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DOD to Host Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony at Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta will host the President at a ceremony on Monday, May 28, 2012, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to thank and honor America's Vietnam veterans on behalf of a grateful nation. This is a special event for invited guests including thousands of Vietnam veterans, their loved ones, Gold Star families and leadership from the military services, Cabinet and Congress. There will be a limited viewing area open to the general public.

The Memorial Day ceremony marks the beginning of the national commemoration of the Vietnam War's 50th anniversary program and is a joint effort between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the National Park Service and the Department of Defense. The event will include remarks, a moment of silence, music and ceremonial elements, and a flyover of military aircraft that will include helicopters and a B-52 bomber, will begin at 1 p.m. EDT. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, secretary of defense and Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Vietnam veteran, and other dignitaries are scheduled to speak.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be closed to the public at 6 a.m. on May 28 and will reopen after the ceremony concludes at about 3:30 p.m. Road closures will include Constitution from the Memorial Bridge to 15th Street, Henry Bacon Drive, and 23rd St. from Constitution to Independence. It is strongly suggested that visitors use public transportation. More information on road closures will be announced by the National Park Service.

There is limited seating for the public (approx 3,000 seats) in the "Blue" seating area near The Wall. All guests must show photo ID and arrive no later than 12:30 p.m. to pass through security check points near 21st and Constitution Ave. in Washington, D.C. No bottled water or food, no knives, no weapons of any type, no sharp metal objects such as nail files, etc. will be allowed past the security screening points.

For more information visit <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com> .