

Best Practices and Suggestions for Bringing the *Moving Wall* to Your Community by *The Moving Wall Newport* Planning Committee

If you are seriously considering bringing *The Moving Wall* to your community be prepared to work hard and have it change you. It is worth every dollar and every minute of it. If you are to take this on, there is much sharing of life experiences which may not always be easy to hear. Each person you encounter is different from the one before. Some stories may be silly and others will be horrifying as well as everything in between. For some the telling of their story was not welcome 50 or more years ago, which makes listening now all the more important.

The people who take on leadership positions on your Planning Committee needs to be able to effectively communicate with all kinds of people. It takes organization, patience, compassion and a vision to create something truly special in your community.

This project is about connection, learning and healing. It is also about making it appropriate to the needs of your community. We found we had accomplished authors and poets, teachers and businessmen, nurses and clergy in our community who were Vietnam veterans. The best way to network is to ask around, one person will lead you to the next, and each will help to create an unforgettable experience.

Potential components of Moving Wall

- Police, Military, and Motorcycle escorts on the day of arrival
- Missing man table
- POW MIA recognition
- Old Glory Ceremony
- Candlelight vigil
- Prayers/Moments of Silence
- Buglers for Taps each night
- Reading of the names each night, KIA on the wall of your town, county or state (we read 209 names each night, about 10-15 minutes, and invited different people to participate each night)
- Veterans sharing personal experiences

Occasional Thoughts and Suggestions

- Some things can be rehearsed, most cannot, include a rehearsal whenever possible.
- Recruiting volunteers is ESSENTIAL, but organizing them can be difficult. There are many volunteer signup websites available, we used signupgenius.com, it will

work if you have only one job/role and simply have time slots for each day of the event. Don't overcomplicate things. Once you have volunteers signed up, you can organize tasks and responsibilities from there.

- Create opportunities for young people to participate, scout troops, college students and other youth organizations. This will engage not only the children and young adults, but sometimes their parents.
- Contact other communities that have hosted before and ask their advice.
- Read and re-read the Sponsors Handbook.
- As with any committee, have someone prepare agendas and keep regular minutes, lots of details can be lost without this attention.
- Everyone is a volunteer, respect people's schedules and keep meetings on track and efficient. Volunteers will be willing to put more time in if you respect their time. Break out into smaller teams as needed.
- Often times online sign ups can be a deterrent, be prepared with pen and paper sign ups.

Site Selection and Available Dates

Communication with the Moving Wall staff to explore potential dates and reserve that date at least a year ahead. The time of year will affect many things: attendance, school involvement, conflicts with other community activities, or in conjunction with other activities.

Site location is important. Cooperation with site owners is critical, and making sure the site is as **level** as can be is **critical**. Test the site a year in advance, laser levels, stakes and strings, whatever you have to run two 130' legs, at an angle between 90-125 degrees.

Fundraising and expenses

Decide how you will pay for it and either begin raising money or asking for people to donate their time and treasure. How much it costs varies dramatically. Our community was incredibly generous.

Local vendors should be offered an opportunity to donate infrastructure such as tents, lighting and sound systems, and other site needs like trash and recycling, landscaping or other preparedness. They may be willing to donate their services or discount them in honor of the vets.

Reach out to a local print shop and see if they will partner with you, there is A LOT of printing to be done in preparation, we created postcards, flyers, posters, and signage

before the event, and then we needed rubbing papers, t-shirts and hats to identify the volunteers, and a multipage program booklet, with order of events, and recognition of the donations, in kind services, and recognition of those participating in our ceremonies. [LINK TO BOOKLET.](#)

We contacted local restaurants to donate food for the volunteers and we were able to get breakfast, lunch and dinner each day for them. As donations were committed, we added them to the website and a few key posters, After the event, we ran a HUGE ad in the local papers thanking everyone we could think of who helped, both businesses and individuals.

Contact Mobile VA support and have them come to a planning meeting.

Ask local therapists if they can donate hours to assist veterans who might have difficulty in addition to contacting the VA Mobile counseling unit.

