



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

COMMEMORATION BACKGROUND

Q: How did “The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration” start?

A: This national commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the Secretary of Defense, and launched by the President. In 2007, the 110th Congress incorporated language in House of Representatives (H.R.) 4986 authorizing the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

H.R. 4986 was signed into law as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008 by President George W. Bush on January 28, 2008.

44th U.S. President Barack Obama officially inaugurated this Commemoration at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. on Memorial Day, May 28, 2012.

Section 598 ([Public Law 110-181](#)) of the 2008 NDAA specifically addresses Commemoration activities.

Q: What is the Commemoration about?

A: Simply put, to thank and honor our Nation’s Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. Congress outlined a total of [five objectives](#) for this U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration, with the primary objective being to thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families on behalf of the Nation for their service and sacrifice, with distinct recognition of former prisoners of war and families of those still listed as missing in action. The four remaining objectives highlight the service of our Armed Forces and support organizations during the war; pay tribute to wartime contributions at home by American citizens; highlight technology, science and medical advances made during the war; and recognize contributions by our Allies.

Q: Is there a national day that honors Vietnam Veterans?

A: Yes; on March 28, 2017, President Donald J. Trump, signed into law The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, designating every March 29 as [National Vietnam War Veterans Day](#). Note: March 29, 1973 is the day the Military Assistance Command Vietnam was deactivated.



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Q: Who leads The Commemoration?

A: [Mr. Sajeel Ahmed](#), acting Director of Administration and Washington Headquarters Services, and acting Executive Agent for The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.

Retired Army Major General [James \(Jim\) T. Jackson](#) is the Director for day-to-day Commemoration operations.

Q: When is the actual 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War?

A: By [Presidential Proclamation](#), The U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration will continue through Veterans Day, November 11, 2025. As stated, we, as a Nation, will commemorate this 50th anniversary over a 13-year period, as the Vietnam War period spanned multiple decades.

For the purposes of this Commemoration, November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975 is the period being utilized to recognize the service and sacrifice of those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. November 1, 1955 was selected to coincide with the official designation of Military Assistance Advisory Group-Vietnam (MAAG-V); May 15, 1975 marks the end of the battle precipitated by the seizure of the SS Mayaguez.

As additional background, U.S. involvement in Vietnam started slowly with an initial deployment of advisors in the early 1950s, grew incrementally through the early 1960s and expanded with the deployment of full combat units in July 1965. The last U.S. personnel were evacuated from Vietnam in April 1975.

Q: Is the Commemoration honoring all veterans who served during the Vietnam War period, or just those veterans who served in the country of Vietnam?

A: The Commemoration honors all United States veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that today there are 6.4 million living Vietnam veterans and 9 million families of those who served during this time frame. We make no distinction between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or who were stationed elsewhere during the Vietnam War period. All were called to serve and the overwhelming majority of these veterans served honorably and admirably.





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Q: Is the Commemoration honoring those who fought the war and, after returning, opposed U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia?

A: The Commemoration thanks and honors all our Vietnam veterans and their families, regardless of their political views.

Q: Is the Commemoration staff planning any events?

A: The Commemoration staff has planned and hosted several national-level tributes in the National Capital Region. However, our focus remains on assisting our Commemorative Partners with events they design and host in cities and towns all across America. Thus far, our Partners have made it possible for communities to individually and publicly recognize their Vietnam veteran friends and neighbors, and their families, in more than 15 thousand “hometown-centric” commemorative events where “Thank you” is most meaningful.

Q: How will you measure if you are successful?

A: We are measuring success in two ways: (1) the number of Vietnam veterans and (2) the number of families of Vietnam veterans personally thanked and honored during events hosted by Commemorative Partners are being reported back to the Commemoration. These numbers are compared against the overall totals, as well as the [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins](#) being distributed.

COMMEMORATIVE PARTNERS

Q: What are Commemorative Partners?

A: Commemorative Partners are local, state and national organizations, businesses, sports franchises and governmental agencies that have committed to hosting hometown-centric events and activities that thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families on behalf of the Nation.

Q: How do I become a Commemorative Partner?

A: There is no cost to join. Simply find the applicable Application and Statement of Understanding forms under the Commemorative Partner program section of our website and submit them to our office. The review and approval process can take up to 60 days. However, once approved you will receive a Starter Kit, Welcome email, and a separate User ID and Password email granting you to access the Partner Portal. To find out more and to get started, click [here](#).



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Q: How many Commemorative Partners have joined this effort?

