

## **Montgomery County, Maryland Vietnam Veterans Memorial**

**Dedicated May 21, 2018**

**by County Executive Isiah Leggett**

**Captain, U.S. Army**

**Vietnam War**

We have marked 54 years since the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that authorized President Lyndon Johnson to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression” by the communist government of North Vietnam. It was passed on August 7, 1964, by the U.S. Congress after an alleged attack on two U.S. naval destroyers stationed off the coast of Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution effectively launched America’s full-scale involvement in the Vietnam War. County resident Everett Alvarez, CDR, USN held from August 1964 – February 1973 is the longest held prisoner of war at 8 years and 6 months. County residents that were held as a Prisoner of War include Retired Navy Captain Everett Alvarez, Retired Air Force Colonel Fred Cherry (deceased); Retired Navy Captain Michael Cronin, Former Navy Civilian Larry Stark and Retired Air Force Colonel Hubert Walker.

Hundreds of men and women from Montgomery County served in this war that took from us 58,300 lives. Montgomery County lost 130 service members who served in the U.S. Uniformed Services with recognition for the military service of our Armed Forces. Their average age was 23 years and they lived in areas from the small town of Dickerson, MD to the city of Silver Spring, MD. Across our nation we see road signs that point to town memorials in memory of those lost in Vietnam but as a county we had no Vietnam memorial that listed the names of persons who were killed or reported missing there. Jane McCarthy, Vietnam Veteran Army nurse first brought the idea to the Commission on Memorial Day, 2009 as annually she goes back to her hometown of Cohasset, Massachusetts where there is a listing of names engraved at the Armed Services Memorial at Cohasset Harbor. The purpose of this project was to establish a memorial to those 130 service members from Montgomery County lost in this war.

“Welcome Home” is a greeting offered to those returning from war that is popular among our Vietnam Veterans because their welcome home was less heartfelt than that offered Veterans from other wars. It continues to be a saying used with a handshake or embrace offered to brothers and sisters that served in Vietnam. The Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs was established by County Executive Isiah Leggett in 2008. The Commission on Veterans Affairs advocated to create a memorial in Montgomery County to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in defense of our country during Vietnam.

The Commission on Veterans Affairs Vietnam Veterans Memorial Planning Committee is made up of Vietnam Veterans Bill Gray, Vietnam 68-69; Jane McCarthy, Vietnam 70-71; Wayne Miller, Vietnam 68-69; Stephen Campanella, Vietnam 68-69; Mike Walsh, Vietnam 67-68 and Dan Bullis, Vietnam 70-71, and Chairman of the group. Michael Subin Vietnam Era Veteran 70-73 and Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager, Commission on Veterans Affairs also served. Anyone wishing to be a part of this effort was more than welcomed.

Please visit our [Vietnam War Fallen Heroes](#) page

There is a digital of the County’s Fallen Heroes in the lobby of the Rockville Memorial Library and in the foyer of the Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza.