



MINNESOTA REMEMBERS VIETNAM



KSMQ-TV
LAKELAND PBS
PIONEER PUBLIC TV
PRAIRIE PUBLIC
TWIN CITIES PBS
WDSE-WRPT



To *our* COMMUNITIES

Our year-long, statewide initiative called *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* was conceived well over two years ago when we learned that filmmakers Ken Burns and Lynn Novick were going to present to America their comprehensive and definitive work on Vietnam. We took pause at Twin Cities PBS (TPT) and asked: *“What could we do to bring this story home? What might we do to honor and give voice to those in Minnesota whose lives were touched by this confusing, divisive, and tumultuous period in American history? And what might we do to create understanding and healing?”*

We set our sights very high, and the collective **\$2 million raised in public support** from the State of Minnesota’s Legacy Fund, generous foundations and organizations, and our community, allowed us to dream big and create what has been the largest and one of the most important projects in TPT’s 60-year history.

In partnership with the five other PBS stations in the state, we explored the war from all sides. It has been a deeply moving experience for all of us at TPT and the stations of the MPTA, and we feel much richer for having been a part of this. I can tell you very sincerely that in my four decades of working with PBS, I’ve never been involved in a project that was so universally embraced.

The unifying message that I heard time and time again from those who supported the war, those who demonstrated against it, and those who only learned about it through the history books was that **the time was now to seize the moment to honor those who served their country** during this tumultuous and confusing time... people who were shunned and endured hardships upon returning home, and who, until very recently, did not feel welcome to tell their stories, both the joyful memories of friendships and camaraderie and the haunting memories of battle.

I cannot tell you how many veterans, family members, legislators, and community leaders have reached out to me to tell me how much they have appreciated what we did - many with tears in the eyes - saying they never believed something like this could happen. **This is public media at its best.** My hope is that in this very brief overview of our initiative, you can experience the essence of what made it so special. And what better way to illustrate the impact, than through the voices of those who participated, shared, and joined us on this journey towards understanding.

The MPTA is truly honored to have played a small role in helping all of us **remember, honor, and understand.**

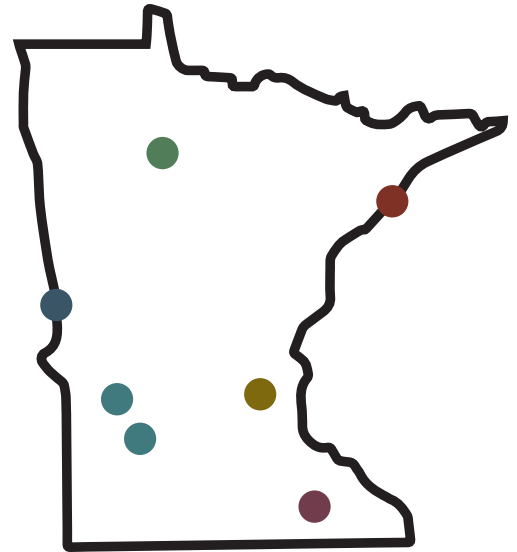


James R. Pagliarini
President & CEO TPT - Twin Cities PBS

mpta

minnesota public television association

The six public media services of the Minnesota Public Television Association (MPTA) harness the power of media and build upon their tradition of creating high-quality programs that sustain viewers in order to document, promote and preserve the arts, culture and history of Minnesota's communities.



Moorhead/Crookston

800-359-6900

www.prairiepublic.org



Duluth/Superior/The Iron Range

218-788-2831

www.wdse.org



Appleton/Worthington/Fergus Falls

800-726-3178

www.pioneer.org



Bemidji/Brainerd

800-292-0922

www.lptv.org



Minneapolis/Saint Paul

651-222-1717

www.tpt.org



Austin/Rochester

800-658-2539

www.ksmq.org

For the full 2018 MPTA Annual Impact Report, please visit www.mptalegacymedia.org

MINNESOTA REMEMBERS VIETNAM

\$2 MILLION IN SUPPORT
LAUNCHED MINNESOTA REMEMBERS
VIETNAM

“ I feel like I have been welcomed
home after serving in Vietnam. ”
Jerry M.

1,000+
**STORIES SHARED
ON THE STORY
WALL**

“ It made my ”
heart remember.
Bill J.
Vietnam Veteran

40+
**IN-PERSON
STORY-GATHERING
OPPORTUNITIES
ACROSS MINNESOTA**

6 **100+**
PUBLIC TV COMMUNITY
STATIONS ORGANIZATIONS
EXPANDED IMPACT STATEWIDE

MORE THAN
2 million
**MINNESOTANS WATCHED VIETNAM
WAR CONTENT ON MPTA STATIONS**

17 **ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARIES
& PROGRAMS**
PRODUCED BY THE MPTA

67% started a conversation with
a family member, friend,
community group*

25,000
PEOPLE ATTENDED
OVER 100
EVENTS STATEWIDE

“ The fact that people ”
now want to hear of
my experiences makes
me feel significant.
Vince S.

69%
learned something new*
75%
listened to experiences
they hadn't heard before*

*MPTA Survey of members, participants and subscribers

MINNESOTA REMEMBERS VIETNAM

To expand on the epic Vietnam War documentary, the 6 PBS stations of the Minnesota Public Television Association launched **Minnesota Remembers Vietnam**. The resulting collaboration features an online Story Wall, original documentaries, and series of public screenings & commemorative events that seek to more fully **remember**, **honor** and **understand** the experience of 50 years ago.

\$2 MILLION IN LOCAL SUPPORT LAUNCHED AWARD-WINNING STATEWIDE INITIATIVE



Upper Midwest 2018 EMMY® AWARD
for excellence in COMMUNITY SERVICE

A look at how Legacy & community funding empowered the MPTA to help us all
REMEMBER, HONOR & UNDERSTAND
in the words of our communities...

REMEMBER.

It made my heart remember. -Bill J

When the MPTA stations were planning for the launch of **Minnesota Remembers Vietnam**, we recognized that asking our communities to “remember” painful moments during the Vietnam War era would not be easy. Many veterans had remained silent about their experiences for years, choosing not to re-open deep wounds. The Vietnam War was one of the most divisive conflicts in our nation’s history that has had a deep and lasting impact not only on veterans, but families, antiwar activists, refugees and civilians.

We’re losing hundreds of veterans each day... and with them, their unique experiences and stories. The time was **now** to “remember” and share stories.

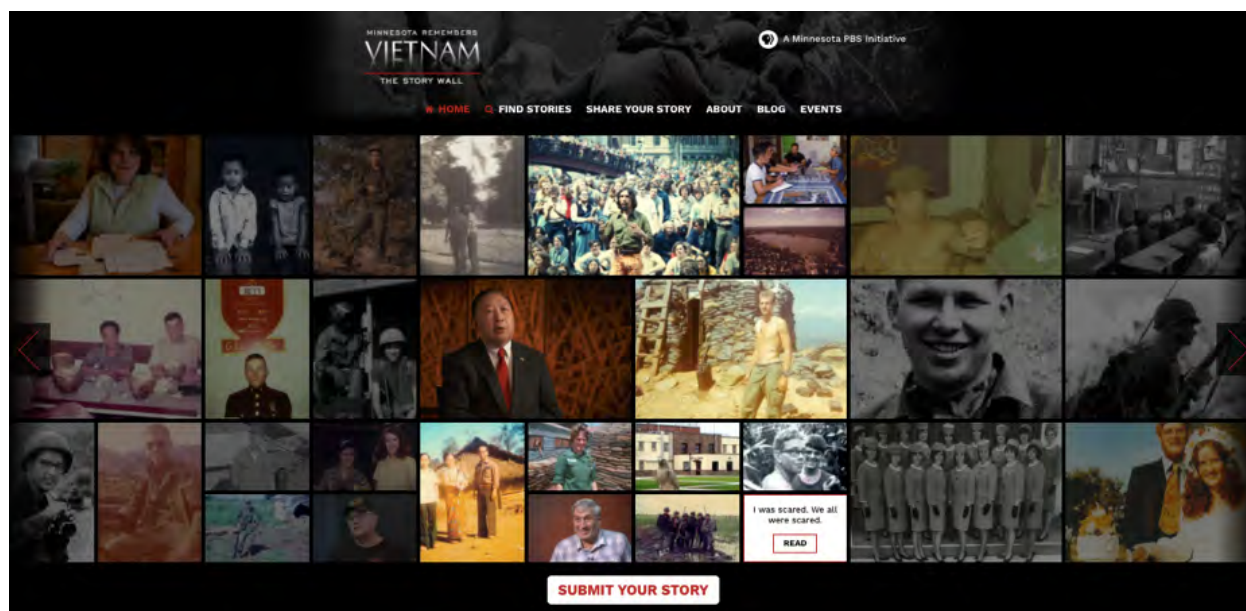
“If you ask, then you also need to shut up and listen.” –Retired Major General Larry Shellito

Commissioner Shellito offered us the above advice at the very beginning of the initiative, and we took it to heart. It was essential that when we ask someone to remember, that we also **listen**. What we discovered in this deeply personal experience of sharing and listening... was that many also discovered that there was room in their heart for **healing**.

**Average age
of a
Vietnam
veteran is
68**

ONLINE STORY WALL

PRESERVED MINNESOTA’S VIETNAM WAR STORIES



MNVIETNAM.ORG

With the goal of including as **many local voices** as possible in this initiative, we designed a one-of-a-kind website - **The Story Wall**- to gather and preserve Minnesota’s Vietnam War Stories.

