



Bridges

Lessons of Vietnam



On this 20th Anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the *Bridges* staff would like to honor those who gave service, and often, the ultimate sacrifice, in hopes that others would be fortunate enough to experience the freedoms that we have in the United States of America.



Meeting the Challenge

By Rebecca Schley

The *Lessons of Vietnam* classes of 2002-2003 would like to introduce to you the fourth volume of our newsletter, *Bridges*. As *Bridges* evolves, we will continue to provide the same thought-provoking articles by our *Lessons of Vietnam* students and insights from Vietnam veterans and others who experienced the Vietnam Era. This year we will include more interviews and articles relating to current world events, thus adding new dimensions to our newsletter.

We greatly appreciate all who support our program. With the enthusiastic students participating in *LOV* this year, the *Bridges* staff looks forward to meeting the high standards set by the students who have come before us!

Eyes On Our Links

By Susan Woodson

As students in Ms. Poling's *Lessons of Vietnam* class, we are beginning a new friendship with Vietnam veterans, Army nurses, Vietnamese refugees, current military officers, and others. *LOV* students have the unique opportunity to communicate with a wide variety of men and women who played important roles during the Vietnam Era. Our link program has touched the lives of many students, as well as the links themselves. When I asked certain links what this program has meant to them, they offered the following thoughtful responses:

"It has meant an opportunity to go back and rethink the war and my associated experiences from a perspective that is thirty years more mature, and hopefully wiser." —Charles Sapp

"The LOV student links have forced me to remember things that had laid dormant for many years."

Sometimes the memories are not always pleasant, but it's good to recall both the good and bad."—Bob Gray

"The program has been a chance to present another side to some of the common mistaken stereotypes portrayed by the media." —Phil Price

"Giving good answers to my links requires some deep thought and research, and in that process, I learned more about myself and about Vietnam." —Dan Sheehan

"It helped me refocus on some of the key elements of that unique war, and appreciate even more the brilliance of Admiral Zumwalt's strategy, and dynamic leadership." —Vice Admiral Emmett Tidd

"What motivates me the most is the idea that maybe I could inspire some young people the way Ms. Poling inspired me."

—2nd Lt. Sean Keenan, MHS Class of '92

"Not only has it given me a new respect, and faith, in the youth of our nation, but it has helped me reflect on a period of my youth in a new light."—June Eldridge

Lt. Col. Jim Zumwalt compared our link program to two empty cups waiting to be filled with knowledge. With one cup for his student links and one for himself, he shared that his cup is always spilling over "with knowledge" that he gains from the *LOV* class. Hopefully, at the end of this year, both the links' and the students' cups will be overflowing with new wisdom that will last us all a lifetime.



Eric Robson, Kyle Kusterer & Mr. Dan Sheehan



Ms. Lee Wilson & Paige Knickerbocker

Unity: A Lesson Learned From Dr. Smith

By Bev Loudon and Crystal Smith

Has an inspiring classroom speaker ever had a profound impact on you? Ms. Poling's *Lessons of Vietnam* students were exposed to such an experience when Vietnam veteran, Dr. William Smith, visited us on September 13, 2002. In the weeks that have followed, *LOV* students are still discussing the lessons learned from this amazing man.

Dr. Smith questioned the purpose of the War. As a nineteen year old of the Baha'i faith, he was a conscientious objector and became a medic. Christy Moore's statement summarized Dr. Smith's role in the War, by stating, "You chose to be a medic, not because you did not want to fight, but because you genuinely wanted to help people."

Udoka Nwaeze chose to discuss Dr. Smith's statement, "There is no glory in war." She went on to say that our leaders do not always put enough thought into the consequences of sending troops to fight in other nations. Dr. Smith encouraged us to use our right to question the government. When asked about war protestors, he replied, "Thank God you're in America and you can express yourself." He even said that many of his friends were active in the protest movement.

The events of September 11th inspired conversation about the unity of our country. Blessing Adeoti commented, "We all call each other brothers, sisters, and family. We gathered around on that day and consoled each other; but after that day, we all went back to our daily lives, forgetting about the importance of that day." Dennis Velez stated, "How do we expect to win the war on terror when we cannot even be at peace with ourselves?" Dr. Smith's parting words sum it all up, "Our saving grace will be to truly unite! This is your challenge, young Americans."



Courtney Moore introduces her uncle, Dr. Bill Smith.

Remembering September 11th, 2001

By Matthew Turrentine

It seemed like something out of a movie, but it was so real...You can only imagine what it was like for the people up there...One year ago, America was struck with one of the most horrific tragedies that has ever hit our nation. In only a few moments time, lives were lost, dreams were shattered and time seemed to stop. Some parents who left their homes and kissed their family goodbye did not realize that they would not come home. Little boys and girls who believed that their father was "Superman" came to realize that Superman was not going to fly to their rescue anymore. America bled. Our very being was wounded, our soul destroyed. But even though we thought our world had ended, our spirits grew strong. Material things took a second seat to something else of more importance. Instead of purchasing tickets for the football game or buying a new CD, Americans stood up and gave money and blood to organizations like the American Red Cross. America became more united.

