

Message on Wednesday, July 16, 2025

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

"What's In a Name?"

- Louis R. Lordi
- Joseph A. Molettiere
- Henry H. Strong, Jr.
- David R. Weigner

Good Morning Friends:

Do you recognize any of the names above?

I would like to share with you an experience Martha and I had on Saturday... perhaps you were able to take advantage of it as well.

During the past week, Maule Memorial Park in Montgomery Township was host to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial "The Wall That Heals," a three-quarter scale, 375 foot replica of the original Vietnam War Memorial that stands in Washington, DC. The 140 numbered panels are constructed of Avonite and are supported by an aluminum frame. The Wall travels across the country in a 51 foot tractor trailer and is erected in towns and villages for short periods as a fitting reminder of the 58,273 servicemen and 8 service women who died while serving our country, and whose names are engraved in the Wall, just as they are in Washington.

I will confess to you that when plans for the Wall in DC were first released, I was not a fan. Used to seeing the grandeur of the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Korean War Memorial, the Washington Monument, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, VA, and other memorials.....a grouping of panels with just a list of names did not seem like a fitting tribute. But once it was built and after standing in front of those panels and taking it all in...it was breathtaking and eye opening. It forces you to understand that the engraved names represent more than just "names"...they represent humans; fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, friends, best friends, high school buddies, co-workers and neighbors. They represent dreams, ambitions, contributions, birthday parties, Confirmations, new jobs, promotions, weddings, vacations, and futures that would never be realized; the loss of their laughter, presence, encouragement, and given the fact that their average age was just 23 years and one month old (the youngest was 15 years old) - they also represent lives that would never have the chance to reach their full potential.

And then you looked to the left and right of the panel your at which you are honorably staring to see the vast overwhelming number of other "names". Thousands of them.

And notwithstanding anyone's particular thoughts about the war either at the time or even now, you think about the incalculable price that was paid to defend our democracy...and the similar amount of loss that was sustained.

Who were the people behind the "names" above? They were actually each residents of North Wales Borough who died in the war. So, I did some research:

- **SP4 Robert Lordi** was a member of U.S. Army Reserves, "A" Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry of the 199th Infantry Brigade. He was 20 years old when on May 16, 1968 he sustained and died of multiple fragmentation wounds in a gun battle in Gia Dinh Province in South Vietnam.
- **Lance Cpl. Joseph Molettiere** was a member of "E" Company, 2nd Battalion of the 26th Marines and the 3rd Marine Division. He was 18 years old when on February 5, 1968 he succumbed to hostile small arms fire in Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam.
- **Capt. Henry Strong, Jr.**, was a United States Navy Pilot assigned to the USS Hancock of the 7th Fleet. He was 45 years old when, on May 25, 1972 his plane was struck by hostile fire and crashed while returning from a bombing run. He remains Missing In Action.
- **Capt. David Weigner** was a member of the United States Army Advance Team Tactical Intelligence Staff. He was 26 years old when on July 27, 1970 he was struck by hostile small arms fire and died in Phu Yen Province, South Vietnam.

This brings it all a little closer to home, doesn't it? Each one of them a hero. We may have not have known these gentlemen, but they were actually our neighbors. They are not just an unknown "name." As the scripture quoted above indicates, we are all more than just "names." God knows who we are. He knew us even before we were born. And He is with us every day hoping that the efforts we undertake are pursued to the Glory of His Holy "Name."

I took these photos while we were standing there admiring the Wall and remembering the all but incomprehensible sacrifices, courage and simplistic honor that it represents. All those "names!" It was inspiring to see veterans standing in front of the wall searching for those with whom they fought. It was graceful to see the volunteers from our own community working with others to help find their relatives or friends and then doing a pencil rubbing so it could be taken home as a reminder of all that their friend's "name" represents still today. We had a chance to speak with them...one of the volunteers came to study here from India to get his Masters degree and now runs a rehabilitation facility in Blue Bell; another from Lansdale was drafted out of High School in 1970 but rather than being sent overseas, he said he was "sent to Tampa, FL and the US Central Command to help protect the Phillies at Spring Training Camp in Clearwater from attack across the Gulf of Mexico!"

Many of our St. Peter's family also served our country honorably, and made it back home safely. Some are also doing so today. I think the traveling Wall stands as a tribute and represents them too. All to say that when we hear a name or see the letters

comprising a name for those we don't know, it helps us appreciate the "appointment" they were given when they were born. Perhaps we can reflect just a little bit more now upon the fact of how their "names" make us feel in the peace we are able to enjoy based upon the service and calling their "names" represent - that are forever etched on a traveling Wall, in our memory, and in our hearts.

Have blessed Wednesday. Peace be with you. See you on Sunday.

Bernie Heinze