

# Disabled American Veterans

## Department of South Dakota *Bulletin*



www.davmembersportal.org/sd.org

www.dav.org

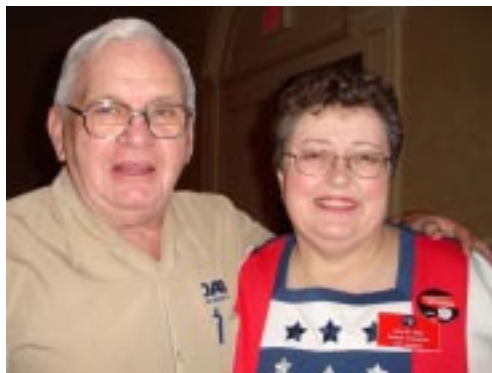
Department Headquarters 332-6866

1519 W. 51st Street - Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Vol. IX, No. 4 APRIL 2008

**YOU'RE INVITED TO THE DAV AND AUXILIARY CONVENTION IN ABERDEEN - MAY 1-3, 2008**

**DAV MID-WINTER CONFERENCE - WASHINGTON, D.C.**



Commander Dick Amos (L) visiting with Auxiliary National Commander Kathryn A. Wiley, who will be our guest at the Annual Convention in Aberdeen.



DAV National General Jonathon H. Wainwright Memorial Award For Numerical Gain Total Membership was presented to DAV Department of South Dakota for FY 2006-2007 to Assistant Adjutant Dennis Adams (R) by DAV National Membership Director Tony Baskerville.



South Dakota delegates visit with Senator John Thune on veterans issues - (L to R) Commander Dick Amos, Senator Thune, Adjutant Gene Murphy, and Assistant Adjutant Dennis Adams.

### 2008 DAV DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA CONVENTION - ABERDEEN

The 2008 DAV Department of South Dakota awarded the 69th DAV Department Convention and the DAV Auxiliary State Convention to Aberdeen Chapter No. 13. The Convention will be held May 1-3, 2008, at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center, 1400 8th Avenue, NW, Aberdeen, SD 57401. The Chapter is planning many activities for the delegates.

Members who would like to attend the convention should contact their Chapter and Unit Commander for information. The Convention will open with a Joint Opening Session with many distinguished guests on May 1st at 1:30 p.m. We would like to send a special invitation to all members of the DAV and Auxiliary to attend this outstanding convention.

#### INFORMATION FOR CONVENTION DELEGATES:

**LODGING:** Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center, 1400 8th Avenue, NW, Aberdeen, SD 57401. Phone (605) 229-4040. Room Rates of \$75.00 Single/Double plus tax. Reservations must be made by April 1, 2008. Thirty (30) rooms have been reserved in the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) name. When making your reservation be sure to mention that it is for the DAV Convention.

**REGISTRATION, LUNCHEON, AND BANQUET:** Cost of approximately \$48.00, which would include: \$8 registration fee and \$40 for (1) lunch, (1) soup/sandwich bar, and (1) banquet meal prior to April 15, 2008. After April 16, 2008 the cost will be \$55.00.

If any member needs information on the DAV Annual Convention please contact DAV Headquarters at (605) 332-6866 and/or e-mail at [davsd@midconetwork.com](mailto:davsd@midconetwork.com)

ALL MEMBERS OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AND AUXILIARY ARE INVITED! PLUS IF YOU KNOW OF A NEW DISABLED VETERAN, PLEASE INVITE THEM.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND PLAN ON ATTENDING THE CONVENTION ON MAY 1-3, 2008

### Disabled American Veterans Department of South Dakota ANNUAL TICKET PROJECT

\$10.00 Per Ticket

THE PROCEEDS OF THIS TICKET TO BE USED FOR THE DAV HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK AND SERVICE TO VETERANS PROGRAMS IN THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE TO OUR VETERANS OF SOUTH DAKOTA.

ONLY 600 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD. BE A WINNER!

DATE OF DRAWING: May 2, 2008

Winners **Do Not** Have To Be Present At The State Convention

**\$2,700 IN CASH PRIZES FOR YOU TO WIN!!**

PRIZES .....	CASH
1st Prize .....	\$1,000.00
2nd Prize .....	\$ 500.00
3rd Prize .....	\$ 400.00
4th Prize .....	\$ 300.00
5th Prize .....	\$ 200.00
6th Prize .....	\$ 100.00
7th Prize .....	\$ 100.00
8th Prize .....	\$ 100.00

DAV DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
1519 W. 51st ST.  
SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA 57105  
(605-332-6866)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!**

## COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Commander Richard C. Amos



After arriving in Sioux Falls following attendance at the Mid-Winter in Washington, D.C. I considered stopping by the Army Surplus Store and buying a Teflon bullet proof vest. The individuals on the Hill have put together a firing squad that is going after veteran's benefits and healthcare. At the present time they have four on the squad, but more could be joining them. The four things to be watching out for are:

- "America's Wounded Warrior Act" Senate Bill 2674 introduced by U.S. Senator Richard Burr (R-NC)
- Its counterpart, the "Noble Warrior Act" in the House of Representatives 5509 introduced by Congressman Steve Buyer (R-IN)
- Independent Commission on the Future of America's Veterans. The Commission is planning to recommend later this year that Congress create a government-chartered entity structured somewhat like the U.S. Postal Service to manage healthcare for veterans.
- President's Commission on Care for America's Wounded Warriors (known as Dole/Shalala Commission)

With any new legislation or Commission study there is always good and bad. Another way of saying it is to divide and conquer us. We should never look at any legislation and say that it would be great for me and back it to our fullest. The right way is what will it do for my brothers/sisters. We have to be united when it comes to health care and benefits. When you think of yourself first and let your brother/sisters benefits be nibbled away, just remember yours could be next.

We are very fortunate to have Disabled American Veterans, Joe Violante and his legislative crew, in Washington, D.C. looking out for our interests.

To learn more about the above, be sure to read DAV Washington Update in the Department Bulletin.

I am looking for a fun time and a productive State Convention in Aberdeen May 1-3. Everything is "go" and I hope to see you there. Continued good health to you.

## LEADERSHIP ADVICE: THE MAN IN THE ARENA

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., the 26th President of the United States and Spanish-American War veteran was famous for his leadership and his energetic ability to put thought into action. A little bit of his spirit and attitude could help the men and women of the DAV as we push to secure our legacy by creating a vital membership.

The following is a quote from his speech "The Man in the Arena":

*"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."*

## VETERANS WEEKEND AT THE DAKOTA RELAYS

The Howard Wood Dakota Relays, one of the largest track meets in the upper Midwest, will be held on Friday, May 2, and Saturday, May 3, at Howard Wood Field in Sioux Falls. Events will start at 3 p.m. on Friday, 8 a.m. Saturday morning, and 5:45 p.m. Saturday night.

We are inviting all veterans and their immediate family to be our guests on this weekend. There will be a VETERANS GATE for veterans, and all the veteran need do is identify themselves as a veteran for free admittance. At some time during the program, they will be recognized.

## AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S COLUMN

By Commander Margaret Koll



Hello everyone.

As I write my final newsletter, spring is just about here and my year is about done.

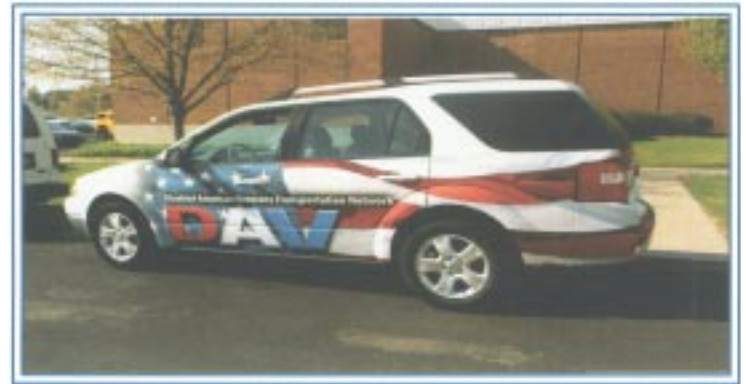
I've enjoyed all my visits to the units, VA hospitals, and all my other travels as your state commander.

As the year comes to an end, don't forget to get reports in on time. Also, as convention nears, don't forget to make your room reservations by April 1st and your registration sent in by April 15th.

Don't forget to get your items ready for our auxiliary auction on Thursday evening. Also, sell, sell, sell those tickets for the quilt raffle. This is a great fundraiser for our state auxiliary.

It sounds like Aberdeen has worked really hard to make this a great convention so I hope to see many of you there.

Veterans are the apple of my eye.



## DAV HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The DAV Department of South Dakota has been approved for five (5) 2008 Ford Taurus X-7- passenger vans through the DAV Colorado Trust which provided grants of \$46,299.80 and DAV Chapter's veteran organizations, State of South Dakota, Communities of Miller, Pierre, Sisseton, Yankton, Clay County, Hand County, Roberts County, Yankton County, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Indian Tribe, and friends providing \$67,000.00 for a total of \$113,299.80. These new vans will be outstationed in Miller, Pierre, Redfield, Sisseton, and Yankton to provide free transportation for veterans to the VA Medical Centers and Clinics. We say a big THANK YOU" to all who assisted in the purchase and placement of these vans. Delivery is expected this spring.

## VA TO HOST WOMEN'S RETREAT

The specialized Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Outpatient Treatment Program of the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System is hosting a women's retreat April 25-27, 2008 at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center.

The semi-annual weekend retreat, beginning at 12 p.m. on April 25th is for women veterans of all eras and family members (wives, significant others, mothers, adult daughters, etc) of combat veterans. The major objectives of the retreat are to help participants develop a better understanding of PTSD, develop a support system and provide an opportunity to develop new perspectives in relationships with their Higher Power, family, friends and the broader world in which they live.

The semi-annual retreat in its 15th year seeks to help women look at some of the basic questions in their lives," said Cathy Edler, Addiction Therapist for the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (SUPT) Program and Retreat Coordinator. "The volunteer facilitators and participants build a community of women who take the time for each other. The retreat does not provide all the answers, but will provide the time, place and personal support for you to search within yourself."

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization provides a yearly grant to cover meals and lodging so there is not cost for eligible participants.

Participants must be screened and pre-register by phoning the SUPT Program (Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.) at 720-7449 or 1-800-743-1070, extension 7449.

# THE AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL ASKS FOR DAV SUPPORT



**The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial** is moving closer to becoming a reality. Everyone involved with the project is excited and working tirelessly to ensure that construction on the Memorial begins on schedule. Federal guidelines require that the full amount for the cost of construction, plus ten percent for ongoing maintenance, be collected and/or pledged prior to beginning construction. With groundbreaking set for early 2009, now more than ever before, **The Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation needs your support.**

The Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation was asked by Congress under Public Law 106-348 to establish a permanent, national Memorial in Washington, D.C. honoring the three million brave men and women, past and present, who became disabled while serving in the United States Armed Forces. **The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial** is a long-overdue tribute to those who have placed their lives in harm's way, and who spend each day living with a deep and permanent reminder of their willing sacrifice.

Foundation Co-Founder and Chairman, Mrs. Lois B. Pope explained, this Memorial is intended not only to honor their service, but also to be a constant reminder to all of us, that freedom truly has a significant price in the lives of those who have fought for it."

Encouraged by the tremendous support from DAV National, which has established a fund of up to **\$3 million to match donations made by Chapters, Departments and individual members through their chapters**, the foundation is confident that groundbreaking and completion of the Memorial will be right on schedule. DAV Chapter 152, represented by Commander Michael Corbett in Delray Beach, FL has pledged \$1000 to the project. Further, Commander Corbett has challenged all DAV Chapters across the nation to match this pledge. A number of Chapters have already done so, while still many more have not. The Foundation earnestly seeks continued DAV support nation wide.

Construction for the memorial was approved by Congress in 2000, and the design, by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd., was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission in 2006. It is a beautiful design spanning two-acres within full view of the nations' Capitol. The focal point of the memorial will be a five point star-shaped reflecting pool (the five points representing each branch of the military), with an eternal flame flowing up from the center. A grove of trees will stand alongside the pool, symbolizing strength, hope and honor.

Donations made to The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will ensure that this site becomes an everlasting tribute to the honorable and patriotic service of all disabled veterans, past and present, who became disabled in service to our country.

Further, the Memorial will stand as a constant reminder for future generations of Americans to never forget the sacrifice and valor of our brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines - the unsung champions of our democracy.

Please act today! The DAV Department of South Dakota will be raising donations for Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation to be present at the 2008 Disabled American Veterans National Convention. The DAV in South Dakota ask all DAV Chapters, Auxiliary Units, members, and friends of the DAV to consider a tax deductible donation. Please make your donation to: Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation.

Donation From: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **THANK YOU!**

Please mail to: **DAV Department of South Dakota  
1519 W 51st street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105**

For more information visit the Memorial website at [www.dvlmf.org](http://www.dvlmf.org). We thank you in advance for your support and **THE DAV SALUTES YOU!**



**ARMY  
AIR FORCE  
NAVY  
MARINES  
COAST  
GUARD**

**Full Time,  
Reserve &  
National Guard**

**All Branches &  
All Eras Are**

**Welcome Here!**



FROM THE

**AMERICAN  
REVOLUTION**

TO THE

**GLOBAL WAR  
ON TERRORISM**

**CELEBRATE ALL  
WHO HAVE  
SERVED OUR  
NATION IN THE  
NAME OF  
FREEDOM!**

**Come to  
Sioux Falls, SD  
June 20-22, 2008!**

**The Only Event  
in the Nation  
Showcasing 233+  
Years of  
American Military  
History in One  
Location!**

**Free to Attend! Make  
This an Educational Day  
for Your Organization!**

This Event Brought to You by M.A.G. Inc. with the Support of the Sioux Falls Veterans Council  
and Many Fine Businesses Thanking All Who Have Ever Served Our Nation.