Site Selection & Other Logistics

The site selection took quite a bit longer than we had thought it would. There are often a variety of things to consider: weather, serene park like atmosphere, is site drillable, muddy, rocky or grassy, trees, sloped or flat, electricity, water, bathroom, a destination or where other things exist, neighbors, accessibility, support facilities and parking. We had wanted one site and then were dissuaded by the Superintendent of Parks to consider other options BEFORE submitting our application to the City. We toured all the possible locations and decided on a 2.5 acre park close to downtown. That way *The Wall* was seen by people who intend to see it as well as those who were merely passing by. With this location *The Moving Wall* does it's own marketing, although we did a lot of that as well.

Make sure site prep is as level as possible, foundation the wall will be placed on, ready in advance and with someone on standby to make any modifications that might be necessary. We underestimated the slope of our chosen location, it worked in the end but **PAY ATTENTION TO THE LEVELNESS OF THE SITE.** If the foundation is solid the installation will be practically seamless.

EMS, safety and security. Is there something political climate that may have an impact on your event? Prepare for the worst so you can have the best. Have a closed door conversation with police, fire and ems.

The wall is open 24 hours a day for the duration of the installation. Volunteers on night shifts may need extra lighting, heat, or shelter ON SITE.

For anyone you do not know who steps forward to be on the Planning Committee find a discreet way to screen them to make sure everyone is who they say they are. This event should focus on the Vietnam veterans as much as possible, you must have vets on your committee to run things by them. Some things that seem like tiny decisions can bring up larger issues that can upset your apple cart.

MUST HAVES for the Planning Committee:

Networker

Veterans Representation

PR/Marketing

Finance

Volunteer management

Ceremonies includes Music, Clergy, hosts or MCs & speakers

VIP, government and/or dignitaries

Site and equipment

Schools

Food/Beverages for Volunteers

Escort and Procession

Many of these will overlap and that is OK. Do NOT try to be an individual superhero, get help, delegate and keep your eyes on the critical path.

Make friends with the City/Town as soon as possible, include them in your process so there are no last minute surprises. Ask for a Proclamation and be ready to send them a sample. It is appropriate to have a representative present at the meeting where they sign it, to accept it.

Promotion, the goal of promotion is to make sure the veterans and their families, or surviving members of those who have already died, are aware of the event. They need to feel welcome reaching out to attend your event, even participate or volunteer. The goal is to include your community, recognize the Vietnam veterans now, because they didn't get it then.

We struggled early on with what to call it because *The Moving Wall* was not something many people knew about. In the beginning we called it *The Moving Wall Vietnam*

Veterans Memorial, after people knew what it was, we shortened it to *The Moving Wall Newport*. If you plan to host it more than once you can add the date after the location.

Wait to contact the press until you have a press schedule, you do not want to peak too early.

Create and maintain a website. Often a local business may be veteran owned or affiliated, or a website/marketing company may be willing to donate their services to set up a website. We had a local designer create a Wordpress site, it was less than \$100 for the domain, hosting and work, because of their donation. Also create a facebook page and be willing to spend some promotional money “boosting” posts and events to help spread the word. Our website is still up and evolved after the event, www.movingwallnewport.org

Have a Power Point presentation ready as well as an “Old School” talk with handouts (and sign ups for volunteers) about your intended project to share with City Officials, VFW, American Legions, Lions, K of C, Rotary, VVA, DAV, Elks, Mobile Vets Center, Viking Riders, Rolling Thunder, Nam Knights, Patriot Guard Riders, Chamber of Commerce, Gold Star Mothers, Military Officers of America Association and local places of worship. Get the word out early and often.

It is likely that people will offer the time and talent to the event from one or more of these groups.

Send out invitations to all VVAs, DAV, American Legions, V.F.W.s, Rolling Thunder, Viking Riders, Patriot Guard Riders and as many organizations you can invite who have members that served in Vietnam. Even after you have done a presentation, protocol of official invites is VERY IMPORTANT.

