On Memorial Day 2012, President Obama spoke at the Opening Proclamation of the Vietnam War 50th, held at the Vietnam Memorial Wall. The President’s speech was powerful, direct, and delivered with a clear intent towards action to do the right thing for our Vietnam War veterans:

(Excerpts from President Obama’s speech)
The Vietnam War Memorial National Mall, Washington, D.C.
Memorial Day 2012
2:27 P.M. EDT

“One of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam—most particularly, how we treated our troops who served there. You were often blamed for a war you didn’t start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor. You were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised. You came home and sometimes were denigrated, when you should have been celebrated. It was a national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. And that’s why here today we resolve that it will not happen again.

And so a central part of this 50th anniversary will be to tell your story as it should have been told all along. It’s another chance to set the record straight. That’s one more way we keep perfecting our Union—setting the record straight. And it starts today. Because history will honor your service, and your names will join a story of service that stretches back two centuries.

Let us tell the story of a generation of service members—every color, every creed, rich, poor, officer and enlisted—who served with just as much patriotism and honor as any before you. Let’s never forget that most of those who served in Vietnam did so by choice. So many of you volunteered. Your country was at war, and you said, “Send me.” That includes our women in Vietnam—every one of you a volunteer. Those who were drafted, they, too, went and carried their burden—you served; you did your duty...
So let us also tell a story of a generation that came home, and how—even though some Americans turned their back on you—you never turned your back on America. 

Like generations before you, you took off the uniform, but you never stopped serving. You became teachers and police officers and nurses—the folks we count on every single day. You became entrepreneurs, running companies and pioneering industries that changed the world. You became leaders and public servants, from town halls to Capitol Hill—lifting up our communities, our states, our nation.

You reminded us what it was like to serve, what it meant to serve. Those of you who stayed in uniform, you rose through the ranks, became leaders in every service, learned from your experience in Vietnam and rebuilt our military into the finest force that the world has ever known. And let’s remember all those Vietnam veterans who came back and served again—in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. You did not stop serving…

You looked after one another. You cared for one another. People weren't always talking about PTSD at the time—you understood it, and you were there for each other. Just as importantly, you didn't just take care of your own, you cared for those that followed. You’ve made it your mission to make sure today’s troops get the respect and support that all too often you did not receive.

Because of you, because our Vietnam veterans led the charge, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is helping hundreds of thousands of today’s veterans go to college and pursue their dreams. Because of you, because you didn’t let us forget, at our airports, our returning troops get off the airplane and you are there to shake their hands. Because of you, across America, communities have welcomed home our forces from Iraq. And when our troops return from Afghanistan, America will give this entire 9/11 Generation the welcome home they deserve. That happened in part because of you.

This is the story of our Vietnam service members—the story that needs to be told. This is what this 50th anniversary is all about. It’s another opportunity to say to our Vietnam veterans what we should have been saying from the beginning: You did your job. You served with honor. You made us proud. You came home and you helped build the America that we love and that we cherish.

Veterans, families of the Vietnam War, I know the wounds of war are slow to heal. You know that better than most. But today we take another step. The task of telling your story continues. The work of perfecting our Union goes on. And decades from now, I hope another young American will visit this place and reach out and touch a name. And she’ll learn the story of service members—people she never met, who fought a war she never knew—and in that moment of understanding and of gratitude and of grace, your legacy will endure. For you are all true heroes and you will all be remembered.

So here today, it must be said—you have earned your place among the greatest generations. At this time, I would ask all our Vietnam veterans, those of you who can stand, to please stand, all those already standing, raise your hands—as we say those simple words which always greet our troops when they come home from here on out: Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Thank you. We appreciate you. Welcome home.”
In his speech, the President mentioned several times that the Vietnam War Veterans’ story is one that “needs to be told.” In the spirit of that charge, Remember My Service Productions (RMS)—an official partner of the Department of Defense Vietnam War 50th Commemoration, and coordinator of the non-profit coalition of the Association of the United States Army and the Naval Historical Foundation—is leading the effort to produce a commemorative book, interactive eBook, and feature documentary that will be presented as a gift from the American people to three million Vietnam War Veterans. This full-color, coffee-table book and film will honor and remember their service and sacrifice during and after the war.