*A Celebration For All Who Have Ever Served  
and Those Who Appreciate Them*

# 2008 ALL AMERICAN



June 20 & 21, 2008  
W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds  
Sioux Falls, SD

June 22, 2008  
Military  
Church Service  
Veterans  
Memorial  
Park  
Sioux Falls, SD

## SALUTE TO THE TROOPS

★ June 20 - 22, 2008 ★ Sioux Falls, South Dakota ★



**Live Music From All Eras  
Military Museum Displays  
Military Tanks, Aircraft, Jeeps & Equipment Displays  
Civil War Reenactments  
Seminars on Veterans Services  
Informational Vendor Booths  
All Night Coffee Shop  
Children's Workshops and Play Area  
Camping Available On Grounds**

See Items from The Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, WW I,  
WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan!



### Vendor Booths

College Recruiters with Info on the GI Bill, VA  
Home Loan Information, Free Blood Pressure  
Screening, Veterans Career Information, State &  
Federal Benefits Information for all Service Mem-  
bers, and so much more!

### Educational Seminars

Surviving the Holocaust, Navigating the VA Healthcare  
System, Accessing Your Benefits, Agent Orange,  
Stress and the Family, Suicide Prevention, PTSD,  
Children Serve Too, and much more!  
See our website for details.



For More Info Visit:

[www.SaluteToTheTroops.net](http://www.SaluteToTheTroops.net)

ABN Army Surplus (605)357-8855

Sioux Empire Fair Office (605)367-7178

**W.H. Lyon  
Fairgrounds  
Gates Open at  
10:00 am on  
Friday, June 20!**

### Special Events:

Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> –  
Noon Hour

**Hire  
America's Heroes  
Luncheon**  
Business Leadership  
Network

"Hire America's Heroes –  
How Military Experience  
Translates into the  
Business World."

Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> –  
Supper Hour

**Thank You  
Veterans Meal**  
Professional Real Estate  
Sales Associates

This group has been hosting  
their "Thank You Vets" Event  
for 4 years at Sertoma Park  
in Sioux Falls and we are  
pleased to have them joining  
forces with the Salute.  
First 600 Meals are FREE!

Saturday, June 21

**Reenactments  
and Live  
Demonstrations  
Occurring All Day!**

Sunday, June 22 –  
9:30 a.m.

**Worship  
Together at  
Veterans' Memorial  
Park & Give Thanks  
for Our Freedom!**





**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
69TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**May 1 - 3, 2008**

**Best Western Ramkota Hotel  
1400 8th Avenue NW  
Aberdeen, South Dakota**

**(605) 229-4040**

**CONVENTION HOST:**

**DAV Swanson-O'Connor Chapter No. 13**

**7:00 AM Coffee - Hospitality Room  
Thursday, Friday & Saturday**

**WEDNESDAY - APRIL 30, 2008**

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM Registration

**THURSDAY - MAY 1, 2008**

- 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Registration
- 8:00 AM Budget & Finance Committee
- 8:30 AM Income Research Committee
- 9:00 AM Department Executive Committee Meeting
- 11:30 AM Auxiliary Forget-Me-Not Luncheon
- 1:30 PM Joint Opening Session
- 3:00 PM Veterans Town Hall Meeting
- 5:00 PM NOTR Rendezvous
- 6:00 PM Soup/sandwich Bar
- 7:00 PM Auxiliary Auction

**FRIDAY - MAY 2, 2008**

- 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Registration
- 8:30 AM Memorial Service
- 9:45 AM First Business Session
- Standing Committee Reports
- Convention Committee Reports
- 12:00 PM Awards Luncheon
- 2:00 PM Seminars
- 7:00 PM Commander's Banquet

**SATURDAY - MAY 3, 2008**

- 8:30 AM Final Business Session

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**By Sr. Vice Commander Bob Hill**

What a year for South Dakota - We are first in Division IV at 101.48% but the year ends on June 30, 2008. We will need to put membership recruitment in high gear because twelve (12) other states will be trying to take over first place. Are YOU willing to assist with the recruitment of Disabled Veterans so Commander Dick Amos receives the DAV National Commander Ring at the 2008 DAV National Convention?

All Chapters are at 100% plus and we must look over our partial life members to convert them to "FULL LIFE" - TODAY! We must look at the younger men and women who will fill our ranks and keep the fire burning. We must reach out to the new Disabled Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan.

We invite and ask ALL MEMBERS OF THE DAV TO SIGN-UP ONE NEW DISABLED VETERAN BY JUNE 15th. Have you talked to your neighbors, the person you work with, the person you attend church with, and talk to the returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Commander Amos would appreciate your recruitment efforts.

I encourage you to keep up the good fight. I ask you to remain steadfast in your resolve to the men and women you have recruited this year, and continue the fight for all of us who have sacrificed on behalf of our nation.



**VETERANS  
TOWN HALL  
MEETING**



**CALLING ALL VETERANS**

*Sponsored By Disabled American Veterans*

**3:00 p. m., Thursday, May 1, 2008**

**Best Western Ramkota Inn  
1400 8th Avenue NW  
Aberdeen, South Dakota**

**ALL VETERANS ARE INVITED**

**CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION STAFF OF SOUTH DAKOTA,  
VETERANS EMPLOYMENT, VA MEDICAL CENTERS  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICERS,  
VA STAFF, AND VISN 23 DIRECTOR**

**WILL BE AVAILABLE TO FIELD QUESTIONS ON:**

- \*Mandatory VA Health Care
- \*G.I. Bill
- \*Employment
- \*VA Budget FY 2009
- \*Health Care Enrollment
- \*Reemployment
- \*VA Benefits
- \*Full Concurrent Receipt
- \*PTSD Reevaluation

**VOICE YOUR OPINIONS AND CONCERNS.**

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

**DONATIONS TO SERVICE AND  
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS  
COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)**

**By Adjutant Gene A. Murphy**

President Bush has signed legislation providing a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for compensation paid to service-connected veterans and surviving family members. The new rates, which were 2.3 %, became effective December 1, 2007, and was reflected in monthly payments beginning in January 1, 2008.

The DAV Department of South Dakota has started a new program to assist with the DAV Department Service and Legislative Programs. We are asking for your support in donating your first month's cost-of-living adjustment (COLA=2.3%) to the DAV Department Service and Legislative Programs Funds. All the donated funds will be used for assisting the Service For Veterans and Legislative Support for our veterans in FY 2008. We received \$1,949.77 from forty-three (43) members in FY 2008 as of 03-31-08. We invite all members to participate. Your support would be appreciated very much by all veterans of South Dakota. Thank you for your cooperation towards this new program.

**YES ADJUTANT MURPHY, I WILL SUPPORT THE  
DAV DEPARTMENT SERVICE AND LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

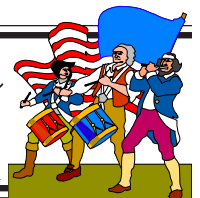
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail to DAV DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS.  
THANK YOU!**

**SUPPORT OUR  
TROOPS**

**NEW E-MAIL: [davsd@midconetwork.com](mailto:davsd@midconetwork.com)**



# 2008 SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) has tracked a number of legislative bills during the 83rd South Dakota Legislative Session. The DAV asks for your support and favorable vote on behalf of the 5,358 members of the Disabled American Veterans in South Dakota.

