact Us
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