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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's July Column – Veterans Burial Benefits

In June, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that they will provide a commemorative urn or plaque for a deceased veteran. Families should note that if they select the new urn or plaque option, they cannot inter their loved one at a VA National Cemetery and cannot receive a government-furnished headstone, marker, niche cover, or medallion for placement in any cemetery.

The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery follows the eligibility requirements for burial in a National Cemetery, so it is important to know if the VA provides a commemorative urn or plaque for a veteran, they will not be eligible for burial at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs wants to emphasize again that if the family chooses to receive a plaque or an urn to commemorate their veteran, the decision cannot be undone. There is no path to restore eligibility. Receipt of a commemorative urn or plaque nullifies eligibility for burial in a National Cemetery, the State Veterans Cemetery, or receipt of a government furnished headstone if the veteran is to be buried in a private cemetery.

As always, we urge all veterans to visit their county or tribal veterans service officers (CTVSO's) to learn more about this program and its implications, as well as all burial benefits.

To locate the CTVSO nearest you visit:

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs