



A Celebration *of*
Character
& **Courage**



VIETNAM WAR 50th

January 13, 2024

Washington National Cathedral



HANOI EPITAPH

BY MAJ. GEN. JOHN BORLING, USAF (RET.)

VIETNAM PRISONER OF WAR, 1966-1973

When days of dim hope and boredom abound,
And you half listen to the desperate sound
Of empty tap-code conversation.

When the heat is so hot, and cold so cold,
You think of your youth and how you've grown old
The endless and senseless frustrations.

When things don't go right and treatment is bad,
You think of the war and how you've been had,
Now live confined; it's life's lowest station.

When you try to do the job expected,
"Hang on, keep faith," till resurrected,
Without plaudit or praise from the nation.

When you cling to values you know are true,
Like family, God, the red, white, and blue,
It's your fortress 'gainst indoctrination.

When floodwaters rise, breaking mind levee,
You go on, through the standard staff heavy,
But you live in confirmed desperation.

When the floor is furrowed by tired feet,
And life slips away 'neath the pounding beat,
You trudge on, in dark desolation.

When years have passed, the many Decembers,
And no one cares and no one remembers
The lost flyer and his supplication.

When the bombing has stopped with no end in sight
Cover your ears as we cry in the night,
With considerable justification.

When you can't go on, the burden too great,
Any words lose their meaning, except for the word "hate,"
You bend and forget repatriation.

The man on the street, a face in the crowd,
Isn't concerned with the mind-numbing shroud
That grey time causes us to be lost in.

The years have passed, the many Decembers,
And no one knows and no one remembers
The Sound of your voice, your face, or your name.

So you dream of steel chargers, skies to roam;
Mostly you dream of ...just going home.
But you dream without hope or conviction

EXCERPTED FROM
"TAPS ON THE WALLS, POEMS FROM THE HANOI HILTON"
COURTESY OF MASTER WINGS PUBLISHING LLC

ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL

Over the past year, the committee that organized this celebration adopted these five underlying themes as our inspiration:

Thanking and Honoring our Vietnam Veterans and their Families

Illuminating Their Legacy of Service and extraordinary contributions to our Nation

Drawing Inspiration from the resolve and courage of these American heroes

Sharing our Veterans' Legacy of Character & Courage with America's future military leaders

Renewing Our Commitment to an honorable accounting for those still missing

LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

From October 1973 through October 1974, I had the honor of serving as the Special Assistant and Executive Officer to the Deputy Commander for all U.S. forces in Southeast Asia and as the Executive Officer to the U.S. Defense Attache in Saigon. During this time, I developed a deep and abiding respect for the courage, character, and spirit of the millions of U.S., South Vietnamese, and allied personnel who sacrificed so much in the service of their countries. I became extremely troubled by the level of contempt and disrespect shown to most military members during and into the post-war years. The saddest day of my career occurred in February 1977 when I reported for duty on the President's staff and was informed that, "As long as you're assigned to this White House, you will not wear your uniform in the District of Columbia. It is too disruptive." I will never forget that day! Recently, public attitudes have changed. "Thank you for your service" is frequently heard across the country. Thus, when the time came to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. combat operations and the return of the POW's, I resolved to ensure that all my fellow Vietnam veterans and their families came to believe that those sentiments also applied to them. This tribute is one small way of saying thank you and an effort to ensure that we as Americans, remain mindful of the risks that our men and women in uniform face every day and the sacrifices they make to ensure our freedoms.

Col. Len Vernamonti, USAF (Ret.)

Vietnam Veteran Chairman AFA Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Committee



US OOD photos

A CELEBRATION OF CHARACTER & COURAGE: VIETNAM WAR 50TH | PROGRAM

Prelude

Cathedral Organist and Brass Ensemble

Choirmaster **Len Vernamonti**
Organist **Thomas Sheehan**
Trumpets **Keven Gebo, Andrew Boylan**
French Horn **Rick Lee**
Trombone **Greg Hammond**
Tuba **Jon Voth**
Percussion **Sidonie McCray**
Choir Director **Constance Chase**, West Point Glee Club

Journey Home

Composed by Sara Corry

Mansions of the Lord

Written by Randall Wallace,
Music by Nick Glennie-Smith

*To fallen soldiers let us sing
Where no rockets fly nor bullets wing
Our broken brothers let us bring
To the Mansions of the Lord*

*No more bleeding, no more fight
No prayers pleading through the night
Just divine embrace, Eternal light
In the Mansions of the Lord*

*Where no mothers cry and no children weep
We will stand and guard though the angels sleep
All through the ages safely keep
The Mansions of the Lord*

