

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



National Mall and Memorial Parks

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Scope of Collection Statement

Scope of Collection Statement

A Scope of Collection Statement is a document that is written to ensure that materials collected for the museum collection contribute directly to the understanding and interpretation of the site's purpose, themes and resources. It should define the scope of present and future museum collection holdings and ensure that the museum collection is clearly relevant to the site by setting limits to protect the collection against arbitrary or excessive growth, and to confirm that an organization is able to adequately care for the collection.

The original scope of collection statement for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection was too broad, which has allowed the collection to grow at unsustainable rate.

1985 Scope of Collection Statement

Items Accepted into the Collection:

1. Artifacts directly related to the construction of the memorial including its planning, design, and execution.
2. Artifacts directly related to the VVMF's involvement in the planning, design, and execution of the memorial and statue.
3. Artifacts directly related to the design, construction and installation of the memorial wall and the "Three Servicemen" statue.
4. Artifacts directly related to the individuals whose names are engraved on the wall. Limited to those obtained through field find at the site.
5. Artifacts directly related to Maya Lin's involvement in the design and construction of the VVM.
6. Artifacts directly related to Frederick Hart's involvement in the design, construction, and installation of the "Three Servicemen" statue.
7. Artifacts directly related to the Joel Meisner Foundry's involvement in the design, construction, and installation of the "Three Servicemen" statue.
8. Artifacts directly related to historic events which took place at the VVM since its construction, including its dedication ceremony.

Museum Resource Center

The objects in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection are in storage at the National Park Service Museum Resource Center.

We currently have over 400,000 objects stored in 1,477 boxes or on one of the 55+ shelves of oversized objects.

Only 440 boxes have been cataloged due to the enormous size of the collection. The new scope will be more specific and focus on materials with a direct connection to the Vietnam War and its veterans.



2015 Scope of Collection Statement

Types of Materials left at the Memorial:

- Personal Artifacts
- Vietnam Military Service Items
- Protest, Activism, Advocacy Items
- Public Tributes

Other Types of Materials to Keep:

- Architectural Elements
- Site History

Personal Artifacts

Personal Artifacts: This category includes objects left by visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) which illustrate a direct relationship or personal connection between a veteran and their involvement in the Vietnam War. Photographs, poems, letters, personal narratives, signs, cards and three-dimensional objects are collected. All materials must be associated with a name on the VVM, a Vietnam veteran, or have a direct connection to the Vietnam War experience.

Personal Artifacts



10/1/90

My Aunt Sam,
Today I am coming to
see your name on the wall.
I know it isn't ready until now
but I know that I must see it
before I die.

I miss you so much - I
think of you everyday. You led so
much of life. It has and your
life was taken so quickly.

With lump in throat and
teary eyes I am on my way.

I wanted to bring you this
but just couldn't part with it.
Instead I brought you just sweater.

You are always in my heart.
How I love you.

God be with you til we meet
again.

Love,

Norm

Panel #
15 E

Line
104

Should I Return U.S.M.C.



VIVE
34062

Personal Artifacts



Personal Artifacts



Personal Artifacts

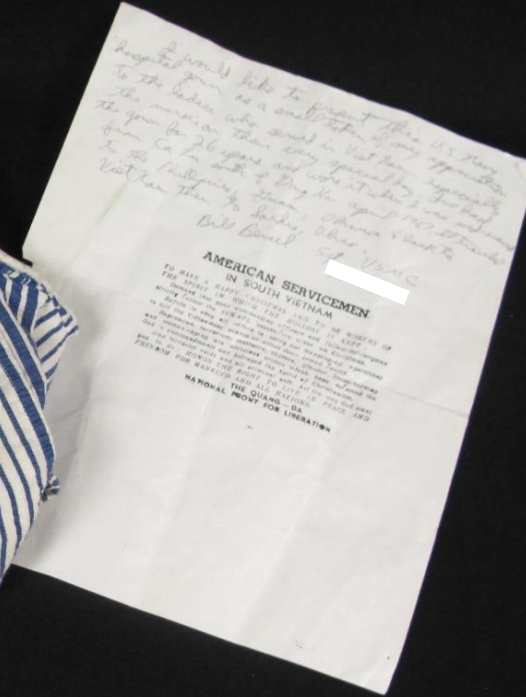


Vietnam Military Service Items

Vietnam Military Service Items (1955-1975):

Objects in this category include original uniforms, accoutrements, awards, gear and other military items. All materials must be associated with a name on the VVM, a Vietnam veteran, or have a direct connection to the Vietnam War experience.

Vietnam Military Service Items



VIVE
35532



Vietnam Military Service Items

This flag was presented to me on my return from Vietnam after spending 5 years as a prisoner of war. It represents to me a commitment of this nation to freedom and liberty; it represents a commitment of this nation to ensure the return of those lost or captured during time of war; it represents an appreciation the American people have for the sacrifices given by it's sons and daughters; and it represents to me a continued commitment we have to preserve the ideals we have fought for and pass on to our youth as they are the future of the United States of America, and the hope of the world.

The cross was made from a toothpaste tube and tie from my prison uniform. It represents the faith I had in God and country and it continues to represent the faith I have that those still alive will be returned to their families for they have suffered more than we can know. I pray for them. I pray for their families. For the anguish of not knowing can only be greater than their loss. And I pray for the men and women that are gone and that some day we will be reunited on a higher plane, one in which we will no longer have to experience the pain, suffering and loss we are now required to preserve freedom. To you I salute.

Forever with us.

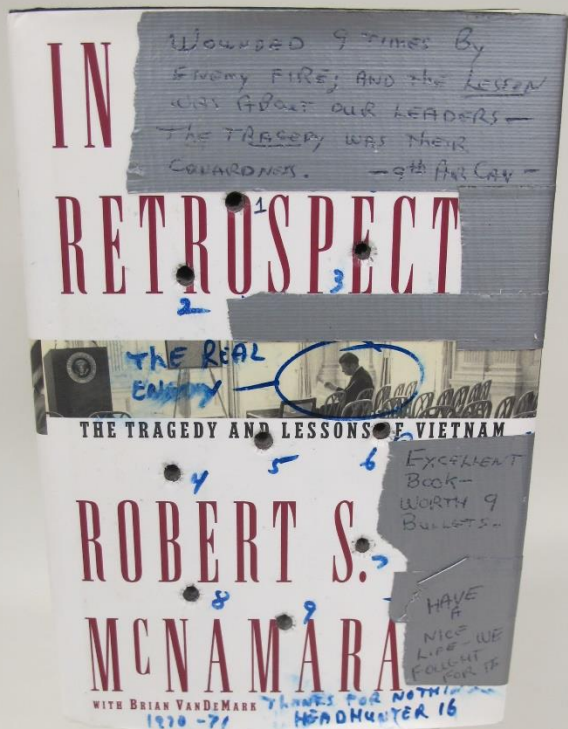


Protest, Activism, and Advocacy Materials

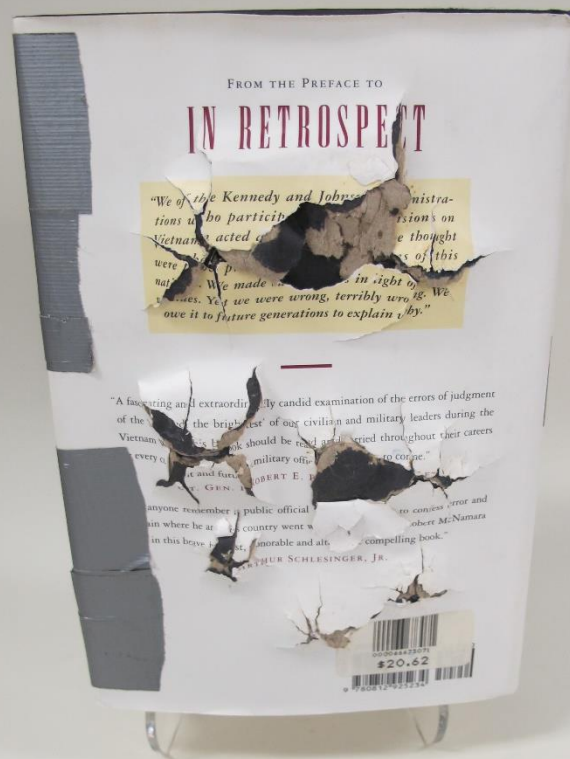
Protest, Activism, and Advocacy Materials:

