



Photo by Ross Martin

The mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall replica, which was taken apart Thursday morning, had a special meaning to both old and young people.

'The wall' makes emotional impact

It's only a half-size replica, but the symbol of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial still holds true. The mobile replica of "the wall" has made its impact at Skinner Butte Park in Eugene.

After a weeklong showing here, it continued on to its next destination, Whittier, Calif.

The only remembrance the wall leaves is a muddy void on the grass where it stood. But Eugene got a glimpse of the Vietnam conflict that

of relief, having sufficiently recovered from a sharp dose of reality.

Although half the size, this memorial still had 58,022 names etched in it, and I have strong feelings that I was not the only one who tossed and turned in my sleep after visiting the wall Sunday night.

It is hard to explain what happened here in mere words. I saw parents staring at the names of their children, children looking up a father they never knew, friends searching for lost companions.

Is this really a memorial, or an apology?

The quiet, shuffling mood reflected at the scene is sincere. Flowers were littered along the length of the wall, as were the wax remainders of a candlelight vigil.

A young boy was impatiently and restlessly asking his father questions, only to be further confused.

"But why was there a war, daddy?"

"I don't know."

"But you said it was bad to kill people..."

This brought back memories of my childhood. I never knew Vietnam as intimately as my elders. I was too wrapped up in Little League, tinker toys and the newest edition of Hot Wheels.

I knew it was bad, for every time Walter Cronkite mentioned the word "Vietnam" on the evening news, my parents would stop what they were doing and listen intently.

I hope that father took his little boy in his arms and explained what the wall meant, that some of those names on the wall were old high school chums or maybe even a brother.

I hope that father teaches his little boy the horrors a lifetime can present, that someday he might have to live the same nightmare, that maybe he can help make a difference, that the world according to Rambo and Reagan is not reality.

I stuck around to witness several veterans

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Reporter's notebook

by Dennis Fernandes

only a few had known before.

There was a noted difference between this replica and the original wall in Washington D.C. The wall in Eugene is not a tourist attraction, not just another exposure on a roll of film enroute to the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument.

Without seeming disrespectful, I have been to the original in Washington, and it just isn't as touching as paying homage to the wall on a local level.

Although more than 100,000 a week visit the original wall, making it the most-visited monument in the country, it would be interesting to see how many of those take the wall to heart.

In the direct vicinity of the Washington Memorial, the mood was gloomy. However, as people walked away they grew more relaxed, wanting to forget the dark blotch in American history.

There was no concessions stand 20 feet from the monument that visited Eugene, no place people could rearrange their camera straps and laugh over a Coke. No one at the original wall would admit that deep inside he was heaving a deep sigh

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