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## Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center Interpretive Plan

May 2011

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# **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center Interpretive Plan**

May 2011

Prepared by  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Mall and Memorial Parks  
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

National Capital Region  
Harpers Ferry Center  
Interpretive Planning



Photo credit: Bill Shugarts

## The Planning Process

This Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) staff, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) staff, VVMF board members, historians, partners, volunteers, and exhibit specialists worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that will outline educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center. This plan will reflect a direct connection between the Center and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Our goal is to promote the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center's resource values through specially planned visitor services and excellence in interpretation that build upon or create new opportunities for visitors to experience The Wall.

This Interpretive Plan (IP) recommends actions that should occur over the next three to five years. It identifies themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and outreach activities that will best communicate the Center's purpose, significance, and themes. Developed using NPS planning standards, it meets the Secretary of the Interior's obligation, as outlined in the enabling legislation. In addition, this planning process has been customized to meet the needs for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

The Project Agreement was signed in February 2010. A Recommendations workshop was held June 21-22, 2010 with 22 participants representing NAMA staff, VVMF staff, partners, regional office staff, exhibit specialists, historians, and volunteers. On July 21, 2010, an Implementation workshop was held with 13 participants representing NAMA, regional office, and VVMF staff, exhibit specialists, and volunteers.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this IP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Based on a concept design produced by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., interpretive services offered at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center will be further developed and refined during subsequent design phases and discussions with VVMF and NAMA. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as schedules, staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents may be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

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# Foundation for Planning



## Enabling Legislation

Public Law 96-297 (July 1, 1980) authorized the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on a two-acre section of the northwest quadrant of Constitution Gardens near the Lincoln Memorial.

Public Law 100-660 (November 14, 1988) authorized the Vietnam Women's Memorial to honor the women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era.

Public Law 106-214 (June 15, 2000) authorized the design, procurement, and installation of a commemorative plaque to honor those veterans who died after their service during the Vietnam War as a result of that service and whose names are not otherwise eligible for placement on The Wall.

Public Law 108-126 117 Stat 1348 (November 17, 2003) states that the "Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., is authorized to construct a visitor

center at or near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Federal land in the District of Columbia, or its environs subject to the provisions of this section, in order to better inform and educate the public about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam War." The legislation also states "that the Secretary of Interior shall . . . as soon as practicable, in consultation with educators and veterans groups, develop a written interpretive plan for the visitor center in accordance with National Park Service policy."

Congress authorized the facility as an underground facility near the existing Memorial. It is intended that the facility would provide meaning and context, present a personality to the names on The Wall, and educate current and future generations about the Vietnam War, including its national significance, and the effect of The Wall itself on American culture.



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center will educate current and future generations about the Vietnam War and the effect of The Wall on American culture. Photo credit: Dan Arant

## Mission, Purpose and Significance

A mission statement is a vision for the future and articulates, in broad terms, the ideas that the NPS and VVMF strive to achieve.

### National Park Service Mission

The National Park Service mission is to preserve unimpaired natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

### Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center Mission

During the June 2009 value analysis workshop, VVMF proposed the following mission statement:

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center will be a place that touches the heart and teaches the mind. It will be a place to honor those who died and all who served, a place where the names on The Wall become visible, where the warrior is regarded apart from the war. It will be inspirational, educational and a place for reflection for people of all ages and walks of life. It will educate the public about the service and sacrifice of those who served.

### Purpose

Purpose statements describe why an area was set aside and what specific purposes exist for a site, and are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making.

The purpose of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center is to:

- Help visitors discover the stories of those named on The Wall.

- Honor those who died and all who served.
- Display a sample of the collection of objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Encourage visitors to learn more about the war, The Wall, and the values of those who serve in the U.S Armed Forces.
- Tell the history of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Commemorate the values of service.
- Enhance the Vietnam Veterans Memorial experience.
- Show the continuing love of the surviving families, the continuing pilgrimage they make to The Wall.
- Serve people of all ages and backgrounds.

### Significance

Statements of significance describe the distinctive values of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, why these values are important within a national context, and why they contribute to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center's purpose.

The following significance statements were suggested by NAMA and VVMF staff in May 2010 during the development of the Foundation section of this document.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial:

- Honors all the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.
- Gives loved ones a place to honor and remember those who died.
- Provides an area where veterans can seek closure.

- Is a tangible symbol of recognition by the American people. By separating the issue of the service of the individual men and women from the issue of U.S. policy in Vietnam through the Memorial, VVMF hoped to begin a process of healing and national reconciliation.
- Remind visitors of the importance of honoring all who answered the call of duty and to remind them of the nobility of patriotism.

During a June 2009 planning charette, attended by NAMA, NPS, and VVMF staff and subject matter experts, the following goals for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center were suggested.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center will:

- Reveal the human dimension of the Vietnam War as well as celebrate the values of service and the bonds of loyalty and friendship.
- Use servicemen and women's values of loyalty, duty, respect, service, honor, courage, and integrity as a lens through which visitors may understand and memorialize those who served and sacrificed.
- Provide faces to go with the names of the people on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and help Americans commemorate the values of all those who have sacrificed their lives for America.
- Help visitors learn about the Vietnam War, how the Memorial has shaped the ways Americans mourn those lost, and the vital part it played in helping to heal the deep societal divisions resulting from the Vietnam War.
- Encourage citizenship and an appreciation of those who have served and continue to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Instill a greater appreciation of public service and of those who make sacrifices for the welfare of others.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center will help visitors discover the stories of those named on The Wall and to honor all those who served and died. Photo credit: Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes capture the essence of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Memorial Center significance. They include the most important stories and represent core messages that every visitor should have the opportunity to experience.

The themes are based on ideas developed by NAMA staff for interpreters working at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the design concept plan for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center developed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc.

### Honor

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors those who served and died by providing a place to express respect for their lives and actions, to encourage emotional and academic searches for understanding of the Vietnam War, and to enhance the difficult process of healing.

### A Lasting Influence

Many domestic and global social changes, cultural changes, technological innovations, and military advances that occurred during and as a result of the Vietnam War have had a lasting influence and continue to be relevant.

### Shared War Time Experiences

Service members' shared war time experiences connect them to one another and to a larger community (unit, branch of military service, and other veterans).

### Strong Bonds of Loyalty, Friendship, and Service

The courage, sacrifice, and devotion of those who fell during the Vietnam War, of those who returned, and of those who waited back home created strong bonds of loyalty, friendship, and service which continue today.

Service members' shared war time experiences connect them to one another.  
Photo credit: Dan Arant



## Desired Visitor Experiences

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

Visitors will have opportunities to:

- Discover how the Vietnam Veterans Memorial began and has evolved including the original vision, the process, the controversies, the compromises, the meaning of The Wall, the design, and the symbolism.
- Participate in a multi-sensory, interactive experience where visitors see, touch, or hear about names of service members listed on The Wall and commemorated at the Memorial.
- Hear an NPS park ranger present a program about the history and significance of The Wall.
- Ask questions and interact with an interpreter (park ranger or volunteer).
- Hear veterans and their families tell stories about their experiences in the war and at home.
- Use clean facilities and have a place to sit and reflect on their experience at The Wall.
- Purchase educational materials about the war and The Wall.
- Locate resources for more information about the Vietnam War, The Wall, and the era.
- Easily access and navigate through the Center.
- Determine how the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center fit into the Memorial campus of Lincoln Memorial, World War II Memorial, and the Korean War Veterans Memorial.
- Have a “pleasant” experience despite the difficult subject matter.
- Feel inspired to serve their country in any way they can.
- Witness the healing power of The Wall and connect personally with a name on The Wall.



All visitors will have opportunities to connect personally with a name on The Wall.

Photo credit: VVMF

## Visitation and Visitor Use

This is a broad description of visitors and their needs – including current and potential visitors. “Visitor” describes anyone who uses a site’s interpretation and education services whether in person or “virtually” through digital technologies.

Approximately four million visitors come to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial annually. This figure is based on a five-year average of monthly public use data taken during calendar years 2005-2009. There was a five percent increase in visitation from 2008 (4,243,573) to 2009 (4,437,771).

