

## Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee

### PUBLIC MEETING

241 18th St. S., Suite 101  
Arlington, VA 22202

February 8, 2018

### MEETING MINUTES

The Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee, hereafter known as the “Committee,” is a Federal advisory committee within the Department of Defense. The Committee operates pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976, and other relevant Federal regulations. The Committee meets at least twice a year. This is the ninth public session for the Committee.

### AGENDA

8:30	Meeting called to order DFO Statement	<i>Chairman and Marcia Moore, Designated Federal Officer</i>
8:35	Welcome Message	<i>Michael L. Rhodes Director of Administration Office of the Deputy Chief Management Officer</i>
	Opening Remarks	<i>James T. Jackson, Major General, U.S. Army, Retired Director, Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration</i>
8:45	Round Table Discussion: Recent Activities and Thoughts for the Commemoration	<i>Individual Committee Members</i>
9:30	Update on Activities from the Office of the Vietnam War 50 <sup>th</sup> Commemoration	<i>Larry Brom, Assistant Director for Plans and Operations</i>
10:30	Responses to the Committee’s FY 2017 Recommendations: Objective One Followed by Committee Q&A	<i>Moderated by Larry Brom, Assistant Director for Plans and Operations</i>
1:15	Responses to the Committee’s FY 2017 Recommendations: Objectives Two thru Five	<i>Moderated by Larry Brom, Assistant Director for Plans and Operations</i>

Followed by Committee Q&A

2:45 Final comments

*Marcia Moore, Designated Federal Officer*

## **ATTENDANCE**

### Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee Members:

1. The Honorable Tom Ridge, Chairman
2. Mr. Paul W. Bucha, Vice Chairman (late arrival)
3. Commander Everett Alvarez U.S. Navy (Ret.)
4. Colonel Clarence R. Anderegg, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
5. Mr. Robert Patrick "Rocky" Bleier
6. Lieutenant General George R. Christmas, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)
7. Chief Warrant Officer Three Donald M. Clarke, Army National Guard (Ret.)
8. Mr. Morton Dean (late arrival)
9. Ms. Jeanette B. Early
10. General Larry Ellis, U.S. Army (Ret.)
11. Mr. Jerome Johnson (late arrival, early departure)
12. Ms. Ann Mills-Griffiths
13. Lieutenant General Roger Schultz, U.S. Army National Guard (Ret.)

### Committee Members absent with an option to listen in:

1. Vice Admiral James Hull, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)
2. Command Sergeant Major Andrew McFowler
3. Mr. Jan C. Scruggs

### Public attendees:

1. Bernard Edelman, Vietnam Veterans of America (early departure)
2. Terry Provance, Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee (early departure)

(No public comments were received for this meeting.)

### Office of the Vietnam War Commemoration:

Designated Federal Officer: Marcia Moore

General James T. Jackson	Sharon Deane	Yvonne Schilz
Mr. Michael Rhodes	General Arnold Fields	Conrad Smith
Larry Brom	LTC Nicole Hayes	Charlita Walker-Moses,
General Peter Aylward	John Radke	SGT Ralph Walton
Debora Cox	Dr. Andrew Ringlee	Barry Willey

## MEETING SUMMARY

Chairman, Tom Ridge called the public meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Governor Ridge expressed his personal thanks to everyone for the cards and kind wishes with regard to his recent illness. He extended his best wishes to Jan Scruggs, who had battled a serious health issue as well.

Marcia Moore provided a brief introduction and instructions to the committee members, while also stating that a quorum had been reached with ten (10) committee members in attendance. Ms. Moore also stated that Mr. Andrew McFowler, Mr. Jan Scruggs and Vice Admiral Hull were not in attendance but could listen to the meeting via teleconference call. *(Mr. Scruggs did not call in and Admiral Hull and Mr. McFowler listened in intermittently.)*

Ms. Moore confirmed that Vice-Chair Mr. Paul Bucha had not arrived for the meeting, and Governor Ridge would take the helm until Mr. Bucha arrived.

Ms. Moore also emphasized the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the recommendations of the Fiscal 2017 Concept and Executive Plan. Ms. Moore acknowledged that public comments had not been received for today's meeting. However, a welcome was extended to Mr. Terry Provance representing the Vietnam Peace Committee and in attendance to observe activity of the Committee. (Note: Both members of the public left the meeting after the lunch break).

Mr. Michael Rhodes greeted the Committee members, and provided a brief overview on the Commemoration's activities and events of 2017, focused on thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. Mr. Rhodes pointed enthusiastically to new partnerships being formed going into 2018, and expressed his gratitude to the Committee members - citing their efforts as "pivotal" in meeting the Commemoration's five objectives. Mr. Rhodes also confirmed that 2 million veterans had been touched, and it was something to be "exceptionally proud of."

Governor Ridge briefly commented on how well things have gone regarding the Commemoration's cumulative efforts.

General Jackson responded by stating that he would not take much time to speak, and offered a word of thanks to the Committee members for their time and efforts. General Jackson specifically thanked Governor Ridge for his efforts in connecting the Commemoration with National League of Baseball (NLB), National League of Football (NLF), and other sports-related organizations. General Jackson also thanked General Ellis for his work in thanking veterans at events in Atlanta. He reiterated that 2017 closed out well and commended the team. Reiterating a statement earlier about the Commemoration's success in reaching 2 million veterans to date, General Jackson asked how the team could connect with those not so easy to connect with – and to stay focused on veterans and their families. General Jackson stressed the importance of the Commemoration not to deal with the war itself or talk about it from a political

perspective, but remain in the background (not seeking publicity) and help others show their gratitude to veterans and their families. In his words, “the Commemoration stands ready to assist Americans to thank veterans.” General Jackson concluded by saying “thank you” again and encouraged the members to ask questions or share comments.

Mr. Larry Brom summarized, line by line, what the Commemoration accomplished in 2017 via a PowerPoint presentation. On page 2 of the presentation slide, he pointed to the number of lapel pins distributed and the number of events supported by the Commemoration, starting in 2011 and ending in 2017. Mr. Brom confirmed that 11,000 Commemorative Partners are currently on board. Looking ahead to 2018, Mr. Brom also reiterated the Commemoration’s focus on Vietnam Veterans Day on March 29, encouraging others to get involved and join the mission. In addition to reaching out to cities and states with large numbers of veterans, with the goal to reach 1.2 million more Vietnam veterans in 2018.

Mr. Alvarez asked Mr. Brom if the total numbers on the slide reflect “new or repeat veterans.”

Mr. Brom responded by saying, “It is a mixture of both.”

General Jackson remarked that some of the veterans had already been recognized and received a lapel pin. However, he stressed that the veterans in attendance at events are asked to make sure they have indeed been recognized.

Mr. Alvarez, in turn, responded that it was good mainly because a friend or somebody new could be in attendance for the first time.

Yvonne Schilz stood up and briefly shared with the members that the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) are an active Commemorative Partner and they help with the mission in so many ways.

General Jackson agreed and remarked that some Commemorative Partners receive lapel pins from other partners, and the Commemoration accepts that these groups help with pinning. And he added, “We don’t have any way to control it...or substantiate it.” He expressed his gratitude for their participation.

Mr. Rhodes then took the opportunity to make the point that the number of veterans reflected are “the most conservative.”

Ms. Mills-Griffiths asked, “Is there an alphabetical listing of the Commemorative Partners?”

Mr. Brom responded, “Yes, on the website.”

Ms. Mills-Griffiths followed up by asking Mr. Brom, “A complete listing?”

Mr. Brom said, "Not a complete listing." He went on to emphasize that the list was as "complete as can be" based on the fact that new Commemorative Partners often change the listing.

General Jackson went on to say that "the DAR is the most prolific organization. They lead by 60,000 recognized Vietnam veterans and their families...a positive we can put our fingers on."

Mr. Alvarez stated that he had not seen Vietnam veterans at DAR events for 3-4 years.

General Jackson pointed out that the president of the DAR directed all of the DAR chapters to join. While General Jackson has been back multiple times for special DAR events, he firmly believes the efforts to continue are worthwhile.

Ms. Schilz confirmed that the Commemoration was "tapping the groups, but still had more to go."

Mr. Brom used the Rolling Thunder organization as an example of a specific group to collaborate with in 2018, in addition to attending Vietnam Veterans reunions. There are also plans to reach out for Congressional support over the next several years. Mr. Brom stated that 117 military reunions had been identified, and 49 had shown an interest in working together. Some are Commemorative Partners and some are not partners. Mr. Brom stressed that support will not be refused if it is requested.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths asked, "What is the rationale for not becoming a Commemorative Partner? Are they ruled out based on hosting two events?"

Ms. Schilz responded by explaining that there were various reasons organizations give for not becoming a partner. But the Commemoration staff works with them to provide support when possible, emphasizing that no one is turned away in terms of trying to support them in efforts to recognize veterans and their families.

General Ellis then asked, "What drives two events?"

Ms. Schilz stated that the General Counsel had agreed upon two events in the beginning stages of the Commemoration.

General Ellis responded, "I ask because we want to reach as many veterans as possible."

Mr. Rhodes confirmed that two events, whether small or large, were set up and "meant for tracking" purposes; in order to support and record the overall process.

General Christmas asked, "How do we handle lesser known groups or military units?"

Mr. Rhodes replied, "The same approach, just more direct."

General Jackson commented that the biggest challenge for the Commemoration is when partner organizations change leadership. Adding that the process can be “stressful,” General Jackson assured the members that no one is turned down. And, he emphasized that the Commemoration staff works with partners to complete their paperwork for proper accountability.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths questioned how she could help the Commemoration [in order to alleviate some of the stress] as an official commissioner and Commemorative Partner going forward.

General Jackson said in response that it would be helpful to give out lapel pins to veterans by supporting a dignified event and presenting the pins properly to veterans. General Jackson also suggested putting it under the Advisory Committee members’ “rubric” and the Commemoration would assist as needed.

LTC Hayes stated that the Commemoration was attempting to reach ROTC groups at different universities, and that the University of Alabama, for example, recently “stepped up to the plate.”

General Christmas recommended presenting each veteran with a lapel pin. Statistics from the organization should include; how many were distributed, what organization, and other pertinent information for tracking purposes.

General Jackson confirmed that the Commemoration staff could take care of the paperwork to help the Advisory Committee members.

Mr. Alvarez asked, “Do I need to tell you about every person I pinned?” General Jackson replied, “Just tell us if you handed out “30” pins and ask for the next 30 [pins].”

Ms. Mills-Griffiths added, “It does not have to be a special event, right?”

General Jackson reiterated that every Committee member is representing the Commemoration. And, he stressed, “If you ask for something, we will get it for you. Again, we can do the paperwork here.”

Chief Warrant Officer Donald Clarke asked, “Would an e-mail suffice?”

Mr. Brom and Mr. Rhodes both said “yes!” and simply requested the final number of lapel pins each member distributed be provided for tracking purposes.

Governor Ridge pointed out that “outcomes and accountability are part of the Congressional mandate.” Governor Ridge further commented, “This will demonstrate our efforts” and serve as “a model of accountability.”

General Ellis replied, "Give us 30 plus pins, and we will sign the form, and keep going."

General Jackson said in response: "We can take e-mails. If you order items on Amazon, then you can do the 2956 form. All of the information is easy to provide. If we don't have the detail, we can pick up the phone. Keep control of pins and what you need. But the form is important for tracking purposes."

LTG (R) Schultz asked, "Where do you get those pins? And, provide an example of how it works."

Mr. Clarke referred to the American Legion to share an example of a Commemorative Partner at the national level. He added that the smaller groups of the national level were not included. Mr. Clarke recommended focusing on the smaller groups to become a Commemorative Partner. He also suggested that the smaller groups are overworked and needed the support of the Commemoration.

***Note: Mr. Bucha and Mr. Dean both arrived at the meeting together at 9:30 a.m. Greetings were briefly extended to both.***

General Jackson stated that the Commemoration provides the pins and the staff attends national events, but "the message does not filter down to the smaller groups."

Mr. Clarke recommended that the Commemoration reach out to states, counties, and rural areas to get the message out.

Mr. Schultz reiterated reaching out to counties and states.

Mr. Bucha suggested that the Commemoration staff contact Linda Schwartz, Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning (due to her military network) to start the process of reaching out to the unreached 5.2 million veterans.

