

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: [ngsd-pao@ng.army.mil](mailto:ngsd-pao@ng.army.mil)  
Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>  
[www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard](http://www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard)  
[www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard](http://www.flickr.com/SouthDakotaNationalGuard)



August 8, 2012

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **S.D. honors veterans with Purple Heart Memorial Highway**

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen  
SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Transportation Commission officially designated Interstate 90, from the Wyoming border to the Minnesota border, as the Purple Heart Memorial Highway during a dedication ceremony at the Valley Springs and Spearfish rest areas along the interstate, Tuesday, Aug. 7.

South Dakota is among 46 states and Guam to name parts of their roads in honor of Purple Heart recipients.

“It seems like a small token of appreciation in comparison of what has been given by those that we are honoring today,” said Darin Bergquist, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Transportation. “I am hopeful that as people travel Interstate 90 in South Dakota they will see the sign and be reminded to take a minute to remember, to reflect and thank those that have been awarded the Purple Heart for their service and sacrifices.”

Several Purple Heart recipients attended the ceremony including Edwin Petranek, who earned four Purple Hearts during World War II; H. Marty Nelson who served in Korea; Doc Jackson and Jack Schooler who both served in Vietnam and Eric Jennings who served in Afghanistan.

“Having I-90 named the Purple Heart Memorial Highway is an honor,” said South Dakota Army National Guardsman 1st Sgt. Eric Jennings, awarded the Purple Heart Nov. 1, 2004. “But what is truly an honor, is to stand next to these four other recipients from World War II, Korea and Vietnam.”

The South Dakota National Guard has 42 service members who have received the United States military decoration within the past 10 years against the Global War on Terrorism. The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the president to those wounded or killed while serving on or after April 15, 1917.

It has been estimated that 320,000 Purple Hearts were awarded during World War I, more than 1 million during World War II, 118,000 during the Korean War, 351,000 during the Vietnam War, more than 35,000 in Iraq and we are now approaching 10,000 in Afghanistan said, South Dakota National Guard’s Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general.

-more-

“This designation of the Purple Heart Memorial Highway here in South Dakota is a very simple way to honor the veterans who left their families, homes and communities to serve this great country in a time of war,” said Reisch. “It is my hope that this marker will serve as a reminder of the price that has been paid for the many freedoms we often take for granted here in the United States.”

-30-

High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard)

Additional stories and information are online at [www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard](http://www.facebook.com/southdakotationalguard)



**120807-A-CW157-039:** South Dakota National Guard’s Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general, addresses the audience during the dedication ceremony to officially designate Interstate 90 as the Purple Heart Memorial Highway at the Spearfish rest area near the Wyoming border, Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2012. (SDNG photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)



**120807-A-CW157-063:** – The South Dakota Transportation Commission held a dedication ceremony to officially designate Interstate 90 as the Purple Heart Memorial Highway to honor military personnel killed or wounded in combat at the Spearfish rest area near the Wyoming border, Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2012. Several Purple Heart recipients attended along with South Dakota National Guard’s Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general and the Department of Transportation secretary and commissioner. (SDNG photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)



**120807-A-CW157-084:** South Dakota National Guard’s Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general, presents a coin to Edwin Petranek, who was awarded four Purple Hearts while serving in World War II, during the dedication ceremony to officially designate Interstate 90 as the Purple Heart Memorial Highway at the Spearfish rest area, Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2012. (SDNG photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,** please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail [ngsd-pao@ng.army.mil](mailto:ngsd-pao@ng.army.mil).