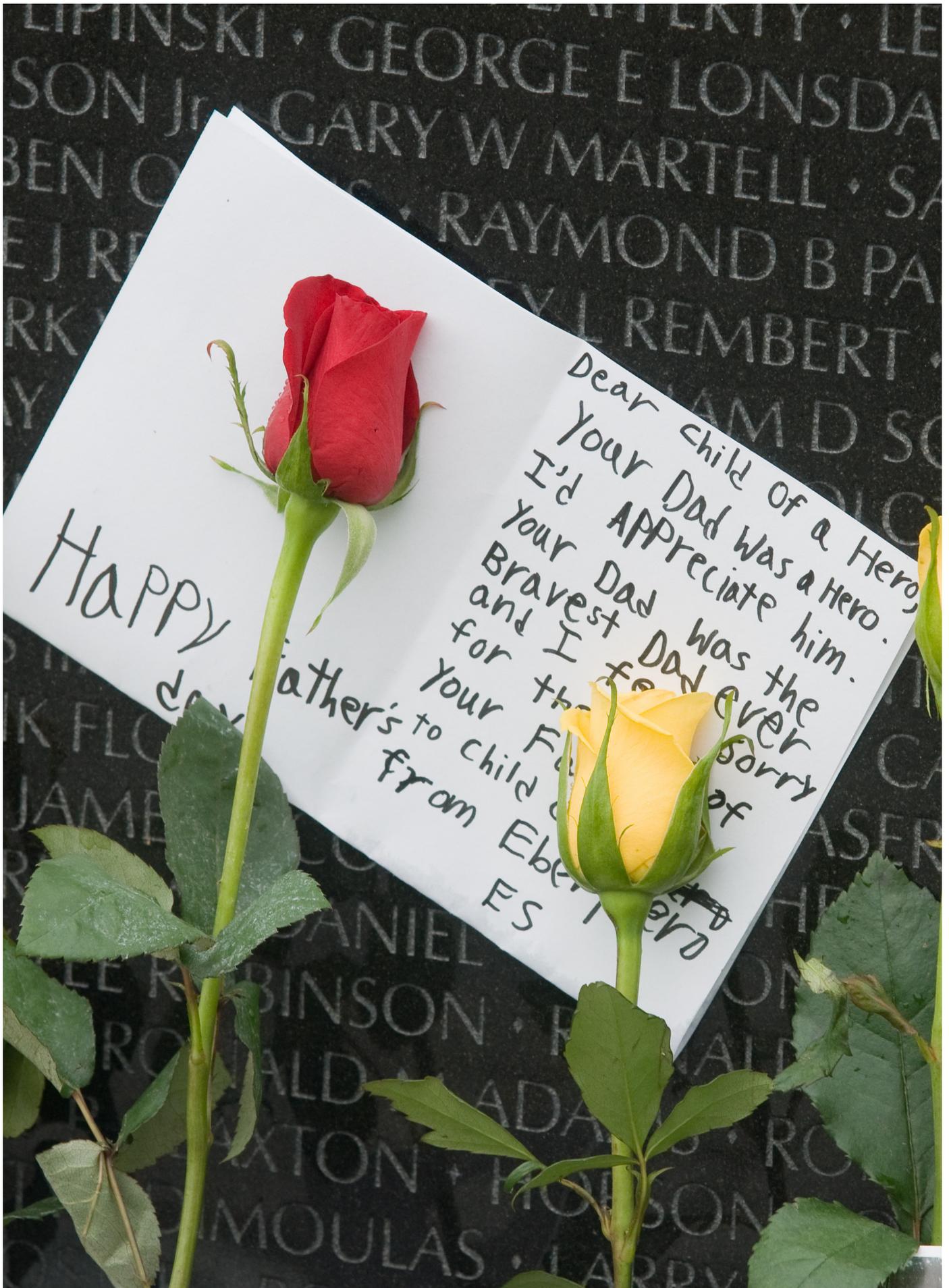
April and May are the peak visitation months. December and January report the lowest visitation - almost 80 percent less than the spring.

An analysis of building capacity, referenced during the June 2009 planning charette, concluded that the building will have capacity for 1.3 million visitors annually, based on a 30-40 minute visit.

During the June 2009 value analysis workshop and the June 2010

Foundation workshop, the following groups were identified as potential future visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center:

- Family members and relatives of those service members honored at the Memorial
- People who lived during the Vietnam era
- Veterans
- Youth
- Education groups
- International visitors
- Active Military
- General public
- Dignitaries
- Professional groups
- Tour groups with licensed guides
- NPS passport stampers
- Virtual visitors



Happy

Dear child of a Hero,  
Your Dad was a Hero.  
I'd appreciate him.  
Your Dad was the  
Bravest Dad ever  
and I feel sorry  
for the father's to child of  
from Eber  
ES



## Existing Conditions



*The following is a brief and generalized description of visitor experiences and interpretive services that existed in FY2009-2010. The purpose of this section is to provide a baseline assessment that can help to justify some of the plan's proposed actions.*

## Information and Orientation

### Marketing

The NPS informs the public of upcoming events and special programs at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial through public service announcements posted on the website as well as sent to area newspapers, radio stations and television stations. Programs and events are listed in National Mall and Memorial Parks, a park-produced newspaper. The public also receives information about some events and special programs through press releases written by the National Capital Region's Office of Public Affairs. VVMF also keeps the public informed of ceremonies and activities at The Wall through the media and the VVMF website. Beginning in 2011, programs and events may also be posted on a new NAMA mobile wayfinding application.

### Website

There are multiple websites to gain information about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
www.nps.gov/vive

The website has very basic information about how to get to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and trip planning. The site is maintained by the National Mall and Memorial Parks.

The Virtual Wall [www.vvmf.org/thewall](http://www.vvmf.org/thewall)

Established on November 10, 1998, the Virtual Wall is a commemorative website created to extend the legacy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It allows families, friends and veterans to post photos, text and audio remembrances to those who lost their lives in the war or remain missing in action. There is also a link to get a digital rubbing of the service member's name. The site is maintained by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

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

The website has news, digital and social media links, calendar of events, press releases, and more related to Fund activities and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center  
[www.buildthecenter.org/](http://www.buildthecenter.org/)

The website describes the Center and the exhibits. There are links for people to donate and show their support for the Center. Social media links are also located on the home page. The site is maintained by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

Vietnam Women's Memorial  
Foundation  
[www.VietnamWomensMemorial.org](http://www.VietnamWomensMemorial.org)

The website has a storytelling archive, calendar of events, sales area, "Sister Search," and more related to the Foundation and the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

## Facilities

### Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center

Scheduled to open November 2014, the Center will be a two-story underground facility located on 5.2 acres near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The Center has been designed to enhance the Vietnam Veterans Memorial experience, to help

visitors discover the stories of those named on The Wall and to honor those who died and all who served. Interior exhibits will feature a display of the collection of objects left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and encourage visitors to learn more about the war, The Wall, and the values of those who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The building will also have restrooms, a bookstore, multi-media exhibits, interactive computer stations, and a meditation garden. A determination has not yet been made about whether visitors will need to acquire free timed tickets to enter the Center. NAMA and VVMF will work together to determine the need for tickets closer to the opening of the Center.

### Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Dedicated November 13, 1982, the Memorial was given by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to the people of the United States on November 11, 1984. Located toward the west end of Constitution Gardens, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is set within a 5.8-acre site. The memorial's design is two polished granite walls that meet and form a "V" bearing the names of

all the Americans killed or missing in action in Vietnam listed in chronological order from 1959 and 1975. Names of service members added after the Memorial was built are placed as close to their date of casualty as possible. Making a rubbing of a name is popular and for some, a significant and emotional, visitor experience.

### Flagpole

Designed to augment the Memorial design and symbolize service members' courage and devotion to country, the American and POW/MIA flags fly 24 hours per day, seven days per week from a 50-foot lighted bronze staff. At the base of the flag staff are the seals of the five branches of military service.

### Three Servicemen Statue

Dedicated November 11, 1984, the statue was designed to augment the Memorial design by providing a realistic depiction of Vietnam servicemen. The statue puts human faces on the suffering and sacrifices of those who served.

Three Servicemen Statue.  
Photo credit: Bill Petros





The In Memory Plaque was placed "In memory of the men and women who served in the Vietnam War and later died as a result of their service. We honor and remember their sacrifice." Photo credit: Holly Rotondi

### Vietnam Women's Memorial

Dedicated November 11, 1993, the Memorial honors the American women who served in Vietnam. Eight yellowwood trees are planted around the sculpture to commemorate each of the military women who died in Vietnam.

### In Memory Plaque

Dedicated on November 10, 2004, the plaque honors those who died as a result of the Vietnam War, but whose deaths do not fit the Department of Defense criteria for inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

### Information Kiosk

Interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) staff the kiosk daily from 9:00 a.m. until late evening. A computer that contains the directory of names found on The Wall, rubbing materials, first aid, and information about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are located in the kiosk. There is also a ladder available for all interpreters to assist visitors with rubbings of the names that are located high on The Wall.

### Walking Paths

There are Directories of Names at the east and west ends of the walkways. The books list casualty names in alphabetical order and the panel and line numbers indicate the name's location on The Wall.

### Interpretive Media

#### Publications

Vietnam Veterans Memorial, NPS Official Park Map and Guide (2009) – Topics covered include the healing process, those who served (names and sculptures), and history of the Memorial.

Never Forget: The Story Behind the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (2008) – published by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. is a free booklet, available by request through the education section of the VVMF website, that describes how and why the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was conceived and constructed.

