



South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Soldiers and Sailors Building  
425 E. Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

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**For more information, contact:** Audry Ricketts at 605-773-8242 or [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us) (South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs)

### **Governor Rhoden Proclaims May as Military Appreciation Month**

**PIERRE, S.D.** – Governor Larry Rhoden, in coordination with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), has officially proclaimed May as “**Military Appreciation Month**”—a time dedicated to honoring, remembering, and expressing gratitude to those who have served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces, as well as their families.

"Freedom isn't free—it comes at a cost, paid daily by the brave men and women in uniform and their loved ones," said Governor Rhoden. "May gives all South Dakotans the opportunity to reflect on their sacrifices and show our heartfelt appreciation."

National Military Appreciation Month includes a series of commemorative observances:

- Loyalty Day – May 1
- Victory in Europe Day – May 8
- Military Spouse Appreciation Day – May 9
- Armed Forces Day – May 17
- Memorial Day – May 26

Additionally, May is recognized as Gold Star Awareness Month, allowing us to pay tribute to the families of our fallen heroes whose sacrifices remain etched in the fabric of our nation.

"This is more than a calendar of events—it's a call to action," said SDDVA Secretary Jeremiah Schneider. "Whether it's reaching out to a veteran, supporting a military spouse, or honoring a Gold Star family, every South Dakotan can play a role in expressing gratitude."

"We are a stronger, more unified state and nation when we recognize the sacrifices of our military community," Schneider added. "Let May serve as a reminder to never take their service—or our freedoms—for granted."

The SDDVA encourages citizens, communities, and organizations to take part in local ceremonies, display the American flag proudly, and find meaningful ways to thank those who have worn the uniform.