



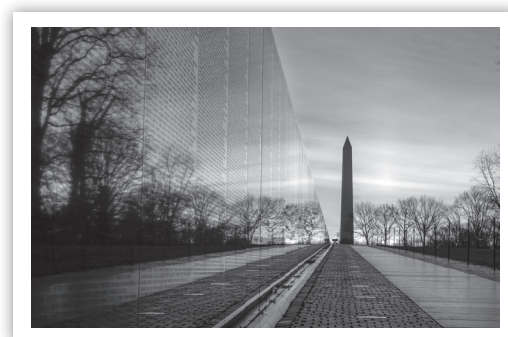
Dear <<Salutation>>,

Before I begin, I want to let you know that I'm making two assumptions about you . . .

First, that you're old enough to have learned a little something about the Vietnam War and what a difficult and divisive time that was for Americans.

Secondly, I'm figuring you've heard of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, simply called "The Wall" by most folks.

The Wall was dedicated on November 13, 1982, and it's made quite an impression on people from the very beginning. (One of the most unusual things about The Wall started even before that day, but I'll get to that in a bit.)



By the way, my name is Jim Knotts. I'm President and CEO of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), and it's our job to take care of The Wall and teach people about the impact the Vietnam War had on our country.

Most importantly, **it's our privilege to preserve and share the heroic legacies of the men and women who served during that time.** That's the best part because they're a remarkable group of people!

Part of my job is also to ask people to donate to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund so we can fulfill those responsibilities that were authorized by Congress to VVMF nearly 40 years ago. (But I'm not asking yet, so please keep reading.)

I hope you've been fortunate enough to see The Wall on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Or to visit our 3/4-scale traveling replica, *The Wall That Heals*, when it was in a city near you on its annual cross-country tour. You can always go to our website, vvmf.org, to take a virtual tour of The Wall.

I guarantee you'll walk away from The Wall feeling very different than when you arrived . . .



(over, please)

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I hate to imagine what our country would be like today if The Wall had never been built.

This Memorial is so beloved that nearly 5 million people visit it every year. Even more when you include the thousands of visitors who turn out to honor their hometown heroes wherever *The Wall That Heals* is on display.

They come for the unforgettable experience.

Veterans from all eras bring their children and grandchildren. Teachers from every state bring students by the busload. They have for nearly 40 years, without signs of slowing down.

You don't have to know someone whose name is on The Wall to understand why it means so much, or why Vietnam veterans call the Memorial site "hallowed ground."



There was one gentleman who made it quite clear how much building a memorial to honor our Vietnam veterans meant . . .

Before The Wall was even finished, that man walked up, paused for a few minutes, then dropped the Purple Heart awarded to his brother who died in Vietnam into the wet cement of the Memorial's foundation.



His was the first of over 400,000 items that have been left at The Wall.

Through the years, people have left tributes in every shape and size. Their meanings can be obvious or a mystery to all except the person who left it there.

Visitors have left teddy bears and wedding rings. Comrades have left poker hands from card games that were never finished with bunkmates who never returned.

Family photos and ultrasound pictures are left of generations never to be met by the loved ones lost. And wedding bouquets are laid at The Wall by daughters who walked down the aisle without their fathers.



(over, please)

As our Vietnam veterans get older, we're losing more and more of them to illnesses related to their service, like exposure to Agent Orange or the burdens of PTSD that they shouldered for decades.

We honor their service through our *In Memory* program. For many veterans, their recognition at the *In Memory* Day Ceremony is the first time they've ever been honored publicly.



For their loved ones, it's a proud and bittersweet day.

I am in awe of what The Wall has meant to so many. And as people continue to flock to the Memorial, I'm inspired by their enthusiasm to learn more. They want to know our Vietnam heroes and to understand what happened to divide us.

Because Americans want our country united.

I'm grateful The Wall has taught generations of Americans that every veteran deserves a hero's welcome home.

As I told you in the beginning, I'm writing to ask for your help so the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund can continue to care for The Wall, honor the sacrifices of our service members, and educate generations of Americans.

Will you please send a gift today, perhaps \$10 or even \$25? If you can send even more, I hope you will. VVMF receives no government funding.

Carrying out our mission depends on your generosity.

I've enclosed additional information about why your support is needed. **Please read it, then give as generously as you can.**



Thank you, and God bless America!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Jim Knotts".

Jim Knotts
President and CEO

P.S. It only takes a minute to send a gift so others can experience The Wall and help ensure that no hero is forgotten. I hope to hear from you soon!

P.P.S. Give by 12/31/2020 to take advantage of this year's CARES Act tax deductions!

The Wall isn't something you just "see" or "visit." It's an experience.

The Wall changes you . . .

When you first set eyes on the sea of 58,279 names inscribed in the black granite, one after the other, it's hard to comprehend. Each name represents someone who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam while serving our country.



Line after line, panel after panel.

It takes your breath away.

The names at the top in the middle of the apex are so high you'll need to get on your tiptoes to read them. To see the names on the panels at each end, you'll be as close to the ground as you can get. Maya Lin designed The Wall that way for a reason. (You can learn why at vvmf.org/About-The-Wall.)

You'll feel compelled to touch the names.

And it's **when your fingers trace the letters of just one name that it will hit you . . .**

Every name stands for someone's son. Or someone's father. A husband. A beloved grandfather. A high school sweetheart. There are eight names for daughters, too.

Frankly, that's the point. Having all their names included makes it impossible to forget that they each had a life before they went off to war. Their stories are unique.

They were loved. They are missed.

But there's one moment I haven't talked about yet. It's one we all have when we stand before The Wall . . . **we see ourselves.**

In your reflection in the granite, those names become part of you. And you become one with them.

Their lives were cut short while they were serving OUR country.

I can't imagine a more powerful way to teach anyone — *child or adult* — the simple truth that **freedom isn't free.**