To maximize the healing potential of this gift to our veterans, high-profile, and highly respected individuals from the world of film, television, music, stage, and sports are currently being invited to lend their celebrity on behalf of all Americans, to honor and truly provide the overdue “welcome home” to these veterans. Their names will be added to the “Resolution of Gratitude” included in the book (Appendix B), along with the first signatures of Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole, and they are invited to record a Public Service Announcement (Appendix C).

The funding for this project is in progress, and comes entirely from the private sector. The commemorative package will include a 160-page, archive-quality book, a feature documentary, an interactive eBook, and digital archives of all Division annuals and quarterlies produced during the Vietnam War. The book and documentary will be produced with content contributions from the Department of Defense, the Library of Congress, the Founding Partners from the private sector, and from many individual Vietnam War Veterans themselves. Before publication, the commemorative will be reviewed and approved from those entities, and the RMS Advisory Board (made up of retired General Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and executives from the private sector).

Working together with state veterans agencies and veterans service organizations, all items of the commemorative will be presented as gifts to three million Vietnam War Veterans and their families at various ceremonies in each state during 2015. RMS successfully employed this same distribution strategy for Korean War Veterans nationwide in November 2013. This same commemorative package will also be made available to the public.
THE MODEL

As part of the Korean War commemorative book, the President of the Republic of Korea, Mrs. Park, submitted a message of gratitude to American veterans. This “coffee table” book was given to 250,000 Korean War Veterans in every state on Veterans Day 2013. The distribution was coordinated with state veterans agencies, National Guard units, and veterans service organizations during events and ceremonies.

The private sector and RMS led the commemorative project, from production through distribution. **Korean companies and individuals fully funded the entire “thank you” project for our American veterans.**

THE APPRECIATION

Veterans nationwide received this gift with deep gratitude. They were overwhelmed by the generosity and remembrance of the Korean people, even 60 years later. In emails and letters, they wrote of a healing experience because of the gift, with final comments such as, “This book is my prized possession!” and “It will always be a treasure!”

Since Veterans Day 2013, the letters, phone calls and emails continue to arrive almost daily, thanking the Koreans for remembering their service. Two of these letters (Appendix A) are a typical representation of those messages of appreciation.
THE 2015-2016 CAMPAIGN

Most Americans are not aware that we are already two years into the Vietnam War 50th Commemorative period with a congressional mandate to honor the warrior, not the war. The task of telling the story is a monumental one that must overcome 50 years of neglect. Many books have been written and published, for individual purchase. Movies and documentaries have been produced, some better and more accurate than others. There are Memorial Day and Veterans Day speeches, ceremonies, and wreath-layings. But there has never been a collective gift from America to the individual Vietnam Veteran that reinforces, remembers, and preserves the honor of their service and sacrifice—especially as a form of sincere apology and deep gratitude.

Fifty years later, America has finally matured and is looking for ways to say, “Thank you, and welcome home.” This gift will be their personal link to the collective Vietnam War 50th Commemoration that pays tribute to all who served and sacrificed during the turmoil of the Vietnam War abroad or at home. For this campaign to be as successful as the previous one for the Korean War Veterans, we must achieve two key benchmarks:

1. **COALITION OF SUPPORT:** We respectfully request the support of highly respected, high-profile individuals to add their name to the proposed resolution (Appendix B), that will be included in the gift to three million Vietnam War Veterans and their families, as well as the book that will be available to the general public for purchase, with proceeds directed to veteran and military foundations. We also request celebrity participation in the recording of one PSA for broadcast, documentary credits, and online sharing (Appendix C). Senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole have been the first to add their names to this resolution.

2. **FUNDING:** Just as the private sector in South Korea fully funded the Korean War Veteran project, this gift for the Vietnam War Veterans will also be funded by the private sector—but this time from America. Because this war was mired in a different level of controversy with a noticeably absent “welcome home” from the country, this must be a gift funded by Americans as tangible evidence of our gratitude. See Appendix D for an overview of the funding and distribution for 2015-2016.