Welcome

The Right Rev. Ann M. Ritonia,
Bishop Suffragan for Armed Forces and Federal Ministries,
The Episcopal Church

Please Stand

Presentation of the Colors

Joint Services Color Guard

The Star-Spangled Banner

Francis Scott Key, 4th stanza

*Oh, this be it ever when
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation
Blest with vict'ry and peace may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause is just
And this be our motto, "In God is our trust"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

JANUARY 13, 2024 | THE WASHINGTON
NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Processional

Cathedral Organist

Invocation

Rev. Dr. Robert Certain, Colonel, USAF (Ret.),
Prisoner of War, 1972-1973

Commentary

Brig. Gen. Bernie Skoch, USAF (Ret.),
AFA Chair of the Board

Please Stand

First Lesson John 15:9-14

Read by Chaplain Bennett Sandford, Capt., USN

Video Address

Lloyd Austin III, Secretary of Defense

Eternal Father, Strong to Save By William Whiting and John B. Dykes
(All Services Hymn)

*Almighty Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
Oh hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea*

*O Christ the Lord of hill and plain
O'er which our traffic runs amain
By mountain pass or valley low;
Wherever, Lord, thy brethren go
Protect them by thy guarding hand
From every peril on the land.*

*O Spirit, whom the Father sent
To spread abroad the firmament
O Wind of heaven, by thy might
Save all who dare the eagle's flight,
And keep them by thy watchful care
From every peril in the air.*

*O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go,
Thus evermore shall rise to thee
Glad praise from air and land and sea.*

Second Lesson Psalm 121

Read by Chaplain Bennett Sandford, Capt., USN

A CELEBRATION OF CHARACTER & COURAGE: VIETNAM WAR 50TH | PROGRAM

Remarks by Colleen Shine, Gold Star Daughter, Advisor to Sons and Daughters in Touch–America’s Gold Star Children from the Vietnam War, and Mentor to the Air Force Survivor Advocacy Council

Please Stand

God of Our Fathers By Daniel C. Roberts and George William Warren

*God of our fathers, whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
Our grateful songs before Thy throne arise.*

*Thy love divine hath led us in the past,
In this free land by Thee our lot is cast;
Be Thou our ruler, guardian, guide and stay,
Thy Word our law, Thy paths our chosen way.*

*From war’s alarms, from deadly pestilence,
Be Thy strong arm our ever-sure defense;
Thy true religion in our hearts increase,
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.*

*Refresh Thy people on their toilsome way,
Lead us from night to never-ending day;
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine,
And glory, laud, and praise be ever Thine.*

Third Lesson Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Read by Chaplain Bennett Sandford, Capt., USN

A Veteran’s Remarks by Gen. Dennis Reimer, USA (Ret.),

33rd Chief of Staff of the Army, Vietnam Veteran

Please Stand

Benediction

Rev. Charles Baldwin, Maj. Gen. USAF (Ret.),
former Air Force Chief of Chaplains,
Vietnam Veteran

Light Candles

Taps

Brass Quintet Trumpets

Recessional

Cathedral Organist

JANUARY 13, 2024 | THE WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Postlude

Cathedral Organist, Brass Ensemble,
and Combined Choirs

POW Hymn

Composed by Col. James Quincy Collins, (USAF, Ret.),
while a POW in North Vietnam
Performed by West Point Alumni Glee Club,
Directed by Nancy Riley

*Oh God, to thee we raise this prayer and sing from
Within these foreign prison walls
We're men who wear the Gold and Silver wings
And proudly heed our nation's call.
Give us strength to withstand all the harm that the hand of
our enemy captors can do
To inflict pain and strife and deprive every life of the rights
they know well we are due
We pledge unswerving faith and loyalty
To our cause, America, and Thee ... and Thee... and THEE...Amen!*

Adjourn

Please join us for the reception at the Washington Hilton, 5:30-8 p.m.

Chaplain Capt. Bruno Massoti conducts services for troops from the 101st Airborne Division during Operation Van Buren, a combined allied operation of military forces from the Republic of Korea, Republic of Vietnam and the United States. Interdisciplinary faith and fellowship offered a sense of wellbeing in the midst of war.



Robert Laiboni/Department of Defense via National Archives

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Brig. Gen. Bernie Skoch, USAF, (Ret.), Chair of the Board, Air & Space Forces Association: Skoch served 29 years in the Air Force in a variety of communications roles. He served as the first-ever Principal Director for Network Services and Customer Advocacy, Defense Information Systems Agency then became Director of Communications Operations, Office of the DCS for Installations and Logistics. Skoch has held a variety of positions at AFA before becoming its Chair of the Board in October 2022.