Inspired by the Vietnam Wall in D.C., this **living, breathing memorial** is an evolving narrative, created by community; a rich archive of our history that can be explored for generations to come. On **Mar 29th, 2017- Vietnam Veterans Day**- we put out our first official call for stories and officially launched the Story Wall on September 1st, 2017.

This **inclusive space** invited the sharing and exploration of personal memories through portraits, narratives, videos, interviews, snapshots, artwork, poetry and objects shared by Minnesotans who fought in Southeast Asia and those whose lives it changed at home. With **over 1,000 stories** represented on the Story Wall, we are proud that it has been embraced as a safe space to share and be heard, because many of the stories were being **shared for the very first time**.

**Preserved
1,000+
Minnesota
Stories on the
Story Wall**

*Thank you for remembering and giving us the chance to remember out loud.
-Jayne L., daughter of a Vietnam veteran & Story Wall author*

“

It is the first thing I've ever written (even tho I've told myself for yrs. to do so) and I feel it is an accomplishment now that I did it. -Tom E.

I feel honored, remembered, and better understood by people who read the stories. They have a greater insight of the people who experienced the events. The men and women who wrote the stories let their feelings be known. This is something which can be hard for a veteran to do in a face to face conversation. -Dave M.



Personal snapshots shared at the Story wall

THE STORY WALL

... is an inclusive space where all perspectives are welcomed

This space **amplified absent narratives** and connected them to a bigger story. We could not have imagined the depth and quality of the stories... how thoughtful, profound, beautiful, heart-wrenching, and at times humorous they were... and from **all sides of the story**. Each story was unique, yet universal threads emerged like courage, hope, love, grief, resiliency, forgiveness and brotherhood.

“

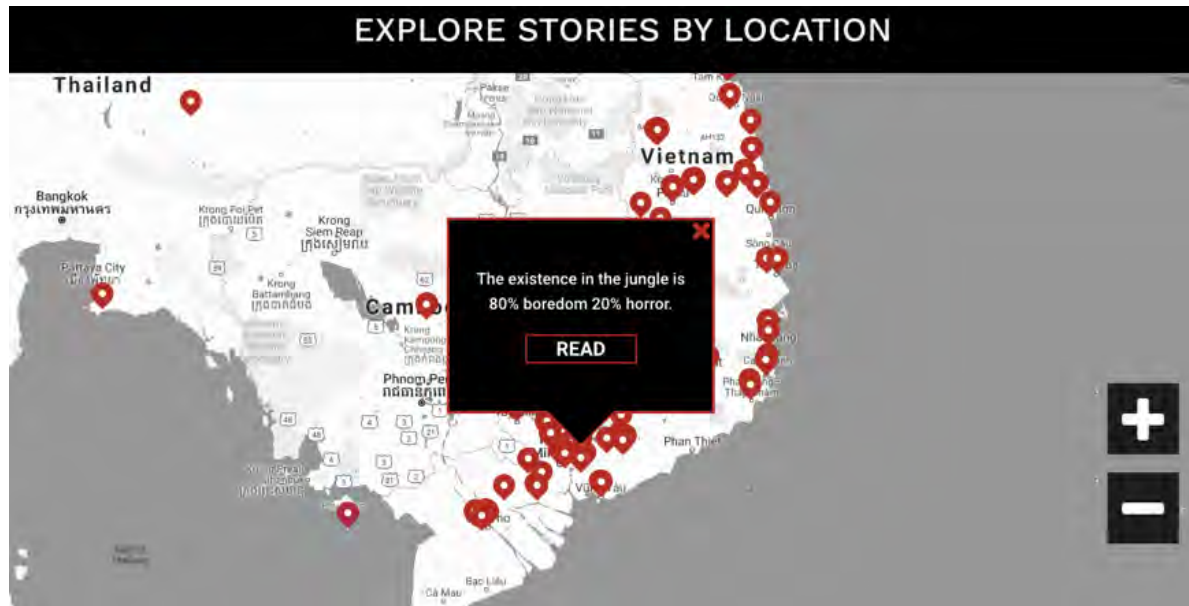
Thank you for putting the wide variety of stories on the Vietnam Wall, particularly the ones that often get left out of the narrative. -Veterans for Peace

It was a positive thing for me to be able to share my anti-war sentiment after all this time and to realize that those of us who were on the streets during the war, haven't changed our belief that the war was wrong. -Linda B.

...created unique ways to explore history

The Story Wall offers a unique and fresh way to **dig in and explore Minnesota's Vietnam War history**. Filters, maps, robust search functionality and curated collections of stories by theme allow visitors to immerse themselves in the stories and discover new perspectives.

The next generations need to hear about this, not from our Government or textbooks, but from you, who lived through such a trying time in our history. -Marty C.



Maps created exciting ways to discover stories and explore their context on a global scale

Exploring and discovering stories in this way builds deeper understanding about the war, offers personal context, and helps us realize that **there is more that connects us than divides us**.



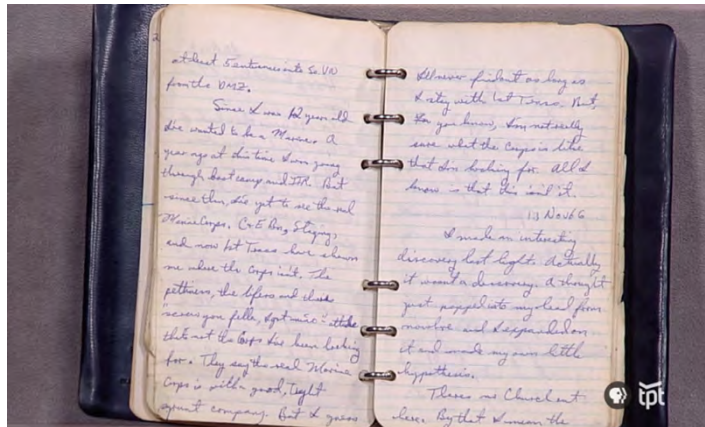
***63%**
**explored stories on the
Story Wall**

When exploring the collection, you'll be able to...

- listen to music recorded in a hooch on a Sony cassette tape recorder
- explore pages from a combat artist's sketchbook
- read letters sent home over the holidays
- see photos of Hmong Story Cloths
- explore a collection of protest buttons
- read poetry about visiting the Vietnam Wall
- Hear a musical written about a MN Vietnam veteran

*2018 MPTA *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* survey of participants, members & subscribers

And you can read a moving story shared by a **Gold Star daughter** who discovered her father's voice when she recently received the long-lost Vietnam War journal of her father (killed in action in Vietnam when Linda was a baby) that made it's way back to her by a twist of fate.



Linda McBrayer shared in her Story Wall story:

If you were told it was written by an 18-year-old, you wouldn't believe it. It is eloquent, humorous, and self-deprecating.

”

It is the only voice of my daddy I have ever known.

...brings local voices into the classroom

The Story Wall's rich archive of personal stories has proven to be an invaluable resource to educators in their classrooms. The local stories bring the war closer to home and make it relevant to students as they learn about this complex era and history.

... what you have created and developed (Story Wall) is an inspiration to me and my own storytelling education goals with my middle schoolers and my community college class. Thank you also for all the times you featured our story — my students were thrilled to see their efforts come alive online! -Steph G., 6th Grade Teacher

A Hmong English Literature educator in the community described the Story Wall as “**a living, breathing history.**” She said that the maps and search tools allow exploration of Minnesota's Vietnam War history in a global context. She also said that it can be difficult for educators to find guest speakers, and the Story Wall offers a great opportunity to easily bring new voices and diverse perspectives into the classroom. For a creative writing exercise, she had students explore three people on the Story Wall and write a spoken word piece to share with the class. A next step may be to share those on the Story Wall.



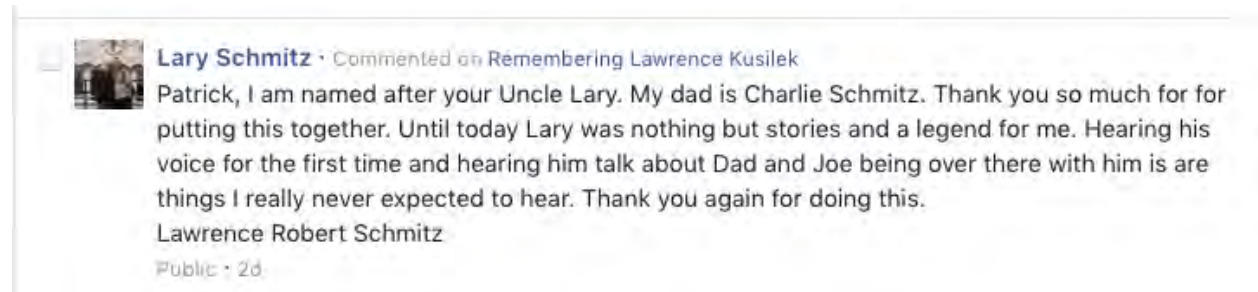
A son helped his father create an album of his Vietnam War photography for a Story Wall story, and in the process, got to see the world through his father's eyes.

...created new pathways for connection and built community

The Story Wall is truly the heartbeat of the initiative, designed for inclusiveness and community-building. We are proud that it has also been embraced as **a place of respect, discovery and connection.**

Over 200 comments have been shared on the Story Wall and they reveal how the platform has engaged and built community.

