



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>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

HONORING COURAGE AND SACRIFICE: MEDAL OF HONOR DAY – MARCH 25

PIERRE, S.D. – On March 25, the nation comes together to observe Medal of Honor Day, a time to revere the bravery, courage, and sacrifice of the men and women who have received the highest military distinction in the United States: The Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor, established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861, is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have distinguished themselves through acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. It is a recognition of extraordinary bravery, selflessness, and commitment to service that can never be overstated.

Each year on March 25, the country pauses to pay tribute to the recipients of this prestigious award, whose actions serve as an enduring reminder of the courage and dedication that keep the spirit of American freedom alive. While their deeds are deeply personal and often go unnoticed by the public, their legacy of valor and sacrifice has a profound impact on the collective history of the nation.

To date, over 3,500 individuals have received the Medal of Honor. These remarkable men and women come from diverse backgrounds, and their acts of heroism span different conflicts; from the Civil War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of these recipients risked their lives to protect their comrades and civilians, often performing actions that led to their own injury or death in the process. Detailed information about each of these veterans can be found at <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/medal%20of%20honor.aspx>.

A Medal of Honor tribute is on display on the first floor of the west wing of the South Dakota State Capitol and honors these ten veterans with South Dakota ties. Behind each name is the community in which their memorial can be found:

- Captain Willibald C. Bianchi (Brookings);
- General Patrick H. Brady (Hot Springs);
- Colonel George E. "Bud" Day;
- Specialist Four Michael J. Fitzmaurice (Hot Springs);
- Captain Joe J. Foss (Sioux Falls);
- Master Sergeant Woodrow W. Keeble (Sisseton);
- Private First-Class Herbert A. Littleton (Spearfish);
- Captain Arlo L. Olson (Toronto);
- Brigadier General Charles D. Roberts (Fort Meade); and
- Colonel Leo K. Thorsness (Brookings).

“We commemorate Medal of Honor Day not only to honor the recipients themselves but also to remind ourselves of the cost of freedom and the bravery required to defend it,” said Jeremiah Schneider, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “Their acts of valor stand as an example for us all, and we must continue to support and recognize the sacrifices of our military men and women.”