General Ellis asked in response, "How do we get to the little ones? Get to the fox holes." He suggested connecting with Journalism Schools and the USMC Education Department.

Mr. Clarke reminded everyone to reach out to small military posts to encourage them in becoming Commemorative Partners.

Mr. Brom reiterated that 6.8 million Vietnam veterans remained, and that number includes in-country. As indicated on slide 3 of the presentation, he pointed out that American Samoa will soon become a Commemorative Partner. Mr. Brom said they will receive a flag, certificate and all of the other usual Commemorative Partner materials such as being able to order Certificates of Honor and lapel pins.

Ms. Schilz took the opportunity to point out that 441 living former American military POWs have been presented with certificates and pins

Mr. Brom moved on to slide 6 of the presentation to summarize History and Legacy contributions to date. He pointed to the number of oral history interviews collected so far.

Mr. Alvarez asked, "Are they video-taped?"

Mr. Brom said, "Yes - they are shared in perpetuity with the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project."

Mills-Griffiths, Dean, General Ellis, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Anderegg and others specifically asked for an update on the Teachers' Toolkit. General Ellis asked if the Toolkit was available on the Commemoration website. Sharon Deane, H&L Education Specialist, responded "yes, it is a downloadable PDF on the Commemoration website." Deane then provided a brief summary on the Toolkit. This included pointing out that myriad educators have been reached via the Commemorative Partners Program, personal contacts, and professional contacts, in addition to the targeted outreach to all 50 state boards and 7 U.S. territories. Governor Ridge specifically asked Deane how the state boards were responding, and she said they were very receptive by sending "thank you" e-mails and sharing the Toolkits with thousands in their education network. Deane also described the two different printed versions (spiral bound versus stapled) of the Toolkits that are available to anyone interested. She explained that the Toolkit can be downloaded from the website, and hard copies (stored in the office) can be provided, and the staff can access them any time to hand out at events or interested individuals. For metric purposes, Deane stated that she keeps a sign out sheet at her desk to track the total amount of Toolkits handed out, in addition to an Excel spreadsheet on all the educators who have received the Toolkits (via e-mail and physical mailings) across the country. Deane also mentioned that the History & Legacy team was in the process of promoting the Toolkit, and discussing various methods of doing so.

Barry Willey then provided a brief summary on Media Coverage to date at the request of Mr. Brom. Willey referred to the presentation slide on page 8 so the Committee members could follow along.

Mr. Brom continued with the presentation, discussing other Commemoration initiatives such as Major League Baseball (MLB), National Football League (NFL), and National Basketball Association (NBA) in particular, as indicated on pages 9-10 of the presentation slides.

General Aylward took the opportunity to elaborate on MLB by summarizing past events and describing the current collaboration. He pointed out that the Commemoration was using the Orlando-Jax-Tampa, FL model in partnering with them. Aylward also pointed out that the model can be tailored to fit with special events tied to MLB on different holidays such as Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day to focus on thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans.



Mr. Alvarez asked, “How were the six Vietnam veterans selected [for the event recognized on the field during game 2 of the World Series at Dodger Stadium]?”

Aylward explained that the MLB leadership selected the six veterans, with the goal to represent the different military branches – even though a USCG veteran was not in attendance at this event. He stated that alternate veterans were lined up in the case of an emergency or if someone could not attend the event.

General Jackson took a brief moment to express his thanks to all for their time and efforts to make the sports connection a reality.

Mr. Brom proceeded to slide 11, describing other initiatives such as the Virtual Tour of the Pentagon Exhibit, along with a brief three-dimensional video compiled by OSD Graphics to show how the tour might look.

Mr. Brom further commented that President Trump had signed an updated version of the Proclamation on November 10, 2017 (as seen on slide 13). He said the Proclamation is handed out at events, and included in the CPP materials sent out by the Commemoration.

Referring to slide 14 in the presentation, Mr. Brom described upcoming events to thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families on March 29, 2018 via a wreath-laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and a 56-state event including the U.S. territories. Mr. Brom stated that the Commemoration was working closely with the Defense Commissaries (DeCA) and the various governors, mayors, and state directors.

Proceeding to slide 15, General Peter Aylward mentioned that Navy and Marine exchanges across the U.S. are participating in special events on March 29<sup>th</sup> in addition to the Army and Air Force. He further stated, “A lot is going on for March 29<sup>th</sup>.”

Mr. Rhodes mentioned that national trucking companies were also involved in the overall AEFES distribution.

Mr. Alvarez declared that he would help make FedEx a Commemorative Partner.

General Aylward reminded everyone that the Wreaths Across America planning meeting was scheduled for May 5, 2018. And, he stated that the partnership is a great one that ought to be leveraged going forward.

LTC Hayes stated that the 2018 National Vietnam War Veterans Day Posters would be available via a downloadable PDF on the website, and the posters would be included in the CP packages as well.

Mr. Brom then played the Partners in Action video.

Mr. Bucha took this opportunity to introduce Bernie Edelman, a long-time professional friend attending the meeting as a member of the public and on behalf of the VVA representing states and leadership groups and veterans magazines. Mr. Bucha encouraged Committee members and the Commemoration to communicate with Mr. Edelman on a weekly basis because of his ubiquitous reach and capacity to support the Commemoration's objectives and goals.

Mr. Brom completed the entire PowerPoint presentation, and Governor Ridge concluded by complimenting Larry on the presentation, and asking if anyone had questions.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths asked if the video had been shown elsewhere.

Mr. Brom replied, "Yes, we do, and it is used to augment speeches."

***Note: At 10:15 a.m. the meeting adjourned for a brief coffee break, and a brief introduction (e.g., name, position, and group) of each staff member in attendance.***

Mr. Bucha resumed the meeting at 10:40 a.m. He then asked all of the Advisory Committee members to provide updates on what each member has been doing since the last meeting.

Dean started by telling everyone that he had completed a 57-minute documentary, American Medivac, based on the selfless service of three wounded infantry soldiers. He said the story focuses on how associations and friendships are made in combat, and last the rest of the soldiers' lives. Dean stated that the film aired on PBS and is shown at libraries and universities. He also stressed that the Commemoration is helping veterans and others "to come out of the shadows" and to help connect lives. As an example, Dean referred to an FIU student he met in Miami, Florida; the student's uncle had served in Vietnam.

Dean also interviewed Jan Scruggs at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dean said Scruggs was determined to help create a Global War on Terrorism Monument. Moreover, Dean personally expressed his thanks to Scruggs [thinking he was on the teleconference call] for all he has done in his life to help Vietnam veterans and their families; and grateful for his extended life on earth.

Mr. Alvarez asked Dean, "How do we get a hold of your documentary?"

Dean replied, "You can access it online via PBS." He mentioned that the documentary is in the process of being printed for distribution.

General Christmas pointed out that General Arnie Fields was assisting in efforts with the Marine Museum in Quantico, Virginia. And, proceeded to tell everyone that the Air Force Museum, Ft. Benning and others are worth considering in moving the Commemoration's initiatives along. General Christmas mentioned that efforts with local

schools and VA Centers were being pursued in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

General Christmas mentioned that the Newseum opened a new exhibit on Vietnam to the public, and the exhibit specifically addressed disability access by including braille and other “seeing” tools for visitors with physical challenges. General Christmas thought this was significant given the age of most Vietnam-era veterans.

Mr. Bucha stated that he had conversations with a professor of U.S. History at the University of New Orleans who studies combat chaplains; specifically the impact on chaplains and the chaplaincy in Vietnam, and “the unique nature of the role and how it changed them.” Mr. Bucha requested that members and staff to share any names and contact information with him, so he can pass along to this professor.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths reported that she had recently visited Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. She commented that since 1982, she had made many such trips when there appeared to be confusion or some disconnect between the U.S. and the other governments. That meant through the decades she had established personal relationships that are very helpful now. Ms. Mills-Griffiths was encouraged by this visit and commented that she had never seen or experienced such a positive, welcoming environment, “the best I’ve ever seen!” In Laos and Vietnam, the League Delegation met with senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense officials for discussions that confirmed steps to remove previously existing on U.S. personnel conducting in-country accounting operations. In Vietnam, these included expanding access to previously restricted provinces, no limit on the number of US personnel operating in-country during joint field operations, and increases in mil-to-mil (primarily Navy) cooperation to advance the accounting mission while there is still time. Pertaining to Laos, Ms. Mills-Griffiths also was encouraged by increased cooperation and flexibility evidenced by very high level Lao leaders. She cited the Prime Minister of Cambodia’s political decision to “temporarily suspend” Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) recovery operations as a violation of his mid-1980s pledge never to take such action, but expressed the view it will pass, hopefully following his predictable re-election. In addition, Ms. Mills-Griffiths suggested the Commemoration consider looking into “Cleats for a Cause” to see if something similar to what recently benefited the League might be achieved with the NFL.

Mr. Anderegg reported that he would be attending teaching events from all fifty states for one week in the summer. The event would be attended by educators, with 2-3 veterans in each class with a big interest in the Vietnam War. He encouraged the Commemoration to reach out to the History offices in every military branch and the National Personal Record Office, by “googling it.”

LTG (R) Schultz commented that DAR is serious about education, and the Commemoration has built a foundation that can be leveraged, at reunions, for example. He mentioned he would be attending an upcoming Artillery reunion and visiting another event in Wilkesboro, Pennsylvania on 24 May – 27 May, 2018.

General Jackson reiterated that Vietnam veterans thank other Vietnam veterans. He encouraged the Committee members to call or send an e-mail to ask the Commemoration staff to support any event.

Mr. Bucha reported that he had recently spoken at a Gold Star Mothers event at the Hilton in Tysons/McLean, Virginia. He was disappointed because not one federal official was there and “the turnout was less than expected.” Mr. Bucha proceeded to say that they set up ten tables, but they had few people in attendance. Mr. Bucha recommended that these events were platforms for recognizing veterans, and the Commemoration could take initiative by sending “blasts out to folks” to make it a special event.

General Jackson responded by pointing out that it was not a Commemoration event, but going forward the Commemoration staff “can work through Yvonne [Schilz],” but without pressing.

Mr. Bucha responded in kind, and said, “We have been given a platform to recognize those who did earn their platform.”

General Ellis made a point to address the “traveling wall” going to cities around the U.S., and encouraged the Commemoration to offer support to make events better. He mentioned that he would be helping with the traveling wall on the eastern Shore, 31 May – 2 June, 2018.

General Jackson replied that his executive secretary, Sandy, was the primary liaison between the Commemoration and Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), and in contact with VVMF’s CEO/president on a weekly basis.

Mr. Bucha then asked if anyone else had anything to share with the rest of the group.

Mr. Clarke encouraged everyone to make others aware of events, particularly ones related to Objective #5. He proceeded by saying that Ann [Mills-Griffiths] had alluded to this topic. Mr. Clarke then told everyone his story about meeting a Vietnamese woman who was a baby that survived the C-5 aircraft crash during Operation BABY LIFT, and adopted by an American family. He described the efforts to get the Vietnamese out (2000 of them in their 40s and 50s now), and the amazing stories that came out of it. Mr. Clarke stated that “everyone who met this woman was floored because of her overwhelming gratitude.” He said it was important history to remember, and encouraged the Commemoration to include “Operation BABY LIFT in the Teachers’ Toolkit.

General Jackson responded by pointing out the challenge of reaching those who were living in different parts of Vietnam that came to the U.S. General Jackson said he speaks and thanks them at events, and other opportunities to do so are presented. General Jackson also said he will continue doing so going forward.

Rocky Bleier shared with the group that he served as a private in Vietnam and learned to respect leaders. He then asked Mr. Dean what year the documentary, American Medivac, was based on for his film.

Mr. Dean replied, "1971 is the year of the incident."

Mr. Bleier mentioned that he had a 50-year school reunion (with other classes too) coming up at the end of June 2018, to specifically honor those who served. Citing a classmate who was a POW in Vietnam, Mr. Bleier said it was important for this fellow classmate to pay tribute to families.

General Jackson replied, "We can support the event. Contact us."

Mr. Bleier also mentioned another event planned in the Pennsylvania prison system as a way to distribute lapel pins.

