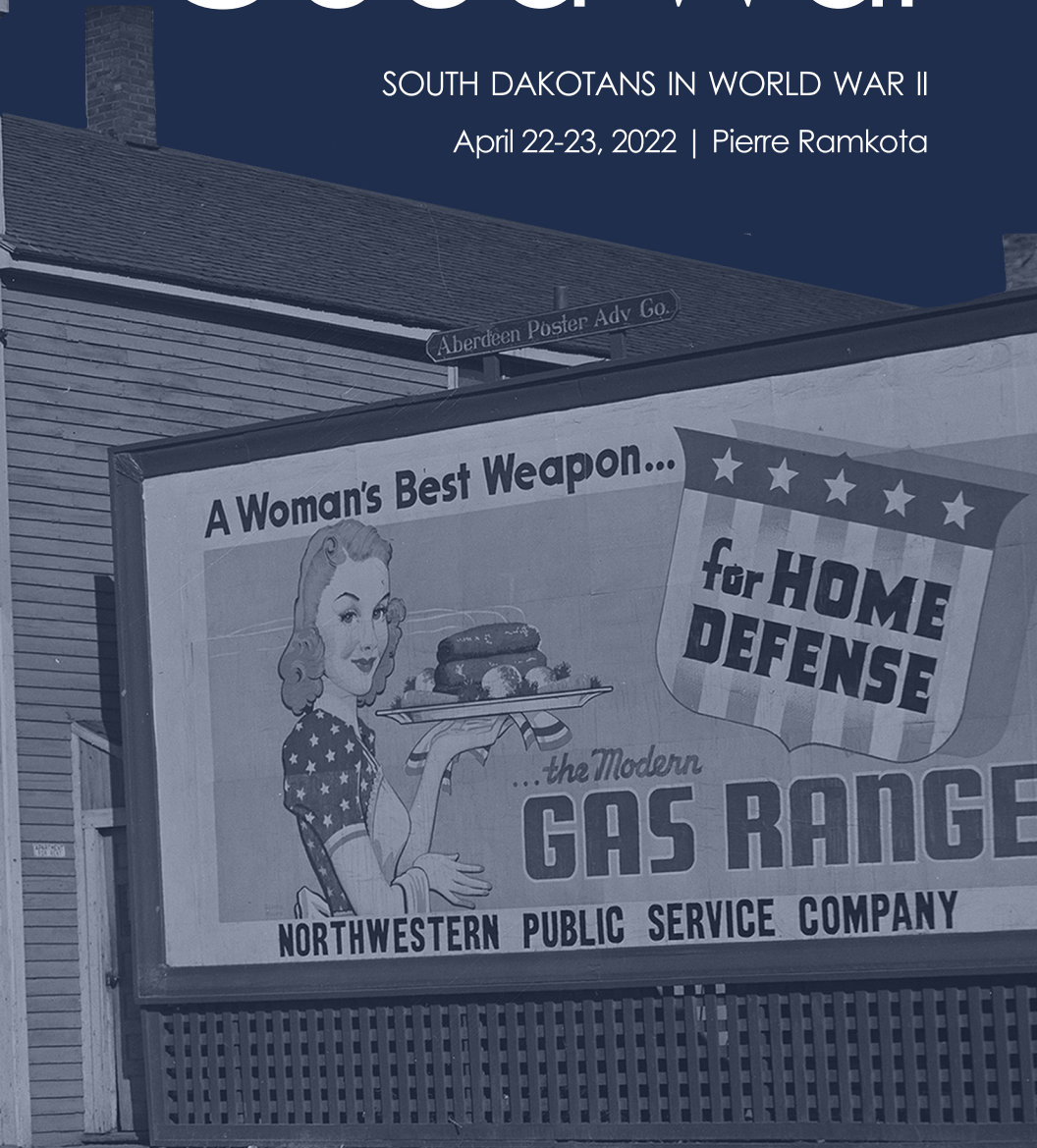


# Fighting the Good War

SOUTH DAKOTANS IN WORLD WAR II

April 22-23, 2022 | Pierre Ramkota





## South Dakota State Historical Society

900 Governors  
Drive, Pierre

Monday-Friday  
8am-5pm

[history.sd.gov](http://history.sd.gov)

