

## Gratitude for The Moving Wall

I didn't realize how quickly I would cry when I visited The Moving Wall Vietnam War Memorial on its recent visit to Lakeport. Tears started to roll down my face before I read the first name. In fact, as soon as I got out of my car and started to walk closer to the exhibit I could sense an energy field. Upon reflection, my intuition tells me that energy field was valor, and it was compelling. I am not a veteran myself. I do not know the horror of combat; but what I do know is how grateful I am for every man and woman who has sacrificed their lives so I may have liberty.

The Moving Wall made me realize how fortunate we are as Americans. In this time of economic hardship, it is easy to complain about our misfortunes. What I have discovered, is how grateful I am to have liberty and freedom. The names on The Moving Wall deserve my honor, respect and acknowledgement. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all veterans for their sacrifice, valor, and courage.

When I hear anyone complain about anything I silently ask myself, "Compared to what?" Most Americans don't pause to contemplate how fortunate they are. I would ask you to stop and realize for a moment how blessed you are as an American. Tyranny and oppression is dominant throughout most of the world. Five minutes of tyranny is far worse than years of any economic hardship. The Moving Wall reminds us that freedom is not free. Our way of life and standard of living is as a result of those men and women in uniform who are willing to die to protect us.

So ask yourself, "Compared to what?" Billions of people on earth go without running water, electricity, medical care, or television. A friend of mine once spent four years operating a hotel in Belize, an English speaking country in Central America. I would always ask him on his return visits to the United States how it was going for him living in Belize. My friend said once, "When I get off the plane in the United States, I get on my hands and knees and kiss the ground." After hearing this I understood how fortunate I am to live at this time, in this country. When you feel any depression in your life, just consider how it would be to live in Iran or Afghanistan.

The same weekend that I visited The Moving Wall I took my five year old son to a Bay Area amusement park. I deliberately spent the entire time being grateful for everything I witnessed or experienced. My first realization when we arrived was there are no amusement parks in North Korea. I thought of The Moving Wall throughout the day and I looked for everything I could be grateful for. I was grateful for lemonade, popcorn, stuffed animals, children laughing, a rollercoaster, coffee, hot dogs, mustard and ice cream. All things were worthy of my gratitude for fallen soldiers.

During the time The Moving Wall was displayed the Record Bee published a supplemental paper which was available to visitors. The paper gave tribute to many of the names listed on the wall. There was also general information about the Vietnam War, and acknowledgement to other special soldiers. One soldier's story caught my attention. Servicemen Rick Rescorla fought in Vietnam, but survived, and was not named on the

wall. He is now, however, joined in heaven with all of those listed on the wall. Rick Rescorla died September 11, 2001. He died while leading people to safety out of the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Rick had valor in Vietnam and valor on 9/11. Thank you, Rick. Thank you for your courage, bravery and heroism so that we may have liberty. I promise I will teach my son your name in honor of all veterans' names on any wall, in any cemetery, or missing in far away lands. My God bless you, and all of your comrades, past and present. We are grateful for your service.

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