General Jackson, in turn, said that the prisons may or may not allow the actual lapel pins for obvious reasons. He offered to provide a "sticky" version of the pin, and confirmed that the Commemoration would work with Mr. Bleier to provide an acceptable solution.

Governor Ridge concluded by stating it was a "good session for all." And, asked the Committee members if anyone else had anything to share before moving onto the FY 2017 Committee Recommendations and Discussion from the Office of the Vietnam War Commemoration. No one responded, and this concluded this part of the discussion.

Mr. Brom then formally introduced the discussion on the FY 2017 Committee Recommendations and Discussion from the Office of the Vietnam War Commemoration document, beginning with Objective #1.1 and going line by line up until Objective #5. He cited that all of the Committee members were instrumental in accomplishing the objectives thus far. Mr. Brom emphasized that the Commemoration concurred with the recommendations put forth by the Committee, and pointed out that the document indicated all of the Commemoration responses. He also took this opportunity to personally thank the National League of POW/MIA Families for becoming one of the first Commemorative Partners.

Mr. Brom introduced the recommendations pertaining to Objective 1; to thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States, and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.

Mr. Clarke referred to the fourth bullet point under the VWC Response for his remarks regarding the 2600 letters sent out to all eligible and willing-to-be-contacted family members of their missing and unaccounted for members. Mr. Clarke wanted to know if the Commemoration received any response.

Ms. Schilz replied that the Commemoration had received a large number of inquiries. She further commented that the Commemoration office was getting a tremendous response through the Service Casualty Offices.

General Jackson emphasized that the “letters go out to every eligible and willing to be contacted family member.”

Mr. Brom pointed out under bullet number six that the period of 1 November, 1955 to 15 May, 1975 was a pivotal time.

General Ellis stated that questions come up in his rotary club about those dates.

Mr. Brom responded in kind, emphasizing that the Commemoration “tried to be inclusive as much as possible.”

The Director added that the dates include those service members who were killed in the operation to rescue the crew of the Mayaguez that ended on May 15, 1975 and whose names appear on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He also added that the Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin is not a Department of Defense award, so the Commemoration is able to present these lapel pins to Vietnam veterans who served prior to 1955.

Mr. Brom moved onto Objective #1.2, summarizing each bullet point and addressing partnerships in particular. He pointed out that successful partnerships have committed leadership, while underscoring that the two events per year shows a level of commitment on the part of the Commemorative Partner. Mr. Brom also said that the Commemoration staff helps partners understand and complete the application required for becoming a partner.

Ms. Schilz reiterated that the Commemoration will continue until 2025, leveraging connections with existing Commemorative Partners. She pointed to the “director letters” sent out to 500 partners (that met their two-year event commitment over the course of three years), thanking them and asking for their continued involvement up to 2025.

General Aylward added that lots of turnover in staff contributes to set backs because educating new people on what the Commemoration does “can be a challenge.” He also reiterated, “It’s part of what we live every day.”

Mr. Brom commented that the Commemoration staff “works closely with veterans organizations.”

Mr. Alvarez quickly addressed the veterans who were not part of any military organizations. He pointed out that a large portion of veterans are not identified because they are not connected to a particular organization. He suggested reaching those veterans through sporting events going forward, and using the Florida model to connect with “the stray” veterans because only “one third” had been reached.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths asked if it were possible to find out through social security numbers.

General Jackson, Mr. Bucha, and others responded, “No...” because of privacy issues. General Christmas added that the best way was by “word of mouth.”

Mr. McFowler also added that “those who want to participate, will participate.” He pointed out that some do not come forward because they want to remain private.

General Jackson pointed out that 6.6 million Vietnam veterans are still living and “comes from Veterans Affairs (VA), but could be off a little...could be to 6.8 million.”

Mr. Brom emphasized the focus on reaching out to Congressional members through a 3-pronged effort (based on the Florida Model) to target Vietnam veterans specifically.

Mr. Dean asked what percentage of Commemorative Partners have sponsored events.

Mr. Brom replied, [We will] need to find an answer for you.”

Mr. Brom stressed the importance of the using the 3-pronged effect to leverage Commemorative Partners to reach out to veterans in those specific regions, as well as conduct events in their areas.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths asked if anyone reached out to Cecil Field in Jacksonville, Florida.

General Jackson answered, “Yes.”

Mr. Brom also responded. He confirmed that a coordination and liaison trip was scheduled for February 2018, and that a “report out would be forthcoming.” Mr. Brom expressed confidence in the success of that initiative.

Mr. Clarke asked if the states with Commemorative Partners are listed on the website.

Ms. Schilz confirmed the list is available on the website.

***Note: Meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:05 p.m. and reconvened at 12:55 p.m.***

Mr. Brom started by summarizing Objective 1.3.

Governor Ridge asked (referring to bullet number 3), “How difficult it is to market PSA’s?”

Mr. Willey replied, "It is difficult. It's tough unless we hang it on a special day or event."

General Ellis – with bullets 5 and 6 in mind – asked if the Commemoration received any feedback on the Ken Burns documentary.

General Jackson replied that they had received "interesting" comments. He pointed out that the veterans he spoke with were geared towards one side, and asking, "Where are the people that saw things from my perspective?"

General Aylward proposed the responses were "polished" and "based on books published by veterans and interviewees." He thought the documentary is presented with a bias and "one-sided."

Mr. Alvarez was interviewed for the documentary, and told everyone he had been contacted for an interview five years before the film was released. Mr. Alvarez said he forgot about the documentary altogether until he saw a preview in 2017. He went on to say that he had no idea who they were going to interview, and only one other POW was interviewed. And when he finally saw it, the documentary was complete. Mr. Alvarez said they had a massive build up for the film, and they were determined to "get it done no matter what." He believes the documentary is "18 hours too long."

Mr. Dean thought it was "pretty good," even though he did not watch it all.

Mr. Alvarez responded in kind, saying that the photography was good and that "the videographer is the best in the business."

Ms. Mills-Griffiths added that the opinions that she heard were "not favorable." But that the historical part was the most interesting.

General Ellis said he saw one section of the documentary, and retorted, "Academia thought it was great!"

Mr. Bleier responded by saying, "It's a movie. Dialogue brings up discussion on the topic of Vietnam. A good thing to talk about [because it] brought out the subject for discussion."

Mr. Clarke believed the film was "crushing for veterans and families. Portrayal all for naught." He thought the Vietnamese and Viet Cong interviewees selected "were better than the U.S....a disappointment." *Note: Many of the Committee members, including Mr. Clarke, made a point to commend Mr. Alvarez on his interview).*

General Ellis asked everyone, "Did it help our effort?"

Mr. Clarke said he believed the film had a negative impact on efforts.



Mr. Anderegg shared his perspective on the documentary with everyone. He thought the film did not capture his duty as an American, and that “American duty” was portrayed in another way in the film. He felt that the documentary did not reflect his perspectives at all. For example, Mr. Anderegg went on to say that he and his sister “came to an understanding” and a place of respect because they both viewed the war differently; she was against it and he served in it.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths responded by saying that she thought the film “has factual and fair-minded interpretations,”...and “it’s not going to go away.” Ms. Mills-Griffiths reiterated that she believed that the “facts are right but the interpretations are not.”

Mr. Brom summarized the bullets in Objective 1.4, and took the opportunity to emphasize the Commemoration’s continued efforts with Commemorative Partners for a greater impact.

Mr. Clarke asked if the Vietnam veterans Memorial Fund’s (VVMF’s) “traveling wall” dates were posted on the website.

Mr. Brom replied, “We have only VVMF’s schedule listed but not the other four traveling walls.” He reminded the Committee members that there are four other organizations with replica walls traveling around the country.

LTC Hayes mentioned “fundraising” as a challenge for getting the “traveling wall” to the different locations. She reminded everyone that the Commemoration does offer assistance and “creates synergy between the two groups.” Hayes also pointed out that VVMF carries Commemoration materials with them to hand out at the various locations.

Governor Ridge asked, “If a Commemorative Partner was in the area of the “traveling wall,” would the Commemoration offer assistance?”

Mr. Brom responded, “Yes.” However, as an example, Mr. Brom said the Commemoration works with 27 organizations, and General Jackson attends and/or speaks at events for those organizations. He specifically asks those in attendance what they can do to help. He pointed out that “some organizations accept and some do not accept.”

Mr. Brom continued onto Objective 1.5, stressing that articles will continue to be published.

Mr. Alvarez asked jokingly, “What about ads with Geico?” Everyone laughed.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.6, line by line.

Mr. Bucha commented on 35-45% viewership, and the importance of getting ideas from social media and those who use it.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.7, highlighting the cooperative relationships and oral history-sharing with the Library of Congress, Witness to War, and many others as a worthwhile endeavor. Everyone agreed that leveraging existing relationships with organizations such as PBS and NPR was worth pursuing, especially with the goal to showcase short oral history pieces, possibly once per month.

Mr. Bucha said he would follow-up with Mr. Rich Jones, Chief Counsel at CBS, regarding potential PSA's.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.8 and he agreed it was worthwhile to talk to service representatives about combat artists, such as McCraft drawings, as per Ms. Mills-Griffiths suggestion.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.9, reiterating the significance of outreach through private family reunions. No additional comments were offered.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.10, and no one commented.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.11, and Mr. Bucha said number 11 was "intuitively obvious," and encouraged to Mr. Brom to move onto the next one.

Mr. Brom summarized Objective 1.12, and Mr. Bucha said this number was discussed in the morning, and unanimous.

Governor Ridge concluded the discussion on Objective 1.1-12 by encouraging all the members to be ready to discuss how to sustain efforts to 2025 at the next meeting.

Mr. Brom introduced Objective 2, highlighting the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with or in support of the Armed Forces.

General Jackson noted that the Commemoration staff works with the TSA, and efforts can be seen at security lines at the airports. He specifically mentioned that the staff was also touching all sorts of government agencies, including the Secret Services, USCG, and many others.

Mr. Bucha ended the discussion by saying, "We will find a restaurant at the end."

Mr. Brom introduced Objective 3, emphasizing the contributions made on the home front. Mr. Brom further commented that the war on Vietnam "is the most written about," and additional research can be conducted via History & Legacy – while "reaching out through service histories."

General Jackson reiterated that the Vietnam is "most studied war in recent memory." Citing the USO and Red Cross as examples, General Jackson pointed out that both organizations keep statistics that could be useful in talking about the contributions by

various organizations. General Jackson thought it would be a good idea to get a copy and print it out for the Commemoration's use going forward.

Mr. Bucha brought up the Donut Dollies Convention. He encouraged the Commemoration to attend and share their materials and resources, and show appreciation for their service.

General Jackson said that they "don't get a pin, but [they would] receive a certificate of appreciation."

General Ellis shared that he thought that "...some good stuff..." would come out of this by studying Vietnam and scholarship focused on Vietnam.

Mr. Bucha suggested providing a scholarship to study the role of the USO and Red Cross in Vietnam.

General Christmas asked, "Do we need to go there with scholarships and studies? Do we need to get wrapped up in this objective?"

Ms. Schilz replied that the Red Cross and Donut Dollies were honored during the early years of the Commemoration. .

General Jackson responded in kind by saying that the Commemoration has not done as much as it could with regard to the USO, especially with the USO focused on active duty personnel. General Jackson stressed that the Commemoration could leverage existing partnerships but it would require "more studies to re-engage" and find the "certain common denominators."

Ms. Schilz shared that partners are contacting other partners to assist with efforts. Citing the USO, she said that they have participated in greeting some Honor Flights at National airport, but efforts are "not consistent" across the board.

Mr. Brom introduced Objective 4 for discussion, highlighting the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.

Governor Ridge asked, "Does the DoD maintain records of doctors and nurses and medical professionals?"

Mr. Bucha also asked, "How do we gather up the records before 1972?" Can you put them together?" The Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, MD is a great resource."

Mr. Alvarez added a question too: "Do they have a separate list?"

Debbie Cox introduced herself as part of the History and Legacy team, and informed everyone that she wrote up the Military Nurse poster series and she was quite familiar with the records being discussed. She pointed out that the medical records are stored in St. Louis, Missouri, and that she was not aware of the facility maintaining professional records on the doctors and nurses. She reminded the Committee members that oral history interviews had been (and will continue to be) conducted at medical reunions.

