



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Commemorates National Vietnam War Veterans Day at State Capitol

PETE HARCKHAM March 30, 2022

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*Albany, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham commemorated National Vietnam War Veterans Day at the State Capitol on March 29 by introducing a resolution to the full Senate and welcoming a contingent of Vietnam War veterans in attendance from the 40th Senate District.

“Today we pay homage to the brave men and women who served in the Vietnam War, knowing full well that they served with tremendous courage and sacrifice,” said Harckham. “Those who returned home alive bore physical and mental injuries, many of them life lasting. If anything, we must acknowledge that the Vietnam War is a scar on our history because of how these men and women were treated when they returned home from the war. They were disparaged, dishonored and faced blame and shame, unfairly.

Harckham continued, “Today, we know better. And we know how much honor and respect and gratitude they deserve for putting on a uniform, wearing our flag on their arm, traveling to the other side of the globe and serving our country. Today, we understand that our Vietnam War veterans learned to protect each other—and continue to protect each other today, decades after the war ended. We see that many veterans continued to serve their country long after they took off the uniform.”

In entering his resolution, Harckham concluded that the State of New York “wishes to show its Vietnam veterans the respect and appreciation they deserve, but did not always get when they returned home.”

To see a video of Harckham’s speech on the Senate floor, click [here](#).

The Vietnam War veterans that traveled to Albany as guest of Harckham were Art Hanley, deputy director of the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency; Steve Seid, assistant at the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency; William Nazario, national senior vice commander for the Military Order of Purple Hearts; Rob Rottkamp, commander of Brewster VFW Post 672; Harry Sherblom, quartermaster of Brewster VFW Post 672; Eugene Lang, a Purple Heart recipient and Cortlandt resident; and fellow veterans Bob Matuszewski, James Mecca and Tor Heskesta. All enjoyed a luncheon held in the veterans’ honor and a tour of the State Capitol afterwards before the Senate session.

This year was the tenth anniversary of National Vietnam Veterans Day, which was proclaimed by President Barack Obama back in 2012.

From the time the United States carried out its first combat mission against the Viet Cong on January 12, 1962 until when the last American troops left Vietnam on March 29, 1973, more than three million Americans served their country, and more than 58,000 sacrificed their lives during the war. Among US service men and women, 300,000 were wounded, 75,000 permanently disabled and 1,200 remain missing and unaccounted for. The names of those 58,318 lives lost are forever engraved in the black granite panels of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

“The warm welcome we received from Senator Harckham and everyone at the State Capitol, the kind words that were spoken, the heartfelt thanks given to us—all of it touched my soul,” said Hanley.