

MEMORANDUM

March 17, 1983

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TO: National Sponsoring Committee
FROM: Jan C. Scruggs, President
SUBJECT: Progress Report




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On Saturday, November 13, 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was officially dedicated in a moving ceremony attended by hundreds of thousands of Americans from all 50 states and territories. It was the highlight of our 5-day National Salute to Vietnam veterans and the culmination of three years of hard work. Thanks to the support of people like you and half a million other caring and patriotic individuals, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is now a reality for all the nation to enjoy.

We are pleased to present this summary of activities since our last report to you July, 1982, as well as an update on our plans for the future. The Program Souvenir and brochure describing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are enclosed for your information.

Fund Raising Campaign Reaches Its Goal.

By the beginning of 1982, VVMF had succeeded in raising over \$5 million for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. With the generous gift of over \$1 million from The American Legion as well as many significant contributions by major U.S. corporations and foundations, the \$7 million goal was reached by late March, in time to break ground and begin construction.

Included among the special gifts that helped VVMF go "over the top" were those from the Exxon Corporation for \$75,000; The LTV Corporation for \$71,058; The Boeing Company for \$64,467; and Anheuser-Busch Companies for \$50,000. Also included in this category are gifts from the following companies and foundations: \$40,000 from Chevron, U.S.A., \$35,000 from Shell Oil Companies; \$26,000 from the Tandy Corporation; and \$25,000 from the Lilly Endowment.

One of VVMF's goals during the campaign was to get as many Americans as possible involved in building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. A number of corporations conducted employee drives and matched each gift, thereby increasing significantly the number of individuals contributing to the memorial project. Among those participating in these special company-wide campaigns were The LTV Corporation, The Boeing Company, American Express, and Tiger International.

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National Salute to Vietnam Veterans

The purpose of the National Salute was to allow the nation an opportunity to publicly honor and recognize all who had served in the Vietnam war. This was accomplished with the five days of events in November that culminated in the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Salute to Vietnam Veterans opened with a Candlelight Vigil at the National Cathedral on Wednesday, November 10. For 56 continuous hours, over 230 volunteers read the names of the 57,939 men and women who had sacrificed their lives or remain missing in the Vietnam war. Among those who participated were Vietnam veterans, parents and family members of those whose names were being read, and U.S. Congressmen and Senators. The vigil concluded at midnight on Friday, November 12.

On the evening of November 10, Vietnam veterans were honored by entertainers in a two-hour concert at DAR Constitution Hall. The show was a dynamic, positive and patriotic performance put on by the five service color guards, U.S. Naval Academy Glee Club, U.S. Air Force Band, and Jimmy Stewart, Brian Dennehy and Carol Lawrence. Singer Wayne Newton performed for more than an hour with a host of songs dedicated to all who had answered their country's call to duty in Vietnam.

On Veterans Day, VVMF opened the military unit registration at three locations in the city (Sheraton Washington for the Army; Hotel Washington for the Navy and Marines; and Mayflower Hotel for the Air Force and Coast Guard). Thousands of veterans, many of whom had pre-registered, scanned the rosters for buddies with whom they had served years before, and many succeeded in finding fellow servicemen from their Vietnam units.

Many attending the National Salute were parents and family members of those whose lives had been lost in Vietnam. In recognition of this special group of people who had experienced such personal tragedy, VVMF sponsored a Gold Star Open House on Friday, November 12. More than 5,000 people (all of whom had lost someone in the war) attended this reception that featured food and beverages donated by such companies as Anheuser-Busch, Joseph Seagram and Sons, Chock Full of Nuts, the Doubek Cookie Company and McDonalds.

The long awaited parade and dedication took place on Saturday, November 13. The Parade in Tribute to Vietnam Veterans began at 10 a.m. and featured twenty-five Vietnam veteran Grand Marshals, and more than 15,000 marchers (most of whom were veterans of the Vietnam war) in separate state formations. Military and high school bands and a noontime military flyover of F4's and Huey Helicopters joined the marchers who represented all 50 states and three territories.

Dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial began at 2:30 p.m. on the memorial site. Over 150,000 attended with millions of others sharing this historic moment through live radio and cable T.V. coverage. The media coverage was all-inclusive, from national and local journalists to national networks as well as some foreign network coverage. The ceremony lasted one hour and 15 minutes; when VVMF President Jan Scruggs announced the memorial was officially dedicated, the crowd cheered. It was a moment that many people had waited for a very long time. The entire dedication ceremony is included in the December 2, 1982 Congressional Record.

