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SD Bridge to be Dedicated in Honor of U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Ervin C. Rieck

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Army S/SGT Ervin C. Rieck.

The ceremony will be Saturday, July 26, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. (CT) at the Community Hall in Warner (11 W. Main).

This dedication is part of the Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication Program, which was launched during the Noem-Rhoden Administration and expanded under Governor Rhoden. In partnership with the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs, this program creates visible and enduring tributes that connect communities to their history and remind future generations of the cost of freedom.

“It is an honor to recognize the brave men and women who gave their lives for our freedom,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jeremiah Schneider. “The Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication program ensures their sacrifice is remembered every day. These dedications serve as lasting symbols of gratitude and respect, connecting our communities to the legacy of those who served.”

The US-281 southbound bridge over Moccasin Creek just west of Warner will be dedicated as the S/SGT Ervin C. Rieck Bridge.

S/SGT Ervin C. Rieck was born on August 5, 1915, in Brown County, South Dakota. Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942, he trained as a machine gunner and served in the Philippines and Okinawa, rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant in Company C of the 383rd Infantry, 96th Division. On April 9, 1945, Ervin was killed in action on the Ryukyu Islands of Okinawa while trying to save a wounded fellow soldier. He was initially interred in Okinawa before his remains were later returned home for burial in 1948.

“As we honor their memory, we also reaffirm our commitment to support veterans and their families in every way possible,” continued Schneider. “Through these bridges, their stories remain a vital part of South Dakota’s heritage and a constant reminder of the freedoms we cherish.”