Administration  
605.773.3458

Archaeological  
Research Center  
605.394.1936

Historic Preservation  
605.773.3458

Research & Publishing  
605.773.6009  
[sdhspress.com](http://sdhspress.com)

State Archives  
605.773.3804

Historical Society  
Foundation  
605.773.6003  
[sdhsf.org](http://sdhsf.org)

## Welcome!

We are excited to bring you stories and history surrounding one of the Twentieth Century's most impactful events. The Research and Publishing Office has assembled a fascinating set of speakers about South Dakotans in World War II.

Our own South Dakota Historical Society Press is debuting two books that look at unique aspects of the war. Each title, a children's picture book highlighting the experience of a Japanese American soldier from Spearfish and an illustrated biography of South Dakota Governor Joe Foss, will bring our history and heritage to new audiences.

Just as WWII brought great change, the Covid-19 pandemic has also prompted change for us, and we are pleased that the conference can be both in-person and virtual this year.

Remember to check in with our State Archives and Museum about how to share and preserve your and your family's experiences during these significant times.

Thank you for joining us,

Dr. Benjamin F. Jones,  
Director & State Historian

*Together we empower audiences to experience South Dakota's stories. We professionally collect, preserve, interpret, and publish our history for present and future generations.*



# History Talks (A Free Monthly Speaker Series)



**March 03, 2022 | Pre-Conference Event**

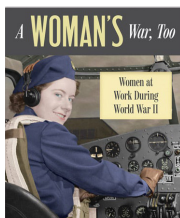
“Lessons in Perseverance from the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II”  
with Dr. Katherine Sharp Landdeck



**April 07, 2022 | Pre-Conference Event**

“Loyalty and Freedom: the all-Japanese American Soldiers of WWII”  
with Lauren R. Harris

Register at  
[sdhsf.org/events](https://sdhsf.org/events)



**May 12, 2022 | Post-Conference Event**

“A Woman's War, Too: Women at Work During World War II”  
with Virginia Wright-Peterson

## Conference Sponsors

A big thank you to our generous donors and supporters:



**SOUTH DAKOTA  
HUMANITIES COUNCIL**

[sdhumanities.org](https://sdhumanities.org)







The USS *South Dakota* fires its guns, crewman Allan Robinson recalled the blowback "stood your hair on end." Photograph used in *South Dakota History*, vol. 23, no. 3.

## Friday, April 22

8:00am-4:00pm

Registration Table Open

12:30pm-1:00pm

Vendor Area Open

1:00pm-1:30pm

WELCOME

Dr. Benjamin F. Jones

1:40pm-2:30pm

MARCELLA LEBEAU:

PRETTY RAINBOW WOMAN

OF CHEYENNE RIVER

Donovin Sprague

2:30pm-3:00pm

Vendor Break

3:00pm-3:50pm

KENNY HIGASHI, NISEI

SON OF SD, & THE

100TH/442ND REGIMENTAL

COMBAT TEAM

Lauren Harris

4:00pm-5:00pm

A HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

PERSPECTIVE

with Dedra Birzer, Renee

Boen, Catherine Forsch,

Katy Schmidt, Chelle

Somsen, Ted Spencer



# Friday, April 22

## Conference Reception

5:30pm-7:30pm

Location: Missouri Avenue Event  
Center, 217 W. Missouri Avenue

CARTOON PROPAGANDA  
AND AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS  
OF WORLD WAR TWO

Kurt Hackemer

On Display at the Reception

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

FELICIA HOSHINO AND

HECTOR CURRIELL



On Display Now

## 25 Years of Publishing



### ARTWORK FROM THE SOUTH DAKOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS COLLECTION

Visit the Jay D. Vogt Education Room at the Cultural Heritage Center,  
900 Governors Dr., Pierre, from January to July 2022, to celebrate 25 years  
of publications that reflect the rich and varied history of the region.



