

The Connecticut General Assembly



April 13, 2015

REP. RILEY JOINS DIGNITARIES TO HONOR VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

Rep. Emmett Riley (D-Norwich) joined state and military officials and other dignitaries to honor the veterans of the Vietnam War in the Hall of Flags at the State Capitol.

The annual Welcome Home To Vietnam War Veterans ceremony on March 30 paid homage to the service and sacrifices made by thousands of men and women who served in the conflict.

That day was chosen because it was on March 30, 1973, that the last American combat and combat support troops left South Vietnam, although some U.S. Marines remained to serve military advisors and protect U.S. installations. South Vietnam fell a little more than two years later.

More than 58,000 personnel died, at least 153,000 injured and more than 1,000 – 27 from Connecticut – still missing.

Regrettably, when the veterans came home after the war ended there were no welcome home celebrations or even commemorative events to honor them. “The annual Welcome Home ceremony on March 30 provides an opportunity for America to right an injustice and give the Vietnam veterans the well-deserved honor and respect they deserve,” Riley said.

A friend and constituent of Rep. Riley, Dominick S. Cortese, a Vietnam War veteran and state officer of the Connecticut chapter of the Disabled American Veterans, also spoke during the ceremony.

Calling the Capitol’s Hall of Flags “a most appropriate setting” for the special day, Cortese said that not since the Civil War had a war divided the American people. And for more than a generation later, soldiers were still haunted by the memory of the war.

“Having answered America’s call to arms, one who served failed to receive a nation’s gratitude,” Cortese said, echoing the words of an author who wrote about the war’s toll on the nation. The Vietnam War still resonates even to this very day in America’s psyche. The phrase ‘not another Vietnam’ is still used today,” he said.

Governor Malloy, another keynote speaker at the event, proclaimed March 30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Connecticut.

Acknowledging that his older brother and other relatives served in Vietnam, Malloy said that it was amazing that 40 years have passed since the end of the war. “It shaped us all,” Malloy said.