



Vietnam War Memorial In Florida

From 1955 to 1975, South Vietnam was the battlefield where the Free World made a stand against the violent assaults of the entire Communist Pact. The soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam (AFRVN) along with the soldiers from the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, The Philippines, and Thailand, had fought bravely in the Vietnam War. There were untold heroism and sacrifices made by these soldiers of the AFRVN, the U.S., and the Allied Forces. More than 58,000 American soldiers gave the ultimate sacrifice with their lives and more than 1,800 still are listed as missing in action. By the end of the war, more than 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers had died, more than 1.5 million were wounded, and 200,000 ended up in hard labor camps for many years after the war had ended.

The United States of America have honored the sacrifices of our soldiers in the Nation's most sacred grounds and in the homelands of Americans across the country.

Today, in Orlando, the center of the Great State of Florida, the Vietnamese Americans of Florida are joining hands with all Vietnam War veterans to build a great memorial. This memorial will serve as a place to remember, to thank, and to honor all the soldiers of the Free World who fought and made sacrifices during the Vietnam War. Together, we will build a memorial to help our children and grandchildren, and the future generations of proud Floridians to remember an emotional and heroic chapter of the history of the United States of America.

The Proposal

The Memorial will be spearheaded by the Vietnamese-American Memorial Committee in Florida, VAMCIF, a non-profit organization founded and comprised of the Vietnamese American communities and Vietnamese Veterans associations across the state. In the past three years, various communities and veterans groups have worked closely with the VAMCIF to raise funds and design the Memorial.

From the day of inception, Orlando was chosen as the city for the Memorial due to its strategically centralized location, with the largest Vietnamese community in the state, and being known as a world-renowned tourist attraction. The Memorial's location will be easily accessible to the veterans and residents of the state. In addition, the Memorial will be an important and meaningful historical and cultural landmark for national and international visitors.

With the estimated budget of \$400,000 and the set goals and purposes, the committee is proposing to erect two ten-foot tall bronze statues of an American soldier and a South Vietnamese soldier fighting side by side. The bronze statues will stand on a six-foot high concrete and black granite podium bearing the national flags of the allied countries that contributed soldiers who served during the war. In order to invoke sincere emotions of visitors while respecting the solemnity of the monument, visitors will be able to walk up and touch the soldiers from a handicap accessible ramp. Along the ramp is flanked by an eight-foot high granite wall with historical inscriptions and combat images imprinted on the granite.



The VAMCIF Memorial will also serve as an intimate gathering place for the surviving veterans and their family all year round and a public ceremonial place during national holidays. This requires the Memorial to be set in a park-like setting with well-designed hardscape and landscape that nestles between a natural park and a natural lake.

The committee has proposed two phases for the construction of the Memorial, which are described below.

Phase 1. After the committee has reached its goal of \$250,000, and the site has been selected, the committee will commence casting of the bronze statues and construction of the granite podium. Following the erection of the statues on the podium and completion of other minor site works, the Memorial will be opened for its first commencement ceremony. This will allow visitors to immediately visit and celebrate the Memorial.

Phase 2. With the continuing efforts of fundraising and supports, the committee will raise an additional \$150,000. This fund will allow completion of the hardscape, landscape and other accessory structures of the Memorial.

After the entire project has been completed, the committee will set aside \$20,000 to provide security and maintenance.

With the aforementioned design criteria and limited budget, it is essential that the Memorial should be part of the city's park system where built facilities nearby will be available to the visitors to the Memorial. It is also more fitting and symbolic to place the VAMCIF Memorial near or within a veteran's park in the Orlando vicinity so that all veterans and visitors can visit it with convenience.

Currently, the VAMCIF is fast-tracking the fundraising process through various venues. The process has been slow and difficult at times due to the difficult economic environment nationwide. The committee has been showcasing the seven-foot tall temporary design of the actual statues during its public and fundraising appearances. The reception to this sculpture and design has been very receptive, emotional, and heartwarming. However, to achieve the next milestone, the VAMCIF's main goal is to select and receive grants for the land with appropriate characteristics that fit the scope of the Memorial. The committee's goal is to accomplish this first milestone in 2011.

With the hard work and efforts of the committee's members and the general public, American veterans groups, Vietnamese communities and veterans, and most important of all, with the blessings of the spirits of those whom Memorial is to honor and remember, the Vietnam War Memorial in Florida will soon become a reality.