Gen. Dennis Reimer, USA (Ret.), Army Chief of Staff, 1995 -1999. Reimer completed Ranger and Airborne training in 1963 and from 1964 to 1965 served as assistant battalion advisor, Advisory Team 30, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. He served a second tour in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970 as executive officer and S-3 of 2d Battalion, 4th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division. He retired from the Army in 1999.

Colleen Shine is the Gold Star Daughter of Lt. Col. Anthony C. Shine, USAF, Missing in Action on December 2, 1972, with remains repatriated for honorable burial in 1996. She is also the surviving niece of Army 1st Lt. Jonathan C. Shine, Killed in Action in Vietnam on October 15, 1970. A lifelong advocate for military, veterans, and Gold Star Families, Shine is a founding board member and Advisor to Sons and Daughters in Touch—America's Gold Star Children from the Vietnam War, and Mentor to the Air Force Survivor Advocacy Council. The Air Force top gun Award in her father's name, now in its 43rd year, highlights the POW/MIA issue and recognizes fighter pilots of exceptional character and professionalism.

Thank You to the Groups Assisting as Ushers:

Air Warrior Courage Foundation

Red River Valley Association

Society of Wild Weasels

Join us for a
Legacy Reception

Immediately
following the service

5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
T Street Entrance
Columbia Ballroom



Honoring Vietnam Veterans and their Families

- Food Stations and Buffet
- USO Historical Tribute
- Map your Service
- Sign a POW/MIA Flag
- Meet the Authors
- PACT Act Information
- VA Welcome Home! photo exhibit
- Gold Star Family Memorial Monument
- Share your Story with Wreaths Across America Radio

Presented by:



GARY SINISE
★ FOUNDATION ★

EVENT SUPPORTERS

Our special thanks to the **Air & Space Forces Association** whose members led the effort to fund the National Cathedral Commemoration. We also extend our sincere thank you to our presenting sponsor the **Gary Sinise Foundation** and contributing sponsor **Ross Perot Jr.**, both of whom made the Reception at the Washington Hilton possible. For the complete list of sponsors please see below.

Air & Space Forces Association • www.afa.org

AFA's mission is to promote dominant U.S. Air & Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense; honor & support Airmen, Guardians, and their Families; and remember and respect our enduring Heritage.

AC-119 Gunship Association • www.ac119gunships.com

Preserves fixed-wing gunship heritage and history, remembers our fallen, and educates the public about the mission.

Air Rescue Association • www.usafrescue.org

Dedicated to extending and preserving the spirit and camaraderie among persons who have been assigned or associated with the Air Rescue mission.

Air Warrior Courage Foundation • www.airwarriorcourage.org

Organization for military aviators and their families whose goal is to assist disabled and needy veterans and members of the U.S. Armed Services, provide financial support as needed, and support communities.

American Gold Star Mothers • www.goldstarmoms.com

Incorporated in 1929 and Chartered by Congress in 1984 to assist Veterans, perpetuate the memory those fallen in war, teach lessons of patriotism in our communities, and assist Gold Star Mother and their descendants.

APG Media of Chesapeake • www.apgchesapeake.com

Publishes "At Ease Magazine," "DC Military," "SHORE Magazine," and other publications.

Association of the United States Army (AUSA) • www.ausa.org

Supports Soldiers, their families, and Army civilians, provides a voice for the Army, and honors those who have served.

Civil Air Patrol • www.gocivilairpatrol.com

An Air Force auxiliary non-profit that provides search and rescue, aerospace education, and emergency services to communities across the nation.

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency • www.dpaa.mil

DCAA's mission is to provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel to their families and the nation.

Gary Sinise Foundation (Presenting Sponsor) • www.garysinisefoundation.org

Honors defenders, veterans, first responders, their families, and those in need, by creating and supporting unique programs designed to entertain, educate, inspire, strengthen, and build communities. "We can always do a little more."

Friends of Rocky Versace • www.facebook.com/FORV59

An Alexandria, Va.-based veterans non-profit founded in 1999 to honor and remember Vietnam War POW/ MIA and Medal of Honor Recipient Capt. H.R. "Rocky" Versace. Organizes regular observances and memorial events.

Gold Star Wives of America • www.goldstarwives.org

A Congressionally Chartered nonprofit service organization that supports the spouses of those who lost their lives while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Honor Flight Network • www.honorflight.org

National organization celebrating America's veterans by inviting them to share in a day of honor at our national memorials; transports Veterans to Washington, D.C., to honor them and celebrate their service.

Library of Congress Veterans History Project • www.loc.gov/vets

Dedicated to collecting, preserving, and archiving the firsthand narratives of U.S. military veterans and Gold Star family members ranging from World War I through current conflicts and peacekeeping missions.

Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW) • www.moww.org

Provides patriotic education, ceremonies, recognition, and support for veterans, youth, and communities.

The Military Women's Memorial (MWM) • www.womensmemorial.org

A National Memorial and Education Center honoring the commitment, contributions, and experiences of America's servicewoman—past, present, and future. As the only historical repository documenting all military women's service, MWM educates and inspires through innovative and interactive exhibitions, world-class collections, and engaging programs, and events for all generations.

Mission: POW-MIA • www.missionpowmia.org

All-volunteer national non-profit pursuing the mission to achieve the fullest possible accounting of missing and unaccounted-for Americans from past conflicts through partnerships, research and outreach; POW/MIA family advocates.

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) • www.moaa.org

Professional organization for military officers and their families, offering advocacy, education, and benefits services.

Red River Valley Association • www.river-rats.org

Association of current and former U.S. Military designated aircrew members.

Rolling to Remember • www.rollingtoremember.com

On Memorial Day Weekend, AMVETS conducts a massive motorcycle demonstration ride through Washington, D.C., to raise awareness of the mental health crisis among veterans and in support of the fullest possible accounting for America's Missing in Action and Prisoners of War.

Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier • www.tombguard.org

Committed to preserving the unique history of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Society of Wild Weasels • www.wildweasels.org

Established to educate, preserve, and perpetuate the Wild Weasel (WW) Concept

Sons and Daughters in Touch: Americas's Gold Star Children from the Vietnam War • www.sdit.org

Since 1989, SDIT has been an unprecedented connector, uniting America's Gold Star and POW/MIA 'Children' from the Vietnam War with Veterans and other Gold Star Families through programs of care, community, and casework.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration • www.vietnamwar50th.com

Authorized by Congress, established, established under the Secretary of Defense and launched by the President in 2012, the Vietnam War Commemoration was established to thank and honor our Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice on behalf of a grateful nation.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Foundation • www.tomboftheunknownsoldierfoundation.com

Through educational exhibits, programming and Flowers Ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, this patriotic non-profit rekindles our country's sacred duty to never forget or forsake those who serve and sacrifice for America.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) • www.taps.org

Provides compassionate care and resources for all those grieving the death of a military or veteran loved one.

Travis Manion Foundation • www.travismanion.org

Develops programs, training opportunities, and events to empower veterans and families of the fallen. Character Does Matter program empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs • www.va.gov

Provides a wide variety of benefits to U.S. military veterans United Services.

United Services Automobile Association (USAA) • www.usaa.com

Dedicated to facilitating the financial security of its members, associates and their families through a range of financial products, services, and discounts for U.S. military members, spouses, and children of USAA members.

United Services Organization (USO) • www.uso.org

Strengthens America's military service members with resources and services that keep them connected to family, home, and country throughout their service; operates 250 USO centers across the U.S., plus globally; Shows that boost morale.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) • www.vfw.org

America's largest and oldest Veterans' organization. Fosters camaraderie among U.S. Veterans of overseas conflicts. Serves veterans, the military and communities and advocates on behalf of all veterans.

Vietnam Veterans of America • www.vva.org

Support and advocacy for the full range of issues important to all veterans; helps veterans, communities, and those serving in harm's way; Outreach programs for Agent Orange, homelessness, PTSD, substance abuse, educational advancement and POW/MIA accountability.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) • www.vvmf.org

The nonprofit organization that built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (commonly referred to as The Wall). Honors and preserves the legacy of service and educates all generations about the impact of the Vietnam War.

Wear Blue: Run to Remember • www.wearblueruntoremember.org

Honors the service and sacrifice of the American military through active remembrance. Gold Star Race Program and Saturday Run community.

Willing Warriors • www.willingwarriors.org

Provides cost-free getaways from the hospital environment for wounded, injured, and ill service members and disabled veterans and their families. Offers more than 60 cost-free educational and recreational activities.

Woody Williams Foundation • www.woodywilliams.org

Through the vision of Medal of Honor Recipient "Woody" Williams, encourages the establishment of permanent Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments in communities throughout the U.S.; conducts outreach and provides Living Legacy scholarships.

Wreaths Across America • www.wreathscrossamerica.org

Promotes remembrance of the fallen. Honors those who serve. Teaches the next generation the value of freedom.

Wreaths Across America Radio • www.wreathscrossameric.org

Serves as a "Voice for America's Veterans"—shares content relative to Gold Star Families, Blue Star Families, and Military veterans and their Families.

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Air Force Sergeants Association • www.hqafsa.org

Advocates and educates for improved quality of life and economic fairness to support the well-being of military service members and their families.