In a recent survey sent to 250 Millbrook High School students by the *Bridges* staff, it was found that the majority remembered exactly where they were when they heard the news. When I read their responses, I realized that a new chapter had been written in the minds of my generation. What happened in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania had scarred us for life. Yes, we will always remember September 11th; and yes, we know what extreme terrorism is.

"Take in every moment of life and hold onto it," said one Millbrook student. Another stated, "We need to stand together as a nation and stop hating each other...We can lose those we love in the blink of an eye." And finally, a MHS junior commented, "I think it's amazing how the plan for September 11th was supposed to tear down America, but in reality it only united us." We will not be around forever and at any time we could lose what we hold most dear. So, I am challenging you to make the most of every moment you have.

Thinking for Ourselves

By Frida Krebs

The attacks of September 11th, 2001 inspired me to take a class during my senior year that would help me better understand why our country was attacked on that fateful day. The *Lessons of Vietnam* class features an in-depth look into the Vietnam War, as well as America's foreign policy lessons that can be applied to our world today. I was very curious about how former *LOV* students viewed the events of September 11th, and how this class might have helped them understand or deal with America's new global challenges. With Ms. Poling's help, I e-mailed a questionnaire to former Millbrook High School *LOV* students from the past six years. The response was overwhelming—and their answers were most appreciated!

Stephen Miura, class of 2001, came to the realization that he may be called upon to serve his country. "Many kids my age, and even younger, traded their books for guns, and even more tragic, their lives for our freedom. *LOV* has helped me look at life from a different perspective. I try to make the most of my life now!" he emphasized.

Not only are former *LOV* students realizing what precious lives they lead, but as Erika Olson, '02 wrote, "...what soldiers are willing to do for our country." Stephanie Bostic, '01 offered that the *LOV* class allows students an opportunity to talk with people who have "dealt with death and horror...in seeing that people can overcome...this gives us all the faith to carry on."

The most recurring theme was the **importance of understanding and forming our own opinions**. As Carlos Iniguez, '02 stated, "Someone will always disagree with the things you believe, but we must stand strong in what we believe and not allow ourselves to be stepped on." *LOV* gave Jayme Canty, '02 "an understanding of how our government handles international issues." A very important lesson learned by *LOV* students is that one or two media sources do not necessarily give us the whole picture. "After September 11th, I read newspapers, magazines, and history books to try to help me form my own opinions...rather than just listening to TV reports." With this statement, Elizabeth Rawls, '97, hits the bull's eye dead on! If we simply let the TV tell us what is fact or fiction, we can be seriously misled. It is essential that we learn to think for ourselves.

Flags Flown Full Mast on Veterans Day

By Nic Pilley

Pride, honor, and service are thoughts that come to mind when looking at the United States flag. This one symbol, above all others, brings out national pride in all of those who are blessed to know what the flag stands for. Our flag is a representation of all of the brave men and women who have come before us, those who have fought for freedom, those who have fought for liberty, and those who have fought against civil injustices.

On Veterans Day our flag can be seen flown at full mast on houses and in parades. On this holiday, various groups honor the people who have sacrificed for our country. But in my opinion, Veterans Day represents all the men and women who have served in uniform to defend our country, no matter how great or small their jobs were.

Veterans Day has a different history compared to other American holidays. Veterans Day became a national holiday on November 11, 1954 when President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill and pushed for American peace and tranquility. Yet, November 11th was originally known as "Armistice Day" to commemorate the First World War, "the war to end all wars." Veterans Day would still be known as Armistice Day if it were not for the Second World War and other wars that followed. In 1968, during the Vietnam War, Congress changed the official date from November 11th to the fourth Monday in October. Shortly after the Vietnam War was over, Congress realized that the American public felt November 11th was a date of great significance, so in 1978 it changed the official date back to November 11th.

Veterans Day is a day to honor those who have served our country. Yet, Veterans Day is also a day to show our national pride and listen to the stories veterans have to share with us. As the youth of America, we must listen well and learn from those who have come before us, so we will be able to understand the things in life that hold true value. We must learn how to defend these values and live every single day to the fullest.

Honoring Those Who Answered the Call of Duty

By Courtney Moore

This year, our nation is commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It has come to stand for something much more than a wall, but rather as an emblem of remembrance for the 58,229 Americans whose lives were lost due to this very difficult war. Behind each name on The Wall is an individual with a story—a story that reflects bravery, sacrifice and pride.

Over twenty years ago, a veteran by the name of Jan C. Scruggs, envisioned a plan to develop a memorial to honor those who served in the Vietnam War. The Memorial Fund's criteria was as follows: "to be reflective and contemplative in character, harmonize with the surroundings, display the names of all who died or remain missing in Vietnam, and make no political statement about the war." After six years, the United States finally had its blueprint for this great structure. The design of a twenty-one year old Yale University student named Maya Ying Lin was chosen for the Memorial. Lin wanted the Memorial to appear as a 'rift in the earth, emerging from and receding into the earth.' Thus, she envisioned a polished black granite wall that appeared to surface from the ground and then retreat back into it. Etched in The Wall is the name of each soldier who was killed or lost in the War. Starting on the right side at the corner is the date of the first casualty in Vietnam, followed by the names of those who remain missing or were killed. The names continue until The Wall recedes into the ground and then continues to surface to the left.

Each year, millions of people from all over the world visit this memorial to honor the lives of the soldiers whose names appear on The Wall. Some go to remember and reflect upon those who gave their lives out of obligation to their nation. Hearts are touched; emotions are kindled. For twenty years, The Wall has epitomized and captured the essence of these American soldiers who answered the call of duty.

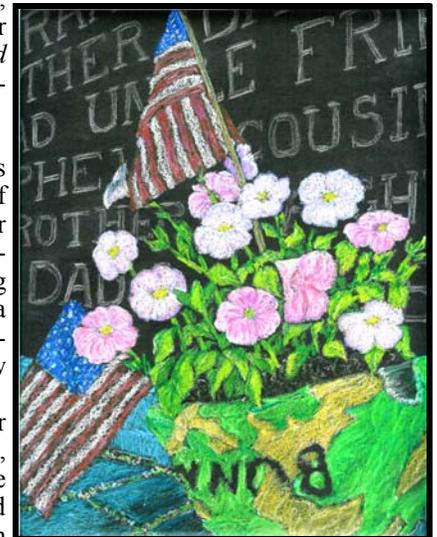
Commemorating The Wall

By Elizabeth Lodge

After the Vietnam War was over, many veterans tried to deal with their traumatic experiences in various ways. Coping with their complex emotions was made less difficult for some when a memorial finally recognizing the sacrifices made by those who fought and died for their country was constructed. Throughout this year the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund has been commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the dedication of Washington, DC's most visited memorial. Several months ago, Mr. Jan Scruggs, Founder and President of the VVMF, invited numerous veterans, journalists, historians, educators, and public servants to submit essays discussing the service, sacrifice and honor that is representative of the Vietnam Era. *The War and the Wall: Service, Sacrifice and Honor* includes personal accounts, as well as testimony to how The Wall has helped America heal.

Mr. Tom Brokaw, Governor Jesse Ventura, Mr. Joseph Galloway, Lieutenant General Harold Moore, and Congressman J.C. Watts are among the remarkable contributors to this special publication. *LOV* teacher Lindy Poling's essay, "Teaching the Lessons of Vietnam," discusses how important the lessons of the Vietnam Era are to understanding our world today. A popular aspect of the *LOV* class is the Community-in-the-Classroom Program, which allows students to learn firsthand about this traumatic time period. Ms. Poling maintains, "Like an original work of art, guest speakers and their personal stories can have a similarly captivating, visceral effect on students." With this in mind, our *LOV* teacher exposes her students to a diverse group of individuals who challenge them to explore new ideas and learn from the mistakes of the past.

The War and the Wall has been sent to every member of Congress, as well as over 250,000 veteran supporters. In addition, a copy of this publication, along with lesson plans, is being sent to 40,000 middle schools and high schools in an attempt to stimulate the desire to spread knowledge of this era throughout classrooms in the United States. By reading and reflecting on the thoughtful essays presented in *The War and the Wall*, Americans can honor those who gave service and made great sacrifices during—and after—the Vietnam War.



By Will Allen

The “Community-in-the-Classroom” website truly does represent what takes place in our *Lessons of Vietnam* class-and beyond. During the initial weeks of the course, students discuss the history of Vietnam as a country. Ms. Poling believes that before one can learn and discuss the lessons of the Vietnam War, it is critical to understand the history and culture of the Vietnamese people. Later in the course, *LOV* students are rewarded with the privilege of hearing from a variety of guest speakers who share their stories of the Vietnam Era.

Every year Ms. Poling takes her *LOV* students to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The section of the website titled, “How the Vietnam War Still Touches Us,” gives the reader an excellent view of what transpires during the three-day field trip to Washington, D.C. Students get a firsthand look at the human cost of the Vietnam War and, as a result, are often deeply touched. The pictures in the website show the connection the students make with The Wall, an experience which they will carry with them forever.