## SENATE BILLS

- SB 7** - An Act to make an appropriation for the renovation of the National Guard Armory in Yankton and to declare an emergency. *Signed by Governor*
- SB 78** - An Act to permit voters to register on Election Day at the polling place. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- SB 104** - An Act to excuse certain elderly persons from jury duty upon request. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- SB 140** - An Act to revise the application requirements for property tax exemptions provided for dwellings owned and occupied by disabled veterans. *Signed by Governor*
- SB 156** - An Act to revise certain provisions regarding special motor vehicle license plates for veterans with a disability, Prisoners of War, Pearl Harbor Survivors, and Purple Heart recipients. *Signed by Governor*
- SB 180** - An Act to make an appropriation to provide certain refunds on sale tax on food. *Signed by Governor*
- SB 197** - An Act to make an appropriation for the cost of the centers for independent living. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*

## COMING EVENTS

### APRIL 2008

- 1st - Tuesday ..... DAV Chapter Endorsement of Department Office  
Constitution & Bylaw Proposals  
Resolutions Proposals  
Fund Raising Project Proposals
- 6th - Sunday ..... U.S. Entered World War 1 - 1917
- 7th - Monday ..... South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting - American Legion, Brookings
- 9th - Wednesday ..... National Former POW Recognition Day
- 10th - Thursday ..... Batman Death March - 1942
- 11th - Friday ..... Persian Gulf War Official Cease Fire - 1991
- 12th - Saturday ..... Testimonial Dinner For Auxiliary National Commander Kathryn A. Wiley - Seattle, WA
- 25th - 27th ..... DAV Department of North Dakota Convention - Mandan, ND
- 26th - Saturday ..... Testimonial Dinner For DAV National Commander Robert T. Reynolds - Herndon, Virginia
- 27th - May 3rd ..... National Volunteer Week

### MAY 2008

- 1st - Thursday ..... National Day of Prayer
- 1st - Thursday ..... Loyalty Day
- 1st - 3rd ..... **DAV 69th Annual Department of South Dakota Convention - Aberdeen, SD**
- 1st - 3rd ..... DAV Department of Minnesota State Convention - Rochester, MN
- 2nd - 4th ..... The Black Hills Vietnam Era Reunion - Deadwood
- 3rd - Saturday ..... DAV Mobile Service Office At J & L Harley Davidson -
- 5th - Monday ..... Fall of Corregidor - 1942
- 8th - Thursday ..... VAVS Awards Luncheon - Program - Sioux Falls
- 8th - Thursday ..... V-E Day: German Surrender Signed - 1945
- 10th - Saturday ..... Battle of Hamburger Hill Began - 1969
- 11th - Sunday ..... **"HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY"**
- 15th - 16th ..... PVA 6th Annual Walleye Tournament - Chamberlain
- 17th - Saturday ..... **ARMED FORCES DAY**
- 26th - Monday ..... **MEMORIAL DAY**

### JUNE 2008

- 5th - 7th ..... DAV Department of Montana Convention
- 5th - 8th ..... VFW State Convention - Rapid City
- 10th - Tuesday ..... Battle For The Punchbowl Began - 1951
- 14th - Saturday ..... **FLAG DAY**
- 14th - Saturday ..... U.S. Army Founded - 1775
- 15th - Sunday ..... **"HAPPY FATHER'S DAY"**
- 20th - 21st ..... DAV Mobile Service Office at W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls
- 20th - 22nd ..... All American Salute To The Troops - W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls
- 22nd - Sunday ..... Pledge of Allegiance Recognized by Congress - 1942
- 22nd - Sunday ..... G.I. Bill Signed Into Law - 1944
- 25th - Wednesday ..... Korean War Began - 1950

### JULY 2008

- 2nd - Wednesday ..... U.S. Army Air Corps Established - 1926
- 4th - Friday ..... **INDEPENDENCE DAY - "HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY"**
- 12th - Saturday ..... DAV Annual Roger Andral Appreciation BBQ - Sioux Falls
- 26th - Saturday ..... ADA Celebration Picnic - Sertoma Park in Sioux Falls
- 27th - Sunday ..... **NATIONAL KOREAN WAR VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY - 1953**
- 28th - Monday ..... World War I Began - 1914

## HOUSE BILLS

- HB 1012** - An Act to revise certain provisions regarding property tax exemptions for certain disabled veterans and to declare an emergency. *Signed by Governor*
- HB 1015** - An Act to provide for the transfer of the state's interests in the Mobridge National Guard Armory to the city of Mobridge. *Signed by Governor*
- HB 1042** - An Act to revise certain provisions pertaining to the definition of residency and the issuance of resident hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses. *Signed by Governor*
- HR 1116** - An Act to authorize senior citizens to hunt deer using crossbows. *Tabled in Committee*
- HB 1117** - An Act to exempt veterans disability payments from income calculations for certain tax relief programs. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- HB 1140** - An Act to provide for the issuance without charge of certain big game licenses to resident active duty military personnel. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- HB 1224** - An Act to provide for the funding of certain reduced tuition programs for veterans and teachers. *Signed by Governor*
- HB 1228** - An Act to revise certain provisions related to bow hunting methods used by persons who are disabled or physically incapacitated. *Signed by Governor*
- HB 1235** - An Act to reduce the license fees for motor vehicles displaying distinctive license plates for Purple Heart recipients. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- HB 1236** - An Act to allow free tuition to certain members of the military. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- HB 1276** - An Act to make and appropriation to fund tax refunds for elderly persons and persons with a disability of property tax and sales tax. *Signed by Governor*
- HB 1298** - An Act to revise the qualifications for the director of the Division of Veterans Affairs. *Deferred to 36th Legislative Day*
- HCR 1005** - A Concurrent Resolution to declare March 29, 2008, as Vietnam Veterans Day, in South Dakota. *House Adopted Resolution, Senate Concurred*
- We also support the specific amount of money that is appropriated from the budget to operate the Department of Veterans Affairs.

## ECONOMIC STIMULUS PAYMENTS FOR MOST DISABLED VETERANS

Disabled Veterans who earned more than \$3,000 in 2007 will receive federal economic stimulus payments this year and many with less than \$3,000 income but who received disability payments or social security benefits may also be eligible based on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) criteria.

Disabled Veterans with \$3,000 or more in qualifying income from nontaxable VA disability compensation or pension or social security benefits will need to file a 2007 federal income tax return to be eligible to receive the economic stimulus payments, even if they normally would not need to file a return, the IRS said.

In most cases payments will range from \$300 to \$600 for individuals and \$600 to \$1,200 for joint filers. Taxpayers may also receive \$300 for each qualifying child. Most taxpayers need not take any extra steps to receive the payments which are scheduled to arrive beginning in May.

Under the Economic Stimulus Act, some disability compensation and certain social security payments can be counted toward the qualifying income requirement of \$3,000 for disabled veterans who did not have enough earned income to file a 2007 income tax return. If a veteran had a small amount of earned income, any combination of income and benefits can count toward the qualifying income of \$3,000.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will provide help to low and moderate-income taxpayers who call 800-906-9887 or visit the local VITA site. Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) provides free tax assistance to those 60 and older. Sponsored in part by the IRS, the TCE program is run by the AARP and can be reached at 888-227-7669 or visit the AARP Web site.