Kenneth ("Kenny") Higashi,  
442nd Regimental Combat Team  
(Spearfish, SD)

## April 23, Saturday

7:45AM-3:00PM

Vendor Area and  
Registration Table Open

8:15AM-8:30AM

MORNING WELCOME

Dr. Benjamin Jones

8:30AM-9:20AM

JOE FOSS: FROM FARM BOY  
TO AMERICAN HERO  
Hector Curriel

9:30AM-10:20AM

EXPLORING OUR ARTIFACTS

"The Glenn E. Soladay  
Collection (147th Field  
Artillery), 1940-1945"  
Liz Cisar

"Oral Histories of World War II  
Veterans from the 1960s, and  
1970s"

Sam Herley

"United We Stand  
Magazines and Elizabeth  
(Meadow) Crissman Collec-  
tion—Summer 1942"  
Matthew T. Reitzel

10:30AM-11:00AM

Vendor Break

# April 23, Saturday

11:00AM-11:50AM

CALL-SIGN 'CHIEF': A LAKOTA  
SIOUX AVIATOR AT WAR IN THE  
PACIFIC

Sean Flynn

12:00PM-1:30PM

AWARDS LUNCHEON

Keynote speaker:

John Little, University of  
South Dakota

1:45PM-2:30 OPM

DON SMITH, DOOLITTLE  
RAIDER

Paul Higbee

2:30-3:00PM

Vendor Break

3:00-3:50PM

THE BLACK HILLS VETERANS  
LEGACY PROGRAM

Kelly Kirk

4:00PM-4:45PM

HISTORY 605 PODCAST,  
LIVE!: LAKOTA CODE  
TALKERS with Francis  
Whitebird and host  
Ben Jones

Listen to more episodes at  
[listen.sdpb.org/show/history-605](http://listen.sdpb.org/show/history-605)



Benjamin ("Ben")  
Reifel, Military  
Police Corps  
(Rosebud Indian  
Reservation)





*Hornet crew members watch as a raider becomes airborne over choppy seas. Photograph used in *The First Strike: Doolittle Raider Don Smith* by Paul Higbee, National Archives*

# SPEAKER BIOS

**DEDRA MCDONALD BIRZER** is director and editor-in-chief of the South Dakota Historical Society Press. She holds a doctorate in the History of the American West from the University of New Mexico and is currently writing a biography of Rose Wilder Lane. She is married to Dr. Brad Birzer and has six children, five cats, and one dog.

**RENEE M. BOEN** is the State Archaeologist and Director of the Archaeological Research Center. She has also served as the South Zone Archaeologist for Hell Canyon and Mystic Ranger Districts at the Black Hills National Forest, and as Area Archaeologist/Principal Investigator at the Bureau of Reclamation, Dakotas Area Office.

**LIZ CISAR** is collections assistant at the Center for Western Studies of Augustana University in Sioux Falls. A Minnesota native, she received her B.A. in history from Augustana in 2006. Most of her archival training has been on the job, but she completed the Western Archives Institute in 2021.

**HECTOR CURRIEL** is a visual artist from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. A native of Lima, Peru, his variety of art production include fine art, book illustration, and cartooning. His distinctive personal style emanates in his composition's different stages of the human spirit. As an artist, he defines himself as a storyteller.

**SEAN FLYNN** is professor of history at Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South Dakota. He is the author of *Without Reservation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation* (South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2018), and *Chief, Marine Corps Warrior* (2003), which chronicles his father's exploits as a combat aviator and POW.

**CATHERINE K. FORSCH** is the CEO of the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation. She previously worked in donor relations at Sanford Health Foundation and has over twenty years in executive planning, administration communications, and marketing.

**KURT HACKEMER** is Professor of History and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of South Dakota. He teaches a wide range of military history courses at USD, including HIST 470: History of World War II, and he has published extensively on a variety of American naval and military history topics.

**LAUREN R. HARRIS** is an author and writer, focused on illuminating the experiences of men who fought in the 100th/442nd battalion. Her book *A Place for Harvest: The Story of Kenny Higashi* was published by South Dakota Historical Society Press.

# SPEAKER BIOS

**SAM HERLEY**, Ph.D., has been the curator of the South Dakota Oral History Center at the University of South Dakota since 2015. He has served as an instructor at USD for the Department of History, Native American Studies Program, and Honors Program since 2011.

