



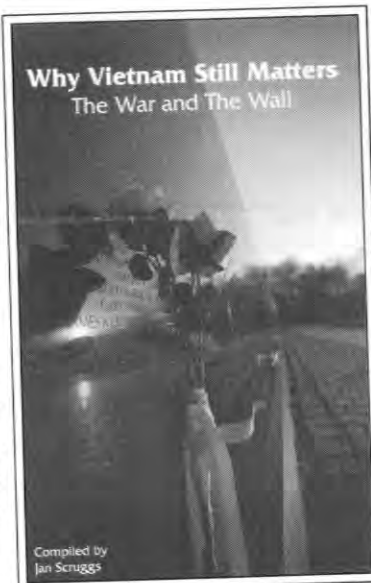
REFLECTIONS FROM THE WALL

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Why Vietnam Still Matters: The War and the Wall

Most of you have by now received our latest book entitled *Why Vietnam Still Matters: The War and The Wall*. A 132 page paperback, this book is a compilation of 58 different writers. For 40 of the authors, the assignment was to briefly, in two typewritten pages or less, explain to high school students the main points about the Vietnam War and its effect on America. The remaining authors reflected on some extraordinary experiences at the Wall. Also included were some speeches by Presidents, Generals, and the brilliant designer of the Wall, Maya Lin, given at or on behalf of, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

**Why Vietnam
Still Matters**



We are convinced that this book should be accessible to all current and future high school students. Therefore, we again are asking your participation in getting a copy into your local high school or high school alma mater. If you haven't already done so, please complete the form provided, making sure to include the name and full address of the high school of your choosing and we will send them a copy for their library. We can't do this without your help, so please complete the form on the back of the leaflet and return it today, before you forget. If you can help defray the cost of this program with a contribution, that would be wonderful. But even if you are unable to send money, please help us.

Letters....

The following letters came in response to *Why Vietnam Still Matters*. We have edited some of the letters for length, but wanted to keep the dialogue our title suggests going. We encourage others to add their voices to the ongoing question of *Why Vietnam Still Matters*. Perhaps it will be the making of *Why Vietnam Still Matters: Part II*.

This is a great book. Too bad our government refuses to learn! It's gone to my sisters and from there it will go to my niece and nephew whom I hope will never have to go to war. Thank you for sending it to me.

Harriet Smith, Attleboro, MA

I am a World War II air corps veteran but have a connection with Vietnam. My friend's only son, Lt. Robert Bruce, was killed only one week after having arrived in Vietnam for duty. I watched this boy grow up and saw the agony in the faces of his mother and father at his funeral ... The book was moving — especially the little vignettes by the Wall volunteers. I have been at the Wall, touched Bobby's name etched in the black [granite] and photographed my wife's reflection in the Wall by his name. I will return.

Harold and Rita Schmidt, Cherry Hill, NJ

Thank you for the book *Why Vietnam Still Matters*. I read some of it already, and will give it to my son who is a Vietnam Veteran. These are sad stories and I'm glad that there is a memorial for those that gave their lives.

Mrs. August Brischle, Genevieve, MO

In my view, we must teach about the Vietnam War because of what it teaches us about all American wars:

- 1) Every American war was opposed by some Americans, some for honest motives, some for base, selfish ones
- 2) The Vietnam War helps us realize that war is a terrible thing, full of excruciating moral compromises and horrible, often unforeseeable, consequences
- 3) We all should learn from the Vietnam War that leadership is often the most important factor
- 4) I hope that studying the Vietnam War will help our descendants to understand that with all of its faults and stupidities, America is a great, wonderful country that always works things out in the end

Raymond Opeka, Grand Rapids, MI



Letter from the President ... Jan Scruggs



The Wall That Heals: The VVMF Traveling Wall Comes Home

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is quite excited about the advent of our latest program: The Wall That Heals, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Traveling Replica. Entire communities

across America can join in experiencing the power of the Wall. The service members whose names are inscribed on the Wall in their nation's capital — in a sense — come home, returning to their family and friends. The Traveling Replica helps us to continue and expand the healing that is still much needed and still taking place. The Traveling Replica helps educate the American people about the Memorial and those it honors, as it wordlessly explains the Vietnam legacy to those the war has touched and those who were born years after the fall of Saigon.