General Jackson asked rhetorically, “What advancements came out of Vietnam? What others are applicable?” He stressed the importance of sharing advancements in the medical field, both military and civilian, particularly “lifesaving.”

Mr. Alvarez replied by encouraging the Commemoration to talk to the historians at the Uniformed Services and at Walter Reed.

Mr. Dean cautioned everyone to balance the perspective with regard to the 58,000 that died and “the medical advances with a positive spin.”

General Jackson cited the Civil War as an example of medical advances during war time, and that the advances were not used to diminish the cost of war. He agreed that the final presentation required thoughtfulness and sensitivity regarding the impact on society.

Mr. Dean reiterated, “I still think that we need to be very, very careful.”

Mr. Bucha stressed the significance of sharing the “miracle of military medicine.” He thinks “it is worth mentioning, but how it is done matters.”

Mr. Dean asked for more details.

Mr. Bucha responded, and elaborated on the miracle of medicine, pointing out that the savagery of war-time medicine had been lessened. He described how doctors learned how to contribute to medicine in the most terrible circumstances.

General Christmas asked if the objective could be re-crafted to place the emphasis on honoring those that helped to move along the medical advancements; listing them each one by one and what they did. Again, he asked, “Should we re-word the objective?”

Mr. Bucha and others replied that it could not be reworded because it was part of the original language that Congress authorized, and confirmed it would remain as is.

Governor Ridge added that it is important to trace the medical advancements from WWII to today, while highlighting Vietnam. He emphasized that it is out of the horrific environment in Vietnam that the quality of life was overall improved and the advancements/contributions significant in the field of medicine.

Ms. Mills-Griffiths also pointed out that the U.S. created a model for countries such as Croatia, Russia, Kuwait, and others to account for missing service members.

Mr. Brom introduced Objective 5, and no comments were provided. Mr. Brom reminded Committee members to inform the Commemoration about the number of pins handed out.

Governor Ridge asked when the Committee members would meet next.

General Jackson said he would let the Committee members know about dates for scheduling the next meeting, after considering upcoming activities on the Office calendar.

Discussions continued among Committee members that included when to meet next and whether or not the Commemoration should continue until 2025. Governor Ridge reiterated that the meeting objectives had been discussed, and brought up planning for the next meeting.

Mr. Bucha asked the Committee members to take a vote on when they thought involvement should end by suggesting 2020. Seven to eight people raised their hands in agreement. However, it became clear that the steps before and after the last phase of activities for the Commemoration require more discussion, as shown below.

General Jackson said it would be important to discuss maintaining the level of interest in honoring Vietnam veterans and their families.

Mr. Clarke recommended Committee members send additional thoughts to Governor Ridge and Mr. Bucha via e-mail in order to get a consensus of the Board prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Anderegg suggested that March 2023 be the date to end, signifying the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vietnam because the Linebacker Campaigns took place in March 1972 and in December 1972.

General Jackson, in response, shared that his staff is not set up to host events. In other words, the Commemoration is set up to support others doing events. He requested that the states “pony up and do something in conclusion,” it could be one big event or lots of small events. He recommended coordinating an event at The Wall with allies. He then asked, “How [would we] leverage it?” General Jackson expressed his concern for more time rather than less time. Suggesting that the President of the U.S. speak at The Wall on Memorial Day or Veterans Day to officially draw a conclusion to the Commemoration, General Jackson pointed out that it is a challenge and “it takes time and coordination.”

Ms. Mills-Griffiths suggested that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is in 2023, and the Commemoration should close out at that time.

General Jackson responded, “Nothing is perfect when it comes to the date.”

Jeanette Early recommended three phases to the close out. First, 2018-2019 could be dedicated to continued collaborations with Commemorative Partners. Second, in 2020 everyone could prepare on closing down the plan. Third, in 2021 everyone could concentrate on closing out. And, finally in 2022, the Commemoration would close out.

Governor Ridge suggested that 2025 seemed too long, but the Committee needed to discuss relevant changes with Congress. And, he recommended further discussions among Committee members prior to running any changes by Capitol Hill.

Ms. Early also recommended holding special ceremonies at local churches, and members of Congress could help with meeting the Commemoration's stated initiatives.

Mr. Brom mentioned that the History and Legacy team would hand out copies of the Teachers' Toolkit to every Committee member at the end of the meeting. Ms. Deane and Ms. Cox handed out the Toolkits, as requested by Ms. Moore.

Ms. Moore concluded the meeting by requesting final comments from the Committee members, asking specifically to send special quotes that would be shared with the record-keeping folks as part of the report compiled for Congress at the end of the Commemoration.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

**SPECIAL NOTE: The meeting was not recorded via audio. If relevant comments or information is not included in this document, please note that omissions are not intentional.**

**CHAIRMAN'S CERTIFICATION**

Acting as Chairman of this meeting held on February 8, 2018, I hereby certify, to the best of my knowledge, that the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Bucha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul W. Bucha, Vice Chairman, Vietnam War Advisory Committee

## HANDOUTS:

The “Teacher’s Toolkit” referenced for distribution to the members is available for download from our website, [http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/education/teachers\\_toolkit/](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/education/teachers_toolkit/) or by emailing directly to the Commemoration Office, [whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th@mail.mil](mailto:whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th@mail.mil). All other handouts are attached to these minutes, including:

1. Committee Meeting Agenda. February 8, 2017
2. Public brochures about the Vietnam War Commemoration
3. VWC Response to the Committee’s Report
4. Office Update slides
5. Bedard, Paul. *Vietnam Wall founder dodges death a fourth time*. Washington Post. February 6, 2017.
6. Federal Register Notice Announcing the Meeting





# The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration



**Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee  
Public Meeting  
241 18th Street South, Suite 101  
Arlington, Virginia**

February 8, 2018

## COMMITTEE AGENDA

- |       |  |  |
|-------|--|--|
| 8:00  | Arrival  |  |
| 8:30  | Meeting called to order<br>DFO Statement   | <i>Chairman and<br/>Marcia Moore, Designated Federal Officer</i>   |
| 8:35  | Welcome Message  | <i>Michael L. Rhodes<br/>Director of Administration<br/>Office of the Deputy Chief Management<br/>Officer</i>          |
|       | Opening Remarks  | <i>James T. Jackson, Major General, U.S.<br/>Army, Retired<br/>Director, Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration</i> |
| 8:45  | Round Table Discussion:<br>Recent Activities and Thoughts for the<br>Commemoration                             | <i>Individual Committee Members</i>  |
| 9:30  | Update on Activities from the Office of the<br>Vietnam War 50 <sup>th</sup> Commemoration                      | <i>Larry Brom, Assistant Director for Plans and<br/>Operations</i>   |
| 10:15 | Coffee Break   |  |
| 10:30 | Responses to the Committee's FY 2017<br>Recommendations: Objective One<br>Followed by Committee Q&A            | <i>Moderated by Larry Brom, Assistant<br/>Director for Plans and Operations</i>  |
| 12:00 | Lunch (Public is excused during this time.)  |  |
| 1:15  | Responses to the Committee's FY 2017<br>Recommendations: Objectives Two thru Five<br>Followed by Committee Q&A | <i>Moderated by Larry Brom, Assistant<br/>Director for Plans and Operations</i>  |
| 2:30  | Coffee Break   |  |
| 2:45  | Final comments   | <i>Marcia Moore, Designated Federal Officer</i>  |
| 4:00  | Adjourn  |  |



# The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration



## *Join the Nation ... Thank a Vietnam Veteran!*

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 110-181 § 598) empowers the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program on behalf of the nation that commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. This law also authorizes the Secretary to coordinate, support and facilitate federal, state and local government commemorative programs and activities. To that end, "The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration" was formed.

By presidential proclamation on May 25, 2012, the Commemoration extends from Memorial Day 2012 through Veterans Day 2025. Congress articulated five objectives for this Commemoration:

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war, or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 9 million Americans served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the period of the Vietnam War; approximately 7 million are living today. To reach these large numbers, the Commemoration has enlisted the assistance of many thousands of Commemorative Partner organizations at the local, state and national levels to conduct hometown-centric events and activities that thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families in their local communities.

Join the nation, become a Commemorative Partner and thank a Vietnam veteran today! Apply online at [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com), where visitors can find more information and enjoy photos, videos and compelling Commemoration stories.



# Commemorative Partner Program



The Commemorative Partner Program is an organizationally based, hometown-centric, veteran-focused program designed for federal, state and local organizations to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring our Vietnam veterans and their families where they live and work. It is the primary vehicle through which our nation thanks and honors our Vietnam veterans and their families. Commemorative Partners participate by planning and conducting events or activities that recognize Vietnam veterans and their families' service and sacrifice. Commemorative Partners must commit to conducting two events or activities each year for a three-year period.

Commemorative events and activities should be dignified, memorable occasions that show a sensitivity and appreciation for the solemnity of war, the losses suffered by many and the sacrifices of all who served. Events or activities should meet one or more of the congressionally articulated objectives (below) of the program, and as a minimum, with an emphasis on the first:

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

*It costs nothing to become a Commemorative Partner.* Organizations simply submit a completed application and Statement of Understanding (SOU). To obtain an application, organizations can visit [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com), then click on the Commemorative Partner Program tab for further information on how to apply. Once a completed application and SOU are submitted, the approval process should take longer than 30 days. Partners are kept informed through electronic notifications. Once approved, organizations will receive a starter kit consisting of a Commemoration flag, Commemorative Partner certificate, and other materials. Additionally, they will have authorization to use The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Commemorative Partner seal for approved purposes and access the Commemorative Partner Portal to order additional materials for events.

- For questions regarding the application process: [whs.vnwar50th\\_cpp@mail.mil](mailto:whs.vnwar50th_cpp@mail.mil)
- For online application forms:  
[www.vietnamwar50th.com/commemorative\\_partners/online\\_application\\_forms](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/commemorative_partners/online_application_forms)
- To download printer-friendly application forms:  
[www.vietnamwar50th.com/commemorative\\_partners/application\\_forms](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/commemorative_partners/application_forms)

# The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Certificate of Honor Program



The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration established the Commemorative Partner Program, an organizationally-based, hometown-centric initiative to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans and their families where they live. As part of the Commemorative Partner Program, Certificates of Honor have been designed to honor and give special recognition to four categories of veterans and their families.

Certificates of Honor are available for our Commemorative Partners to present along with accompanying lapel pins for the following groups:



## Former, Living American Military POW

The Former POW certificate and lapel pin are for former, living American military POWs from the Vietnam War as listed by the Department of Defense. If the former POW is deceased, the lapel pin may be presented to the surviving spouse.



## Unaccounted For

The Unaccounted For certificate and lapel pin are for the immediate family members (parents, spouse, siblings and children) of American military personnel listed as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War by the Department of Defense.



## In Memory Of

The In Memory Of certificate and lapel pin are for the immediate family members (parents, spouse, siblings and children) of a veteran who is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.



## Deceased Vietnam Veteran's Surviving Spouse

The Deceased Vietnam Veteran's Surviving Spouse certificate and lapel pin are for the surviving spouse at the time of death of a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location.

Certificates are requested through Commemorative Partners on the Commemorative Partner

# Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin



*“A Lasting Memento of the Nation’s Thanks!”*

Front



Back

**Purpose:** To recognize, thank and honor United States military veterans who served during the Vietnam War.

**Eligibility:** Living United States veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive one lapel pin.

**Presentation:** These lapel pins will be presented in a dignified manner to each Vietnam veteran during public events held in their communities by Commemorative Partners. Accompanying remarks should reflect the nation’s thanks for their service and sacrifice. In the rare instance when an honoree cannot attend a public event, the pin may be presented during a private ceremony.

## **Symbolism:**

- **Eagle** - The eagle represents courage, honor, and dedicated service to our nation. As one of the most recognizable and notable American symbols, it is emblazoned with distinction on numerous military insignia.
- **Blue Circle** - The color blue matches the canton of the American flag and signifies vigilance, perseverance, and justice. The circle shape and blue color also match the official seal of the Commemoration.
- **Laurel Wreath** - A time-honored symbol representing victory, integrity, and strength.
- **Stripes** - The stripes behind the eagle represent the American flag.
- **Stars** - The six stars represent the six allies who served, sacrificed, and fought alongside one another: Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and the United States.
- **Message** - “A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You” is embossed on the back, closest to the heart of the wearer. Also, the official name of the Commemoration is included to remind each veteran that this is a national initiative, and this lapel pin is the nation’s lasting memento of thanks.



## COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### A PROCLAMATION

Today, I lead our Nation in somber reflection as we continue the 13-year Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War that began in 2012. We salute our brave Vietnam veterans who, in service to our Nation and in defense of liberty, fought gallantly against the spread of communism and defended the freedom of the Vietnamese people.

Fifty years ago, in 1967, nearly 500,000 American troops served in South Vietnam, along with approximately 850,000 troops of our allies. Today, during Veterans and Military Families Month and as the Federal Government observes Veterans Day, I am in Vietnam alongside business and political leaders to advance the interests of America, and to promote peace and stability in this region and around the world. I cherish this opportunity to recall, with humility, the sacrifices our veterans made for our freedom and our Nation's strength.

During this Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, we embrace our responsibility to help our Vietnam veterans and their families heal from the heavy toll of war. We remember the more than 58,000 whose names are memorialized on a black granite wall in our Nation's capital for having borne the heaviest cost of war. We also pay tribute to the brave patriots who suffered as prisoners of war, and we stand steadfast in our commitment not to rest until we account for the 1,253 heroes who have not yet returned to American soil.

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, 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.

We applaud the thousands of local, State, and national organizations, businesses, and governmental entities that have already partnered with the Federal Government in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Because of their remarkable leadership and dedication, countless Vietnam veterans and their families have been personally and publicly thanked and honored in ceremonies in towns and cities throughout our country. During my Administration, I promise to continue coordinated efforts to recognize all veterans of the Vietnam War for their service and sacrifice, and to provide them with the heartfelt acknowledgement and gratitude that they and their families so richly deserve.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby confirm the commitment of this Nation to the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, which began on Memorial Day, 2012 and will continue through Veterans Day, 2025. I call upon all Americans to offer each of our Vietnam veterans and their families a thank you on behalf of the Nation, both privately and during public ceremonies and programs across our country.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand seventeen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-second.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald J. Trump", is positioned at the bottom center of the page.

**How you can help ...**

***Become a proud partner  
with The U.S.A. Vietnam  
War Commemoration!***



Commemorative Partners are local, state and national organizations, businesses, sports franchises and governmental agencies that have committed to publicly thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families on behalf of the nation.

Their commitment includes conducting at least two events or activities each year over a 3-year period that publicly recognize the service and sacrifice of our nation's Vietnam veterans and their families.

In hometown America and on national stages, our partners are helping Americans unite in thanking and honoring these unsung warriors and their families. These events and activities can be as simple as a recognition ceremony during an established organizational function, or as robust as a major staged event solely focused on honoring Vietnam veterans and their families.

Free support materials are available to all our partners, including Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins and a Commemoration flag. Visit our website today at [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com) to learn more about becoming a Commemorative Partner.

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



## The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration



**Web:** [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com)

**Phone:** 877-387-9951

**Email:** [whs.vnwar50th@mail.mil](mailto:whs.vnwar50th@mail.mil)



[/VIETNAMWAR50TH](https://www.facebook.com/vietnamwar50th)



[@VIETNAMWAR50TH](https://twitter.com/vietnamwar50th)

## The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration



***Join the Nation ...***



***Thank a Vietnam Veteran!***

***"On behalf of President Obama  
and the entire Department of Defense,  
I thank all of you for your service."***

***~Secretary of Defense, Ashton B. Carter~***

## What the nation is saying ...

*"And one of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam, most particularly how we treated our troops. You were often blamed for a war you didn't start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor."*

~ President Barack Obama

*"We are a better, stronger nation today because of the tremendous sacrifices that our Vietnam veterans and their families made for this country, and I'm very proud to be part of that generation ..."*

~ Former Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel

*"It mattered not what politicians argued. It mattered not what history would reveal. We had no expectation but to serve where duty called us. We asked for no reward except a nation's thanks."*

~ Col. Albert J. Nahas, USA, Retired  
*Warriors Remembered*



## Who we are ...

This national Commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the secretary of defense, and launched by the president in May 2012.

Under the auspices of the Department of Defense with a small office and staff in Northern Virginia, we rely on the dedicated efforts of Commemorative Partners to bring this national Commemoration to life in hometown America.

Through the dedicated efforts of these partners, 7 million living Vietnam veterans and families of the 9 million who served are being thanked and honored where they live and work by neighbors, family and friends. Our partners are hosting thousands of public ceremonies in towns and cities throughout the country during which Vietnam veterans and their families are recognized for their service and sacrifice.

### Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin



Front



Back

*"A lasting memento of the nation's thanks"*

Each living veteran who served at any time on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, regardless of location, during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975 is eligible to receive one Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin (pictured above) on behalf of a grateful nation.

*"I have had a number of medals pinned on me in my day ... even though it might just be a lapel pin to a lot of people, this is like a medal to the Vietnam veterans."*

~ Col. Michael Brazelton, USAF, Retired  
*Four Silver Stars awarded, former Vietnam War POW*



## Why we exist ...

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration exists to fulfill the following five objectives:

1. To thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families.
2. To highlight the service of our Armed Forces and the contributions of federal agencies, governmental, and non-governmental organizations during the war.
3. To pay tribute to wartime contributions made at home by American citizens.
4. To highlight technology, science, and medical advances made during the war.
5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by our Allies. (Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand)

(2008 National Defense Authorization Act, Sec. 598)



# The Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee

FY 2017 Committee  
Recommendations and  
Discussion from the  
Office of the Vietnam War  
Commemoration

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

***Recommendations pertaining to Objective 1: To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans:***

1. Place more emphasis on these populations in the VWC's messaging and events:
  - a. Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Families
  - b. Blue Star Families
  - c. Gold Star Families

*Rationale:* Overall, the VWC is doing a good job in reaching living Veterans and POW MIA families. The goal here is for the VWC to place more emphasis on reaching the families of deceased veterans.

### **VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the Committee's recommendation and rationale:

- The Certificate of Honor (COH) Program is the primary vehicle by which the VWC recognizes and honors the unique service and sacrifice of four special groups, including those identified by the Advisory Committee.
- As noted by the Advisory Committee, the VWC has worked closely with the Vietnam Era Prisoners of War (NAMPOW) organization since 2012 to reach all of their membership.
- The VWC has recognized a total of 416 of the estimated 471 living former POWs through NAMPOW and other Commemorative Partners. We believe there are 55 more former POWs out there, but it will require the assistance of organizations outside of NAMPOW to locate them. Counting those former POWs who have passed away, but were honored, the VWC has honored a total of 441 former POWs.
- The VWC has worked very closely with the National League of POW/MIA Families. This past May, the VWC focused on an 18-month strategy to reach all eligible and willing-to-be-contacted family members of those still listed as missing and unaccounted for. Working closely with each of the Services' Casualty Offices, 2600 letters were sent to all the eligible and willing-to-be-contacted family members of their missing and unaccounted for members.
- The VWC has also worked very closely with the Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Wives organizations since 2012 and more recently with the staff's first attendance of a national convention of the Society of Military Widows (once they were Blue Star

families). In addition, the VWC has worked closely with the Sons and Daughters in Touch over the years to reach the estimated 20,000 children of those listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

- The VWC developed a Surviving Spouse certificate to recognize and honor a spouse who's loved one who served in theater, came home, and passed away. To be as inclusive as possible, the criteria was later expanded to include all who served on active duty during 1 November 1955 to 15 May 1975, regardless of location of service. This also aligns with the veteran's date of service for the Vietnam Veterans Lapel Pin eligibility.
- This certificate was placed on the VWC's website to allow Commemorative Partners to print and present certificates within their event timeline.
- The VWC has published SITREPs and posted information on its website regarding the COH program throughout the year.

Remarks with regard to the COH Program are included in speakers' remarks at Commemorative events. COH program fact sheets are widely distributed.

2. After a review of current partnerships, make a greater effort to form new commemorative partners.
  - a. Avoid burdensome requirements to become a partner.
  - b. Develop messaging specifically for potential partners.
  - c. Involve individual Committee members in soliciting partnerships.
  - d. Identify partners that can maintain a significant and public presence through 2020.

*Rationale:* The relentless efforts to build commemorative partners has been very successful. Naturally this level of commitment has varied, but the numbers are remarkable. The momentum to find potential partners should not wane any time soon.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the Committee's recommendation and rationale:

- The VWC has had a long relationship with the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA).
- These two groups know where their veterans, particularly their Vietnam veterans reside, and are essential to the successful recognition of Vietnam veterans through the remaining Commemoration timeframe.
- In addition, organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, Rotary, Mason, Lions, and other geographically diverse and service-oriented organizations will be invaluable to conduct local events through the remaining Commemoration timeframe.
- Larger Commemorative Partners such as corporations and professional sports contribute to the national voice of the corporation by reaching large audiences and hopefully, driving them to the website for more information.
- In addition to seeking new Commemorative Partners, the VWC established a Reach-back program intended to educate and inspire current partner organizations to remain with us past the initial commitment period.
- The Commemorative Partner Program was primarily focused on larger entities such as Congress, Veteran Service Organizations and the Military Services; however, our staff answers inquiries for new committee membership changes, ordering replacement and new materials, every day.

- Partners are accounted for (updating information on their committee), educated on the latest Commemoration programs or materials such as COH or new material offerings like posters or media kits. Commemorative Partners are also inspired to continue hosting events, not just for veterans, but for family members as well, especially through the COH program.
- The VWC has developed a three-pronged policy to handle unique circumstances of organizations or entities that want to recognize their veterans but cannot or will not meet the requirements of the Statement of Understanding (SOU), developed in conjunction with Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs and DoD General Counsel.
  - First, organizations may become full partners with the VWC.
  - If an organization is unable or unwilling to meet the SOU requirements, then the VWC will assist them in finding a Commemorative Partner in the area of their event so that materials and support can be obtained through Commemorative Partners.
  - If no partner is in the area of the event, the Director has authorized a one-time support of materials to the organization, provided the appropriate documentation is done before and after the event.
- With respect to support from our Advisory Committee members, the VWC has continuously benefitted from the Committee's referrals for new Commemorative Partners. We welcome your leads so that we can follow up with them.
- The Events Branch is developing a conceptual plan to target Vietnam veterans in specific regions through strategic engagement with Commemorative Partners, the VA, The State Adjutant Generals, Congressional offices, State Directors of Veterans Affairs, and other organizations. This plan will assist in creating synergy to implement new initiatives for the VWC.
- Identifying upcoming events that might be enhanced by bringing additional Commemorative Partners to bear has proven to be beneficial and has produced increases in number of veterans recognized at events. We believe this tactic has value and should be exploited. Efforts are underway to expand this effort.
- This approach allows us to focus more resources in a specific geographic area (Tampa-Orlando-Jacksonville) with the intent of reaching the rather large number of veterans. If successful, our intent is to carry best practices to other high veteran locals across the country.

3. Take advantage of this period where numerous books and documentaries, not all of which are supportive of the Vietnam War, are widely available to increase outreach efforts. We should be able to arrange a public service announcement on the VWC's mission with major media companies like CBS or CNN. Examples:
  - a. *The Vietnam War*, 2017 documentary directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick.
  - b. Discussions/anniversary of the 1968 Tet Offensive.
  - c. Discussions/anniversary of the Paris Peace Accords.
  - d. *Phantom Force Revisited*; 2017 documentary by David Shoup.
  - e. *American Medevac*; 2017 documentary by Morton Dean.

*Rationale:* This set of recommendations is meant to encourage the VWC to seize the opportunity to get the message about the Commemoration out while the general public is paying attention to other major projects. These recommendations do not imply that there must be a partnership between the VWC and the sponsoring organization.

