

Appendix for Module Five

Supplementary Materials:

- Video — *The Wall That Heals*, Simitar Entertainment, Inc. , 1997
- Book — Scruggs, Jan, ed. *Why Vietnam Still Matters: The War and The Wall*, Washington, D. C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 1996
- Book — Scruggs, Jan, ed. *Voices From The Wall*, Washington, D. C. : Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 1998

Background Information:

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial stands as a symbol of America's honor and recognition of the men and women who served in the Vietnam War. Inscribed on the black granite wall are the names of more than 58,000 Americans who gave their lives or remain missing. Yet the Memorial itself is dedicated to honor the "courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty and country" of all who answered the call to serve during the longest war in U. S. history.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization authorized by Congress in 1979 to fund and build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C. Incorporated on April 27, 1979 by a group of veterans led by Jan C. Scruggs, who was wounded and decorated for service in Vietnam, the organization sought a tangible symbol of recognition from the American people for those who served in the war. By separating the issue of individuals serving in the military from the controversy surrounding the war, VVMF's leaders hoped to begin a process of national reconciliation.

Two members of the U. S. Senate, Charles Mathias (R-MD) and John Warner (R-VA), took the lead in Congress to enact legislation providing three acres in the northwest corner of the Mall as a site for the Memorial.

For its juried design competition, VVMF set four criteria: The design had to be (1) reflective and contemplative in character, (2) harmonize with its surroundings, (3) display the names of all who died or remain missing in Vietnam, and (4) make no political statement about the war.

Of the 1,421 entries, one submitted by Maya Ying Lin, a 22-year-old architecture student at Yale University, was the unanimous choice. Her design was a chevron-shaped, polished black granite wall to be built into the earth's surface.

Lin wanted the Memorial to appear as a rift in the earth, "emerging from and receding into the earth." One section of the wall would point to the Lincoln Memorial while the other section pointed to the Washington Monument, thus bringing the Memorial into the historical context of our country while maintaining the serenity of the area.

Carved at the vertex of the wall, on the right side, would be the date of the first casualty of Vietnam, followed by the names of those who died and remain missing in chronological order. The names would continue until the wall receded into the ground and resume on the left wall emerging from the ground continuing back to the vertex of the wall where the date of the last casualty would be inscribed. The beginning and ending of the war — joined forever. Not even Maya Lin could have imagined the lasting impact the Vietnam Veterans Memorial would have on our nation. VVMF was able to raise \$8.5

million to build the Memorial. Donations came from corporations, veterans groups, foundations, civic organizations, and more than 275,000 individuals across the country.

With the site designated, the design selected, and the money raised VVMF was quick to begin construction. Ground was broken on March 26, 1982. Less than eight months later, America gave the Vietnam veterans the homecoming they deserved.

A National Salute to Vietnam Veterans was held in Washington, D. C., from November 10-14, 1982, climaxing with the dedication of the Memorial on November 13. Thousands of Vietnam veterans crowded the nation's capital for a week of reunions and reconciliation.

Two years later Frederick E. Hart's heroic-size statue, Three Servicemen, was dedicated on the Memorial site and a flagpole was added nearby. On Veterans Day, 1984, President Ronald Reagan accepted the Memorial as a gift to the nation from the VVMF. Within a short time, The Wall had become the most visited memorial in the nation and the Vietnam veterans were finally welcomed home.

On Veterans Day 1993 the Vietnam Women's Memorial was dedicated. The statue, designed by Glenda Goodacre, depicts three military women, one of whom is tending to a wounded serviceman.

Today, VVMF continues to work with the National Park Service in maintaining and improving the Memorial and its grounds, so that each visitor may truly experience its healing power. In addition, VVMF sponsors programs that strive to preserve the vast legacy of The Wall and to educate about the impact of the Vietnam War era on American society. Included among these programs is The Wall That Heals Traveling Memorial and Multi-Media Museum. This traveling exhibit travels to communities throughout the world offering millions the healing and educational experience of The Wall.