Materials in this category include signs, letters and other types of items that relate to protests, activism, and and/or advocacy of the Vietnam War or issues resulting from service in Vietnam including, but not limited to: Anti-War efforts, GI Resistance efforts, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Prisoners of War (POW), Missing in Action (MIA), and Agent Orange.

Protest, Activism, and Advocacy Materials



VIVE
11938



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Protest, Activism, and Advocacy Materials

TODAY IS DAY 7172
for POW PETER STEWART
he needs your help! today is his 41st
wedding ANNIVERSARY



VIVE

1186

Protest, Activism, and Advocacy Materials



Public Tribute Items

Public Tribute Items: This category includes objects left at the VVM by the general public to honor the men and women who served in the Vietnam War. These tributes are generally left by people with no direct connection to the Vietnam War or a Vietnam veteran. This is now the vast majority of what is left at the Memorial. Only a small representative sample will be retained.

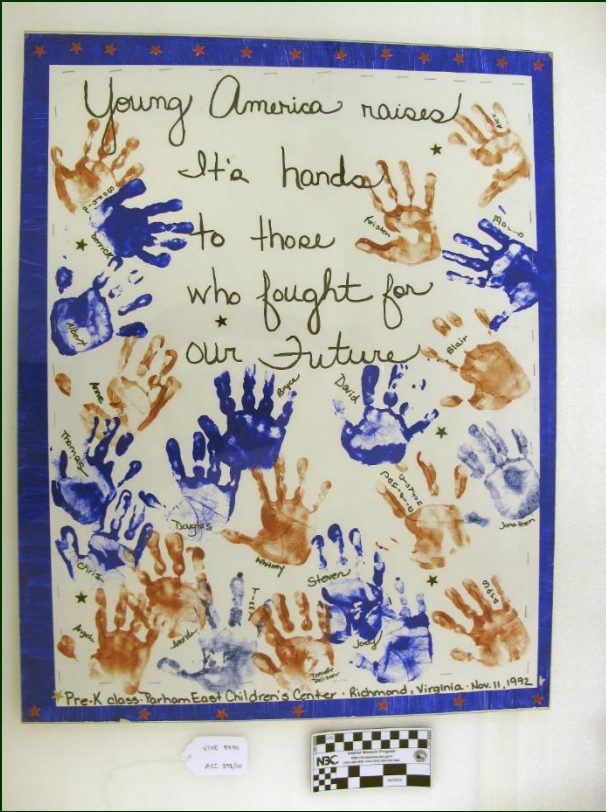
Public Tribute Items



VIVE 2219
ACC 242/18



Public Tribute Items



Architectural Elements

Architectural Elements: When original architectural fabric is removed from a historic structure during a preservation or repair project, a representative portion is kept. Included in this category are the mold and casts for the *Three Servicemen* statue and test panels of the VVM used for corrosion studies.

Site History Items

Site History Items: This category includes materials that relate to the VVM's planning, design, construction and preservation. It also includes materials that document major singular events that have occurred there, such as its dedication.

What is not retained for the collection:

- Redundant items - when a large quantity of an object type already exists in the collection, only a representative sample is kept, with priority given to acquiring the best-preserved examples. The number of representative samples kept for the collection depends on the type and size of object.
- Mass-produced, impersonal items (patches, fake dog tags, etc.).
- Items left by school or youth groups.
- Perishable or biotic items likely to deteriorate.
- Items likely to deteriorate due to inherent vice.
- Items that pose a safety hazard or that contain chemical residue.
- Random items with no context such as pencils, shoes, hats, etc. that appear to have been left by accident.
- Objects relating to social or political movements or wars other than the Vietnam War.

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