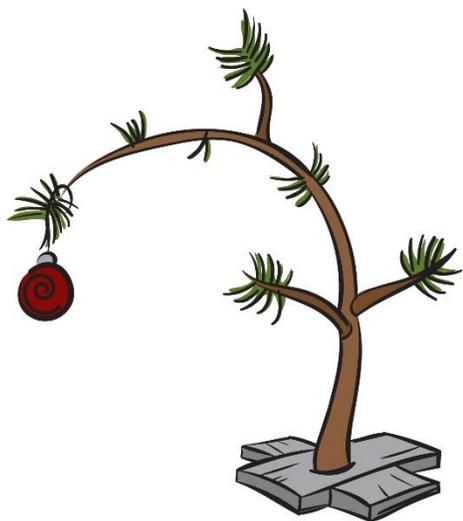


Every Member Counts

SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD 



December Family Focus

Mission: Service Member & Family Support enhances and empowers the lives of our customers with consistently exceptional service & support.

Service Member & Family Support

Phone: 1-800-658-3930

THE FOCUS IS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS & FAMILIES, VETERANS, RETIREES & SURVIVORS

IN THIS ISSUE

History of Christmas in the Military

Reprinted in part from <https://militarybenefits.info/christmas>

Christmas has long been celebrated in the military, even in times of war. Perhaps the most famous celebration of Christmas in the military is the Christmas Truce of 1914. Starting on Christmas Eve, troops on both the British and German sides began singing Christmas Carols to one another. The sounds of guns and cannons faded along the Western Front in Belgium and were replaced by holiday celebrations, albeit cautious ones, in the trenches. The Germans initiated this temporary “truce” and began with the singing of carols and placement of Christmas trees along the trenches.

On Christmas morning, German soldiers emerged unarmed, calling out “Merry Christmas” to the Allied British soldiers in the trenches across no-man’s-land. This gesture of goodwill between enemies came a mere five months after the outbreak of war in Europe, and is perhaps the last example of the concept of chivalry between enemies in warfare. This notion of goodwill between enemies was never again repeated, as future similar attempts were promptly squashed with threats of discipline from squad leaders. Even a world war could not destroy the Christmas spirit.



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Disclaimer: The announcements that appear on this page(s) or attached are intended to inform Soldiers, Airmen, veterans, and their families of special offers provided to Service Members, veterans and their families and are not intended to constitute an endorsement by the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard, the United States Army, the United States Air Force, or the Department of Defense. It is strictly intended to be used for informational purposes only.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA CEREMONY INVITATION



13TH ANNUAL
**WREATH
LAYING
CEREMONY**

to be held on

Monday, December 9, 2019 at 11:00 am CT

at the

FLAMING FOUNTAIN VETERANS MEMORIAL

at Capitol Lake near the

South Dakota State Capitol Building

in Pierre, South Dakota

Hope you will join us!

Save
the
Date

SDNG STATE
FAMILY
&
YOUTH
SYMPOSIUM
2020

April 25-26 2020

Projected location: Western SD

2019 Winter Clothing & Toy Drive

Volunteer members of the South Dakota National Guard are organizing a 2019 winter clothing/toy drive to benefit needy individuals in their communities. New or gently used coats, gloves, hats, scarves or blankets -- new or gently used toys-- are being donated by Guard members to help the most impoverished in need of warm clothing this winter season. The clothing/toy drive is not limited to only volunteer members of the Guard, but is intended as a community activity.

Members of the public who'd like to donate items are encouraged to bring winter clothes or toys to any SDNG Armory or the Sioux Falls Air National Guard base from now **until 10 DEC19.**



Clothing Drive

TOY DRIVE

SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD
ANNUAL CLOTHING AND TOY DRIVE.

DONATION

PLEASE HELP ANYWAY YOU CAN. EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS THOSE IN NEED. DROP YOUR DONATIONS IN THE BARREL. PLEASE ENSURE COATS, GLOVES, HATS AND TOYS ARE IN GOOD CONDITION. THANK YOU

The all-volunteer effort to collect winter clothing/toys, while not an official function of the National Guard, is a welcome adjunct activity showcasing volunteers' commitment to serve our most needy.

