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South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

MEDAL OF HONOR DAY – MARCH 25

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – On March 25, the nation will unite to observe Medal of Honor Day, a day dedicated to honoring the courage, heroism, and sacrifice of the men and women who have earned the United States highest military distinction, the Medal of Honor.

Established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861, the Medal of Honor is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through acts of valor performed above and beyond the call of duty. Each recipient's bravery embodies the very spirit of service and selflessness that defines America's armed forces.

To date, more than 3,500 service members have received the Medal of Honor. Their acts of heroism span every major U.S. conflict, from the Civil War to the Global War on Terrorism. These individuals risked their lives to protect their fellow service members and civilians, demonstrating great personal sacrifice.

A Medal of Honor tribute is displayed on the first floor of the west wing of the South Dakota State Capitol, honoring ten veterans with ties to our state. Each name is accompanied by the community where their memorial can be found:

- U.S. Army, Brigadier General Charles D. Roberts (Fort Meade)
- U.S. Army, Captain Willibald C. Bianchi (Brookings)
- U.S. Marine Corps, Captain Joe J. Foss (Sioux Falls)
- U.S. Army, Captain Arlo L. Olson (Toronto)
- U.S. Marine Corps, Private First-Class Herbert A. Littleton (Spearfish)
- U.S. Army Master Sergeant Woodrow W. Keeble (Sisseton)
- U.S. Air Force, Colonel Leo K. Thorsness (Brookings)
- U.S. Air Force, Colonel George E. "Bud" Day (Vermillion)
- U.S. Army, General Patrick H. Brady (Hot Springs)
- U.S. Army, Specialist Four Michael J. Fitzmaurice (Hot Springs)
- U.S. Navy, Captain Elmer Royce Williams

"Medal of Honor Day reminds us that freedom is not simply given, but safeguarded through extraordinary courage and unwavering sacrifice," said Jeremiah Scheider, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "The heroes we honor today faced unimaginable challenges and chose valor over fear, showing us that true strength lies in selfless service. Their

legacy calls on us to live with the same resolve, to support those who serve, and to ensure that their example continues to light the path for generations to come.”