

# THE WALL THAT HEALS

## FIELD TRIP GUIDE

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1959

IN HONOR OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR, THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO CAVE THEIR LIVES AND OF THOSE WHO REMAIN MISSING ARE INSCRIBED IN THE ORDER THEY WERE TAKEN FROM US.

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund produced this guide to enhance your visit to *The Wall That Heals*. This guide contains a variety of activities to use before, during and after your visit. All activities are designed so that they may be adapted for students in grades K-12, although a grade guide is included with each lesson to help teachers identify those activities that may be most suitable for their students.

As many teachers are unable to visit Washington, D.C. with their students, this guide provides a framework for exploring The Wall That Heals, veterans memorials in your own community, or other traveling replicas.

Parts of this guide were developed in partnership with Disabled American Veterans (DAV), an organization that works to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. The profiles of some disabled veterans, along with questions and activities throughout the guide, offer students a look at the accomplishments and enduring spirit of some of our nation's most courageous veterans.

To better coordinate the on-site and classroom learning tools within this guide, a student activity key has been included.

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**ACTIVITY KEY:**  REFLECTION  WRITING  READING  SPEAKING  HANDS-ON

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This key designates the type of educational experience for each activity. The more introspective activities are signified by "Reflection." Others engage students in educational "Writing" and "Reading" exercises. There are also interactive learning opportunities, such as "Speaking" and "Hands-on" activities. We encourage teachers to make use of these different types of activities so that students may have a more personal experience with the memorials and gain a better understanding of our nation's history.

## PREPARING FOR A VISIT

Before arriving at *The Wall That Heals*, you may want to prepare yourself and your students for a visit to The Wall replica.

### To Read

- **Never Forget: The History of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial**
- **Dreams Unfulfilled**
- **The American Patriot**
- **The War and The Wall**

*(All of the above titles can be downloaded in their entirety from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund website at: [www.vvmf.org/vvmf-education](http://www.vvmf.org/vvmf-education))*

### To Watch

- **To Heal A Nation**, *the story of Jan Scruggs and his efforts to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*

### To Log On To

- **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund** at [www.vvmf.org](http://www.vvmf.org)

## MEMORIAL ETIQUETTE

We hope your trip to The Wall That Heals is educational and thought-provoking. Please remember that many visitors lost friends and family members during the war. They are visiting the memorial to pay respect to those who served or lost their lives during the wars. Please discuss with your students the kinds of behaviors that are appropriate to display while they visit the memorial:

- Do not eat at the memorial.
- Do not litter. Deposit trash in the appropriate containers.
- For your safety and the safety of others, walk at all times.
- Speak in a quiet voice.
- The memorials are designed so that you can get very close to them. Feel free to touch them, but please refrain from sitting or climbing on them.





## DID YOU KNOW?

*There were 1,421 design-competition submissions for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.*

## THE WALL

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was created to honor those who served with the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. Because there was so much dissent about our involvement in Vietnam, many Americans returning home felt scorned and "let down" by their country. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has done much to heal those wounds and to honor and remember the nearly three million who served with the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. Today, it is one of the most visited memorial in Washington, D.C., receiving more than 4.4 million visitors annually.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund was formed in 1979 to establish a national memorial for those who served with the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. Jan Scruggs, an infantry corporal in the war, conceived the idea to build this memorial.

The Memorial Fund held a contest to select a design for the memorial. The winning entry was submitted by Maya Ying Lin, a 21-year old Chinese-American student at Yale University. She chose polished black granite for the walls. Its mirror-like surface reflects the images of the surrounding trees, lawns, monuments, even visitors. The walls point to the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, linking the Vietnam War to the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. The names are inscribed in chronological order by date of casualty, showing the war as a series of individual human sacrifices, thus giving each name a special place in history.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated on November 13, 1982.

Every day of the year, people leave remembrances at The Wall. Numbering more than 300,000 items, there have been more remembrances left at The Wall than there are names inscribed on it. Items left behind include teddy bears, baseball gloves, family photo albums, wedding rings, letters, even a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Each night, the National Park Service collects and catalogues the items that have been left that day at The Wall. A display of these items will be a central part of the future Education Center at The Wall.

Use the following questions to engage your students in a discussion about remembrances left at The Wall:

1. Why do you think people leave remembrances?
2. What sorts of items would former servicemen leave?
3. What would family members leave?
4. What would you leave?

