



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



## GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed Monday, March 30, 2015, as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day,” calling on all South Dakotans to recognize the courage, service and sacrifice of the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.

“The words ‘thank you for your service’ and ‘welcome home’ are some of the most encouraging words for those who served and were rejected after the Vi-

etnam War,” said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “It is important to pause, remember and recognize the bravery of all who served and

to do what we can to help heal the wounds of war.”

Through the establishment of an annual statewide Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans recognition day, South Dakotans can express their appreciation and honor the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.



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## WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS CEREMONY

Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, will be the keynote speakers at the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Ceremony at the Capitol Lake in Pierre at 1:30 p.m. (CDT) on Sunday, March 29.

This ceremony affords attendees the opportunity to express our gratitude, remember their service and say thank you and welcome home.

Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets, sunscreen, sunglasses and water.

Immediately following the ceremony, Pierre American Legion Post 8 will host a celebration reception (free-will donation) from 2:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Veterans will be provided numerous opportunities throughout the weekend to network and share their stories.

Saturday, March 28, events include VA briefings from Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Director Darwin Goodspeed and Dakotas Regional Office benefits team members at 10 a.m., an Agent Orange and Toxic Chemical Town Hall at 1 p.m., a celebration dinner for Vietnam Veterans and their families will be hosted by Pierre Post 8 at 6 p.m. (free will donations), and at 7 p.m. a pre-screening of "Last Days in Vietnam," a PBS American Experience Production will be aired.

On Sunday, March 29, a Welcome Home Breakfast will be held at McClelland's Restaurant in Fort Pierre (902 Walleye Drive) with serving from 7 a.m. – 10 a.m. At noon, participants will begin lining up for the "Celebration" procession, which starts at 1 p.m., and will travel from McClelland's to the Vietnam Memorial at Capitol Lake in Pierre. The VA mobile Vet Center will be located at Capitol Lake and staff will be on hand to provide outreach to veterans and their families.



## PIERRE AND WATERTOWN HOST VA TOWN HALL MEETINGS

During recent Town Hall meetings, veterans in the Watertown and Pierre areas were afforded a great opportunity to be updated on benefit changes and VA services.

The VA believes these Town Halls provide a great opportunity to listen and learn directly from those who use the system.



These meetings are designed to allow feedback from veterans, family members and other beneficiaries. Input was also obtained from Congressional stakeholders, Veteran Service Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and other community partners.

SDDVA's Field Officer Kevin Swanson participated in both of these events.

## MJFSVH WWII VETERAN SHARES SERVICE STORIES

Our very own Wanda Short, a World War II Veteran at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, shared her war stories with American Legion National Auxiliary President Janet Jefford.

Jefford visited the State Veterans Home on March 18 when the American Legion Auxiliary hosted a pie and ice cream social for our heroes.

Wanda showed Janet a photo holder that her husband carried with him in war. On the front of that holder is a bullet burn mark from when he was shot at during the war.

Spencer Kimball once said, "I promise that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, to your children, your grandchildren and others. Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us and as our posterity reads of our life's experiences, they, too, will come to know and love us."

Our special thanks to Wanda for sharing the entries in her journal of life.



# VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

# 2015 NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES



**August 8-12, 2015 | Omaha, Nebraska**

**Open to Veterans 55 and older  
who are enrolled in VA health care.**

*Sports include air rifle, badminton, bowling, cycling, dominoes, field, golf, horseshoes, nine ball, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, and track. Exhibition events include 3-on-3 basketball, blind disc golf, boccia, racquetball, and a road race.*

**Registration is now open online.**



**To register, visit [www.VeteransGoldenAgeGames.va.gov](http://www.VeteransGoldenAgeGames.va.gov).**



## GOV. DAUGAARD VISITS STATE VETERANS HOME

This week, while Gov. and First Lady Daugaard were touring the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, the veterans were at Cabela's getting ready for the big hunt!!!!

Staff provided the Governor and his team with an update on the status of the construction of the new state veterans home.

After touring the new construction site, Physical Plant Manager Greg Frohman provided the group with an update on how the new bio mass plant will operate.

As always, we encourage you to view our web cam to see how the project is progressing— <http://www.truelook.com/clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/>.



SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman, Walter Panzier, First Lady Daugaard, Gov. Daugaard, Jim Seward, Danny Wagner, Brad Richardson and Steve Ivey

## INCREASING DIVERSITY REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY FOR SDNG

As the state and nation concludes celebrating Women's History Month, we can all be proud of the contributions that women in uniform have made and are making to our great military, and in particular those in our South Dakota National Guard.

As the adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard, I'm proud of the progress we continue to make in increasing the number of women and opportunities available to them within our ranks.

Since 2007, the South Dakota Army National Guard has been able to open more than 800 positions, previously unavailable to women, increased the number of women in our ranks by nearly 15 percent, and we look forward to opening our remaining military occupational specialties as soon as we are able.

Pentagon officials say all four of the services are on track to open all military jobs to women by next year and expect rules for those changes to be in place by this fall.

In March 17 testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, defense officials said each of the services are reviewing the final male-only occupations within their ranks, to see what accommodations, if any, will need to be made in coming months.

Under current law, Pentagon officials have until the end of September to develop gender-neutral standards for all military occupations and until the end of December to finalize plans to allow women to compete for those jobs. I strongly believe that this is a step in the right direction.

I made increasing the number of women and minorities, and allowing all races, ethnic groups and genders the highest leadership opportunities a top priority four years ago when I was appointed adjutant general.

A year ago, I was appointed as the National Guard's Joint Diversity Executive Committee Chair, which has given me the opportunity to lead the development of General Frank Grass' Campaign Plan to "operationalize" diversity and inclusion throughout the National Guard.

Right here in South Dakota, we've formed State Diversity Council's within both the Army and Air Guard, along with a State Joint Diversity Executive Council to develop, implement and maintain strategic diversity processes for our organization's success.

From our diversity councils to our leaders' commitment to enhance diversity, I'm proud of the progress we continue to make every day in the South Dakota National Guard.

We're all proud of the history, accomplishments and contributions that women throughout the history of our organization have made, and will continue to make.

By Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch  
SDNG adjutant general



# Upcoming Events

- 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 (MT)  
Apr. 15—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting (DAV—Sioux Falls) 10:00 am  
Apr. 23—ICVCSF Conference—Aberdeen  
Apr 24—ISVCSF Conference—Yankton  
May 1-3—DAV Convention—Sioux Falls Holiday Inn City Centre  
May 5—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis (Veterans Club—868 Main Street) —10:00 am (MT)  
May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre (Post 8 American Legion—520 S. Pierre Street) —10:00 am  
May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sioux Falls (VA Regional Office) —9:00 am  
Jun. 18-21—VFW State Convention—Yankton, SD  
Jun. 24—Black Hills Job Fair—Western Dakota Tech—Rapid City—12:30—5:00 pm (MT)  
Jun.. 25-28—American Legion 97th Annual State Convention—Huron Crossroads Convention Center  
Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
Aug. 5-9—AVIT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls  
Aug. 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre  
Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

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