# **ADMINISTRATION ACTS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE VETERANS OF SOUTH DAKOTA? VETERANS OF SOUTH DAKOTA MUST QUESTION THE GOVERNOR AND THE ADJUTANT GENERAL TODAY!**

In March of 2007, Dennis Foell, Director of the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs, contacted the leadership of the various Veterans Service Organizations in South Dakota and informed them that April 6, 2007 would be his last day as Director.

On March 12, 2007, the members of the South Dakota Veterans Commission held a conference call and discussed their concerns about the time table and selection/hiring process for the appointment of the new Director of the Division. Members of the commission recommended sending a letter to Major General Gorman requesting a meeting with him to discuss these issues and concerns.

Shortly after that it was announced by the South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs that Dennis Foell was retiring as the Director. At the next meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Commission, Major General Gorman announced that Dennis had retired and that he was appointing George Summerside, as the interim Director until such time as a new Director was selected and appointed.

In June, 2007, the three major veterans service organizations in South Dakota all adopted a resolution calling for the study to determine if it would be beneficial for the veterans service organizations to press for a change to the structure of state government and call for the establishment of a Veterans Affairs entity within state government which was a cabinet level agency, separate from the Department of Military Affairs.

This resolution was the topic of much discussion at the July 2007 meeting of the South Dakota Veterans Commission in Watertown. Adjutant General and Department Secretary for Military and Veterans Affairs Major General Gorman; Deputy Secretary for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Andy Gerlach; and Dale Bertsch, Senior Staff for Governor M. Michael Rounds, all informed the veterans service organizations that the administration did not believe that a separate Veterans Affairs cabinet level organization was in the best interest of the state or the veterans of South Dakota and that it would be opposed by the administration.

At this meeting, Major General Gorman announced his intentions to retire in September of 2007. He further stated that the appointment of the next Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs would be handled by the new Adjutant General and that until such time as that happened, George Summerside would continue to serve as interim, "acting" Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs.

Also at that July meeting it was revealed that the previous Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs had not wanted to retire, but rather, he had been told that it was time for him to retire.

Don Loudner, Chairman of the SD Veterans Commission at that time sent a letter to Governor Michael Rounds requesting that the Governor schedule a meeting with the members of the commission to discuss the involvement of the SD Veterans Commission in the selection and hiring process for the new Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs.

On August 16, 2007, Loudner received a response, not from the Governor, but from Acting Director Summerside. Summerside wrote that he had been asked to respond to the Veterans Commission regarding their request to meet with the Governor. Summerside wrote, "The Governor regrets to inform that his schedule will not allow him to meet with the Commission at any time in the foreseeable future." Summerside continued by writing that "...the Governor asks that the Veterans Commission meet with the SD Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and selected members of his staff on any issues it may have." He concluded the letter by writing "Please feel free to contact me if you wish to schedule such a meeting."

The veterans service organizations were very upset with this announcement by Past Director Foell and shortly thereafter, The American Legion and the DAV wrote separate letters to Governor Rounds asking for an explanation as to why Foell, a combat injured, disabled veteran had been told to retire from his position. Also addressed in the letter from The American Legion was that organization's concern that the process outlined in South

Dakota Codified Law be adhered to in the process of selecting a new director for the Division of Veterans Affairs.

The response from the Governor was "Regarding your concern for Dennis Foell, out of respect for all parties involved, I will not comment on personnel issues". The response also stated that "One of the reasons I chose General Doohen to serve as secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is his commitment to South Dakota's veterans. I expect one of his first priorities will be the selection of a director of the Division of Veterans Affairs."

On October 15, 2007, the new Adjutant General, Major General Steven Doohen, sent a letter to the SD Veterans Commission outlining the process that would be used to select the new director for the Division of Veterans Affairs. Initially, the members of the commission were only asked to review the applications and select five candidates from the applicants who would then be interviewed by the Adjutant General and the Chairman of the Commission. They subsequently agreed upon a plan whereby the commission members would interview the eight applicants and forward five names to the Adjutant General. The General and the Chairman of the Commission would then select a primary and an alternate candidate and send those two names back to the commission. The commission would report their preference of one of the two and then the General would announce the name of the individual selected to be appointed. Members of the Commission questioned whether this process was in accordance with codified law and were told that it had been provided by the Attorney Generals office.

The day of the interviews, only five applicants appeared before the commission. The members of the commission were informed that the other three had withdrawn for various personal reasons. After conducting the interviews, a majority of the commission members requested that since they had only interviewed five applicants, instead of the original eight, that they should only be required to send three names forward. The commission provided the names of the three candidates that they wished to forward to the General and the Chairman of the Commission. George Summerside was not one of the three choices that the commission originally forwarded. The commission chairman checked with the Adjutant General and was informed that the commission would be required to be forwarded all five names.

After interviews were conducted by the Adjutant General and the Commission Chairman, two names were sent back to the commission, George Summerside as the primary, and an alternate.

The members of the commission by a vote of four (4) to two (2) agreed that the alternate candidate had had a better interview and submitted the name of the alternate as their choice for the position. The members of the commission were informed on December 20, 2007, that the General was appointing George Summerside to the position of Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs.

On December 21, 2007, the leadership of the major veteran service organizations, The American Legion, VFW, DAV and PVA met in Sioux Falls at the DAV Headquarters. There was a great deal of concern about the process that had been used to select the Director and the actual individual selected. There was also a lengthy discussion about the fact that it appeared that the individual who was selected had an additional discharge from the armed forces of the United States that was possibly something other than honorable.

A telephone call was made to the Governor's Office in Pierre informing that office that the leadership of the four major veteran's service organizations were having a meeting and discussing the selection of the new director and that as a group, we wished to discuss the issue with the Governor. We were informed that the Governor was leaving the building and was not available for a discussion. The Governor's Office was informed that the group would be sending a letter to the Governor that day on the issue and outlining the group's concerns over the selection.

Two letters were written that day, one to the Governor and one to the Attorney General. Both letters were signed by the adjutants of the organizations represented.

The letter to the Governor expressed our collective concerns about the individual who was selected for the position of Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs and requested an opportunity to meet with the Governor and discuss those concerns. The letter to the Attorney General requested an opinion from the Attorney General on the eligibility of the individual selected if in fact, that individual had a discharge that was other than honorable.

The Attorney General responded by letter on December 27, 2007. The Attorney General wrote "that for the purpose of answering your question, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs was contacted. This office was advised that the newly appointed Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs meets the citizenship criteria and had only one period of service that satisfies the provisions of SDCL 33-16-8 and 33-7-1. The Directors' qualifying period of military service was during the Vietnam conflict from July 1972 through August of 1976, which is within the time period set forth in 33-17-2(5). We were further advised that for this period of qualifying military service the Director was honorably discharged. Under these circumstances, the Director is clearly an "honorably discharged wartime veteran" and thus meets the statutory qualifications under SDCL 33-16-8."

However, the letter continues and reflects another period of service; "We were advised that the Director returned to the military for a second period of time. However, his subsequent service did not constitute "qualifying military service" under SDCL 33-17-2 because it was not during "wartime." Therefore, the status of separation or discharge of that service is irrelevant to the inquiry whether the Director is an "honorably discharged wartime veteran." The nature of the separation or discharge from non-qualifying military service neither adds nor detracts from the Director's status."

