



# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION



## “SITREP” 2021 – Issue 9

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*Dear Commemorative Partners,*

“Off we go into the wild blue yonder, climbing high into the sun ...” opens the U.S. Air Force song. We find it fitting to launch their birthday celebration by recognizing our past and present U.S. Airmen with this [Air Force Birthday Salute!](#)

**U.S. Air Force roots** reach back to a small Aeronautical Division established in **1907** within the **U.S. Army Signal Corps**. Just 11 years later, the Division’s importance was recognized as the War Department created the **U.S. Army Air Service**. Its name was changed by the **Air Corps Act of 1926**, and presence expanded in the War Department build-up prior to our entry into World War II. In June 1941, the **Army Air Forces** was established and by the end of the war had become a major military organization. Its significance led 33rd U.S. President Harry S. Truman to sign into law the [National Security Act of 1947](#), which provided for three separate military departments: the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The first Secretary of the **U.S. Air Force**, [W. Stuart Symington](#), was installed September 18, 1947 – and so on September 18, we observe the Air Force’s **74th birthday**. The Air Force Historical Agency provides all these facts and more on their [webpage](#).



A formation of F-100C “Super Sabres,” a jet routinely called upon for “close air support” missions during the Vietnam War.



Our own History & Legacy Branch created a [U.S. Air Force Patch Poster](#) (shown left) to highlight major U.S. Air Force organizations that served during the Vietnam War. This, and their **three-panel poster series** entitled [Air Base Defense in the Vietnam War](#), are freely available for downloading. In addition, we invite you to view a Vietnam veteran Airmen interview [“trailer”](#) compiled from three different full-length [Oral History Interviews](#).

Service members from each of our Armed Forces gave their “last, full measure of devotion<sup>1</sup>” to our country during the Vietnam War. Of the **58,281** whose names are etched in the [Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#) in Washington, D.C., **2,586 are Airmen**. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, **1,584 – 490 Airmen** among them – remain missing and unaccounted for. Finally, of the **47 Medal of Honor recipients** from the Vietnam War alive today, **retired Colonel James P. Fleming** is the sole remaining Air Force honoree. Read the [account of his gallant actions](#) near Duc Co, Republic of Vietnam, November 26, 1968.

Please join with us in honoring *all* U.S. Air Force Airmen, especially those who are Vietnam veterans!

~ *The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Staff* ~

<sup>1</sup>16th U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, “Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address,” Battlefields.org, American Battlefield Trust, 2021, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/abraham-lincolns-gettysburg-address?ms=googlegrant> (accessed September 16, 2021)

*Join the Nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran!*