



NEW JERSEY VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL
VIETNAM ERA MUSEUM & EDUCATIONAL CENTER

1 Memorial Lane
Holmdel, NJ 07733

2017 YEAR-END ACTIVITIES REPORT

TO REMEMBER... TO HEAL... TO HONOR...



NEW JERSEY VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL
VIETNAM ERA MUSEUM & EDUCATIONAL CENTER

2017 YEAR-END ACTIVITIES REPORT



SARAH TAGGART



ANNUAL VETERAN'S DAY EVENT

GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I am honored to greet all of you as the Foundation's new Executive Director. Since joining our staff in 2011, I have watched the NJVVMF become a stronger, more effective community-oriented organization, a process that I have truly been humbled to have a role in. The Foundation and its community hold a special place for me and I am honored to take on this new role and ensure that our future remains bright.

I need to begin by thanking our former Executive Director, Bill Linderman, for his continued support and the contributions he made during his eight years on our staff. The hard work of the Board, staff and volunteers under his leadership prepared the Foundation for its exciting next chapter. Most importantly, Bill is a Vietnam Veteran whose heart remains with the Foundation. I thank and commend him for all he has accomplished.

2018 marks a new chapter in our evolution with plans for expanded programming, exhibitions and collections. As we prepare to launch a Capital Campaign which will enable us to rehab and build upon our public spaces, enhance our exhibitions with new technology and expand our unique and powerful collections, I ask you to keep the Foundation in your plans. As a self-sustaining organization, we need the support of our community to make these plans a reality. We hope you will be a part of this exciting time in our work and we look forward to sharing an exciting, engaging and powerful year with you.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to sharing 2018 with all of you!

Sarah Taggart
NJVVMF Executive Director

SUPPORT THE NJ VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

CHECK LINE 61 ON YOUR NJ INCOME TAX FORM

Your donation is greatly appreciated.



L-R: KERI GIANOTTI, MICHELE KNELL, SARAH TAGGART,
GERRY APPEL, GREG WATERS

NJVVMF STAFF

Sarah Taggart, Executive Director
Gerry Appel, Office Manager
Keri A. Giannotti, Museum Educator
Michele Knell, Gift Shop and Tour Manager
Greg Waters, Curator

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.NJVVMF.ORG OFTEN FOR UPDATES AND
ABOUT OUR EVENTS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.



BILL LINDERMAN

BILL IN VIETNAM

BILL & NJVVMF CHAIRMAN
CLARK MARTIN

KEN BURNS & BILL AT THE MUSEUM

FROM BILL LINDERMAN

Dear Fellow Veterans, NJVVMF Supporters and our Many Friends,

November 2017 marked the completion of my 8th year as Executive Director of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation (NJVVMF) and I am proud to have served the Foundation in this capacity. We have come a long way since November, 2009 and the Foundation has a great and promising future ahead. I have especially been honored to serve under the leadership of Chairman Clark Martin and the Board of Trustees and I congratulate them for all they have done to secure the future for this incredible organization. I also want to thank the terrific staff and dedicated volunteers for the great work they continually do.

I want you to know that I have retired effective December 31. I have such an affinity for the Foundation, the people and our mission that I definitely plan to stay involved and assist in raising the funds to expand the Vietnam Era Museum, build an adjacent annex and other projects as well as supporting new leadership and staffing.

I am proud to announce that former Deputy Director Sarah Taggart has assumed the role of Executive Director effective November 1, 2017. Sarah possesses terrific talents and has proven over her 7 years in leadership positions at the Foundation that she has the skills and knowledge and the connection to our community to lead NJVVMF into the future. All of us have worked together on a shared vision and Strategic Plan to ensure the long-term viability of the Museum and Memorial.

Importantly, you need to know that this amazing organization cannot survive without your financial assistance. We are forever grateful for your ongoing generous support and hope that you will continue to remember us as we remember those on our Memorial Wall. For your convenience in this Newsletter, we have included ways in which you can contribute to NJVVMF and be recognized for your generous support.

I am most grateful for the trust our community and Board have given me and will cherish the opportunity I have had to be a part of this unique and important organization. Please support Sarah and her wonderful and capable staff as they chart the way to secure the future of your Foundation.

