



From The Other Side

Thanks For Remembering ...

by: [Patrick Camunes](#),

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Many things are written about The Wall, but never anything of being on the *other side*. I was inspired by the above famous painting by Lee Teter, and Don Poss' recent [Autumn's Wall](#) story. For me, and I hope for you, *Reflections*, and *Autumn's Wall*, revealed the Wall's emotion and healing power. Now remember that walk we all began in Vietnam, and *know* that it will be completed

FROM THE OTHER SIDE



At first there was no place for us to go until someone put up that "Black Granite Wall." Now, everyday and night, my Brothers and my Sisters wait to see the many people from places afar file in front of this "Wall." Many stopping briefly and many for hours and some that come on a regular basis. It was hard at first, not that it's gotten any easier, but it seems that many of the attitudes towards that Vietnam war we were involved in have changed. I can only pray that the ones on the *other side* have learn something, and more "Walls" as this one, needn't be built.

Several members of my unit, and many that I did not recognize, have called me to The Wall by touching my name engraved upon it. The tears aren't necessary, but are hard even for me to hold back. *Don't feel guilty for not being with me, my Brothers. This was my destiny as it is yours, to be on that side of The Wall.* Touch The Wall, my Brothers, so that we can share in the memories that we had. I have learn to put the bad memories aside and remember only the pleasant times that we had together. Tell our other Brothers out there to come and visit me, not to say Good-bye but to say Hello and be together again ... even for a short time ... and to ease that pain of loss that we all still share.

Today, an irresistible and loving call summons me to The Wall. As I approach, I can see an elderly lady ... and as I get closer, I recognize her--*It's Momma!* As much as I have looked forward to this day, I have also dreaded it, because I didn't know what reaction I would have.

Next to her, I suddenly see my wife and immediately think how hard it must have been for her to come to this place, and my mind floods with the pleasant memories of 30 years past. There's a young man in a military uniform standing with his arm around her--*My God!--*he has to be my *son!* Look at him trying to be the man without a tear in his eye. I yearn to tell him how proud I am, seeing him standing tall, straight and proud in his uniform.

Momma comes closer and touches The Wall, and I *feel* the soft and gentle touch I had not felt in so many years. Dad

has crossed to this side of The Wall, and through our touch, I try to convey to her that Dad is doing fine and is no longer suffering or feeling pain. I see my wife's courage building as she sees Momma touch The Wall and she approaches and lays her hand on my waiting hand. All the emotions, feelings and memories of three decades past flash between our touch and I tell her that ... *it's all right ... carry on with your life and don't worry about me ...* . I can see as I look into her eyes that she hears and a big burden has been lifted from her on wings of understanding.

I watch as they lay flowers and other memories of my past. My lucky charm that was taken from me and sent to her by my CO ... a tattered and worn teddy bear that I can barely remember having as I grew up as a child ... and several medals that I had earned and were presented to my wife. One is the Combat Infantry Badge that I am very proud of, and I notice that my son is also wearing this medal. I had earned mine in the jungles of Vietnam and he had probably earned his in the deserts of Iraq.

I can tell that they are preparing to leave, and I try to take a mental picture of them together, because I don't know when I will see them again. I wouldn't blame them if they were not to return, and can only thank them that I was not forgotten. My wife and Momma near The Wall for one final touch, and so many years of indecision fear and sorrow are let go. As they turn to leave, I feel my tears that had not flowed for so many years, form as if dew drops on the other side of The Wall.

They slowly move away with only a glance over their shoulders. My son suddenly stops and slowly returns. He stands straight and proud in front of me and *snaps a salute*. Something draws him near The Wall and he puts his hand upon etched stone and touches my tears that had formed dew drops on the face of The Wall ... and I can tell that he senses my presence and the pride and love I have for him. He falls to his knees and the tears flow from his eyes and I try my best to reassure him that *it's all right*, and the tears do not make him less of a man. As he moves back wiping the tears from his eyes, he silently mouths, "God Bless you, Dad"

God Bless, YOU, Son ... we WILL meet someday, but in the meanwhile, go on your way ... there is no hurry ... there is no hurry at all.

As I see them walk off in the distance, I yell out to THEM and EVERYONE there today, as loud as I can:



... and as others on this side of The Wall join in,
I notice that the U.S. Flag, Old Glory, that so proudly flies
in front of us everyday, is flapping and standing proudly
straight out in the wind from our gathering numbers this day
... and we shout again,
and ... again ...
... and again ...

THANKS FOR REMEMBERING!

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**APVNV Pat (Beanie) Camunes
D/4/31 196th Lt. Inf. Bde
Tay Ninh 12/66-4/67 Tam Ky 4/67-12/67**

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