

**Welcome Home, Paul B.-- Post Historian
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The VietNam Wall, Part II**



Medals of Honor-during the Vietnam War, 248 Congressional Medals of Honor citations were awarded; 161 MOH to the Army, 57 to the Marines, 16 to the Navy and 14 to the Air Force. Of the 248 Medals of Honor, 166 were awarded posthumously. Names on the Wall were obtained by the Dept. of Defense according to the criteria of a 1965 Presidential Executive Order. This Order specified the combat areas as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia along with the coastal areas as well.

There are no civilians listed on the Memorial, the Vietnam Wall is dedicated to the 2.7 million men and women who served in the war zone. Names are in chronological orders according to the date of casualty within each day; the names are alphabetized and inscribed on two large black granite walls comprised of 70 panels. Hundreds of items have been left at the Memorial Wall over the years.

Vietnam veterans are now aging into their 60's; many Vietnam veterans have suffered from the effects of the US forces use of chemical warfare, especially Agent Orange. The Dept. of Veterans Affairs has listed 15 serious diseases associated with Agent Orange-one of the Rainbow herbicides sprayed in Vietnam.

Agent Orange was conceived as a jungle defoliant and herbicide; it was manufactured by the Monsanto and the Dow chemical company. Operation Ranchand poured nineteen million gallons of this poisonous liquid into the South Vietnam jungles and underbrush for defoliation-to expose the Vietcong and NVA routes for moving troops and supplies. A large amount of the chemicals were carried by wind, rain and dust thus falling on our friendly forces. The results have been devastating; we now have children with birth defects born to soldier's families, veterans succumbing to cancer plus numerous other physical problems resulting from Agent Orange. The Red Cross estimates that one million veterans and Vietnamese people are now suffering from the effects of Dioxin, the deadly chemical in Agent Orange. Other chemicals that were sprayed on the leafy plants include Agent Silver, and Agent Blue- a chemical that was poured on the rice paddies to destroy the rice crops. Thus the government's decision to use chemical warfare on our enemy effected physical collateral damage to the friendly forces at a very high cost, death and disease for multitudes of Vietnam veterans, plus the untold suffering of the soldiers families, not to mention the millions upon millions of dollars in government compensation and disabilities that are continuously paid to Vietnam veterans and families. Sadly, no amount of money can bring back one's health and soldiers who have suffered and paid the ultimate price with their life.