In other words, yes he had a second discharge (character of discharge unknown at this time), but since it wasn't during a wartime period - it is irrelevant as to whether this individual is eligible for the job as Director.

Due to the lack of response from the Governor's Office to the December 21, 2007, letter to the Governor's Office, four members of the SD Veterans Commission, Paul Evenson, Don Clarke, Gene Murphy, and Don Loudner, drafted a letter to the Governor on January 4, 2008. This letter again expressed concerns with the selection and appointment of George Summerside as the Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs and requested a meeting with the Governor to discuss those concerns. To date, to letter has not been answered.

Also on January 4, 2008, the same four members of the SD Veterans Commission sent a letter to the Attorney General outlining the selection process which had been used for selecting the Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs and requesting an opinion as to whether SD Codified Law had been followed in this selection process.

Governor Rounds' office responded to the December 21, 2007, letter from the four adjutants on January 9, 2008, and agreed to meet with the adjutants of the four veteran's service organizations. The Governor's office requested that a list of concerns and questions be forwarded prior to the meeting.

On January 23, 2008, HB 1298 was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Eldon Nygaard of Vermillion at the request of The American Legion, VFW, DAV and PVA. This bill was to change the eligibility requirements so that any and all discharges or separations from the armed forces of the U.S. held by the Director of the Division of Veterans Affairs would have to be honorable. The bill was assigned to the House State Affairs Committee.

During the meeting between the Governor and the adjutants, the Governor stated that he considered Dennis Foell's leaving the Division and George Summerside's qualifications for the job of Division Director to be personnel issues and that out of respect for the privacy of the individuals he would not address specifics in either case. However, he informed the adjutants that appointments in state government are made with the understanding that those who receive such appointments "serve at the pleasure of the persons making the appointment". He stated that such appointments and their terminations were the responsibility of the Secretary of the Department and that he, as Governor, supports the Department Secretary's decisions.

With regard to the process used for selecting the new director, the Governor stated that he was confident that it had been done according to statute, but he understood our concern because there were a couple of different statutes that governed this and that there was a conflict between the two. He stated that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Attorney General's office were working to clarify this and resolve the conflict between the statutes.

House Bill 1298 was scheduled for a hearing in the House State Affairs Committee on February 4, 2008. Gary Knudson spoke as a proponent for the VFW; Ron Boyd spoke as a proponent for The American Legion. The committee room was packed with members of the veteran's service organizations. Andy Gerlach, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs spoke as an opponent to the bill. Representative Gillespie (D) of Canton moved to give the bill a DO PASS recommendation and send it to the House Floor. This motion was seconded by Representative Miles (D) of Sioux Falls. Representative Turbiville (R) of Deadwood made a substitute motion to defer the bill to the 36th Legislative Day. That motion was seconded by Representative Brunner (R) of Nisland. The substitute motion carried with the following members of the committee voting to Defer the bill: Brunner (R), Deadrick (R), Faehn (R), Krebs (R), Rave (R), Turbiville (R), and Rhoden (R). Dykstra (R), Gillespie (D), Hargens (D), Miles (D), and Moore (D) voted to defeat the substitute motion. Representative Cutler (R) was excused. The bill was deferred to the 36th Legislative Day by a vote of 7-5.

The SD Adjutant General, Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Major General Steven Doohen, met with the leadership of the veteran's service organizations on February 7, 2008, at the DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls. The meeting was very similar to meeting with the Governor. Major General Doohen was of the opinion that this matter should be behind us and we should move on to discussions on how to better serve the "new" veterans of South Dakota. The Adjutant General was presented with the same concerns and questions as had been provided to the Governor, and had just about the same answers. He stated that the process that was used for the selection of the Director had been provided by the Attorney General's office. Every time one of the representatives of a veteran service organization would ask him a question from the list, he wanted to change the subject and move on to discussions about the future.

On February 14, 2008, the members of the SD Veterans Commission sent another letter to the Attorney General's Office requesting to know if their letter of January 4, 2008, in which they had requested an opinion on the legality of the selection process that had been used to select the Director, was going to be answered.

On February 28, 2008, the four adjutants received a letter from the Attorney General's Office which replied to the February 14th letter which the Attorney General had received from the members of the SD Veterans Commission. The response was sent to the wrong group. In this letter, the Attorney General stated that he thought the issue should be discussed by the members of the Commission, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Governor's Office at the March 17/18 meeting of the SD Veterans Commission. Therefore, he was electing not to provide an opinion on this issue.

On March 17, 2008, Adjutant General (AG) Steven Doohen announced at the South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting in Pierre that Director George Summerside of the Division of Veterans Affairs would be Acting Director. This appointment as Acting Director would be until South Dakota Codified Law is amended and/or changed. The law can't be amended and/or changed until the South Dakota Legislature meets in Legislative Session in 2009.

The veteran organizations think the AG Doohen and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs were in violation of South Dakota Codified Law in the appointment process of Director George Summerside from December 20, 2007, through March 17, 2008, but we still need an answer from the Attorney General Office and/or Governor Michael M. Rounds.

This issue is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the Veterans Service Organizations.



## DAV WASHINGTON UPDATE

www.dav.org

By Legislative Chairman Gene A. Murphy

### DAV TALKING POINTS

#### VA FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET

For the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) total budget the Administration requested \$93.7 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, an increase of \$3.37 billion over last year. Compared to the President's request for VA's total discretionary budget of \$47.2 billion including medical collections, the Independent Budget (IB) recommends \$50.2 billion, \$3 billion more than the President's request and an increase of \$4.6 billion over last year.

**Medical Care Budget:** The Administration's request of \$41.2 billion includes \$2.5 billion in collections. It also calls for user-fees, and the doubling of co-payments for prescription medications. The IB recommends \$42.8 billion, which is an increase of \$3.7 billion over the FY 2008 level and is \$1.6 billion above the Administration's request.

**Medical and Prosthetic Research:** The Administration's request of \$442 million is \$38 million less than last year's level. The IB recommends \$555 million to allow VA to better understand and develop treatments for the unique injuries and diseases of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for diseases and injuries of older generations of disabled veterans.

**Benefits Processing:** To manage the projected increase in new claims, reduce the out-of-control claims backlog, and improve the quality of processing claims, the IB recommends a total of \$1.99 billion. This is \$285 million above the Administration's request of \$1.70 billion for the General Operating Expenses account.

**Construction Programs:** The Administration proposes to severely reduce VA's major and minor construction programs by 46 percent and the State veterans homes construction grant program by 48 percent. The IB recommends \$2.1 billion for FY 2009, \$234 million above last year and \$1.1 billion above the Administration's request.

#### VA NEEDS SUFFICIENT, TIMELY AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING

Due to political wrangling over the federal budget, and for the 13th time in 14 years, VA did not receive this fiscal year's (2008) appropriation until January, despite the bill being completed before the start of the fiscal year on October 1. Furthermore, although the appropriations bill was eventually enacted, to make the proposed increase close to the *Independent Budget's* recommended funding levels, the \$3.7 billion increase was contingent upon an emergency funding request by the Administration.

