



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION 50th Anniversary



JULY 2012

THIRD QUARTER 2012 COMMEMORATION NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events:

The Traveling Wall at the Nashville Connection, VVA Ch. 523, in Greenville, SC- June 27-30

Spirit of America Festival
Decatur, AL- July 3-4

Cold War Victory Salute parade
Omaha, NE- July 3

Transportation Corps Reunion
Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport
Williamsburg, VA- July 28-29

25th Infantry Division Reunion
Oak Brook, IL (Chicago)- Sept. 9-15

Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Reunion
Columbus, NE- Aug. 16-19

The Wall That Heals, Nationwide- Multiple dates and locations
More details on page 4

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



A GRATEFUL NATION THANKS AND HONORS YOU

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Kathy Cardona and her daughter, Julianna Blamire, both of Connecticut, hold back emotion as they look at the name of Cardona's husband, Army Staff Sgt. Ronald Cardona, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., after attending a ceremony at The Wall to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Cardona said her husband was a Ranger and loved serving as one. (DoD photo by Linda Hosek)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- I. 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.
- II. 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.
- III. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
- IV. To highlight the advances in technology, science and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
- V. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

Inside:

Memorial Day: Washington, D.C.
Presidential Proclamation
U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta visit to Vietnam

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VIETNAM WAR
COMMEMORATION

Memorial to fallen Vietnam war hero and Dunmore resident dedicated



Troops attended the June 16 dedication of a memorial to 2nd Lt. Carol Ann Drazba, who was the first American woman and nurse to die in the Vietnam War. The event honoring the Dunmore native was held at the Gino J. Merli Veterans Center in Scranton and was organized by Friends of the Forgotten Northeast Pennsylvania Wing. (Photo courtesy of Kim Atkinson, Friends of the Forgotten) Read more: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/memorial-to-fallen-vietnam-war-hero-and-dunmore-resident-dedicated-1.1330948>

Scranton The Times-Journal
BY ROBBIE WARD (STAFF WRITER)

Published: June 17, 2012

Forty-six years after Dunmore native 2nd Lt. Carol Ann Drazba died while helping wounded soldiers to good health in Vietnam, her community honored her life with a memorial that included a statue of the hero who holds the distinction as the first American woman and nurse to die in the Vietnam War.

Ms. Drazba's family and friends joined veterans and supporters Saturday at the Gino Merli Veterans Center in Scranton for the memorial's dedication. Organized by Friends of the Forgotten Northeast Pennsylvania Wing, a missing-in-action and prisoners-of-war advocacy group, the celebration of Ms. Drazba's life took place

just steps away from where she learned nursing at Scranton State General Hospital.

Ms. Drazba died with another nurse, a doctor and four soldiers while in flight when the helicopter carrying them became tangled in electrical lines.

The memorial cost about \$90,000, generated through fundraisers and donations from community and veterans groups, schools and individuals.

Along with the bronze statue of Ms. Drazba, the memorial honors the others killed in the helicopter crash. A bench at the site also recognizes the four other Dunmore natives who died in the Vietnam War.

During the day's lineup of patriotic music, speakers and the unveiling of the statue, Ms. Drazba's brother and sister sat and

watched a community of veterans, along with residents of Scranton and Dunmore, attend the tribute to their sister. "There couldn't be a better day," said Joanne Drazba Katula, the nurse's sister.

During the celebration, friends and teachers shared insights about Lt. Drazba. Anne Domin, a close friend and nursing school classmate of Ms. Drazba, told the audience of many hundreds about the care her friend gave wounded soldiers.

Making rounds late at night at a military hospital in Saigon, Lt. Drazba discovered a man bleeding from a wound. He never forgot the nurse who saved his life, Ms. Domin said. After learning of her death, the wounded veteran sent Ms. Drazba's parents floral arrangements on Memorial Day for many years.

"She didn't look for glory," said Ms. Domin, who received her final letter from Ms. Drazba dated two days before she died. "She just cared about people."

Maj. Gen. Jimmie O. Keenan, chief commander of the Army Nurse Corps, said she admired the area for organizing the event.

"The sense of community I see here today is just phenomenal," Gen. Keenan said.

Kim Atkinson, special events coordinator for the local chapter of Friends of the Forgotten, saw her connection with Ms. Drazba as serendipity. A retired nurse and wife of a Vietnam veteran, Mrs. Atkinson said she and her husband nominated Ms. Drazba as someone who died in a military conflict and were struck by how few people know the nurse's historical significance. That's when Ms. Atkinson said she decided to help recognize the Dunmore native in a fashion she deserved.

"It's been my honor to bring this to you," Mrs. Atkinson told the audience Saturday. "She was our hometown girl."