Write letters to all the neighbors of where *The Moving Wall* will be to keep them in the loop, invite them to join you for some or all of the events.

Send out invitations to Governor, Lt. Gov., Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, VA Director, Rep and Senators for US and State as well as local officials. Keep track of who plans to attend and have the emcee on the day they speak mention them in opening remarks. Protocol is also important here.

See if your local newspaper has done stories on local Vietnam vets before, perhaps they have contacts or stories that can be rerun leading up to TMW’s arrival.

Identify Vietnam veterans or their families who would feel comfortable doing radio and television interviews. Then schedule the interviews.

Potential content for the program book include schedule of event (see ceremonies handbook for more details), speaker profiles and pictures and resources for veterans in your area.

It's hard to know how many visitors you will have. Do the best you can with estimates.

Work on design of t-shirts and hats. We ran out because we had so many volunteers! We knew we would need over 200 volunteers to cover the 100 plus hours TMW would be displayed. In the end we had close to 340 volunteers.

Volunteers

Begin an interest list for volunteers. Send out periodic communications. Select early the software you will use to organize the volunteer shifts. Understand how it works and it will save you time and frustration.

Make sure there is a consistent volunteer scheduling and check in process. We had access to the Elks Lodge basement right next door, all volunteers checked in, met other volunteers, and felt part of a special group, plus there was always food and hot coffee available!

If people could not attend volunteer training, how will you get the word to them? Who is training them each shift?

If volunteers do not show up for a shift, who covers it?

Make someone responsible for making sure the walkie talkies are charged for each day.

Orientation and Training.

Offer volunteers a detailed overview of the event, we even created a customized volunteer handbook. Volunteers hate to have nothing to do, again, respect everyone's time. Go over the schedule, answer questions to the best of your ability. Also let them know there WILL BE A LOT OF LEARNING AS WE GO.

A few key people on site may want to have info cards on lanyards with important numbers for volunteers and key participants.

Ceremony Overview

Invite a local theater director, school drama teacher, or others with experience organizing and directing events like this, it will become invaluable to have someone “directing” the activities on the days you have ceremonies.(See ceremonies handbook).

Walk through the program as well as the space for regular and rain date events. If candlelight is involved be aware that bringing it indoors can cause problems for your event. You should check in with all the speakers, musicians and clergy, sound, lights, and construction people. Go over events in detail.

Parking & Seating

Send out information about parking or anything specific about your location or event to your speakers, musicians, clergy, volunteers and invited special guests.

If you have high ranking dignitaries, Generals, Governors, Senators and the like, they are used to having people provide direction and not be spun around in circles. Have one person responsible for the VIPs and dignitaries. Reserved parking and reserved seats can be helpful.

Hosting the Drivers

Have a welcome to the area packet for them, so when they have some time off they can explore the area. Good restaurants, places to go and things to do.

The Moving Wall Arrival

The Wall actually arrived the night before which we believe is standard practice so TMW personnel can scope out the site and know in advance of the procession what to expect. The truck that pulls The Wall is wider than typically small town street. FYI- This can limit the driver’s ability to get around. When unloading the Wall it is important to have that section of the street blocked off to make sure The Wall, staff and volunteers are safe. This may mean hiring or asking the city or town for a police detail for that timeframe of 3-4 hours.

Procession for *The Moving Wall Public Arrival*

We did a smaller procession in part due to the requests and concerns of the local Police Department and our location is a tourist spot. The police limited the number of veteran motorcycles in the procession to 4 per group close to the arrival, which was very upsetting to the groups. Each Police Department in our state sent 2 motorcycle officers

to participate in the procession. If you are not a motorcycle person you need to have one in charge of that.

Everything here is something we learned. We LOVED our experience and so did our community. We share these documents with you in hopes that you can make The MOving Wall's visit to your community the best it can be. We wish you luck and knowledge, you may need a bit of both!

