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Monument to Vietnam Veterans in Washington, DC,

Literature

*“In this paper addresses the VVMF (the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund) is the nonprofit organization authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1980 to build a national memorial dedicated to all who served with the U.S. armed forces in the Vietnam War. The mission of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) is to honor and preserve the legacy of service and educate all generations about the impact of the Vietnam War. Various books from library, online books and research papers have been used as reference material”.*

**1. Introduction**

The Vietnam War was one of the largest military conflicts of the 20th century. It is starting as a civilian; it quickly turned into a clash of two coalitions: the United States and its allies supported South Vietnam, the USSR and China acted on the side of the North. The Western coalition used the latest weapons, carpet bombing, and napalm. North Vietnamese forces skillfully used partisan tactics. The losses of the parties were colossal. The bloody battles continued from 1957 to 1975 and ended with the defeat of the South. On April 30, 1975, the communist forces raised the banner over the Independence Palace in Saigon, the city was “*renamed Ho Chi Minh City”*. This war has split American society. About a third of the population was totally against it. At least 3 million Americans passed through Vietnam, half of them participated in the hostilities. The country lost more than 58 thousand people killed (The wall of faces, 2019).

**2. History**

The idea of the memorial was advanced by a Vietnam veteran, former corporal of the 199th light infantry brigade, Jan Scruggs. He began to raise funds for the monument by investing 2,800 personal dollars in the business (Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 2016).

**In 1980**, Congress allocated land near the Lincoln Memorial. Project competition has been announced. It received about one and a half thousand applications, including a sketch of a student at Yale University, Maya Ying Lin - and it was chosen by the jury.

Lin conceived a memorial in the form of a colossal letter V. The branches of the letter are two black granite walls gradually plunging into the earth, on which 58220 names of those who fell in Vietnam are carved. One of the walls is aimed precisely at “*the Washington Monument, the other at the Lincoln Memorial”.* A path for visitors passes along the entire monument. You can touch the walls with the names of loved ones. The unusual design of the building and the complete absence of decor initially caused an explosion of indignation. In order to reassure the public, a more traditional monument, known as the Three Soldiers, was erected nearby in 1984. The sculptor Frederic Hart sculpted three front-line soldiers - white, African American and Latin American, very realistically depicted their weapons and form.

The memorial is a long wall of black marble, on which are carved the names of 58,209 US Army soldiers who went missing or died during the Vietnam War. The basis of the list of names was a database that was provided by the Department of Defense of America.

**In 1984,** the memorial was supplemented with a sculpture made of bronze, which was created by Frederic Garth. The sculpture was named "Three Soldiers". These are symbolic images of white, Latin and African American, which are located near the wall with the names of the dead, and their gaze is directed at this wall. All this is a single composition.

This memorial was built in honor of the American soldiers who left their lives or went missing on the fields of the Vietnam War. “*The Vietnam Veterans Memorial”* belongs to the national monuments of the United States of America. This monument consists of three parts and includes the Women's Memorial, the Veterans Memorial, and the Three Soldiers sculpture, as well as the Memorial Wall.

The construction of the monument took off at the end of March 1982, and its grand opening took place in November of the same year. The most famous element of this complex is the wall of the memorial of veterans. The wall consists of two parts, the east, and west. They are interconnected at an angle of 125 degrees. When creating it, black granite was used. The total length of this structure is 75 meters, and the height is three meters and increases from the end of the two walls to the place where they join, reaching maximum height. On this wall are the inscriptions of the American military, who failed to survive and disappeared without a network in the Southeast Asia region from 1957 to 1975. All the names of the soldiers and officers are engraved in alphabetical order.

**In 1993**, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial became an integral part of the complex - a monument to American women who participated in hostilities. Most of them were nurses. The sculptor Glenna Good acre portrayed three nurses in military uniform rescuing a wounded soldier.

**3. Audience**

The main element is the so-called Wall. Black granite is polished so that when you read the names of the dead, you see your reflection. Probably this is the way to honor the memory of the dead soldiers in any war. The memorial is quite majestic, but at the same time not pompous. Probably, the monument to the soldiers who died in that war, given the extremely ambiguous attitude towards it in society, should be like this. Stone slabs with the names of the dead and two sculptural groups (Sturken, 1991).

**4. Viewers**

There are many memorials and monuments to great people and significant events in Washington. This memorial is one of them. People remember their history; honor the memory of the dead, that's right. The sculptural image is three American soldiers and the names of the dead on the arched black reflective wall. It consists of a wall and two sculptural compositions dedicated to the warriors who returned from the war and women warriors. The thought of the memorial is excellent and with other memorials, it is part of a large ensemble. The memorial consists of three parts: 1. a long wall of granite with the names of the dead and missing in Vietnam, 2 - statues of three soldiers (a symbol of compromise and reconciliation) and a flagpole, 3 - a memorial to women who fought in Vietnam, three women in military uniform with a wounded soldier (Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2016).

