



"With a photo for every name on the Wall (in D.C.), their memories are preserved," says volunteer Jay Kimbrough.

FACES *of the* WALL

VETERANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM ARE ON A MONUMENTAL MISSION: GATHERING PHOTOS OF THE 58,272 WHO DIDN'T MAKE IT HOME

Former Marine platoon commander Jack Ruffer can still see the faces of all 11 men he lost in Operation Medina on Oct. 12, 1967. One, Sal Bazulto, was a newlywed who left for Vietnam unaware his wife was pregnant. Another, William Stanton Blessing, gravely wounded at 18, took his last breath as Ruffer held him, rocking. "These aren't just names on that wall," says Ruffer, 70, of those and the 58,270 others on Washington, D.C.'s Vietnam Veterans Memorial. "They were real people."

Ruffer is one of about 200 volunteers—many of them vet-

erans—toiling to find a picture for each name etched in the black granite. In the 18 months since memorial founder and president Jan Scruggs launched a nationwide call for photos (buildthecenter.org), more than 23,000 have come in. The plan is to display them in a nearby education center, opening in 2014. For the surviving vets, it's a Herculean labor of love. "You see how much of life they had ahead," says Dr. Linda Schwartz, who was an Air Force nurse in Vietnam. "People need to see these faces as the real cost of war."

Sandra Sobieraj Westfall



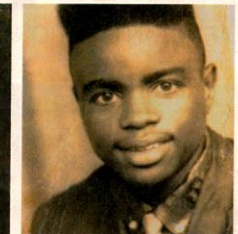
CHARLIE COMPANY UNDER ATTACK: 1st LT. RUFFER (left, ca. 1960, and right) collected these photos of 11 Marines lost in Operation Medina, then tracked down 382 more. Thanks to Ruffer and other volunteers, says Wall project leader Scruggs, "a whole new generation will learn of these men's courage."



PFC WILLIAM STANTON BLESSING
The Denver teen "was only in my platoon for three weeks and he was dead" from a battle wound, recalls Ruffer.



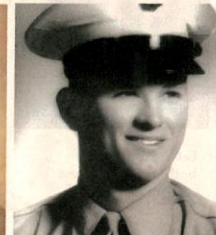
PFC ROGER EDWIN WALTON
He followed both his parents into the Marines and is buried in their family plot near the East Springfield, N.Y., home he left behind for Vietnam.



PFC OLIVER BELL JR.
Only 19, Bell had been sending money home to Florida so that his mother, Annie Mae, could get out of her apartment and buy a house—his dream for her.



SGT. SALVADOR BAZULTO JR.
He married just three months earlier and didn't know his bride, Cecilia, was pregnant—with a son she would name Salvador III.



CPL. QUINTON MORGAN BICE
The Texan first served aboard the USS *Coral Sea* and, for a USO visit, escorted actress Jennifer Jones, who later called his mom to say he's a fine son.



CPL. JOHN RAYMOND LEE
Lee and his best friend, fellow Marine Brad Foote, bought 40 acres in Oregon to build houses and start a business. Foote escorted Lee's body home.



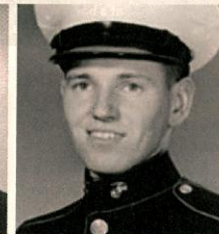
PFC JOHN JAMES CASTILLO
His sister Margaret recalls how, back home in Saginaw, Mich., Castillo's dog Charlie inexplicably began to howl on the night of Oct. 12, 1967.



L.CPL. KEVIN ARTHUR CAHILL
Ruffer remembers Cahill, from Lynn, Mass., for his "great instincts—the best point man you could ask for, and he died doing his job."



PFC JAMES MICHAEL DE ABRE
The Morgan Hill, Calif., native marked his 21st birthday just 12 days before the deadly, eight-hour firefight in Hai Lang National Forest.



CPL. WILLIAM THOMAS PERKINS
A combat photographer and posthumous Medal of Honor winner, he dove on a grenade, saving Ruffer and others.



PFC GERALD JOHN BROTHERS
He married his girlfriend right after he graduated Infantry Training Regiment. They had only a few weeks together.

FROM LEFT: RUDY SALGANCORRE, COURTESY JACK RUFFER