**VWC RESPONSE:** The VWC concurs with the Committee's recommendation and rationale, with some limitations:

- VWC has emphasized thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans and their families since early 2012.
- The mission to honor veterans, and not the War, aligns with our Congressional objectives. This mission is in our key messages, Media & Public Information Kit, speech templates and sample press releases, which have been distributed multiple times to over 20,000 recipients. All of this information is on our website.
- The VWC continually seeks opportunities to develop and enhance a strong, fully mature national voice. To that end, we have developed a menu of actions to enhance our national voice, which include conducting ceremonies and creating public service announcements to market for public awareness. All VWC national voice efforts remain dedicated to reach these warriors and offer the nation's gratitude.
- The VWC recognizes the strategic importance of remaining relevant, and capitalizing on opportunities which heighten awareness and bring attention to the national conversation with our Vietnam veterans and the significant contributions they have made.
- The VWC continually seeks opportunities to capitalize on books, documentaries, key dates (i.e. National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Service Birthday, etc.). In some cases, in close coordination with a Commemorative Partner (e.g., the Department of

Veterans Affairs) we may learn of the release of a Vietnam War-focused movie that may be impactful to our Vietnam veteran community.

- We have seized numerous opportunities and will continue this effort when appropriate to be part of the national conversation. A few recent examples:
  - a. The Vietnam War, 2017 documentary directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick.
  - b. The VWC worked in close concert with several of our strategic partners, such as the VA, DoD and PBS who are all force multipliers. We provided them with materials, draft talking points, media/info kits, to leverage their network and assist with our messaging. All efforts yielded positive results.
  - c. VWC Director signed over 76 letters to all PBS Affiliate stations that participated in the screening of the documentary, which also included our messaging, videos, materials (e.g., Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins). Veterans were recognized and presented lapel pins, families were honored in several screenings. Additional public service announcements and promotional videos were shown to inform communities across the PBS viewership.
  - d. The Deputy Secretary of Defense hosted a screening in the Pentagon Auditorium whereby over 300 personnel attended, Vietnam veterans, their family members, Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, representatives from the Services. The VWC History and Legacy Chief was the moderator. The event was very well received in honor of all DoD Vietnam veterans and their families in the National Capital Region. A video of the event was placed on the DoD website for future viewing.
  - e. The VWC will continue to post weekly announcements of articles that highlight key discussions/anniversaries (e.g., the 1968 Tet Offensive.) on social media and our website. Our social media followers have increased since these initiatives were implemented.
- The VWC fully supports the recommendation to market our current 15-second, 29-second, and 59-second public service announcement on our mission to all major media companies, not just limited to CBS or CNN.
- We have had success with Sightline Media, C-SPAN, local CBS, NBC, and ESPN Affiliates to name a few, but will continue to garner every opportunity to showcase our story.
- Over the past two years, we have seen a slight increase in success as a result of partnering with the National Football League, National Basketball Association, and Major League Baseball, including the 2017 World Series. These events have showcased a pinning and or recognition ceremony during halftime or pregame shows which reached local print and media platforms.

- Lastly, the VWC has engaged the Advisory Committee on numerous occasions to conduct a public service announcement, as we feel that their public notoriety could be the “news hook” needed to peak interest for major media company. We stand ready to assist to ensure this is accomplished.



4. Strategize for repetitive VWC messaging and ceremonies to continue recognizing Vietnam War veterans.
  - a. Invest more efforts with the top 10% of partners that are clearly reaching our target objectives.
  - b. Encourage collaboration among partners, specifically smaller entities, to plan and host commemorative ceremonies.

Rationale: Like recommendation #3, the Committee believes the key to the VWC's success is a campaign that involves numerous entities working together for the same cause, with a common mantra to recognize Vietnam War veterans.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the Committee's recommendation and rationale:

- The Events Branch continues to seek opportunities in communities to connect with Commemorative Partners.
- By the nature of our work, we focus on the most active Commemorative Partners who conduct events. We support these Commemorative Partners' events and occasionally send teams to enhance their activities.
- By concentrating on those Commemorative Partners who are active, we maximize our benefits to them and it allows us to have a larger impact. Continual efforts are at work to reach those Commemorative Partners who have not been active.
- Currently reviewing the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund Traveling Wall to determine which locations are supported by Commemorative Partners. This will allow us an opportunity to possibly connect other local Commemorative Partners with the host Commemorative Partner for the Traveling Wall.
- We are also working to post the Traveling Wall dates for all five Traveling Walls to inform Commemorative Partners of these activities planned in their areas. We have done so in several events.

5. Provide information articles in popular veteran publications, such as Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association, Wild Weasels, Air Force Association, Army Times, Navy Time, and Air Force Sergeants Association. All service organizations should be included along with key organizations that have magazines such as the Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed American Veterans.

*Rationale:* We know the VWC can easily reach Vietnam veterans who remain engaged with veterans' organizations. It is important to maintain a presence in publications frequently read by this audience.

### **VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee to retain a presence in veteran focused publications, such as articles in their newsletters, magazines, and social media blogs.

- We will review veteran publications with the intent to encourage them to become Commemorative Partners (if not already) and plan articles on the Commemoration.
- As part of the VWC initiative, aligned with our Commemorative Partner Program, and Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, Community Outreach, we remain engaged with over 27 National Veterans Service Organizations, Military Service Organizations, Associations/Affiliations, Military Academies, Reunions, and Non-Governmental Organizations, to name a few.

We have developed a strong and effective working relationship with these groups that have visibility to reach veterans and share the message of the Commemoration. For example, we have partnered with Sightline Media; responsible for Military Times that includes all publications (Army Times, Air Force Times, Navy Times, Marine Corps Times), with readership and social media stretch in excess of 7 million readers.

- We provide draft articles, talking points, pictures, graphics, and other materials to support these organizations; ensuring we have a frequent presence in their publications.
  - We have had success with recent publication of articles in Paralyzed Veterans of America Magazine, Military Order of the Purple Heart, American Legion, Geico Magazine, Association of the U.S. Army Magazine, just to name a few. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is currently reviewing an article for future publication.
  - General Barry McCaffrey, U.S. Army (Ret.), and Joe Galloway, retired Vietnam War correspondent, have authored several articles that were published on behalf of the VWC.

This initiative will be ongoing throughout the duration of the Commemoration.

6. The VWC should significantly expand the use of social media to reach target audiences.

*Rationale:* Unlike the veterans who remain engaged with veterans' organizations, the veterans who do not remain engaged with veterans organizations or the families of the deceased are harder to find. It is important to maintain a presence in popular social media to reach this largely younger demographic group.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee to expand the use of social media and maintain a presence to garner support from all demographics, particularly our legacy generation:

- Social media offers new ways to share our message. Currently the VWC leverages, Facebook, Twitter, and Defense TV. We continue to seek ways to leverage all social media platforms to include Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- We agree that better and an expanded use of social media is necessary. We currently have a website, Facebook account, and a Twitter account. Actions are ongoing to add links to other related sites and to grow this capability.
- This remains one of the VWC's top priorities, as we remain aligned with DoD directives and comply with site restrictions.
- Additionally, the VWC is considering another 'separate' group known as the Friends of the Commemoration. This group would be individuals (not able to become Partners) who we have a desire to stay connected with the VWC and who, when armed with up-to-date information about our activities, would be valuable and productive in sharing our information across their contacts. Again, this can be managed with a few internal controls and might bring us added visibility.

We will continue all efforts to raise our viewership.

7. The VWC is encouraged to post a list of what veteran interviews are available from various organizations.

*Rationale:* We suggest the VWC exchange products from its Oral History Program with those of the Armed Services and patriotic non-profit organizations such as Witness to War. The VWC benefits by receiving interviews completed by other organizations.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The VWC has established cooperative relationships and oral history-sharing agreements with the Library of Congress, Witness to War, Norfolk Naval Museum, Atlanta History Center, the Oral History Project at West Point and the U.S. Army History and Education Center, Army War College.

We will continue to pursue similar relationships with other such organizations.

8. Continue to encourage services to exhibit art at commemorative ceremonies. Select work from the Vietnam War era by the Army's Combat Artist Teams.

*Rationale:* The art works of Combat Artist Teams depict skills and knowledge of those who served in the military during the Vietnam War, and our appreciation for their contribution in preserving our U.S. military history.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- VWC currently works closely with Office of the Secretary of Defense Graphics Division to exhibit art from these skilled artists and will continue to encourage the Services to highlight Combat art from the Vietnam War era.

9. Increase outreach through private family reunions to allow family members to honor Vietnam War veterans.
  - a. Encourage military bases to do community outreach.
  - b. VWC can give instructions to partners to encourage them to reach families through reunions.

*Rationale:* Many families designate at least three days annually to celebrate their family reunion. This is opportune to include a ceremony to thank and honor veterans in attendance who served during the Vietnam War era. Many of our Vietnam Veterans are not affiliated with Veteran organizations, neither are they engaged with popular social media, which makes word-of-mouth paramount. The presence of family at pinning ceremonies will greatly enhance the veteran's reception of thanks and appreciation for his/her service and sacrifice to our great nation.

#### **VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The best method to reach Vietnam veterans through family reunions is to start with a message from Commemorative Partners, as the Advisory Committee recommended.
- The VWC will discuss this recommendation with Service Representatives with regard to military bases and community outreach.
- Speaking engagements at Commemorative events and social media offer other opportunities to reach those who are planning family reunions.
- The VWC plans to support stand-alone events such as family reunions. The VWC would have to research ways to encourage families to announce their reunions and evaluate our success on a case-by-case basis.
- Similarly, the VWC embarked on identifying military reunions as a method in honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. This endeavor resulted from an encounter with an attendee an event who saw one of our posters and mentioned their organization's reunion. The VWC then reviewed the Military Union Magazine and websites of Veteran Service Organizations to identify and contact 147 military reunions.

10. Continued emphasis and outreach efforts through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Association of State Veterans Directors.
  - a. Collaborate on the VA's annual ceremonies honoring veterans.
  - b. The VA, working with local Veteran Service Organizations, has the ability to reach down to the local level in identifying and contacting these veterans, and their families. Focus on the Vietnam veteran. The families are going to help reach the reluctant veterans. With the decreasing population of Vietnam veterans, it is going to be harder and harder to find them. Five million veterans cannot be the sole responsibility of the VA. Also, the VA does not know how many vets are in each state.
  - c. National Association of State Veterans Directors can provide excellent information not only on states, but also the territories.

*Rationale:* The VA holds annual ceremonies honoring veterans, especially former POW's, throughout its vast system. The majority of patients for whom the VA now provides care in its hospitals and clinics are Vietnam War era veterans. The VA, working with the local veteran service organizations, has the ability to reach down to the local level in identifying and contacting these veterans, and their families.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the rationale of the Advisory Council.

- The VWC has cultivated and maintained a strong relationship with the leadership and staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- The VA has provided much needed information on the numbers and locations of Vietnam veterans to the VWC.
- In addition, many hundreds of VA facilities have become Commemorative Partners and are conducting events to honor veterans and family members in almost all states.
- As previously mentioned, the NASDVA has been instrumental in working with state-affiliated VA offices and veteran homes. Our staff attends NASDVA's mid-winter conferences annually and fall conferences every other year.

11. Continue supporting traditional veteran organizations (e.g., Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Disabled American Veterans organizations.) with an emphasis of including families. The VWC should identify which organizations to support. Where national organizations do not give the local organizations support, the VWC should do so.

Rationale: Overall, the VWC is doing a good job in reaching appropriate audiences. The goal here is for the VWC to place more emphasis on these families in the Conceptual Plan.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The VWC will continue to reach out and provide requested support to the Veterans Service Organizations.
- The VWC Director meets with the Veterans Service Organizations listed in the Committee's recommendations on an annual basis, or when the organization has leadership changes. Commemoration speakers make a point to speak with Veterans Service Organizations.
- The VWC updates Veterans Service Organizations on the Commemoration with suggestions on how the organization can support these efforts.



12. Identify key dates annually and increase significant events around dates.
- a. Join with VA to ensure that March 29 anniversary of the last United States troops left South Vietnam, ending America's direct military involvement in the Vietnam War. Focus on the Vietnam veteran. The VWC could do much to cement March 29<sup>th</sup> as Vietnam Veterans' Day.
  - b. Memorial Day.
  - c. November 11-19 highlighting Veterans Day and the Anniversary of the Wall.
  - d. POW/MIA Day.