Remembering Lawrence Kusilek is a story on the Story Wall that features audio recordings of the author's uncle who was killed in action in Vietnam. Larry Schmitz **discovered a connection** in this story and shared the following comment:



Through this **new pathway of connection**, several people have discovered each other and are finally re-connecting after having searched for each other for decades unsuccessfully.

...sparked many other opportunities this year

Not only did Story Wall authors inspire confidence and courage in others to share, but they became leaders within the initiative, openly sharing their stories at many of our community events.

Story Wall authors inspired & shaped the following:

- Vietnam War 360 event series at local libraries
- Skies Over Vietnam event featuring pilots
- We Gotta Get Out of This Place concert
- The Wall That Heals veteran events & conversations
- EPILOGUE, a stage performance of the most powerful stories at the Ordway concluding an emotional year
- Veterans Day event at TPT
- Vietnam War Roundtable series at Concordia



Lawrence Kusilek

“

I feel honored to have been part of this project. My contribution to the Wall will help me to be remembered. My own understanding of the Vietnam experience was deepened by the TPT Vietnam project. -Bill G.

STORY-SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

INSPIRED HEALING

As a Vietnam vet, this project has helped me feel more at peace with my experiences during those years. -Stephen A.

Accessibility was at the forefront of our story-sharing efforts. Even though The Story Wall empowered many to share online, we wanted to provide *multiple* ways to share in-person. We traveled the state to collect stories and artifacts from veterans, family members, activists, and protesters.

MPTA Stations partnered with schools, libraries, and veteran organizations, and attended reunions and community events to gather stories at 40+ in-person story-sharing days. *The result?* **Authentic storytelling** based on a foundation of **trust**. It provided another open way for community to share, on *their* terms.

40+
in-person
Story-gathering
days across
Minnesota



Gold Star Sister Donna Clark shared the story of her brother who was killed in action at TPT's story-gathering day at the MN Military Appreciation Day at the State Fair. She talked about her brother Douglas who was KIA in Vietnam. She wore his military pins proudly and brought newspaper clippings and the Western Union Telegram announcing his death.

SHARING STORIES

... helped vets understand their experiences better and even seek help

I contacted the VA for help dealing with recurrent memories of Vietnam that have bothered me for 4 decades. - James L.

*Just writing about my experience in Vietnam for the Story Wall helps to **keep the ghosts away**... Brent H.*

“

*It was my hope that sharing my story would be a catalyst for other Veterans to look at where there are today, and know that there is help there, but... ”you have to ask for it, and it takes work!” This result was experienced immediately following the premiere (The Telling Project) with four Veterans and one hospital flight nurse coming forward to share, “Thank you, **you motivated me to seek some help**.” Since the airing of the production, other individuals continue to reach out to me, and I am able to point them in an appropriate direction of support. -Ken P.*

Good for healing. Hard to explain what we did over there for a verity of reasons. Nobody would understand anyway. But at least I got it out of my mind, so to speak. - Wilbur O.

***It is a healing process to tell your story.** Thank you for the opportunity. -George S.*



Story-sharing at a TPT event, photo shared at 1st Battalion 1st Marines Reunion, and Prairie Public interview

Prairie Public held multiple sharing events to gather oral histories from Minnesotans about their Vietnam War experiences. Events were held at The Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, MN and Perham, MN in August 2017.

***53% shared their story**

(e.g. in a video, at an event, or on the Story Wall)

The main difference has been to assist me in sharing my military experience, including my combat role in Vietnam, more comfortably with family and friends. Until recent years I have not openly ID'd myself as a Vietnam vet, especially as a veteran of combat. I am thankful for that. The writig that I have done has had a somewhat therapeutic aspect to it. The experience has helped, as has time and family, soften my anger and discomfort with being a vet and helped letting me feel pride in my service. Steven P.

”

We were Grunts. We have never been asked to share our story. And it was healing for us. We shared it our way. -Sam V.

This was one way for me to share part of my story on how Vietnam affected my life, my mom and siblings, and my Dad who gave the ultimate sacrifice...I am SO proud to tell my Dad's story and how I've met the men he went to OCS with and fought with. I had hoped when I was little that I would find "something" about my Dad so I could help my Mom with closure. I know her heart has never been the same since my Dad died but I think this has helped mend it a little. -Alicia L

“THE VIETNAM WAR” BROADCAST & SCREENING EVENTS CONVENED COMMUNITY

The fall 2017 broadcast of “**THE VIETNAM WAR**” by filmmakers Ken Burns and Lynn Novick sparked a national conversation. 10 years in the making, the 18 hour-long series explored the war from all sides, illuminating complex and controversial topics through the testimony of over 80 witnesses.



With record-breaking viewership on-air and online, the series stimulated questions and uncovered forgotten memories. *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* brought the Vietnam War story **closer to home** and created an atmosphere of trust that made it safe to explore, learn, share *and* feel.

It was a history that we needed to fully understand. The PBS series was absolutely riveting. I watched more than once and found it to be very emotional. This was really well done. It should be part of the High School History Classes. - Michael B.

**33.8
million
tuned in to
THE VIETNAM WAR
nationwide**

The MPTA stations hosted a series of screenings and conversations to spark fresh dialog about the lasting impact of the war, to ask and answer questions, and create opportunities in a safe atmosphere to **learn from each** other through the power of storytelling.



Veterans gather at the Lakeland screening event

On September 14, 2017, **Lakeland** hosted lunch and a screening of Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's "THE VIETNAM WAR" film. Over 80 Vietnam veterans were in attendance at the Northern Lights Conference Center in Walker, MN. Lakeland partnered with the Walker American Legion Post #134. **Pioneer hosted five screening events** in Willmar, Milbank, Appleton, Marshall and Worthington. In total more than 500 people attended these events — mostly veterans and their families. The station held roundtable discussions after the events facilitated by veterans from the Gulf War and Afghanistan War. Pioneer partnered with the Minnesota Humanities Center, the South Dakota Humanities Commission, Minnesota Office of Veterans Affairs, SMSU, Minnesota West and local county Veterans Service Offices.



Screening event at the Minnesota Humanities Center

***67% started a conversation** (e.g. with a family member, friend, community group)

WDSE/WRPT hosted three regional screenings and discussion events in Hibbing, Minnesota at the Hibbing Memorial Building; in Duluth, Minnesota at the Great Hall; and at the Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center in Superior, Wisconsin.

TPT partnered with the Minnesota Humanities Center and Stillwater Public Library to host three screening events prior to the premiere.

TIM O'BRIEN & LYNN NOVICK SPARKED COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

In partnership with Macalester College, TPT hosted master storytellers **Tim O'Brien** (Vietnam veteran, author of *The Things They Carried*, and featured in THE VIETNAM WAR) and filmmaker **Lynn Novick** (Co-director of THE VIETNAM WAR) for a conversation on the power of sharing stories and honoring diverse experiences.



Don Shelby moderates the conversation; Tim O'Brien signs a young man's copy of *The Things They Carried*

*2018 MPTA Minnesota Remembers Vietnam survey of participants, members & subscribers

Over **600 attended** the event that took place at Macalester College in St. Paul on October 18th, 2017, and over 11,000 were reached via the live Facebook stream of the conversation. The event included an opportunity to share stories on camera for The Story Wall, a question and answer session with Tim and Lynn, and a post-event book-signing with Tim and Lynn.

The dialog, facilitated by retired journalist and Vietnam veteran Don Shelby, inspired attendees to share their own stories, some for the very first time:



Lynn Novick and Tim O'Brien at Macalester

*War was not discussed in our home. Tim O'Brien and Lynn Novick have **opened a conversation that should have started 50 years ago**, but thankfully begins now. You'll never know how many Gold Star families you have helped heal.*

-Gold Star Sister

Tim's comment about "abandoning volition" resonated with me because I had an experience similar to his story of crossing a bridge under fire. His comments helped me make sense of my experience in a way that I had not been able to do before.

-Vietnam veteran

Their visit inspired other opportunities for story-sharing and connection both on and off of the Macalester campus, including:

- Second event for students on campus with Tim O'Brien and Macalester writer and professor **Marlon James**

- Story-gathering event called **Mac Talks '68**; 40 members of the Macalester Class of 1968 shared reflections on that pivotal year at their 50th class reunion (Tim O'Brien was class president)

- Feature interviews with Lynn and Tim on TPT's *Almanac*

- A video for History Day students featuring documentary film-making tips from Lynn Novick and other filmmakers



In a touching moment at the event, **veterans and protestors stood up, side-by-side**, to be recognized for both of their contributions during the Vietnam War Era.

RESOURCES & TOOLS

EMPOWERED EDUCATORS

It (Minnesota Remembers Vietnam) has made me a much better teacher of the text "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. I am better informed about the historical context of the Vietnam War and now have excellent tools to illustrate the importance of the war and the need to understand all perspectives. The most important knowledge I can provide my students is the ongoing impact of the Vietnam War across the global village. -Sincerely, Jana Rieck



Leading Classroom Conversations: **THE VIETNAM WAR**

In partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center and WETA, TPT produced the official webinar for secondary educators to receive training on how to lead classroom discussions around “THE VIETNAM WAR” film. The free resource is accessible to all educators via PBS LearningMedia in the Ken Burns Classroom Collection.

