



# America's Defenders

## Honoring Veterans And Celebrating America

(NAPSA)—America's military heroes, past and present, will be honored during the third annual Celebrate Freedom!™, Aug. 10-24, 2002, in Pigeon Forge, at the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in East Tennessee. These heroes are the men and women who have afforded us the freedoms that we as Americans enjoy every day.

Celebrate Freedom! 2002 will include special activities and entertainment that focus on this special group of patriots.

Rocky Bleier, a veteran of the Vietnam War, will deliver a keynote address during a candlelight ceremony on Aug. 23. Bleier was drafted twice in one year, once by the Pittsburgh Steelers, once by the U.S. Army. Sent into combat in Vietnam, Bleier was seriously wounded when his platoon ran into an ambush. He received leg wounds from both rifle fire and grenade fragments. Barely able to walk, it seemed his professional football career was over before it began.

Bleier's story is one of courage and determination. For more than two years he fought his way back. Not only did he rejoin the Steelers, he eventually became the team's star running back, helping them win four Super Bowls.

The Vietnam Moving Wall, a replica of the National Monument, will be on display Aug. 13-17. Operation Liberty, a parade that includes veterans of several military conflicts, marching units and vintage and active military vehicles, is scheduled for the morning of Aug. 24.

Other events planned during Celebrate Freedom! include a series of Freedom Forums with veterans and historians participating in roundtable discussions.



Freedom Forum topics include "Special Ops in Vietnam," "Vietnam Warriors Tell Their Stories," and "Amazing War Stories."

Celebrate Freedom! activities are offered free of charge. As an added benefit, veterans presenting proof of military service at the Pigeon Forge Welcome Center will receive a special Celebrate Freedom VIP card, good for discounts at businesses throughout the city during the 15-day event.

Celebrate Freedom! recently was awarded the Grand Pinnacle Award by the International Festivals & Events Association. Created to honor all U.S. military veterans, the event has become a way to honor all American heroes and to celebrate what makes this the greatest nation on the face of the earth. The fourth annual event is scheduled for Aug. 9-23, 2003.

More information about Celebrate Freedom! is available by calling 1-800-365-6993 or at [www.mypigeonforge.com](http://www.mypigeonforge.com).