Perhaps one of the *LOV* class’s greatest contributions is the *Bridges* newsletter. While reading several *Bridges* newsletters written over the past three years, I learned that these are very unique. Each quarter students volunteer to write articles on their own time, reflecting their thoughts on the Vietnam experience. While browsing through the articles, one is able to get an idea of how the students view this historical era, and how the Vietnam War affects our lives today.

This well organized website provides a wonderful guide to the *LOV* class and the Community-in-the-Classroom program. As Dennis Velez commented, “It presents, in a simple, but effective manner, what is needed and expected to properly immerse students in the *LOV* experience.” Rebecca Schley added, “I found this website very informative and resourceful. It certainly can benefit teachers, veterans, and students.”

Bridges Staff

Editor: Rebecca Schley

Production Designer: Laura Browning

Staff: Will Allen, Kim Dragos, Angela Gonzalez, Taylor Henry, Frida Krebs, Elizabeth Lodge, Bev Loudon, Courtney Moore, Nic Pilley, Lauryn Reece, Crystal Smith, Matthew Turrentine, Chris Wagoner, Michele Wahula, Susan Woodson

Advisor: Ms. Lindy Poling (lgpoling@juno.com)

Advisory Board: Vice Admiral and Mrs. Emmett Tidd, Mr. Bob Gray, General George B. Price, Mr. John Odum, Mr. James Sarajiotis, Mr. Joe Galloway, Mr. Larry Stogner, Ms. Tricia Edwards, and Lt. Col. Jim Zumwalt

Websites: www.wcpss.net/community_in_the_classroom/ and <http://mhs.wcpss.net>

A special grant from the PBR-FVA made possible the publication and printing of this issue of *Bridges*.

LOV Links-Fall 2002

1. Casey Kott—Mr. Bill Bacon
2. Rebecca Schley—Lt. Col. Jim Zumwalt
3. Matt Stanley—Mr. Larry Bissonnette
4. Hoang Nguyen—Mr. Qui Nguyen
5. Jim Shonerd—Mr. Dan Sheehan
6. Jennifer Shuman—Mr. Phil Beane
7. Harris Garrett—Mr. Dave Samuels
8. Kevin Nguyen—Mr. Day Nguyen
9. Mike Miller—Mr. Larry Stogner
10. Tony Ogunjobi—Mr. Wade Sanders
11. Susan Woodson—Mr. Bob Gray
12. Crystal Smith—Mr. Phil Price
13. Elizabeth Plating—Mr. Rob Wilson
14. David Fulp—Mr. Stephen Sossaman
15. Stephen Mount—Mr. Charles Sapp
16. Mike Reed—Mr. Fred Downs
17. Mike Lebov—Mr. Bill Bacon
18. Chris Wagoner— Mr. Robert Carlson
19. Eric Verbic—Mr. Tom Anderson
20. Jack Dugan—Mr. Scott Smith (Grandfather)
21. Toya Carlton—Mr. Carl Bimbo
22. Kim Dragos—Mr. Ken Delfino
23. Austin Vevurka—Mr. Rob Bozeman
24. Tabitha Bryant—Mr. Kinzie Bryant Jr. (Uncle)
25. Udoka Nwaeze—Mr. Mike Gormalley
26. Michele Wahula—Mr. David Rabadan
27. Christy Moore—Mr. Ron Wolfe
28. Heather Burton—Mr. Phil Latimer
29. Linh Nguyen—Mr. Tom Dingbaung
30. Elizabeth Lodge—Dr. Jim Willbanks
31. Laura Browning—Ms. June Eldridge
32. Joey Massey—Mr. J.C. Campbell
33. Lauryn Reece—Mr. Alvin Cantrell (Uncle)
34. Matthew Turrentine—Mr. Jim Nesmith
35. Nic Pilley—2nd Lt. Sean Keenan
36. Ray Williams—Mr. Ken Russell
37. Paige Knickerbocker—Ms. Lee Wilson
38. Dennis Velez—Mr. Jim Schueckler
39. Matt McClure—Mr. Bob Brown
40. Laura Bonin—Ms. May Tran
41. Dale Watson—Mr. Larry Weatherall
42. Jonathan Waggy—Mr. Cecil Martin
43. Angela Gonzalez—Dr. Robert Ordenez
44. Bev Loudon—Ms. Diane Oliver
45. Chris Wilson—Mr. Bill McGrady & Mr. Jonathan Lamoreaux
46. Blessing Adeoti—Mr. Carl Bimbo & Mr. Bob Horton
47. Blake Hamlin-VADM & Mrs. Tidd & Mr. Jim Nelson
48. Frida Krebs—Dr. Mel Stephens & Mr. Bud Gross
49. Daniel Blan—Mr. George Scaife & Mr. Adam Hess
50. Courtney Moore-Ambassador Phong & Dr. Bill Smith
51. Logan Rumble— Mr. Rob Robertson

