

VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(McLean, Virginia) November 6, 2017— The Vinson Hall Retirement Community 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemorative Program was held on November 3 in the Community Building Ballroom at Vinson Hall Retirement Community. The program included student lead discussions, a panel of Vietnam War veterans, a movie viewing, and guest lecturers from Major General Donald C Hilbert, USA (Ret), Captain Douglas Cohn, USA (Ret), and Lieutenant Colonel Marcy Neuendorf, USA (Ret).

The purpose of Vinson Hall's Vietnam War Commemorative Program was to educate school aged children about the Vietnam War beyond what is taught in the classroom and history books. Students from Lenape Middle School in Doylestown, Pennsylvania and members of Boy Scouts of America Washington, D.C. Chapter attended this year's program and lead the discussions with the Vietnam War veterans. The day was full of discussions and recollections as each group of students was paired up with a Vietnam Veteran, many being residents of Vinson Hall Retirement Community.

The morning started with guest lecturer, Major General Donald C. Hilbert, USA (Ret) with a moving talk about his recollection of the Vietnam War. Major General Hilbert served in the military for 35 years before retiring in June 1990. Throughout his long career he has had many major duty assignments including serving as a company commander on his first tour in Vietnam and as a battalion commander on his second tour with the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. It was an honor to hear him speak.

The morning continued with another speaker, Captain Douglas Cohn. He spoke about his war stories, stating that he does not normally share his stories, but for this audience he would. His recollection of his time serving in the jungles of Vietnam helped the audience understand what it was like to be "in country" and understand the different aspects of war. He spoke about his welcome home journey and what it was like to fight for freedom.

The day concluded with a slide show presentation from Lieutenant Colonel Marcy Neuendorf and the movie "Shakey's Hill." LTC Neuendorf described, through her personal photographs, what life was like as a U.S. Army nurse in Vietnam in 1970. She painted a descriptive picture of what the hospitals and operating rooms were like during that time.

Throughout the day there were intergenerational discussions with the student attendees and Vietnam War veterans. Discussions about “when did you first hear about the Vietnam conflict?” and “what did you think about the media presence during the war?” were all topics of conversation. During lunch more informal discussions continued and valuable conversations were had, conversations that are not taught in history class.

The Vinson Hall 50th Anniversary program is an official U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration event. The United States Department of Defense began the Vietnam War Commemoration 2008 “to thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war (POW), or listed as missing in action (MIA), for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.” With the help from supporters and sponsors, Vinson Hall Retirement Community and Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation continue to educate the Northern Virginia community through events like this commemorative program.

Photographs of the event on page 3.

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Vinson Hall Retirement Community is an active, resident-focused, and not-for-profit Life Plan Community that values independence and individuality. We celebrate and encourage freedom of expression, personal choices, and the opportunity to maintain, revitalize, and begin friendships. Independent Living is open to commissioned officers from the U.S. military and their immediate family members. Independent Living is now accepting GS-14 and above federal employees from select agencies. Assisted Living and Nursing Care is open to all members of the community. The Sylvestery provides memory and dementia care to all member of the community as well, no military affiliation required.



LEFT: MG Donald C. Hilbert addressing the audience about his time in Vietnam

BELOW: Vietnam War veterans and student leaders discuss topics of the Vietnam War. Topics included media involvement, tours of duty, and adjusting to civilian life back home.



LEFT: CPT Doug Cohn spoke about his time in Vietnam and what his journey home was like.



BELOW: LTC Marcia Duendorf recalled her time as an Army nurse in Vietnam in 1970. She showed the audience her personal photographs to tell her story of the Vietnam War.

