

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Department of the Chesapeake

Patriotic Instruction – April 2022

What is a Warrior?

Recently, on March 29th, we observed “Vietnam Veterans Day” in the United States. This particular day is set aside to remember, and recognize, all the U.S. troops who served during the Vietnam conflict. What most Americans, and even many current and former military members don’t know, is that it does not recognize just those military members who served “in-country” in Vietnam, but rather ALL the U.S. Military members known as “Vietnam Era Veterans,” who served anywhere in the world during, what is officially known as the “VIETNAM ERA, “(period from August 6, 1964 until May 7, 1975).”

It has been the same in almost every war ever fought. There is a percentage of the military sent to “The Front” to fight, sometimes hand-to-hand with the enemy, but there is a far greater number who serve close behind, or far in the rear, in important roles which enable the frontline warriors to operate efficiently, and effectively. Often times these “rear-echelon” personnel get overrun, bombed, killed by landmines, die on death marches, become prisoners of war, and/or suffer and die from the same diseases that everyone else endures. And yet, they don’t get the respect due to them. They are however, patriots, just as if they had gone forward into the “heat of battle.”

Supply, logistics, transportation, communications, medivacs, doctors, nurses, and many others

“Behind the lines,” work hard to support the overall mission in each and every conflict. It was no different during the U.S. Civil War, as author William Davis once wrote about the 1863 U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps:

“The enormous manpower demands of the Union Army’s many functions behind the lines became so great that Washington had to attempt to place less able-bodied men in some postings, in order to free the fitter men for active service. Thus in 1863 was created the Veteran Reserve Corps. It was to be composed of men who were disabled or hospitalized and divided into two battalions – one for men able to use weapons, the other for those missing a limb. Eventually, veterans whose terms of enlistments had expired were also allowed to serve in the corps, with or without disabilities. Men of the reserve wore uniforms of sky-blue kersey, with dark blue cap and trimmings, the jacket cut short in the cavalry pattern, even though they were strictly an infantry service. Their weapons were usually old or worn-out models, which like their owners were no longer needed on the front line.” (1)

As we enter April 2022, and pause to recall the attack on Fort Sumpter on April 12, 1861, let us never forget our Patriotic Duty as Brothers to remember, and recognize, ALL who have served, and are continuing to serve around the world, whether they be active duty, veterans, or patriotic civilians. They are all “warriors” in their own right. Keep them ALL in your hearts and prayers.

FC&L, Andrew W. Johnson, M.Ed., Patriotic Instructor, SUVCW, Department of the Chesapeake