Left: Educators at the Minnesota Humanities Center at the taping of the webinar

ESSENTIAL SHORTS

To provide a historical context for the thousands personal accounts within the initiative and in THE VIETNAM WAR series, TPT produced a series of short animations – focused on the motivations and milestones that defined the era. Ideal for viewing on mobile devices, the shorts can open a channel to greater intergenerational understanding. Artwork was created by local **artist and veteran David Geister** who also was involved in painting The Wall That Heals at the State Capitol in June, 2018.



Still from an animated *Essential Short* on Maya Lin and her winning design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in D.C.

ORIGINAL MPTA PROGRAMS AMPLIFIED MINNESOTA'S HISTORY

I think it brought a distant war closer to home. -Everett V.

*You've done a truly impressive job over the last year, marshaling all the disparate elements and stories and molding them into a coherent, enjoyable and moving project.
-Bonnie U., antiwar activist*

VIETNAM REMEMBERED: WESTERN AND SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA



Pioneer Public TV's 30-minute documentary **VIETNAM REMEMBERED: WESTERN AND SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA** and series of video shorts feature local Vietnam War veterans. Pioneer **worked with students at SMSU** to create nine additional web-only interviews of veterans that have all been posted to the Story Wall. A couple of examples are:



Royal Hettling talks about his experience during the Vietnam War Era. Back "in the world," even without his uniform on, he had a certain stoic look about him that clued other veterans into his experience.

A guy came up to me and he said very softly, 'You've been in Nam.'

Native American **Diana King** talks about her experience during the Vietnam War. Diana was a protester and the wife of a veteran who also eventually became a protester. She felt that it was important to tell the stories of those who were left at home, and to share the perspectives of Native Americans.

I was in college at the time, and every weekend we were off protesting the war.



LAKELAND PBS



Vietnam veteran Jim Crigler in his helicopter during the Vietnam War and paddling the Mississippi

LAKELAND PBS had a busy year capturing veteran stories and featuring them in their current affairs program, **Common Ground**. Stories featured Wendell Affield who recalls his experiences in Vietnam in his self-published book, *Muddy Jungle Rivers*; a Vietnam Veteran Memorial Service in Ponsford, MN; and the story of U.S. Army veteran Buford Johnson.

They also featured the story of Vietnam veteran & author Jim Crigler who began a canoe journey of the entire Mississippi River at Lake Itasca's Headwaters to raise awareness for Gold Star families.

I don't really care what the sacrifice is because it's nothing compared to what our soldiers and Gold Star families have been through. -Jim Crigler



Photo by Ken Klose

Another feature shows us what Vietnam was like for Minnesota veteran **Ken Klose** through the lens of his own camera.

That's where I bought what I would consider my first real camera and in the position I was in, I had a lot of free time and we used it partly to go out and photograph the Vietnamese countryside. -Ken Klose

***Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* Collection of longer-format productions**

PIONEER

VIETNAM REMEMBERED: WESTERN AND SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA | 30-minute documentary

TPT

THE TELLING PROJECT | 60-minute documentary
THE TELLING PROJECT PERFORMANCE | 70-minute performance special
AMERICA'S SECRET WAR | 60-minute documentary
LYNN NOVICK & TIM O'BRIEN EVENT | 90-minute event coverage
PERSPECTIVES | 60-minute documentary
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORS | 60-minute documentary
ESSENTIAL SHORTS | Series of short video animations
WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE | 90-minute Vietnam-era concert video
EPILOGUE | 120-minute Ordway Stage Performance

WDSE

REMEMBERING THE VIETNAM WAR: COMBAT | 30-minute documentary
REMEMBERING THE VIETNAM WAR: COMBAT AND AFTER | 30-minute documentary

PRAIRIE

PRAIRIE MEMORIES: THE VIETNAM WAR YEARS | 4-part documentary series

LAKELAND

LAKELAND CURRENTS- BUFORD JOHNSON, U.S. ARMY | 30 minute feature length interview
GOLD STAR MISSISSIPPI CANOE JOURNEY | Short-form feature
HOWARD MANINGA VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL | Short-form feature
WENDELL AFFIELD | Common Ground #404 segment
KEN CLOSE | Common Ground #319 segment

KSMQ

MINNESOTA AND VIETNAM: AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP | 30-minute documentary

2 million+
in Minnesota
tuned in to
Vietnam War
content on TV

100's of video
stories created for
The Story Wall



13 original
documentaries

1 Emmy &
4 nominations

2.5 million
reached on social media

***83% watched Vietnam content**

*2018 MPTA *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* survey of participants, members & subscribers

PARTICIPATION ENRICHED LIVES



Cast members performing Minnesota Remembers Vietnam: The Telling Project at TPT; Cast with The Telling Project directors

Participation in projects like **“The Telling Project”** enriched the lives of five Minnesota Vietnam War veterans and family members who shaped their experiences into a powerful stage performance with the help of **The Telling Project**. The national performing arts non-profit uses theater as a tool to deepen civilian understanding of the military experience. The amateur cast’s courageous storytelling set the tone for an incredible year of inspired and moving storytelling.



Left: Ken Sholes, Ken Plant and Ray Wilson meet regularly

*The people who I went through it (The Telling Project) with are **now my very best friends**.* -Ray Wilson, Vietnam veteran and participant in The Telling Project

*My experience in the 2017 TPT/Telling Project’s “Minnesota Remembers Vietnam” has been a catalyst in several major changes in planning the next step in my life. Following the premiere viewing at TPT Studios with a live audience, the cast, along with the Telling Project writer and director, were asked “what effect has the production had on you?” My immediate answer was, “It raised my awareness of the importance of the arts, and **brought a new family into my life**.”* -Ken Plant, Vietnam veteran and participant in The Telling Project

The Telling Project was made available to 79% of U.S. households | 2018 Emmy® Nominee

More thoughts shared by those who participated in *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam*:

Enriched my life, helped me sort through some psychological issues left over from the war and certainly brought me closer to my brothers in arms. -William S.

“

I have to thank U, because you’ve introduced me to so many different people and some of them will be my friends forever Especially my fellow veterans. -Jerry M., Vietnam veteran

*We were involved in several of the events throughout the year and I think it was especially good for Mike (husband). He was interviewed and it’s on the site. It’s been obvious to me how meaningful, first the reunions, and now the MN year has been to him, maybe even **cathartic**.* -Carole H., anti-war activist and wife of a Vietnam veteran

HONOR.

The Vietnam War was the most divisive conflict in American history since the Civil War and was too often expressed as a division of veterans and non-veterans. In Minnesota and across the nation, many veterans were shamed upon their return home from service in Vietnam. And even 50 years later, there are still open wounds that require healing. By hearing each other's stories, we can gain a deeper understanding about the Vietnam War, its impact on an entire generation, and its important lessons for today. And we can honor and thank Minnesota's Vietnam veterans for their service.

This initiative was an opportunity to do something meaningful, memorable and lasting here in Minnesota to honor our veterans and welcome them home.

I feel like I have been welcomed home after serving in Vietnam.

-Jerry M.

VETERANS DAY EVENTS

HONORED MINNESOTA VETERANS

*Finally there is some recognition of what went on in Vietnam. I don't mean the quick and curt "thank you for serving" that came 25 or more years after, but **a real meaningful understanding** of just what the Vietnam vets did. -Jim B.*

Our stories were captured and many new connections were made. The new public perspective about Vietnam veterans is refreshing and we now feel the love that was lacking for fifty years. -William S.



Amy Klobuchar; Veterans honored; Vietnam veteran and author Doug Bradley with MN Vietnam veteran Jerry Kyser

TPT partnered on a Veterans Day event with the City of Bloomington and Northwestern Health Sciences University for a panel discussion comparing the experiences of Vietnam veterans and Post 9/11 veterans.

TPT also partnered with the **Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs** to host Minnesota's **Official 2017 Veterans Day event**. The event had a special focus on music and the Vietnam War, which was the thread that tied comments from speakers like Amy Klobuchar and Tim Walz to the keynote presentation from Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, co-authors of *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War*. The event theme complemented TPT's Veterans Day concert experience that was based on the book.

WE GOTTA GET OUT OF THIS PLACE HONORED VETERANS THROUGH MUSIC



Antiwar activist & volunteer Linda Brown with a custom screen-printed concert poster made for each guest

Music, storytelling and imagery from the Story Wall came together to create an unforgettable community experience at two concerts held at Twin Cities PBS Veterans Day weekend of 2017. Led by St. Paul musician **Dan Chouinard**, an all-star band performed iconic music from the Vietnam War Era including Jimi Hendrix, Buffalo Springfield, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and many more.

These musical performances were punctuated with readings by Minnesota veterans and activists, selected from *Rolling Stone's* #1 Music Book for 2015, "**We Gotta Get Out of This Place.**"

It (the concert) was a high point for me and you made us feel like family. TPT is a leader for other public media and a beacon of hope. -Doug Bradley, author & Vietnam veteran

TPT will be featured in Doug Bradley's follow-up book about the impact of the music of Vietnam called "Who'll Stop the Rain?" out in 2019.