**5. Glorify War**

“This war began as a civil war in South Vietnam (1957 - 1964), then North Vietnam” joined it, which later received the support of two powerful powers - the USSR and China. The United States and its allies, called the CENTO military bloc, in 1965 sided with the South Vietnamese regime. At the same time, civil wars were going on in Laos and Cambodia. *“All the hostilities that took place in Southeast Asia from the late 1950s to 1975 are known in world history as the Second Indochinese War”.*

**5.1 About the Memorial**

*“The Vietnam Veterans Memorial”* was built with funds raised through private donations from various companies and organizations, as well as more than 275 thousand ordinary citizens. The total amount was 8.4 million dollars. Funding from the federal budget has been reported.

On July 1, 1980, by the decision of the US Congress, the area near the Lincoln Monument was allocated for the construction of a memorial. Then, from October to May 1980, there was a competition for the best project, where the work of a 21-year-old Chinese-born student Maya Lin was recognized as the best. The memorial was laid March 26, 1982, opened - November 13, 1982. The construction of the entire complex was completed by Veterans Day on November 11, 1984.

The basis of the composition of the “Vietnam Veterans Memorial” is a huge wall of black granite (The Wall), consisting of two parts. The total length of the Wall is 75 meters; the height at the junction of the two parts of the wall is 3 meters. On the Wall are engraved the names of all American soldiers killed or missing in Southeast Asia during the Second Indochina War, in the territory of South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, China, Thailand, as well as in the Gulf of Tonkin, between 1957 and 1975 for years.

The lists of military personnel were compiled from a database of the US Department of Defense. In 1982, the list was 57,939 names. After construction, the names were added periodically. In 2011 there were 58272 of them ... Veterans who died from the effects of battle wounds after the war is on a separate list.

In 1984, three soldiers of different races are standing close to the Wall and look in its direction, making up a single composition. At the Vietnam Veterans, Memorial volunteers are always on duty - volunteers in yellow jackets. They help to find the right name on the Wall.

**6. Antiwar**

The first national memorial of Vietnam, inaugurated in 1982, bears witness to a particular context, not activist where veterans seek above all a form of recognition of their commitment and the commemoration of companions in arms fallen to the front, in a nation divided by the war that left them in oblivion. However, the creation of this memorial will be at the origin of a vast debate on the legitimacy of such a monument and the criteria of representation of the heroism of the soldiers. “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Memorial Veterans of Vietnam is a national memorial dedicated to the fallen US soldiers during the Vietnam War. It is located in Washington, DC in Constitution Gardens, adjacent National Mall Park, northeast of the Lincoln Memorial. Its construction and related problems provoked several controversies, some leading to additions to the memorial” (American Icons, 2016).

**7. Culture**

*“The statue of the Three Soldiers ( Three Soldiers statue), a bronze statue that represents a real size”,* three soldiers who are voluntarily identifiable as an African-type soldier, a Caucasian soldier, and a Hispanic soldier. Here is a vast memorial that should not leave you indifferent. Here, as far as the eye can see, are written all the names of the Americans who died during the Vietnam War (1955-1975). The monument itself is composed of three elements: a granite wall bearing the names of the 58,249 victims (the dead and the disappeared) American of the Vietnam War, built by Maya Ying Lin in 1982 (controversial under Reagan, who did not want the construction of the monument); the statue of Three Servicemen (added in 1984) by Fredrick Hart; and “*the Vietnam Women's Memorial (added in 1993)”,* signed Glenna Good acre. This is, of course, a vast place of recollection for many American families and the atmosphere is very solemn (The Things They Leave Behind: Artifacts from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2012).

**8. Effective**

*“The Vietnam War is the only war lost by the United States”.* This "dirty war" was denounced by public opinion and resulted in a lasting trauma that inspired many films. Leader of the free world in the Cold War, the United States must defend freedom and democracy against communism.

Truman has defined a containment policy that consists of essentially economic assistance. There is no question of military engagement even though the intervention in Korea was a real war. Thus the Americans finance 3/4 of the military effort of French Indochina but US aircraft did not intervene at Dien Bien Phu. Since 1954, the United States supports the Vietnamese regime south of the 17 the parallel. But Diem established an authoritarian regime and the southern communists engaged in subversion with the Vietcong that relies on North Vietnam (The wall of faces, 2019).

**Conclusion**

The reason for creating the statue of the Three Soldiers (The Three Soldiers or The Three Servicemen) became controversies around the design chosen by Maya Lin. In 1984 a bronze sculpture created by Frederick Garth was added to the memorial. Three soldiers - white, African American and Latin - stand at some distance from the wall and look in its direction, making up a single composition with it.

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