Overview of our schedule of events:

Thursday arrival and blessing

Morning motorcycle and vehicle procession arrives at site
School band, veterans groups, flag holders, police color guard
Construction of the Wall, panels carried to the already built foundation by volunteers

Thursday Evening, Candlelight Vigil

XXX

Friday, Opening Ceremony in the morning

XXX

Friday Evening, Reading of the Names and “Taps”

Saturday, Afternoon Ceremony

with Local veterans, dignitaries and officials

XXX

Saturday Evening, Reading of the Names “Taps”

Sunday, Afternoon Ceremony

XXX

Sunday Evening, Reading of the Names “Taps”

Monday Morning, Closing Ceremony

Disassembly by volunteers, led by *Moving Wall* staff-drivers

Ship non-perishable items left at the Wall to: Vietnam Combat Veterans, Ltd., The Moving Wall, P.O. Box 715, White Pine, MI 49971

Outline of the Volunteer Handbook from our event

Thank you for volunteering your time and energy to help make the display a memorable, meaningful, and a well run event!

Maintaining a dignified and respectful atmosphere at *The Moving Wall* is of the utmost importance. Neither organizers nor any vendors may use the time or location for profit.

The Inscription from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

“In honor of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. The names of those who gave their lives and of those who remain missing are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.”Our nation honors the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of its Vietnam Veterans. This Memorial was built with private contributions from the American people. November 11, 1982”

A Little History...

The Moving Wall, a half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., was inspired by one soldier's visit for the dedication of the original in 1982. John Devitt, a former helicopter door gunner and Army veteran who served during the Vietnam War, was changed by his experience at the Memorial. He wanted to share that with others across the country who did not have the means to make the trip to the nation's capital to see it with their own eyes. With the help of friends, family, and fellow veterans, Devitt spent two years conceptualizing, financing, and creating *The Moving Wall*. Today, the monument has been touring for 34 years and has been to more than 1,000 communities across the United States. Devitt, who is dedicated to sharing his vision, wants *The Moving Wall* to be about honoring and remembering the individuals who died serving this country.

The _____ Visit

Bringing *The Moving Wall Vietnam Veterans Memorial* to _____ in 20__ is a community effort to honor the many veterans in _____ and surrounding areas. *The Moving Wall (TMW)* was brought here for every single Vietnam vet whose story went untold and unnamed for too long. It is hoped that the presence of *The Moving Wall* can bring healing, with acknowledgement that it can never replace the sacrifices made or loss of life. Bringing *The Moving Wall* here is a way for this

community to say thank you to all Vietnam veterans—for enduring pandemonium, horror, and adversity and for reveling in moments of beauty, kinship, and harmony.

Volunteer Information

Assembly/Disassembly of The Moving Wall

The Moving Wall is intended to be a community-wide project. Prior to the installation, *TMW* personnel will gather a work crew together and brief volunteers on the best practices for assembly. The tools necessary to assemble the structure are brought with *TMW* itself.

With a minimum of ten volunteers, the assembly of *TMW* should take three hours. *TMW* has been touring the country for more than three decades and will continue to tour after the installation in Newport. Although the panels are lightweight, each panel must be transported by two people, and great care should be taken in handling each and every item. Though it may be tempting to carry a panel by yourself, it is NOT ALLOWED. This makes it easier on each volunteer and ensures the panels are not dropped or hit against obstacles while being carried.

Before *TMW's* arrival, a simple, level foundation of 2x4 lumber boards will be constructed. After the panels are in place, the foundation will be draped with cloth so that it is not visible from the front.

Ideally, the same individuals who assemble it will help with disassembly. Disassembly takes an hour and a half.

Inclement Weather

If severe weather such as high winds, hail, snow, etc. is imminent, the panels will be taken out of the foundation and placed in the trailer to keep them safe after *TMW* personnel makes the decision. Temporary removal will take 30 minutes with a crew of eight people. If this action is necessary, active (current shift and on deck) volunteers will be notified.

