

Gov. Walker: Honors Wisconsin's Vietnam veterans

Posted on Thursday, Mar 29, 2018

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Proclaims March 29, 2018 as Vietnam Veterans Day in Wisconsin

EAU CLAIRE – Governor Scott Walker today honored Wisconsin Vietnam veterans by proclaiming March 29th, 2018 as Vietnam Veterans Day in Wisconsin. Governor Walker attended “Welcome Home: A Vietnam War Commemoration,” a ceremony to honor Vietnam veterans, the fallen, the wounded, those unaccounted for, former prisoners of war, their families and all who served. The ceremony was hosted by The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US Post 305 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Daniel J. Zimmerman, and Major General Donald P. Dunbar, Wisconsin’s Adjutant General of the Wisconsin National Guard.

“Men and women from across Wisconsin bravely served our nation in the Vietnam War, putting their lives on the line to protect others,” said Governor Walker. “The sacrifices of all those who served must always be remembered, especially those who never returned home. Many of our Vietnam War veterans never received the welcome home they deserved, but today and every day we can work to make up for this by honoring their service and recognizing the sacrifice they made for our country.”

Today’s ceremony was in recognition of March 29, 2018, being the first anniversary of the country’s newly established National Vietnam War Veterans Day. The day is being marked by hundreds of events being hosted across the country to thank and honor Vietnam War veterans and their families. National Vietnam War Veterans Day was added as a national holiday when the President signed into law The Vietnam

War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017.

Governor Walker has proclaimed March 29, 2018 as Vietnam Veterans Day throughout the State of Wisconsin saying, “the people of the State of Wisconsin honor the obligation and sacrifice of the men and women who served during the Vietnam era and that of their families, and we honor their just and honorable devotion to our country and that service can never be devalued.”

“Today gives us pause to remember those who fought and sacrificed so selflessly and valiantly in Vietnam,” Secretary Zimmerman said. “To my brothers and sisters in arms that served that noble cause, I wish them a long overdue and heartfelt ‘Welcome Home!’”

More than 165,000 Wisconsinites served in Vietnam, with 1,239 paying the ultimate sacrifice. With about 132,000, Vietnam veterans are the largest group of living veterans in Wisconsin.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our Vietnam veterans, and today we honor their service and sacrifice,” Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin’s adjutant general, said. “This generation served not only in a time of war but in a time of social unrest at home, they served with dignity and honor, they returned home and made America better.”

Among the featured speakers was former WDVA Secretary Colonel Ray Boland, a pilot in Vietnam who flew an AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter during his second tour. He served in the Army until 1991 when he retired with the rank of Colonel. Col. Boland went on to serve as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and later as a civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army. Boland, along with Medal of Honor recipient Gary Wetzel, a door gunner in the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company, serve as Co-Chairs of Wisconsin’s Vietnam War Commemoration Committee.

Another featured speaker is Bee Yang, Secretary of the Wisconsin Lao Veterans of America. The Hmong Lao in the mountainous regions of northern Laos were recruited by the CIA to fight for American interests during the Vietnam War. Thousands of men answered that call and worked together with the United States to defend peace, security, freedom, and democracy during the Vietnam War.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration began with a

Presidential inaugural event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. on Memorial Day, May 28, 2012, and concludes on Veterans Day, November 11, 2025.