#### Wayside Exhibits

There are two wayside exhibit panels located within the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial. One panel is located along the west approach near The Wall and provides an introduction to the site and describes The Wall, the Three Servicemen Statue and the Vietnam Women’s Memorial. The other panel is across the walkway from the Vietnam Women’s Memorial and describes the roles of women who served in Vietnam.



The “Timeline” exhibit will be a military chronology of the war from 1959 to 1975.

Photo credit:  
Ralph Appelbaum  
Associates, Inc.

### Exhibits

The Center’s interior exhibits are being designed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc. The exhibit will feature five component parts: “Making the Names Visible,” the “Collection,” “Timeline,” “Legacy of Service,” and the “History of the Memorial”. These components are per the current design concept plan and may change with further design development. There may also be an area for temporary exhibits.

“Making the Names Visible” will feature a display of the photographs and personal information of the service members memorialized at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on each of their birthdays.

The “Collections Wall” will highlight items from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection. More than 150,000 items have been left in tribute at The Wall since 1982.

The “Legacy of Service” exhibit will display images of service members from the Revolutionary War through current conflicts, paying tribute to all American service members across the generations. The exhibit places the Vietnam experience into the broader historical continuum of all of those who have served and sacrificed. It connects the values of service from the Vietnam era to the larger national story told on the National Mall.

The “Timeline” will be a military chronology of the war from 1959 to 1975. Possible temporary exhibits may feature the 101st Airborne Division, In Memory program, soldier’s photographs of Vietnam, Vietnam War journalism, Allied Forces, and Medal of Honor winners.

Programming for temporary exhibitions requires planning and resources, including staff time and funds. The VVMF and the NPS will need to develop an operational approach to temporary exhibits. Interactive stations will be located near the bookstore, on the lower level of the Center, and will provide information regarding the collection artifacts, additional timeline research and information about the Memorial and the National Mall. Positioned as an exit experience, visitors will be able to enrich their experience at their leisure.

### Traveling Exhibits

“The Legacy of The Wall” – a traveling storyboard exhibit produced by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. The original exhibit was retired after eight years of use. A new lightweight version started circulating in 2009. Two two-sided panels feature images, timelines, and text covering topics including policy makers, those who served, the home front, and the history of Vietnam, the history of The Wall, and the ways fallen heroes are honored. The exhibit is loaned to

schools and public facilities for up to four weeks.

“The Wall That Heals” – a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial produced by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. Began touring in 1996 and a museum and information center located on a semi-trailer was added in 1998. In 2009 the exhibits were revised and re-installed. Photographs of those who served are displayed along with artifacts, letters and quotes. A chronology of the war and a map provide historical context. The traveling museum reflects the concepts being pursued for the Center – putting faces to the names, showcasing the items left at The Wall and exploring the values of our service members. “Bringing The Wall Home” to communities throughout our country allows the souls enshrined on the Memorial to exist, once more, among family and friends in the peace and comfort of familiar surroundings. The traveling exhibit, known as The Wall That Heals, allows the many thousands of veterans who have been unable to cope with the prospect of “facing The Wall” to find the strength and courage to do so within their own communities. The exhibit is hosted by schools and civic and veteran organizations usually for a weekend (Thursday – Sunday) event that includes other appropriate activities.

### **Junior Ranger**

Two pages of activities focused on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the National Mall Junior Ranger activity booklet (2003). The primarily fill in the blank activities provide context for the Vietnam War (date and location activities), honor those who served, and put faces on those who served (three soldiers and women’s memorial activities). The booklet was designed for children ages 7 through 12, and may be obtained from the NPS Vietnam Veterans Memorial

website, any one of the site visitor contact stations/information kiosks, and Survey Lodge Ranger Station on the Washington Monument grounds. When all of the activities, not just the Vietnam Veterans Memorial pages, are complete, children take or mail the booklet to the Ranger Station located on the south side of the Washington Monument grounds. There they will receive a junior ranger badge recognizing their work.

### **Artifact Collection**

Since 1982, the NPS Museum Resource Center (MRCE) has collected over 150,000 artifacts from The Wall.

### **NAMA Library**

The park library, located at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, has secondary source materials and some primary source materials, mostly newspaper articles, the interpretive staff (park ranger and volunteer) can use to research any of the sites within National Mall and Memorial Parks. The books that are available have been purchased or donated. The library has internet access for the interpretive staff to use for research.

## **Personal Services**

### **Curriculum-based Education**

“Echoes from the Mall: A Field Trip Guide – A Teacher’s Guide to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial and other Memorials in Washington, D.C.” (2003) – published and distributed free of charge by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. Activity guide that may be adapted for grades K-12. Activities are structured using reflection, writing, reading, speaking, and hands-on categories. There are no national or state curriculum standards specifically outlined in the guide.

For teachers who are unable to visit Washington, D.C. with their students, this guide provides a framework for exploring traveling replicas like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's Traveling Wall, known as The Wall That Heals.

"Vietnam Echoes from The Wall: History, Learning, and Leadership Through the Lens of the Vietnam War Era" – (2002) Teacher's Guide for middle and high school students published by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. Topics include escalating U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, conflict on the home front, those who served, the country and culture of Vietnam, legacy of the Vietnam War, the emotional effects of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The "Vietnam: Echoes from The Wall" poster features a timeline of national and world events that begins with the Treaty of Saigon in 1862 and ends with the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982. "The Wall: Vietnam Veterans Memorial" poster has a timeline of events that begins with the call for a memorial in 1977 and includes Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center milestones. California, Illinois, and Chicago Standards of Learning have been connected to the curriculum. Echoes From The Wall has been distributed free of charge to all 40,000 public and private middle and high schools in the country. The package features the teachers' guide, the two posters, two books, a DVD and a war chronology provided by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The teacher's guide and lesson plans can also be downloaded from the VVMF website.

"Stories in Stone" – (c. 1999) Vietnam Veterans Memorial lesson plan produced using an NPS Parks as Classroom grant. The lesson plan is for grades K-4 and 7-12 using National History Standards. There are two

pre-visit activities, one on-site activity, and a post-visit activity. The on-site activity may be conducted by a park ranger if requested in advance. Topics include those who served in Vietnam, popular culture reflection on the Vietnam War, and honoring those who served. Teachers contact the NAMA Education Specialist to get a copy of the free booklet.

Close-up Foundation Teacher Workshops - In 2009, VVMF entered into a partnership with the Close-Up Foundation of Washington, D.C., to offer two to three hour training sessions for teachers. These sessions include a discussion of the history of The Wall, a tour of the site, and an overview of materials available from VVMF that teachers can request or access online.

Most schools that contact the National Mall and Memorial Parks Education Specialist want to receive a multi-stop program. Early elementary students learn about symbols found along the National Mall and middle school students learn about 20th century history. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial then is just one of many places that the students visit during one day. There is little time for in-depth or site-specific programs or experiences. The students are encouraged to walk along The Wall respectfully. Some first grade students from Virginia make a visit to The Wall after reading a story about Maya Lin.

Children's activity sheets are available to teachers upon request by contacting the NAMA Education Specialist. One page is a fill in the blank activity related to the names on The Wall. The other page has two matching activities one about the designers and the other about the symbols on The Wall. These activities were designed to meet the needs of teachers who requested activities that could be done with children at The Wall.

## Special Events and Programs

**In Memory Day** – On the third Monday in April, the names of those being honored are read by their families and certificates bearing their names, photos, and other information about their service are placed at The Wall. The ceremony, sponsored by VVMF, honors those who died as a result of the Vietnam War, but whose deaths do not fit the Department of Defense criteria for inclusion upon the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

**Mother's Day** – VVMF pays tribute to women who have lost children in war and honors those who currently have a child serving in the armed forces.

beginning at 8:30 a.m. and concluding at 4:45 p.m.

**Father's Day Rose Remembrance** – VVMF sponsors this event where roses are left at The Wall in tribute to those who have served and sacrificed. Red roses are for those killed in action in Vietnam, yellow roses are for those who remain missing in action, and white roses are for those who have died during the Global War on Terrorism.

**Veterans Day** - VVMF and NPS jointly host a ceremony at The Wall each Veterans Day to honor all who serve. A place on the stage is left empty to ensure that those who were taken prisoner or remain missing in action



2010 Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony.  
Photo credit: Bill Petros

**Memorial Day** – VVMF and NPS jointly host a ceremony at The Wall every Memorial Day. A place on the stage is left empty to ensure that those who were taken prisoner or remain missing in action are never forgotten. The ceremony concludes with a wreath laying by the veterans service organizations. In addition, storytellers are featured every 15-30 minutes at the Vietnam Women's Memorial

are never forgotten. The ceremony concludes with a wreath laying by the veterans service organizations. In addition, storytellers are featured every 15-30 minutes at the Vietnam Women's Memorial beginning at 8:30 a.m. and concluding at 4:45 p.m.



