



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION

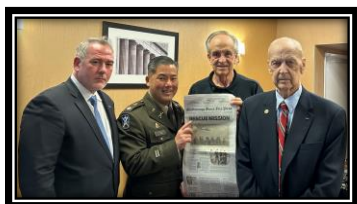


“SITREP” 2024 – Issue 2 *Special Edition: 2023 in Review*

Tuesday, January 30

Dear Commemorative Partners,

Well done! Since 2012, you have galvanized millions of Americans to thank and honor **3.8 million** Vietnam veterans and their families during more than **26 thousand** events across the country. **In 2023 alone**, we welcomed **353** organizations as Commemorative Partners and **358** as Honorary Partners. Your successful efforts last year have resulted in the recognition of **half a million** of these heroes during **3,053** events!



Top social media coverage – a [post](#) on “X” (formerly Twitter) announcing the [Medal of Honor](#) for Vietnam veteran, the late retired U.S. Army Captain [Larry L. Taylor](#), garnered more than **214 thousand views**, with an overall potential reach of **61 million!** Taylor and his comrade—retired U.S. Army Staff Sergeant James M. Holden—who also recently passed away, were each presented with the Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin in honor of their service.

Speaking of the Nation’s **highest award for valor**, another Medal of Honor was presented to Vietnam veteran, retired U.S. Army Colonel [Paris D. Davis](#) by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., on March 3 for Davis’ gallant actions on June 18, 1965. Discover more by viewing the formal [White House Medal of Honor presentation](#) and reading his official [citation](#).



In preparation for [National Vietnam War Veterans Day](#) (NVWVD), we introduced our [promotional video](#), the most-watched video of the year, and revealed our brand new NVWVD [poster](#). On and around **March 29**, you held more than **12 hundred events**, recognizing Vietnam veterans across the country! Here in the Nation’s Capital, we joined your efforts on that day in a joint wreath-laying ceremony at the [Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#) (above left). If you missed the live-stream, you can still watch the [video](#). Other **national-level** efforts included President Biden’s [social media post](#), a special [video message](#) from Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Denis R. McDonough (at right), and the Vietnam Veterans [monument unveiling](#) at the Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in California.



In May, we brought [Welcome Home](#) to the National Mall, a three-day milestone event honoring our Vietnam veterans and their families. Held at **JFK Hockey Fields** and **West Potomac Park**, it drew thousands both virtually and in person, as we recognized the service and sacrifice of these heroes and paid tribute to their legacy. An [opening ceremony](#) (at left) accentuated by a flyover featuring four period Hueys in four-ship formation kicked off **Camp Legacy** on May 11.

Join the Nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!



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[Welcome Home](#) featured *daily performances* by high school JROTC bands, military bands and drill teams from all service branches, as well as a variety of musicians. It also comprised eight panel discussions, daily afternoon precision parachute drops, *four static Huey Vietnam War period helicopter displays*, and more than 40 exhibitor tents with national and military historical museum exhibits, including Vietnam War and Gold Star family associations as well as other organizations.



In addition, *the Washington Nationals* paid tribute at their stadium before, during and after their May 12 evening game, honoring Vietnam veterans both on and off the field.

Saturday afternoon, May 13 concluded the event with a powerful two-hour [Welcome Home Celebration](#).

The impressive honor concert brought the *memories and legacy* of the Vietnam War period to life through imagery, music and storytelling. Co-hosted by NFL legend and broadcaster Joe Theismann and Miss America 1985 and former ESPN reporter Sharlene Wells Hawkes (at right), it also featured musical guests such as Broadway talent Jon Hacker, T.V. star Lauren B. Martin, The New York Tenors, 2023 Miss America's Outstanding Teen Morgan Greco, the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own," and ensembles from every single military service band!



The concert also included *special tribute videos* by President [Biden](#) and Secretary of Defense, [Lloyd J. Austin III](#). For those unable to join in person or online, catch the entire honor concert in a brand new [Broadcast Video Production](#). You can also watch a [video summary](#) of the entire weekend, including highlights and interview segments!

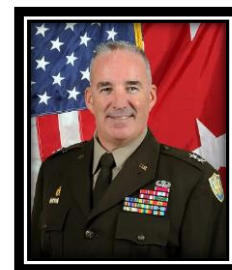


Vietnam veterans of VVA Chapter 808 in Magnolia, AR, shown above with Gilbert Marshall, NSDAR. This photo represents just one of the many Honorary Partner distinction ceremonies from 2023.

