

One cold morning while the Chapel was being constructed, Doc discovered a note scrawled on a piece of scrap plywood that read, "Why did you lock the doors when I needed to come in?" Since that time, the doors of the Chapel have always been open.

9 Flag Retirement Area. Every year on Flag Day in June, hundreds of American flags are "retired" in this area. Flags are honored and ceremoniously burned, and the ashes are covered with an American flag and buried on the Memorial grounds.



10 Medal of honor bricks. The black granite bricks that line this walkway are for Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. The David Westphall Veterans Foundation Board members select 8 names every year from a list of the hundreds of Medal of Honor recipients. They seek to add at least one black granite brick from each branch of service every year. Eight new Medal of Honor bricks are installed every September on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend during the Brick Ceremony.



11 Doc and Jeanne Westphall Gravesite. Doc passed away in 2003 and was buried here with full military honors.

His wife, Jeanne, was laid to rest beside him in this small cemetery. Their eldest son, Lt. David Westphall III, was buried in 1968 in the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, long before the Memorial was established.

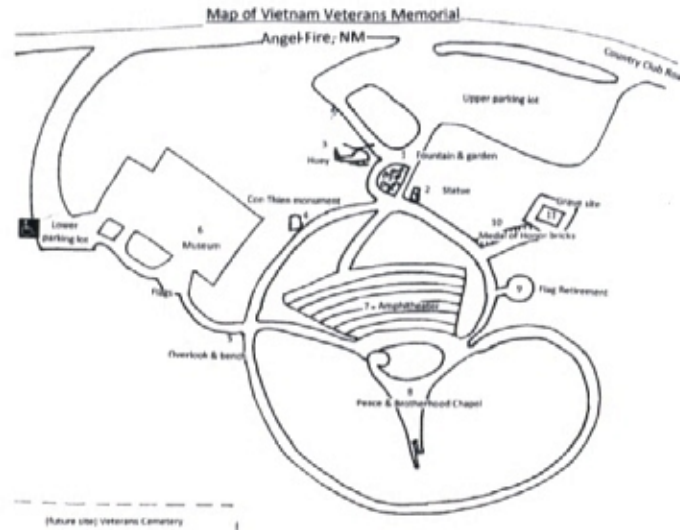


During the amphitheater's construction, contractors uncovered the remains of Doc's dog, Anna. Anna's remains were reburied just outside this small cemetery, near her master, Doc.

The black rod-iron fence and the surrounding trees were donated in 2006 by riders from Run for the Wall.

The History of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Grief over the loss of their eldest son, David, prompted Victor "Doc" Westphall, his wife, Jeanne, and their younger son, Walter to build the Peace and Brotherhood Chapel. Completed in May, 1971, for many years the Chapel was the only building on the site. A few years after the Chapel was completed, Doc formed the David Westphall Veterans Foundation (DWVF) and sought permanent sources of funding for the Memorial. In 1982 the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) assumed ownership. In 1985 they broke ground on the Memorial museum and visitors center. The museum was designed to compliment the flowing architecture of the Chapel so it is primarily underground. In 1998 the DAV returned ownership to the DWVF. In 2004 the DWVF approached New Mexico State Parks, seeking a new source of funding for the Memorial. On Veterans Day, 2005, the site became the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park. In 2009-10 the facility was completely renovated, and the museum was rededicated as the Westphall Visitor Center. On July 3, 2017, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was officially transferred to the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) whose motto is "serving those who have served."



Thank you for visiting Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
We hope your visit is interesting, educational, memorable and healing.

Updated March 2018

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Self-guided Tour



Hours of Operation
Visitor Center & Gift Shop 9-5 Daily
Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas
Chapel & grounds always open



PO Box 242
Angel Fire, New Mexico 87710
(575) 377-2293

1 The Tranquility Fountain. This beautiful fountain was donated in 2012 by veteran Herman Olguin (Sgt. US Army) and offers visitors a sense of tranquility as water gently flows over the native rocks into a reflective pool at the base.



Blue Star Garden. These lovely gardens are maintained by the volunteers from the Angel Fire Blue Star Garden club.

2 The Sculpture. On Memorial Day, 2003, Taos artist, Doug Scott, dedicated his interpretation of a soldier's dilemma of writing home to his parents and describing what he is seeing and experiencing in the war.



3 Viking Surprise, UH-1D 64-13670. This helicopter served with the 121st Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) as a smoke ship and earned the name "Viking Surprise." It was badly damaged on Easter Sunday, 1967 while assisting a rescue operation in the Mekong Delta region. The Viking Surprise was rebuilt on the USNS Corpus Christi where an inspection revealed it had been riddled with 135 bullet holes. After it was repaired the Viking Surprise returned to combat, and later came back to the US where it was put into storage until 1976.



Eventually it was acquired by the New Mexico National Guard. In 1999 the Guard donated the Viking Surprise to the Memorial. From October 2016 through May 2017 the Viking Surprise underwent a much needed restoration. Current and retired Guardsmen maintain it to this day.

4 The Stone Monument. In 1994 Victor "Doc" Westphall visited Con Thien, Vietnam, where his son, David, had been killed in an ambush on May, 22, 1968. Before departing Doc took a handful of New Mexico soil to scatter at the site of the ambush. Doc brought Vietnamese soil back with him and scattered it in this spot. In Vietnamese the word Con Thien means the "hill of angels."



The Bricks. The red bricks that line the walkways honor our veterans. Bricks are purchased by a Veteran's family or friends from the David Westphall Veterans Foundation (DWVF), a non-profit organization that partners with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The veteran's name, branch of the military and dates of service are laser-inscribed on the brick. Two stars signify that a serviceman was killed in action (KIA); one star on the left means that the serviceman was missing in action (MIA) and a star on the right indicates the serviceman was a prisoner of war (POW). Bricks can be purchased at the gift shop and are installed on Labor Day weekend by Run for the Wall riders.

5 The flags below. The flags below mark the future site of the Angel Fire Veterans Cemetery which is one of four state veterans cemetery sites selected in New Mexico in accordance with federal standards.



6 The Museum. Completed in 1986, the Westphall Visitors Center includes a library of over 800 books and a KIA photo collection of over 2000 photographs of servicemen who were killed in action in Vietnam. The museum hosts exhibits of memorabilia, touchable displays, photos, artwork & sculptures that provide a glimpse into the daily life of our troops. Award-winning films on the Vietnam War are shown daily.



7 The Amphitheater. In 2006-07 The State Parks constructed a new outdoor amphitheater. This amphitheater is the site of many of the annual programs at the Memorial including the Run for the Wall and Memorial Day weekend (May), Flag Day (June), Brick laying (Labor Day weekend) and, when weather permits, Veterans Day (November).



8 The Peace and Brotherhood Chapel. In the 1960's Victor Westphall (Doc) and his wife, Jeanne, purchased 800 acres of the Val Verde ranch with the intention of building a resort. On May 22, 1968, their eldest son, Lt. David Westphall III, was killed in action in Con Thien, Vietnam. Jeanne suggested building a chapel on the site to honor his service and sacrifice. In September 1968 construction of the Peace and Brotherhood Chapel began. Over the years all but 5 acres of the ranch was sold to finance the project. The Chapel was completed in May, 1971, and was one of the first memorials in the US dedicated to Vietnam Veterans.