Park ranger answering visitor questions at The Wall.  
Photo credit: Leroy Lawson

are assigned to work the day shift and one is assigned to work the late evening shift. Interpreters staff the information kiosk, provide interpretive talks, and rove along The Wall and grounds.

The GS-025-11 Supervisory Park Ranger is responsible for oversight of an interpretive management zone that includes the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as well as Lincoln Memorial and the Korean War Veterans Memorial. This position is responsible for overseeing front-line interpretation, maintenance, and upkeep at all of these sites. When necessary, the Supervisory Park Ranger is also responsible for more than one other interpretive zone. Due to supervisory duties and collateral duties, this position does not usually provide programs or interpretive services.

Christmas Tree at The Wall – VVMF places a tree at The Wall and decorates it with cards and ornaments sent from around the country.

### Personal Services Programs

During hours of operation, 15- to 20-minute interpretive talks are presented by park rangers at the Three Servicemen Statue.

Interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) rove The Wall and the walkways. They answer questions and assist visitors who are looking for a specific name.

### Staffing:

In FY2010, the NAMA interpretation staff at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial included a GS-025-11 Supervisory Park Ranger, GS-025-5/7/9 Park Rangers, and GS-090-4 seasonal and permanent Park Guides. Three NAMA interpreters are assigned directly to work at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial each day. Two interpreters

Mall 101 Chapter 8 (written in 2000) of the National Mall and Memorial Parks Handbook provides operating procedures and resources for staffing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Guidance includes the following: "... inspire those who don't know about the sacrifices and contributions of the warriors and those who supported them. Remember that you are here to interpret and explain the history, symbolism, and organization of the Memorial, not argue the history, correctness, or folly of the war."

## Partnerships

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund - As the founders of The Wall, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund works to preserve the legacy of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to promote healing and to educate about the impact of the Vietnam War.

Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation - The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project was incorporated in 1984 and is a non-profit organization located in Washington, D.C. The mission of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project is to promote the healing of Vietnam women veterans through the placement of the Vietnam Women's Memorial on the grounds of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., to identify the military and civilian women who served during the Vietnam War, to educate the public about their role, and to facilitate research on the physiological, psychological, and sociological issues correlated to their service. In 2002, the Project changed its name to the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation to better reflect its mission at this time.

### Commercial Operators

Tourmobile - The Tourmobile staff create their own programs and they differ from person to person. They do not use a script.

### Cooperating Association

The cooperating association for National Mall and Memorial Parks is Eastern National (EN). The EN bookstores at the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington Cemetery currently feature many sales items on the Vietnam War and the Memorial. In FY2009, the two bookstores generated approximately \$200,000 specifically from the sale of Vietnam-themed items. The Memorial is also included

in products which encompass all of the National Mall and Memorial Parks including a scrapbook kit, books, and quiz cards.

### Volunteer Program

In FY2010, more than sixty interpretive volunteers served at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The volunteers staff the kiosk, rove along The Wall, and provide informal talks.

Additional volunteers participate in the "wall washing" program that is conducted one weekend day each month from April to November. In FY2010, 440 volunteers from many different groups provided 649 hours for wall washing.



Hundreds of volunteers representing many different groups and military units wash The Wall annually. Photo credit: Leroy Lawson

## Goals for Interpretive Programming



The Goals for Interpretive Programming are designed to realize the vision, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences described in the Foundation for Planning section. All interpretative services will provide physical and programmatic accessibility to the extent possible.

All of the workshop participants agreed that two top priorities for future interpretation at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center should be to provide a meaningful and memorable experience for the visitor, and to always treat the people whose names are on The Wall, their families, and all veterans with the utmost respect.

Goals were identified to increase the effectiveness of the interpretive services at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and identify possible interpretive services for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center. These goals are representative of many ideas generated during the workshop. Over the next three to five years, the National Mall and Memorial Parks and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund will focus on achieving the following goals:

- Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience
- Connect to Virtual Visitors by Improving Existing and Creating New Web-Based Resources
- Provide Interpretive Services at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center
- Improve Existing and Develop Interpretive Wayside Exhibits and Digital Media
- Expand Existing and Develop New Educational Opportunities
- Expand Existing and Develop New Opportunities to Reach and Engage Youth

- Improve Personal Services
- Plan and Host Special Events
- Facilitate the Development and Growth of Existing and Future Partnerships
- Expand the Volunteers-in-Parks Program
- Contact a Variety of Visitors
- Upgrade and Improve Site-specific Interpretation

### **Action Plan for the Next 3–5 Years**

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, NAMA management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. NAMA and VVMF should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects. Flexibility is extremely important to allow interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) and partners the opportunity to try new and different interpretive ideas and make adjustments as necessary.

During the July 2010 workshop, the participants agreed to divide the actions necessary to implement the recommendations into immediate (1 year), short-term (2-3 years), and long-term (4-5 years) goals. Most of the recommended actions for personal services including curriculum-based education programs at the Memorial and the Memorial Center are dependent on the hiring of new staff. Other action items can be implemented immediately, within existing funding and staffing levels.

## Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience

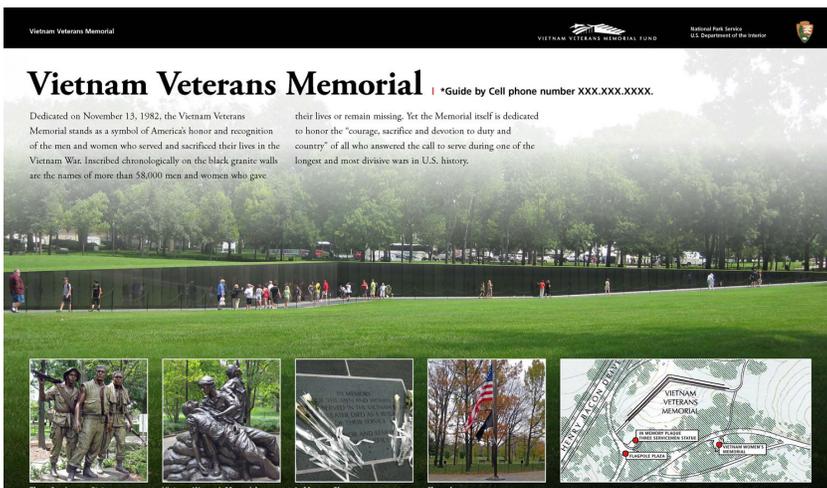
An important goal for providing interpretive services over the next three to five years is to improve orientation and wayfinding. Before visitors can have a meaningful experience, they need to find their way to the site, determine where the experience begins, and take care of their basic needs. Visitor experience issues such as agency identity and orientation must be addressed before interpretation can begin. Effective signs as well as pedestrian orientation and information are the first steps toward satisfying these basic visitor needs. The National Mall and Memorial Parks is completing a comprehensive sign plan that will include The Wall and the Center. Installation of some of the orientation signs has already begun.

### Immediate

- Define purpose of NPS kiosk located between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial.
- Redesign wayside exhibit and add guide by cell phone information.
- Develop, fabricate, and install better signs around the Memorial following the guidelines of the NAMA wayfinding plan.

Proposed redesign of the wayside exhibit located along the west approach to the Memorial.

Photo credit: VVMF



### Short-term

- Redesign brochures (Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Washington: The Nation's Capital) to include the Center.
- Expand visitor and orientation information available online and via smart phone and cell phone applications.
- Develop a site map that provides information and orientation to the Center as well as a self-guided experience that can be downloaded prior to a visit.

### Long-term

- Re-evaluate purpose and hours of operation at kiosk once the Center opens to assure it focuses on experiences at The Wall rather than the Center.
- Provide a welcoming orientation prior to entering the Center.

### Connect to Virtual Visitors by Improving Existing and Creating New Web-Based Resources

Since the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was authorized in 1980, significant changes in digital technology, in DOI/NPS web standards, and in social media have occurred. During the life of this plan, NAMA and VVMF staff will need to continually increase and improve their skills with the technology, monitor and update all web-based content to meet the current standard, and remain vigilant about what is posted via social media sites. More work using contracted web designers may be needed.

An ever-increasing percentage of visitors are web users who visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial ([www.nps.gov/vive](http://www.nps.gov/vive)) seeking information. Many of these "virtual visitors" never actually come to the site, but have their

needs met solely through the website. The same will be true for the Center. The websites for both should highlight the opportunities and experiences that are available to both on-site visitors and virtual visitors. A first step should be to prioritize actions to provide more interpretive content on the websites. Approaches could include videocasts, storytelling, and links to partner sites.