Contact the writer: rward@timesham-rock.com

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION

Marines remember fallen from Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan

Defense Media Activity- Marines

Story by Cpl. Chelsea Flowers

CLEVELAND -- A somber crowd gathered in front of the traveling Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Voinovich Park for a wreath-laying ceremony during Marine Week Cleveland June 12, 2012. Although the wall lists the names of the fallen from the conflict in Vietnam, the service also commemorated those who paid the ultimate price in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We've been out here 14 hours a day doing this and still every ceremony we do is very emotional," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Drake, staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the Marine Week honor guard at the Vietnam War Memorial Wall.

During the ceremony, which will take place daily throughout Marine Week, a Gold Star family member lays the wreath at the foot of the flagpole in front of the wall.

Today, Sandra Mendez-Ruiz placed the wreath to honor the life and sacrifice of her nephew, Lance Cpl. David Alberto Mendez, who was killed in Iraq six years ago.

"When David died, I lost David, but I gained a family," Ruiz said. "What I've learned in the past six and a half years is that the Marine Corps is a family – it's a bond unlike any other. It doesn't just include the Marines, it includes the family of those who served and paid the ultimate sacrifice."

That family loyalty was plainly seen through the Marine sentries who walk daily in front of the wall from eight in the morning until 10 at night. Marine veteran Cleveland police officers volunteered to stand guard for the evening hours to honor their fallen brothers.



U.S. Marine photo by Cpl. Marcin Platek

Lt. Gen. Steven A. Hummer, commander of Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North, Sgt. Maj. Mike Burke, an inspector-instructor at 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, and Sandra Mendez-Ruiz, a Gold Star family member, watch as Marines march toward a traveling Vietnam War Memorial Wall during a wreath laying ceremony at Voinovich Park here June 12. Voinovich Park is one of the sites of displays available for public during the Marine Week Cleveland. Along with the wall, Marine Corps vehicles, aircraft and equipment will be available for viewing at Public Square, Voinovich Park, Gateway Plaza and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Marine Week Cleveland celebrates community, country and the Corps. More than 750 Marines journeyed to Cleveland for the event, which runs through June 17. Ohio has more than 9,000 active and reserve Marines, making it one of the top-five producers of Marines.

Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Taylor, with 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, and native of North Hampton, England, was one of the Marines chosen to serve hourly shifts as a sentry.

"It's hot, and it can get pretty miserable, but it's a feeling you can't really describe," Taylor said about standing guard. "It's humbling to say the least."

Ceremonies like the wreath laying are just one way Marines and gold star families alike are doing their best to keep the memories of their fallen brothers and sisters alive.

"We're just a continuation," Taylor said. "It's an ongoing thing. It's nice to know that when I'm gone, there will be more Marines who will remember me and so on and so on."

As the wreath was placed in front of the wall, the fallen from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan joined their fallen brothers from past conflicts in American history. Although they may be gone, they are never forgotten.

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION

Past, Present, Future Come Together in Hanoi Meeting

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

HANOI, Vietnam, June 4, 2012 – The past, present and future came together here today during a meeting between Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Vietnamese Defense Minister Gen. Phuong Quang Thanh.

The two men used the shared history of the United States and Vietnam to assess the status of military-to-military relations between the nations and chart the future of the partnership.

The past was represented by the two men exchanging artifacts of the Vietnam War -- the diary of a Vietnamese soldier and letters written by American service members.

The present was represented by Panetta's historic visit yesterday to an American ship being repaired by Vietnamese workers in Cam Ranh Bay.

The future was represented by plans the men made to broaden and deepen defense cooperation between the two nations.

The meeting, held at the Vietnamese Ministry of Defense, was a chance for both sides to assess the progress made in the 17 years since the United States and Vietnam normalized diplomatic relations. Panetta said the relationship between the two nations is based on mutual trust and understanding. The two men discussed the memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation signed last year. The memo looks at areas where the two countries can work together, and has been successful over the past year, the Vietnamese defense minister said.

The two men agreed to expand cooperation in five key areas. These are high-level dialogues between the two countries, maritime security, search and rescue operations, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

"I also noted in our discussion the im-

portance of our establishing an Office of Defense Cooperation to enhance our cooperation in these areas and as a signal of the United States' enduring commitment to this important defense relationship of the future," Panetta said.

The men shared views on how the United States could work with the defense ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to try to improve the maritime rights of all nations, the defense secretary said. "We also discussed our shared commitment to a peaceful and prosperous and secure Asia-Pacific region," Panetta said.

The secretary expressed his deep thanks for Vietnam's long-standing efforts to help the United States resolve the fate of those missing in action from the Vietnam War. "In particular I want to thank him for his offer to open up three new areas for remains recovery," he said.