Memorial items left at the Wall in Washington are an especially important part of the legacy. Through your help, VVMF has been able to provide the funding that enables the National Park Service to undertake a major photographic effort. One thousand carefully selected items were meticulously catalogued and photographed and are now available on CD-Rom. The National Park Service is working to upload these images so that anyone worldwide will be able to access them via computer modem. Journalists and academic researchers will be able to study and use these photos in their articles and reports on this important part of American history.

Our scholarship program for 1996 is now complete. One hundred thousand dollars has been sent to colleges for distribution to students who are children of Vietnam veterans. The effort has given VVMF yet another way to help educate young people about an important epoch in our recent history. The list of colleges receiving funds includes: University of Maryland Extension Colleges, State University of New York at Albany, Virginia Military Institute, University of Nebraska, University of California at Davis, University of California at Santa Barbara, Howard University, University of Massachusetts, New Mexico Military Institute, Norwich University, Texas Tech, University of Georgia, University of Colorado, The Citadel and University of Illinois at Chicago. Veterans' children will receive funds for their college education at each of these schools thanks to your help. It is through your support that we are able to continue such worthwhile programs. (Contact the college's financial aid department for more information)

On behalf of everyone at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, I send our very best wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy and healthy holiday season, and the most wonderful new year ever. Thank you again for all of your support.

Jan Scruggs

VVM Engineering Study Continues... Researchers Gather Important Information

As most of you know by now, shortly after the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, small hairline cracks appeared in several of the Memorial's facing panels. Some have grown several inches since first noted in 1984. Upon first evidence of the cracks, the VVMF was concerned enough to have numerous experts take a look at the situation. After much analysis, it is now believed that the cause and growth of the cracks may be a result of several factors acting individually and together. For example, the effect of temperature on the dark black stone, combined with the way the connective dowels are attached to the Memorial and its supporting wall, are at this point considered to be the most significant factors affecting the stability of the panels.

In late 1993, we hired Parsons Brinckerhoff to review all of the compiled records, the condition of the Memorial, and to evaluate the best method of preventing or mitigating further cracking, as well as tasking them with defining a long-term overall maintenance program for the entire Memorial site. Headed by Brenda Bohlke and John Michels, the PB team is now in the second of a three-phase program designed to document the present condition and to provide comprehensive information and data from which to make important decisions about maintenance and the long-term condition of the structure.

During Phase II, the temperature fluctuations are being monitored on an hourly basis every day throughout an entire year. (See photograph) Thirteen tiny thermocouples, or sensors, were unobtrusively attached near the edges of the panels to measure the air temperature as well as the temperature on the front and back surfaces of the panel. So far, we have had computer-tracked temperatures rising as high as 125 degrees, with a difference of up to 15 degrees from top to bottom of one panel, up to 12 degrees from front to back, and sometimes up to 25 degrees between the East and West Walls in the late afternoon. And, of course, all of the panels are different sizes so the temperature effects would vary depending on their height. And just as a sidewalk

Continues on Pg. 3

The sensors in the Wall transmit information continuously to this box which is located on top of the East Wall. The scientists download information to their laptop computer on a weekly basis for analysis.



expands when it gets hot (and is constructed with intermittent spaces permitting it to do so without cracking), the Wall's panels expand as well. Not enough to see with the naked eye, of course, but enough to cause stress to the heat-holding black granite. We have 54 displacement transducers spread over six panels which provide information about this expansion.

So you can see there are a lot of variables that have to be studied when considering how best to protect this important American legacy. After a thorough analysis, the PB team will issue a series of recommendations for Phase III. A life cycle cost analysis and recommendations for replacing stone panels, if and when necessary, will be made a part of this phase. Also, a thorough investigation into any and all facets of the entire site will be rendered at the completion of Phase III. And while it may be technical, we will keep you informed every step of the way because we know how much the Memorial means to each and every one of our loyal supporters. And we at the VVMF are confident that working together with you, our scientists, and the National Park System, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be guaranteed a long, long life, well into the new millennium.



The Parsons Brinckerhoff team explains to local and national press about their instrumentation and readings.