### **Immediate**

- Create a “Frequently Asked Questions” page that provides more in-depth answers to questions.
- Strengthen links between NPS and VVMF websites for virtual wall and virtual rubbings.
  - Offer virtual name rubbings on the website.
  - Provide greater access to the Virtual Wall.
  - Create a virtual exhibition using the directory of names. The kiosk database is an example.

### **Short-term**

- Develop and post a virtual tour of the site.
- Develop and post an interactive brochure.
- Establish a social networking site to link relatives to veterans who knew their loved one.
- Create a space where visitors can post reflections on their experiences at the site including student blogs.

### **Long-term**

- Provide access to resources and educational materials related to Center exhibits.
- Partner with the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial curator and MRCE staff to establish a web-based catalog using the NPS Museum Management Program so that visitors can research and learn about the tributes left at The Wall.

- Post details about upcoming temporary exhibits and permanent exhibits in the Center.
- Produce a video of veteran reflections about The Wall and its meanings.

### **Provide Interpretive Services at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center**

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center is scheduled to open in November 2014. A determination will be made by NPS and VVMF about days and hours of operation and whether a ticket system will be needed to access the Center. Workshop participants generated ideas for planning and development, permanent exhibits, temporary exhibits, and interpretive media and activities that will help VVMF, NPS, and Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc. create an immersive, interactive visitor experience. The participants also suggested that VVMF and NPS continue to consult with a variety of different groups so that innovative, creative and appropriate ideas are considered throughout the lifetime of the Center.

### **Planning and Development**

#### **Immediate**

- Carefully consider all logistical requirements so that the visitor experience to the Center is smooth, educational, and enjoyable.
  - Determine how visitors will access the site including walking, drop-off locations, and methods of transportation. Will

an additional crosswalk need to be considered on Henry Bacon Drive?

- Develop security plans for the building including determining the need for visitor screening, and developing evacuation and medical emergency plans.
- Do not over program or over complicate the Center’s exhibits and spaces so that the clarity and emotional power of the concept is not diluted.
- Explore and identify the appropriate types of interpretive delivery methods before the Center opens so that materials can be integrated as they are created (publications, signs, programs, and websites).
- Plan to allow crowd to flow seamlessly for a self-guided 35-minute tour.
- Create virtual opportunities to encourage dialogue and conversation among visitors about some aspect of their experience at the Memorial and the Center.
- Establish an accurate historical timeline that includes the history of events during the war in Vietnam.
- Establish a list of potential discussion topics that might be associated with a name from The Wall.
- Where possible, interpretation will use reproduction objects and documented personal stories to bring the story alive for visitors.

### **Permanent Exhibits**

#### **Immediate**

- Develop permanent exhibits.
- Present the American involvement

in the Vietnam War in as unbiased manner as possible.

- Create a feeling of connections for visitors with the experiences of Vietnam-era servicemen and servicewomen.
- Put faces with the names on The Wall and honor all those who served.
- Use digital displays and media throughout exhibits.
- Showcase the artifacts and letters and let them speak for themselves.
- Make the exhibits in the Center relevant and meaningful to all visitors.
- Display the museum collection and reveal what happens to the tributes left at The Wall, and provide a historical summary of phenomenon of leaving things at The Wall.
  - Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc. design concept recommends a selection of the more than 100,000 tributes be displayed in the Center. Exhibit will work within museum collection protocols for the long-term protection of objects on display. If there is a need for hands-on exhibits, non-museum collection or replica objects will be used.
- Consider adding or allowing for artifacts to change over time.
- Possible exhibit suggestions:
  - Add social history to military history exhibits so people can put the war in context.
  - Provide a touchable exhibit e.g. GI gear, helmets.
  - Provide a place to listen to the music that came out of the Vietnam conflict.

- Provide an opportunity for visitors to hear the sounds of Vietnam era helicopters, gunfire, AFVN radio/TV, and highway traffic. Any soundscapes will have to seriously consider impact on young children as well as visitors and veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.
- Need to secure permissions for all artifacts, photographs, music and other resources used in the exhibit.

### Short-term

- Fabricate and install permanent exhibits.

### Temporary Exhibit Space

#### Short-term

- Define criteria for temporary exhibit space because it will not be in a separate gallery.

#### Mid-term

- Develop, fabricate, and install temporary exhibits.
- Women in Military Service Association temporary exhibits should be considered as a type of exhibit that could go into the display cases.
- Plan for use of the temporary exhibit space for first three years that the Center is open including who will be responsible for developing, installing, and maintaining exhibits.
- Topics may include women, various ethnic groups, medal of honor recipients, special units – dog handlers, medics, medical evacuation units including out of country flights, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP), engineers, brown water navy, Hispanic heroes in Vietnam War,



and immigrants seeking citizenship in military Vietnam and today.

- Develop a digital presentation enhanced by artifacts where appropriate that reveals why the U.S. went to war without getting into politics of war.
- Make exhibits relevant to dates or events including 1960s culture.
- Develop and present a radio communications program or exhibit.

Artifacts and letters collected from The Wall will be showcased with minimal supporting interpretive text so that the items speak for themselves. Photo credit: Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc.

### Interpretive Media and Activities

#### Short-term

- Identify bookstore sales items.
- Consider films that may be shown online or available for purchase that tell the story of the creation of the Memorial: “To Heal a Nation,” Maya Lin documentary, history of the Vietnam War.
- Develop and provide age appropriate activities and exhibits for different audiences.

#### Long-term

- Provide access to the photos of names on The Wall at all times in addition to the day they are shown in the Center, provide kiosks or terminals to allow visitors to access

names/faces onsite, develop a registry (like that at the Women in Military Service Association) where people can find pictures of the names on The Wall and facts and stories about them, develop methods to identify names on The Wall by unit, military occupational specialty (MOS), sub-branch (e.g. Nurse Corps, medical corps, transportation, or artillery), make available on or offline names of deaths on The Wall by units of service.

### Improve Existing and Develop Interpretive Wayside Exhibits and Digital Media

Wayside exhibits tell Vietnam Veterans Memorial stories on location. They “caption the landscape” and help visitors make direct connections with the Memorial and its meanings. Wayside exhibits provide round-the-clock information and interpretation, and with appealing high quality design, writing, and graphics, they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources. In association with good graphics, waysides can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary waysides can be developed inexpensively to interpret future construction, restoration, and preservation projects.

A wayside exhibit panel describes the role of women who served in Vietnam. Photo credit: NPS



Digital media are well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. It can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. Also it can reach many visitors at one time and may be included in exhibits or posted onto the NPS website, in addition to being shown in dedicated auditorium spaces.

Digital media can reach the many visitors who are now using computers, cell phones, Global Positioning System (GPS) units, MP3 players, and a variety of other technological systems for entertainment, information, orientation, and interpretation. In response to the growing demand for these services, the Memorial and the Center needs to include the use of portable “individualized” audio and/or audiovisual opportunities. Using new technology will possibly create opportunities for a more diverse audience to experience these resources than ever before. These services will allow visitors to access more meanings, information, and orientation at their convenience.

Workshop participants recognized that great care and caution must be taken when considering the use of interpretive media around The Wall and certain areas of the Memorial. Media should be used sparingly around The Wall and its use is encouraged at the statues, flagpole, and In Memory Plaque.

### Immediate

- Develop and provide a cell phone tour.
- Redesign and update existing wayside exhibit panels.

### Short-term

- Develop digital smart phone applications that allow users to

access information about the Center and the Memorial including providing access to photos connected to the names on The Wall and information about objects left at The Wall.

- Develop, fabricate, and design wayside exhibit for Memorial walkway entrance at 21st and Constitution.
- Revise the Vietnam Veterans Memorial brochure. Add panel dates, collection information, website, cell phone tour, Center location and information, Vietnam War statistics, and the In Memory Plaque location and information.

### Long-term

- Determine oral history collection sites and collect oral histories.
- Once the Center opens document dignitaries' visits to the site and Center.
- Develop downloadable media and a smart phone application that provide a self-guided tour to the entire Memorial site and the Center.

### **Expand Existing and Develop New Educational Opportunities**

An effective education program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. The resources and themes of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular education program in partnership with area schools, neighboring parks, historic sites, and affiliated areas.

The National Mall and Memorial Parks Education Specialist and the VVMF Education staff will work together to secure resources to facilitate

the development and growth of a curriculum-based program based on national education standards.

With a strong program and ties directly to national curriculum standards, more schools will see the value of using the Center to help meet their needs. This can be accomplished by involving educators from area schools directly in the development of both general and specific activities and curriculum guides.

### Immediate

- Explore space issues for presenting education programs at the Center.

### Short-term

- Develop curriculum-based programs that link multiple National Mall and Memorial Parks' sites.
- Modify the existing field trip guide and plan your visit guide to include the Center.
- Partner with organizations such as "Teaching with Historic Places" to develop lesson plans.
- Make all existing and future education materials and programs available in digital and online formats.