Bill Linderman

Former NJVVMF Executive Director

NJ HISTORICAL COMMISSION GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT THROUGH 2019

Once again, the Foundation expresses its sincere gratitude to the New Jersey Historical Commission for renewing its General Operating Support Grant. The grant demonstrates the Commission's continued belief in our mission and our work.



PLANNED UPGRADES AND EXPANSION

TOUR GUIDE JJ MINOR

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018

In 2017, the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation's programs, services and events attracted more participants than ever before. The impact of the Foundation's work was evident in interactions with Veterans, families, other guests and members of our community.

This year heralds a new chapter in the life of our organization. Educational programs will leverage lessons and experiences from our nation's great history to examine and respond to our present cultural and political climate as never before. An expansion of the museum building will allow for improved exhibits and more varied educational programming.

Please check our website www.njvvmf.org often for updates and more information about these initiatives and all of our events and community programs.

PLANNED UPGRADES AND EXPANSION TO THE MUSEUM INCREASES FOUNDATION CAPACITY FOR EDUCATION AND SERVICE

As 2017 ends, the Foundation's board and staff is busy at work preparing to kick off a capital campaign which will enable us to rehab and build upon our public spaces, enhance our exhibitions with new technology and expand our unique and powerful collections and programs.

In the two decades since the construction of the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Museum & Educational Center, we have received an outpouring of artifacts and local history from the community and those New Jerseyans who served in the armed forces during the Vietnam Era. The center has become an important place for people across the region to visit, and our staff and programs have grown as a result.

The current footprint of the facility simply does not provide adequate storage, display and exhibit space – or the ability to expand on our current programs.

The proposed rehab and two-story addition will provide the necessary storage space for growing collections, increase administration space, incorporate a flexible programming space allowing staff to host educational programs, and expand the exhibition gallery allowing the Foundation to expand its exhibitions. Additional upgrades to the sound system and technology will allow for enhanced events and programs.

If you are interested in supporting or getting involved in the Campaign please contact our office. We look forward to sharing updates with you about the project throughout this year!

DAILY TOURS ADDED FOR 2018

By popular demand, we are now offering personal tours of the Memorial and Museum each day we are open. Our Vietnam Veteran Tour Guides are generously sharing their time, expertise and stories with visitors each day the Museum is open from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. They are also on site the first Saturday of each month starting at 11 a.m. Their experiences offer unique insight into the history of the Vietnam Era and our site. Please plan your next visit while they are on site!



GREG WATERS



GOLD STAR FAMILIES



WREATHS AT THE MEMORIAL



JOHN AITKEN (VVA CHAPTER 12) AND HOME DEPOT MANAGERS

STAFF NEWS

GREG WATERS JOINS STAFF AS CURATOR

The Foundation is proud to welcome Greg Waters to our staff as our new Curator. He brings a wealth of experience in collections care, exhibition development and oral history to the Foundation which have greatly enhanced our exhibitions and programming. Greg will also help design and integrate new technology into our exhibitions including the development of a site-wide app for smart phones.

Greg grew up in Arizona and earned both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Arizona State University in American History and Public History, respectively. He also spend time working at the Smithsonian Institution at the National Museum of American History. Most recently, Greg worked at the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF) in Philadelphia, PA, where he worked on preserving the oral histories of scientists who transformed the modern world through their research and innovation.

On his decision to accept the position with the NJVVMF, Greg said, "This is an incredibly exciting time for the organization. Interest and participation in the work of the Memorial and Museum is growing, driving our new campaign to build an annex for expanded exhibit and presentation space. I can't wait to work with the staff to continue building this wonderful resource."

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

We were once again honored by a visit from the Wreaths Across America Caravan on December 13. During a ceremony that honored nineteen Gold Star Families and the 1,563 people on our Memorial, the organization made sure that these individuals and their families will not be forgotten. During the ceremony, 366 wreaths were laid at our Memorial, one for each panel, a first for Wreaths Across America.

