

# VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL

*Thirtieth*

## ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION



November 11, 2023

Veterans Day Observance at the Wall  
Washington, D.C.

Cover Photo: Photography by Rod A. Hill, © Rod Hill Portraits LLC  
Vietnam Women's Memorial, Washington, D.C. ©1993 Eastern National, Glenna Goodacre, Sculptor

# WELCOME LETTER

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Dear Friends,

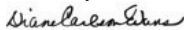
Thirty years ago, we dedicated the first monument on the National Mall to honor American women's patriotic service, achievements, courage, and sacrifice. The Vietnam Women's Memorial brings reconciliation and healing for all veterans, their families, and the nation. Women's contributions no longer hide in the shadows but inspire us today.

We are most grateful to designer and sculptor Glenna Goodacre, who describes the humility and deep satisfaction she feels at having shaped "the clay which might touch the hearts and heal the wounds of those who served...I can only hope that future generations who view the sculpture will stand in tribute to these women who served during the Vietnam era."

More than 265,000 women served during the Vietnam era in professional, technical, and leadership roles. We needed them. We are proud of them. Today, we see growing numbers of women follow in their footsteps and dedicate their lives to service in the military or in support of our Armed Forces. We salute the patriotic women who served before us, with us, and those currently serving our nation.

On behalf of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Advisory Group and Eastern National, I thank you for being with us today, and for your enduring support.

Sincerely,



Diane Carlson Evans

Founder, Vietnam Women's Memorial

Chair, Vietnam Women's Memorial/Eastern National Advisory Group



Left: Vietnam Veteran Sharon Bystrom touches a name, with her sister veterans reflected in the "Wall". Right: Diane Carlson Evans with the Vietnam Women's Memorial Statue



# ANNUAL VETERANS DAY OBSERVANCE AT THE WALL

Prelude Music	"Dances with Wolves" Composed by John Barry
Opening Remarks	Jim Knotts, VVMF President and CEO, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
Invocation	Chaplain Linda Pugsley Doctor Biblical Studies; Flight Nurse, USAF Vietnam
Presentation of Colors	Joint Forces All Women's Color Guard Military District of Washington
Pledge of Allegiance	Edie McCoy Meeks, 1st Lt. U.S. Army, Vietnam
National Anthem	SFC Lindsey Grebeldinger
Master of Ceremonies	Major General Sharon Banister, USAF (ret.)
Welcome	Jeff Reinbold Superintendent National Mall and Memorial Parks
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Speaker	Lt. Col. Janis Nark, U.S. Army Nurse Corps (ret.)
Vietnam Women's Memorial Speaker	Colonel Courtney M. Sugai, U.S. Army
Music	"Til the White Dove Flies Alone" Sung by Kera O'Bryon, Written by Rod McBrien and John Linde, Theme song of 1993 Dedication.
Introduce Keynote Speaker	Marsha Guenzler-Stevens Ph.D, Advisory Group Vietnam Women's Memorial
Salute to the Vietnam Women's Memorial	Diane Carlson Evans, U.S. Army Nurse Corps, Vietnam, Founder & President Emeritus, Vietnam Women's Memorial
Music	"I Will Always Remember You" Sung by Kera O'Bryon; written by Rod McBrien
Wreath Laying	Patriotic Organization Representatives
"Amazing Grace"	Chris Jackson, Bagpiper
TAPS	Military District of Washington

Speakers Subject To Change



# VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL: THANK YOU

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## Thank You! From The Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation

The Vietnam Women's Memorial Advisory Group is grateful to Eastern National, the National Park Service, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for their assistance in making this ceremony possible. We extend our heartfelt "Thank You" to the volunteers, organizations, and individuals who have faithfully supported the Vietnam Women's Memorial and the 30th Anniversary Commemoration with their gifts of time, talents, and dollars. We especially appreciate Kera O'Bryon, an Emmy-nominated actress, singer, and voice talent for graciously performing during the commemoration activities.