### Long-term

- Develop and disseminate curriculum-based education materials and programs for a variety of age groups including resources that may be used before, during, and after a visit.
- Consider partnerships with recognized and related educational institutions.
- Host seminars and conferences for educators e.g. seminar that discuss



Offering a scout badge program is one possible way to reach and engage youth. Photo credit: VVMF

The Wall from architectural and historical perspectives.

- Establish a relationship with other Vietnam Memorials around the country to develop complementary education programs.
- Hire and train staff including veterans and volunteers to deliver curriculum-based education programs.
- Establish a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program to increase interpretive opportunities on-site and in the classroom.
- Once dedicated classroom space is addressed, consider partners who can conduct education programs in the Center.

#### Other actions to be considered

- Prepare an education plan that would provide overall direction for the education program. Target grades will be identified as well as funding sources for transportation and distance learning equipment.
- Create a teacher advisory group to advise NAMA and VVMF on the most useful ways to offer educational services to schools

and to develop curriculum-based education programs.

- Conduct teacher workshops to enable teachers to participate in on-site curriculum-based programs.

#### **Expand Existing and Develop New Opportunities to Reach and Engage Youth**

An effective youth program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. In this planning document, youth programs are designed for pre-kindergarten through age 25. The resources and themes of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular programs in collaboration with VVMF, area schools, and local communities.

#### Short-term

- Provide online and onsite access to resource information that may be used for school projects.
- Develop and offer programs that address the needs of youth versus adult or general audiences.

#### Long-term

- Determine the feasibility of developing and possibly implementing partnerships with local youth groups.
- Connect to Vietnamese Embassy students.
- Connect to American and Vietnamese youth.
- Develop and present Girl and Boy Scout badge/patch programs.
- Create an engaging program, like a scavenger hunt, to get youth involved in exhibits and site.

- Establish a veteran-led youth service program.
- Develop a Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Center-specific Junior Ranger program and booklet.
- Provide access to individual stories of people on The Wall including, but not limited to, home town connections, the same last name, or share the same birthday.

### Improve Personal Services

Interpreters are the best interactive tool in enabling visitors to experience, understand, appreciate, and make personal connections with the resource. A well-trained, knowledgeable, professional park ranger and volunteer staff will ensure sensitivity, accuracy and consistency. Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view. It will respond to diverse audiences, varying levels of interest, and different lengths of time for a visit. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial's resources and themes present almost limitless opportunities for both standard and innovative interpretive activities. As staffing levels permit, and in keeping within the parameters of the interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, volunteers, interns, and interpreters should be given a high degree of creative freedom to explore and experiment with new programs. This will help to maintain a creative edge and attract new and returning audiences.

The Memorial reflects more than an isolated day in history. It represents a continuum of events associated with the Vietnam War. Since personal services and interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify or improve those that



require it, and validate those that are successful. Continuous individual and peer evaluation will ensure that factual, accurate, and timely answers to visitor questions are provided.

In the future, guided walks covering the entire Memorial experience may be offered.  
Photo credit: VVMF

### Immediate

- Draft a general overview talk for use by park rangers and volunteers.
- Present talks, walks, and illustrated programs outside of the Center and around the Memorial.
- Offer guided walks of the entire memorial experience.
- Begin to identify staff/post assignments at the Center and coordinate access to the Center and crowd control.

### Short-term

- Define and clarify tour group leader responsibilities in the Center.

### Long-term

- Offer informal interpretation inside the Center.
- Utilize interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) to provide directions and informal interpretation.

- Increase the use of veterans to tell stories.
- Establish a space that enables conversation and discussion about the war.



Special events, such as the Veterans Day program, will continue to be offered to promote healing and closure for veterans, families, and friends. Photo credit: Bill Petros

### **Plan and Host Special Events**

All special events must relate to the purpose, significance, and themes and provide interpretive opportunities. Continue existing and add new special events programs to promote healing and/or closure for veterans, families, and friends. Ensure all partners and staff has a clear understanding of NPS policies, restricted areas, and permits including NPS museum collection guidelines prohibiting food in exhibit areas.

### **Immediate**

- Establish clear understanding of what is possible (NPS policies and space available), where resources would come from, and the roles of VVMF and NPS.
- Develop an operational and logistics plan for the Center.
- Determine if Area 5 will be the First Amendment demonstration area for the Center. It is currently the First Amendment demonstration area for the Memorial.

### **Short-term**

- Coordinate all special events with activities and exhibits offered at the Center in order to avoid potential conflicts with NPS events and other non-NPS events.
  - Advertise special events to reach as many as possible.
  - Plan for the 2015 50th Anniversary of the U.S. entry into the Vietnam War.
  - Ensure all partners and staff has a clear understanding of NPS policies, restricted areas, and permits.
  - Explore connections with organizations such as the U.S. Army Center for Military History and other military service organizations.

### **Long-term**

- Add special events such as unit/battle reunions and anniversaries.
- Consider adding events that might require evening use of the Center.
- Continue existing and add new special events programs to promote healing and/or closure for veterans, families, and friends.
- Host honor flights for the Memorial.

### **Facilitate the Development and Growth of Existing and Future Partnerships**

Interpretive partnerships play a key role in the delivery of essential programs and can also provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services. Partnerships are most effective when partners share a common goal and can leverage their efforts to accomplish the goal. Workshop participants recognized that the NAMA staff cannot and should not be the sole

provider of interpretive services. Working more closely with VVMF as well as other local, state, and federal agencies is imperative.

### Immediate

- Prepare a Memorandum of Understanding between VVMF and NPS to outline use, roles, and responsibilities for each for the Center.
- Establish and strengthen a broad range of public and private partnerships to support both the site and the Center.
- Establish partnerships with private companies to help fund Center activities and services.
- Strengthen partnerships with veteran's organizations (Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and Vietnam Veterans of America).

### Short-term

- Enhance partnerships with recognized educational institutions including the University of Maryland which has an active education program in Vietnam.
  - Establish partnerships with universities, youth organizations (Young Marines and Sea Cadets), and service academies for curriculum development.
- Establish partnerships with other local, state, and federal agencies (Smithsonian Institution, National Archives, Library of Congress, military services, other Vietnam Memorials) to share resources and information.
- Establish partnerships with not-for-profit groups (Women in Military Service Association, U.S. Institute of Peace, 50th

Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Commission, and Newseum) to coordinate exhibits, programming, and access to collections.

- Where allowed, link NPS website to partner websites and vice versa.

### Long-term

- Provide orientation to new partners regarding NPS and National Mall and Memorial Parks' regulations and policies.



### **Expand the Volunteers-in-Parks Program**

The Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program could be enhanced with more dedicated NPS supervision, providing VIP accommodations, and an increase in VIP funding. An effort to enhance and expand the participation of local volunteers would be beneficial as well.

### Immediate

- Improve overall site volunteer program management.
  - Create a volunteer calendar that is easy to maintain and follow.
  - Better coordinate efforts of

Thorough and continuous training opportunities will help volunteers answer questions and provide assistance to visitors.  
Photo credit: Leroy Lawson

VVMF and NPS volunteers.

- Integrate volunteers into site operations including NPS information sharing (roll calls).
- Develop and implement a retention strategy that will include creating and maintaining a database of volunteers; updating position descriptions and determining how many volunteers are needed for each task; communicating the length of assignment when recruiting volunteers to minimize turnover; working with partners to reduce competition for volunteers; and working with park staff to ensure that there is adequate oversight and support for volunteers. Recognize volunteer achievements.
- Determine NPS supervisory structure needed to assure program success..

#### **Short-term**

- Conduct a needs assessment. Identifying what tasks park staff need volunteer help with will provide the coordinator with the necessary information to successfully recruit. The assessment also would help identify potential individuals or group skills that might be needed. For example, youth groups may be identified who have an interest and skill in developing web-based services. High school students may get academic credit for volunteering.
- Develop and implement a recruitment strategy that would focus on Vietnam veterans to provide programs and augment services; the “next generation” of volunteers from groups that already have involvement with The Wall (i.e. Wall washing groups);

youth; history students; and museum studies interns to help collect and manage artifacts and tributes until they are transferred to MRCE.

- Provide thorough and continuous volunteer training that is presented by NPS and VVMF staff.

#### **Long-term**

- Implement the recruitment strategy.
- Review NPS supervisory structure to assure it is appropriate for sustaining the program.

#### **Other actions to be considered**

- Prepare a volunteer plan to guide the development and enhancement of the volunteer program.
- Establish internships with local colleges.
- Create a volunteer pamphlet to recruit new volunteers incorporating appropriate elements from the servicewide volunteer recruiting brochure.

#### **Upgrade and Improve Site-specific Interpretation**

##### **In Memory Plaque**

During 2011, the In Memory Plaque will undergo restoration. Due to its location, the plaque is often overlooked.