WALL WASHING

Members of VVA Chapter 12 and our great friends at Home Depot continued their support washing our Memorial in preparation for our Veterans Day ceremony. On a warm November day, the group came together to share coffee, stories and volunteer their time. This annual site-wide clean up is something we look forward to twice a year. We are grateful to VVA Chapter 12 and Home Depot for their hard work and support in keeping our site in great shape.



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK COMMUNITY AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NJVVMF/



MEMBERS OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY OF NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION AT THE NJVVMF ANNUAL FORUM



MATT SWAJKOWSKI AND KAYLYNN MILLIEN, PRE-SERVICE TEACHER FROM MONTCLAIR STATE AT THE CULTURE OF VIETNAM WORKSHOP



HUEY PLAZA PAVER

2017... A YEAR OF EDUCATIONAL EXPANSION

This year the Foundation set a goal of increased visibility and partnerships in the educational community along with enhanced programming for 2018. Much of the groundwork for this important work laid in 2017.

In March 2017, the NJVVMF hosted its Annual Forum, bringing teachers from across the state together. Our topic, "For Them It Isn't Over: Our Vietnamese Allies Post War, shared the legacies of our allies after Saigon fell in 1975. Through a partnership with members of the New Jersey Vietnamese American Community Association teachers learned about the fallout that US allies experienced from the first-hand accounts of those who lived it. The history of the Boat people, plight of the refugees, life in the Vietnamese Reeducation camps and the impact of these experiences on Vietnamese-American families were all explored. Harrowing and inspiring testimonies, often left out of Vietnam War narratives and textbooks, took center stage. In the fall, the Foundation hosted a booth at the New Jersey Council for Social Studies and introduced our new tool for educators, "You Be the Curator: Civil Rights During the Vietnam Era". Developed as part of a new outreach program sponsored by the NJVVMF, "You Be the Curator," is a kit with a collection of over 100 photos from the Civil Rights Era and assigns students to take on the role of a Museum curator, selecting images that tell a story about the Civil Rights Movement.

In 2017, the NJVVMF also presented at the NJEA Convention for the first time. Following the Convention's theme, "Standing Together: Social Justice, Student Success, Education Justice," we used our experience as a Memorial dedicated to a difficult time in US history to talk about the Foundation's evolution as a both a memorial and also a living community resource, telling a story that maintains its importance and relevance throughout history. We also presented "Memorials, It's Complicated," and discussed both the historical perspective and the current culture surrounding memorials across the country, including the recent, public calls for Confederate monuments to be taken down.

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE NJVVMF

IN MEMORY DONATIONS

Honor a loved one with a donation to support our programs at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Museum.

BECOME A MEMBER

NJVVMF relies on the support of its individual, family and corporate members to make its work possible.

HUEY PAVER

Honor a special Veteran with a forever message and place your message under our Huey helicopter, located at the entrance to our Vietnam Era Museum & Educational Center visited by more than 11,000 annually.

VISIT OUR GIFT SHOP

The NJVVMF Gift Shop has something for all ages, both men and women. Support our mission by purchasing something today. Please stop by on your next visit to the Museum or shop online.

“ No veteran should ever be left on a shelf. Their recovery and proper burial fulfills the final piece of the social contract between a veteran and the citizens they served. ”

BOB HOPKINS



RICH GOUGH (CENTER) AND VVA CHAPTER 12 MEMBERS

VETERANS HONORED THROUGH CREMAINS PROJECT

The Foundation is proud to support and recognize VVA Chapter 12 for their Cremains Project. Since 2011, members of the Cremains Committee have worked tirelessly to bring home fellow Veterans whose cremains have remained unclaimed in New Jersey funeral homes. This project is just one example of the lasting legacy that these Vietnam Veterans are making every day. Their mission, to ensure that all Veterans are honored, is both important and a shining example for future generations.

In November 2017, the Foundation worked with Chapter 12 to capture this work and the emotions that accompany the completion of such an important mission. Thanks to producer Tom Phillips and his team, the clip at the end of this piece ensures this legacy will continue to inspire others to continue this important work.

What follows is a brief history of this project by Committee Chair Rich Gough.

