



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 19, 2019

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## **Fourth of July Festival Announces a Festival Float Honoring Vietnam Veterans as the Honorary Marshals of the Festival Parade**

**SOUTHPORT, N.C.** - The North Carolina 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival Committee will honor Vietnam Veterans during the 2019 festival by naming them as Honorary Marshals of the Festival Parade.

It is the tradition of the festival to acknowledge different war era soldiers in alternate years. This year the committee has chosen to honor our Vietnam Veterans for their contributions overseas and at home.

“The 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee is pleased to honor all veterans,” said Karen Sphar, executive vice president of the Southport Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce.

“Acknowledging our Armed Services for the freedoms we enjoy today is an important aspect of each year’s 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. From the days of the Continental Army to today’s five branches of military service opportunities, many have given all. No matter the call or opinion of cause, the troops stand ready to defend and we are proud to honor their efforts.”

The military festival float coordination has been done with the help of the Brunswick County Veterans Coalition. Brunswick County has more than 130,000 people within its boundaries. Approximately 10 percent are veterans who have served in the armed forces, a majority of these are over the age of 65. Many of these veterans are members of veteran organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, the Marine Corps League and others. These veterans, although not in uniform any longer, strive to assist fellow veterans in need and the citizens of Brunswick County through various programs.

Currently, the Brunswick County Veterans Coalition consists of 15 veteran organizations located throughout Brunswick County. It meets every other month on the second Wednesday of the month at various locations within the county. The Coalition was established to unite these veteran organizations to accomplish three missions: first, to provide information to the membership on updates of veteran legislative actions, as well as veteran health and disability benefits; second, to coordinate the efforts and activities of the veteran organizations; and finally to act as a unified voice on veteran issues to those who represent them in the halls of Congress.

Accompanying the Vietnam Veterans on the float are their spouses representing the families of our veterans who have played and are playing a vital support role to the servicemen and women both past and present.

For more information about the Brunswick County Veterans Coalition, please contact retired Lt. Col. Gary Crowden.

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For more than 200 years the city of Southport, N.C. has celebrated the nation's independence. Annually more than 50,000 people visit during the festival. With events ranging from arts and crafts in the park, vendor booths, street dances, gallery walks and of course a parade. The Fourth of July Festival is known as the official celebration for the State of North Carolina. For more details regarding the Festival visit the Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce's website [www.southport-oakisland.com](http://www.southport-oakisland.com) or official Fourth of July Festival website [www.nc4thofjuly.com](http://www.nc4thofjuly.com).

Contributor: retired Lt. Col., Gary Crowden, Chairman Brunswick Veterans Coalition