American Battle Monuments Commission • www.abmc.gov

Honors the services of overseas U.S. Armed forces by maintaining and promoting America's overseas commemorative cemeteries and memorials.

American Ex POWs • www.axpow.org

Service organization that advocates for former prisoners of war and their families.

American Legion • www.legion.org

Chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization devoted to enhancing the well-being of America's veterans, their families, our military, and our communities through mutual helpfulness.

American Veterans (AMVETS) • www.amvets.org

For 75+ years, AMVETS has assisted veterans and sponsored programs that serve our nation and its citizens. Membership is open to all who honorably served, or are serving, in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves.

Angel Force USA • www.angelforceusa.com

Raises awareness of the military suicide epidemic through entertainment, engagement, and education. Join us in our fight to stop Suisilence.

Arlington National Cemetery • www.arlingtoncemetery.mil

Provides a final resting place for those few who have served our nation with dignity and honor, while immersing guests in the cemetery's living history.

Arnold Air Society & Silver Wings • www.aas-sw.org

Organizations that develop future leaders through community service, professional development, and education about our national defense.

Blinded Veterans Association • www.bva.org

Non-profit supporting blinded veterans.

Catholic War Veterans of the USA • www.cwv.org

Supports all veterans, their families, and our communities through fellowship, charitable activities, and veteran services.

Combat Infantrymen's Association • www.cibassoc.org

Provides assistance to combat veterans and their families.

Congressional Medal of Honor Society • www.cmohs.org

Society of MoH recipients. Through outreach, education, and history initiatives, the MoH recipients continue their service across the nation.

Daughters of the American Revolution • www.dar.org

Honors its members' Revolutionary War ancestors and supports community service, history, education, and patriotism.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) • www.dav.org

Provides VA benefits, medical transportation, employment and entrepreneurship, and transition services to disabled American veterans and their families.

Green and Gold Congressional Aide Program • www.usajobs.gov/job/753558200

Job positions are limited to eligible Veterans and Gold Star Family Members desiring to serve as a paid Congressional Aide.

Hiring our Heroes • www.hiringourheroes.org

Connects Service members, military spouses, and veterans with American businesses to create economic opportunity.

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. • www.jwv.org

Premier voice for Jewish uniformed service members and veterans in the U.S. Defends the rights and benefits of all service members and veterans, fights anti-Semitism, and supports the State of Israel.

Joining Forces • www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces

White House initiative to support military families. Includes: families of service members and veterans, caregivers, and survivors.

K9s for Warriors • www.k9sforwarriors.org

Provides highly trained Service Dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD. 14

Marine Corps League • www.mcleaguelibrary.org

Active, reserve, retired and veteran Marines who continue the faithful tradition of looking out for the Marines to their left and right.

Military Chaplains Association • www.mca-usa.org

Chartered by Congress in 1952 and dedicated to the advocacy and professional excellence of our military and government agency chaplains.

Military OneSource • www.militaryonesource.mil

DoD agency provides 24/7 gateway to trusted information, resources, and confidential help.

Military Order of the Purple Heart • www.purpleheart.org

Fosters goodwill and camaraderie among combat wounded veterans, promotes patriotism, supports legislative initiatives, and provides service to all veterans and their families.

Nam Knights • www.namknights.org

American Military Veteran and Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club that honors the memory of fallen heroes and helps their families and fellow officers.

NAM POWs • www.nam-pows.org

Official web site for the Prisoners of War (POW) from the Vietnam era.

National Military Family Association • www.militaryfamily.org

Provides scholarships, programs, and resources for military spouses, children, and families.

National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum • www.powmiamemorial.org

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to honor, teach, and reflect, through the establishment of a 26-acre multi-faceted complex, the stories and legacy of service members Missing in Action, their families, and all former Prisoners of War.

Officers Christian Fellowship • www.ocfusa.org

Mission is to engage military leadership in Biblical fellowship and growth to equip them for Christlike service at the intersection of faith, family, and profession.

Paralyzed Veterans of America • www.pva.org

Helps Veterans, their families, caregivers, and those living with Service-Connected Injuries and Disabilities.

Navy League of the United States • www.navyleague.org

Nonprofit civilian educational and advocacy organization that supports America's sea services: the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and U.S. Merchant Marines.

Reserve Officers Association • www.roa.org

Leading advocate for members and retirees of the Reserve Components and their families.

The Semper Fi and America's Fund • www.vawarmemorial.org

The Fund is dedicated to providing immediate financial assistance and lifetime support to combat wounded, critically ill, and the catastrophically injured.

Virginia War Memorial • www.vawarmemorial.org

Honors Virginia's fallen and preserves the past.