*Rationale:* Currently, the VWC is taking planning events on a national and the local scale when it comes to holidays. These are excellent plans, but we recommend more promotion, particularly for Vietnam Veterans' Day.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- We are routinely focusing efforts around holidays such as the big one and some of the lesser recognized one; Purple Heart Day, Armed Forces Day, Service Birthdays, etc.
- Key dates are being highlighted in briefings with key leaders of organizations (internal and external to DoD) to showcase their upcoming activities to generate support for hosting their Vietnam veterans-specific event(s).
- On March 28, 2017, President Donald Trump signed Statute 305 which became the "Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017" (Public Law 115-15) designating March 29<sup>th</sup> as National Vietnam War Veterans Day in perpetuity.
- On March 29, 2018, senior DoD and VA representatives will place a wreath during an event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. commemorating the service and sacrifice of those whose names are on the Wall and their families.
- The VWC requested all 56 states and territories to hold similar events at a location of their choosing in their respective state or territory. To date, we have commitments from 23 of the 56 to do so.
- The Events Branch is coordinating with other VWC branches to support upcoming activities for March 29<sup>th</sup> Vietnam War Veterans' Day with all service military exchanges (e.g., Post Exchanges, Base Exchanges, Navy Exchanges, and Defense Commissary Agency) as well as Veteran Affairs.

All members unanimously approved the recommendations under Objective #1.

**NOTE:** The following recommendations under Objective #1 are being held for discussion at a later date:

- Culminate the Commemoration with a weeklong event at the Vietnam Memorial. Don't use a single holiday for the culmination.
- The Committee should provide advice on the design of one major, time specific event (day or week) to conclude the commemoration in 2025.
  - Seek an amendment to the Commemoration's statute, if necessary, to conclude this effort by 2020 or even 2023. A closing event as late as 2025 presents difficulty for maintaining interest and enthusiasm over a prolonged period of time.
- The Conceptual Plan should have a minimum of three phases. Recommend each year's activities be spelled-out by phase.

***Recommendations pertaining to Objective 2: To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces:***

1. The VWC Conceptual Plan should identify Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental that served with or in support of Armed Forces. Continue efforts to recognize and acknowledge other agencies on the website. Focus on the Vietnam veteran, but through Federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations, particularly the State Department and sub-agencies like USAID etc.
2. Other strategic partners may be necessary to meet the requirements of Objective #2.

*Rationale:* The Committee does not believe the Conceptual Plan identifies the preponderance of Federal agencies and other organizations that served with or in support of Armed Forces.

All members unanimously approved the recommendations under Objective #2.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendations and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The VWC has identified Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental that served with or in support of Armed Forces and will highlight their contributions through poster displays and website timeline entries. These agencies include:
  - a. Department of Defense
  - b. State Department
  - c. CIA
  - d. USAID
  - e. Red Cross
  - f. Merchant Marines
  - g. Faith-based non-profit (e.g., Catholic Church charities)
  - h. USO
  - i. Universities (e.g., Michigan State University)
- The timeline and the display in the Pentagon acknowledges the government and non-governmental agencies' activities during the Vietnam War.
- The virtual tour of the Pentagon exhibit will be posted on the VWC's website upon completion, for viewers who cannot travel to Washington, D.C.
- Other strategic partnerships may be necessary to meet the requirements of Objective 2. The VWC will continue to research and identify other Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental that served with or in support of Armed Forces and highlight their contributions as indicated in response to Objective #1.

***Recommendations pertaining to Objective 3: To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War:***

1. The VWC Conceptual Plan should specifically continue to increase the recognition of the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War. Provide a study to inform the Committee on about activities of organizations such as Red Cross, USO etc. supported the Vietnam veterans and their families and those on active duty. VWC should provide recommendations on how to identify and address this objective.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee, with some limitations:

- The VWC does not have the resources to do extensive studies. If by studies, it is meant that adequate analysis and conversation has taken place to allow for plan development, then yes, we can and have instituted processes that insure adequate review and analysis occur prior to the execution of any new endeavor. However, contracts might be required for detailed studies since our resources are not sufficient for both existing responsibilities and new, detailed studies that are not among our priorities.
  - The VWC will continue to highlight activities of organizations (e.g., the Red Cross and United Service Organizations.) that supported Vietnam veterans and their families and those on active duty through poster displays and timeline entries on our website.
  - If the VWC discovers that an organization had a direct or indirect meaningful impact during the Vietnam War (specifically related to the service of our veterans), the VWC will recognize the organization in our projects.
2. Place more emphasis on these populations in the VWC's messaging and pinning events: See #1 also. Veterans who served between 1955 thru 1965 and were not actually in Vietnam: VWC could provide more information on this population.

*Rationale:* Objectives #3, 4, and 5 were written to cover what was not mentioned in objectives #1 and 2, that are more obvious in determining what must be done during a formal commemoration of war. All of these efforts help to rid the negative stigma of the Vietnam War. The VWC should provide more information on these objectives in its conceptual plan.

All members unanimously approved the recommendations under Objective #3.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The VWC routinely emphasizes the need to recognize Vietnam era veterans along with those who served in theater. A major operational imperative was for this Commemoration to be as inclusive as possible—thus, the continuous efforts to draw out Vietnam era veterans.
- Nevertheless, it remains difficult to evaluate because there are no records on how well we have reached Vietnam era veterans. Our data is anecdotal; based on eye witnesses and statements from veterans.
- Hence, the VWC has renewed its efforts to encourage the recognition of all Vietnam era veterans. This has become a hot item for 2018 and beyond.
- The Events Branch continues to work with the Strategy and Engagement Branch to highlight populations eligible to receive the lapel pin.
- The VWC coordinates with hosting Commemorative Partners to disseminate information about their upcoming events, present eligibility requirements, and limit any barriers that may discourage Vietnam veteran participation.
- The Events Branch continues to inform Commemorative Partners of requirements by including the lapel pin fact sheet and other information in mailings.
- The Events Branch created a "How to Present a Lapel Pin" document to inform organizations of recommended presentation methods. This document will be included in all shipping packages.

***Recommendations pertaining to Objective 4: To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War:***

1. The VWC Conceptual Plan should identify and provide more detail on the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.

*Rationale:* Objectives #3, 4, and 5 were written to cover what was not mentioned in objectives #1 and 2, that are more obvious in determining what must be done during a formal commemoration of war. These all help get rid of the negative stigma of the Vietnam War. The VWC should provide more information on these objectives in its conceptual plan.

All members unanimously approved the recommendation under Objective #4.

**NOTE:** The Committee requested further analysis from the VWC for the Committee to consider as how to best address Objectives #2-4 going forward.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The VWC is focused on Objective #4. We are developing educational material, posters, and articles written for publication to highlight several key medical and technical advances from the Vietnam War.
- Medical and technical advances include but are not limited to:
  - Medical advances in trauma care, vascular surgery, anesthesiology, aeromedical evacuation, treatment of tropical diseases, and drug addiction rehab and their application to medicine today (e.g., Dustoff Medivac Medics, emergency medical technicians, Pas.)
  - Description of and evolution of sensor technology.
  - Description and evolution of signals technology.
  - Evolution of rotary-wing aircraft.
- Additionally, efforts are routinely made to include comments that address key medical and technical advances from the Vietnam War in speeches as our teams travel and speak at events.

The VWC is working to engage with individual experts and organizations who support seminars and conferences associated with Objective #4. Future areas of interest may

also include; medical, aviation, safety, communications, and other areas as deemed appropriate. Our goal is to make the results these engagements available to academia, museums, and libraries across the nation.

***Recommendations pertaining to Objective 5: To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War:***

1. Continue to work with veteran service organizations and the U.S. allies to reach out to recognize their Vietnam War veterans, including those who served for the Republic of Vietnam and their families
2. Increase outreach to our Korean, Australian and New Zealand and other allies in the U.S.

*Rationale:* The VWC is handling this objective well, we recommend that it be continued and clearly addressed in the Conceptual Plan.

All members unanimously approved the recommendations under Objective #5.

**VWC RESPONSE:**

The VWC concurs with the recommendation and rationale of the Advisory Committee:

- The VWC has met with representatives of our Allies. Some are more eager to participate or know what the U.S. is doing to commemorate the Vietnam War than others.
- The most interested Allies participated in several events, with only a few having speaking parts.
- The international event in Hawaii, for Memorial Day 2017, included an invitation to some of the Allies. However, participation was limited. Future events at the national level are under development and are expected to involve invitations to several of the Allies.
- VWC's speeches routinely reference the significant contributions our Allies provided during the Vietnam War. The VWC has also shared our operations concepts and plans with the interested Allies.
- Vietnamese-American populations within the U.S. are encouraged to participate in Commemorative events.
- When it is known that a significant population of Allies reside close to an event, the VWC assists and recommends the inclusion of this group in any way possible, while maintaining Commemorative Partner's theme as host of the event.



**U.S. ARMY LOGISTICS** READINESS • FUTURE FORCE • TAKING CARE OF THE TROOPS

**U.S. ARMY**



# Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration (IAG Meeting)

DCS, G-4 (LIG) and CMH

06 February 2018



★★★ **LTG AUNDRE F. PIGGEE** DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G-4 • HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY







# Agenda



- DA Headquarter Events
- Installation Level Events
- Lessons Learned
- Future Events and Programs



# Four Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Events



1

- He reflected on his experience in Vietnam during a Q&A Town Hall hosted by LTG Piggee
- Standing Room only; with another 1,500 turned away; 30 Vietnam Veterans attended
- The audience was moved by his story and personal insights; and he was grateful for the opportunity to speak with today's Soldiers
- G-4 produced a video tribute
- 100,000 fans saw it on social media

## 2017: GEN Colin Powell

*A Conversation With a Soldier for Life*



3

- In a standing room only town hall at the Pentagon he discussed how his Vietnam experience inspired him to start FedEx and how he has modeled FedEx after the Military
- It was one of the first times he ever talked about Vietnam; and he reflected on friends he lost
- Three years later people are still talking about how inspiring his story was

## 2014: FedEx CEO Fred Smith

*Battlefield to Boardroom*



2

## 2015: Roger Staubach and Rocky Bleier

*Game Changers*

- 2 Super Bowl rivals came together at the Pentagon to reflect on Vietnam, sports and life – neither had ever visited
- They participated in a standing room only town hall
- People said it was one of the best events they have seen at the Pentagon
- G-4 produced: *Game Changers Video*
- They presented CSA with a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Super Bowl commemorative football
- More than a million fans saw this on social media (*Dallas Cowboys FB page*)



4

## 2013: Saluting Our Own

*Nine G-4 Vietnam Veterans Honored*

- We started by honoring nine Vietnam Vets who work in the G-4
- We produced a 30-minute heartfelt documentary on their experiences
- It premiered at a event at the Pentagon, with GEN John Campbell (former VCSA) giving a keynote. The video has been viewed many times since
- People who worked with them everyday never knew their stories – and today appreciate them with a new found respect

***Four Different Approaches, Four Successes!***



# Installation Level Events



In August 2017, the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (at Fort Riley), conducted their third ceremony honoring the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War. They were joined by active-duty Soldiers from the 1<sup>st</sup> Inf. Div. returning from deployments. This ceremony was open to all Veterans.



VIETNAM VETERANS / 1<sup>ST</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION  
**WELCOME HOME**  
 CEREMONY 2017



Welcome Home  
 Vietnam War Veterans  
 Honoring our American Heroes



24 January 2018, On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Route 9 Battle*, Vietnam Veterans share their experiences and lessons learned with current Senior ROTC Cadets (Battle Date: 24JAN1968)



In June 2015, Vietnam Veterans welcomed home at Fort Stewart ceremony in Hinesville, Ga. The ceremony was to give Vietnam veterans a proper coming home ceremony to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War.