Stories of a Few

We also want to remind everyone to visit "Stories of a Few" on our AOL site. It is composed of photographs and short biographies of those men and women whose names are on the Wall. While we don't envision getting all 58,000+ stories up online, we'd like to get as many as we can. So, if you have a loved one whose name is on the Wall, please send us a photograph (which will be returned) and some biographical information — this can include what his/her hobbies were, number of siblings, personal philosophy, or circumstances surrounding service, whatever you would like to share about what made him or her special. Send this to: **Stories of a Few, VVMF, 815 15th Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005.** Make sure to include your full name and address, relationship to person in photograph, and label the back of the photograph with the name of the person in the picture as well as your name and address. Thank you for participating in this wonderful program.

NOTES FROM THE 'NET



Book Online

Why Vietnam Still Matters is now going up, chapter by chapter, onto the 'Net. The folks at Military City Online, who work with us to maintain our America Online (AOL) site (keyword: WALL) as well as the Internet site (<http://www.militarycity.com>), are feeding the chapters up week by week until the entire book will be accessible via the cyber-highway. We encourage anyone who hasn't already visited our site to do so. You can still get 10 hours free cyber time if you call 800-677-4419. They will send you the diskette which will enable you to join everyone "surfing the 'Net." (You need a computer with a modem for access.)

Here are some more excerpts from postings on our Wall Site on the 'Net.

I was a small boy during Vietnam and I had nobody killed there but I had a powerful experience when I happened to visit the Wall a few years back. While perusing the names on the Wall, I witnessed a woman and a little girl looking at the inscribed names. They stopped at one name and the woman whispered something to the little girl. Then I heard the little girl say, "That's my grandpa, Mommy?" The woman nodded. The little girl then started crying and said, "Why did he have to die, Mommy? I wish he was here." The woman burst into tears and touched the Wall so tenderly. I choked back tears as I watched this. I know now the pain Vietnam caused. It touched me that day and I never forgot that.

ForestEngr ❖

To David Stanley Demmon: We love and miss you. Your guardian angel will be with you always. We miss the old days but keep you in our heart always. Your neighborhood pals, Tom Pedigo and John and Pat Perkins

PJ Perk ❖

We played together in a band and you always dreamed of being famous. Your name's on the Wall. I guess you're famous, but what a cost. I will always miss you. Save a place for me. JJ

JShow87642 ❖

Vietnam Vets Honored

You almost have to die to learn to live.

TRebe59982 ❖

Thank you Volunteers!

We gathered again to thank the Volunteers of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for their tireless contribution to the life of the Memorial. What is really remarkable about these volunteers is how many have been coming back week after week, year after year — quite a few since the very beginning years of the Memorial back in 1982 and 1983. “Volunteer burnout” which so often hits after a couple of years, or even months, is certainly not unknown to this NPS group. But the character of the core group of volunteers who have stuck with it all these years, while truly amazing, is not hard to fathom.

Many have a personal relationship with the Memorial that enables them to give the special attention needed especially by the first time vet or family member. There are others who did not begin with any private connection to the war, but through the years have been gratified by their opportunity to touch so many through their work at the Memorial. It is their way “to give back” and what a wonderful job they are doing.

Part II in *Why Vietnam Still Matters* gave just a few meaningful experiences encountered at the Wall. Reading these vignettes gives insight into the special nature of the work performed daily — rain or shine, summer or winter — all in thanks to those who served this country during the Vietnam War. We join our many supporters in thanking these very special people, the VVM Volunteers.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial Volunteers, Gold Star Mothers, National Park Service rangers, and even our official VVMF Bagpiper, gathered together to enjoy some R'n'R under VVMF auspices.



Vietnam Christmas 1967

As I sit and watch the fire
I think of Vietnam.
Of another time, another place
Where the world had gone all wrong.

Last year there was a Christmas
With food and gifts and cheer.
In 'Nam I shared a bunker
With Marines and fighting gear.

But Christmas there was richer
Than most that I've had since.
Cause my heart was stripped of tinsel
And my soul of happiness.

All we had was one another
And a war we would not win.
But there was hope for a tomorrow
And a love for life within.

We sang songs about our Savior
With no choir or instruments.
We lived to see another dawn
That was our Christmas gift.

When our time of trial had ended
And we left that shattered land
Our souls were scared and wounded
With a pain few understand.

But hidden in that dreadful night
Was a light that would not die.
The spark of life, the love of Christ,
A Mother and a Child.

*Cpl. David Papineau
USMC, B Co., 1/3
Vietnam 67-68
Just another grunt!*

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Please send us your comments and suggestions.
We always enjoy hearing from you.