See the Next Page for Drop Off Locations

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Clothing & Toy Drive Donation Locations:

Aberdeen Armory
115 South Roosevelt Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401-5205
605-626-2270

Belle Fourche Armory
1202 Lawrence Street
Belle Fourche, SD 57717-0489
605-892-4346

Brookings Readiness Center
300 5th Street South
Brookings, SD 57006-3319
605-696-5400

Chamberlain Armory
202 East Kellam Street
Chamberlain, SD 57325-0496
605-734-5441

De Smet Armory
403 3rd Street Southwest
De Smet, SD 57231-0057
605-854-3762

Ellsworth Air Force Base
1319 Kenny Rd.
Building 1012
Ellsworth AFB, SD 57706
605-737-6996

Flandreau Armory
710 West Community Drive
Flandreau, SD 57028-1061
605-997-2661

Fort Meade
54 Sheridan Road
Fort Meade, SD 57741-0317
605-737-6456

Huron Armory
1030 3rd Street Southwest
Huron, SD 57350-0829
605-352-0200

Madison Armory
1302 N. Washington Avenue
Madison, SD 57042-0030
605-256-5287

Milbank Armory
1001 East Park Avenue
Milbank, SD 57252-0510
605-432-4671

Mobridge Armory
1014 Airport Road
Mobridge, SD 57601-0328
605-845-2301

Mitchell Armory
5501 Airport Road
Mitchell, SD 57301-0610
605-995-1671

Parkston Armory
102B South Chapman Drive
Parkston, SD 57366-2017
605-928-3420

Pierre Armory
3440 East Highway 34
Pierre, SD 57501-0938
605-773-3449

Rapid City – Camp Rapid
2823 West Main Street
Rapid City, SD 57702-8186
605-737-6200

Rapid City – Range Road Armory
3740 Range Road
Rapid City, SD 57702-8186
605-737-6322

Spearfish Armory
1200 University Street
Spearfish, SD 57783-0520
605-642-6121

Sioux Falls Armory
801 West National Guard Drive
Sioux Falls, SD 57104-0117
605-357-2973

Joe Foss Field – Sioux Falls
1201 West Algonquian Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57104-0264
605-988-5700

Sturgis Armory
12930 Highway 34 East
Sturgis, SD 57785-0549
605-737-6400

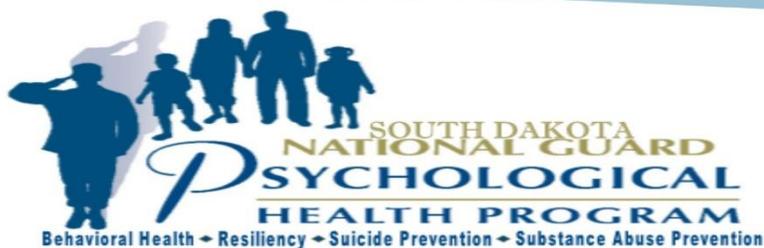
Vermillion Armory
603 Princeton Street
Vermillion, SD 57069-0434
605-677-6787

Wagner Armory
600 East Highway 46
Wagner, SD 57380-9417
605-384-3657

Watertown Readiness Center
1951 N. Hwy 20
Watertown, SD 57201-3048
605-882-9327

Yankton Armory
204 West 31st Street
Yankton, SD 57078-0071
605-688-3045

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Substance Abuse Program Supports Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week is the largest and oldest drug free campaign in the nation. The 2019 theme was "Send a Message. Stay Drug Free." Soldiers in the SDNG signed a large red ribbon that was hung at the Minuteman statue at the entrance to Camp Rapid, as a visual for the community to see our commitment to be drug free. Youth participated in a Poster Contest to show their Red Ribbon Spirit.

Visit redribbon.org to start or bring Red Ribbon Week to your community!



