

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: And Wisconsin Vietnam War veterans secure Vietnam helicopter pilot and crewmember monument in Arlington National Cemetery

Posted on Thursday, Apr 19, 2018

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin today applauds the unveiling and dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument in Arlington National Cemetery. Senator Baldwin has worked across party lines with Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and with members of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, led by Wisconsin-native Bob Hesselbein, to make this monument a reality.

“The brave individuals who served as helicopter pilots and crewmembers during the Vietnam War and their families have earned this recognition,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “I’m so proud to see this monument become a reality at long last so we can honor their sacrifice and remember their courage for generations to come.”

The monument honors the nearly 5,000 helicopter pilots and crewmembers killed during the Vietnam War, and is the only monument established to honor all who died operating rotary-wing aircraft in what is frequently called, “the Helicopter War.”

During the Vietnam War the helicopter became the mainstay for joint operational

mobility. Approximately 12,000 helicopters operated in the combat zone and were used by all military services: Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force. Of this number, 5,086 were destroyed.

The new commemorative monument was authorized in March, 2017 following conversations between the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) and Karen Durham-Aguilera, Executive Director of the Army National Military Cemeteries. “The outcome proved a win-win for Vietnam Veterans, Gold Star Families, and Arlington National Cemetery,” **said Bob Hesselbein, VHPA Legacy Committee Chairman.**

Senator Baldwin worked for over a year to secure the monument, including introducing the bipartisan, bicameral [Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act](#) that was cosponsored in the Senate by Senator Sullivan and introduced in the House by Representative Mark Amodei (R-NV-2) in 2016.

Arlington National Cemetery holds the greatest cluster of helicopter casualties from the Vietnam War made up of immediate casualties, Medal of Honor recipients and the remains of MIAs recovered in the decades after the war ended in 1975.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).