

Thanking Vietnam War Vets

Tennessee Post recognizes veterans' service

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VFW Post 10904 in Manchester, Tennessee, hosted its annual Vietnam-era Veterans Honors Dinner on March 28. Now in its seventh year, the dinner's purpose is to recognize Vietnam veterans and to treat them as they should have been treated when they returned home from Vietnam.

The Vietnam-era veterans in attendance were told:

- “Thank you for your service;”
- “Your cause was just;” and
- “Welcome home.”

The gathering was held at Manchester's Coffee County Veterans Building, which is shared by the VFW, DAV and American Legion. More than 100 guests were present. Lloyd Smith, a local musician performed songs from the Vietnam period.

A 10-foot projection screen showed the 1967 Bob Hope Christmas Special featuring Raquel Welch and other celebrities touring Southeast Asia. Several of the veterans in attendance fondly remembered seeing the show when they were there nearly 60 years ago.

VFW Post 10904 Quartermaster Howard Thompson served as the emcee. Thompson was a first lieutenant with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is a Vietnam veteran.

He read a letter of gratitude from a former South Vietnamese refugee who later started a business. Part of the letter stated: "Back then, I didn't grasp the nuances of politics, and I really didn't care to. What I knew for sure was these brave soldiers, representing the United States, stood by our side against the Northern Vietnamese communists ... risking their lives for our lives and liberty. That's how I saw them then ... that's how I continue to see them now."

VFW Post Commander Kimberly King said it is important to recognize Vietnam veterans especially as they were not recognized when they came.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

"I'd say eight years ago, when we came up with this idea it was to pay honor and respect to our brothers and sisters who served in Vietnam," King said.

To learn more about activities hosted by VFW Post 10904, visit <https://www.vfwpost10904.com>.

This Checkpoint article was submitted by G. Lamar Wilkie, VFW Post 10904 Senior Vice Commander and Adjutant.