

On April 18<sup>th</sup> of 2016, the unit I served with in Vietnam, Alpha Battery 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, had a reunion at the Wall.

On April 18 1966, my third week in Vietnam, our unit was attacked and overrun by Vietcong Sappers. We had 5 men killed and 28 men wounded out of 90 of us.

That day changed who I was and who I would become. My first friend in the unit was William "Jake" Terry Main - he was also from Florida. He was killed on April 18.

The morning after the attack, the dead Marines were laid next to a bunker and were covered with ponchos. I pulled back the ponchos from each man to see who they were. My friend Jake was one of them. I realized that I was in a place where people were trying to kill me and my friends and that there was no do-overs; if I was killed that would be it.

I had believed that we were there to help the South Vietnamese protect themselves against the North Vietnamese. But the people who had just laid waste to my unit were South Vietnamese.

It became obvious to me that my real purpose was to keep me and my friends from being killed or injured. It was no longer about politics - it was about survival.

I ended up spending 20 months in Nam and received 2 Purple Hearts for being wounded twice.

Now 50 years later, I reflect. As I look at this Wall, I think about all of the sacrifices we made, the pain, the suffering, the loss of very special friends. I think of those of us that "survived", with our broken bodies and searing memories.

My psychological wounds are much more intense than my physical wounds.

I wonder what did we buy with all of this sacrifice?

All I see is a Black Marble Wall.

This was a very expensive Wall.

If my country would have learned from Vietnam, to never repeat this again, then our sacrifices would have bought something invaluable.

My country did not learn anything from our sacrifices in Vietnam and this is what causes me the most pain.

We continue to repeat the same mistakes over and over. We continue to behave as if we can make the world better by killing those that disagree with us.

When we killed people in Nam or when one of our own was killed we would say, "The gooks Wasted him or we Wasted some Gooks".

I never realized how profound the use of the word "Waste" was. Yes, it was all a tragic waste and that is what I see when I come to this Wall.

Scott Camil  
Sergeant, USMC - 1965-1969- Vietnam 3/66-11/67