We'd also like to thank Rod Hill, Navy Veteran, for providing the cover photography for this program and other Vietnam Women's Memorial materials. We extend our warmest gratitude to the participants of the 30th Anniversary Candlelight Ceremony and Storytelling Program at the Vietnam Women's Memorial, and the 1:00 pm ceremony today at the Wall.

To learn more about the Vietnam Women's Memorial please visit [www.VietnamWomensMemorial.org](http://www.VietnamWomensMemorial.org)



Top left: Former 1st Lt. Ann Cunningham, Army Nurse Corps during – TET at the 12th Evacuation Hospital, Cu Chi Vietnam. Two tour operating room nurse. Top right: Barb Lilly and Emily Strange, American Red Cross Donut Dollies. Bottom: Women who served gathered around the statue during the 20th Anniversary commemoration in 2013



# FEATURED SPEAKERS



**Dr. Sharon R. Bannister, Major General, United States Air Force (retired)**

Dr. Sharon Bannister is a former U.S. Air Force Major General with 15+ years of C-level experience leading complex healthcare teams. As a trusted and proven professional, she drove policy and strategic direction for the \$52B Department of Defense healthcare system comprised of more than 144K medical personnel. Having served in multiple critical governance roles during the historic, Congressionally-mandated Military Health System reform, she was recognized for producing multibillion-dollar results through the development of inclusive teams with a shared passion for crafting, marketing and executing strategy designed for global impact. Additionally, as a four-time military commander, she exercised decision authority for all policies, healthcare operations, resource management, budget execution, human resource management, risk management and community relations for clinics and hospitals. As a dedicated Veterans' advocate, she is serving her second term on the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF). She also has been serving as a National Mall Park Service volunteer since 2017, assisting visitors at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Sharon is also a nationally renowned speaker who connects with audiences through her diverse background as a servant leader, dedicated healthcare executive, board-certified periodontist, educator, wife, mom, veteran's advocate, and Gold Star daughter.

## Kera O'Bryon

Kera O'Bryon is an Emmy-nominated actress, voice-over artist, and singer, originally from Bel Air, MD. Over the past 30 years, she has been featured in numerous television commercials, films, animations, musical recordings, corporate videos, and theatrical performances. She is also a vocal coach. In 2003, Rod McBrien, the composer of "Til the White Dove Flies Alone", the Anthem of The Vietnam Women's Memorial, asked Kera to perform the theme song for the 10 Year Anniversary Memorial Ceremony on Veterans Day. She has since performed it at the 15th, 20th, and 25th Anniversaries. She is honored again to participate in this year's 30th Anniversary Commemoration.



**Lt. Col. Janis Nark, US Army Nurse Corps (retired)**

Janis Nark enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps while in nursing school and shipped off to boot camp in the spring of 1970. Her first duty station was at Madigan General Hospital in Washington state. Her ward was a medical one, all Vietnam Vets with overlapping diseases and toxic exposures. She served one year in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971, where she was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay. She stayed in the Army Reserve for 20 years, serving on active duty for Operation Desert Storm from 1990 to 1991. Nark is a graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff College. She retired from the military in 1995 as a Lieutenant Colonel, with 26 years of service behind her.



# FEATURED SPEAKERS

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## Keynote Speaker

**Diane Carlson Evans, Founder & President Emeritus of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation**

As a former Captain in the Army Nurse Corps who served in the combat zone of Vietnam in 1968 and 1969, Diane Carlson Evans had a profoundly personal interest in the recognition of women veterans. Working in surgical and burn units gave her first-hand knowledge of the casualties of the Vietnam War and the sacrifices of the women who volunteered

to leave the comforts of home to support their fighting brothers in a foreign land. This led her on a ten-year mission to establish a Vietnam Women's Memorial. She had to convince government agencies, Congress, journalists and the public that a memorial was a necessary part of the healing process for female war veterans whose service was of lasting historical significance to our nation.



Ms. Evans was the first woman in American history to spearhead a campaign to place a national monument in the nation's capital that recognized the contributions of military women to their country, as well as civilian women's patriotic service. The Vietnam Women's Memorial is an everlasting tribute to the 265,000 women who served during the Vietnam War. She lives today in Helena, Montana with her husband, a Vietnam era veteran of the U.S. Army Medical Corps.