**Welcoming Home Our Soldiers!**



# Lessons Learned

- Historically ‘Grassroots Events’ at the installation level have proven to be the most effective and successful engagements
- Never underestimate the impact of an unexpected ‘Thank You!’
- As we transition into the Sustainment Phase, documentation is key. Use today’s technology e.g. social media to sustain your message and educate the future generations
- Some Veterans are reluctant to talk about their experience in Vietnam and as a result will not come forward. Organizations may have to use unique ways to identify those Veterans serving within their areas

***Grassroots Engagements Yielded the Best Results with Vietnam Veterans!***



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# Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorative Events

Mr. Mike DeYoung  
Program Manger,  
CMH Commemorations

January 2018



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*Educate, Inspire, Preserve!*



# Vietnam Commemorative Publications



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- **Books:**

- December 29, 2017: *Combat Operations: Staying the Course, October 1967 to September 1968*

- **Commemorative Series Pamphlets:**

- January 31, 2018: *Transition: November 1968 – December 1969*
- November 30, 2018: *Drawdown: Vietnam 1970 - 1971*
- March 30, 2020: *Vietnam 1971 – 1975*

- **Previously Published Commemorative Series Pamphlets:**

- **2013:** *Deepening Involvement, 1945 - 1965*
- **2015:** *The U.S. Army Before Vietnam, 1953 - 1965*
- **2015:** *Buying Time, 1965 - 1966*
- **2016:** *Taking the Offensive, October 1966 – September 1967*
- **2017:** *Turning Point, 1967 – 1968*

- **Vietnam War Commemorative Website activated: January 16, 2018**





# Vietnam Commemorative Events



- **January 25, 2018:** Vietnam: The Tet Offensive. Dr. Villard book release and a discussion panel hosted by the National Archives (William G. McGowan Theater)
- **March 15, 2018:** My Lai at 50 Symposium hosted by CSIS (CSIS Conference Center)
- **March 16, 2018:** My Lai at 50 Symposium hosted by OTJAG/CMH. GEN Milley will open the Symposium. Two panels: CMH will focus on the historical perspective and the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic will focus on the Army Profession. (Pentagon Auditorium)
- **April 5-8, 2018:** Academic Panel on Vietnam at the Society for Military History Annual Meeting (Kentucky)
- **April 2019:** Manpower and the Advent of the All-Volunteer Force. Hosted by the University of Kansas (Lawrence, KS)





# Vietnam Commemorative Events (cont.)



- 
- **TBD 2019: Seminar and Symposium Series:**
    - Strategy and Political Leadership
    - War and the Media
    - Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Practice
    - Armed Forces Vietnam Network
    - Logistics in Vietnam







# Vietnam War Commemoration "SITREP"

Special Edition – 2017 in Review



*"Join the nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!"*

Monday, January 29

*Dear Commemorative Partners,*

**Congratulations! 2017** represents another *huge step forward* in the national initiative to thank and honor our Vietnam veterans and their families ... *because of you!* You have *inspired millions of Americans* in towns and cities across the country to thank and honor nearly *2 million Vietnam veterans* and their *families!*



*You meticulously planned and hosted 3,221* commemorative events in 2017! Your efforts ensured **Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins** ... a "lasting memento of the nation's thanks" ... were individually presented with dignity to *348 thousand* veterans who are part of this remarkable generation of unsung patriots.

*Amidst beaming smiles ...*

*and falling tears;*

*in communities large and small ...*



*North and South;*



*East ...*



*and West;*



# Vietnam War Commemoration "SITREP"

Special Edition – 2017 in Review (page 2)



*"Join the nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!"*

*by leaders of Congress ...*

*the Secretary of Defense ...*

*and generations alike;*

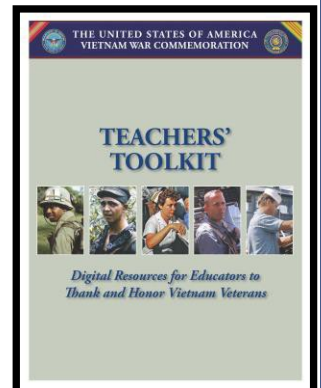


*on special days* – like the *new* [National Vietnam War Veterans Day](#) each *March 29<sup>th</sup>*, and the [2017 Presidential Proclamation](#) bolstering America's *commitment to the Vietnam War Commemoration through 2025 ...*

*and in special ways* – honoring families through our *new* [Certificate of Honor Program](#),



and providing educators with our *new* [Teachers' Toolkit](#);



*in the Pentagon ...*



*and communities far and wide;*



# Vietnam War Commemoration "SITREP"

Special Edition – 2017 in Review (page 3)

*"Join the nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!"*



*during Major League Baseball's  
World Series ...*



*the National Football League's  
"Salute to Service" games ...*



*and  
National Basketball Association halftime  
tributes;*

*evoking memories, sweet ...*

*poignant,*

*and sorrowful.*



*Thank you for  
serving as a ... "Proud Partner with  
The U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration!"*

# Vietnam Wall founder dodges death a fourth time

by [Paul Bedard](#) | [Feb 6, 2018, 9:53 AM](#)



*Jan Scruggs, left, president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and Gary Wright the project engineer for the memorial look over plans for the project in Washington on March 23, 1982, which will be built on this site near the Washington Monument. Groundbreaking will be on March 26. (AP Photo/Bill Auth)*

The Washington Post had its obituary of [Jan Scruggs](#), the father of the [Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#), wrapped up. So had the New York Times. Plans for his burial at Arlington National Cemetery were being made.

But Scruggs, in a coma for 28 days in his fourth battle with certain death, wasn't giving up, even though his caregivers were recommending palliative care. And neither was his wife, Rebecca, nor his friends, including megastar Jimmy Buffett, who wrote Scruggs' battle into a new song, and author, special forces expert [John Fenzel](#), who prayed at the side of his former Army pal, or former Obama-era Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel who nonetheless was working on his Arlington funeral.

"I was as good as dead, but I still had a pulse, and a lot of people cared and prayed for me," Scruggs said.

And, added the Purple Heart Vietnam War recipient who fought naysayers to get The Wall built in just three years, he couldn't give up until notching one more achievement — getting a monument built to the [Global War on Terror in Washington](#).

“I have one more mission,” said the founder and president emeritus of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

Scruggs, 67, who almost bled to death in Vietnam in a 1969 mortar attack, suffered from heart-damaging rheumatic fever as a child, and it has dogged him ever since, two other times pushing him to the edge of death.

The latest episode with endocarditis happened Nov. 10, the day before Veterans Day, at his home in Annapolis. “The last thing I heard was my wife saying, ‘I think we better call an ambulance.’”

She said that for the next 28 days, death was the likely outcome. But, said Rebecca, “He is a fighter; he has always been a fighter.”

Fenzel, whose latest novel "The Fifth Column" is due out March 16, said he saw Scruggs two days before he went into a coma, and he was devastated when Rebecca texted him, “It’s very grave.” During prayer visits, he said Scruggs “was as close to death as they come,” his body ravaged by the bacteria in his body. “We honestly thought we’d seen the last of him. It just shows that prayers work,” he added.

Hagel, who has known Scruggs since he helped raise money to build the Wall, said, “You never count Jan Scruggs out, this is a guy full of surprises and is one of the toughest guys I have ever known.”

Still, with Scruggs in a coma, Hagel worked on a full honors funeral for his friend just in case. “The fact is that we’re all going to make an exit at some point,” said Hagel, a former Nebraska senator. He added, “I wanted to make sure that if in fact this was the end, I would help Becky on this and we would make sure all of us did what we could to make sure that this exit was appropriately recognized because this guy is one of the real unique characters in America in the last 50 years.”

And Buffett helped too. On Facebook, Scruggs revealed, “When I was in a coma in November and December of 2017, I had two friends rooting for me, my wife Becky and Jimmy Buffett. He made a little song ending with the words ‘Hang In There, Jan.’ The song was played for me daily. My chance of survival was near zero. So thanks for the motivation Jimmy!!! And thanks to the many who prayed and gave support to Becky Scruggs as she worked to keep me alive.”

During an interview with Scruggs, prayer was a central theme, and he told Secrets why. Ever since the mortar attack, he has said the Lord’s Prayer every day. “It works for me.”

While he is likely to undergo heart surgery, Scruggs’ recovery has been remarkable. In just a few weeks, he was able to walk on his own and last week went out to get a haircut.

“I’m feeling pretty decent,” he said, “though I’m not ready to run any marathons.”

*Paul Bedard, the Washington Examiner's "Washington Secrets" columnist, can be contacted at [pbedard@washingtonexaminer.com](mailto:pbedard@washingtonexaminer.com)*

After logging in to the webinar, please (1) dial this TOLL number 1 (213) 929-4232 (not a toll-free number), (2) enter the attendee phone audio access code 676-925-992, and (3) then enter your audio phone pin (shown after joining the webinar). NOTE: We have disabled Mic/Speakers as an option and require all participants to use a telephone or cell phone to participate. Technical Information and system requirements: PC-based attendees are required to use Windows→7, Vista, or XP; Mac→-based attendees are required to use Mac OS→ X 10.5 or newer; Mobile attendees are required to use iPhone→, iPad→, Android™ phone or Android tablet (See <https://www.gotomeeting.com/meeting/ipad-iphone-android-apps>). You may send an email to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt at [Kris.Kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:Kris.Kleinschmidt@noaa.gov) or contact him at (503) 820-2280, extension 411 for technical assistance. A public listening station will also be available at the Pacific Council office.

*Council address:* Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Robin Ehlke, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2410.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The primary purpose of the Area 2A Pacific halibut manager's meeting is to prepare and develop recommendations for the January 22-26, 2018, International Pacific Halibut Commission's (IPHC) annual meeting in Portland, Oregon. Recommendations generated from the meeting will be communicated to the IPHC by the Pacific Council's representative, Mr. Phil Anderson. Attendees may also address other topics relating to Pacific halibut management. No management actions will be decided by the attendees. The meeting will be open to the public, and the agenda, which will be posted on the PFMC website prior to the meeting, will provide for a public comment period.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this document that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the intent to take final action to address the emergency.

### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt (503) 820-2411 at least 10 business days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: December 11, 2017.

**Jeffrey N. Lonergan,**

*Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2017-26975 Filed 12-13-17; 8:45 am]  
**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Office of the Secretary

#### Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee; Notice of Federal Advisory Committee Meeting

**AGENCY:** Deputy Chief Management Officer, Department of Defense.

**ACTION:** Notice of Federal Advisory Committee meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Defense (DoD) is publishing this notice to announce that the following Federal Advisory Committee meeting of the Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee will take place.

**DATES:** Thursday, February 8, 2018, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** 241 18th Street South, Room 101, Arlington, VA 22202.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mrs. Marcia L. Moore, 703-571-2005 (Voice), 703-692-4691 (Facsimile), [marcia.l.moore12.civ@mail.mil](mailto:marcia.l.moore12.civ@mail.mil) (Email). Mailing address is DoD Vietnam War Commemoration Program Office, 241 18th Street South, Suite 101, Arlington, VA 22202. Website: <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com>. The most up-to-date changes to the meeting agenda can be found on the website.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This meeting is being held under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 (5 U.S.C., Appendix, as amended), the Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976 (5 U.S.C. 552b, as amended), and 41 CFR 102-3.140 and 102-3.150.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b and 41 CFR 102-3.140 through 102-3.165, and the availability of space, this meeting is open to the public. All members of the public who wish to attend the public meeting must contact Mrs. Marcia Moore or Mr. Mark Franklin at the number listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section by February 1, 2018.

*Purpose of the Meeting:* The Committee will convene and receive briefings on current activities, accomplishments to-date, the Strategic Plan for the Vietnam War 50th Commemoration's 2018-2025, and activities and plans influenced by the Committee's recommendations.

*Agenda:* The Committee will convene at 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on February 8, 2018. The morning briefings will cover current activities and accomplishments to date for the Commemoration of the Vietnam War. The afternoon agenda will be a review of the Strategic Plan for the Vietnam War 50th Commemoration's

2018-2025 and activities and plans influenced by the Committee's recommendations.

*Meeting Accessibility:* Special Accommodations: Individuals requiring special accommodations to access the public meeting should contact Mrs. Marcia Moore or Mr. Mark Franklin at the number listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section by February 1, 2018 so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

*Written Statements:* Pursuant to 41 CFR 102-3.105(j) and 102-3.140, and section 10(a)(3) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the public or interested organizations may submit written comments to the Committee about its mission and topics pertaining to this public meeting. Written comments should be received by the DFO by February 1, 2018. Written comments should be submitted via email to the address for the DFO given in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section in either Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word format. Please note that since the Committee operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, all submitted comments and public presentations will be treated as public documents and will be made available for public inspection, including, but not limited to, being posted on the Committee's website.

Dated: December 8, 2017.

**Aaron Siegel,**

*Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.*

[FR Doc. 2017-26921 Filed 12-13-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 5001-06-P**