

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Vietnam Memorial Monument Unveiling and Dedication to Take Place April 22 on Kent Island
Queen Anne's County Veteran and Military Support Alliance (VAMSA) to Launch, Locate at Marina
Office Park**

Kent Island, Maryland (4/11/2023) - Libbey's Coastal Kitchen at Bay Bridge Marina owner and Vietnam War veteran Walt Petrie will unveil a Vietnam War monument to honor three fallen service members from his military unit at a dedication taking place Saturday, April 22, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. on marina grounds.

"On March 25, 1967 during operation 'Junction City,' members of Company C 4th Combat Engineers Spec 4 Michael Twigg, Spec 5 Michael Knight, and Sergeant Lloyd McBroom were killed in action," explains Petrie. "On April 22, we will dedicate this monument to them, their families, and the other 55,000 men and women that made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War."

Accompanied by veterans of all generations, special guests include Company C 4th Combat Engineers former members Captain Sanchez and Colonel Sciple, Lieutenant Pietrie, Spec 4 Joe Poppone, Spec 4 John Patella, and Spec 5 Ron Gray as well as company commanders. In addition, local, regional, and state officials, including Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown, will be in attendance. The memorial will serve as a firm reminder that since the dawn of this nation veterans have stood ready to give the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country.

Fellow Vietnam Veteran Wes Guckert, President and CEO of SDVOSB, The Traffic Group, Inc., will serve as the memorial's emcee. Guckert is also a founding member of the Queen Anne's County Veteran and Military Support Alliance (VAMSA) and a staunch, life-long supporter of veterans and their unique needs.

As part of the memorial and dedication event taking place on April 22, VAMSA and the national Veterans Health and Wellness Foundation will announce a strategic partnership to open a national center of excellence to provide critically needed resources and support for service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers with VAMSA.

To be located in the adjacent office park, the VAMSA Center will offer free navigation services, counseling, peer support, benefits advisement, massage and wholistic therapies, and other locally-based services.

"Veterans and their families encounter some of the most challenging struggles of any Americans – especially after service members come home wounded both physically and mentally," says Eric Johnson, Executive Director and Vice Chair of VAMSA and a disabled Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (Afghanistan) Veteran. "We seek to cement the standard that there is an absolute moral obligation to support the entire military family from start to finish."

"The experiences of veterans are often vastly different than that of their civilian neighbors, so their voice needs to be adequately incorporated in health and wellness discussions and ultimately healthcare delivery," says Evelyn Lewis, MD, MA, FAAFP, President and Chair of the Veterans Health and Wellness Foundation. "For veterans and their families to be their best, they need receptive, culturally accepting communities which they can call home and feel at home."

In the future, the Center will serve as a training ground for community leaders across the nation, particularly those in rural America, to assemble, exchange ideas and learn how to operationalize “thank you for your service.” They can then return to their respective communities and establish similar resource centers adapting the model presented at the center.

With limited capacity, the dedication event is private and by invitation-only. Approximately 200 attendees are expected. Additional information can be found at: www.VAMSA.us.