##### **Short-term**

- Add the In Memory Honor Roll to the brochure and website to help visitors understand why the plaque is needed.
- Provide a program that reveals what happened to vets when they returned home.

### Long-term

- Provide an explanation of Agent Orange and its use/effects, why the plaque is needed, and why Agent Orange victims are not on The Wall.

### Three Servicemen Statue

There are so many questions asked about the Three Servicemen that a variety of media are needed.

### Short-term

- Produce a recording or present a program that reveals more details about the statue including the weapons, ethnicity of the soldiers, models for statues, why M-60 bullets are pointing “up” on soldier, why the sculpture was made, and who the figures represent.
- Provide publications or have staff available to answer questions about the statue.

### The Wall

Increasing opportunities for interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) to provide informal interpretation as well as answer questions and provide information is the preferred interpretive method for The Wall.

### Immediate

- Continue to have interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) available to answer questions and provide information on the names, dates on The Wall, the objects left at The Wall, how new names are added, Theipvah Memorial was an inspiration for Maya Lin, how names are arranged and why, and what the symbols mean.

### Long-term

- Offer programs that share the stories of a few specific people whose names are on The Wall.

### Flagpole

### Immediate

- Use interpretive media to reveal why POW/MIA flag is flying and what it means.

### Vietnam Women’s Memorial

Interpretive media in addition to the existing wayside exhibit panels could describe the role of women in the war, what the figures in the statue represent, the original proposed statue and final design, and provide more information about the women whose names are on The Wall.

### Short-term

- Use digital media and publications to talk about the role of women

Vietnam Women’s Memorial.  
Photo credit: Bill Shugarts



in the war and what the figures represent.

### **Long-term**

- Offer interpretive programs about the original proposed statue and final design.
- Use interpretive media to provide more information about the women whose names are on The Wall with reference to learning more in the Center.

### **Directory Stands**

Even though the directories are one of the most used and useful references available onsite, many visitors still do not understand how the names are identified on The Wall. Stationing a ranger or volunteer near the directories is not always practical or possible. Digital media, websites, or a publication may be the best ways to communicate to visitors. Adding more signs or permanent fixtures in this area might not be the best or most effective interpretive tool.

### **Immediate**

- Use interpretive media to explain the arrangement of names.

### **Long-term**

- Place decals on directory stands or print text at the bottom of each directory page to direct visitors to the Center to see pictures of the people whose names they are looking up.

### **Kiosk**

Interpreters (park ranger and volunteer) at the kiosk are an effective way to offer general information, publications, first aid, rubbing materials, and help on how to access digital interpretive media at The Wall.

### **Immediate**

- Continue to offer general information, publications, and help on how to access digital interpretive media.

### **Short-term**

- Provide visitors with electronic access to list of names on The Wall.

### **Contact a Variety of Visitors**

Most interpretive services are developed for a general audience. There will be visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center who come with specific needs and for specific reasons. To best meet these needs and provide opportunities to discover the significance of the resource, workshop participants identified some visitor groups that may be interested in specific topics of interest or require specific interpretive services.

### **Professional Groups**

- For art history buffs and architects, develop a history of The Wall design competition including design considerations, site restrictions, and Maya Lin's interpretation of the design. Develop a program about Frederick Hart and Glenna Goodacre's sculptures, interpretations, and comments.
- For historians, provide special and in-depth research materials.
- For curators, develop a program about the collection.
- For academics, host seminars or conferences on the Vietnam War.

### **Military**

- Provide Service Academy visitors with information on academy heroes.

- Develop programs and/or services on the following topics:
  - Use of counter-insurgency warfare.
  - Tactics – use of air power, technology, medicine on battlefield, communication.
  - Medical advances due to responses to war injuries. Nurses, medics, doctors – pictures, comparison of then and now, advances that came out of Vietnam War.
  - Vietnam compared to current wars and conflicts.
  - Training of soldiers.
  - Chaplain group – military/civilian.
  - Specific units or military occupational specialty.
- Provide access to information on service members' names from their country or state (e.g. Australians or Koreans who served in the U.S. military in Vietnam and are on The Wall).
- For military dignitaries, provide access to information on their service branch represented on The Wall.

### *Families/Relatives*

- Provide no interpretation of letters and notes left at The Wall.
  - Be responsive to the needs of families who arrive to observe their relative's birthday. Levels of service that can be provided will need to be based on the number of families observing birthdays and number of staff available that day.
  - Provide genealogical information about the servicemen and women identified in the exhibit and on The Wall including when and where the individual served, his/her unit, and events associated with that unit.
- Dignitaries*
- Offer a personal tour led by the President of VVMF or prominent staff.
  - Produce foreign language translations of most requested materials.



Interpretive staff must be prepared to address the needs of visitors who may be seeking more detailed information such as the specific unit that a servicemember was in. Photo credit: Leroy Lawson.



Research into the significance of memorialization is vital to understanding The Wall today and in the future. Photo credit: Dan Arant

## Research and Evaluation Needs

All interpretive programs and services must be solidly grounded in research. In order to fully accomplish the actions included in this plan and support the interpretive themes, research needs to be conducted.

- Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc. will coordinate research and content development efforts for the “Timeline of the Vietnam War,” “Legacy of Service,” and “History of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial” exhibits.
- Conduct audience research to determine what pre-conceptions the current and future visitors have about the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Conduct research to determine who is coming to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Why are they visiting? What are their expectations before arrival? Do they carry powerful or even painful emotional memories?
- On-going research into the causes of the war in Vietnam and reactions to it, both during the conflict and after, is vital to understanding the Memorial today and in the future. Research memorialization and

whether memorials prevent war or deter countries from going to war.

One of the pillars of the Interpretation and Education Renaissance is the “Culture of Evaluation.” Evaluation also is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and special programming. Front-end evaluation will inform the project team about what visitors already know about the site before they come, what understandings they may have about the significance of the site, or how to fulfill the visitor’s interest in visiting the site. This type of evaluative study is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations allow the team to get feedback on project content before it is fabricated. Knowing how potential visitors react to stories and information or even how the message is displayed can inform and enhance the media product and the overall visitor experience. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs – i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually making use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected. Summative evaluation may even be a necessary follow-up for certain sources of funding such as foundation grants.

- After the Center has been opened for a year, the NPS should evaluate the purpose of the kiosk. Is it still necessary? Do more visitors come after Center has closed for the day to ask questions? What will be the impact on Center staff if kiosk is closed? Is it working effectively as a base of operations for staff working at The Wall?

## Staffing and Training Needs

In order to fulfill the vision of this plan, additional funding and staffing will be required. Ten additional FTE (full-time equivalency) have been requested by National Mall and Memorial Parks to staff the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center when it opens in 2014. The Center will be staffed ten hours daily, 364 days a year. NAMA will be hiring a public information officer in 2011. Duties for this new position will include providing marketing support for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center.

A trained and motivated workforce is necessary for any successful interpretive operation. Emphasis should be placed on accountability for interpretive standards to be applied or adhered to when any paid employees or volunteers present interpretive programs, design publications, media, and exhibits, or present curriculum-based educational programs. Ensure that all staff members who provide interpretive services are held to the appropriate NPS standards as defined

in the Interpretive Development Program and be trained accordingly.

Because volunteers are an important part of the workforce, NAMA staff members require an appropriate level of volunteer supervisory training or a separate volunteer supervisor should be funded.

- Develop and provide training that meets the needs of all interpreters including interpretation skills, Vietnam history, and Center exhibits.
- Create training and learning institutes for park ranger and volunteer staff.



Volunteers and NAMA Park Rangers work together now to staff the Memorial and they will work together to staff the Center once it opens. Photo credit: Leroy Lawson



## Appendix A: The Planning Team

### *National Park Service*

#### National Mall and Memorial Parks

John Piltzecker, Superintendent (transferred)  
 Karen Cucurullo, Deputy Superintendent  
 Carolyn Richard, Chief of Interpretation  
 Lance Hatten, Chief of Interpretation (transferred)  
 Rosanna Weltzin, Deputy Chief of Interpretation  
 Jaime Boyle, Supervisory Park Ranger  
 Jennifer Epstein, Education Specialist  
 Mark Isaksen, Chief of Resource Management (transferred)  
 Allison Dixon, Museum Technician  
 Dan R. Arant, Volunteer  
 Annmarie Emmet, Volunteer  
 Dan Kirby, Volunteer  
 Allen McCabe, Volunteer

#### Harpers Ferry Center

Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner (Team Captain)

#### National Capital Region

Sue Hansen, Chief of Interpretation  
 Gary Scott, Regional Historian

### *Park Partners*

#### Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

Jan Scruggs, President  
 Holly Rotondi, Vice President (no longer at VVMF)  
 Harry G. Robinson III, Board Member  
 Lisa Gough, Director of Communications  
 Mariah Payne, Director of Education (no longer at VVMF)  
 Jessica Perno, Program Manager (no longer at VVMF)  
 Geoffrey Wiles, Director, National Education Programs  
 Daniel Schenk, Program Manager, The Wall That Heals (no longer at VVMF)  
 Sara McVicker, Volunteer

#### Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc.

