



Behind every name is a story.

Published May 23, 2019

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, commonly called The Wall, is a collection of more than 58,000 names and countless stories related to one of the most contentious periods in American history.

Since its dedication on November 13, 1982, The Wall has become an integral part of the story of how our nation healed from the wounds of this turbulent time.

The Wall now has its own story . . .

How many names are on The Wall?

One of the most frequently asked questions by visitors to The Wall is, "How many names are on The Wall?" What they really mean is, "How many American service members died in the Vietnam War?"

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) believes the best answer to this question is **58,276**.

While an internet inquiry of this question may yield dozens of numbers as low as 58,000 or as high as 58,479, the keepers within the Department of Defense (DoD) – the Defense Manpower Data Center – will respond with 58,276 as well.

Yet like so many questions related to the Vietnam war, there is no easy and completely accurate answer. There are known errors on The Wall, and we know there are people listed on The Wall who actually lived. So do you answer the easy question with how many names are actually inscribed, including the errors, or do you try to tell visitors how many people died and have their names inscribed on The Wall?

Why has VVMF been saying the number was 58,318?

Since Memorial Day 2017, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) has said there were 58,318 names on The Wall.

This number came from taking the published number of names inscribed at its 1982 dedication, 57,939, and adding the number of name additions made over the years. The following table shows the simple accounting, even though we now know errors were made in the addition process and the published totals.



Year	VVMF Stated Name Additions	Published Total
Initially Inscribed		57,939
1983	68	
1984	15	
1985	* 110	
1986	0	
1987	* 24	
1988	0	
1989	*19	
1990	0	
1991	8	
1992	0	58,183
1993	8	
1994	5	
1995	0	
1996	6	
1997	7	
1998	5	58,214
1999	5	58,219
2000	1	58,220
2001	6	58,226
2002	3	58,229
2003	6	58,235
2004	10	58,245
2005	4	58,249
2006	4	58,253
2007	3	58,256
2008	4	58,260
2009	1	58,261
2010	6	58,267
2011	5	58,272
2012	10	58,282
2013	4	58,286
2014	14	58,300
2015	7	58,308
2016	8	58,315
2017	3	58,318
2018	0	58,318
2019	0	58,318
* Included errors described below		58,318

Why are you changing the number?

Since the dedication of The Memorial, VVMF has recognized the DoD and National Park Service (NPS) were the ultimate arbiters of who could and could not be on The Wall. Over the years, DoD has directed edits, additions, and deletions from the casualty list provided in 1981.



In 1991, the Associated Press wrote an article noting that dozens may have lived; yet while the names were removed from the directories, the number (as noted above) was never reduced from the initial count. The same can be said for other discoveries of errors or corrections. The number only increased, it never decreased.

For more than four years, VVMF has been working to reconcile the differences between the numbers of names in our printed directories, our web-based database called the Wall of Faces, other databases found online and the DoD records.

Through various efforts to understand the differences in number, researching the names of those known to be included by error, those who lived and others – it became clear that **a full and complete audit of exactly what is inscribed on The Wall was necessary.**

After completing that audit and reconciling different databases, lists and explanations, we are confident in saying our own number should be changed.

So how were all these errors made?

Dealing with more than 58,000 names, inscribed in **granite**, is very difficult.

When The Wall was being built, desktop computers were still rare. Powerful computers at that time took up entire rooms. The original list provided by the Department of Defense was on magnetic tape, and supplemental lists on paper came later from the military branches.

Before the names were inscribed, VVMF went through paper versions of the lists of more than 57,000 names eight different times. Even as much, this process was full of errors including those associated with military recordkeeping and transcription errors.

In addition, at that time, we made some judgment calls about including or excluding some names based on DoD casualty reports, and we chose to err on the side of including a few names rather than excluding them. VVMF operated under the assumption we would get only one shot at putting names on The Wall, and we took the chance we would include a small number of names in error rather than leave off someone who should be there.

We still feel that was the right choice.

To the best of our knowledge and widely published, at the dedication in 1982, the number of names inscribed on The Wall was 57,939.



Since that time, we have discovered we made some errors in the initial inscriptions, we made a few errors since dedication, and through our research we now have more details about some of those cases that were in question.

Name Additions: 375

In the table above, VVMF historically has indicated there have been 379 names added to The Memorial. Unfortunately, this total includes four names that shouldn't have been inscribed or counted as name additions.