THANK YOU

Thank you for your solemn consideration of how you and your organization might participate to share your gratitude and “welcome home” to our Vietnam War Veterans. This gift will be a permanent reminder they have not been forgotten, they are appreciated and respected, and their story of service and sacrifice has been preserved for generations.

For more information, please contact:
Sharlene Hawkes
shawkes@remembermyservice.com
801-860-6820

For a sponsorship overview including short videos, please visit:
www.remembermyservice.com/sponsorvets.html
APPENDIX A

Example Letters of Appreciation

To whom it concerns,

It has been an honor to receive the wonderful book about the Korean war. It has been assembled with the best description of the Korean action I have ever read. The photographs range remarkably from the instant of combat to the beauties of South Korea today. It was truly difficult to put the book aside, and it leaves me proud and humble to be a tiny piece of the action.

It is a great tribute that you wish to put this very fine collection in the hands of the American Veterans.

I was called up for active service on April 3, 1951 and discharged on July 1952. My first duties were plans and training “S3” for the 597 Armored Field Artillery Battalion. Before they went to Korea, I was transferred to the Joint Military Packaging School as its Assistant Officer in Charge. It was felt that my expertise in military packaging could be used to train the units going to South Korea on how to package their arms and General Equipment, including food rations, to withstand the extremely harsh winter conditions. Our school trained hundreds of students from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, as well as personnel from private industry and foreign countries under the UN auspices.

I hope and think we made a difference. The book Korea Reborn will always be a prized possession. Thank you once again.

John D. Farrington
Capt. Retired

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22 June 2014

To: Remember My Service
C/o Korea Reborn
474 Bearcat Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84115

From:

I recently received a copy of the book titled Korea Reborn and am very thankful for the actions and thanks the Government of Korea has extended to those who served there.

My service in Korea was after the war ended. My feeling is that we have stood our ground in Korea and have made the difference to allow Korea to become a new, strong, and thankful nation.

The Foreword, written by Park Geun-hye, President of the Republic of Korea, sincerely expresses the sentiment of a thankful nation to those from around the world who helped the Korean Nation in time of need.

My brother served there during the war with the 3rd Infantry Division and was wounded during war.

Thank you and the Korean People for the wonderful book.....it is my TREASURE!!

Wilbert C. Shipe Jr
CW5 US Army Retired
WHEREAS, members of the U.S. Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were often wrongly criticized for their government’s policy decisions, and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue and a conflict that caused a generation of veterans to wait too long for the American public to acknowledge and honor their efforts and services, and

WHEREAS, it is a national shame and disgrace that Americans did not welcome home our troops from Vietnam with open arms and yellow ribbons, but instead with harsh criticism and denigration, and

WHEREAS, thanks to the example of Vietnam War Veterans who warmly welcome home troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, Americans have, in recent years, learned how to properly show appreciation for the warriors who serve this country with valor, separate from the debate over the issue of war itself, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, on behalf of all Americans, express our deep gratitude to all those who served so selflessly in Vietnam;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT we stand united in support of you, no matter our political affiliation and disagreements over the Vietnam War, and call on all Americans to show that support to you and all who wear the uniform, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT we welcome you home with heartfelt and profound appreciation for your service.

Names to be listed below (in alphabetical order)
APPENDIX C

Sample PSA

“When today’s men and women come from war, they are given a hero’s welcome. It wasn’t anything like that 50 years ago when our Vietnam War Veterans came home. But America has learned something important since then. No matter how you feel about the policies of war, today we always honor, respect, and pay tribute to all who have answered the call to duty. To our Vietnam War Veterans, thank you… and welcome home.”
APPENDIX D

Founding Partner(s) contribution funds the production of the commemorative package for sponsored gifts and public sales.

For more information, please contact:
Sharlene Hawkes
shawkes@remembermyservice.com
801-860-6820

For a sponsorship overview including short videos, please visit:
www.remembermyservice.com/sponsorvets.html