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THE MUSEUM OF FLIGHT MAGAZINE



FLIGHTS TO VIETNAM WERE ALL TROOPS, THEY WERE FULLY DRESSED, ALL THEIR GEAR, GUNS, EVERYTHING.



◀ A rendering of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park with the Museum's B-52G Stratofortress as the centerpiece.

Museum over several weeks, but the 159-foot fuselage and the 92-foot wings required a bit more planning. These final pieces were transported on semi trucks and escorted by the Washington State Patrol and the Tukwila Police and Fire Departments, avoiding highway overpasses and road construction between Everett and Tukwila. More than 300 supporters welcomed the trucks as they backed into the parking lot of Raisbeck Aviation High School at the Museum. The B-52 was reassembled last June next to the site where the park is being constructed.

A committee of Vietnam veterans has guided our *Project Welcome Home* efforts every step of the way; their perspectives and military experience ensure that the park, and our supporting programs, are respectful and meaningful to all veterans who served between 1955 and 1975. Although the park's name and design have changed since we began, our mission remains the same: to honor the legacies of the many veterans who were not recognized or welcomed when they returned home. The Memorial Park will encourage an important conversation in our community about those who served, how they were treated when they returned home, and the conflicting narratives perpetuated by the media about the Vietnam War.

Join us for the momentous opening and dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park on Saturday, May 25 over Memorial Day weekend. See ad on back cover for details.

New Park Set to Open in May

BY: SEAN MOBLEY, DOCENT SERVICES SPECIALIST, AND
LOUISA GAYLORD, DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

THE MUSEUM ACQUIRED the veteran B-52G Stratofortress #59-2584 when it was retired from service by the United States Air Force. It had accumulated 15,305 hours of flight time and had played an integral role in bringing 591 American prisoners of war home as part of Operation Linebacker II (OLB II) in 1972 during the Vietnam War. When the Museum received the B-52 it didn't have enough space for the massive aircraft on its main campus at Boeing Field; the B-52 sat quietly for 20 years at Paine Field in Everett, until it was "rediscovered" by some familiar faces.

Former B-52 navigator Carl Hanson-Carnethon was planning a reunion in 2012 with several of his fellow E-12 crewmembers. They wanted to reconnect with each other and revisit the aircraft they flew together during OLB II. The reunion convinced the

Museum that although the B-52 was rusted and run-down, it still held a special place in the hearts of many veterans across the country. Museum Trustee Jim Farmer also flew B-52s in Vietnam and has been a tireless advocate for the restoration of #59-2584. A committee of veterans, including Jim, began to envision more than simply restoring the aircraft; they saw an opportunity to properly honor veterans of the Vietnam War, many of whom hadn't been recognized when they returned home from their service. The *Project Welcome Home* campaign to restore the B-52 and build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park was born from this vision.

Project Welcome Home began in earnest in 2017 when the B-52 was repainted in its original Vietnam-era camouflage livery and carefully disassembled. Many of the smaller pieces were easily transported down to the

flew for Northwest as a pilot. In 1965, Major Schierman was shot down, his fate unknown. "I flew with him," remembers Jevne. "All of us knew he was MIA. All of us at Northwest. But you don't know... you don't know anything."

In 1973, Major Schierman was released from a Prisoner of War camp in northern Vietnam and returned to life in the US. He eventually resumed piloting for Northwest Airlines.

Northwest Airlines was one of several involved in the evacuation of Saigon in 1975. Darlene Jevne crewed the last Northwest flight out of the city as it fell. "It was absolute chaos," she says. "People knew that if they did not get on the aircraft..." She pauses. "It was life or death."

Chaos indeed. Mothers, unable to fit themselves on the planes, passed their children to those boarding. "The pilot kept saying we had to shut the door, we're too heavy. We're not going to get off the ground." Packed well past its normal load, the distinctive red-tailed Northwest aircraft lumbered down the runway before finally lifting off.

That red tail of a Northwest aircraft was a welcome signal to soldiers on the ground. They knew it was their ride home. "We were there for years welcoming home the troops. They were so happy to see Americans. We were there in our Northwest uniforms. And they got an ice-cold Coke and sandwiches and they were happy."

Darlene, and the Vietnam veterans she served, is why The Museum of Flight chose to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park at its main Tukwila campus. As part of the larger *Project Welcome Home* initiative, the park honors those who served during one of the most difficult times in our country's history. A dedication ceremony will take place on May 25 at 11:00 a.m. to open the park to the public. Please join us in saying "Welcome Home" to our veterans.

THE MUSEUM OF FLIGHT FOUNDATION
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**FREE &
Open to
the Public**



**SATURDAY
May 25
11 a.m.**

Memorial Day Weekend

The Museum of Flight invites
you to this momentous occasion!

GRAND OPENING & DEDICATION

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park

9305 East Marginal Way South, Tukwila, Washington - *Behind the Aviation Pavilion*

Aircraft Fly-Overs, Color Guard,
Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony, and so much more!



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