LTC Amber Heinert
Director of Psychological Health (DPH) & Resiliency Programs
605-737-6582

MAJ Sarah I Jensen
R3SP Coordinator (Resiliency, Risk Reduction, Suicide Prevention)
605-737-6948

Jeffrey Hurst
Psychological Health Coordinator
605-737-6521

Kristi (Cricket) Palmer
Alcohol and Drug Control Officer (ADCO)
605-737-6973

Paul Brosz
Prevention Coordinator (PC)
605-737-6990

SGT Shaun Kuharski
Drug Testing Coordinator
605-737-6566

William (Bill) Meirose
Suicide Prevention Program Manager
605-737-6954

◆ Red Ribbon Week

◆ Suicide Prevention Message

◆ Resiliency Skill of the month

◆ Cyber safety tip of the month

◆ Substance Abuse Prevention Message

◆ Psychological Health Message—S.A.D.

Suicide Prevention Program Message

We are entering the busy Holiday season. This time of the year many of us have family gatherings, office parties, and celebrations with our friends. There are endless trips to the grocery store, toy stores, and Wal-Mart. This is also the time that many do not have the same things going on. It is a time of memories of loved ones who have passed too early, broken relationships, and thinking of the many regrets that we have in our lives.

During this Holiday season, be sure to take the time to be honestly thankful for the many blessings and relationships that you have in your life. And let the people in your life know that you are thankful for them and appreciate them. Take the time to step back out of the busyness of the days and look around. Is there someone who is struggling or in need of encouragement. Are you struggling?

"Be the One" to reach out to others and help them

"Be the One" to reach out and ask for help.

#BeThere

DEPRESSION & THE HOLIDAY BLUES

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at a certain time of the year, usually in the winter.

Causes, Incidence, and Risk Factors:

SAD may begin during the teen years or in adulthood. Like other forms of depression, it occurs more often in women than in men.

People who live in places with long winter nights are at greater risk of SAD. A less common form of the disorder involves depression during the summer months.

Symptoms:

Symptoms are usually the same as with other forms of depression:

- Hopelessness
- Increased appetite with weight gain (weight loss is more common with other forms of depression)
- Increased sleep (too little sleep is more common with other forms of depression)
- Less energy and ability to concentrate
- Loss of interest in work or other activities
- Sluggish movements
- Social withdrawal
- Unhappiness and irritability

MANAGING YOUR DEPRESSION AT HOME

Get enough restful sleep.

Eat a healthy diet

Take medicines as prescribed. Ask your health care provider how to manage side effects.

Watch for early signs that your depression is getting worse. Have a plan if it does get worse.

Try to exercise more often. Do activities that make you happy.

Do not use alcohol and illegal drugs. These can make depression worse. They can also affect your judgment about suicide.

When you are struggling with depression, talk about how you are feeling with someone you trust. Try to be around people who are caring and positive. Volunteer or get involved with group activities.

LIGHT THERAPY

Your health care provider may prescribe light therapy. Light therapy uses a special lamp with a very bright light that mimics light from the sun.

Treatment starts in the fall or early winter, before the symptoms of SAD begin. Follow your health care provider's instructions about how to use light therapy.

FOR ASSISTANCE OR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH PROVIDERS:

LTC Amber Heinert

Director of Psychological Health: 605-737-6582

Jeffrey Hurst

Psychological Health Coordinator: 605-737-6521



Self-Help Suggestions

SOLO:

Let the sadness in then let it pass.
 Let the Sunshine In While the Sun Is Out - open curtains
 Go for a walk or get some exercise
 Pray or meditate
 Take a nap.
 Think about your favorite things.

GET SOCIAL:

Take a social media fast and instead, connect only in real time and in person.
 Break out a cookbook, invite a friend or two over and make a meal from recipes that you've never tried before.
 Recall a fond memory about someone, contact that person and let that person know you remembered him/her.
 Give a co-worker a ride home.
 Talk to a stranger. Ask a safe and simple question and see where it leads.

LOSE YOURSELF:

Perform Random Acts of kindness.
 Pop in a feel-good movie or video and allow yourself a little veg time.
 Do something silly and let go of self-conscious feelings.
 Do something you would not normally do.
 Laugh it up at a comedy show or funny movie/video
 Invite a little unpredictability into your life.
 Go for a drive without a particular destination. Feel the breeze and let your senses take in the feeling of not having a particular place to go.
 Go sightseeing where you live; you never know what you might find.

