

American Warrior

Autumn's Wall: My November journey to The Wall

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



I stroll along the boulevard walkway to the north, and see an American flag waving on its pole. A small crowd is standing nearby and then move slowly, reverently, away to the west. Only a few remain, and then I realize the *few* are bronze warriors--the three Fighting Men sculpture. I look closely at their weary youthful faces--their eyes...so tired...so *exhausted* ...and remember. I realize they have lost more than their youth.



I am drawn to follow their gaze westward --to The Wall.



An instant lump forms in my throat, and my eyes mist. I feel that I might lose it. Others are near, and they too seem taken by the power of The Wall's presence. *It is so* . . . and I cannot find words to describe the simplicity and scale of the Memorial. I walk to the southwest entrance and people are quietly, reverently, moving to and fro. It begins at surface level and as you stroll along, too many names to read, gently dips ever deeper until you find yourself in the center of the V and the names towering above you.



A numbness seems to take over from the choking feeling. Grandparent-types stand before a red-white-and-blue wreath. The old man's eyes are closed and he simply shakes his head as if trying to make sense of it all.

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