Wounded Warrior Project • www.woundedwarriorproject.org

Helps veterans and Active-duty service members, their families and caregivers recover and transition back into civilian life.



© F.E. Hart/VVMF 1984 Photo Credit: Larosha Adams

The Three Servicemen statue, added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1984, depicts U.S. ground troops as they were during the war, evoking their strength and unity. "The contrast between the innocence of their youth and the weapons of war underscores the poignancy of their sacrifice," said its sculptor, Frederick Hart.



Thousands of Vietnam Veterans have suffered from Agent Orange exposure, PTSD and other illnesses as a result of their service in Vietnam. The In Memory program enables families and friends of those who served and later died to have loved ones forever memorialized. To learn more, go to www.vvmf.org.



LEARN THEIR STORIES.
SHARE THEIR STORIES.

To search the names of friends
and loved ones on the Wall,
scan this QR code



CHRONOLOGY: U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, 1955-1975

- Nov 1, 1955** President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends first advisors to Indochina.
- May 11, 1961** President John F. Kennedy sends 400 additional advisors to Vietnam.
- Nov 22, 1963** President Kennedy is assassinated, Lyndon Johnson becomes President.
- Aug 2, 1964** USS Maddox attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.
- Aug 7, 1964** Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.
- Feb 12, 1965** President Johnson authorizes bombing of North Vietnam (NVN).
- Mar 2, 1965–Aug 31, 1968** Operation Rolling Thunder—Sustained bombing of NVN.
- Mar 8, 1965** U.S. Marines land at Danang, marking first U.S. combat troops in country.
- Nov 29, 1967** Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, announces he will retire.
- Jan 21, 1968** Siege of Khe Sanh begins.
- Jan 30, 1968** Tet Offensive.
- Mar 31, 1968** President Johnson suspends bombing of NVN and invites peace talks.
- Nov 5, 1968** Richard Nixon elected as President.
- Apr 1, 1969** President Nixon announced Vietnamization Plan.
- Jun 10, 1969** President Nixon announced major troop withdrawals.
- Sep 2, 1969** Ho Chi Minh dies.
- Dec 13, 1972** Peace talks stall.
- Dec 18-29, 1972** Operation Linebacker II (15 B-52s & 10 other aircraft lost).
- Jan 27, 1973** Paris Peace Accords.
- Feb 12, 1973** Operation Homecoming The first of 591 U.S. POWs released from Hanoi.
- Aug 8, 1974** President Nixon resigns.
- Oct, 1974** Significant reduction in U.S. support to Vietnam
- Apr 4, 1975** Operation Baby Lift.
- April 30, 1975** Saigon falls, War in Vietnam ends.

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL: FACTS & FIGURES

THE CONCEPT OF A VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WAS CONCEIVED BY VIETNAM VETERAN JAN SCRUGGS IN 1979. THE WALL WAS PRIVATELY FUNDED AND DEDICATED IN 1982, LESS THAN 10 YEARS AFTER THE WAR'S END.



SERVICE BRANCHES REPRESENTED




58,281

NAMES ON THE WALL


23 yrs

AVERAGE AGE
OF SERVICE
MEMBERS ON
THE WALL


 DAN BULLOCK

15

AGE OF THE YOUNGEST
SERVICE MEMBER ON
THE WALL


 KENNA TAYLOR

62

AGE OF THE OLDEST
SERVICE MEMBER TO DIE
IN VIETNAM



161

MEDAL OF HONOR
RECIPIENTS
ON THE WALL

43

SETS OF BROTHERS
ON THE WALL

3

SETS OF FATHERS
AND SONS
ON THE WALL



SHARON LANE

8

WOMEN,
ALL NURSES,
ON THE WALL

1968

THE DEADLIEST YEAR
OF THE WAR

246

MOST KILLED
IN A SINGLE DAY
(JAN. 31, 1968)



1,577

STILL MISSING
IN ACTION

493 ft

LENGTH OF THE WALL



VINCENT CAPODANNO

16

CHAPLAINS
ON THE WALL

5 million

VISITORS TO THE WALL IN 2022

400,000+

ITEMS LEFT AT THE WALL

THE WOMEN WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR



Photo Credit: Holly Rotundi. Copyright: Vietnam Women's Memorial, Washington, D.C. (c) 1983, Eastern National, Glena Goodacre Sculptor

The **Vietnam Women's Memorial** on the National Mall was founded in 1984 by Army Capt. Diane Carlson Evans, an Army nurse in Vietnam, to honor the 365,000 military women who served around the world during the Vietnam War era, as well as the thousands of civilian women who served in support of the Armed Forces.



