

Good Morning. My name is Flora Jo Dunn, many who know me, call me Peaches.

Being here today is a mixed blessing. You see, I grew up during the Vietnam War—era, in a family where military service was commonplace through the generations. My peer group from when I was a teenager was made up of lots of guys who went overseas either because they were drafted or signed up to fight. I will never forget the Vietnam War or the circumstances the soldiers came home to. My connection to the Vietnam War has stayed with me.

Fifteen years ago I began a labor of love on the Welcome Home Quilt which I made from old photographs, uniforms, emblems, and other patriotic mementos. Some are from local veterans and some are from other parts of the country. For me working with the soldiers' uniforms was especially uplifting, spiritual even. It was an honor to be able to create this quilt and to finally welcome the service members home in a way that recognizes all of their experiences, the good and the bad.

I said being here is a mixed blessing, the reason today is hard is because my husband Tom who is featured on the quilt died of Vietnam War service related injuries 5 weeks ago. It is challenging to sit with that.

I want to thank my husband, Tom Dunn, Posthumously, who was always there for me when I ran out of thread or my needed more fabric, my dear friend Ronald Curria, posthumously, who was so encouraging until his death last year and my friend Nancy Chace, whose encouragement, advice and friendship made my life so much easier. And lastly thank you Kim Shute for finding me and helping to the finish line.

I made this quilt as an act of solidarity and it is my hope that this quilt will travel with The Moving Wall to other Cities and Towns or find a home in the eventual Moving Wall Museum. I present to you, Aaron Gray of The Moving Wall with this Vietnam veterans Welcome Home Quilt from my heart to yours. Thank you to all Vietnam vets, and Welcome Home.