



For Immediate Release

3 February 2009
Mineral Wells, Texas

Vietnam Memorial Garden Project Officially Begun

On Saturday, January 17, a bright, mild winter morning in North Texas, ground was officially broken for The National Vietnam War Museum's most ambitious project to date. About 100 people joined the Board of Directors and major donors of the project to launch the Vietnam Memorial Garden effort.

At the groundbreaking were representatives from the Brazos Foundation, Kirk Horton and family, and the Friends of the Museum. Two other major donors – Baum, Carlock, Bumgardner Funeral Home, and Mrs. Betty Boyd Dettre, widow of Major General Rexford H. Dettre, Jr. (USAF Ret.), were unable to attend, but were represented by members of the Board of Directors. The major donors were presented with a specially designed plaque commemorating the event, while the other attendees received an annotated plastic shovel as a token gift.

When it opens to the public in May of this year, the garden will feature a permanent one-half scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. Located in a grove of Arizona Cypress backing on U.S. Highway 180, the gleaming black aluminum panels will contain the most up-to-date listing of names available. Because of its design and construction, the museum will be able to update the panels on an annual basis to match the wall in Washington.

With the site currently graded, project manager Ralph Lister is scheduled to begin construction on the wall in early February, weather permitting, with labor being provided by the Friends of the Museum. The Vietnam Memorial Garden, which will house the wall, will be designed and constructed by the Parker County Master Gardeners and the Palo Pinto County Master Gardeners, again with an assist from the Friends of the Museum. The garden will not be completed until after the Memorial Day ceremony to allow visitors to congregate in that area for the wall's public debut.

The Board of Directors would like to extend an invitation to all Vietnam veterans and their families who are able to attend the event. Mark your calendars to be at the museum site, 12685 Mineral Wells Highway (U. S. 180), in time for the 11:00 a.m. ceremony. We are expecting participation from the American Legion and the VFW, the Patriot Guard Riders, a uniformed bugler, 21-gun salute, color guard, food vendors, and special guest and keynote speaker Joseph L. Galloway, co-author of *We Were Soldiers Once...And Young* and *We Are Soldiers Still*. This is a once in a lifetime event. Don't miss it.



Donors' Commemorative Plaque



Major Donors and Board Members

Edward T. Luttenberger
Communications Director