

CAMDEN VETERAN'S MONUMENT DEDICATION

March 28, 2015

Commander: Good afternoon. Thank you all for attending this monument dedication ceremony today. This is a solemn and important occasion— one which we will long remember with pride for the small part we are contributing. The Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, so we've selected this day in honor of them and we also celebrate on this day, the 80th Anniversary of VFW Post 3238 in service to this community. Please help me to welcome any Vietnam Veterans in attendance, please come forward to be recognized. Prior to starting the formal portion of our dedication today, I'd like to read to you a statement from VFW National Commander John Stroud which was distributed earlier this week.

March 30 is a very important day, not only to the VFW, but to all of America. It is a day dedicated to a generation of veterans who were made extraordinary by their commitment and lasting resolve.

In 2011, nearly 38 years after the final withdrawal of U.S. combat and combat-support troops from Vietnam, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution designating March 30, "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

From February 1961 – May 1975, more than 3,400,000 Americans served in support of the U.S military operations in Vietnam and Southeast Asia; more than 58,000 gave their lives.

Our Vietnam veterans are worthy of every praise, monument and memorial erected in their name. They served with a tenacious and indomitable spirit and returned to a homeland in political turmoil. Regrettably, their noble and steadfast service was overlooked by many upon their return. In many cases their sacrifice went unappreciated, dismissed or was even insulted.

Though long-overdue, today America recognizes each and every Vietnam veteran who did not receive the proper welcome home they earned and deserved. We praise their sense of duty, unselfish devotion and courageous willingness to put their country first.

We truly owe them a great debt. It's because of their strength that the flame of freedom burns brightly today in countries all around the world. And it's because of their vision for the future that no veteran will ever again return to an America unappreciative of one's service and sacrifice.

To all Vietnam veterans: today and every day, on behalf of the entire VFW, thank you for your service, and welcome home.

I'd like to acknowledge some distinguished guests here with us today.

Mayor Justin King
Vice Mayor John Green, Jr.
Councilman Kevin Casquarelli
Councilwoman Tracey Torres

Town Manager Aaron Chaffinch
Accountant Amanda Marlow
Town Clerk Jamie Fenske

Commander: Comrades, Attention!

Please join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Commander: Order Arms!

We are assembled here to pay tribute to the men and women of our community who have served in the United States armed forces—our neighbors who have served and fought in defense of this country—and for preservation of our way of life. Those men and women are worthy of far greater recognition than mere words or markers. The sacrifices they made and the deeds they performed shall be written in history, and will remain alive in our memories for generations to come. We express sincerely our pride and gratitude for the tasks they fulfilled. Before you is the flag of our nation (indicate the flag). That flag is the symbol of all that is sacred to us. Look at it closely for a moment. The Flag of the United States reflects what we are—and what we hope to be. The white stripes symbolize purity of purpose in our freedom of thought, expression and worship. These are the privileges we guarantee to all who live in our land. They are the rights we defend against all enemies who seek to crush the way of life that you and I cherish. Also in that flag we see the red stripes of courage—our willingness to die, if necessary, for preservation of American ideals. Then there is the blue of tranquility upon which the stars of our states are united to hold intact all that is truly ours—the desire for peace, prosperity and happiness throughout our nation. We emphasize this interpretation of the Flag of the United States which you see hoisted proudly and guarded so carefully. We emphasize our tribute to the flag because we are assembled here to honor those who have fought under that sacred symbol of our land. We have come here to dedicate a monument of honor dedicated to the men and women of this community who went forth as the living strength of our flag. They were the United States armed forces on land, sea and in the air. Some of them did not return. They are the honored dead whose resting places are found in many foreign lands and waters around the globe. These American defenders left our schools, our shops and our farms to take up weapons against the foe. They left their peacetime pursuits with confidence in their hearts and assurances upon their lips. They were aware of the dangers before them, yet they responded without hesitancy to the call of duty. These are the men and women in whom we entrusted all our faith. They are the ones for whom we toiled and prayed here at home—to help make their effort victorious, so they might return and live with us in lasting peace and security.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars looks upon all these honored ones as comrades. Within our organization are men and women who have served under the Flag of the United States overseas in many wars to preserve American freedoms. The honors we symbolize here express the appreciation of the VFW toward all comrades-in-arms. Fighting under the flag of this nation is the privileged duty of every able-bodied American, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will always honor

those who go forth in defense of our nation. They are the true guardians of freedom, justice and equality among humanity.

(Comrade 1 & 2 perform about-face. Step to the monument, unveil it and return to their places.)

Commander: Before us is a monument dedicated to all from the town of Camden Delaware who served in the United States armed forces. We honor them. We extend to them and to their memory our deepest respect.

Comrade Chaplain, you will ask the divine blessing.

Chaplain: O, Thou Almighty God — guide these men and women we honor through every day and night. Give them unbounded strength and courage to continue their efforts for lasting peace. Make their victory a true service to all humanity. Give them growing faith in Thy teachings. Make them Thy chosen servants—to carry on forever a victorious crusade against all evil forces seeking to destroy that which is just and good in the hearts of men. Help them to bring brotherly love to all lands. Bless and comfort those whom they have left bereaved. And, finally, O God, help us to increase our spiritual unity, and our love for all. In reverent humility we ask these blessings. Amen.

Commander: And now, in the name of Clarence Vinson – John Chason Memorial Post No. 3238, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of Delaware, we dedicate this monument, so all may see, in honor of all the brave men and women who have served in the fighting forces of our great nation. May the memory of their noble deeds live on forever.

Commander: (Offer any distinguished guests and opportunity for remarks.)

Commander: Before we conclude, I would like to introduce to you soloist Rachel Maclain. Please join her as she sings the first stanza of “America the Beautiful”.

This concludes today’s ceremony, thank you for attending.