## Colonel Courtney M. Sugai, U.S. Army

Colonel Courtney Sugai is a U.S. Army Logistics Officer and the commander of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade in Fort Shafter, Hawai'i. COL Sugai is from Lihue, Kauai and attended the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she earned a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education and her commission as Quartermaster Officer from University of Hawai'i Army Reserve Officer Training Corps. COL Sugai earned her Master's Degree in

Diplomacy and Military Studies from Hawai'i Pacific University and a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy from National Defense University's Eisenhower School of National Security and Resource Strategy. COL Sugai has deployed twice to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002 and 2013, twice to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003-2004 and 2006-2007, and once to Kuwait in support of Operations Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield 2018. She has participated in multiple joint operations and exercises in the Pacific and European regions. COL Sugai enjoys music, dancing the hula, reading, and going on road trips with her family. COL Sugai is married to Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Iven Sugai, and has three sons.





# SCULPTOR GLENNA GOODACRE

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Sadly, after a long illness Glenna passed in 2020 at age 80 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Vietnam Women's Memorial sculpture was created in her studio there. In 1993, Glenna wrote, "My desire to create a lasting tribute to the American women serving during the Vietnam War is founded upon my deep respect for each of them, and my heartfelt prayer for their hope and healing. I have been humbled by the enormity of such a task yet incredibly honored by the overwhelming gratitude of the veterans. The emphasis of this tribute is centered on their emotions: their compassion, their anxiety, their fatigue, and above all, their dedication." Glenna's design portrays a woman comforting a wounded soldier, a standing woman anxiously looking skyward, and the reflective kneeling woman holding a helmet. There is no rank or identifying insignia as this monument honors all women who served their country during the Vietnam Era. Glenna leaves us with her everlasting words, "That my hands can shape the clay which might touch the hearts and heal the wounds of those who served fills me with humility and deep satisfaction. I can only hope that future generations who view the sculpture will stand in tribute to these women who served during the Vietnam era."



Glenna Goodacre is a world-renowned, award-winning sculptor and is one of a small number of independent artists to have her artwork minted on a U.S. circulated coin, the gold-colored Sacagawea dollar issued in 2000.



# STORYTELLING

## In Their Own Words: Storytelling at the Vietnam Women's Memorial

Join us every Veterans Day and Memorial Day to honor the service and experiences of Vietnam era women veterans. Women veterans, family members, and friends who were touched by that war gather to heal, connect, and share their powerful experiences in their own words.

Storytelling events are hosted by Eastern National, in coordination with the National Park Service and the Vietnam Women's Memorial Advisory Group.

To learn more about upcoming events and to hear stories from past participants visit [www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org).



## Securing the Legacy of the Vietnam Women's Memorial

In 2015, The Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation board of directors entrusted Eastern National, a non-profit educational partner of the National Park Service, with its long-term goal to continue the legacy of the Vietnam Women's Memorial by honoring all the military and civilian Vietnam-era women who served, educating the public and facilitating research. Eastern National is proud to help share the important story of women who served around the world in the Vietnam era.

Kevin Kissling, President and CEO of Eastern National, said, "We are honored to have been asked to partner with the Foundation. The Foundation and Eastern National are committed in our efforts to preserve and promote the legacy of the military and civilian women who have shown their dedication to duty during Vietnam. We are forever mindful of the commitment the Foundation has shown in preserving their memory, and indebted to those women who risked their lives to serve our country." We are forever indebted to their service."



Eastern National employees at Memorial Day Storytelling.

Learn more about Eastern National at [easternnational.org](http://easternnational.org)





# VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

## A Message From Jim Knotts, President and CEO

On behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, I'd like to congratulate the Vietnam Women's Memorial Advisory Board and Eastern National on 30 years of leading the efforts to recognize the contributions of military women to our country. We are pleased to be a partner in today's ceremony commemorating the 30th anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

The women who volunteered to serve during the Vietnam War played a crucial role and brought compassion to those they cared for and support to their fellow service members. Today, we'll hear stories of their service and be reminded about why we should honor all who serve and sacrifice in our nation's armed forces.