The National Salute to Vietnam Veterans concluded, just as it had begun, at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. On Sunday, November 14, an 11 a.m. Eucharist service was held to remember all veterans of the Vietnam war and to pray for the reconciliation of divisions in our nation caused by that war. Throughout the country, other churches and religious faiths held services that weekend to remember those in their communities who had died, and to pray for the binding of the wounds caused by that war.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Construction Summary.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, listing the names of the 57,939 servicemen and women who sacrificed their lives or remain missing in Vietnam, stands proudly between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument on our national Mall.

Ground was broken for the memorial on March 26, 1982. By July 1982 the first inscribed panel arrived from Memphis, Tennessee (where a specially designed inscription process was being applied to the cut and polished granite slabs). By the first week in November, all of the 140 inscribed panels had been installed, the landscaping had been completed, and the new sod was planted. The construction fence was taken down on November 10 just prior to the National Salute.

Flag and Sculpture Additions.

I am pleased to tell you the memorial is now nearing completion, having received final approval from the three federal agencies (Department of Interior, The Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission) for the addition of a flagstaff and a life-size three figure sculpture.

An approved "entry plaza" concept calls for the sculpture and flag to be grouped at the entrance to the site from the Lincoln Memorial. This concept provides for revising the walkways surrounding the site to add a walkway on the direct line from the Lincoln Memorial.

National Park Service Volunteer Guides Program.

The National Park Service has created a voluntary guide program to assist visitors in finding the names, which are listed on the walls in chronological order. As the official hosts at the memorial, these guides are answering visitors' questions and are reporting a very favorable reaction by our visitors. Over one million visitors have come to see the memorial, and it is well liked.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Directory of Names.

A Directory of Names (catalogue) is now in its second printing. The Directory is an alphabetical listing of the nearly 58,000 names inscribed on the memorial's granite walls. The Directory provides the exact location of each name by panel and line number, as well as additional identifying information about each person.

As a public service we recently distributed copies to offices which Vietnam veterans and families are likely to contact. These include Congressmen, state governors and state directors of Veterans affairs, Vet Centers, VA hospitals, Vietnam Veterans Leadership Programs, and others.

VVMF went to great lengths to verify the inclusivity and corrections of the names inscribed on the memorial. We imagine, however, that errors and omissions possibly remain; and are committed to rectifying any such errors. We will not add a name, however, unless the Department of Defense adds it to the official list.

Site Restoration and Other Plans.

Due to the heavy rains the night of November 12th and the large crowd in attendance at the Dedication the following day, the sod at the site was severely damaged, particularly in the "bowl" area in the front of the V-shaped walls. With favorable weather now, we have just begun the work of restoring the site.

In the effected areas, we are installing a new topsoil layer to insure adequate percolation of surface water and will also add a system of perforated pipes to drain off the percolated water. We plan to complete the restoration by mid-April in time for the large crowds of annual visitors to the Washington area.

In response to public wishes, our architect of record is working on a proposal for lighting the memorial at night. Based on an acceptable plan, we will submit it to the Park Service for consideration by the appropriate Federal Commissions.

Stewardship.

The VVMF has had annual audits done by Peat, Marwick and Mitchell, an outside auditor, to meet the requirements of the various state charitable solicitation agencies and the Better Business Bureau.

Additional audit work, a special review of VVMF's internal controls, was recently completed under the supervision of the Fund's Independent Audit Committee. The Committee was formed by the VVMF to oversee all accounting operations of our organization. The Independent Audit Committee has our appreciation for their dedicated work.

The members of the Committee are:

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Memorial Day /Veterans Day Ceremonies.

We are planning to have the "entrance plaza" modifications (realigning the walkways) and the flagstaff in place, and highlighted by an appropriate ceremony on Memorial Day, 1983. Frederick Hart, the sculpture, is hard at work on the full size statuary and is nearing 50 per cent completion. We would like to have an installation ceremony for the sculpture on Veterans Day this year, but of course this will depend on Mr. Hart's progress and the final bronze casting of the statue.

Thank you again for your support of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.