Guaranteeing the long-term viability and vitality of the VA health care system is, and must remain, a national priority. The *Independent Budget Veterans Service Organizations (IBSVOS)* support enactment of a long-term solution for funding VA health care that guarantees all enrolled veterans will have a dependable system for the future not simply next year. Reformation of the whole funding system is essential so federal funds can be secured on a timely basis, allowing VA to manage the deliver of care, and to plan effectively to meet known and predictable needs. In our judgment, a change is warranted and long overdue. To establish a stable and viable health care system, any reform must include *sufficiency, timeliness, and predictability* of VA health care funding.

**Congress should increase VA discretionary funding by \$3 billion and reform the budget process to provide a sufficient, timely, and predictable budget for VA health care.**

#### COMPENSATION FOR LOSS-OF QUALITY OF LIFE

The DAV believes a realistic increase in VA compensation rates should be made to bring the standard of living of disabled veterans in line with which they would have enjoyed had they not suffered their service-connected disabilities.

The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) issued its report, *Honoring the Call to Duty: Veterans' Disability Benefits in the 21st Century*, which identified eight principles as a guide to the development and delivery of

#### **LEGISLATIVE ALERT: WWW. DAV. ORG**

ALL MEMBERS SHOULD CONTACT THEIR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ASK FOR SUPPORT FOR MANDATORY VA HEALTH CARE FUNDING; FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT; AND AN ADEQUATE VA BUDGET. PLEASE SEND THE PREPARED E-MAIL MESSAGE TODAY! For more information visit the DAV website www.dav.org.

future benefits for veterans and their families. One principle is that benefits and services should be provided that collectively compensate for the consequence of service-connected disability on the average impairment of earnings capacity, the ability to engage in usual life activities, and quality of life.

The current statutory basis for disability payments based on the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is an average impairment of earning capacity. Yet, service-connected disabilities can impede veterans from engaging in usual life activities and can impair their quality of life. Consequently, the VDBC recommended increasing the compensation rates up to 25 percent as an interim and baseline future benefit for loss of quality of life pending development and implementation of a quality of life measure in the VA Rating Schedule. In particular, the measure should take into account the quality of life and other non-work related effects of severe disabilities on veterans and family members.

The VDBC consulted with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and Center for Naval Analyses Corporation (CNAC) on the loss of quality-of-life for service-connected disabled veterans. A chapter in the IOM Medical Evaluation Committee report, *A 21st Century System for Evaluating Veterans for Disability Benefits*, is entirely dedicated to addressing impairment, disability and quality-of-life (QOL), and recommended compensating disabled veterans for three consequences of service-connected injuries and disease: work disability, loss of ability to engage in usual life activities other than work, and loss in quality-of-life. The CNAC analysis of the VA disability compensation system found that the program does provide for reasonable earnings adjustments for most disabling conditions.

Additionally, recommendations contained in the report by the President's Commission on the Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, includes quality of life payments to compensate for permanent losses of various kinds, as well as compensation for loss of earning capacity. While the DAV disagrees with this Commission's recommendation for a new compensation structure for the newest generation of disabled veterans that would eventually eliminate VA earnings loss payments and shift to Social Security, it is clear current VA disability compensation does not adequately provide for the full effects of service-connected disabilities.

**Congress should increase VA disability compensation to include compensation for the loss of quality of life resulting from service-connected disabilities.**

#### STAND UP FOR VETERANS

Thousands of our military personnel return from deployments with physical and mental wounds and permanent disabilities. Already, more than 300,000 veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have sought care at VA health care facilities; 150,000 have service-connected disabilities. Millions more veterans have also been disabled from their military service during prior wars.

They fought to defend our nation and our freedom; they shouldn't have to fight to get the specialized medical services they need. Our nation must keep faith with these men and women by taking action now to ensure they are cared for.

Our veterans kept their promise. We must keep ours.

**We urge the President and Congress to enact new laws to:**

- 1. Mandate that all veterans are properly screened and treated for psychological wounds, including post-traumatic stress disorder, utilizing the most effective evidence-based therapies.**
- 2. Ensure that all combat veterans, particularly those who may have suffered a traumatic brain injury, be properly screened using validated assessment tools and, when indicated, be provided timely and convenient access to proven, effective treatments.**
- 3. Provide comprehensive support to family caregivers of severely wounded and disabled veterans, including access for family caregivers to VA mental health care services, financial support, and other programs, in order to promote the full recovery and rehabilitation of these veterans and their families.**



**DAV HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDS:** Sr. Vice Commander Bob Hill (R) receives \$13,000.00 from Dave Pary (L) and Kerry Hanson (C) for the Yankton van.



**IRAQ VETERANS ROUND TABLE:** Rep. Stephanie Herseth-Sandlin hosted a Iraq Veterans Round Table at the DAV Headquarters to discuss veterans issues.



**COMMANDER'S VISIT:** Commander Richard Amos (R) and Commander Margaret Koll make official visit to DAV and Auxiliary No. 7 of Mitchell.

**4. Reform the federal budget and appropriations process for veterans medical care program: to guarantee that funding is sufficient, timely and predictable in order to sustain VA health care as the "best care anywhere."**

**THE BLACK HILLS  
VIETNAM ERA REUNION**

**Deadwood Gulch Resort - Deadwood, S.D.**

**Sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans of America**

**Chapter 463, Rapid City, S.D.**

**May 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 2008**

See old friends and meet new ones.

Room discounts at the Deadwood Gulch Resort (605) 578-1294 and Super 8 Motel (605) 578-2535, both within walking distance of the convention center.

Registration fee is \$40.00 per person registering in advance and \$45.00 per person at the door. For more information contact Jack Dean at 393-0444 or Virgil Stockstad at 381-5789. You can pick up registration at the DAV Headquarters.

**DAV OPPOSES S. 2674 AND H.R. 5509**

U.S. Senator Richard Burr (R. N.C.), the Ranking Member on the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs introduced legislation in late February 2008 titled "America's Wounded Warriors Act." or S. 2674. Likewise, Congressman Steve Buyer (R. Ind.), Ranking Member on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs introduced sister legislation in the House titled the "Noble Warrior Act" or H.R. 5509. Senator Burr, in a February 2008 press release, stated the legislation "would require VA to replace the current outdated VA rating schedule with a new schedule that takes into account both average loss of earning capacity and loss of quality of life." Congressman Buyer iterated similar statements regarding H.R. 5509. Each bill creates a new transition system for injured service members and creates a new VA disability compensation system.

Senator Burr and Congressman Buyer each tout this new legislation as incorporating major improvements in VA's compensation system. While the DAV has cautious reservations regarding minor points in the portion of the bills dealing with service members transitioning from the military to VA, the DAV has serious objections to the second portion of the bills that create a new VA disability compensation system. The DAV's primary objections to this measure are:

- It creates a second compensation system superimposed onto VA's current compensation system. All newly discharged veterans would be evaluated under the new system, while veterans already receiving benefits under the current system would continue to receive such benefits, until they are involuntarily forced into the new system via new or reopened claims. Once a veteran is compensated under the new system, he/she would be unable to revert to the old system. Also, there are no protections for ratings in effect for 20 or more years in the new system. We believe this transformation would overwhelm VA's claims process.