A: As of January 2019, more than 11 thousand organizations have become Commemorative Partners, and this number continues to grow.

Q: How are you and the Commemorative Partners planning to thank Vietnam veterans?

A: There are a variety of wonderful ways in which our Commemorative Partners recognize Vietnam veterans and their families. Although each partner may utilize a different approach, there are two key aspects common to each: (1) a dignified, public presentation of thanks on behalf of our Nation, and (2) individual recognition of each Vietnam veteran.

Q: What is the difference between a Commemorative Partner hosting an event and a company buying a national advertisement that thanks Vietnam veterans?

A: Advertisements recognizing Vietnam veterans are appreciated and important during this national Commemoration. The efforts Commemorative Partners are making to personally recognize individual Vietnam veterans and their families during hometown-centric events and activities, on behalf of the Nation, provide local communities the opportunity to do what we should have always done: thank and honor our Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice.

Q: What kind of support is provided to Commemorative Partners by the Commemoration?

A: Once an organization becomes a Commemorative Partner, the following material is provided by the Commemoration –

1) Commemorative Partner "Starter Kit:"

- a) Vietnam War Commemoration Introductory Letter;
- b) Certificate of Commemorative Partner Designation signed by the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff;
- c) Commemoration Flag;
- d) Commemoration Objectives; and
- e) Presidential Proclamations (May 25, 2012; November 10, 2017).

2. Event Support can include listing Commemorative Partner events on the [Commemoration website](#); providing materials for Commemorative Partner events, which include [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins](#), [Certificates of Honor](#) and their accompanying lapel pins, pamphlets, posters, stickers and tin-pin buttons; and, on a limited basis, providing speakers, presentations and information booths at events.



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Q: What is the Commemorative Partner Portal?

A: This Portal allows our Commemorative Partners to submit requests for support (DD Form 2956) for their events, and view and obtain other helpful resources. The Portal also includes the Commemorative Partner Reference Guide, Style Guide, as well as access to the Commemorative Partner Seal and Flag. Access is granted through a User ID and password emailed to the Committee Chairperson upon acceptance in the program.

FOR COMMEMORATIVE PARTNERS

Q: How do I use the Commemorative Partner Seal and Flag?

A: The Commemoration has two seals. Both are protected by law. One is our official seal, which is authorized for use only by the Commemoration on official material (e.g., website, printed material). The Commemorative Partner (CP) Seal is similar to, yet distinctive from, the official seal and contains a banner under the seal that reads "COMMEMORATIVE PARTNER." Our Commemorative Partners are authorized to use the CP Seal, and access is found inside the Partner Portal. They are not authorized use of our official seal.

Our Partners also have access to an electronic version of both the CP Seal and the Flag through the Commemorative Partner Portal, along with a "Commemorative Partner Style Guide" providing guidance on the proper use of each, including display of the Flag.

Q: What materials are available to order for my event?

A: A printable PDF of materials is available exclusively to our Partners via the Partner Portal under the "Event Support" tab.

Q: How do I get my event photos shown?

A: Several means of "publishing" event photos are outlined in the [2015 VWC SITREP, Issue 5](#). All our [SITREPs](#), which contain helpful tips and event highlights, can be found under the "Communication Resources" section of our website. Event photos we receive can be viewed in our [Photo Gallery](#), or our [Facebook rotating slide show](#).



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Q: How do I submit a request for support for an upcoming event?

A: A request is made by submitting a DD 2956 Form through the Commemorative Partner Portal as follows:

- 1) Log on to the Portal.
- 2) Click on the "Event Support" tab.
- 3) Under "Commemorative Events Request Form", click on the DD2956 (Online version).
- 4) Complete the form (any fields in RED and noted at the top of the page need correction before you submit it).
- 5) A "Thank You" page will appear when the form has been properly submitted.

Q: How far in advance do I need to submit a DD 2956 Event Request Form?

A: Submit your request for support (DD Form 2956) at least 90 days before your event when requesting a speaker, booth or both (Full Support). 60 days is the lead time required when requesting Materials or a Website Posting of your event. Requests not meeting these standards will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: What types of support are available?

A: Three levels of support are available –

- 1) "Event Website Posting" only, where your event is posted on the [Commemorative Events map](#);
- 2) "Materials." These include an Event Website Posting, along with Commemoration materials, which include [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins](#), [Certificates of Honor](#) and their accompanying lapel pins, pamphlets, posters, stickers and tin-pin buttons; and
- 3) "Full Support," available on a limited basis. This includes Event Website Posting, materials, and support by VWC personnel (e.g., speaker, staffed booth or both). Commemorative Partners incur no costs for any materials or Full Support.