LET NATURE FILE YOUR SENSES:

Get outdoors - enjoy nature and the sights and sounds
 Watch the sunrise or sunset and remind yourself of the beauty of nature.
 Stop and smell the flowers.
 "Pull down your pants and slide on the ice!" - MAJ FREEDMAN FROM M*A*S*H

GET CREATIVE OR IMMERSE YOURSELF IN ART:

Take pictures.
 Draw or paint.
 Write a song, a poem or a short story.
 Buy a coloring book and crayons and color some pictures.
 Read a classic.
 Be in awe of a work of art. A photograph or a painting is a good source of awe-inspiring moments that can transport you to another place and melt sadness.
 Listen to music that moves you.
 Sing and dance.

GET BUSY:

Do some chores. Purge your closet of unwanted things and donate a bag of clothes and shoes to Goodwill; de-clutter your home and clear your mind in the process.
 Throw yourself into your work or start a new project.
 Plan and throw a party. Watch the sadness turn to excitement.

DO FOR OTHERS:

Visit a nursing home and talk with the residents.
 Visit a friend and offer to pick up take out.
 Walk your neighbor's dog.
 Play with neighbor kids.
 Offer to run an errand for a parent with young kids.
 Pick up a greeting card or a present for someone. Any chance you can focus on making someone else's day will help brighten your day.
 Volunteer at a food pantry.



Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage

Strong Bonds for Couples

18-19 January 2020
Rapid City

***Split Training is Authorized
For Soldiers living 50+ miles hotel room
will also be included for 2 nights***



Whether you've celebrated one anniversary or twenty, as an military couple you can anticipate more excitement — and expect more challenges — than the average civilian couple. Long separations, frequent relocations, and the stress of deployment can subject military marriages to extreme hardship.

That's why we developed the Strong Bonds Couples program. It's our way of saying thank you for the sacrifices you and your Family make every day as members of the world's premier fighting force. And, because we understand the stresses of military life, we want to serve you through an off-post, Strong Bonds weekend retreat. You and others from your unit will gain skills that fortify your marriage and enjoy a time of relaxation, recreation, and fun.

You'll gain practical, useful information based on world-class curriculum developed from years of research. The weekend retreat is designed to strengthen relationships, inspire hope and rekindle marriages.

Each year thousands of couples enjoy ***Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage*** with Mark Gungor's candid and comedic approach he uses unforgettable illustrations and the power of laughter to teach proven principles that are guaranteed to strengthen any marriage. His take on marriage issues is refreshingly free of both churchy and psychological lingo. "Our secular culture over-romanticizes marriage and our Christian culture over-spiritualizes it. The reality is that relationships between men and women are very down to earth," Mark comments. "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage is about helping couples get it right, get along, have fun, and achieve a successful marriage."

Mark is one of the most requested speakers for the U.S. Army and his Laugh Your Way materials are used extensively by chaplains and military personnel. Mark has been featured on national broadcasts such as Focus on the Family, Life Today and ABC News.

To Register or for additional Information contact:
Chaplain (COL) Wilson at
605-737-6009 or lynn.j.wilson.mil@mail.mil



SDARNG CHAPLAIN CORPS PRESENTS...



**This changes
EVERYTHING!**
Your money. Your story. Your life.

Learn God's ways of handling money with Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace University*! The average turnaround is \$8,000 in just the first three months!

**** WEDNESDAYS ****
15 January 2020 - 22 April 2020
Cathedral—Rapid City SD
520 Cathedral Drive/RM TBD
1745 MST HRS

To Register: Contact Lynn Wilson or Lonnie Hofer
chappy_lynnjwilson@icloud.com or lhofer56@hotmail.com

Materials Needed: FPU Workbook (Cathedral covering cost)

* 29 JAN, 19 FEB, 25 MAR NO FPU (Cathedral doing 3 studies on Eucharist; still welcome to come!)