Mary Beth Byrne, Content Developer  
 James Cathcart, Project Director

#### Ennead Architects

Thomas Wong, Associate Partner  
 Charles Griffith, Associate Partner

#### Eastern National

Stacy Madalena, Regional Manager  
 William Hammond, Chief, General Histories Branch at U.S. Army Center of Military History (retired)

#### Tishman Construction

Mike Baruccheri, Project Manager  
 Steve Dimond, Vice President

## Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

“... To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.”

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/accessibility/access-guide-aug2009.pdf>.



Veterans Day 2010. Photo credit: Bill Petros

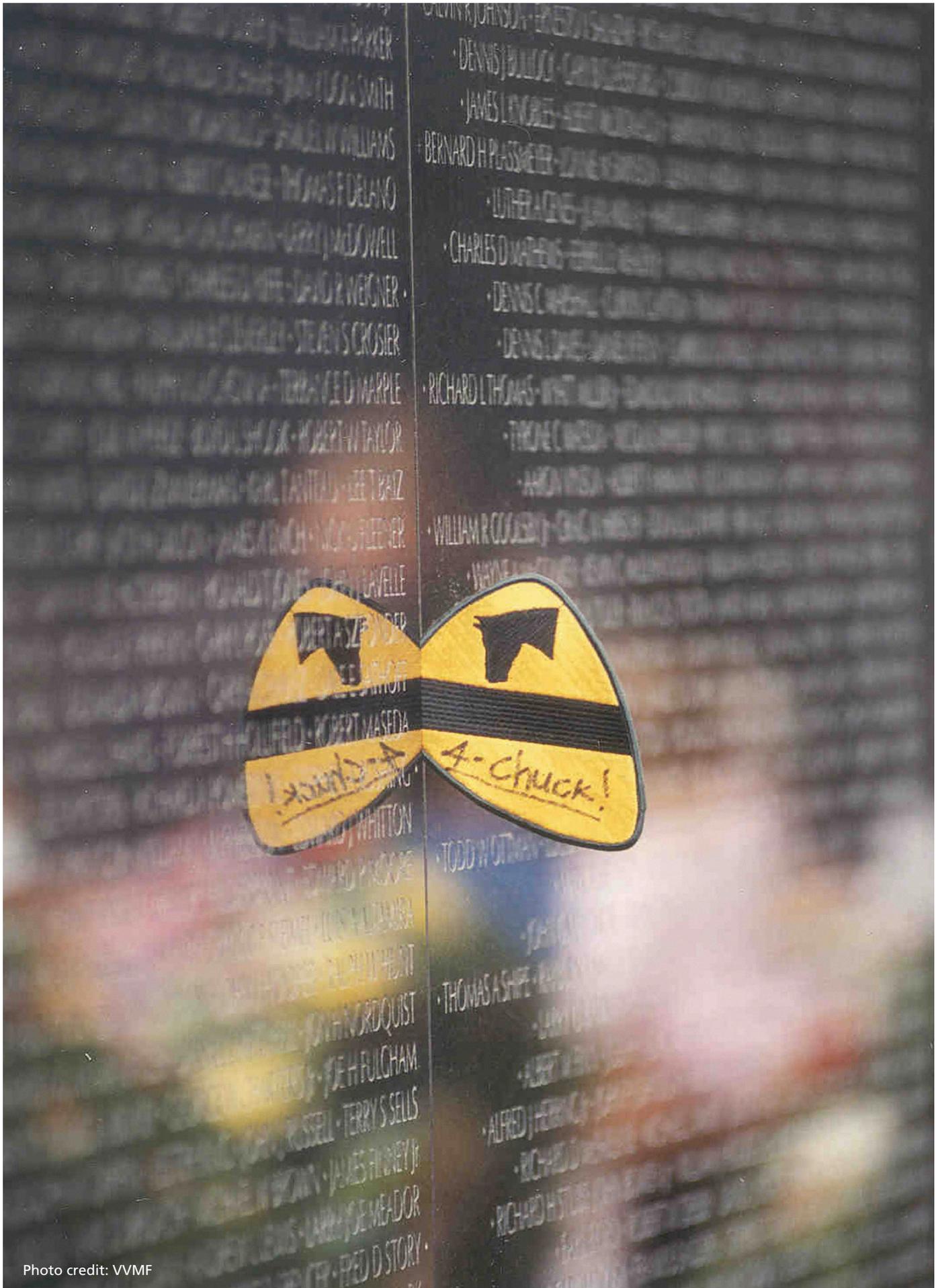


Photo credit: VVMF

Harpers Ferry Center  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



**Vietnam Veterans Memorial**  
**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center**

c/o National Mall and Memorial Parks

900 Ohio Drive SW

Washington, DC 20024

202-426-6841

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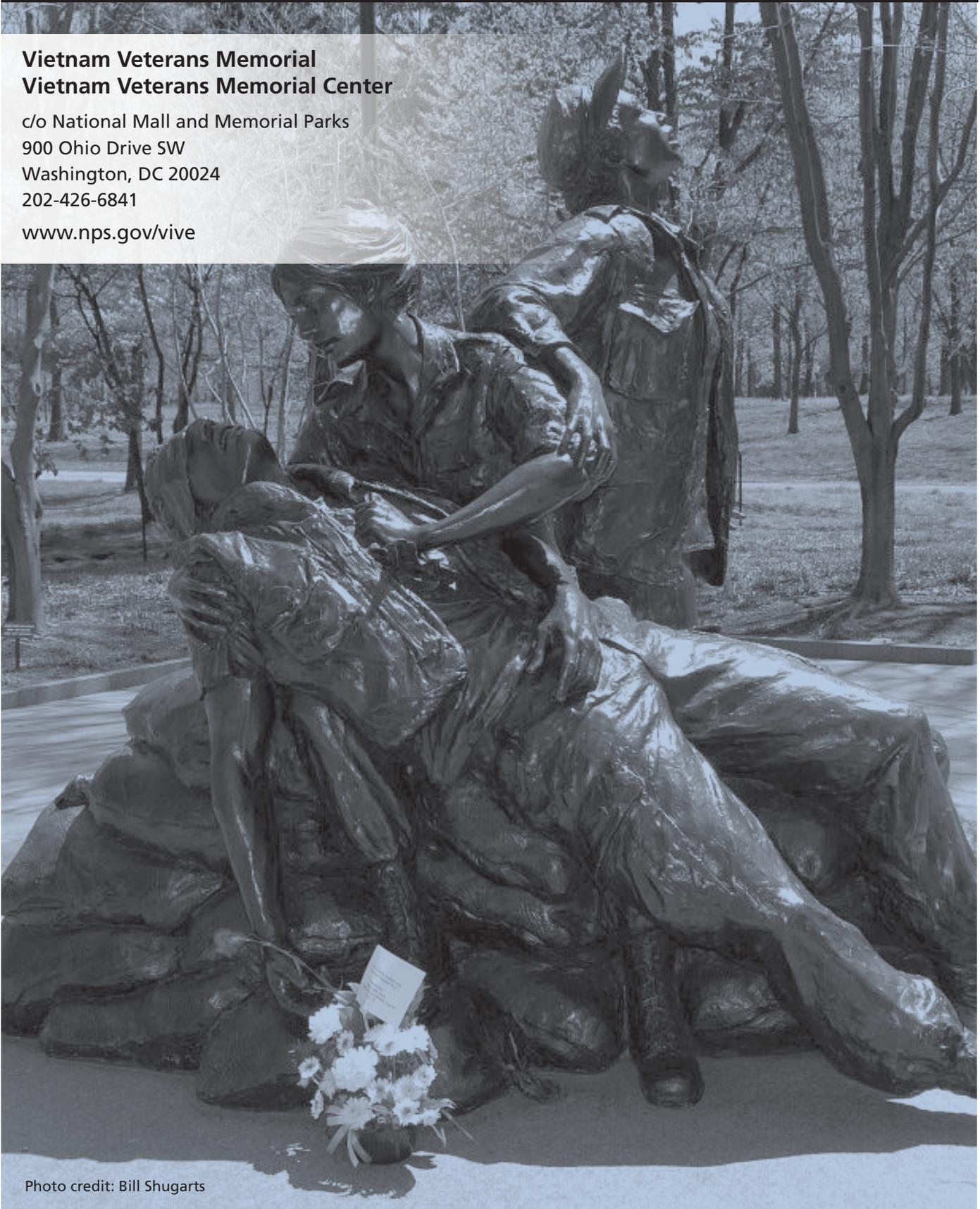


Photo credit: Bill Shugarts