

May 29, 2017 - Memorial Day Event - Letters to The Wall

America wants YOU to write a letter today to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) for delivery on Memorial Day. Over the past two years we have solicited letters from folks just like you to deliver to The Wall on Memorial Day. Now it's your turn.

Do you remember the American War in Vietnam? I mean really remember it -- from deep in your bones --because you actually lived through it. Perhaps as a soldier, perhaps as a conscientious objector, perhaps as a youngster caught up in your family's pain and anguish, perhaps as a dedicated street protestor, or perhaps as a friend or a lover of a soldier. Perhaps as an orphan or a grandchild who never met her grandfather. Perhaps as a citizen of Vietnam or Cambodia or Thailand. I am sure I am missing other important scenarios, but you get the picture. That war is an indelible part of your psyche, like it or not.

We in Veterans For Peace's "Vietnam Full Disclosure" project are concerned that your voice is not being heard. By whom, you might ask. Answer: by those too young to have witnessed the scourge of this war who think they can learn "the truth" from the Pentagon's revisionist history. And that re-writing of our lives is what is going on right now as we are being more and more inundated by so-called "fifty year commemorations." We in VFP have dedicated a fair amount of time in resisting the game plan of our government to mythologize the war and, subsequently, to justify it and, eventually, to use it as a backdrop for future wars.

So, we are doing something about that. Over the past few years we have sponsored teach-ins and panel discussions; we have barraged the Pentagon with letters pointing out the fallacies of their own web page; we are actively working with our chapter in Vietnam to help heal the victims of Agent Orange and Unexploded Ordnance. And we are writing letters to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Say what?



That's right. Over the past two years we have delivered hundreds of letters so far, and we are looking for yours to deliver this Memorial Day. Here's how we do it -- we collect the letters, we place them in business sized envelopes with the tops slit open, we write "Please Read Me" on the outside of the envelopes, and then at 10:30AM on Memorial Day we walk down The Wall from both sides, placing the letters at the foot of The Wall (if a soldier's name is referenced in a letter, we leave that letter at the foot of the panel where his or her name appears).

So what? Well, these past two years we have watched visitors to The Wall on Memorial Day pick up these letters and hug and cry and look more deeply into the black granite before them. And we also watch the National Parks Service as they collect the letters to put into the national archives for future displays. Oh, and by the way, we are also publishing letters -- our most recent book **LETTERS TO THE WALL** that shares 150 of these letters has been available since August of 2016. You can buy a discounted copy by going to LuLu.com and typing the title into their search engine (it is listed in their History section). Our voices are being heard. Please join us.



Here's how. If you are moved to write a letter, you can email it to rawlings@maine.edu before May 15, 2017. It's that simple. Members from VFP will then print out your letter, place it in an envelope, and deliver your letter as you have written it to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on May 29th at 10:30AM. If you want to join us for this ceremony, please let me know.

Please note that we consider The Wall to be something akin to "sacred ground," so we do not perform political actions there; we will treat your words with the respect they deserve. You may sign your letter with your full name, or not. Up to you. Also note that by sending us your letter you are giving us permission to do three things -- possibly publish your letter to our website (vietnamfulldisclosure.org); publicly display your words at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day, 2017; and, possibly, include your letter in the next edition of our **LETTERS TO THE WALL** collection. Finally, we want all to know that we acknowledge the devastation brought down on the heads of millions and millions of Southeast Asian people during the American War in Vietnam. Last year we unfolded a banner in DC to that effect. We will do the same this year.

We encourage you to visit our website at vietnamfulldisclosure.org to see what we are about and to sign our pledge to tell the truth about the American War in Vietnam; we encourage you to purchase our book, read it, and then give it to a local school library to help their students enrich their research on the war; but, most importantly, we encourage you to write your letter. We need to hear from you. America needs to hear from you.



Thanks,
Doug Rawlings
on behalf of the
Vietnam Full Disclosure group