



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMÉMORATION



Examples: How to Safely Host Commemorative Events Using COVID-19 Precautions On and Around National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March 29 is **National Vietnam War Veterans Day**, uniting Americans to thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice.



Signed into law four years ago, The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 designated March 29 as our Nation’s annual, national observance to honor these previously unsung patriots.

Since its inception, this special day has become a “lightning rod” of sorts, attracting and inspiring our Commemorative Partners (CPs) to host events in their local communities on and around March 29 that publicly and individually honor all who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces between November 1, 1955 and May 15, 1975.

However, this past year the **COVID-19 pandemic challenged us all**. In fact, thousands of events designed to honor those who served during the Vietnam War period were postponed. **Despite this reality, resilience and creativity became watchwords for our CPs!**

While observing **guidelines** issued by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, and **State and local authorities**, our partners fashioned **new, safe approaches to thanking these previously unsung warriors**.

Honor Flight organizations worked with law enforcement, fire fighters and Veterans Service Organizations to replace flights with tailored **Honor Parade routes** in local communities. These routes incorporated streets where Vietnam veterans live and parade participants stopped in front of veteran residences to honor them (see [Honor Flight South Florida Drive-By Parade](#) and [Stars & Stripes Honor Flight Parade of Honor](#)). Parade “presenters” wore **masks, sanitized their hands and lapel pins** each time they departed the parade to make a presentation; some wore **protective gloves and clear faceguards**.



In addition, event organizers took strong measures to ensure **in-person recognition ceremonies** were safe for Vietnam veterans, their families and all participants. These events featured **limited access, “non-touch” checking of temperatures prior to entry, social distancing, the wearing of masks, clear verbal instructions on protection measures** announced upon entrance and throughout the event, **appropriately spaced seating**, individual bottles of **hand sanitizer on every seat, no-contact presentation of lapel pins** (presented on tray from which the veterans took the lapel pins), and **no handshakes or elbow bumps**.

Join the Nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMÉMORATION

50th



Further, **ceremonies held outside care facility windows** integrated Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin presentations by nursing staffs and doctors to Vietnam veterans within.



Plus, **virtual ceremonies** became the norm. Various **videoconferencing platforms were utilized** to safely bring together individuals in local communities and throughout the Nation to thank and honor



Vietnam veterans and their families. Ranging from intimate ceremonies to events boasting more than 100 participants, Vietnam veterans were **thanked and honored from a distance** by local communities and national leaders alike.



Although most appearances were cancelled, **traveling “Walls”** occasionally moved about cautiously in various parts of the country, with **significant restrictions in place** to protect attendees.

Notably, safe **one-on-one presentations of “Quilts of Valor” or “Quilts of Honor,”** along with Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins, continued to take place in **private homes, and long-term, palliative care and hospice care facilities.** These remarkable volunteers **sought out and uplifted those who were isolated, separated from loved ones and discouraged due to safeguards designed to protect them from COVID, and reminded them that their service and sacrifices during the Vietnam War period mattered!** Presenters were **masked, socially distanced and sanitized** to protect everyone being thanked and honored.



Finally, **during ongoing COVID-19 vaccinations** at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in NYC, Vietnam veterans were identified and honored (**more than 700 in the first month**) following their inoculation with a **safe presentation of the VVLP** by National Guardsmen in a separate area of the building.

The bottom line ... the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates **we lose 557 Vietnam veterans each day – more than 200 thousand annually.** It is our **solemn duty to locate and honor this generation of warriors, extending to them the Nation’s long-overdue gratitude before our opportunity vanishes!**

Use the tried and true safe means outlined above to reach these patriots, or create new ways to safely connect with them. At the very least, in this “virtual” environment ...

“Join the Nation ... CALL or TEXT a Vietnam veteran!”

Join the Nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!