Welcome to National Mall and Memorial Parks.

Winter is a great time to experience your national park. Our ranger staff presents interpretive programs throughout the park including park-wide walking tours and shorter detailed programs of each memorial.

To learn more about the future of the National Mall, visit the National Mall Plan website (www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan) to read current alternatives, express ideas, and follow our progress.

Page through this newspaper to find out more about the many fascinating ranger programs offered throughout the park. Our park staff and volunteers will be glad to answer any of your questions. Thanks for visiting, and have a wonderful experience at National Mall and Memorial Parks.

Superintendent John Piltzecker

“YOU NO FIGHT, WE NO FIGHT”

By Ranger Heidi Dietze

O ye who read this truthful rime
From Flanders, kneel and say:
God speed the time when every day
Shall be as Christmas Day.
-Frederick Niven

World War One was a war fought mainly in the trenches, poorly constructed mazes hastily cut through the landscape, separated from the opposing side by an ammunition-riddled swath of land called “No Man’s Land.”

On Christmas Eve, 1914, British soldiers, entrenched in Belgium, noticed a shimmering light coming from the nearby enemy German trench. They soon realized it was candlelight from Christmas trees the Germans had placed along the top of their trench. The British soldiers were told not to fire or leave the trench in case it was a trick. In the quiet of the night they began to hear the sound of singing and though they may not have understood the language they did recognize the tunes and realized the Germans were singing Christmas carols. The British soldiers joined in with carols of their own. A few soldiers from both sides ventured out into No Man’s Land, hesitantly shook hands and negotiated a truce: there would be no fighting on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Christmas Day dawned clear and bright and the soldiers emerged from their trenches to wish each other a happy Christmas and bury their respective dead. Many bodies had been lying in No Man’s Land for months without the benefit of a proper burial due to the heavy fighting. After the burials the festivities began. Soldiers came together and exchanged food items, newspapers, addresses; they showed off pictures of their families back home; soccer balls were produced and “kick-abouts” were played. The “enemy” was not the barbarian they had been led to believe by the press and their commanders but soldiers just like them, experiencing the same isolation, stress and despair.

This Christmas “truce” occurred up and down the front line, but only happened in 1914. Other attempts in following years largely ended in failure. Many see it as a miracle that it happened at all. A German soldier wrote in his diary, “How marvelously wonderful, yet how strange it was…. Christmas, the celebration of Love, managed to bring mortal enemies together as friends for a time.”

Illustration of Christmas Truce of 1914.

“Peace on Earth in the new year.”

German and British troops.

German soldiers decorating a Christmas tree.

German and British troops.

Illustration of Christmas Truce of 1914.

- cigarette: A Journey of Healing

Winter Calendar of Ranger Led Programs

Ranger Article: Vietnam Memorial Artifacts

Washington Monument Tickets
Eastern National
Tourmobile
Old Post Office Tower NHS Tours and Presentations
NPS Organic Act
Daily Ranger Programs

Winter 2009-2010, Volume 3 Issue 2

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<td>Friday, December 11</td>
<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 12</td>
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<td>The Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.</td>
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<td>Friday, January 15</td>
<td>1 p.m. - 2 p.m.</td>
<td>African Americans during the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidency</td>
<td>Memorial. Contact Kawan Allen at 202-426-6841 for more information.</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 20</td>
<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas</td>
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<td>Friday, February 26</td>
<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
<td>The Election of 1800</td>
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<td>Friday, February 5</td>
<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
<td>The Forgotten Founding Father</td>
<td>Memorial. Contact Natalie Grime at 202-426-6841 for more information.</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 27</td>
<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
<td>A Grand Esplanade: L'Enfant and Washington Envision a Federal City</td>
<td>Memorial. Contact Michael T. Kelly at 202-359-2662 for more information.</td>
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<td>Saturday, January 10</td>
<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
<td>The Battle of Monte Cassino</td>
<td>Memorial. Contact Don Stanko at 240-375-4857 for more information.</td>
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<td>Sunday, January 13</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 28</td>
<td>1 p.m. - 2 p.m.</td>
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<td>5 p.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Saturday, January 3</td>
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Vietnam Memorial Artifacts – A Journey of Healing

By Ranger Lee Vogtman

The ‘winter of our discontent’ might well describe this nation’s collective consciousness during, and for a lengthy time following the Vietnam War. An uncertain political policy had delivered hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the depths of a Southeast Asian jungle to battle a relentless and unyielding enemy. Many never returned, and those fortunate enough to do so arrived home not to fanfare and accolades, but to the embittered reprisals of an angry nation.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. was established to develop the concept of a memorial for the nation to recognize and honor the spirit and sacrifice of all Vietnam veterans. On November 13, 1982, their dream was realized, when the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated, paving the way for this country to provide its heroes a tangible symbol of recognition, respect, and reconciliation.

The memorial currently has 58,261 names inscribed on its reflective black granite panels. For many visitors, the memorial offers a place to connect with loved ones, a sense of healing, and, most importantly, an opportunity for closure. Almost immediately following its dedication, items began appearing at the base of the memorial, as friends, relatives, and even strangers began leaving flowers, personal items, tokens of esteem, and other symbols of their appreciation and recognition. By 1984 when the National Park Service became the steward of the memorial, the social phenomenon of leaving objects at the memorial was well established. Over 500 items were left during the first two years, and the number began to grow exponentially.