Module 5: Appendix A — Poem, The Wall by Doug Anderson

The Wall: For Maya Lin

By Doug Anderson

Black mirror cut into the green, from a distance seems a scar,
but closer, the crook of an arm to cradle the head,
it draws us in, embraces. A place of whispers, and tourists
wander confused, are hesitant to photograph, seeing themselves
reflected so. How are we to be, they seem to ask, and what is this?
The young ask especially, threatened by this invitation to grieve,
this knowledge of how things become one in the end, or how
this labial gesture of stone draws the surrounding monuments
into contention, shames them with the suggestion that we are not stone,
but reflections of earth, before and behind these names.
I move my finger down the index, find the name of the first man
I could not help, and for a moment, the tree splintering
in front of me, smell of blood and cordite, his lips turning blue,
the gasp of a lung filling with blood. I select more names
in order of their passing, find their places on the wall.
All along the base dried flowers scatter, some have left letters
to the dead, some medals. A young girl, too young to know this war,
sobs nonetheless, so precise are these fifty-eight thousand facts,

but we who fought there never imagined we would return to such a world,
to such a monument, numb, we did not yet imagine that for us the war
had just begun, that for years we would be picking through the shards,
the war pursuing us everywhere, our dreams, our lives with women,
chasing us from hiding place to hiding place, would wait at the edge
of whatever anesthesia's groundfog, would wait, would wait until
we looked it in the eye. My face reflected, I watch the wall's
perspective vector into earth and wonder, how long a wall,
if we inscribe three million Vietnamese, four million Cambodians,
how long a wall? And after Hiroshima and the Holocaust how if an
Asian woman turns a mirror of black granite, gazing stone of possibility,
womb of Kali, and not least, the night we wander in becoming whole.

Module 5: Appendix B— Poem, Christmas in Child's World by Stephen Sossaman

This poem by Vietnam veteran Stephen Sossaman defends The Wall against the early critics of the design who wanted a traditional, more heroic memorial. In fact, a more conventional statue of three soldiers was later erected close by The Wall. In this poem the speaker is in a toy store when he discovers among the kits of model airplanes and cars that the statue of the soldiers is also available as plastic model.

Christmas In Child's World

By Stephen Sossaman, © 1999

A shopper seeking models to give boys
Who like things known to soldiers and to jocks
Find here in Child's World, among the toys
The statue of three 'Nam grunts in a box

Of plastic parts to be pieced back together.
The real one's in D. C. , a late concession
To those who saw The Wall and wondered whether
The facts of war required more discretion.

The three men offer little to a boy
(Who'll fit things as instructed, use some paints)
And are too stiff to function as a toy.
Once done they'll be ignored, like plaster saints.

Why a kit of them and not The Wall?
To boys the men seem real, if tired and slack,
Sport military gear and, after all,
The only color for The Wall is black.

Module 5: Appendix C — Remarks, by General Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

Remarks By General M. Alexander Haig, Jr.
Delivered On Memorial Day, May 31, 1999

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet here today to mark both the past and the future, the memory of those who have gone before and the meaning of their sacrifice for those yet to come.

A nation's memory includes both victory and defeat, glory and shame, those events that went right and those that went wrong. Sometimes, the memory of an event remains controversial, inconclusive, a question mark on the nation's mind, a rebuke to the sin of excessive pride.

Vietnam was one of those events.

How fitting it is that we stand here solemnly before a low wall, a humble wall. There is no triumphal arch, no victories etched in stone, yet through design or accident it is high enough to be seen from the Secretary of State's Office. This wall reminds the stewards of our foreign policy that the national interest is underwritten by the flesh and blood of sacrifice.

Every time I visit this place I also see the group of soldiers, cast in bronze who face this wall. And in this old general's eyes, their faces appear to be puzzled. Are they surprised to see their names engraved here? Are they wondering whether we, the living, have the intelligence to understand what happened and not let it happen again? Are they frozen in disbelief that twenty-five years after their sacrifices we are again afflicted with the old illusions, the tactics of graduated response, the refusal to understand the nature of war, the unwillingness to tell the truth to ourselves about what must be done? Do they see yet another wall in the making?

I tremble to answer these questions.

Yet I do not hesitate to declare that the meaning of this day and this wall is to reaffirm the necessity of patriotism. Beyond our individual wants there must be a dedication to the values that unite us. And for those values to order our society we must be prepared to sacrifice for them, each in our own way. Those names on the wall, those bronze veterans over there, they made the supreme sacrifice.

For the sake of our country, our sons and daughters — my comrades, have shed their blood. They sacrificed their future so that we and our children and our children's children might enjoy the blessings of liberty in this land. This is the simple truth engraved on these stones. This is the simple legacy they have left to us.

But these stones are not silent. Do not forget us, they say. Do not forget the cause of liberty. Do not forget the cause of America.

Let us therefore rededicate ourselves this Memorial Day, when our country is yet again at war, to an understanding of what they left us and what we must make of our country. Let us say each of us in our hearts, we know what you did. We shall not forget. And we shall be worthy of your sacrifice.