“

*This was incredible. **Music makes you feel**, not just remember. - Jane L.*

This was the welcome home celebration I never had. - James K., Vietnam veteran



Thomasina Petrus sings Janis Joplin; Vietnam veteran & musician, Jerry Rau, offers a rare performance of Leaving on a Jet Plane

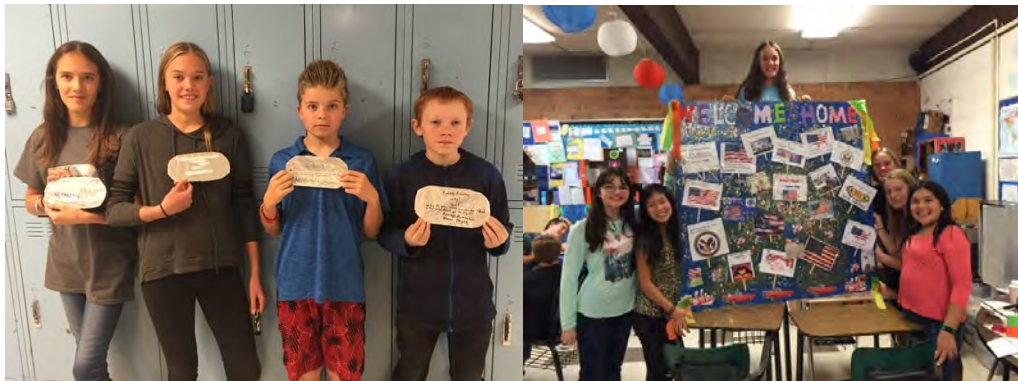
THE BAND led by DAN CHOUINARD | BANDLEADER & PIANO
THOMASINA PETRUS | VOCALS; PETER JOHNSON | DRUMS; DARYL BOUDREAUX | PERCUSSION; JOHN HERMANSON | GUITAR & VOCALS; PRUDENCE JOHNSON | VOCALS; DEAN MAGRAW | GUITAR; MARK LICKTEIG | VOCALS & HAMMOND B-3; JERRY RAU | GUITAR & VOCALS; JULIUS COLLINS | VOCALS; JAY YOUNG | BASS

STUDENTS

WELCOMED VIETNAM VETERANS HOME

A powerful excerpt from the Story Wall story, “Dog Tag Poetry” shared by 6th grade teacher Steph Glaser, from Buena Vista, CO:

I began a conversation with my 6th graders about why Veterans Day is important and how badly Vietnam Vets were treated. We watched clips from Lynn and Ken's documentary and read comments from Vietnam vets. I had my students respond, and the beautiful quality of 6th graders is that their sense of justice vs injustice is so strong. They were outraged by the mistreatment of vets. We turned their reactions into "Dog Tag" poetry.



Students display their Dog Tag Poetry; Students with their Welcome Home Veterans sign

The cool thing is that my students now want to hold a special Vietnam Vets Day. They have created a "Welcome Wall" with images of red convertibles, marching bands, balloons and confetti, part of the parades the vets never experienced.

On December 8, sixteen veterans from both Buena Vista and Salida, CO, came to our first annual Vietnam Veterans Day. Students read their Dog Tag Poetry, served the vets homemade goodies and mingled with the veterans, thanking them for their service.



The response from a Vietnam veteran on the story:

I am so proud of you sixth grade students. From now on I will think of you as the real people who greeted me when I came home from Vietnam. In reality, no one greeted me, other than my family.

What a wonderful Legacy you have Preserved for all of us. Thank You.

- Michael Harvey, Vietnam veteran

Left: Veterans and students at the December “Welcome Home” event

RECOGNIZED VETERANS OF THE SECRET WAR

My heart is full. -Hmong community member



Archival stills from *America's Secret War*

In the shadows of the Vietnam War, the CIA conducted a secret war in Laos that relied on Hmong soldiers to prevent the threat of communism from spreading deeper into Southeast Asia. Tens of thousands died, both in the fight and in the escape. TPT's documentary ***America's Secret War*** explores the untold, turbulent history, and **honors the stories of Hmong veterans and families.**

Documentary involved community in the making...

TPT's documentary team **included the Hmong community** in doing research, recording voice-overs, and conducting interviews. Hmong composer Shu Lor recorded his parents singing traditional songs and playing Hmong instruments like the queej (Shu's father pictured below) to create a one-of-a kind soundtrack for the film.



Connected communities & younger generations to the story...

Two sold-out screening events at TPT celebrated Hmong culture through food, music, spoken word, a museum of artifacts, and a panel of Hmong leaders.

Salute to our Hmong elders who have sacrificed their life for us. Most have passed on but some still live among us, carrying the most heavy wounds in their heart and soul. My heart is full. -
Hmong community member

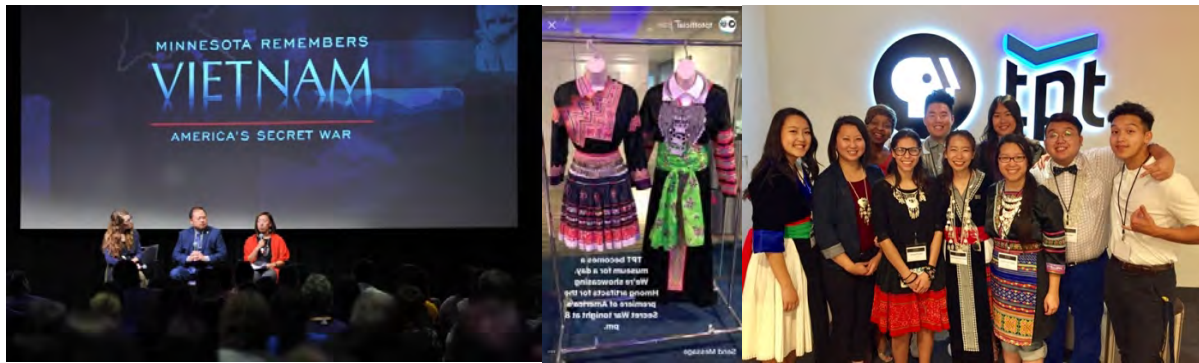
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The right to exist is worth fighting for, it's worth dying for. I appreciate what Minnesota Remembers Vietnam is doing. It means a lot to my parents and to my ancestors. For once, the Hmong are given the opportunity to record our own history, to tell our side of the story.

-Kou X., Hmong community member & Story Wall author

And we're **working with Hmong educators** to create tools to bring this story into classrooms:

As an educator and Hmong community member, I am grateful for your efforts to be inclusive of my community in making history. Importantly, I appreciate your prudence and care to make sure it is done well. You make me proud to live here. -C.T.



TPT Premiere Event Highlights: *America's Secret War* director Lisa Blackstone with Senator Fong Hawj and Sia Her; Hmong clothing at a museum exhibit; Student volunteers from C.H.U.S.A. helped at the events

The Hmong Veterans Service Recognition Act passed on March 23, 2018

Policy changed...

After decades of fighting for recognition, Hmong and Lao-American SGU veterans are now allowed to be buried in U.S. national cemeteries, excluding Arlington National Cemetery.



The Special Guerilla Unit veterans on stage at EPILOGUE at the Ordway got a standing ovation; June 2018

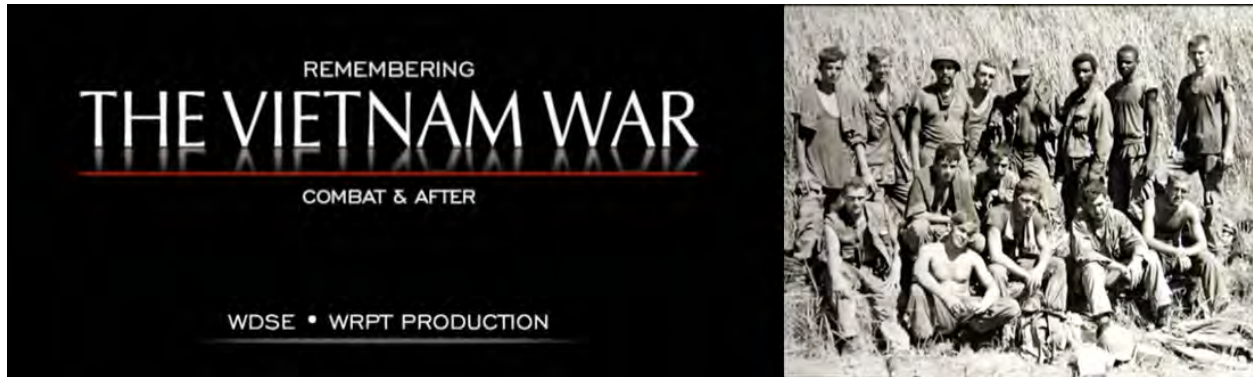
After the law passed, all of the veterans were very happy, because they've been waiting for this for forty years.
- Tong Vang, SGU

The most important thing is to be acknowledged.
- Lee Pao Xiong, Director of the Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia University

***America's Secret War* was made available to 81% of U.S. households
Nominated for 2018 Emmy® Award**

HONORED MINNESOTA'S VIETNAM VETS

My People family friends had no idea what we really went through in that war until they saw my story. -James M.



In addition to 20 individual video contributions to the Story Wall, **WDSE-WRPT** has produced twelve original short form features and two long form features with interviews gathered for the project.

REMEMBERING THE VIETNAM WAR: COMBAT and **REMEMBERING THE VIETNAM WAR: COMBAT AND AFTER** are both 30-minute documentaries featuring Vietnam veterans from the Northland sharing their personal stories, in their own words.



Jerry Sikorski spent seven months in Vietnam from 1969-70 as a radar technician in the US Marine Corps. His service was cut short when a tragic family accident occurred. As the oldest of 14, he was sent home on emergency leave to help his family.

You never knew who was the enemy or not because the Viet Cong didn't wear uniforms.

Paul Helbach served in the U.S. Navy Hospital Corps in Vietnam from 1969-70. After a brief medical training at Camp Pendleton, one year after the Tet Offensive, Helbach found himself in Vietnam at the battle of Liberty Bridge which he describes as his "baptism by fire."