"Our continued progress in this area -- as well as other legacies of war -- reflects ... the growing maturity of the relationship between the United States and Vietnam," Panetta said. "I want the general to know and the people of Vietnam to know that we will ... do everything possible to continue to work together to achieve our shared objectives and our common goals. I believe that the United States and Vietnam can build a better future not only for our people, but for the entire Asia-Pacific region."

For more stories on U.S. Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta's travels to the Asian-Pacific, visit http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2012/0512_panetta1/



U.S. Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta is greeted by Vietnamese Army Maj. Gen. Nguyen Cong Son, deputy chief of the office of the minister of defense, upon arrival in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, June 3, 2012. (DOD photo by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo)

Upcoming and Recent Events:

The Wall That Heals

June 27-July 1, North Kansas City, MO
July 18-22, Owego, NY
July 25-28, Newton, IA
August 4-12, Sturgis, SD
August 23-26, Klamath Falls, OR
August 28-September 4, Red Bluff, CA
www.vvmf.org/twthtour

The Nashville Connection Vietnam Veterans of America, Ch. 523

The Traveling Wall

June 27-30 All day
Greenville, SC
www.thenashvilleconnection.com

The Spirit of America Festival

July 3-4, All day
Point Mallard Park
Decatur, AL
www.spiritofamericafestival.com/

Cold War Victory Salute Parade July 3

Downtown, Omaha, NE
www.amvetsne.com/necal.html

Transportation Corps Reunion Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport

July 28-29, All day
Williamsburg, VA
www.armyav.org

25th Infantry Division Reunion

September 9-15, All day
Oak Brook, IL (Chicago)
www.25thida.org

Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Reunion

August 16-19, All day
Columbus, NE
www.vetsreunion.com/index.html

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VIETNAM WAR
COMMEMORATION



COMMEMORATION OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE VIETNAM WAR

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

As we observe the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, we reflect with solemn reverence upon the valor of a generation that served with honor. We pay tribute to the more than 3 million servicemen and women who left their families to serve bravely, a world away from everything they knew and everyone they loved. From Ia Drang to Khe Sanh, from Hue to Saigon and countless villages in between, they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoon, fighting heroically to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans. Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

As a grateful Nation, we honor more than 58,000 patriots—their names etched in black granite—who sacrificed all they had and all they would ever know. We draw inspiration from the heroes who suffered unspeakably as prisoners of war, yet who returned home with their heads held high. We pledge to keep faith with those who were wounded and still carry the scars of war, seen and unseen. With more than 1,600 of our service members still among the missing, we pledge as a Nation to do everything in our power to bring these patriots home. In the reflection of The Wall, we see the military family members and veterans who carry a pain that may never fade. May they find peace in knowing their loved ones endure, not only in medals and memories, but in the hearts of all Americans, who are forever grateful for their service, valor, and sacrifice.

In recognition of a chapter in our Nation's history that must never be forgotten, let us renew our sacred commitment to those who answered our country's call in Vietnam and those who awaited their safe return. Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the Federal Government will partner with local governments, private organizations, and communities across America to participate in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War—a 13-year program to honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of the most challenging missions we have ever faced. While no words will ever be fully worthy of their service, nor any honor truly befitting their sacrifice, let us remember that it is never too late to pay tribute to the men and women who answered the call of duty with courage and valor. Let us renew our commitment to the fullest possible accounting for those who have not returned.

Throughout this Commemoration, let us strive to live up to their example by showing our Vietnam veterans, their families, and all who have served the fullest respect and support of a grateful Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, 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 proclaim May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to honor our Vietnam veterans, our fallen, our wounded, those unaccounted for, our former prisoners of war, their families, and all who served with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written over a circular embossed seal.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VIETNAM WAR
COMMEMORATION

BILLY GRAHAM
MONTREAT, NORTH CAROLINA 28757
May 28, 2012

To our Vietnam Veterans and their families,

Decades ago, I visited with many of you in Vietnam and throughout South East Asia, sharing a message of hope and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. During that traumatic time, I talked with you, prayed with you, and prayed for your families back home while you bravely answered your nation's call.

The years have flown by, and we are all older now. At the age of ninety-three, it is not possible for me to travel to be with you in person for the Memorial Day ceremony, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your service. I will never forget my times visiting with troops, which I counted to be a great honor and privilege for me.

We have only to look at the many thousands of names carved on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall to realize the great loss suffered by so many families. For those of you who lost father or brother, sister or mother, husband, wife, or friend during Vietnam, or in the years that have passed since then, or whose loved one was listed as Missing in Action and not yet returned, it is my prayer that events planned during this 50th anniversary period will be a comfort and encouragement to you as their service and sacrifice is recognized and their memory honored.

May God bless each of you.

