

KSVAC Call to Action Condensed (rev 2)

June 28, 2009

Kansas Veterans Action Committee is a coalition of veterans, active duty military, and those citizens who owe their freedoms to the faithful service of the members of the United States Armed Forces.
www.ksvac.info

Subject: The Proposed New South Vietnamese Soldiers Vietnam Memorial

OUR MISSION

- To reserve Wichita Veterans Memorial Park for memorials that honor men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.
- To honor and protect the ground made sacred by the memorials to the sacrifices of the men and women in service to the United States of America presently located in Veterans Memorial Park.

Since our inception as a nation, the American military have fought to win and preserve our freedoms as Americans, freedoms that we now take for granted. As a people we owe an immense debt of gratitude to those who, throughout our history, have been willing to fight, sacrifice and die for those freedoms. The memorials in Veterans Memorial Park that publicly recognize those sacrifices are not nearly enough to repay that debt.

However, we, as a people, owe no debt of gratitude to the South Vietnamese Army. And while, philosophically, we can appreciate and respect what they did for their own country; they did not fight for our freedoms, our country, or our way of life.

FACTS

- The John Steven's Veterans Memorial Park was conceived as a park to honor American Veterans. The Wichita Eagle of November 12, 1977 reported the dedication as follows, "Today's dedication of John S. Stevens Veterans Memorial Park at 2nd and Greenway again gives Wichita a public facility honoring those who have served in this country's wars...Now a riverfront plaza will serve as a reminder of Wichitan's efforts and sacrifices in their country's military service..."
- The City of Wichita announces to the public in the Wichita phone directory that "the Park is a tribute to those Kansas citizens who gave their lives in battle for their country." (2008 AT&T Community Living Pages) and on the Attractions in Wichita, Kansas Website proclaims "that the Veterans Memorial Park is a tribute to the men and women of Kansas who answered the Nation's call to defend our freedom in the U.S. Armed Forces and the Merchant Marines."
- **The only memorials that exist in the Park now are to men and women who served in the United States military.**
- **The Park has limited space.** The Park itself is only 3.5 acres with no room for expansion. Only a few of the wars and conflicts in which American soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen have fought and died are memorialized in the Park. Many conflicts in which American military served are not yet memorialized, including, WWI, WWII, Afghanistan, First Gulf War, Iraq, Grenada, Bosnia and Panama. Memorials to the Veterans of the United States have first priority.

- **There is already a Vietnam Memorial in the park.** When other veterans have not yet been honored, in view of the limited space, it is inappropriate to have two major structures commemorating the same conflict.
- **The proposed memorial has wording that honors the South Vietnamese Military and other Allies.**
- **The Veterans’ objections to the memorial are not related to race or national origin.** People of all races, religions, colors, gender and national origin serve in the United States military. Veterans are as diverse and integrated as the active duty military. There is no prejudice as to race, color or religion involved in asking that only American veterans be memorialized in a Veteran’s Memorial Park in Wichita, Kansas. **The American Armed Forces is the ultimate “multi-cultural” organization and our memorials are to Americans of all races, creeds, and national origins.**
- American service men and women take a lifetime oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States. No foreign national serving a foreign government takes that oath; America is not protected by foreign soldiers.
- The South Vietnamese were not our allies; we were theirs. They did not fight for our freedom; we fought and died for theirs.

The right to be memorialized in the Veteran’s Memorial Park is earned by honorable service in the United States Military, and by nothing else. The diminishment of the respect and honor shown for the service of our American soldiers and sailors is not a bone to throw to diversity or political ambition. This ground sacred to a people’s defending warriors is already a fully matured expression of “multi-culturalism” as distinct and multicultural as America itself.

OUR POSITION

Veterans Memorial Park is sacred ground dedicated to the memory of American service men, and women who served our country in the American uniform and who each took the enlistment oath “to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic;” and to ...”bear true faith and allegiance to the same.” These American service men and women faithfully served the United States of America and her interests and, in some cases, offered up their lives to fulfill this oath. Their dedication to their oath sets the American soldier, sailor, marine, airman and Coast Guardsman above all other foreign national combatants, and entitles their service to be recognized, honored and memorialized, separate and independent from the service of foreign nationals who fought while wearing the uniform of a foreign country.

All veterans, active duty military and citizens we call on you to serve your country and fellow veterans. You have a voice as a citizen. Make your opinions known.

- Contact your mayor and city council members by email, phone, mail or in person.
- Call City Hall at 316-268-4331
- Sign the Petition for Reserving Veterans Memorial Park to the memory of Veterans who were serving in the United States Armed Forces at the time of their service.
- Attend the City Council Meeting on July 14, 2009 at 9:00 am when this issue will be voted on.