

# In between the lines



*THE WALL  
THAT HEALS*

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# The Wall That Heals

By Monica Worth

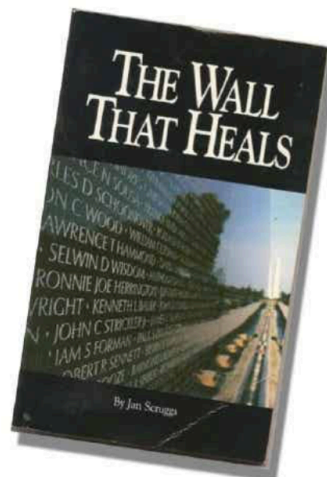
Monica Worth directed The Wall That Heals, the national touring exhibition that features a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This exhibition includes a mobile museum on the sacrifices of Vietnam veterans, and educational material on the Vietnam War.

Even sitting behind a folding table inside a tent marked “Information Center,” a volunteer can feel the tide of emotion gathering around visitors to The Wall That Heals.

Veterans approach the table, focused intently on the green directories lined up along its length. Each book contains all of the names inscribed on “the Wall.” Opening the heavy volumes, an intimate journey begins.

For many, this is no easy trip. Some clutch scribbled lists of names. Absorbed in their search, they flip back and forth through the pages finding friend after fallen friend.

Others stand before a crowded page and stare at a single string of letters, a name, perhaps last seen embroidered on a buddy’s battered uniform. Voices, names, images from the past begin to rise through 30 years of everyday life, of marriage and family, kids and carpools. Soon, each will turn quietly from the table and face the Wall.



Neighbors and friends, remembering their own “Vietnam” experiences, begin another passage. The names they seek may ring in memory from the loudspeaker at a high school football game, or smile from the pages of a yearbook. The clear division of ranks so common then, of pacifist and hawk, of those for a policy of military intervention and those opposed to it, begins to rise in memory.

A generation that marched toward the future in two separate columns is about to be reunited at The Wall That Heals.

The last quarter of the 20th century has been marked by extraordinary explorations of history. From King Tut to the raising of the Titanic, images and artifacts now routinely travel around the globe and through time. Each exhibition is fascinating, memorable, enlightening—but rarely transforming.

The Wall That Heals has the power to change lives. Names carved in singular tributes on gravestones and hometown memorials assume their place in history when touched among the 58,214 inscribed on the face of the Wall. Those who search the names for memories find their images reflected side by side, hawk and dove, united in survival and in loss.

The Wall That Heals soon disappears from the local landscape. But it leaves behind a renewed opportunity for recognition and reunion. Similarities begin to outweigh historic differences. Our shared lessons of Vietnam are welcomed home.