

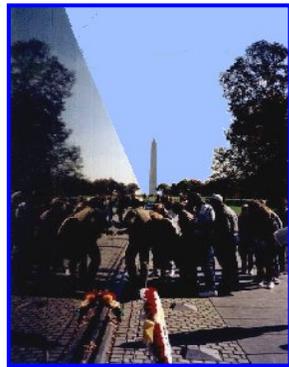
## American Warrior

### Autumn's Wall: My November journey to The Wall

The National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, [Constitution Gardens](#), Washington, D.C.

I walk a hundred yards or more, pass thousands of names and years of war, and wonder how many of the 256 American Indians so listed I have passed--mind games of distraction, knowing that I will soon find **the name** I came to visit. And I am there ...

**James B Jones**, amongst decades of thousands, is before me on The Wall near center-right. I am comforted somewhat to know that my nation has honored him in this way--and with a Bronze Star with Valor. I am also grateful that my veteran brothers, Jerry (USA, Vietvet 1970-71), Ray (US Navy, 1960-64), and Larry (USA, 1972-75) are not named on The Wall.



A flower-wreath reflects in the polished stone. A Park Ranger taps me and says, "You must have been there early in the war?" I nod yes, and tell him 1965-66, Da Nang. He hands me some paper and chalk and said that I "could take a rubbing" if I want. I remember hearing that you could make an impression of a name by placing the paper over the marble engraved name and slide the chalk over it like a ruler. I make rubbings of two names.

Looking toward the northeast I see the Washington Monument standing sentry duty. The Park Ranger is busy helping others with **free rubbings**, and I hear him mention nearly four and a half million visitors come to The Wall each year.



I walk on along the cobblestone pathway, pausing for photos, and take a series of pictures to make the composite panorama above. I remember other names I have searched out and touched: **SSgt Terrance Jensen**, **PFC Gary Steven Poss**, **Sgt Travis O'Neal Poss**, and others.

At the Northeast end of the Memorial, I pause and appreciate the glory of Autumn's foliage bursting forth in multi-hues of amber, golden reds, browns, yellows and greens. A slight wind soughs across the park, sending leafs falling and scampering, with a pleasant, but crisp, forest sound of trees rustling. A young man is pausing to take a photo his girl (wife?), after a few words I take the picture of the two. She seems close to tears and offers that her father's name is on The Wall. I don't know how to respond, so I just nod in understanding. I can't remember the name she gave, and am taken by the loss this young woman has suffered.

As I glance down the enfilade of 58,229 names--like stars in heaven--there are just too names to see at once, and yet, misty eyed, I try--a galaxy of ultimate blood sacrifice and national tears. I know that other Memorials and hallowed fields of valor are nearby, and collectively they are symbolic of American veterans ... American Warriors .... through the ages, and of our nation's heritage from revolution, internal conquests, civil war, and foreign wars. Through it all,





this chilled Autumn day, I am grateful that we are one nation like no other on earth.

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