

PATRIOTS OF THE YEAR

Veterans of the Vietnam War Era

Today we pause to honor the men and women who answered our nation's call to arms and made sacrifices both large and lasting. It takes a generation to begin to understand the true impact of major historical events. Only in recent years have the contributions of our Vietnam Era veterans been given the proper recognition and appreciation from the general public.

9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the official Vietnam era. Of these 2,709,918 Americans served in uniform in Vietnam. Today, more than 1,500 Americans remain unaccounted for from the conflict and are listed as Missing In Action.

Using the dates of the National Defense Service Medal, the Mobile Bay Area Veterans Day Commission decided that it was appropriate to recognize the service of all who served. Many veterans served "in country" as soldiers and Marines. Our airmen, sailors and coast guardsmen fought in the air and sea over and in the waters of Vietnam.

Others received orders to serve elsewhere and in ways that did not face the dangers of combat. Still, they served where Uncle Sam sent them. Among them were the crews of ballistic missile submarines and soldiers who stood guard in Europe while under the watchful gaze of the Soviet Union. Others staffed the supply depots and repair shops far from the sounds of battle, yet to give them honor does not detract from the gratitude, all too slow in coming, that is owed to those who, in service to the United States of America, traveled to Southeast Asia.