Strong Bonds 2020



Strong Bonds is conducted in an offsite retreat format in order to maximize the training effect.

The retreat or "get away" provides a fun, safe, and secure environment in which to address the impact of relocations, deployments, and military lifestyle stressors.

Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage - Couples

18-19 January 2020 – Rapid City

Five Love Languages - Singles

15-16 February 2020 – Rapid City

Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program - Couples

21-22 March 2020 – Sioux Falls

For additional information contact

Chaplain (COL) Wilson at

605-737-6009 or

lynn.j.wilson.mil@mail.mil



2019 RED RIBBON BILLBOARD CONTEST Winners “SEND A MESSAGE. STAY DRUG FREE.”



CONGRATULATIONS 2019 Red Ribbon Week SDNG Poster Contest Winners

10 & Under:

First Place:

Cybil Huxford 10 years old



Second Place:

Anasten Wollman 9 years old



Third Place:

Presley Carlson 9 years old



Fourth Place:

London Carlson 7 years old



Fifth Place:

Aubree Kuharski 6 years old



11-15 year old

First Place:

Kaia Carlson 11 years old



Second Place:

Tehya Beck 15 years old



Honorably Discharged Vets Now Have Online Exchange Shopping Privileges



By Chris Ward, Army and Air Force Exchange Service

Some 18.5 million honorably discharged veterans now have a lifetime benefit enabling them to shop online marking the first expansion of military exchange privileges since 1990.

"The Exchange is honored to open its virtual doors to millions of deserving veterans," said Tom Shull, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's director and CEO, a Vietnam-era Army veteran.

"There are many generations of service members who have not been properly recognized," he added. "This new benefit acknowledges their service and welcomes them home. This is something veterans can enjoy the rest of their lives."

Purchases Improve Quality of Military Life
Every purchase veterans make online will help to improve the quality of life for those who wear the uniform today, Shull noted, as exchange earnings support programs such as combat uniforms below cost, fitness centers, child development centers and youth programs on Army garrisons, Air Force outdoor recreation programs, school lunches for warfighters' children overseas and more.

"This is a virtuous cycle," he said. "As a veteran myself, it is an honor to pay forward support to active-duty service members and their families."

Excitement for the new benefit has been building for months, AAFES officials said, thanks to social media shout-outs from Mark Wahlberg and Marcus Luttrell, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Richard Rawlings and other celebrities. As a result, they said, more than 255,000 veterans verified their eligibility for the benefit before its official Nov. 11 launch.

To verify eligibility and begin shopping, Veterans can visit : <https://www.shopmyexchange.com/veterans>





I WANT YOU

ENROLL IN VA HEALTH CARE

Did you deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn?

Then your service may have earned your access to VA health care benefits.

In order to take advantage of these benefits, you need to enroll in VA's health care system.

Contact your Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) today to get started!

Christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil or 605-737-6669

Did you know?

The **Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) Program** serves Active and Reserve Component service members of **ALL** branches of the military **AND** Veterans who have dedicated themselves to serving our nation, often at great personal sacrifice. The program's principal role is to provide direction to Reserve Component service members so that they can secure all benefits, entitlements, and services earned through their military service with the compassion of someone who's been there.

You may not need assistance at this time, but you may have a friend or family member that could use some assistance.



Common services provided are:

- Requesting Military Service records
- Enrollment into the VA Healthcare
- Counseling on Education Benefits
- Supporting deploying and returning units
- Employment
- Tricare
- State specific benefits
- Navigating local, state and federal programs

I am a current service member in the SDARNG, an OEF-Afghanistan veteran, former full-time Soldier, education counselor and will put to use my skills and relationships to ensure your needs are met.

Contact your TAA today at
605-737-6669 or

christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil

December Family Focus

Service Member and Family Support
South Dakota National Guard

2823 W. Main St, Rapid City SD 57702

1-800-658-3930



We also recommend that you like and follow us on Facebook as we continuously update new and exciting information.

Have suggestions of thing you would like to see in a future issue of the focus?
Please contact us!