

IOWA GOLD STAR MILITARY MUSEUM

Public Relations and Media Committee
Camp Dodge Joint Maneuver Training Center
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For Immediate Release

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VIETNAM POW TO HEADLINE GOLD STAR MUSEUM VETERANS TRIBUTE CELEBRATION

The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum will host a Veterans Tribute Celebration on Saturday, Nov. 10, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The celebration includes a musical performance, vendor tables, luncheon and comments from retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Larry Spencer who spent nearly seven years as an American prisoner of war in Vietnam.

Spencer was born in Wichita, Kansas and grew up in Earlham, Iowa graduating from Earlham High School in 1958. He entered the U.S. Navy in February 1963, completing aviation officer candidate school at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida.

During Vietnam, Spencer had two deployments to Southeast Asia serving aboard the USS Ranger and USS Enterprise from 1964-1966.

On Feb. 18, 1966, while flying an F-4B Phantom II on reconnaissance escort mission over North Vietnam he was shot down and captured near Thanh Hoa. Spencer spent six days shy of seven years in captivity as POW, for a total of 2,551 days.

Spencer was one of the first 20 American POWs to return from North Vietnam, arriving back in the United States on Feb. 14, 1973. He retired from the U.S. Navy in 1985 after 22 years of service.

During the celebration the museum will host a supply drive for veterans with a collection point sponsored by Operation Barnabas of Des Moines. All donations will go to benefit veterans in central Iowa. Some examples of what to bring include coffee, canned goods, chewing gum, bath soap, and cleaning supplies. For a complete list go to www.iowamilitarysupport.org

The lecture will take place in the Col. Al Rolfes Education Center at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum on Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa. Admission to the museum is free.

Established in 1985, the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum is the only federally-recognized repository for military artifacts in the state of Iowa. The mission of the Iowa

Gold Star Military Museum is twofold: to preserve Iowa's military history and honor the military service of all Iowans.

The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum's permanent exhibits tell the stories of Iowans who have served in defense of their state and nation, beginning in the early settlement of the state in the 1840s, through the Global War on Terror. An extensive exhibit honors the 34th Infantry Division ("Red Bull" Division), which holds the distinction of serving the most continuous days in combat of any division in the European Theater of Operation during World War II. The museum also contains one of the finest military small arms collections in the Midwest. Additionally, an exhibit detailing the history of the Iowa State Patrol is also on display.

The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum is located on Camp Dodge, 7105 NW 70th Avenue, Johnston, Iowa. Admission is always free. Museum hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Note: For all motorcyclists entering Camp Dodge, drivers and passengers must wear the following Personal Protective Equipment: helmet with full face shield or eye protection/goggles, gloves, long-sleeve shirt or jacket, long pants, and boots.

Group tours are welcome and guided tours are available by appointment. For additional information or questions about the IGSM, contact the museum at (515) 252-4531 or visit the museum website at www.goldstarmuseum.iowa.gov or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HonoringIowaVeterans/.

For questions concerning this release, please contact Lt. Col. Michael Wunn, Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Officer, by email at michael.a.wunn.mil@mail.mil or (515) 252-4582 (office) or (515) 867-4494 (cell), or contact Lt. Col. Tim Mills at timothy.d.mills10.mil@mail.mil or (515) 252-4282 (office).

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