Maintenance and Groundskeeping

Volunteers are responsible for keeping the park and area around *TMW* free of litter. Occasionally, the panels may need to be cleaned. Volunteers may assist with cleaning after obtaining instructions from *TMW* personnel. It is ESSENTIAL that nothing be done

to the panels unless specific instructions are given by *TMW* staff. Only the cleaning supplies brought with *TMW* or approved by the *TMW* personnel may be used to clean it. If *The Moving Wall* gets wet from rain, dew, etc., let it air dry. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DRY IT!

Panel and Line Locations on *TMW*

The Moving Wall tells a story of the day-to-day personal tragedy of war, yet the wrap-around effects provides a closure, like a wound that is closed and healing. Names are arranged in chronological order by date of casualty (starting in 1959) or Missing in Action, beginning at the center of the Wall. Panels are labeled as “east” (right of center) or “west” (left of center). With the exception of the two center panels (1 East and 1 West), the bottom of each panel is demarcated with a number, from 2 to 70, and an “E” or “W” noting east or west.

Names begin at the top of panel 1E, continue down that panel, and continue on at the top of each successive panel, moving out toward panel 70E. They then wrap around to continue at 70W – the outermost panel on the left side of the Memorial – and move inward toward the center, finishing at 1W.

Within a given day, names are arranged alphabetically. Their location can be found in the Directory of Names (as discussed in the next section). On the edge of every other panel, white dots are placed every 20 lines, making it easier to find a specific line. For example, if you were looking for a name on line 44, you’d start at the top of the appropriate panel and count down two dots; the name will be located 4 lines below that second dot. NB: Several names have been added since the Wall was carved in 1982. Those names were placed as close to the correct position as possible.

Directory of Names

The Directory of Names of the veterans lost is arranged in alphabetical order. Each name and the information associated with it take up one line, which includes rank, branch of service, date of birth, date of casualty, city and state, and panel and line number; MIA is noted with an asterisk (“*”). Care should be taken with the Directories as they are NO LONGER BEING PUBLISHED.

- If you are uncertain about the spelling of a name, ask the interested party. There are many variations with name spellings. If a person doesn’t recall or know the spelling, ask your fellow volunteers for ideas on spelling variations.

- Several common names like “John Smith” will have multiple listings. To determine the correct listing, use middle initials, branch of service, or date of birth or casualty if information is available.
- When searching *TMW* for a name, be sure you are looking at BOTH the correct panel and line. Use a ruler or piece of paper to assist you. It may be challenging at first, but your eyes will eventually adjust the task.
- Names with two capital letters (e.g., MacGregor) may be located at the end of the entries under an alphabetical listing.
- Please note and pass along any discrepancies, with suitable contact information, to the Driver/Caretaker.
- The Directory of Names is also searchable by date of casualty.
- Please note that city and state listed in the directory constitute Home of Record, not necessarily place of birth or residence.
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Name Rubbings

Name rubbings are **ONLY** permitted using lumber crayons, which will be available at the information table in the Fallen Heroes tent. Absolutely **NO pointed pencils or pens** are to be used. Unless a child has a relative on *The Moving Wall*, students and children are not permitted to take rubbings as it creates additional wear and tear on the panels, which should be avoided. If you are one of the volunteers assisting with rubbings, please practice so you can assist people who may have difficulties.

Good results are obtained by holding the piece of crayon on the ends and rubbing the paper over the name; rub back and forth **LIGHTLY**, until the name begins to appear.

Rubbing Tips (good idea to print out the following on half sheets of paper)

Rubbing Pointers

- 1) **HOLD PAPER FIRMLY** against the name you would like to capture. If the paper moves the name will be blurred, a second set of hands is recommended (volunteers are available to assist).
- 2) Hold crayon vertically and use side of crayon for rubbing (not the tip of the crayon). Rub with medium pressure.
- 3) Please return crayon to information tent.

Artifacts Left at *The Moving Wall*

Frequently, visitors to *TMW* leave letters, poems, photographs, etc. Items may be pinned to the cloth, **NEVER** taped to *TMW*. The items should be placed in plastic bags to help keep them dry. Before disassembly, volunteers need to collect all non-perishable artifacts and place them in boxes. *TMW* Planning Committee will make certain the Vietnam Combat Veterans, Ltd. receive the artifacts so they may preserve those items.

