

VIETNAM GRAFFITI

Vietnam Graffiti Project Fact Sheet

- Volunteer-based Vietnam Graffiti Project, a Virginia 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, is founded in 1997 by Art & Lee Beltrone after their discovery of historic Vietnam-era graffiti-covered troopship bunk canvases
- 1997 discovery of canvases and other artifacts is made on the troopship *General Nelson M. Walker*, located in Virginia's James River Reserve Fleet
- In 1997, historic canvases are removed from the troopship *Walker* and transferred to museums throughout the United States including the Smithsonian Institution; the Library of Congress; Army, Navy and Marine Corps museums; and state and local repositories
- Project founders search for the men who left the graffiti or traveled to Vietnam aboard the troopship *Walker*; *Walker* veterans are interviewed and their voyage stories recorded
- In 2004 the Maritime Administration announces the troopship *Walker* will be scrapped; arrangements are made to recover more canvases and artifacts from the ship
- In 2004, plans are initiated to honor Vietnam veterans with a traveling exhibit featuring graffiti-covered canvases and stories of veterans who made the voyages
- In 2005, the Vietnam Graffiti Project forms a partnership with the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities to record and preserve *Walker* troop passenger stories
- In 2005, *Vietnam Graffiti: Messages from a Forgotten Troopship* is published (written and photographed by Art & Lee Beltrone)
- In November, 2007, Vietnam Graffiti Project's *Marking Time: Voyage to Vietnam* exhibit opens at the United States Navy Memorial, Washington, DC; the exhibit honors all Vietnam veterans and shows how Americans went to war by ship
- The Vietnam Graffiti Project develops exhibit gallery talks and other public programs (often with Vietnam veteran participation); Project founders continue to attend veteran reunions and interview men who went to war aboard the troopship *Walker*
- In September, 2009 a second *Marking Time: Voyage to Vietnam* exhibit opens on the West Coast at the Washington State Historical Society
- East and West coast exhibits currently continue to travel to new venues

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Project Founders

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