The Military Women's Memorial is a unique tribute to America's Servicewomen, past and present, and is located across the river adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. To register your service scan this QR code. →



IN GRATITUDE

This celebration was conceived nearly a year ago and made possible through the hard work of many. We especially wish to thank the **Air & Space Forces Association's** outstanding staff, leadership, and field volunteers; numerous individual donors who underwrote the ceremony at the Washington National Cathedral; **Ross Perot Jr.** for his generous support, and the **Gary Sinise Foundation**, whose generosity helped make possible the Legacy Reception. Special thanks all who donated time and treasure in support of this event; to the **Washington National Cathedral** staff; and to **Wreaths Across America** for enabling us to live-stream the event nationwide.

VIETNAM WAR 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE & LIAISONS

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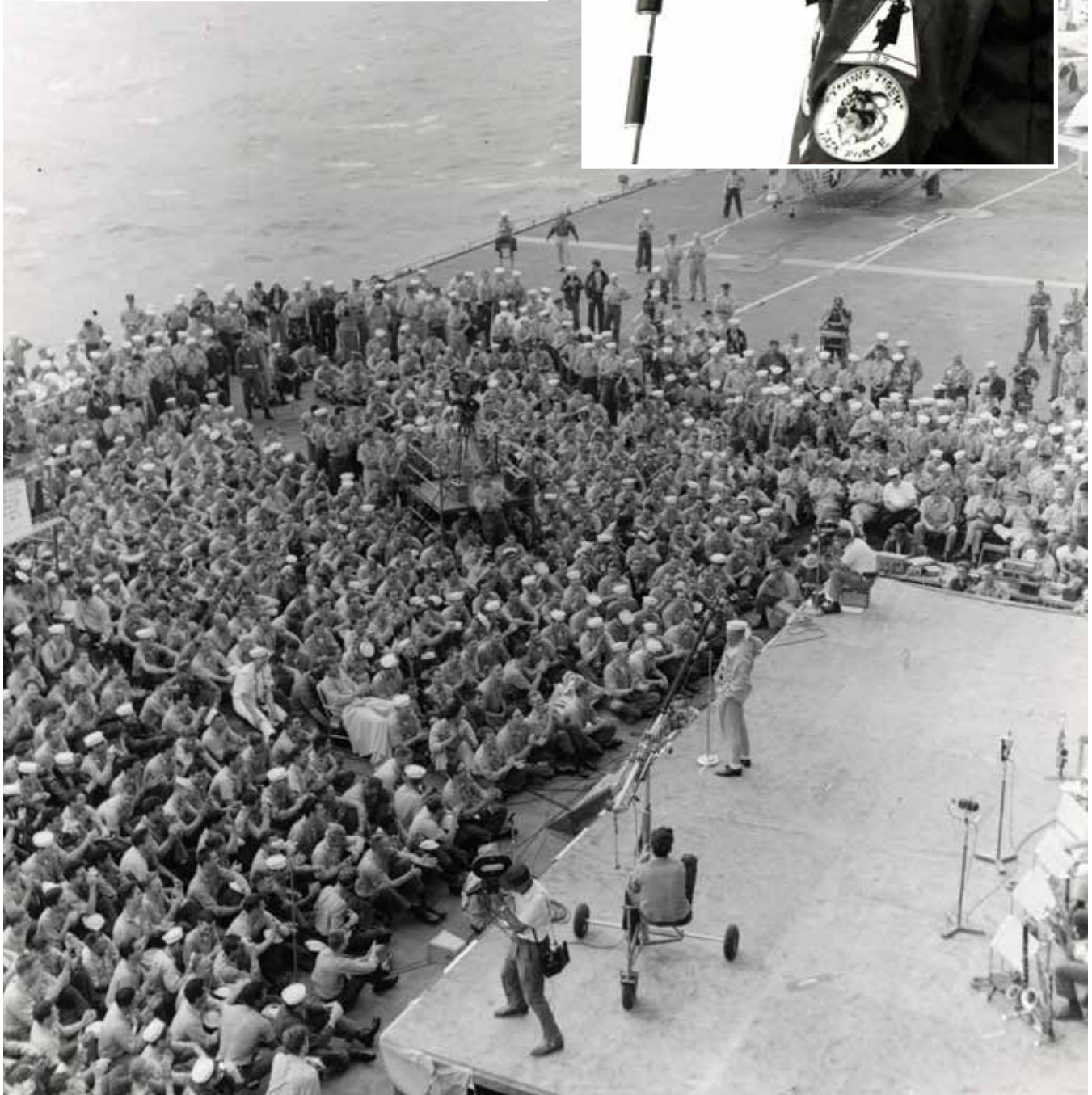
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Chris Chapman and Jeff Pierce– Wreaths Across America
Chuck Crosby, Luc Chiarenza, Lucas Davalos, and Brian Wierzbicki – U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration
Maj. Kathryn Hedgecock, USA – West Point Glee Club, Mission Officer-in-Charge
Ryan Hinely – Department of Veterans Affairs
Donna Houle - Military Women's Memorial
Amy Dozier - Woody Williams Foundation
Col. Terry Ryan, USA (Ret.) – West Point Alumni Glee Club
Col. Joseph Simonelli, USA (Ret.) – Cadet support & housing