Your class may wish to hold a memorial service to honor those who served in Vietnam.

Here are some things your class can do as part of a Memorial Service:

1. Sing **America the Beautiful, the National Anthem** or play **Taps**.
2. Read the names on The Wall from your city or state. (Use [[www.vvmf.org/thewall](http://www.vvmf.org/thewall)] to locate people from your area.)
3. Honor the POWs and MIAs from your community by reading their names.
4. Leave notes, drawings, flowers or a wreath in remembrance.

Allow students to take time for reflection as they visit The Wall. Invite your students to share their thoughts about the following:

1. What are your first impressions of The Wall?
2. Maya Lin, the Memorial's designer, described The Wall as "a rift in the earth, a long, polished, black stone wall, emerging from and receding into the earth." What effect does her design have on you? Do you like it or dislike it?
3. How does The Wall make you feel?
4. Write a poem, a song or create a drawing that expresses how you feel.
5. Write a letter to leave at The Wall.

Appoint a team from your class to locate the name of someone from your state or community an The Wall.

1. It is best to find a name or names before you visit Washington, D. C. To do so, instruct your students to visit [[www.vvmf.org/thewall](http://www.vvmf.org/thewall)] . Here, students can search for names from their town or state. In addition, students can view and leave remembrances to these men and women.
2. At The Wall, students can find someone from their state in the Information Tent. Instruct a team of students to find the name of someone from your home state.
3. Have them copy down the name, the date the person was killed or declared missing and the panel and line number where the name can be found.
4. Have the team locate the name on The Wall for the entire class.



### DID YOU KNOW?

*The phenomenon of leaving offerings at The Wall started when someone dropped a Purple Heart into the concrete as it was being poured.*

The names on the panels are organized chronologically by casualty date: The listing of names begins at the apex of The Wall on the center right hand panel (Panel 1 East). Here, the year 1959 is inscribed to indicate the year of the first American casualties in Vietnam. The names continue eastward to the far right end of the Memorial (Panel 70 East). The list continues on the farthest panel (Panel 70 West) and ends at the apex on Panel 1 West, where the year 1975 is inscribed. Here, the last casualty meets the first.

The symbols tell you if a service member is missing in action or a confirmed casualty: A diamond (◆) denotes the person's death was confirmed. A cross (+) denotes the person remains missing in action. A diamond superimposed on the cross (◆) confirms that the person's remains, although once missing, have been returned or accounted for. In the event that a person returns home alive, a circle (⊕) - as a symbol of life - would be inscribed around the cross. To date, no person has ever returned home alive.



This activity is designed to give students a sense of the enormity of American lives lost in Vietnam. As of Memorial Day 2012, 58,282 names are inscribed on The Wall. If appropriate, additional names will still be added.

What fraction of the total number of names on The Wall does your class represent? Using your group as a guide, figure out how much space would be filled if there were a person for every name on The Wall.

The Veterans Administration estimates that more than 150,000 men and women were wounded during their service in Vietnam. Use your class to estimate the amount of space that these veterans would occupy.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*More than \$8,000,000 was raised to build The Wall, all of which came from private sources. No government funds were used in the construction of the Memorial. This money was raised by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the first \$2,800 came from VVMF founder and president, Jan Scruggs.*

VVMF has created a special classroom project, **Hometown Heroes**, to help your students connect with those who served from your local community.

The goal of this project is to collect photos and stories of those on The Wall and those who returned. This unique, extra curricular project was originally developed by Cindy Gallaway, a teacher at Lewiston Middle School in Lewiston, Michigan, to encourage her students to find information about their Hometown Hero, Michael Jonas Pynnonen.



**The Service Learning Project is split into three parts:**

**Remembering Those Who Sacrificed** encourages students learn more about local veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice and to send the pictures and stories of those on The Wall to VVMF.

**Honoring Those Who Served** encourages students to preserve the legacy and stories of those who served in our nation's military during a conflict and to preserve these stories in a written or oral format.

**Honoring Those Who Served and Sacrificed** encourages the students a ceremony for veterans and their families on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

This project not only encourages today's youth to learn about those who sacrificed their lives in Vietnam but also to learn and preserve the stories of those who served in Vietnam.



**Hometown Heroes** can be downloaded directly from VVMF's website and physical copies will be sent free-of-charge to educators who request them.

Visit <http://www.vvmf.org/vvmf-education> to learn more and get your copies.