

Vector Family Helps Vietnam Veteran Families Honor Loved Ones

On April 19th, Vector family members from the Columbia, MD and Manassas, VA offices helped the families of Vietnam Veterans, who died as a result of non-combat injuries; honor their loved ones at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.

According to Tom Rogers, the effort was designed to help surviving family members get through the ceremony, knowing that their comfort mattered. “Each year Vietnam Veterans die as a result of illnesses and injuries that are NOT considered to be *combat related* but from things like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or exposure to Agent Orange to name just a few. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund helps preserve the legacy of these soldiers in a ceremony conducted at the wall, where the names of those who have passed are read, and individual memorial wreaths are placed at the wall in their specific honor.” This year nearly 200 Vietnam Veterans were remembered.

As one might imagine, the emotional toll is inescapable! These families relive their loved ones’ war experiences in Vietnam, the personal trials of their return home, and of course their deaths from non-combat but equally final injuries and illnesses. Our Vector Family members’ jobs were to assist these families to get them through the day with as much comfort as possible. Most traveled from all corners of the country to get to Washington, some incapacitated and in wheelchairs, some weakened by age and by sadness. ALL of them however, were experiencing the same emotional mixture of pride, grief, and loneliness that reflects in the death of every American Soldier from the Revolutionary War forward.

One thing for certain is that those Vector family members who escorted Veterans’ families were equally moved! They also felt the pain, pride and loneliness that anyone experiences in this situation. While most families smiled with pride when showing photos of their loved ones, they also swallowed hard to keep back the tears. They were fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, but that day they were remembered first and foremost as soldiers.