

## *Thanking Vietnam Veterans and Their Families – Long Overdue!*

By Retired Army Maj. Gen. Jim Jackson

The Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) is very excited and grateful to the U.S. Coast Guard and all its subordinate organizations who are Commemorative Partners with us and who regularly thank and honor our Vietnam veterans and their families. Each of these veterans, their families, and especially the retirees, deserve our appreciation and recognition for their service and sacrifice during the Vietnam War era. Most were not thanked when they returned from that conflict or service across the world. The Army is doing the right thing – thanking them and welcoming them home!

Americans have been uniting to thank and honor veterans who served during the Vietnam War years—and their families for many years now. But we have many more to find, thank and honor! Spearheading this effort since 2012 is United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.

The commemoration was authorized by Congress, under DoD auspices, and launched at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2012. Our goal is to thank and honor America's 6.5 million living veterans of the 9 million who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975 — regardless of location — and the families of all who served.

***The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates we are losing more than 500 of these heroic veterans every day.*** We must act now to do what should have been done 50 years ago. We must find, thank and honor each of these veterans and their families for their service to the nation and we need your help to engage communities across the country so they can be recognized in their home towns where they live and work.

### **National Vietnam War Veterans Day**

Of special significance, two years ago President Donald Trump signed into law the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, establishing a National Vietnam War Veterans Day that will be celebrated every March 29, in perpetuity. ***It's time to put this on all our calendars.***

The commemoration office is also coordinating with governors of all U.S. states, commonwealths and territories, and the mayor of the District of Columbia, to host similar events on or around this day. All of them have already hosted events for Vietnam veterans and their families.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. — also known as “The Wall” — has played, and will continue to play, a significant role in our nation’s honoring of our Vietnam veterans on March 29th. The Wall is an arresting reminder to its more than 5 million annual visitors of the service and sacrifice of the more than 58,000 Americans. There is something haunting, cleansing and healing about this memorial. If you’ve never visited this memorial, we encourage you to experience this hallowed site.

### **Commemorative Partner Program**

The Commemorative Partner Program is an organizationally-based, hometown-centric initiative established to reach the veterans and their families in their hometowns. Those who have joined as partners have committed to conducting events or activities annually for three years in their local communities that recognize, thank and honor our veterans and their families. The nearly 12,000 partners include a mix of dedicated local and national businesses, corporations, veterans and military organizations, associations, educational institutions, community groups, towns, cities and states. They have held more than 17,000 events to date and have thanked and honored approximately 2.6 million Vietnam era veterans, plus more than 41,000 of their families have received special recognition in memory of their veterans (the Certificate of Honor program, which includes a pin for Surviving Vietnam Veteran Spouses, is found on our website –

[https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/commemorative\\_partners/certificate\\_of\\_honor\\_program/](https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/commemorative_partners/certificate_of_honor_program/)). We heartily thank ALL of our partners for their continued efforts to recognize more veterans and families. We are now seeking assistance to find those Vietnam era veterans who are unable to attend events. Many are in care facilities, nursing homes, hospices, hospitals, or just in their homes and unable to travel.



## **Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin**

The Commemoration is also providing Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins to Commemorative Partners for dignified public presentations during commemorative events, to living veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the specified timeframe above, regardless of location of service. Each veteran who served during the dates above is eligible to receive one lapel pin. The pin is a tangible sign of our Nation's thanks and is inscribed on the back with the words "A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You."

Veterans and their families can locate upcoming commemorative events in or near their hometowns here; zoom in to locate your state and city or town, and click on a blue pin to reveal details of an upcoming event, including contact information.

If there are no events in your area, check back frequently as new events are added every week. Veterans who need help finding an event can email the Commemoration at [whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-cpp-events-application@mail.mil](mailto:whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-cpp-events-application@mail.mil).

The Vietnam War Commemoration heartily thanks the Coast Guard, and especially its awesome retirees, for its support of our mission – finding, thanking and honoring Vietnam veterans and their families. Your participation, and that of thousands of our other Commemorative Partners around the Nation, is deeply appreciated. We have much more work to do...please help us find and honor these veterans.

*Retired Army Maj. Gen. Jim Jackson is the Director of The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.*