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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's February Column – South Dakota's Bonus for Active Duty Service Since 1990**

If you had active duty military service within the past 30 years, you may be eligible for a bonus. The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs administers the bonus; in which active duty servicemembers and veterans who began their active duty service as a South Dakota resident could be eligible to receive a payment of up to \$500. Currently, the bonus is given for qualifying active duty service from August 2, 1990, to December 31, 1992; for qualifying service after January 1, 1993; or for those who are currently active duty.

South Dakota has a legacy of offering bonuses to servicemembers called to active duty in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Each of those bonus programs are now officially closed.

In 2005, after being deployed to the Middle East with my South Dakota Army National Guard unit, I applied for the current bonus program with the help of my local county veteran's service office. The one-page form is easy to complete. Applicants must prove South Dakota was their home of record prior to their active duty period and show where they were deployed and their character of service. If the applicant has a service-connected disability of 10% or more, they will need to submit their VA award letter with the application. Active duty for training is not allowed for bonus purposes.

As stated on the SDDVA website, our team advocates for veterans and works to link them to services and support. The veterans/active duty bonus is just one benefit offered to say thanks to our servicemembers for their hard work, bravery, and dedication to our country.

If you have questions about the bonus program, visit with your nearest county or tribal veterans service officer. A list of VSO locations is available under the "Veterans Service Officers" tab on the SDDVA website at <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/>. You can also find a bonus application under the "Benefits" tab of our website. To verify whether or not you already received a bonus or to request an application form, please contact Jeri Smith at 605-773-7251 or email her at [jeri.smith@state.sd.us](mailto:jeri.smith@state.sd.us).

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs