

Speech for Wreath Laying—08 September 2012

Good Morning...

We are gathered here at the CCB-18 Vietnam War Memorial at the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, CA to honor and remember the 2604 of our fellow soldiers who gave, all those years ago during the Vietnam War, to us and to their nation everything they possibly could--- their current and future lives. They paid the ultimate price doing their duty to protect us and to uphold their honor and the best principles of our society during a war and at a time when many of their fellow citizens did not understand nor appreciate their courage and sacrifice. They are exemplified in the extreme by men such as Medal of Honor winner PFC James W. Fous, who on 14 May 1968 saved 3 of his fellow soldiers by giving up his own life by smothering an enemy grenade, and by many others.

We honor and remember them for doing their duty in the far off places of Vietnam, such as the Rung Sat Special Zone and the Plain of Reeds, and Long An, Co Gong, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Vinh Long, and

Phong Dinh provinces of the Mekong Delta, as well as the base camps, cities and towns, such as Bear Cat, Dong Tam, Rach Kien, Can Tho, My Tho, and Chi Lay.

We honor and remember them for their perseverance and fidelity in doing their duty during thousands of engagements and hundreds of heavy battles such as Ap Bac and those during Tet of 1968. We honor and remember them for doing their duty while enduring closely sprung ambushes and snipers, incoming mortar and rocket fire, incoming small arms and automatic weapons and RPG fire, and the ever present mines and booby traps. We honor and remember them for doing their duty even while experiencing the pain and horror of witnessing the wounding and mutilation and death of their brothers in arms before their own occurred.

We honor and remember them for carrying the fight to a sometimes elusive but always skillful and tenacious enemy, such as the 261st, 263rd VC Battalions, and the 303rd, 306th, 309th, 514th, and 516th Main Force Battalions.

We honor and remember them for doing their duty while experiencing the frustration of trying to sort friend from enemy and enemy from non-combatant civilians. And for doing all of these things amid the heat and low water of the “dry” season; the never ending mud, wetness, high water, and the leeches and mosquitoes of the monsoon season, often while walking on split, swollen and infected feet.

We honor and remember them for doing their duty during countless amphibious and airmobile assaults, patrols, night ambushes, reconnaissance-in-force, cordon and search, cordon and destroy, and search and clear operations, fire missions, air strikes, and Med-Caps as well as all of the necessary signal, supply and maintenance and medical logistical missions.

I know that many of us would not have had the past 46 years or so of life without their specific sacrifices and that we have remembered them and prayed for them, each in our own way, for these many years.

Even though we may often fall short, one of the important ways we can continue to honor our fallen brothers, is to continue to strive daily to live our own lives with principle, honor, integrity, and industry. Another way is to support, in every way possible, the comparatively small percentage of our young men and women, and their families, who are carrying the heavy burden of our current wars.

Further, let us each, as best that we can, continue to work toward keeping our nation strong, free, and the champion of justice, freedom, and peace.

God bless our fallen brothers, the “Old Reliables” of the 9th Infantry Division of the U.S, Army, and the United States of America.