With the dedication of The Wall in 1982, along with the dedications of the Three Servicemen Statue, the Vietnam Women's Memorial, and the *In Memory* plaque – all those who served and sacrificed in Vietnam are commemorated here. This is the place our nation has set aside to honor them.

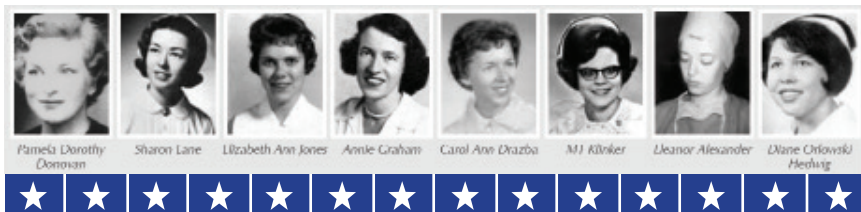
We are thrilled that, for the first time ever, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) now has maintenance responsibility at the Vietnam Women's Memorial. This change comes as VVMF expands its maintenance partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) to cover all four components of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial site. Eastern National and the Vietnam Women's Memorial Advisory Board have been partners for many years, and were instrumental in having VVMF expand its maintenance responsibility.

The Memorial was built on a promise to "never forget." You have our commitment that we will continue to engage visitors and work to ensure that current and future generations learn about the roles of women in Vietnam and why all service members should be recognized for their service and sacrifice.



Jim Knotts  
President and CEO  
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund  
Veteran, Operation Desert Storm

The Women on the Wall



## Vietnam Women's Memorial

The continued stewardship of the Vietnam Women's Memorial and its mission to honor the legacy of women veterans in the Vietnam era is made possible by Eastern National and the National Park Service. Storytelling Programs are held each Veterans Day and Memorial Day at the Vietnam Women's Memorial on the National Mall. To learn more about the memorial, its educational programs, and research on women who served during the Vietnam era, please visit: [www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org).

To learn more about the founding of the Vietnam Women's Memorial, please visit: [www.dianecarlson-evans.com](http://www.dianecarlson-evans.com)

To donate to support programs at the Vietnam Women's Memorial, please write to:

**Vietnam Women's Memorial Fund**  
c/o Eastern National  
470 Maryland Drive, Suite 1  
Fort Washington, PA 19034

You may donate online via [www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org) or contact us by email at [vietnamwomensmemorial@easternnational.org](mailto:vietnamwomensmemorial@easternnational.org)

## Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

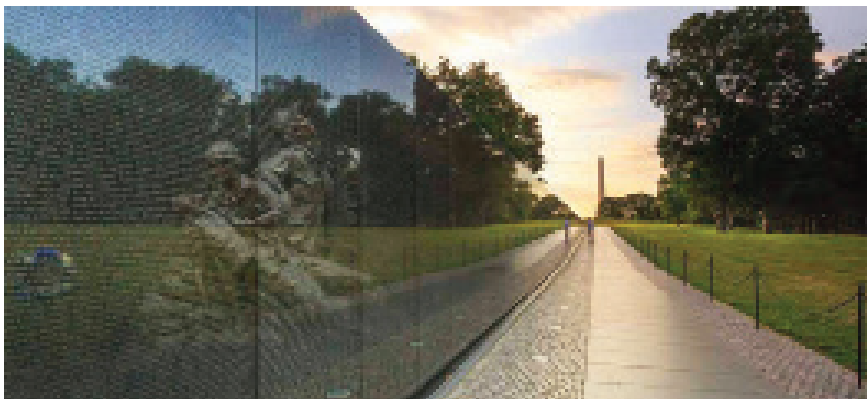
Stay connected:

**Facebook:** Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/VVMF](https://twitter.com/VVMF)

**Instagram:** VNVeteransMemorial

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the National Park Service have co-sponsored observances on Memorial Day and Veterans Day at The Wall every year since its dedication in 1982.



Front Cover Photo: Rod A. Hill, CDR, USN  
(Ret.), 23 years  
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**