

# Special feature

## Fly your flag for Vietnam War veterans Thursday

In 2017, Congress passed a law to permanently designate March 29 as Vietnam War Veterans Day.

The law, known as the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, encourages the display of the United States Flag on March 29th in honor of our Vietnam War Veterans.

Here are a few reasons why we should fly our flags tomorrow:

Fifty years ago, the United States military and its allies were responding to the advances of the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong. This is known as the Tet Offensive, which lasted 30 days. This was a campaign of surprise attacks against mili-

tary and civilian command-and-control centers throughout South Vietnam.

There were two additional offensives by the North Vietnamese in 1968 that ultimately made it the bloodiest year of the Vietnam era. There were more war casualties that year than in any other.

The era of the Vietnam War was a tumultuous period that lasted 20 years and spanned a total of three decades. It has been established that the start of the Vietnam War was Nov. 1, 1955, and the official end was April 30, 1975.

(Some are showing the end to be May 15, 1975.)

Almost 3 million United States Military personnel served in Vietnam over time.

### GUEST EDITORIAL

By STAVE BATES  
LIFE MEMBER

ASSOCIATES OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Millions more served in other locations during that 20-year span.

Over 58,000 died in Vietnam.

More than 700 Oregonians were among the Vietnam Killed In Action.

Four Oregon families each lost two sons in Vietnam; a total of 39 families nationwide experienced such a loss.

In addition, 1,600 American military personnel are still unaccounted for and officially remain Missing In Action in

Southeast Asia.

Most of the Vietnam soldiers who came back to the United States were never welcomed home. Many uniformed veterans were spit upon, ridiculed and attacked for honoring the call of their nation.

Today, there are Vietnam War Veterans suffering from maladies due to exposures to infecting sources such as Agent Orange. Many who were awarded a Purple Heart are still experiencing compli-

cations attributed to their battle wounds.

In addition to flying our flags on March 29, we, as Oregonians, should honor our Vietnam War veterans with a mandate of support for a Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds.

Such a memorial would honor those who served during the Vietnam Era regardless of their location of service, honoring all who served in Vietnam. Furthermore, this memorial would remember those who gave their life, forfeiting their American Dream so that we could live ours.

Vietnam War veterans have endured a great deal of controversy, heartache and physical discomfort for varying reasons.

A memorial to honor their service on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds would be a way of finally acknowledging their sacrifice and saying "Welcome Home," albeit nearly 50 years later.

A memorial would also enable our state residents to better understand the struggles of our Vietnam War veterans and be an educational tool.

Let us honor and memorialize our Vietnam War Veterans for generations to come.

*Steve Bates serves as Chair of the Committee on Memorials and Remembrance and is president of the Vietnam War Memorial Fund.*

*For more information, visit [www.VietnamWarMemorialFund.org](http://www.VietnamWarMemorialFund.org).*



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Local veterans from the Vietnam War are part of a group of vets from World War II, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan that meet Monday mornings at the Florence Elks Club to discuss events sponsored by local VFW and American Legion Posts. The group, known as the Band of Brothers, contributes time and donations to local schools and charities.

### Vietnam

from 1A

Unfortunately, Vietnam veterans received mixed support for their service upon returning home from the conflict that took the lives of more than 58,000 American service members.

The unpopularity of the war, opposed by many on the grounds that it was undeclared and appeared to unfairly draft citizens from minority communities and men from

lower income families, changed the way in which the service of draftees and volunteers was perceived and acknowledged.

Florence-area resident Wally Schultz remembers returning from his tour to an almost hateful reception.

"I will make it short and sweet," he said, ruefully. "When I got home, I was spit on and now people are buying me my lunch and dinner. The feedback I get now is very positive. People come up to me on the street

and say 'Thank you for your service.' These are strangers, people I have never met, and they are thanking me for something I did 50 years ago. It is a really good feeling."

Many Vietnam veterans agree that the treatment they receive now is invariably positive and supportive.

Patrick La Nasa served in both Korea and Vietnam and says the attitudes he faced upon his return are considerably different from the comments and support he receives these days

"There is a 110 percent difference from then to now. I was living in California and when I came back from Vietnam, it was like a miniature social revolution was going on and we were 'the bad guys,'" La Nasa said. "Now it is a totally different country almost — and I'm talking about the attitude towards veterans from the Vietnam era. These days, strangers thank us for our service and offer to buy us a drink or a meal. It's a major change."

La Nasa is also planning a trip to

Washington, D.C., later this summer, as a participant in an "Honor Flight" trip. He will be making the flight with his son.

"I'm getting ready to go on and Honor Flight. I spent 20 years in the corps, from '52 to '72. The sequence for going on these flights is World War II-era veterans, whether you served overseas or not, and then Korea and then Vietnam. But there is a two-year wait for Vietnam-era vets. I served in both eras, so I am going as Korea Vet."

## Vietnam War Timeline

### EVENTS LEADING TO UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, 1945-1964

