

Restored copter trucked to war memorial

The UH-1 Huey was taken to the site of the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Papillion

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The Huey is at its new home.

Volunteers on Wednesday trucked a restored UH-1 Huey helicopter to the site of the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Papillion, on a 2-acre site adjacent to SumTur Amphitheater.

For the past two years, veterans and volunteers have worked with students in Iowa Western Community College's aviation maintenance program to restore the

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NIKOS FRAZIER, THE WORLD-HERALD

A restored UH-1 Huey helicopter is moved off a trailer to the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Papillion on Wednesday.



NIKOS FRAZIER PHOTOS, THE WORLD-HERALD

A restored UH-1 Huey helicopter is lowered onto a temporary platform at the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Papillion on Wednesday. The helicopter, tail No. 68-15532, flew a total of 3,180 hours in Vietnam over the course of four years, according to the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation.

UH-1 Huey

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55-year helicopter.

Delivered to the Army in 1969, the Huey racked up 3,180 hours of flight time over the next three years as a command-and-control aircraft in Vietnam, according to a history compiled by the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation. It apparently never was flown again after it was returned to the U.S. in 1972.

The foundation acquired it from a Vietnam Veterans of America chapter in Bennington, Vermont, with plans to make it a centerpiece of the new memorial.

Three local Vietnam War veterans conceived of the memorial in 2017 and sold the idea to veterans across the state. They launched a fundraising drive in 2020, but it was hampered by the COVID pandemic and inflation that doubled the cost of the project to \$7.3 million.

The foundation held a ground-



A restored UH-1 Huey Helicopter was transported Wednesday to the Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

breaking ceremony in March 2022; construction started in September 2023 after an infusion of \$2.5 million in state money — enough to finish the project.

In addition to the helicopter, the memorial will feature 11 obelisks telling the story of the 11-year war, several flagpoles, and an honor wall bearing the names

of 400 Nebraskans who died in Vietnam — including four sailors who died in a Navy training exercise off the coast of South Vietnam on June 3, 1969.

The memorial is scheduled to be dedicated on June 6.

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