





# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION



families for their service and sacrifice. Today (tonight), we join thousands of communities throughout this Nation in doing just that.

For those who may not be aware, The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 established the 29th of March, in perpetuity, as a national day to recognize the previously unsung patriotism of our Vietnam veterans. So, National Vietnam War Veterans Day joined the six other annual, military-centric, national observances codified in law; among them ... Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

Our Commander-in-Chief also issued a presidential proclamation in 2017, which stated, and I quote ... “To ensure the sacrifices of the 9 million heroes who served during this difficult chapter of our country's history are remembered for generations to come, I signed into law the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, designating March 29 of each year as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Throughout this Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, and every March 29 thereafter,





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**we will honor all those who answered our Nation's call to duty.**

**We vow to never again confuse personal disapproval of war with prejudice against those who honorably wear the uniform of our Armed Forces. With conviction, our Nation pledges our enduring respect, our continuing care, and our everlasting commitment to all Vietnam veterans.” Unquote.**

**Now, many people ask, “why March 29th?” Well, the answer is multifaceted. First, March 29, 1973 was the day U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was disestablished. In addition, March 29, 1973 was the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. Finally, March 29, 1973 was the day Hanoi released the last of its acknowledged prisoners of war. Therefore, March 29th is a fitting choice for our National Vietnam War Veterans Day.**

**In addition, the president’s proclamation lists the number of veterans who served during this period as 9 million. This number reflects the fact that our national Commemoration honors everyone who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from**



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**November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975. No distinction is being made between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or who were stationed elsewhere during the Vietnam War period. All were called to serve, none could self-determine where they were stationed, and all were seen in the same way by a country that could not separate the war from the warrior. Each person who served during this period deserves our profound thanks.**

**People also ask, “how were these bookend dates chosen?” Again, the answer is clear ... November 1, 1955 was selected to coincide with the official designation of the Military Assistance Advisory Group-Vietnam, or MAAG-V, while May 15, 1975 marks the end of the battle precipitated by the seizure of the SS Mayaguez, and the names of our Service members lost in that battle are listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.**

**So today (tonight), we gather here, at the (name of the memorial), to humbly thank the Vietnam veterans living in our**



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community, and also to honor those who, in President Abraham Lincoln's words, gave their "... last, full measure of devotion."

Clearly, there is something about this special place that stirs our souls ... and helps cleanse those who served. Perhaps it is the memories that arise when reading the names of the **(number)** individuals represented on (carved in or embossed on) this memorial. Or maybe it is the fact they are counted among the 58,318 men and women – their average age ... 23 years – whose names are engraved in the polished black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, also known as "The Wall," in Washington, D.C. Or, is it the memory of their ultimate sacrifice cutting into our hearts the same way their names are etched in that rock?

Perhaps it is the sobering fact that 1,589 **(as of Feb 28, 2019)** are still considered missing in action and their families await word of their fate as we continue our diligent work to fulfill our promise and bring them home. Or, that more than 350 thousand American



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warriors carry both seen and unseen scars from this war, and more than likely some carrying those scars are among us this day (night).

Whatever the reason, it is important that every one of you Vietnam veterans, and your families, understand the prominent place you occupy in the conscience of our Nation, and the remarkable measure of esteem in which you are held by friends, neighbors and countrymen.

Hopefully, the following facts will lend credence to those words ... over the past **7 years**, more than **11,000** local, state and federal organizations, including **(Commemorative Partner name)**, have come alongside our Department of Defense as Commemorative Partners with the Vietnam War Commemoration ... these partners cumulatively have hosted **15 thousand** ceremonies in towns and cities across the country, during which Americans have been inspired to publicly and individually thank and honor **2.3 million** of our **6.4 million** living Vietnam veterans and the families of the **9 million** who served during the Vietnam War period.





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While more remains to be done, these accomplishments, along with the establishment of our annual National Vietnam War Veterans Day, all point to remarkable progress as we pursue this noble mission.

Today (tonight), we have the distinct privilege to add to those numbers. But before we do, I invite (                    name                    ) to come forward. He (She) joins me today representing (Commemorative Partner name) ... another Commemorative Partner. Together, we will lay a wreath at this (name of the memorial) in an act of unity, both as a local community and as part of our Nation ... and in quiet reflection ... to honor those warriors who made the ultimate sacrifice.

(Insert ceremonial wreath-laying movements)

As a lasting memento of the Nation's gratitude, the Commemoration designed a Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin with the intent of having Commemorative Partners publicly present one to each veteran who served during the Vietnam War period.



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**This lapel pin is beautifully struck and features an eagle's head, representing courage, honor and dedicated service; stripes, representing our Nation's flag; and six stars, representing the allies who served, sacrificed and fought alongside one another; all encircled by a ring of blue, matching the canton of our national flag and signifying vigilance, perseverance and justice. The phrase "A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You" is embossed on the reverse side, along with the Commemoration's name.**

**Before this lapel pin is presented, I ask that every Vietnam veteran among us please stand (only if seated; if all are standing, modify remarks to accommodate) if you are able ... or raise your hand if you are not ... so we might recognize your service and sacrifice, and finally acknowledge you in the way you so richly deserve! *[slight pause for standing]* Ladies & gentlemen ... your Vietnam veterans! *[lead applause]***

***[when applause begins to wane]* And, if their families will stand (same as above) and join them ... you also are to be commended for**









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applause for 50 years! So, I encourage you all to stand, cheer,  
applaud, stamp your feet and let these men and women know you  
love them throughout all the lapel pin presentations!

(name), the floor is yours ... *[move offstage to table]*

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## \*\*ALTERNATE LAPEL PIN SCRIPT

We are especially privileged to have join us up front

(name(s)) & former Military affiliation

(if known).

Representing all our Vietnam veterans in attendance tonight,  
we are honored to present a Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin to this  
(these) patriot(s) on behalf of a grateful Nation.

*[following presento & applause]* Ladies and gentlemen ... your  
hero(es)! *[continued applause]*

And, if you are a Vietnam veteran in our audience today  
(tonight), please visit the Commemoration booth (Commemorative





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**Partner name** table at the back) following our ceremony; we will be privileged to present each of you with your own lapel pin.

Thank you all for attending today (tonight). I encourage everyone here to please take a moment before you depart to reach out and shake the hand of one of those who just identified themselves as a Vietnam veteran or family member ... they all deserve our thanks and admiration.

*Join the Nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!*