In 1985, two names were added that were originally inscribed on The Wall. CHARLES F WHITE (28W/4) was considered a name addition, yet his name was originally inscribed correctly (28W/6). He never should have been added a second time. The inscription of KENNITH ALLSTON (8E/36) was announced, however it was to correct his misspelled name originally inscribed as KENNETH ALLSTON (7E/86). This reduces the name additions in 1985 from 110 names to 108.

In 1987, it was announced that 24 names were added to The Wall. Amongst those inscribed was ROBERT J HAIN (1E/22), however it was to correct his misspelled name originally inscribed as ROBERT J MAIN (1E/22). This reduces the name additions in 1987 from 24 to 23 names.

In 1989, the list of 19 additions contained the name of ROBERT C COTHRAN (6E/125), however his name was originally inscribed on another panel (5E/10). This reduces the name additions in 1989 from 19 to 18 names.

Those Who Lived/Unknown Status: 32

In 1991, a series of articles were published by the the Associated Press and others stating there were names originally inscribed on The Wall who were actually still alive. At the time, the number was suspected to be as high as 38.

Reviewing this list and other sources, VVMF has concluded 32 names were inscribed of those who lived or those whose status (alive or dead from their injuries) still is unknown. If multiple sources have indicated the individual survived the war, VVMF has included them amongst twenty-six names inscribed on The Wall who definitely lived. However, in the case of six individuals, only the Associated Press indicated their inclusion on The Wall. VVMF is still researching the circumstances of these six to gather further evidence of their exclusion, but at this time, we support the conclusion they should not be included amongst those on The Wall.

THOSE WHO LIVED

1. ROBERT BEDKER (10E/69)
2. CLARK T BOOTZ (7W/112)
3. STANLEY E BOWEN (22E/90)
4. PETER H BROWN (11E/64)
5. WILLARD D CRAIG (12E/87)
6. CARL COX (17E/34)
7. MARIAN J DOMINIAK Jr (32E/43)
8. JAMES R GILREATH (11W/73)



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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9. KEITH L HARDY (18E/4) | 18. ALEXANDER M MORALES (19W/103) |
| 10. LARRY G HATCH (17E/122) | 19. FRANKIE NORTHERN (7W/47) |
| 11. ANDREW J HILDEN (14E/108) | 20. DANIEL P OUELLETTE (11W/17) |
| 12. TIMOTHY L HONSINGER (10E/86) | 21. ROBERT B PHILLIPS (17E/38) |
| 13. DENNIS C HUCKABY (19W/101) | 22. RICHARD J PRESKENIS (6E/57) |
| 14. DAVID F KIES (14E/67) | 23. FRANCIS M RINKER (18E/7) |
| 15. DARREL E LAUSCH (12E/89) | 24. JERRY L SEVENBERGEN (6E/16) |
| 16. CHRISTOPHER G MIRACLIA (7W/36) | 25. MATEO SABOG (12W/49) |
| 17. ROCKNEY D MONROE (18E/6) | 26. EUGENE J TONI (7W/121) |

UNKNOWN STATUS ¹

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. ROBERT M BENNETT (20E/127) | 4. MICHAEL R HALIBURTON (8W/94) |
| 2. MICHAEL J DOMINGUEZ (10E/83) | 5. LOUIS D KIMES (12E/89) |
| 3. DAVID R EDWARDSON (22E/77) | 6. CLIFFORD W JAMES (18E/8) |

DUPLICATES: 13

Of the names listed in the Washington Post article in 1991, eight were duplicates or permutations of another name already inscribed on The Wall. This creates a new classification known as “duplicates.”

They are duplicates from original inscriptions or duplicates when names were added unnecessarily after the dedication. Ultimately, four names were re-inscribed unnecessarily and nine were inscribed twice – either identically or as a permutation/misspelling.

DUPLICATES IN 1982

1. KRIS BILMER (22W/116) was errantly inscribed in addition to KRIS BLUMER (21W/12).
2. CURTIS E DANDY (55E/39) was errantly inscribed in addition to CURTIS E BANDY (56E/5).
3. PAUL A FROEHL (65E/8) was errantly inscribed in addition to PAUL A PROEHL (66E/1).
4. JAM O'SHAUGHNESSY (28W/33) was errantly inscribed in addition to JAMES J O'SHAUGHNESSY (14W/104).
5. DAVID A GRILLY (23W/100) was errantly inscribed in addition to DAVID A CRILLY (23W/98).
6. JAMES G GRINER (22W/53) was errantly inscribed in addition to JAMES G GRIENER (22W/52).
7. RODNEY G HEISEL (13W/111) was errantly inscribed in addition to RODNEY G HELSEL (13W/112).
8. ALLAN H JORDAN (10E/83) was errantly inscribed in addition to ALLAN H JORDAN (48E/28).

¹ Those listed in the Associated Press story issued February 15, 1991.



9. DOUGLAS C RUSTINE (47E/42) was errantly inscribed in addition to DOUGLAS C RISTINE (47E/54).

DUPLICATES THROUGH RE-INSCRIPTION

1. ROBERT C COTHRAN (6E/125) was a name addition in 1989. His name was originally inscribed (5E/10).
2. RODNEY G HELSEL (12W/5) was errantly re-inscribed in 1989 in addition to RODNEY G HELSEL (13W/112).
3. ROBERT F SCHERDIN (35W/6) was errantly re-inscribed in 1989 as ROBERT F SCHERIDIN (35W/79).
4. CHARLES F WHITE (28W/4) was a name addition in 1985. His name was originally inscribed (28W/6).

CORRECTIONS : 69

The original listing of names to be inscribed was a conglomeration of Department of Defense (DoD) databases, casualty notification records, and other lists and documents provided to VVMF. In as much as these documents were never entirely accurate, the human action necessary to compile, organize and then layout stencils for engraving created multiple opportunities for error. Over the years, 69 of these have been reviewed by the DoD and then directed to be corrected on The Wall.² When names are corrected, they have to be re-inscribed with the correction. They cannot be corrected in place on the granite. So, one person may have their name on The Wall correctly and incorrectly, meaning the total number of names inscribed on The Wall will be higher than the number of people who made the ultimate sacrifice.

So How Do You Get from 58,318 Down to 58,276?

We don't. We don't start from 58,318 and deduct names. We had to take a completely different approach . . .

In 2015, VVMF began an intense effort to replace our replica traveling memorial, called *The Wall That Heals*. No digital file existed with a list of names by panel and line, and we believe there has never been one total and complete digital file of exactly what was inscribed on The Wall. We had to have one to create a new replica.

Thus began a multiyear effort that included thousands of hours of staff and volunteer time to establish a database of exactly what is inscribed on The Wall, errors and all.

² When appropriate, VVMF documented other spelling errors and mistakes that are known but not addressed through re-inscription. They are not summarized here. The Wall does not have sufficient space necessary to correct all the mistakes.



Our Process

VVMF began with a rough electronic list of the names and their arrangements for each panel. While generally this document was accurate as to placement of each name on a particular line, the order of names on a given line often was incorrect. Staff and volunteers reviewed this initial electronic listing against an online photographic image of The Wall available on the Fold3.com website. Reviewers looked at every name, on every line, on every panel of The Wall, focused on spelling, corresponding symbols (i.e. cross or diamond), and order within the line.

After edits were made, this task was repeated by a second reviewer.

As necessary, a third review was done.

Finally, each panel was reviewed and compared physically at The Wall to make final edits, including changes to The Wall since the Fold3 photograph was made.

What we found is that, in fact, **today there are a total of 58,390 names actually inscribed on The Wall.**

This database was then compared to the Wall of Faces database to find those names that exist on The Wall and yet did not have associated records on our database. In doing so, we found a number of errors most frequently in the Wall Names (or inscribed name) that will be addressed in the coming weeks. Presently, there are 58,276 records in the Wall of Faces database.

Next we took the engraved Wall database and compared it to the DoD Vietnam casualty database. Over the course of several months, we worked with various offices within the service branches and DoD to reconcile differences within the data. Through that process we identified necessary edits to the Wall of Faces and DoD databases and The Wall directories. These edits will be made in the next months.

At the conclusion of those reviews, we were left with three databases. The DoD database maintained by their staff and policies contains 58,276 entries. Those 58,276 match identically to the records found in the Wall of Faces database and the associated file for The Wall directory. Finally, The Wall inscription database has 58,390 names yet contains associated records of names which were duplicates, errors, and corrections.



So How Do You Get from 58,390 Down to 58,276?

Total Names Inscribed on The Wall	58,390
Corrections (re-inscribed)	-69
Total Duplicates	-13
Those Who Lived/Unknown Status	-32
How many names/people are on The Wall?	58,276

So let's rephrase the question and its answers:

- How many names are on The Wall?
 - There are 58,390 names inscribed into the 140 panels.
- How many names are on The Wall?
 - There are 58,276 names of casualties listed upon The Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Some other interesting questions we can now answer:

- Who has the longest name on The Wall?
 - RODRIGO VELAZQUEZ-FELICIANO Jr
- Who has the shortest name on The Wall?
 - BEN COY and NED LEE