*Denotes Vietnam-era Veterans

HOPE TO OUR HEROES



“IN A WAR MARKED WITH CONTROVERSY THEY WRAPPED THEMSELVES IN THE AMERICAN FLAG AND DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO THEIR COUNTRY. THEY ARE THE ULTIMATE HEROES OF OUR NATION.”

- BOB HOPE
REMARKS FROM A 1973 USO LUNCHEON
PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE SERVICEMEN
RETURNING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR



“I WAS THERE. I SAW YOUR SONS AND YOUR HUSBANDS, YOUR BROTHERS AND YOUR SWEETHEARTS. I SAW HOW THEY WORKED, PLAYED, FOUGHT, AND LIVED. I SAW SOME OF THEM DIE...”

- BOB HOPE

RETROSPECTIVE

The Vietnam War left an indelible mark on our nation, testing both our national resolve and our internal politics. Unlike World War II, where the nation had clear objectives-- the unconditional surrender of both Germany and Japan--the war in Southeast Asia remained ambiguous from its start. It was the first TV war, with images and death tolls broadcast into American living rooms every night. That made political oversight more intense, and complicated how the war was executed. Extending nearly four times as long as World War II, public support waned over time.

Through it all, more than 8 million Americans answered their country's call, mostly young men, but also including 27,000 women who served as nurses and in other critical fields. These patriotic Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians sacrificed on behalf of a nation that did not seem as grateful as it might have.

The Vietnam-era American military reflected American society, with brothers and sisters in arms serving side-by-side regardless of race, religion, gender, or ethnic background. After the war, those Vietnam Veterans gradually rose to become leaders in their communities, in the armed services, and in Congress. Their work yielded the training and technological mastery that made such short work of the Iraqi opposition in Operation Desert Storm, and that helped bankrupt the Soviet Union.

Those who fought in Southeast Asia were the first Americans to return from war without a hero's welcome. From the moment they stepped off commercial flights in the United States, they often faced hostility both from their peers and even their elders, as if they themselves were responsible for a fight they did not choose. It would take decades for those wounds to heal. In the wake of Desert Storm and especially since 9/11, those ill feelings have faded and Americans adopted a collective resolve to never treat veterans so badly again.

Today, with the benefit of time, America has come to honor and celebrate the courage of our Veterans and their Families, among them heroes who earned the Medal of Honor, POWs who endured torture and maltreatment, service members who even now remain Missing in Action, Gold Star Families who sent loved ones off to war, never to see them again, and millions whose experiences on the far side of the world affected them throughout their lives.

May their sacrifices always be remembered, and may our Veterans, our Military, and their families always receive the respect and admiration they so rightly deserve.

97% of all Vietnam-era veterans were honorably discharged.



The iconic POW/MIA flag, originated by POW/MIA families in 1971, remains a powerful symbol of our nation's commitment to fully accounting for those still missing in action from conflict around the globe, and Vietnam in particular. The POW/MIA flag flies over the U.S. Capitol, White House, and Pentagon as a constant reminder that America stands by those who serve.

“FREEDOM AND SECURITY ARE PRECIOUS GIFTS THAT WE, AS AMERICANS, SHOULD NEVER TAKE FOR GRANTED. WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO EXTEND OUR HAND IN TIMES OF NEED TO THOSE WHO WILLINGLY SACRIFICE EACH DAY TO PROVIDE THAT FREEDOM AND SECURITY. WHILE WE CAN NEVER DO ENOUGH TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO OUR NATION’S DEFENDERS, WE CAN ALWAYS DO A LITTLE MORE.”

– GARY SINISE

AMERICA STANDS WITH ALL WHO SERVE



REMEMBER VIETNAM VETERANS DAY ON MARCH 29

The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 designates March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. This special day joins six other military-centric annual observances codified in Title 4 of the United States Code §6, among them Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day.

March 29 is a fitting choice for a day to honor Vietnam veterans. It was chosen to be observed in perpetuity as March 29, 1973, was the day United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was disestablished, and the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. In addition, on and around this same day Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war.