I would describe my own Vietnam experiences as 98% boredom and 2% sheer terror. But the 98% was getting ready for something... always getting ready for something.



Biographical Details

Submitted From: **DULUTH, MN**

Primary Location During Vietnam: **QUANG TRI, VIETNAM**

Story Subject: **MILITARY SERVICE**

Military Branch: **U.S. NAVY**

Dates of Service: **1969 - 1970**

Unit: **ASSIGNED TO 112 MARINES MORTAR UNIT**

Specialty: **HOSPITAL CORPSMAN**

HONORED MINNESOTA'S AKICHITA, OGICHIDAAG, WARRIORS



The People's Protectors director Leya Hale interviewing Art Owen for the film; Veteran ceremony at a pow wow

In TPT's documentary *The People's Protectors*, four Native American veterans reflect on their experiences in the military during the divisive Vietnam War and how their communities helped them carry their warrior legacy proudly. From the Marine Corps to the Navy to the U.S. Army veterans Valerie Barber, Art Owen, Sandy White Hawk, Vince Beyl, and civilian eyapaha (announcer) Jerry Dearly recall their memories of one of the most controversial wars in United States history.

Native Americans have the highest per-capita involvement of any population to serve in the U.S. Military

“

*As a Dakota/Diné filmmaker, it is deeply important to me to continue celebrating the stories of my people, as well as sharing with non-Natives the challenges we face. I believe that *The People's Protectors* can combat decades-long stigmas against veterans and empower all Native people—in fact, all people—to be protectors within their communities by remembering and honoring the bravery of those who served as Akichita | Ogichidaag | Warriors.*

-Leya Hale, TPT producer

Even as they struggled with their relationship to the United States government from genocidal policies and government oppression; the Dakota, Lakota, and Ojibwe warriors still felt compelled to honor their duty to their people as *Akichita | Ogichidaag | Warriors*, as **protectors of the people**. A lifetime later, these soldiers met us in the TPT studio as they begin to tell their stories.

Tom Dimond, a Vietnam veteran, was moved to action, sharing via email:

*November 1, 2018 I attended the premiere of *The Peoples Protectors* at Twin Cities Public Television. Valarie Barber and Sandy White Hawk were highlighted and spoke after the screening. My wife and I had a chance to sit down with Valarie before the screening. Near the end of the event it became apparent that Valarie and Sandy have not received their Vietnam Veterans pins. I briefly mentioned to them that I would look into getting them their Vietnam Veterans pins. I have worked with the VA and they have gotten the pins for them. I am working on a pinning event and have requested Governor elect Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan. I am waiting on a response of availability. Tim is a Veteran and Peggy is our first Native Woman LT. Governor elect. It is an honor that Valarie and Sandy earned.*



Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan will do the honors of pinning Sandy and Valerie in 2019.

American Indian Film Festival San Francisco, First Nations Film Festival, UNO Native American Film Festival and SkinsFest

UNDERSTAND.

It has made it easier for family and friends to ask question. For me I always have been able to talk about what happen to me. I know friends that are reluctant to talk about what they have gone through. Most people will talk about their military experience if they know the person they are talking to has also served in a battle zone.
-Richard T.

Our third goal for the initiative was an important one- to **build deeper understanding** about the war and the people who lived through that era. We also wanted to **introduce a younger generation** to a war, and to an experience that veterans had, that in so many respects is very different than the experiences our veterans are having today.

STATEWIDE EVENTS INCREASED UNDERSTANDING

*Thanks for the hard work, **empathy for those without a voice**, the ones that served whose voice was forgotten and sometimes discounted in the dirt and swamps and blood buried in their memories in a long march across a short distance.*
-Bruce B., Vietnam veteran



A Vietnam veteran shares his story at **St. Cloud Remembers**, an event that brought Vietnam veterans, protestors, family-members and Vietnamese from the St. Cloud community together to share and connect

By the end of June, 2018 the 6 MPTA stations, in partnership with community organizations, had hosted over 100 community events, many featuring the rich archive of content on the Story Wall and local people that had been uncovered across the state. Events convened community and offered opportunities to connect in a safe space, share stories and also **build understanding** about one of the most complex and divisive eras in our nation's history.

100+
events statewide
engaged
25,000
people

I was in college during the Vietnam war, and participated in a peace march. The event and the speakers made me realize the sacrifices given during that difficult time in our history. -Attendee at the St. Cloud Remembers Story-sharing day



Community gathered at the St. Cloud Remembers event; Our team reminisced that some of our most memorable moments were *after* the events when people would linger, sharing stories with new friends, exchanging books and contact information... even in a dark event space or in a cold, snowy parking lot.

Because of your invitations to participate in MN Remembers Vietnam, I have had new interactions with new people I might never have met and done things I never expected to do at this stage of life. You created a platform for people to tell their stories and to feel heard and appreciated- that's pretty powerful stuff.
-Lesley H. wife of a Vietnam veteran



Scout dog handler Jerry Miron sharing his story at the Vietnam War 360 event at Robert Trail Library in Rosemount

VIETNAM WAR 360 series

Throughout the spring of 2018, TPT partnered with the **Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA)**, to host 11 community conversations at metro libraries and schools. The events explored the Vietnam War and its legacy from **several points of view.**

Drawing upon speakers with very different experiences (conscientious objectors, refugees, activists, nurses, veterans, Gold Star family members), the conversations expanded on the Ken Burns and Lynn Novick Vietnam War documentary and on the *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* body of work, including the Story Wall.

*2018 MPTA *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* survey of participants, members & subscribers

***75% listened to experiences or perspectives they hadn't heard before**

***51% attended an event or screening**

***69% learned something new**

Communities shared about the initiative & events:

I like the coverage of the regional anti-war protest movement that was covered by one of the videos I saw.
-Viewer

“

I made connections with both Vets and protestors. My photos were shared over a wide audience. -Bill J.

I realized how much my current thoughts about Vietnam differ from my thoughts during and immediately after the war. The perspectives of the later wars in Iraq and Afghanistan helped my define my thoughts about Vietnam. I also learned to distinguish my thoughts about U.S. involvement in Vietnam from my feelings about the people and places where I worked. The memories of the people I knew, aided by my pictures of them, are only warm and positive. -Bill G.



Vietnam veteran Richard Jenkins, Sr. & Vietnamese poet/refugee Anh-Hoa Thi Nguyen hug after presenting their stories at a 360 event

Because I worked at the draft board during the war I heard stories from people that I had "advised" during that time. It made a difference in their lives that I would never have known about had I not participated in this event. -Donna J.

*I now have so much more knowledge and facts, **I can now talk with anyone from any side** calm and share information.* -Tom C.

*It made me feel more connected to all those who shared experiences by their stories, even with those whose points of view I might have some disagreements with. **We were all in it together.*** -Gib A.

It reinforced the importance of free speech and civil discourse and the importance of simply realizing how ordinary people can play important roles in a democracy. -Gerald J.



Collage of protest photos shared at the Story Wall

LOCAL VOICES

FOSTER DEEPER UNDERSTANDING



KSMQ produced a series of short videos featuring local stories from the Austin/Rochester area. These portraits offer a uniquely personal window on the war that bring history closer to home.

DAUGHTER OF A POW: When **Rose Le** was a girl, she moved to the U.S. from Vietnam. Her father had fought for the South and was imprisoned after the fall of Saigon. After four years, he was allowed to move his family to America. In 2002, Rose opened her own nail salon, Top Ten Nails, in Austin.



On the 28th of April, 1975, my father became a prisoner of war.



BOTH AGAINST THE WAR: The Nevilles had very different experiences during the Vietnam War. Debbie protested the war while Pat served in Vietnam. After Pat returned from the war, he married Debbie. Unfortunately, Pat suffers heavily from the effects of Agent Orange.

I protested the war and was against it. You served and you were against it, and life went on for a number of years.

In addition to producing shorts for the Story Wall, KSMQ produced **MINNESOTA AND VIETNAM: AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP**. This half hour documentary explores the relationship between Minnesota and Vietnam from being antagonists during the Vietnam War to modern day trading partners.

Communities shared about the initiative:

All perspectives were welcome and encouraged. -Lowell C.

Empathy is the greatest gift you can give because empathy is the ability to walk in another person's shoes without ever having to go through the experience. -Kevin Kling, Minnesota Storyteller at EPILOGUE

100+ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS EXPANDED IMPACT STATEWIDE

Prairie Public partnered with the **Vet Center and The Red River Valley Vietnam Veterans Group** to host a viewing event that was held in the PPB studios on Tuesday November 7th. At this event PPB showed short video features that had been produced using the interviews gathered at earlier sharing events in August. The event featured guest speaker Minnesota State University Moorhead professor Camilla Wilson author of “The Ghost Parade From Shiloh to Saigon” and an audience Q and A period.

KSMQ partnered with **Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Austin** (A network of citizens and community organizations supporting our active duty, reserve and guard soldiers, their families and veterans through community support) to show the stories that the station produced for the Minnesota Remembers Vietnam project during a display of the Traveling Wall exhibit at the Mower County Fairgrounds.