- It lures veterans into the new system by compensating them for loss of quality of life, while refusing to compensate veterans in the current system for loss of quality of life.
- Once in the new system, veterans are subject to scrutinizing reexamination indefinitely, or until a physician directs VBA that additional examinations are no longer necessary.
- It directs VA to reduce a veteran's disability rating upon showing of improvement, but also directs VA to reduce a veteran's disability rating based on a change to the rating schedule since last examination. Essentially, VA could reduce a rating wherein no change in condition occur but rather a change in the Rating Schedule occurs, or could drastically reduce a rating based on change in condition and change in Rating Schedule. This type of constant threat to one's benefits will serve as a constant force of instability and disruption to veterans' lives.

The foregoing will result in VA never being able to close a veteran's case via stability *until* directed by VHA physicians. Because VA will only be able to close a small number of cases, the claims backlog will grow exponentially year after year. These perpetual claims will eventually lead VA's claims backlog to a point of no return.

- It removes VA's authority over the Rating Schedule and gives the authority to Congress thereby allowing Congress to determine which disabilities will be ratable. There are many disabilities, such as hemorrhoids and flat feet, that some in Congress would rather see removed from VA's Rating Schedule, thereby prohibiting veterans from receiving compensation for those disabilities, or any residual thereof.
- It links *compensation* for service-connected disabilities to *treatment* for service-connected disabilities.
- It removes the 20-year protection on disability ratings, even for those already protected, and prevents anyone else from gaining protection of ratings.

Contact your Senators and Representatives today and urge them to oppose these bills.

**S. 2309, THE COMPENSATION FOR COMBAT VETERANS ACT**

Amends title 38, United States Code, section 1154(b) to clarify that service treatable as service wherein a veteran "engaged in combat with the enemy," for utilization of non-official evidence as proof of service-connection for a combat-related disease or injury.

Establishes that a veteran, who served in a combat zone for the purposes of section 112 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or a proceeding law, shall be treated as having engaged in combat with the enemy.

This bill is currently pending in the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. Chairman Akaka has indicated that he would like to move the bill out of Committee this year for consideration by the full Senate.

**CONCLUSION**

As always, your support of DAV's legislative goals is appreciated. Your hard work and efforts on behalf of our nation's service-disabled veterans have not gone unnoticed by members of Congress. Substantial increases in VA's funding levels last year and the proposed increases for this year are the direct result of your efforts.

Thank you for all that you do to advance DAV's noble cause of building better lives for America's service-disabled veterans and their families and survivors.

# NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER REPORT

By NSO Paul Wekenmann

Upcoming outreach for the National Service Office will include several Mobile Service Office events for the spring, summer, and fall of 2008.

The first will be for the eastern half of South Dakota beginning on May 28th in Yankton, May 29th in Mitchell, June 2nd in Madison, and then on June 4th in Watertown. After this event the MSO will be at the Minnehaha County Fairgrounds on June 20th to the 21st in support of the All American Salute to the Troops and Welcome Home Event for the OIF/OEF veterans.

As for Harley Davidson events, the MSO is slated to be at J&L Harley Davidson in Sioux Falls on May 3, 2008, and then at the bike Rally in Sturgis in August.

The week of September 6th to the 14th we will be planning our Fall MSO run for the western half of South Dakota. Any chapter wishing to have the MSO considered for their location can contact the National Service Office for details and arrangements for this week in September. We will be closing out consideration 10 weeks prior to the event for logistic reasons. So please contact us at the National Service Office if your chapter is interested.

## EMAIL ON ISSUES

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of South Dakota would like to invite ALL DAV and Auxiliary members to consider receiving emails on DAV issues that are important to veterans and their families.

Mail or email your name, mailing address, phone number, and email address to: [davsd@midconetwork.com](mailto:davsd@midconetwork.com).

# SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS BONUS

South Dakota is paying a bonus to members of the Armed Forces who were legal residents of the state for no less than six months immediately preceding their period of active duty and who served on active duty during one or more of the following periods.

1. August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 - All active service counts for payment.
2. March 4, 1990 to December 31, 1992 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.
3. January 1, 1993 to September 10, 2001 - Only service in a hostile area qualifying for any United States campaign or service medal awarded for combat operations against hostile forces counts for payment.
4. September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined - All active service counts for payment.

***Veterans with qualifying service before Dec 31, 1992 and after Jan 1, 1993 may receive two separate bonuses of up to \$500.00 each!***

***Applicants living outside of South Dakota*** may obtain an application by email at [john.fette@state.sd.us](mailto:john.fette@state.sd.us). Please include your branch of the military and dates of service. If you do not have email you may request an application and instructions by writing SD Veterans Bonus, 500 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501 or by calling 605-773-7251.

***Applicants living in South Dakota*** may apply through the nearest County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer.

## DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HEADQUARTERS

### DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. BOX 14301, CINCINNATI, OH 45250-0301  
(859) 441-7300

### DAV LEGISLATION & SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

807 MAINE AVENUE S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20024  
(202) 554-3501 [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)

### DAV DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA

1519 W. 51ST STREET, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105  
(605) 332-6866 FAX: (605) 338-5489  
[davsd@midconetwork.com](mailto:davsd@midconetwork.com) Website: [www.davmembersportal.org/sd](http://www.davmembersportal.org/sd)

### DAV NSO - PAUL A. WEKENMANN & ERIC VAN EMMERIK

2501 W. 22ND, P.O. BOX 5046, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57117  
(605) 333-6896 FAX: (605) 336-8158

## DAV HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATORS (HTC)

### FT.MEADEVAMEDICALCENTER(HTC)

DON SEALOCK, HTC  
FT. MEADE VAMC (568)  
BLDG. 148, RM. A-133  
FT. MEADE, SD 57741  
(605) 347-7065

### SIOUX FALLS VA MEDICAL CENTER

JOHN HUNTINGTON, HTC  
SIOUX FALLS VAMC  
2501 W 22ND STREET  
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Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2801 Fax (202) 225-5823  
[stephanie.herseth@mail.house.gov](mailto:stephanie.herseth@mail.house.gov)  
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## CHAPTER MEETINGS

### Sioux Falls - DAV Club

5:30 p.m., 2nd Tuesday,  
1519 West 51st Street

### Rapid City - DAV Club

7:30 p.m., 2nd Wednesday  
101 E. Madison St.

### Watertown - American Legion

7:00 P.M., 2nd Monday  
1412 9th Avenue, SW

### Mitchell - James Valley Community Center

1:30 p.m., 2nd Monday  
300 W. 1st Street

### Sturgis - Veterans Club

7:00 p.m., 1st Thursday  
868 Main Street

### Aberdeen - VFW Club

8:00 p.m., 2nd Tuesday  
821 Circle Drive

### Yankton - VFW Club

7:30 p.m., 3rd Thursday  
209 Cedar

### Pierre - VFW Club

7:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday  
401 S. Central

### Milbank-Sisseton - VFW Club

8:00 p.m., 4th Tuesday  
Community Center, Agency Village

### Winner - American Legion

1:30 p.m., 3rd Monday, Colome

### Brookings - American Legion

7:00 p.m., 2nd Tuesday  
1229 Western Avenue

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