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SD Bridge to be Dedicated in Honor of U.S. Navy Radio Man Second Class Ordien F. Herr, Naval Air Force Lieutenant LeRoy M. Herr, and U.S. Navy Radio Man Second Class Eugene L. Herr

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor three brothers, U.S. Navy Radio Man Second Class Ordien F. Herr, Naval Air Force Lieutenant LeRoy M. Herr, and U.S. Navy Radio Man Second Class Eugene L. Herr.

The ceremony will be Monday, August 5, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. (CT) at the High School Gym in Bristol (500 S. 3rd Street).

The US 12 Westbound bridge over the railroad three miles west of Groton will be dedicated to RM2, LT, and RM2 Herr.

Eugene was first reported as missing in action when he was serving on the USS Johnston, which was sunk at the Battle of Samar. Eugene survived the sinking, but died two days later, October 25, 1944, from exhaustion and exposure.

Having completed over 38 missions during the war, LeRoy's PV1 Ventura bomber crashed while flying over Catalina Island September 25, 1945.

On June 8, 1943, a transport carrying personnel to Sydney Australia crashed leaving Tontouta Airfield, New Caledonia. Approximately three minutes after takeoff the plane was seen going into a low turn and disappeared from sight. During the initial climb, one of the engines failed. The pilot tried to return to the airfield, but the aircraft stalled and crashed. The wreckage of the plane was in the water of St. Vincent's Bay about 100 yards from shore. A total of 24 men were killed, one of which was Ordien Herr.

Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died while serving their country is an initiative of Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs.

“Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memories live on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state,” said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen gives us the opportunity for remembrance, reflection, and respect. It helps us to honor the men and women who gave their lives in service to this

nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom so much, they were willing to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life.”

“We can never underestimate, or over appreciate, the costs they bore for us,” said Whitlock.

“We must never forget that our fallen sacrificed their future and their dreams. Their memories can only live through the accomplishments to present and future generations.”