Q: Is there a list of available speakers?

A: The Commemoration does not provide a list of speakers; however, speakers typically are retired Military senior leaders, as well as Vietnam veterans. You may let us know the type of speaker you are requesting, but availability is limited.

Q: How soon will I hear if my request for support is approved?

A: Event Website Postings are typically approved and posted within 2 business days. For Materials and Full Support requests, partners are typically notified



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within 10 business days. To verify our receipt of your request, please call (877) 387-9951, or email whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-events@mail.mil.

Q: I forgot my password. How do I log in?

A: On the Partner Portal login page, click on the “Forgot Password?” link. You will be prompted to enter the email address of the Committee Chairperson (this is also the User ID). A new password will then be emailed to the Committee Chairperson.

Q: What is an AAR, and why do I need to submit one?

A: An AAR is our acronym for an “After-Action Report” (DD Form 2957). Once Commemorative Partners hold an event, we ask that they submit an AAR through the Partner Portal. This allows the Commemoration staff to keep records of all events supported, report cumulative progress and take corrective action when any process improvements are needed.

VIETNAM VETERAN LAPEL PINS

Q: Why did the Commemoration create lapel pins for Vietnam veterans?

A: To recognize, thank and honor United States military veterans who served on active duty during the Vietnam War period. The [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin](#) has become “a lasting memento of the Nation’s thanks.”

Q: Who is eligible to receive a Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin?

A: Living United States veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955 to and May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive one lapel pin.

Q: How does a veteran get a lapel pin?

A: The Commemoration is providing Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins exclusively to Commemorative Partners for dignified public presentations to U.S. military veterans who served during the Vietnam War period as a lasting memento of the Nation's thanks. 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.

Vietnam veterans can locate upcoming commemorative events by visiting <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/events/>. Zoom in to locate your state and city or



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town. Blue pins represent future events. When a pin is clicked, details about the event are revealed, including contact information. If there are no blue pins in your area, check back frequently, as new events are added every week. Veterans who need help finding a commemorative event can email whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-cpp-events-application@mail.mil.

Q: How do Commemorative Partners acquire these lapel pins to present to Vietnam veterans?

A: Commemorative Partners can request these pins and other materials by submitting the DD 2956 Form found under the Event Support tab in the Partner Portal. For best results, use the online form. Note: Portal access requires the User ID and Password emailed to the Commemorative Partner Chairperson upon acceptance in the program.

Q: Is there any symbolism attached to the images on this pin?

A: Yes; in fact, the symbolism is significant. The [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin Fact Sheet](#) explains each element incorporated into this pin.

Q: When were Vietnam veteran lapel pins first released?

A: The Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin was initially introduced in small numbers in late 2014 with the first lapel pin presented to then Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. Lapel pins are now in full production and available to our Commemorative Partners for presentation to eligible Vietnam veterans.

Q: Can service members of our Allies receive a Vietnam veteran lapel pin?

A: While we recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by our Allies in Vietnam, Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins are specifically for U.S. veterans.

Q: Can civilians who were working for other agencies and were injured in Vietnam receive a Vietnam veteran lapel pin?

A: While we highlight the contributions of Federal agencies and non-governmental organizations that served with or supported our Armed Forces, Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins are specifically for U.S. veterans.



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Q: Are there other types of pins available for presentation?

A: Yes; the Commemoration created a [Certificate of Honor Program](#) to recognize four distinct subcategories of Vietnam veterans and their families –

- 1) former, living American military POWs from the Vietnam War as listed by the Department of Defense;
- 2) immediate family members of American military personnel listed as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War by the Department of Defense;
- 3) immediate family members of a veteran who is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.; and
- 4) surviving spouses (at the time of death) of veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period from November, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location.

Q: Do you have any interviews from Vietnam veterans?

A: Yes; the Commemoration is collecting oral history interviews on video of Vietnam veterans and their families. As we interview these Vietnam veterans, we are able to leverage their vast network of fellow veterans to interview and capture a wide breadth of experiences – all ranks, Services, specialties and viewpoints – that reflect personal thoughts and opinions about all aspects of the war. Eventually, this collection of interviews will be shared, unedited, with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. In addition, we anticipate these interviews being available on the Commemoration website in the future. As of January 2019, more than 600 interviews have been completed.