During the early part of 2011, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 12 created a Committee to look into and identify the unclaimed cremated remains of Veterans still sitting on the shelves of local funeral homes. Chapter members Rich Magovern and Ernie Diorio took on the task of heading up the Committee. As a result of their efforts, in August 2012, the Chapter located and interred three military Veterans from Ely's Funeral Home at BG William C Doyle Cemetery. Due to lack of activity and funeral home cooperation the project stalled until late 2014.

At that time the Committee was revitalized with additional members and a renewed enthusiasm. We partnered up with Missing In America Project and things moved along.

By May 2015, the Cremains Committee had completed the new folder, updated worksheets and brochures and developed a new plan of attack to capture the interest of the funeral homes.

The concept worked well and as a result, in June 2016, we were invited back to Ely's funeral home with access to all of their cremains.

With the complete inventory of remains we were able to research the eligibility of each individual. The improved research process resulted in the identification of an additional 15 veterans and 2 spouses. All but 2 who were claimed by family were interred in April 2017.

During 2017 we have worked with 6 area funeral homes resulting in the additional interment of 3 Veterans and 1 spouse in November. As of this date we have interred 22 Veterans or spouses, returned 18 to family and have 34 in the process of being interred.

Although the process is long and cumbersome, we look forward to a successful future to ensure that all Veterans and their spouses receive the final tribute that they so honorably deserve.

See the video at <http://bit.ly/VVA12CremainsProject>.

SEE THE LATEST INFORMATION ON NJVVMF EVENTS AT WWW.NJVVMF.ORG/EVENTS/



STEVEN RUSCH

BLOOD ROAD MEMORIAL TOUR

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

BLOOD ROAD: FILM SHARES THE STORY OF A NEW JERSEY GOLD STAR FAMILY

The NJVVMF was honored to screen the film Blood Road in September. The film follows endurance mountain biker, Rebecca Rusch on her journey along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to learn more about her father, Stephen Rusch, a Vietnam Veteran who was killed in action during his tour. Our Vietnam Veteran Volunteer, Joe Leone, shares his insight on this journey and the importance of remembering Rusch's legacy in an NJVVMF blog post, excerpted here:

“Captain Stephen A. Rusch was a Weapons Systems Officer (WSO) in an F-4E, along with Aircraft Commander, Captain Carter A. Howell. They were shot down on a bombing run over the Ho Chi Minh Trail on March 7, 1972. At the time of the incident, I was a Staff Sergeant, Administrative Specialist, and served as the Chief Clerk of the orderly room. During my tour, we lost 6 pilots. When a pilot was lost, there was a sense of solemn disbelief.

After my discharge from the service, I returned home and decided to wear a POW/MIA bracelet, a gesture in support of the missing and captured. I chose one with Captain Rusch's name and date of loss, as I knew him and he was a fellow Jersey boy.

I moved on with life, entering the medical field. The bracelet was a reminder of my service and the cost of war.”

To read the Joe Leone's entire account of his experience with the Rusch Family and the Blood Road project, visit <http://bit.ly/LeoneTalksRusch>

You can learn more about Rebecca and Sharon's journey at <http://bit.ly/RebeccaRuschStory>

LEGACY FILMING PROJECT

We began an incredibly important project in 2017, which will continue to expand in 2018. With the help and support of a talented local producer and owner of G Street Productions, Tom Phillips and his team, we are documenting the history and legacy of the NJVVMF and its Veterans. Tom has become a part of our community, joining our volunteers for their monthly lunches and stopping by to have coffee with them. We are honored to be working alongside someone so dedicated to his work and our Veterans.

To date, we have documented the stories of many of those responsible for the early ideas that grew into the NJVVMF as it stands today including its first Executive Director, Kelly Watts, Trustee Louis Vlahakes and Committee Member Bill Watkins. We have also documented the stories and legacies of more than 20 Vietnam Veterans with a focus on what the Memorial means to them.

This work is crucial to the future of our organization. If you have a connection to our site and would like to be included please contact our Curator, Greg Waters, at gwaters@njvvmf.org.

