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## EDITORIALS

# Put The Memorial In Coventry

Should there be a memorial to the 612 Connecticut men who died in the Vietnam War? Should it be in Coventry?

Yes, and yes again.

A woman named Jean Risley, inspired by her brother's heroic service and by a remarkable research project on our 612 Vietnam casualties done by local middle-schoolers, is raising money to build a memorial to all of the Connecticut veterans who gave their last full measure of devotion in Vietnam. She has strong support and has raised more than a third of the \$40,000 needed for the memorial, which will be built in the style of the national Vietnam War Memorial in Washington.

The town council has voted to place the memorial on the Memorial Green across from Patriots Park, where Coventry dead from several wars are honored. But in March, the chairman of the town's veterans memorial commission told the council that it doesn't want the memorial installed on the green.

Although supporting the concept, Eric J. Ohlund said the green could run out of room to honor Coventry's war dead, and said the small rural town was not the ideal place for a statewide memorial. He suggested Hartford.

Whether there's enough space is a fair ques-

tion, one that was raised about placing the World War II and Korean War memorials on the National Mall in Washington. Town council members believe there is; after Mr. Ohlund read his letter, they reiterated their vote in favor of the memorial.

**REMEMBERING  
VIETNAM**  
Honoring all state veterans who gave the last full measure of devotion would work fine

Also, there aren't many statewide war memorials, and there's no tradition of locating them in Hartford. War memorials have traditionally been hometown projects, reflecting the era when local troops enlisted or marched off together. Hartford's greatest war memorial, the Soldiers and

Sailors Memorial Arch, is dedicated to the 4,000 city residents who served, and the 400 who gave their lives, in the Civil War. Also, Connecticut's Iwo Jima Memorial, which functions as the state's World War II memorial, is in New Britain.

In today's society, more mobile than when soldiers carried muskets, families aren't as connected to a single town. Though there are many local Vietnam memorials around the state, it's likely that a number of veterans of that star-crossed conflict aren't honored in stone. A statewide memorial would be appropriate. If Coventry residents wish to honor these gallant GIs and offer their green for quiet reflection, we support them all the way.