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American Airpower Museum Unveils Vietnam Veteran Tribute

On Sunday, Jan. 30 more than 40 years after the start of the bloody Tet Offensive seen as the turning point in the Vietnam conflict, the American Airpower Museum at Republic Airport in Farmingdale unveiled a permanent tribute to the American veterans who served in that war and all those who did not return home.

The display, conceived and constructed by two Purple Heart Vietnam veterans Leonard Partiss of Bohemia and Joseph Pelligritti of West Islip, includes a mannequin depicted as an American "grunt" loaded down with gear and weapons in the middle of a jungle clearing. Another element

of the display is a model of an American firebase engaged in defending its position somewhere in Vietnam's "I Corps."

The display was presented in coordination with the museum's Vietnam era F-105 fighter-bomber built by Republic Aviation during the 1960s at the museum's hangar location and flown in support of American troops throughout the Vietnam conflict. Vietnam veterans who experienced Tet were in attendance to discuss their experiences.

The Tet Offensive was a massive surprise attack launched by North Vietnam against the

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Vietnam Veteran Tribute *(continued from page 1)*

United States and South Vietnamese Army on January 30, 1968. The attack took place during Tet, one of the most sacred holidays in the Vietnamese calendar and took months for the communists to be routed from their positions throughout South Vietnam. While a tactical defeat for the North, with tens of thousands of casualties, the fact that they could mount such a devastating sur-

prise attack eroded support for the conflict across the United States.

The American Airpower Museum operates inside a working hangar, at 1230 New Highway in Farmingdale and is open to the public. For more information about this new, permanent exhibit and general museum information visit their website at: www.americanairpowermuseum.org or call (631) 293-6398.