



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



SDDVA TO HOST MINI CONFERENCES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will hold their annual Spring Mini Conferences May 5-7, 2015.

The conferences will be held 10:00 am—3:00 pm at the following locations:

- Sturgis on May 5 at the Veterans Club (868 Main Street)
- Pierre on May 6 at Post 8 American Legion Cabin (520 S. Pierre Street)
- Watertown on May 7 at

“Our Mini Conferences afford us the opportunity to review new VA policies and procedures,” said Program Manager Heather Henderson.

Topics to be covered during this conference include: the new VA form 21-0966, overview of the new process for filing a claim of intent vs. an informal claim, national work queue, paperwork needed for filing PTSD claims, adding dependents via the stakeholder enterprise portal, bonus eligibility, best practices for using Vetra Spec and E-signatures on DD 214.

Our claims office staff and field officers have the opportunity to view every claim that is filed by our VSOs and we will be showcasing some of the best practices used.

“The Mini Conferences provides a venue for more hands-on training and affords participants the opportunity to get to know Department staff and neighboring CTVSOs,” said Henderson.



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ZIMMERMAN KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT 147TH DINING OUT

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman served as the keynote speaker for the 1st BN 147th Field Artillery Dining Out Ceremony in Watertown on Saturday, March 7, 2015.

Zimmerman received the "sea to shining sea" print from 147th Commander LTC Linn. As keynote speaker Zimmerman spoke on the WWII soldiers ring found on Australia beach. The ring was lost in 1943 and found in 2013 by local Brian Morris of Australia. He also spoke about Operation RAV.

Zimmerman thanked the 147th for all their commitment and dedication to ensure our freedom.



CONSTRUCTION ON STATE VETERANS HOME PROGRESSING AS PLANNED

Construction is progressing according, or ahead of, schedule on the new Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Sheet-rocking and painting are being completed in some areas, kitchen cabinetry is being installed, the exterior is nearing completion and the Bio-mass building is almost completely enclosed.



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH UNIFORM EXHIBIT

A Women's History Month military uniform exhibit was displayed at the Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket Student Union March 2-4 to celebrate the contributions of women in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The traveling display features time-period uniforms from women serving in various military branches. The free exhibit provided visitors with descriptions of the garments and the women who wore them.

"The uniform exhibit is a great way to recognize and honor the history of women who have served and are currently serving in our military," said exhibit coordinator 1st Lt. Carstin Jerzak, South Dakota National Guard equal employment manager. "Additionally, it's a great way for those who may be interested in serving in the National Guard to learn about the career opportunities and benefits of being associated with a professional, dependable, high-skilled and elite organization that represents the best of South Dakota and the nation."

The South Dakota National Guard partnered with the SDNG Museum and the Reserve Officer Training Corps and Veterans Services offices of Black Hills State University, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University to host the exhibit at the college campuses.



One of the uniforms belongs to South Dakota Army National Guard's State Chief Warrant Officer 5 Darla Crown, who will retire this spring after serving in the military for 42 years.

"I hope young people see the uniforms and are inspired," said Crown. "These uniforms represent the women who came before and after me."

Crown has experienced firsthand the changes women have faced in the military since her first day in 1973 in what was called the Women's Army Corps. According to Crown, women in the past were limited to very few duty positions compared to the new combat roles in which women are now

serving.

"Now, women are able to pursue any position they aspire to fill," said Crown, who currently holds the highest ranking chief warrant officer position in the SDARNG. "There are so many opportunities today for women in the military. There is no gender barrier; nowadays, it's not about what you're allowed to do... it's about what do you want to do."

Black Hills State University freshman Kourtney Christopherson spent time reading the biographies from the women who wore the uniform.

"I first took a photo of the Army uniform and sent it to my friend, who recently decided to join the South Dakota Army National Guard," said Christopherson. "I texted her saying 'this is going to be you in a few months' and she replied with 'I know, I can't wait!'"

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH UNIFORM EXHIBIT (CONTINUED)

Christopherson looked at the rest of the uniforms and found a personal connection with the exhibit when she saw her last name on one of the nameplates.

She made a phone call to her family and discovered the Air National Guard dress uniform was worn by her second cousin.

"It is really cool that I am related to someone who wore one of these uniforms," said Christopherson. "I think this [exhibit] is awesome! It really brings the history of women in the military to us and helps give them the recognition they deserve."

Chief Master Sgt. Jenn Reecy, a member of the S.D. Air National Guard for nearly 22 years, lent her Airman Battle Uniform for the display.

"I couldn't think of a better way to tell the story of women serving in the National Guard than through this incredible display of heritage," said Reecy. "I have immense pride in serving and consider wearing the uniform as an opportunity to influence others to serve and grow the leadership capacity of our communities, state and nation."

Reecy believes visibly celebrating the role women have had, and continue to have, in the military builds upon the legacy of women serving our country.

"Woven through the fabric of the uniform is the story, the legacy, the journey of being an Airman," said Reecy.

The exhibit will be on display throughout the month of March on the following dates and locations:

March 8-13, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Rapid City – Camp Rapid, Joint Force Headquarters, Bldg. 420

March 16-20, 7 a.m., - 6 p.m., Vermillion – University of South Dakota – Muenster University Center

March 23-27, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Brookings – South Dakota State University – Student Union

March 30-April 3, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Pierre – SDNG Museum



Upcoming Events

- Mar. 13—SFVAHCS Veterans & Employees Creative Arts show
Mar. 19—DOL Job Fair—Aberdeen Civic Arena—215 S. Washington Street—12:30 pm—5:00 pm
Mar. 20—VA Veterans Town Hall—American Legion Post 8—Pierre 2:0 pm
Mar. 25—DOL Brookings Job Fair—Days Inn—2500 E. 6th Street—Noon—5:30 pm
Mar. 26—DOL Yankton Job Fair—Technical Education Center—1200 W. 21st Street—2:00 pm—6:00 pm
Mar. 28-30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebrations
Mar. 29—Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Program—Pierre—1:00 pm
Mar. 31—DOL Watertown Job Fair—County Fair Banquet Hall—14 2nd St SE—1:30 pm—5:30 pm
Apr. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Apr. 15—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting (DAV—Sioux Falls) 10:00 am
Apr. 23—ICVCSF Conference—Aberdeen
Apr 24—ISVCSF Conference—Yankton
May 5—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis—10:00 am
May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre—10:00 am
May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings—10:00 am
Jun. 18-21—VFW State Convention—Yankton, SD
Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Aug. 5-9—AVIT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls
Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

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