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SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's April Column – Memorials, South Dakota's Connection from Past to Present

As the cabinet secretary for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, I travel across this great state and visit with veterans in every county. These trips also afford me the opportunity to stop and view all the veteran's memorials in South Dakota.

Memorials are not about war – they are about people. They are about paying tribute to all the military service personnel who honorably served their country. Their bravery, their resourcefulness, and their patriotism mark them as America's finest citizens. These proud Americans stepped out of the crowd and swore an oath to support and defend the constitution of the United States of America against all enemies.

Veterans' memorials provide a connection from the past to the present. They encourage people to remember and honor those who have served our great country. They also teach younger generations about the sacrifices made by our nation's heroes.

There are over 200 veteran's memorials in South Dakota, and this is a testament to their significance. Veterans service organizations, community leaders, and civic organizations have designed these historical touchstones. Each of them has a specific message and includes symbolisms such as peaceful waters, raging waters, crosses, dog tags, eagles, soldiers, pillars, eternal lights, and flags.

Whether you are traveling through Geddes, Armour, Viborg, Tyndall, Kennebec, Pine Ridge, Sisseton, Gettysburg, Wall, Belle Fourche, or any other community in this state, I encourage you to take the time to find these memorials. We even have a resource tool that will help you – <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/Veterans%20Memorials.pdf>

These memorials play a vital role in ensuring the sacrifices made by so many for freedom are remembered.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs