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### **SD Bridge to be Dedicated in Honor of U.S. Army Specialist Fourth-Class Thomas L. Zeigler**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Army SP4 Thomas L. Zeigler.

The ceremony will be Friday, July 18, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. (CT) at The American Legion in Winner (133 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street).

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 SD49 bridge over Moccasin Creek just north of Hamill will be dedicated as the SP4 Thomas L. Zeigler Bridge.

SP4 Thomas Lee Zeigler was born on December 22, 1949, in Winner, South Dakota. Thomas was drafted into the Army in 1969. He served bravely as a Specialist Fourth Class and squad leader with Company C, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry Regiment, 198th Light Infantry Brigade during the Vietnam War. On March 22, 1971, just one month before he was due to return home, Thomas volunteered to take the point position for a fellow soldier and was killed in action during an ambush in Quang Tin Province.

“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.”