

# SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH

*"They Were Our Fathers..."*

**For immediate release**

## **15<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SONS & DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH REUNION DEEMED TREMENDOUS SUCCESS, LARGEST GATHERING EVER**

*Two Californians, Ohioan and Washingtonian SDIT Members Receive  
Lifetime Achievement Awards*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., July 15, 2005** – More than 1,000 people from across the country, spanning four generations, participated last month in the largest ever reunion of family members who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War.

Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT) – a national nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping the legacy of their fathers alive – hosted four days of events from June 16-19 to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The reunion comprised widows and comrades, sons and daughters and their spouses, and grandchildren and great grandchildren. More than 20,000 sons and daughters lost their fathers in the Vietnam War.

“The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion of Sons and Daughters In Touch was a tremendous success and the number of attendees greatly eclipsed our wildest dreams,” said SDIT Founder & Chairman Tony Cordero, who lost his father, Maj. William Cordero, USAF, over Laos on June 22, 1965.

“While more than 30 years have passed since our fathers were lost in Vietnam, this celebration shows us that there is an incredible need to come together to honor our fathers’ memories, collectively heal from the wounds of Vietnam and teach new generations about the lessons of America’s most divisive war,” he said.

The reunion featured several special events around the nation’s capital and many poignant visits to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Some of the more memorable events included a grandchildren’s visit to The Wall, an early morning Wall washing, and an artists’ forum featuring SDIT members Karen Spears Zacharias (author, *Hero Mama*) and John Hulme (filmmaker, *Unknown Soldier*).

The gathering culminated with a special Father’s Day ceremony (June 19) at the Memorial highlighted by laying 1,500 red, yellow and white roses along the base of The Wall and a special presentation in which each of the SDIT members in attendance received a “Gold Star” pin from the Department of Defense.

**(more)**

## **SDIT Reunion Tremendous Success**

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One of the reunion's many highlights featured the presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards to four long-time SDIT members. The honorees are:

- **Jeanette Chervony (Costa Mesa, California)** has been involved with SDIT at the local or national since 1992 and has been responsible for developing and maintaining the SDIT Web site ([www.sdit.org](http://www.sdit.org)) since 1997. She has created dozens of personal tribute Web sites for SDIT members and has been instrumental in recruiting new SDIT members from across the country. Chervony served on SDIT's National Board from 1999 to 2001 and was president of SDIT's Southern California Chapter from 1997 to 2000. Chervony's father, Sgt. Eddie E. Chervony (**Los Angeles, California**), was killed in Vietnam on May 5, 1967. He is honored on Panel 55 East, Line 6 of The Wall.
- **Patty Lee (San Diego, California)** has been an active SDIT volunteer since Father's Day 1992. She worked tirelessly for two years with the Department of Defense to have all of the SDIT members who participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion receive a "Gold Star" pin. More than 400 pins were awarded on Father's Day 2005. Lee, the SDIT Historian who works closely with her husband, Gary, to archive SDIT's activities, served on SDIT's National Board from 1997 to 2003. Lee's father, Sgt. First Class Delbert C. Totty (**Napa, California**), was killed on March 31, 1967. His name is located on Panel 17 East, Line 82 of the Memorial.
- **Dennis Shine (Washington, D.C.)** has served as SDIT's treasurer for 10 years during which time he has been responsible for the organization's financial stability. He also has been responsible for ensuring SDIT's nonprofit compliance. Shine's father, Cpl. Dennis Francis Shine, USA (**Worcester, Massachusetts**), was killed in Vietnam on August 19, 1969. His name can be found on Panel 19 West, Row 73 of The Wall.
- **Cindy Smith (Milford, Ohio)** has been instrumental in the organization's growth and development over the past 13 years. As SDIT's secretary, she has helped with the planning of the organization's 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries and assisted in organizing SDIT's historic journey to Vietnam in 2003. Smith's father, Cpl. Richard L. Sanders (**Los Angeles, California**), was killed in Vietnam on November 24, 1967. His name is located on Panel 30 East, Line 81 of the Memorial.

### **About Sons & Daughters In Touch**

For nearly 15 years, Sons and Daughters In Touch ([www.sdit.org](http://www.sdit.org)) has worked to locate, unite and provide support to the now-grown children of American servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War. In that time, more than 3,000 members have been able to contact veterans who served with their fathers, visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, share their life experiences with others and take pride in knowing that the loss of their father was not in vain.

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### **For more information about Sons and Daughters In Touch**

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