TPT partnered with the **Minnesota Humanities Center** who also leveraged Legacy funding to offer 6 communities grants to host Minnesota *Remembers Vietnam* conversations, screenings, and story-gathering events across MN:

Charles Lindbergh House and Museum,
Little Falls, MN

HomeFront Resource Center,
St. Cloud, MN

Minnesota State University Moorhead,
Moorhead, MN

Saint Louis County Historical Society,
Duluth, MN

The SEAD Project,
Minneapolis, MN

SGU Veterans and Families of USA Inc.,
St. Paul, MN

Casey DeMarais, Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Minnesota Humanities Center, shared about the initiative:

The community’s experience felt honored. Their individual stories felt heard and remembered and validated.



MN State University Moorhead Host Community event;
Host Community Kick-off Retreat at the MN Humanities Center

INCREASED EMPATHY **ACROSS GENERATIONS**

TPT hosted a Vietnam War 360 event for **400 students at Blaine High School** after their teachers attended a 360 event at Blaine Public Library. Students heard the personal stories of veterans, a Navy Nurse, Hmong spoken word poet, wife of a Vietnam veteran, African American Purple Heart recipient, Hispanic Marine, and Army scout dog handler.

We've had really positive feedback from the other teachers and students who were able to attend. We've had several students write thank yous to the presenters. - Alaina Burchill, Social Studies Blaine High School

Moved by the speakers' openness, students wrote personal cards to each person who spoke, thanking them for their courage to share and for helping them better-understand the experiences of veterans and those impacted by the Vietnam War. One young female student wrote to Navy Nurse Kay Bauer, **"I hope to be like you someday."**

Photos right: Blaine Vietnam War 360 speakers Richard Jenkins, Sr., Kevin Yang, Lesley Hauser, Samuel Verdeja, Jerry Miron and Kay Bauer; Pile of thank you letters from students for the speakers; Students linger to chat with Vietnam veteran Richard Jenkins, Sr.

OTHERS SHARED about the initiative:

For me it has made a difference among my various circles of friends; brought us closer with a shared experience of that era of our lives. I think our sons have a better understanding of how their dad was impacted by his service. -Ellen M.

I was honored to share my dad's story. I was honored to volunteer at the Wall That Heals. I was honored to meet Tim O'Brien. And I am beginning to understand more and more about the Vietnam War and era. -Cami S.

I certainly feel honored to have contributed to the war story. It was especially satisfying to be able to share my involvement with my own children and grandchildren, who otherwise might have been unaware of such involvement. It touched a positive perspective among my various family members and perhaps will be a catalyst for their own political involvement. -Gerald J.

It was particularly moving to feel and see the interest of younger people in the Vietnam era. -Diane W.

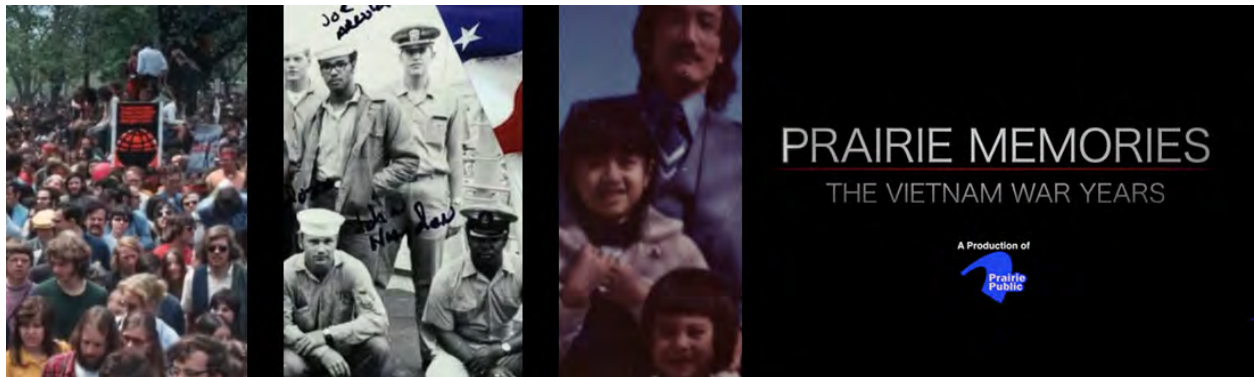
My grandchildren understand more about me. - Charles C.

*The fact that people now want to hear of my experiences **makes me feel significant.** -Vince S.*



SUPPORTED STUDENTS & EDUCATORS

The Vietnam War defined a generation. It changed the lives of people who fought in it and who fought against it, leaving an indelible mark on millions of people. To document how this turbulent time shaped life in the prairie region, ***Prairie Memories: The Vietnam War Years*** inspired Minnesotans and North Dakotans to remember and share stories, recognize bravery, honor those lost, express reasons for dissent, and foster understanding of the lasting impact of war.



Oral histories were **shared with teachers at several workshops** in the region, including a workshop in conjunction with the Fargo premiere and virtual webinars. Teachers told PPB that they were excited to share the stories of local vets with their students to make the past come alive in their classrooms and engender greater empathy.

One teacher shared the following:

Prairie Memories: The Vietnam War Years has been an invaluable supplemental resource during our study of Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried". Multiple local veterans' stories aligned well with many of the book's character's struggles and triumphs bringing the story truly to life. Being able to put a **local face and voice to the war** made students engage with not only the texts, but their own reflections about what they had been reading, discussing, and learning in English class and history in a deeper more meaningful way.

”



In addition to the veterans' stories, being able to see clips of other local stakeholders in the war whether it was a college student, a friend, or journalist allowed my students to see how far the war's impact stretched here at home. It was striking to hear students make comments and connections about the life-long impacts of war not only on the veterans, but our local communities as well.

Thank you for producing this resource.

Emmy-nominated *Prairie Memories: The Vietnam War Years* and a series of short videos on the Story Wall shine a light on the experiences of the many Minnesotans and North Dakotans whose lives were changed:



- The men and women who served in Southeast Asia
- The families who were left behind, caught in social conflict
- The people who protested and, in some cases, resisted the war
- The refugees who fled their war torn country to make a new home on the prairie

...Like the child of a Vietnamese Air Force officer, **Sue Willson** was evacuated to safety as the war ground to an end but was never able to return to the country she grew up in or the family who stayed behind.

We were in Guam when we heard the message that Saigon fell. -Sue Willson

NEW PERSPECTIVES for all of us

Sometimes a project comes along that changes *us*. Many of us who worked on these productions were changed. We now have new friends and new perspectives on the world. TPT's ***Perspectives*** documentary producer Luke Heikkila shared what he learned through his interview process:



Learning that, though so many men and women gave their lives during their service in Vietnam, the men and women I interviewed often times were more interested in telling me about their lives after Vietnam. Their jobs. Their families. Their grandchildren.

These are men and women who are proud of their service, but even more proud of what they've built around them.

*- Luke Heikkila
Perspectives Producer at TPT*

Caption: Luverne premiere of *Perspectives* at the Palace Theater; Vietnam veterans (featured in *Perspectives*) Wendell Affield, Ron Mackedanz and Jon Hovde at the TPT premiere; Production slate; New friends Debbie Muellner (Gold Star sister) and Mick Aguirre (Vietnam veteran) hold hands at the TPT premiere event (both featured in the film); Luke Heikkila interviewing Vietnam veteran Clyde Lewandowski on set at TPT

TPT partnered with NATIONAL HISTORY DAY MN to embed the *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* initiative in materials provided to History Day teachers/coaches in addition to the **25,000 Minnesota students** who participate in History Day each year. The 2018 History Day theme was **“Conflict and Compromise.”**



In partnership with state organizers, TPT awarded four topical prizes to outstanding student projects focused on the Vietnam War; special attention was given to documentaries. TPT staff served as judges at the regional and state competitions and assisted students with their projects prior to competitions at events like **University of Minnesota’s “Gopherballoo.”**

In support of History Day students making a documentary, TPT produced an 8-minute video filled with tips from fellow filmmakers, including THE VIETNAM WAR co-director, **Lynn Novick.**



**Supported
25,000
students & educators
through partnerships with
History Day MN
& MCSS**



Caption: Minnesota Remembers Vietnam team helping students at the U of M’s Gopherballoo; Brian Berg of Salk Middle School received one of the “Remembering the Vietnam War” topical prizes for his documentary on the Secret War. Prizes recognize the next generation of scholars and storytellers like Berg who was also a featured speaker at EPILOGUE in June; Berg interviewing Hmong scholar, Dr. Yang Dao, for his prize-winning documentary

TPT’s partnership with the **Minnesota Council for Social Studies (MCSS)** helped to raise awareness among educators about the rich collection of Vietnam War resources available through the initiative. Educators were reached via e-news, social media and at the annual conference and associated events.

THE WALL THAT HEALS CONVENED COMMUNITY TO REMEMBER & TO HONOR

15,000
attended
The Wall That
Heals over the
4-day weekend

As part of the culmination of the initiative, we brought to the Minnesota State Capitol, **The Wall That Heals**, a traveling replica of the Vietnam Memorial, June 20th - 24th, 2018.

TPT was chosen as one of 38 hosts for 2018 tour of The Wall That Heals, a brand new 375” travelling exhibit and replica of the Vietnam War Memorial on Washington, D.C. **15,000 attended** the weekend to pay respects to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, as well as honor those who served. It was a moving and memorable experience to watch the community come together to **remember and to honor**.



Veterans at The Wall That Heals at the State Capitol; photo by Vietnam veteran Dell Erickson

DAILY EXPERIENCES

We designed a series of experiences that **brought generations of community together** to experience the Wall as well as a veteran resource area, mobile museums, interactive art experiences, flyover of Vintage Vietnam-era aircraft, public commemoration events, a **Huey Helicopter on display**, music, reading of the names of Minnesota's fallen each day, Taps played each night, screenings of stories from the initiative, a veteran conversation event, and a Native American drum ceremony to close the weekend.

