

To: Members of the Vietnam Veterans and Families Community
From: Ruth Coder Fitzgerald
President, The Vietnam War In Memory Memorial, Inc.

Your consideration and support are requested for our grass-roots effort to place a plaque near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., in public recognition and honor of the many military personnel whose postwar deaths have resulted, and continue to result, from their experiences in Vietnam.

I am involved in this project because of my brother, who died in 1992 from non-Hodgkins lymphoma officially attributed to his exposure to Agent Orange. John served in the Air Force from 1965 until 1970. He was stationed at DaNang, South Vietnam, from April, 1969 to April, 1970, as a CH53 (Jolly Green Giant) pilot in the 37th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron. He received a Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal for his participation in rescues of downed aviators in southeast Asia. There are many people like John whose names will never be on public war memorials, but whose lives were ended prematurely because of their service in Vietnam.

Most of us would consider it impractical and inappropriate to chronicle our country's continuing litany of loss on yet another structure in the vicinity of the incomparable Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The Memorial is, after all, dedicated to all Vietnam Veterans. Yet, many who have suffered the loss of friends and family after the war feel a void when they visit The Wall.

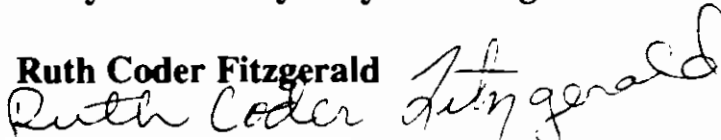
That is why we suggest a 3x3-foot plaque, with an appropriate inscription to acknowledge the many people who died after the war because of their service. This would include people such as my brother, and also those lost to post traumatic stress, such as Lewis B. Puller, Jr.

The memorial plaque's inclusive scope will be similar in spirit to that of the "In Memory" honor list program maintained by the Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The plaque would be privately funded, but many political and bureaucratic obstacles must be overcome.

If you support this project, please contact me. Feel free to forward this letter with your comments to anyone who might be of assistance. In order to accomplish this modest project, we must gain the support of congressmen and organizations such as the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars as well as citizens at large.

We thank you sincerely for your thoughtful consideration.

Ruth Coder Fitzgerald


Fredericksburg, Va., 22401

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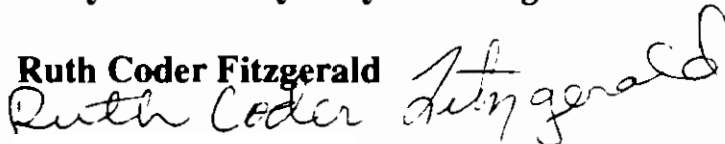
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