**PAUL HIGBEE** is the author of *The First Strike: Doolittle Raider Don Smith*, published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press. He is a contributing writer for the next volume of *The Plains Political Tradition* series, set for publication later this year. Since 1992 Paul has been the Black Hills writer and columnist for *South Dakota Magazine*.

**FELICIA HOSHINO** is the prize-winning illustrator of multiple children's books, including Jane Addams Peace Award winner *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow*. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the California College of the Arts and lives with her family in San Francisco, California. Her parents' families were forced to move into the Minidoka (Idaho) and Poston (Arizona) incarceration camps. Like Kenny Higashi, two of her great uncles served in the 442nd.

**BEN JONES** grew up in South Dakota and served 23 years in the Air Force and was twice assigned to the History Department at the Air Force Academy. He has served as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Dakota State and as South Dakota's Secretary of Education. He's been State Historian and Director of the Historical Society since Dec 2020.

**KELLY KIRK** is the Director of the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center, history instructor, and the Director of the Veterans Legacy Program at Black Hills State University. Inspired by her surroundings, Kelly's research focuses on local history, contributing an essay to *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains* published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press in 2018. Ultimately, she enjoys finding new ways to share this history with others.

**JOHN LITTLE** is the Director of Native Recruitment and Alumni Engagement at USD. He received his PhD from the University of Minnesota in history. He is the co-director of the award-winning film *More Than A Word*. His research focuses on Native American Vietnam Veterans. He is Dakota and a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.



# SPEAKER BIOS

**MATTHEW T. REITZEL** has served as the South Dakota State Archives manuscript/photo archivist for seventeen years. He earned his B.A. in history in 2001 from Northern State University and his M.A. in history in 2003 from Oklahoma State University. He also compiles a weekly history column for the Pierre Capitol Journal. He lives in Pierre with his wife Jessica and daughters Emma and Lily.

**KATY SCHMIDT** has worked as Curator of Collections for the museum since 2017. She has an MA in Museum Science from Texas Tech University and a BA in Archaeology from the University of Evansville. Her interests in WWII include not just the military conflict, but the impact the war effort had on civilians and the home front.

**CHELLE SOMSEN** is the South Dakota State Archivist with degrees from South Dakota State University and Mankato State University. She received the Digital Archives Specialist certificate in 2013, is the chair of the South Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board, is an alumnus of the Archives Leadership Institute, and a member of the National Heritage Responders.

**TED SPENCER** has been the State Historic Preservation Office deputy and director of the State Historic Preservation Office for ten years. A native South Dakotan, with degrees from South Dakota State University and the University of Oklahoma, Spencer previously served in the United States Air Force for twenty-seven years.

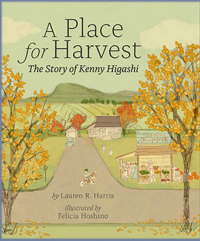
**DONOVIN SPRAGUE** was born at Dupree, SD. He is Lakota and faculty at Sheridan College, WY. An author of ten books, he is a historian & artisan. He taught at Black Hills State University, Iowa State University, University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, University of Wyoming, and Oglala Lakota College.

**FRANCIS WHITEBIRD** is a fluent Lakota speaker. He earned his Bachelors of Science degree from South Dakota State University and a Master of Education from Harvard University. Whitebird was a combat medic during the Vietnam War and earned a Purple Heart during his service. A member of the Red Feather Warrior Society, he was a cabinet member under the Mickelson administration and served on the South Dakota State Historical Society Board of Trustees for nine years.



Marcella LeBeau, Army Nurse  
(Eagle Butte, So. Dak.)

Conference Releases:



*A Place for Harvest:  
The Story of Kenny  
Higashi*  
by Lauren Harris  
Illustrated by  
Felicia Hoshino



*American Ace:  
Joe Foss, Fighter  
Pilot*  
written & illustrated  
by Hector Curriel

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Save the Date!

2023 History Conference  
April 21-22, 2023

Next year's conference  
is brought to you by the  
South Dakota State Historic  
Preservation Office.

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