Moments at The Wall That Heals ...



“ When I look at the Vietnam Wall and see the 58,000 plus names on it I understand what each name represents: a unique, person-shaped hole in the hearts of untold numbers of mothers, fathers, siblings, spouses, children and friends.

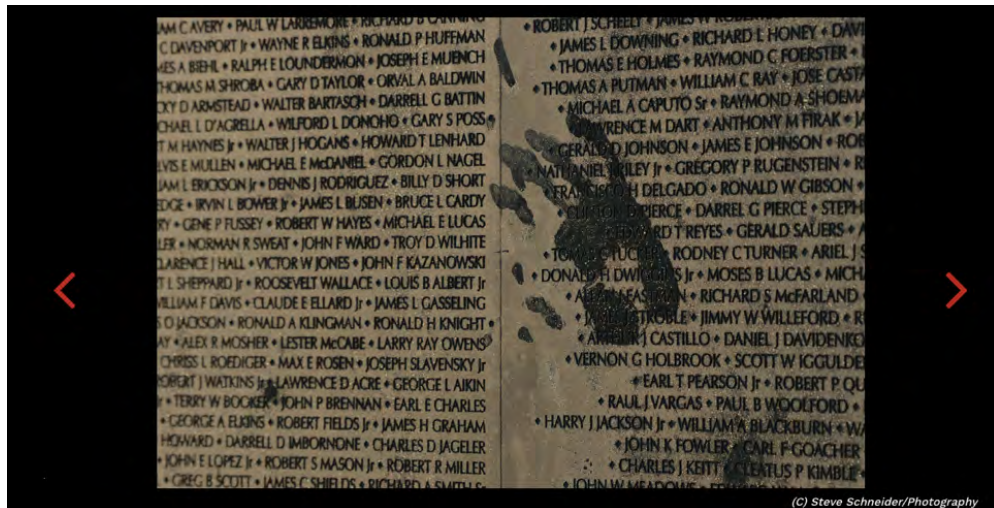
TPT President & CEO Jim Pagliarini with Mayor Melvin Carter and members of the Vietnamese Community of Minnesota; Vietnam veteran Emilio Munoz playing “Highland Cathedral” on bagpipes at the Opening Ceremony; Flyover of vintage Vietnam-era aircraft including a Huey Helicopter; Jim Pagliarini at the Public Commemoration event; The Wall- day & night; A Veterans for Peace member at the Wall; A Story Wall reflection from a Gold Star sister on what The Wall means to her.

“

Seeing the Wall for the first time was a very emotional and powerful experience as I served during the Vietnam era. -Jon L.

As we walked to the Wall, a small miracle occurred! A monarch butterfly had lit and was sunning itself. It had chosen Luis Conception to light on. I hope Luis felt blessed and gladdened by the little creature. I hope when he died, Luis felt he'd sprouted multi-colored wings. -Diane G.

The Wall was wet. When I put out my hand to touch it, **my palm print left an impression.** Lorenzo, Bill, Fred, Holden, John under my hand. So many names, one my friend. -Diane G.



(C) Steve Schneider/Photography

The morning sun and the dew combine to leave the mark of another touch on the Wall. Touching is connecting for so many.



Caption: Story Wall story about visiting the Wall That Heals early in the morning; Vietnamese refugee, poet & artist Anh-Hoa Thi Nguen shows Vietnam veteran Don Pedersen how to fold a paper boat, part of her interactive artwork, **Waves Enfolding**, a tribute to the “Boat People” who escaped Vietnam

When i volunteered at the Wall, i witnessed many visitors who seemed to be very moved being in the presence of the Wall. Some wanted to talk a lot, others just wanted to soak it in and be alone with their thoughts. Some visitors talked to other visitors, i believe looking for someone with common experience to hear them and talk to. there is no doubt in my mind that being at the Wall was a valued experience to these visitors. -Eileen T.

Having only been witness to the Vietnam War as a grade schooler. It just shined a larger picture. Then attending the viewing of the wall on the State Capitol grounds. Having seen it in Washington, DC, but there was something about bringing it "home" that added more depth of understanding of the wars impact. -Ruth H.

Your documentaries, the miniseries, bringing The Wall That Heals, and the efforts I am not even aware of, will all make great memories for many whose lives were forever changed. -Herb R., volunteer at The Wall That Heals

Thank you both and many others in advance for all your hard work to honor the dead and those of us that made it home. -Maynard K., Vietnam veteran



Volunteer training at The Wall That Heals

257 Volunteers
donated 1550 hours during
The Wall That Heals weekend

75 were veterans



Artist David Geister invites a Vietnam veteran and his grandson to add paint to his canvas during the Wall That Heals weekend at the State Capitol; Completed painting of The Wall That Heals by David Geister and friends

Artist and veteran David Geister's reflections on painting The Wall That Heals:

*Of my various experiences painting in front of the public, **this was the most moving.** On the first morning, as I finished sketching the basic composition, I was approached by a veteran who introduced himself as Les Fordahl. Les explained that he had been a combat artist in Vietnam, and I was secretly star-struck. I had served as a graphic-artist and illustrator in the Marine Corps during peace time, and had developed a fascination with combat artists throughout our nation's history.*

*We talked shop for a few minutes, and then Les agreed to put down the first strokes of oil paint on the panel. **I could not help feeling that the project had been, in a sense, blessed.***

EPILOGUE OFFERED CLOSURE

In an epilogue to our incredible year, master storyteller, Kevin Kling, was joined by Cathy Wurzer and J.D. Steele on the Ordway stage to lead a dozen Minnesota storytellers from the initiative and over 50 members of the Mill City Choir in a show that moved from remembrance toward reconciliation. Fifty years after the height of the war, **EPILOGUE was truly about what unites us, not divides us.**



Jim Crigler, a pilot in Vietnam, paddled the entire Mississippi river in a kayak in honor of Gold Star Families. He gives a coin to Linda McBrayer, a Gold Star Daughter at Epilogue; J.D. Steele leads the Mill City Choir in “Turn, Turn, Turn,” as images of each of Minnesota’s fallen are projected on the screen- a collaboration of TPT and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Wall of Faces Project; Storytellers join hands as they “take a bow” while the band plays “Let it Be” by the Beatles

*I felt at peace during my three visits to the Wall that Heals and thoroughly enjoyed the conversations I had with several veterans. The Ordway Program on Saturday night was a very moving experience and you could feel the emotion in the Theater. **The feedback I received ranged from grateful to closure.** – Bill S., Vietnam veteran*

”

Again, what you are offering up is so profound. The giving of voice to very deep wounds and grief. Thank you, thank you, thank you. -Nell Y.

THANK YOU.

*I can't thank you enough for your commitment to preserving our piece of history. **You have made every person who lived during that time feel special and welcomed home. PEACE!***

-Bill S., Vietnam veteran



Sapa, Vietnam Sept 2018 by Katie Carpenter, *Minnesota Remembers Vietnam* Project Lead

OUR WORK TOGETHER **HAS CREATED A RIPPLE EFFECT OF HOPE**

To our community partners, leaders, funders and those who courageously shared stories this year- **thank you.** What we have created together is a truly moving and **deeply personal archive** of Minnesota's Vietnam War history that extends well beyond this initiative.

We will never really know the full impact of the lives that have been touched by this work. But we do know that the courageous storytelling this year has already sparked a **ripple effect of hope and healing** that we can see and feel, and that will continue on for years, perhaps generations to come.

*We decided to travel to Vietnam to see the country (beautiful) and meet the people (wonderfully friendly). We also heard and saw the war from their perspective (informative and tragic). **We hope to help heal the wounds of war.*** -Glenn O.

“

It was good to hear different stories at the public events. And the invitation to participate in the community meetings helped me to decide to publish my diary from my time in Vietnam (1970-2). -Stewart H.

*Layers of interaction with fellow veterans and TPT members and the community has just begun a healing process. The Minnesota Remembers Vietnam Story Wall is a **SAFE** place for veterans to visit, listen, and share their stories. **HOPEFULLY** the wall will continue to be able to share new stories, and it may take **YEARS** for some to finally come to terms with experience(s) and be able to share. **THESE are stories worth sharing.*** -Ken P.

**The MPTA is honored to have played a role in helping all of us
REMEMBER, HONOR, UNDERSTAND and HEAL.**



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THE WALL THAT HEALS SPONSORS

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The Wall That Heals special thanks to:
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THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Minnesota Remembers Vietnam Advisory Team
The Minnesota Humanities Center
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
and

1st Battalion, 1st Marines
Air America Association
American Legion
Arlington Hills Community Center in St. Paul
Bayport American Legion
Blaine High School
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Plymouth Public Library
Prior Lake Library
The Red River Valley Vietnam Veterans Group
The Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center
Robert Trail Library in Rosemount
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The Telling Project
The Traveling Wall- Mower County Fairgrounds
University of Minnesota- Twin Cities
University of St. Thomas
The Vet Center- Fargo
Veterans for Peace Chapter 27
Vietnam Veterans of America
Vietnam Veterans Helicopter Pilots Association-
Midwest Chapter
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
Vietnamese Community of Minnesota
Walker American Legion Post #134
Wings of the North Air Museum

*"But the thing about remembering is that you don't forget."
-Tim O'Brien, The Things They Carried*

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