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Honor and respect will be shown to military veterans, especially those held as prisoners of war or who are still missing in action, on Saturday, Nov. 5, at 2 p.m. when the City of Burleson hosts the fifth annual Military Veteran Tribute at Veterans Memorial Park at Renfro Square. A POW/MIA monument will be unveiled and dedicated during the ceremony.

The guest speaker is United States Air Force Lt. Col. Jerry A. Singleton of Burleson. He graduated from the Air Force Academy in the 1960s, completed pilot training and advanced helicopter training, then was sent to Southeast Asia. Singleton was assigned to an air base in Northern Thailand where he flew rescue missions over North Vietnam. Singleton was shot down Nov. 6, 1965, while flying a rescue mission over North Vietnam. He evaded the enemy for five days before he was captured by the North Vietnamese. Singleton was held as a prisoner of war in the Hanoi Hilton for more than seven years before his release Feb. 12, 1973. Singleton earned two Silver Stars, a Legion of Merit, a Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts and a Prisoner of War Medal. After his release, Singleton attended the Dallas Theological Seminary and finished his Air Force career as a chaplain.

During the Nov. 5 veteran tribute, members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart will honor the family of Army Pfc. Jesse W. Dietrich, 20, of Venus, who died in action Aug. 25, 2011 while serving during Operation Enduring Freedom. Dietrich was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y. He died in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when insurgents attacked his unit using small-arms fire.

Burleson Mayor Ken Shetter will emcee the annual veteran tribute. The Burleson Fire Department honor guard will post the colors. The 6-person choral group From the Heart will sing the national anthem, a musical ensemble and the Salute to the Armed Forces. The Burleson High School Air Force ROTC will present a wreath as bagpiper Steve Pruitt plays Amazing Grace. Following the presentation to Army Pfc. Dietrich's family, the Burleson Police Department's Honor Guard will fire three volleys each by seven members of the guard. That will be followed by the playing of the military Taps by the police department's bugler. ROTC members will raise the POW/MIA flag during the volleys and Taps, then the mayor will dedicate the POW/MIA monument.

There will be limited seating so attendees should bring lawn chairs. The Burleson Lions Club will provide free hot dogs and drinks at the tribute.

Veterans Memorial Park is a City-owned park that includes a fountain surrounded by bricks engraved with the names of local service members, the bronze eagle and Purple Heart memorial that were unveiled in 2009, and the names of veterans from World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam from the Johnson County Veterans Monument that were added in 2010. The park was dedicated to the City in 2009 by Rocky Bransom and Jim Garrett of B&G Development. The park is located at 298 E. Renfro St., near the corner of Renfro Street and I-35W.