

Okaloosa County News Release 1

6/17/2010

Heritage Museum of NWF Director Michelle Severino, mseverino@co.okaloosa.fl.us,
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Once in a Lifetime Event: Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall & Traveling Museum Father's Day Weekend, June 17- 20

Honor a soldier and your father with some time spent at the **Wall That Heals**, presented by the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida as part of the 75th Anniversary of Eglin Air Force Base. The **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and Traveling Museum** will be escorted into Okaloosa County, and will be a *free* visitor exhibit **June 17 through 20**, at the C.H. "Bull" Rigdon **Fairgrounds**. Visitation is **open 24 hours daily**, with many exciting details planned as part of this event – whether a visitor, an educator, a sponsor or a volunteer, please visit www.veteranswallokaloosa.com.

"With everyone's help, we are going to make it a special, far-reaching and **historical event** for Okaloosa County," says Museum Director Michelle Severino. Visitors are encouraged to educate themselves before they go so make the visit most educational and worthwhile, as well as be familiar with etiquette when experiencing this extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime event. Events scheduled include a Wall Escort into Okaloosa County, daily scheduled events, as well as exhibits and lectures. **Details follow:**

Tuesday, June 15, 9 AM, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and Traveling Museum is escorted into Okaloosa County through DeFuniak, Freeport, Niceville and Fort Walton Beach, to its final destination at the Fairgrounds; refreshments follow at Heritage Cycles. (Contact Sam Smith for more information, **850-217-9371**.)

Wednesday, June 16, 4 PM Opening Ceremonies

Honored Guests: Medal of Honor Recipient Col. George "Bud" Day, Rev. Ausley of the Niceville United Methodist Church (invocation), Fort Walton Beach Mayor Anderson, Okaloosa County Commission Chairman Wayne Harris, and Leo Day, Olive Baptist Church will sing the National Anthem. **Each Day there will be a Reading of the Names on the Wall.**

Friday, June 18, 8:30 PM – Candlelight Ceremony and Reading of the Okaloosa County names, sponsored by the Eglin Officers Spouse Club.

Saturday, June 19, 11 AM – Art History Professor Laura Stevens, NWF State College, will give a lecture on Maya Ling Lin – Artist of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

1PM – Charles Merkel, PhD., **People and Places of Vietnam Lecture**, a presentation of slides, stories and memorabilia illustrating how the people of South Vietnam carried on their daily lives during a time of danger, hardship and turmoil.

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Sunday, June 20, 9 AM - Father's Day Rose Remembrance Ceremony – Father's Day is a special day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Every year volunteers join sons and daughters of those whose names are inscribed on The Wall and gather in the early morning to affix long-stemmed roses with messages of love and honor, sent from across the country to those lost in the war. Red roses represent those killed in action in Vietnam and yellow roses are for those who remain missing. The white roses symbolize those who have died during America's most recent conflicts. As part of the ceremony each message is read aloud and each rose is touched to the loved one's name on The Wall before finally being placed at the base of the Memorial.

1 PM Lecture: Receiving Father's Medal of Honor, by Captain Mark Meadows

2 PM Closing Ceremonies with special guest veteran, Maj. Gen. Richard Comer (ret.)

Educational opportunities include:

- Many more lectures are being scheduled, to include POWs.
- Indoor exhibits including collections from the Vietnam Archives at Texas Tech University will be on view from 8 am – 9 pm daily.
- An educational kiosk just for the wall; how the design was selected; American sentiment for the most-visited monument in the US; how the names are arranged; etiquette surrounding visitation; Vietnam Veterans are being interviewed by High School Students for the Museum archive. Veterans will also be speaking to classes.
- School curriculum guides are available for before/after school field trips to the Wall.

Visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and Traveling Museum is a time for reflection and respect for veterans listed on the wall, as well as the visitors who lost friends and family members during this war. **Memorial Etiquette** is requested when visiting and includes the following restrictions:

1. Do not eat at the Memorial, do not litter and do not run.
2. Speak in a quiet voice.
3. The Memorial is designed to get very close to the names on the wall. Feel free to touch; however children should not sit or climb on the wall itself.

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Before you Visit the Wall:

Read: A Wall of Names, by Judy Donnelley

*Watch: "To Heal a Nation," story of Jan
Scruggs & efforts to build the Vietnam
Veterans Memorial.*

Log onto: www.vvmf.org
www.dav.org