

THE VIETNAM WAR IN MEMORY MEMORIAL, INC.

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The concept of formal recognition, within the
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Complex,
of Veterans whose deaths may be attributed to
their wartime service is endorsed by :

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.*
(National Board)

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.*
(Virginia State Board)

Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade

The National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers

National Congress of American Indians

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America*

The Fallen Warriors Foundation

Rolling Thunder*, Inc.

In Memory

**The Vietnam War In Memory
Memorial, Inc.**

There are names that can only be imagined between the lines engraved on the shining black granite panels of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Imagined, for the most part, by surviving family and friends of veterans whose premature deaths may be attributed to service in Southeast Asia. Among them, a consensus is building that formal recognition will extend the legendary healing quality of the Wall.

PREMATURE DEATHS

Since the war ended, uncounted numbers of Americans who served their country in Vietnam have died prematurely. Typically, these losses are attributed to such causes as Agent Orange-induced cancers and post traumatic stress disorder. Official statistics of this kind are not available from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Seeking to bridge the void of recognition for their loved ones many feel at the Wall, family members and friends of such veterans established the nonprofit *Vietnam War In Memory Memorial, Inc.* The group is working to gain approval for a 3x3 foot ground-level plaque to be placed near the Memorial.

Retired Naval Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. supports what he terms this "important mission" and serves as a member of the project's advisory board.

Feelings run deep among survivors of these "hidden casualties of Vietnam." Since 1993, special ceremonies have been held in Washington,

Family and friends from across the country meet on a knoll overlooking the Memorial to read the names of their loved ones before leaving certificates of remembrance and mementos at the Wall. Later, the items are collected, catalogued and archived by the National Park Service. The *In Memory* plaque, possibly to be located along the walk between the Three Soldiers and the Women's Memorial statues, would provide year-round acknowledgement of these veterans in a quiet place with a panoramic view of the Wall.

REMEMBERING VETERANS

The Vietnam War In Memory Memorial project grew from a letter-writing campaign by Ruth Coder Fitzgerald of Fredericksburg, Virginia, after her brother, John Keath. Coder, a former Air Force rescue helicopter pilot, died of non-Hodgkins lymphoma attributed to his exposure to Agent Orange.

There are many people whose names will never be on memorials, but whose lives were cut short after the war because of their service in Vietnam. Some, like John Coder and Elmo R. Zumwalt III, have died of cancer. Others, such as the grievously wounded Lewis B. Puller, Jr., have taken their own lives. Still more veterans have been and continue to be lost to the mental and physical ravages of post traumatic stress disorder.

THE PLAQUE

The organizers of *The Vietnam War In Memory Memorial, Inc.* acknowledge that it would be impossible to name all the post-war casualties. The group sincerely believes,

however, that symbolic recognition, close to the Wall, on a three-foot-square plainly-worded plaque or tablet level with the ground, is not too much to ask.

The *In Memory* plaque will honor the lost and offer comfort to their survivors and descendants, with no compromise to the architectural integrity of the Memorial.

THE CHALLENGE

Before the *In Memory* memorial plaque finds its rightful place, Congress must endorse it with legislation, followed by the review and approval of several panels and the Secretary of the Interior. Please lend your voice to the effort.

We need support from veterans groups, other civic organizations and private citizens nationwide. Please do what you can to help bring this project to public attention

For more information, or to volunteer:

Ruth Coder Fitzgerald

Fredericksburg, VA 22401

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

—Visit the *In Memory* Website—

<http://members.aol.com/>

[VietWarMem/plaque.htm](http://members.aol.com/VietWarMem/plaque.htm)