

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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The Moving Wall Coming to Michigan City

Michigan City, IN (December 15, 2004) – *“In honor of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. (Inscription on The Wall and The Moving Wall.)*

The Moving Wall, the nation's first and only traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial, will be in Michigan City from August 19 – 26, 2005. This honored visit is sponsored by The Wall Gang, a non-profit organization comprised of motorcycle enthusiasts whose mission is to honor and respect our fallen American soldiers and our living veterans.

Mayor Chuck Oberlie said, “We are honored that The Moving Wall will visit our community and appreciate the generous efforts of The Wall Gang in bringing this very special experience to Michigan City. The memorial helps to bring healing to veterans and families and friends of those who died or are missing in Vietnam, especially those who may not have the opportunity to see the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC.”

“We strive to educate the community on the price veterans paid for us and the respect they deserve from us,” said Roger Speakman, chairman of The Committee for The Moving Wall In Michigan City. “We are committed, as a group, to ride to The Wall in Washington, D.C. annually to pay our respect and to honor those who gave their lives for our country. Our organization holds several fundraisers throughout the year; the proceeds are used to make donations to selected veteran organizations, veteran families and the Great Lakes Museum of Military History.”

“Visitors to The Moving Wall are moved beyond words,” Speakman continued. “The Moving Wall allows people to experience the memorial, to reach out and touch the name of someone they lost. Visiting the wall is a very emotional experience, even for people who don't personally know someone who died in Vietnam. The Vietnam War touched us all in some way, and The Moving Wall gives us a chance to say thank you to those who gave their lives to that war effort.”

In 1982 John Devitt, a former helicopter door gunner and Army veteran, visited Washington, DC for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and to participate in the National Salute to Vietnam Veterans. This visit and experience changed Devitt's life and led to the creation of the "Moving Wall," which has since moved millions of people. Devitt, Chairman/Founder of The Moving Wall and the Vietnam Combat Veterans, Ltd., wanted to capture the spirit he felt at the Washington, D.C. memorial and share it with people who couldn't travel there to see the monument. In 1983, he and some friends spent 22 months and about \$28,000 in donations to build his original Plexiglas replica of the memorial. Today there are two replicas touring the country every year. Each measures 250 feet long, 4 feet tall at each end and 6 feet tall in the center. The replicas are now constructed of aluminum with the 58,245 names of the American dead in Vietnam silk-screened upon black panels. Each replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial cost approximately \$60,000, and all money to create the memorials was donated.

The Moving Walls each visit between 22 and 28 cities in the United States each year, and 75,000 to 100,000 people come out to the memorials during their weeklong appearances at each spot. By the end of 2002, The Moving Wall had been displayed in 867 communities from Hawaii to Alaska and in every state across the entire continental United States as well as Canada. There is no admission fee charged to visit The Moving Wall.

“Many of those who visit The Moving Wall leave flowers, notes, medals, photographs and other loving mementos at the memorial,” said Speakman. “All items left there will be collected on the last day of the display, marked and boxed and then shipped to the Vietnam Combat Veterans, Ltd. office for storage in their warehouse. When The Moving Wall has fulfilled its need, a museum will be constructed where The Moving Wall and all artifacts collected over the years will be displayed in glass cases below the flag of each state the memorial visited.”

Those who come to The Moving Wall while it is in Michigan City will be looking for one or a few very special names. Trained volunteers will be on the site to help people identify the location of the names they seek.

The Moving Wall will be open to the public, 24 hours a day, from setup on August 19th until late afternoon on August 26th.

Those who want to be a volunteer for this event should contact Roger Speakman at (219)326-8717 or via email at rogeranddiana@comcast.net.

“Our nation honors the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of its Vietnam veterans.”

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