2023 has also been a significant year for our *Honorary Partners*—organizations made up solely of those who **bore the battle** or those who **bore the loss** of the Vietnam War. **National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)** and their 2,148 Commemorative Partner chapters have been collaborating with us to bestow this distinction on all **Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)** organizations—those who **bore the battle**—and publicly thank and honor the veterans in each of their 47 state councils and 605 chapters in our 50 states, the District of

Columbia and Guam. In addition to VVA state councils and chapters being conferred this distinction, DAR members are presenting [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins](#) to VVA members who have never received one and all VVA members are being given a warm "*Welcome Home*" and offered the humble thanks of a grateful Nation. To date, *422 ceremonies in 47 states* have already been completed or scheduled. Check out the more than 850 [ceremony photos](#) by state so far!

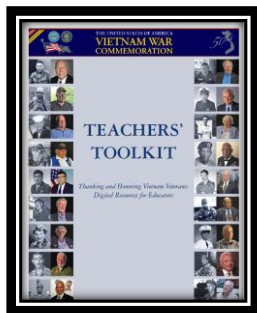
In July, we introduced our *new Director*, [Maj. Gen. Edward \(Ed\) J. Chrystal, Jr.](#), U.S. Army (at right), and bid a fond farewell in his retirement to Maj. Gen. Peter (Pete) M. Aylward, U.S. Army (Retired), who led the Commemoration the previous three years.



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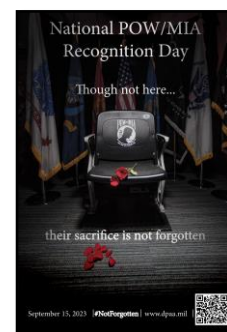
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Just in time for back-to-school, in August we announced newly expanded educational materials such as the [Teachers' Toolkit](#) (at left). The [toolkit](#), which can be integrated into any learning session, includes an added *Posters and Questions Prompts* section designed to facilitate teacher-student discussions about the poster-series. It also offers service-learning projects, as well as other activities, events and research projects. Other 2023 creations included four new posters: [The U.S. Navy in the Vietnam War](#), [Service Organizations in the Vietnam War](#), [Native Americans in the Vietnam War](#), and [Indigenous Peoples in the Vietnam War](#). Access the toolkit, posters and more

educational materials on our [Educator Resources](#) page. Further, we transferred **96 percent** of our **839 Oral History Interview** (OHI) collections to the Library of Congress (LOC). These interviews will be preserved for the families, future generations, and will contribute to the enduring historical record. You can watch up to 158 of these [interviews](#) directly on our website!

In September, we observed *National POW/MIA Recognition Day* and paid tribute to those held prisoners and returned, to those still missing, and the families still waiting for word of their loved ones. The [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency](#) remains steadfast in their ongoing mission and recovery efforts. Since our [2023 SITREP Issue 12](#) report, two additional Vietnam War military servicemembers' remains have been identified, bringing the [total missing](#) from that period to **1577** (1549 military, 28 civilian).



In November, we joined Navy Fleet Week in San Diego along with local Commemorative Partners (CP) for [Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans](#) at the USS Midway Museum and other venues over Veterans Day week. In its entirety, more than **one thousand** Vietnam veterans were recognized during **14 events!**

In December, we were privileged to present the [Commemorative Flag](#) to the *CBS Sports Network* for the *Army Navy Game*, in honor of their work recognizing Vietnam veterans. If you were not able to catch it before the game that day, you can still view the presentation via the short [video clip](#) at right.



As we continue to engage America in 2024 and beyond, we are still in **full swing**, recognizing our Vietnam veterans and their families and doing **all we can** to support your efforts in this mission! Stay tuned toward the summer for an update, as we prepare to wind down and close out on Veterans Day, 2025.

Finally, Josh Kraft, President of the *New England Patriots Foundation* articulated it best, when he gave remarks at a special [National Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony](#) at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts last year: *"There's no filled stadiums, there's no filled parking lots, be it for a football game, soccer game, concert, there's no smiling people, there's no celebrations without our veterans and those who have served, preserving the values that make America so great."* Thank you for an outstanding 2023!

~ *The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Staff* ~

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