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**FOR RELEASE:** Thursday, October 24, 2024

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### **SD Bridge to be Dedicated in Honor of U.S. Army First Lieutenant Josef L. Thorne**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Army First Lieutenant Josef L. Thorne.

The ceremony will be Monday, November 11, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. (CT) at the Beresford High School Gym (301 W. Maple Street).

The SD 46 bridge over the Vermillion River, about eight miles west of Beresford, will be dedicated as the 1LT Josef L. Thorne Bridge.

On April 19, 1965, Thorne was flying a mission near Qui Nhon, a city on Qui Nhon Bay on the central coast of then South Vietnam. His helicopter and one other came under intense enemy ground fire, and both were shot down. Thorne's Huey exploded on hitting the ground. All nine men on both helicopters were KIA.

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,” 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 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 will live on for generations.”