

Christmas Remembrance Ceremony set for Dec. 3 at Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Springfield

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will host the

annual Christmas Remembrance Ceremony for Illinois soldiers listed as prisoners of war or missing in action (POW/MIA) during the Vietnam War on Saturday, Dec. 3, at the Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield.

The ceremony will begin at 1 p.m., and it's open to the public.

Family and friends of soldiers will have the opportunity to hang handmade, heart-shaped ornaments with the names of loved ones on a tree near the memorial. The Black Tiger Honor Guard will serve as the color guard. The names of the POW/MIA soldiers will be read aloud, and the ceremony will also include music courtesy of the Land of Lincoln Chorus.

"The Illinois Vietnam Vigil Committee appreciates IDNR sponsoring the annual POW/MIA Christmas Remembrance Ceremony each year. There are still 63 men unaccounted for," said committee spokesman Jim Mathes. "We always need to remember these men and the sacrifices of their families. They should never be forgotten."

"The holiday season offers us a wonderful opportunity to honor the Illinois heroes still listed as POW/MIA from the Vietnam War," said Terry Prince, director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. "We are grateful to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Oak Ridge Cemetery for providing us the opportunity to have this special occasion. I can't think of a better location to honor our military POW/MIA than in the same place where thousands of our dearly departed veterans rest in peace, near our 16th president and surrounded by a community and state that will never forget their service and sacrifice."

To learn more about the Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Oak Ridge Cemetery, visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/features/memorials/Pages/vietnam-veterans-memorial.aspx>