



"They Were Our Fathers..."



VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

For immediate release

MEDIA ADVISORY

SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH TO MARK ITS 20th ANNIVERSARY WITH SPECIAL FATHER'S DAY CEREMONY AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

U.S. Army Chief of Staff, SDIT Member Gen. George W. Casey Jr. to Keynote 10 a.m. Event; SDIT Members, Other Gold Star Children & VVMF Volunteers to Lay 2,000 Roses at The Wall

Washington, D.C., June 16, 2010—Nearly 1,000 Vietnam War Gold Star children—members of Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT)—their family members and a new generation of children who lost their fathers in America's recent military conflicts will participate in a special Father's Day ceremony at The Wall June 20 beginning at 10 a.m. The event is being cosponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF). Following are the specifics for these events at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall):

WHO: **Nearly 1,000 members of Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT)**, a national organization founded in 1990 to locate, unite and support those sons and daughters whose fathers made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.

U.S. Army Chief of Staff and SDIT member Gen. George W. Casey Jr., who will be the keynote speaker. His father, Army Maj. Gen. George William Casey Sr. was killed on July 7, 1970 when his command helicopter crashed in South Vietnam. Maj. Gen. Casey is remembered on Panel 9 West, Row 126 of The Wall.

SDIT Founder & Chairman Tony Cordero (Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.) will serve as the event's master of ceremonies. His father, Air Force Maj. William E. Cordero, was lost June 22, 1965 (Father's Day) after not returning from a bombing mission over North Vietnam. Maj. Cordero is remembered on Panel 2 East, Row 15 of The Wall.

Other featured Father's Day ceremony speakers and participants include:

- **Gold Star daughter and mother Elaine Roach** (Yorba Linda, Calif.) whose father Navy Lt. Harold S. Roach was killed Oct. 2, 1964 when his plane crashed into the South China Sea. Her son, Army PFC Joel K. Brattain, was killed March 13, 2004 when an explosive device detonated near the military vehicle in which he was patrolling Baghdad.
- **VVMF founder and President Jan Scruggs and VVMF volunteers.**
- Vocalist and songwriter **Barbara Martin** (Staunton, Va.) will perform "I Won't Forget", which is dedicated to her brother Army Sgt. Dennis K. Martin who is remembered on Panel 8 West, Row 8 of The Wall and the other service members who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.
- **Families of American KIAs and MIAs** from other U.S. military conflicts including current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

WHAT: **SDIT Father's Day Ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall).** SDIT, in conjunction with VVMF, will hold the special Father's Day Ceremony June 20 as the culminating event of its 20th anniversary activities beginning June 17 in the D.C. area.

The Father's Day ceremony will honor the estimated 20,000 American fathers who were killed or remain missing from the Vietnam War. The event will conclude with SDIT members, other Gold Star children and VVMF volunteers laying 2,000 red, yellow and white roses at the base of The Wall in honor of their fathers and all fathers lost in wartime. The red roses represent American military KIAs, the yellow signify those who are listed as MIAs and the white are for America's most recent war casualties.

WHEN: **Father's Day, Sunday, June 20 beginning at 10 a.m.**
VVMF volunteers will affix Father's Day messages to roses beginning at 8:30 a.m.

(more)

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WHERE: **East Knoll, Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall)**
21st Street & Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.
IMPORTANT: Please see Media Note "Father's Day Road Closures" below.

WHY: One-third of the 58,000+ U.S. service members KIA or MIA in Vietnam were fathers. 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of SDIT's founding and the 35th anniversary of the Vietnam War's official end.

Nearly 1,000 sons, daughters, widows, grandchildren, family members and veterans will gather from June 17 to 20 in the nation's capital to remember their fathers who died in or remain missing from the Vietnam War. The four-day SDIT Family Reunion will include poignant visits to The Wall, sharing circles, and a June 19 Gold Star family banquet. For more information about the SDIT Family Reunion contact Alan Greilsamer at (703) 760-7007 (office), (703) 201-2508 (mobile) or info@communications-resources.com.

RELATED FATHER'S DAY EVENT: More than 50 SDIT members and their families will wash the Vietnam Veterans Memorial starting at 5:30 a.m. Father's Day (June 20).

About Sons and Daughters In Touch

For 20 years Sons and Daughters In Touch (www.sdit.org) has worked to locate, unite and provide support to the now-grown children of American service members who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War. Since the organization's founding its more than 3,000 members have contacted veterans who served with their fathers, visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and shared their life-experiences with others, often for the first time. In 2003 more than 70 SDIT members traveled to Vietnam to meet the people their fathers fought to protect, to walk the ground their fathers tread and to visit the locations where their fathers died. Today, SDIT members are sharing their unique life-experiences as the child of a military member lost in the line of duty with a younger generation of Gold Star "sons and daughters".

About the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

Established in 1979, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (www.vvmf.org) is dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., promoting healing and educating about the impact of the Vietnam War. Authorized by Congress, its most recent initiative is building The Education Center at The Wall, an underground facility near the Memorial that is designed to add faces to all the names on The Wall and tell their stories. Other Memorial Fund initiatives include educational programs for students and teachers, a traveling Wall replica that honors our nation's veterans and a humanitarian and mine-action program in Vietnam.

MEDIA NOTES:

SDIT Members Across the Country—SDIT members from around the country are available to discuss their fathers, SDIT and the 20th anniversary reunion. To schedule an interview contact Alan Greilsamer at (703) 760-7007 (office), (703) 201-2508 (mobile) or info@communications-resources.com.

Father's Day Road Closures—Media representatives planning to cover the SDIT Father's Day ceremony June 20 should be aware that there will be widespread roadway and Potomac River bridge closures due to a triathlon that will be run that morning. Access to The Wall will be available only via 23rd Street. A special permit granting satellite media trucks access to a reserved parking area on Constitution Avenue close to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is available by contacting Alan Greilsamer at (703) 760-7007 (office), (703) 201-2508 (mobile) or info@communications-resources.com. A round-trip shuttle-bus service will be transporting SDIT members and other guests from the Doubletree Hotel-Crystal City to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and back. Media representatives are invited to use this shuttle-bus service. More information is available on the SDIT Web site at www.sdit.org.

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For media inquiries:

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