



# Remembrance and Honor

## VVA, SUPPORTERS JOIN FOR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION AT THE WALL

BY MARC LEEPSON

**O**n April 24, less than a week before the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, Vietnam Veterans of America held a stirring Remembrance and Honor wreath-laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The ceremonies opened with the presentation of the colors by the Joint Armed Forces Color Guard of the Military District of Columbia, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by Shelley Waite and the Pledge of Allegiance led by the event's emcee, VVA Public Affairs Committee Chair Dennis Howland. VVA member Liz Cannon gave the invocation and National President Jack McManus welcomed everyone, noting they had come together as "brothers and sisters in arms, with friends and people who are part of our lives" including members of Sons and Daughters in Touch and the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Grant Coates, long-time chair of VVA's POW/MIA Committee, then addressed the gathering. He spoke about his Vietnam War service and offered a tribute to Spec4 Edward "Eddie" Cox, Jr., his teammate in the 199th Infantry Brigade who was killed in action on February 15, 1969.

Coates also talked about Vietnam War MIAs, noting that VVA "has not forgotten the 1,573 missing Americans whose names are etched on *The Wall*." He concluded with remarks about VVA's



Howland



veteran-to-veteran Veterans Initiative program that helps the Vietnamese find their missing "so that they will ... help us find our missing."

Medal of Honor Recipient Paris Davis, a member of the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame, followed with a brief Keynote speech. After sketching his military career, Col. Davis told the assembled: "You're here to share in the fiftieth anniversary of what we did and where we did it, and I want to thank all of you ... who were able to come back, wounded or otherwise."

The event ended with VVA members placing 56 wreaths at *The Wall*, representing all U.S. states and territories, followed by the playing of "Taps." ♦

