

A RESOLUTION HONORING NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY 2026, AMERICA 250, AND THE VISIT OF THE WALL THAT HEALS

WHEREAS, March 29, 2026, marks National Vietnam War Veterans Day, designated to honor the more than three million Americans who served during the Vietnam War, with the date chosen to commemorate March 29, 1973, when the last United States combat troops departed Vietnam and American prisoners of war were returned home and to acknowledge that many veterans returned home to a divided nation without recognition, gratitude, or welcome home extended to veterans of other conflict; and

WHEREAS, the County of Rutherford recognizes that remembrance is not only an act of reflection, but a responsibility to ensure that the service and sacrifice of veterans are honored, acknowledged, and carried forward for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the year 2026 coincides with America 250, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and providing a meaningful opportunity for communities across the nation to reflect on service, sacrifice, and the enduring cost of freedom; and

WHEREAS, Rutherford County has been selected as the only stop in North Carolina on the 2026 national tour of The Wall That Heals, to be hosted November 12–15, 2026 at Isothermal Community College in Spindale, North Carolina, spanning Veterans Day and representing a milestone of national and local significance; and

WHEREAS, The Wall That Heals bears the names of 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War, whose names are forever inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., bringing their stories home to the communities from which they came and offering a place of remembrance, education, and healing; and

WHEREAS, ten service members from Rutherford County, known as our Hometown Heroes, lost their lives during the Vietnam War, and their names are forever inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and reflected on the panels of The Wall That Heals, representing courage, sacrifice, and love of country; and



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bryan A. King, *Chairman* | Alan Toney, *Vice Chairman* | Michael Benfield | Hunter Haynes | Donnie Haulk
Bryan A. King, *Interim County Manager* | Hazel S. Haynes, *Clerk to the Board* | Richard Williams, *County Attorney*

WHEREAS, the Rutherford County Hometown Heroes are:

Douglas Grant Bailey	U.S. Army	Home of Record: Rutherfordton
Steve Lewis Camby	U.S. Marine Corps	Home of Record: Spindale
Henry Harrison Ford Jr.	U.S. Marine Corps	Home of Record: Rutherfordton
Gaston David Godfrey	U.S. Marine Corps	Home of Record: Forest City
Earl Marshall Hayes	U.S. Army	Home of Record: Spindale
John Mitchell Hicks	U.S. Army	Home of Record: Rutherfordton
Jimmy Leroy Johnson Jr.	U.S. Army	Home of Record: Rutherfordton
Steve Edwin Lowery	U.S. Army	Home of Record: Forest City
Michael Ray Smith	U.S. Marine Corps	Home of Record: Spindale
Michael Ray Street	U.S. Army	Home of Record: Rutherfordton;

and

WHEREAS, the County of Rutherford recognizes with particular gratitude and reverence those whose lives, service, and sacrifice are forever part of this community's history; and

WHEREAS, the County of Rutherford honors all Rutherford County Hometown Heroes equally, acknowledging that every life given in service to this nation matters and that each name represents a story, a family, and a legacy worthy of remembrance; and

WHEREAS, the In Memory Program honors Vietnam veterans who returned home and later passed away, ensuring that their service and sacrifice continue to be acknowledged and remembered alongside those whose names appear on The Wall; and

WHEREAS, the County of Rutherford recognizes the importance of encouraging community participation, volunteerism, and engagement in The Wall That Heals exhibit as an opportunity to educate, remember, and extend a long-overdue "Welcome Home" to Vietnam Veterans and their families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners hereby honors National Vietnam War Veterans Day 2026, expressing its deepest gratitude to all Vietnam Veterans for their service, sacrifice, and perseverance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County formally recognizes and supports the visit of The Wall That Heals to Rutherford County in November 2026 as an event of national and local significance, aligned with America 250 and Veterans Day, and encourages residents to attend, volunteer, and participate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County honors by name and remembrance the ten Rutherford County Hometown Heroes whose lives were lost during the Vietnam War, ensuring their sacrifice is never forgotten and their legacy endures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County acknowledges the importance of the In Memory Program and encourages families to participate so that all who served in Vietnam and later passed away may be honored and remembered, ensuring their legacy endures for future generations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution stands as a symbol of the County of Rutherford's commitment to remembrance, gratitude, and healing—affirming that while the welcome home may come decades later, it is offered with sincerity, respect, and enduring gratitude of a hometown that believes every life given in service to this nation matters and will never be forgotten

Adopted this 2nd day of March 2026.

Bryan A. King, Chairman

ATTEST:

Clerk to the Board