***The Moving Wall* Hours**

The Moving Wall will be open for viewing for a 24-hour period each day of the display, from ____ to ____, from the completion of assembly to commencement of disassembly. *TMW* will be lit and staffed at all times.

Security

Volunteers on overnight shifts will be provided with a means of communication with local law enforcement and first-aid personnel.

Fallen Heroes Tent/Information Table

Items permitted on the information table are the Directory of Names, pads for writing down information, name rubbing paper/forms, crayons for rubbings, a list of names of local veterans, and tissues. No literature or materials promoting organizations that seek contributions are allowed within 100 yards of *TMW*. A volunteer information book will also be available here for volunteer reference.

Volunteer Roles

For each hour that *The Moving Wall* is in Newport, there must be a minimum of five volunteers working. During peak periods, assembly, disassembly, and ceremonies, more volunteers will be required. We will also need a list of 10 or so volunteers for an on-call list in case we are hit with a higher number of visitors.

We need two people to stand watch over *The Moving Wall* at all times to ensure its safety. These volunteers will be posted at the entrance and exit, which will be clearly marked. The individuals are to look for signs of trouble but to call for backup from the local police department if necessary. Each Watch person needs a walkie-talkie; please make sure at the beginning of your shift that the device is stationed on the same channel as the other volunteers on your shift.

We need two people to work together in the Fallen Heroes/Information Tent. One will be stationed at the Directory of Names to look up names for visitors and write them down. (This is an excellent job for a volunteer with mobility issues.) The second person will escort the visitor to the location on *The Moving Wall*, bringing the name and location as well as rubbing papers and a lumber crayon. Assist with the rubbing as needed. Each Fallen Hero Attendant needs a walkie-talkie; please make sure at the beginning of your shift that the device is tuned to the same channel as the other volunteers on your shift.

The fifth person is a Rover, meaning they travel from place to place making sure the park is tidy and providing help wherever it is needed. The Rover needs a walkie-talkie; again, please make sure at the beginning of the shift that device is turned to the same channel as other volunteers' walkie-talkies.

Communications

There will be a Volunteer Shift Leader available on site should any questions or problems come up during your shift. There will also be walkie-talkies available for active volunteers to communicate with one another. Please make sure we have your contact information so we can notify you of any circumstances that may impact your shift.

Wheelchairs

At least two wheelchairs will be available on-site for the duration of the installation. We hope to have an oversized chair for visitors as well as standard-sized chairs.

First Aid Tent & EMS

First Responders are available to any visitors who require such services. Please inform your Volunteer Shift Leader if there is an emergency.

Mental Health Services

There will be a Department of Veterans Affairs mobile counseling center located on the side of the park should any veteran visitors need additional mental health support.

Restroom Facilities

There are portable toilets available for visitors and volunteers near the park.

Donations

Contributions to the donation box will remain under lock and key for the duration, TMW staff has the key.

Frequently Asked Questions

What dates does the Wall cover?

July 8, 1959 – May 15, 1975

What are the dimensions of the Wall?

253 feet in overall length; each side of the Wall is 126.5 feet. At the tallest point the Wall is 6 feet high.

Which wall is East, and which is West?

Facing the Wall, the East wall is to the right and West is to the left.

How many names are on the Wall?

As of January 1, 2018 there were 58,318 names listed on the Memorial. Approximately 1,300 are still unaccounted for POWs and MIAs.

How many women are listed on the Wall?

Eight women are listed; seven were U.S. Army nurses and one was an Air Force nurse.

IT IS GOOD TO HAVE AN OVERHEAD RENDERING WITH LAYOUT OF ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE DISPLAY- THE WALL, SIDEWALKS, TENTS, PARKING, BATHROOMS, ETC. FOR PRESENTATIONS TO THE PUBLIC AND FOR VOLUNTEERS. IF YOU ARE ABLE TO PUT UP A WEBSITE INCLUDE THAT IS YOUR HANDBOOK AND PRESENTATION. This was the