To learn more about Tom's work please visit <http://www.gstreetproductions.com/>



WOODSTOCK CLOTHING

BAND MICROPHONE

JESS LEVINE AND KEN BURNS AT THE GALA

SARAH TAGGART, KEN BURNS, JESS LEVINE AND BILL LINDERMAN

CURRENT EXHIBITION

SOUND TRACK OF A CHANGING NATION: MUSIC OF THE VIETNAM ERA

Our new museum exhibit, Soundtrack of a Changing Nation: Music of the Vietnam Era, is on display until December 31, 2018. The exhibit explores the connections between the music of the Vietnam Era and the history of the War itself. A curated playlist guides visitors through some of the most important tracks of the day. Other areas explore the history of the Armed Forces Vietnam Network, the United Service Organizations, and the Woodstock Music & Art Fair. It also shares the stories of several New Jerseyans including Barton Haynes and Stephen Rusch who were musicians before they were soldiers in Vietnam. The exhibit is accompanied by an interactive website that allows visitors to listen to music from the Era, access song lyrics and artist bios, and learn more about how the history of the Vietnam War and the music of the Era are interconnected. Educational materials including lesson plans will also be available for educators both in the classroom and on site.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

We saw great success with our 2017 fundraising events. In June, our annual Sporting Clay and Golf events both sold out. In October, we shared an evening with Documentarian Ken Burns, following the debut of his latest project, The Vietnam War. Burns spent the morning touring the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Museum before joining more than 300 guests at Eagle Oaks Golf & Country Club for our annual Salute to Patriotism Gala. During an in-depth discussion with Trustee and Historian Jess LeVine, Burns shared his experiences and insight on producing a series about such a controversial and difficult period in our history.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2018 FUNDRAISING EVENTS

As a self-sustaining organization, our major fundraising events support our staff, programs and ceremonies, ensuring that we can continue to deliver the quality our community members expect from us. We look to all of you for advocacy and support of these events. It's never too early to take a sponsorship for these events.

SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

Tuesday • June 5
Hudson Farm Club Andover, NJ



ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Monday • June 25
Eagle Oaks Golf & Country Club • Farmingdale, NJ



ANNUAL GALA

Thursday • October 25
Eagle Oaks Golf & Country Club • Farmingdale, NJ



SAL MIONE

BILL WATKINS

PASSINGS

SAL MIONE

Sal Mione was one of the first people to truly believe in the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. Sal worked from our earliest days, raising funds and awareness for the site. He served on our original Commission as the Vietnam Veterans of America Liaison, a crucial position as the Foundation was being formed and the Museum developed. Sal's work on the Commission brought Vietnam Veterans' perspectives to the discussions that helped the Foundation evolve into what it is today. He remained involved in our activities and ceremonies until his passing.

A Veteran of the Vietnam War, Sal served as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army. Sadly, Sal was predeceased by his brother Anthony, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1969 and is honored on our Memorial.

Deeply involved in his community, Sal served as a councilman in Rahway for more than 24 years and worked for Union County Veterans Affairs. He was also involved with VVA State Council, the New York/New Jersey First Cavalry Association, the Bayonne Vietnam Memorial Committee and other Veterans' organizations and causes, the Foundation was just one of many organizations that Sal shared his time and talents with. We were honored to have him as a core part of our community. He is greatly missed and his contributions and personality will always be remembered.

BILL WATKINS

William Doane Watkins, known to all of us at the Foundation as Bill, was another early believer in the Memorial. Bill served on our first Education Committee, a group that worked tirelessly over many years to define the storyline told in our Vietnam Era Museum.

Visitors to the Museum will forever be greeted by Bill's jungle boots, on display at our entrance. We were honored to have him as a core part of our community. He is greatly missed and his contributions and personality will always be remembered.

What follows was written by Bill's son Matt.

Bill Watkins was born in North Tonawanda November 24, 1942. He attended Chaminade High School, and was a graduate of Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service. Bill served in Germany and Vietnam, where he rose to the rank of Captain. In 1969, he married Peggy (nee Falahee), his best friend and mother of his four children, Will, Matt, Kirby and Maggie.

Bill spent much of his life after the war as an advocate for veterans, as past commander of the Bergen/Rockland Chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America, Post Commander of the American Legion, Treasurer of the VFW, and member of the Bergen County Veterans Advisory Council and a tireless volunteer for the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation.