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Major General Lester “Les” Simpson will be the guest speaker for the Friday, March 27, fourth annual Vietnam Veterans Celebration at Veterans Memorial Plaza in Burleson. The event begins at 2 p.m. The Burleson Heritage Foundation and the City of Burleson are hosting the event.

Simpson assumed duties of Commanding General of the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division on June 1, 2014. He received his commission in the Army National Guard in 1980. His command posts include commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 144<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment; Commander, 142<sup>nd</sup> Rear Operations Center; and in 2011 he served as commander, 176<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade during major combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In October 2012 General Simpson assumed the duties of Assistant Adjutant General - Army, Texas National Guard and in May 2013 he assumed the duties of Special Assistant to the director, Army National Guard, the Pentagon.

The general’s military awards include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star and Combat Action Badge awarded in Afghanistan, the Defense Meritorious Service medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with 1 bronze oak leaf cluster), the Army Commendation Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster) and numerous other awards.

The 2 p.m. celebration will include the presentation of colors; the Burleson Police Department’s firing team and “Taps” by a bugler; and representatives from Burleson, Cleburne, Arlington, Midlothian and Fort Worth Police serving with the Pipes and Drums Corps. Burleson Mayor Ken Shetter and Congressman Roger Williams are also scheduled to speak at the celebration.

Veterans Memorial Plaza is located near Renfro Street and I-35W. The City-owned plaza includes a fountain and room for 3,000-plus bricks engraved with the names of local service members. The plaza also includes a bronze eagle and Purple Heart memorial that were unveiled in 2009; 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; and a POW monument that was added in 2011.