Quite often park staff experience their own moments of connection to the memorial, either through visitors, or the objects they leave behind. Ranger Kristel Nelson recalled one of her more emotional experiences while collecting artifacts at the memorial recently. “Inside a plastic bag I found a photograph and a sonogram. The photo was of a husband and wife with four children, and handwritten on the back of the sonogram was a simple message: ‘Dear Dad, you’re going to be a grandfather again! Love, your daughter.’ I remember feeling moved by the thought that the names on the wall aren’t just names; they’re real people, with loved ones who still reach out to make that connection.”

Another incident remembered by Ranger Lowell Fry involved finding a simple note left at the base of a panel that read, “William, I forgive you – your daughter.” Ranger Fry commented, “We don’t know what the circumstances might have been, but in this case the memorial seemed to bring a measure of closure to this woman, as it does for countless others.”

National Park Service staff collects the artifacts, and deliver them to the National Park Service Museum Resource Center (MRCE), where specialists have created a museum collection for safekeeping, storage, and further study. Over one million artifacts are acquired and cared for by the center. Their collections include historical, archeological, archival, ethnographical, biological, geological, and paleontological materials. The program is responsible for the acquisition, care and preservation of museum objects that are held in trust for the public, and its mission is to provide guidance and assistance on caring for museum objects, related studies and exhibits in order to preserve the cultural and natural objects for eternity.

Recently, a group of National Park Service staff visited the MRCE facility, where they were introduced to Site Manager Tyra Walker, and Duery Felton, Curator of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection. The tour covered the route taken by every item collected at the memorial, beginning with the receiving dock. All artifacts are separated there, and moved to temporary environmentally controlled rooms, depending on whether the objects are dry or wet. Damp items are carefully dried and treated with the intent of retaining as much of the original form as possible. Assemblages (several items left as a single artifact) are kept intact, and all items are then moved to the cataloging stage.

Hundreds of thousands of items have been collected; some as small as a favorite piece of candy, or as large as a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Perhaps one of the more poignant stories of objects left at the wall is that of Peter Pace, retired four-star general in the United States Marine Corps who served as the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After his retirement ceremony, Pace visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial where he left several handwritten notes dated October 1, 2007. Each note had a set of his four-star General insignia attached, and read something like this one: “For Mike Witt, USMC These are yours – not mine! With love and respect, your platoon leader, Pete Pace.”

Every artifact collected and delivered to the MRCE facility is accounted for, catalogued and stored, no matter how many identical items have been previously collected. In the cataloguing room, the MRCE staff painstakingly sort through every box of artifacts, identify each one, label them individually, and package for storage. After all the identification, tagging, and cataloguing is finished, the one final task is to find the appropriate home for each artifact amidst the maze of storage. One glance at the enormity of this facility is enough to appreciate the effort put into cataloging. Cabinets, safes, and modern shelving units are lined up as far as the eye can see. Although the MRCE facility is not open to the public, there is a rotating selection of items from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on display at the Smithsonian Museum of American History.

In their new home the artifacts are cared for, and kept for future studies and exhibits. The journey they have made has created a connection between all who come into contact with them. All visitors who leave artifacts at the memorial have different stories and experiences, yet the memorial and artifacts create a common bond between them all – that of a healing process.
**Visiting the Washington Monument**

**Hours of Operation:** 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

All persons who wish to visit the Washington Monument must have a ticket. One person may obtain up to six tickets.

Open daily except July 4 and December 25.

Timed entry tickets are required and may be obtained in two ways:

1. Free, same-day tickets may be picked up at the Washington Monument Lodge, located at the base of the Monument along 15th Street, on a first-come-first-serve basis, the morning of your visit. Monument Lodge opens at 8:30 a.m.

2. Reserved tickets may be obtained in advance by visiting www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777 (for individuals) or 1-877-559-6777 (for large groups). Reserved tickets are often booked 30 days ahead of time. Please plan accordingly. All reserved tickets carry a $1.50 convenience charge.

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**Eastern National**

Want to learn more about National Mall and Memorial Parks? Eastern National, a park partner, operates four bookstores throughout the park. The bookstores are located at:

- **Lincoln Memorial**
  - 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

- **Thomas Jefferson Memorial**
  - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- **Washington Monument Lodge**
  - 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**Tourmobile Sightseeing**

Get ready for the sights and sounds of the Nation’s Capital. Tourmobile Sightseeing’s narrated shuttle tours take you right where you want to go. Buy your tickets from the driver, and enjoy unlimited re-boarding. You choose where to stop, stay as long as you want, then board and ride to another historic location.

202-554-5100  www.tourmobile.com

*Monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*

National Park Service Organic Act
August 25, 1916

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**Old Post Office Tower NHS**

The Old Post Office, built between 1892 and 1899, is home to the Bells of Congress, which were a gift from England on our Nation’s Bicentennial. From the observation deck, located 270 feet above the street level, the visitor can get a spectacular view of our Nation’s Capital.

**Operating Hours**

**Summer: Memorial Day through Labor Day**

- Monday through Saturday
  - 9 a.m. - 7:45 p.m.
  - Sunday and Holidays
  - 10 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.

**Winter: Labor Day through Memorial Day**

- Monday through Saturday
  - 9 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.
  - Sunday 10 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.

202-606-8691  www.nps.gov/opot

**Ranger led walking tours of Pennsylvania Avenue**

**Upon Request - Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.**

Join a park ranger for an interpretive program to learn more about one of Washington, D.C.’s more impressive and fascinating landmarks, the Old Post Office Tower. Tours are by request. Call 202-606-8691 for more information.

**Daily Ranger Programs**

- World War II Memorial
- Lincoln Memorial
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Korean War Veterans Memorial
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Scheduled Programs are presented on the hour from 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.

**Additional programs on request.**