

# THE DAKOTA MESSENGER

A Publication of the South Dakota National Guard  
Enlisted Association Auxiliary

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## **Kayleen's Comments:**

Happy January Everyone!

I hope this finds you all healthy and enjoying the New Year. It has been a cold one so far! Our household has been extremely busy the last couple of months. If some of you haven't seen or heard, my sons 6th grade SD Football Team placed 7th out of 64 teams in the Nation at a tournament in December in Naples, FL. It was a whirlwind of events and an experience we enjoyed participating in. Now we are in the midst of wrestling season and busy with school being back under way. My daughter has enjoyed some fall volleyball and girl scouts. We are looking forward to some warmer weather!

The beginning of the year marks the start of our membership drive. The 2018 membership application is available on the SDNGEA website.

We have a wonderful group of people in this

organization. Please encourage any spouses you know to become a member of the Auxiliary. Membership strength and numbers help to support our voice on the legislative issues that can make a difference to all airmen, soldiers, and their families. Please contact me if you have any questions about membership.

There are many opportunities within the Auxiliary. One of the biggest of these is the availability of scholarships. This year the SDNGEA Auxiliary is offering 2- \$1000 scholarships. Applications and information can be found on the SDNGEA website under the Auxiliary tab. Applications are due March 15, 2017. The National Association also offers scholarships. The information on these is also found on the SDNGEA website. There are 1-\$3000, 1-\$1250, and

2-\$1000 scholarships available nationally.

The Legislative Dining out is scheduled for February 2nd in Pierre. I look forward to seeing some of you there. It is a good time for everyone and a chance to meet some new people as well.

The State Conference will be held in Pierre this year as well on April 21-22nd. Registration forms are on the SDNGEA website. If you have never attended a conference I encourage you to do so. It is a great way to see what this organization is about and meet everyone. Let me know if you have any questions about the conference. Any input from attendees is welcome to the agenda.

Thank you all for your support of this organization. I look forward to seeing you at the Dining Out and the Conference. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions that you may have.

Kayleen Meyers

SDNGEA Auxiliary  
President



I found the following interesting facts on the National Parks.org website regarding "Presidents' Day".

1. Presidents Day is celebrated on the third Monday in February, thanks to the 1968 Uniform Monday Holiday Act
2. It was established in 1885 in honor of President George Washington's birthday
3. Washington's birthday was actually on February 22, 1732 (this would be his 285th birthday!)
4. Washington's birthplace is a national monument and is located in Colonial Beach, VA
5. It is still officially called Washington's Birthday by the federal government
6. The government debated renaming the holiday to Presidents Day to include President Abraham Lincoln's birthday, but the proposal failed in committees
7. Lincoln's birthday was actually on February 12, 1809 (this would be his 208<sup>th</sup> birthday!)
8. Lincoln's birthplace is a national historical park and is located in Hodgenville, Kentucky
9. President Ulysses S. Grant established Yellowstone as the first national park
10. President Theodore Roosevelt has the most national parks named in his honor
11. Lincoln is a close runner-up for that title
12. Roosevelt's birthplace is a national historic site and is located in New York City, NY
13. Adams National Historical Park was the birthplace of two presidents: John Adams and John Quincy Adams
14. The most recent presidential birthplace added to the National Park System belonged to William Jefferson Clinton
15. There are 35 parks named after American Presidents, and one park that celebrates four of them (but it's named after a New York attorney, Charles E. Rushmore.)

## **Letter from the South Dakota Department of Veteran's Affairs**

Happy New Year everyone! We wish you a terrific 2017 filled with happiness and good fortune.

Brad Paisley once said, "Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one."

Let's ensure that our 2017 book is not left blank! Let's write a good one!

Our 2016 book was full of projects, accomplishments and stories. During 2016 we honored over 1,000 Korean War Veterans, we helped Vietnam War Veterans celebrate the tenth anniversary of the dedication of their memorial, participated in numerous welcome home and outreach events, and opened the doors to a new state-of-the-art veteran's home. We partnered with the Department of the Military to create South Dakota Joining Forces; an initiative to grow community support for veterans, service members and their families. We improved veteran's preference status, provided numerous training programs for our county

and tribal veteran's service officers, assisted incarcerated veterans, served on committees for Veterans Courts and increased the number of nursing home beds at the State Veterans Home. In addition, our staff worked closely with veterans to secure over \$170 Million in compensation and pension benefits for veterans.

Each year we set new priorities to reflect the needs of all generations of veterans. As always, we encourage veterans to contact their local County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer to determine eligibility of benefits.

How many of you buy books, gadgets, or tools, only to let them sit on the shelf - never to be used? Of course you don't! But according to our records, only 2,300 veterans in South Dakota are using their GI Bill benefits and the On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship program. The result for those not using the benefit is that 36 months of education they have paid for is sitting on the shelf unused. That education benefit is part of what veterans earned for their service so why not collect

it and use it? Why not add a chapter to your book?

As a veteran you have shown you have the talents to get things done under difficult circumstances. Build on that by picking up the right tools and improving what you have. Veterans from Vietnam Era, Post 9/11 and Gulf War Era should give our team a call and visit with them about education benefits, free tuition and housing allowances (605-773-3269).

We truly enjoy interacting with veterans, service members, and their families throughout our great state. We have tremendous partners at federal, state, and local levels who work tirelessly to ensure great outcomes. We are all here to work with our veterans.

Let's make sure our 2017 book has numerous pages and is a best seller. Keep the book open and continue to add chapters to your journal.

Larry Zimmerman,  
Secretary



**LEGISLATIVE DINING  
OUT:**

**February 2, 2018**

**FUTURE  
CONFERENCES:**

**April 20-22, 2017:  
Pierre, SD**

**April, 2018: Deadwood,  
SD**

**April 21-23, 2019: Sioux  
Falls, SD (Co-located  
with officers)**

**FUTURE NATIONALS:**

**August, 2017: Reno, NV**

**August, 2018:  
Charleston, WV**



Joann McElroy, Editor

