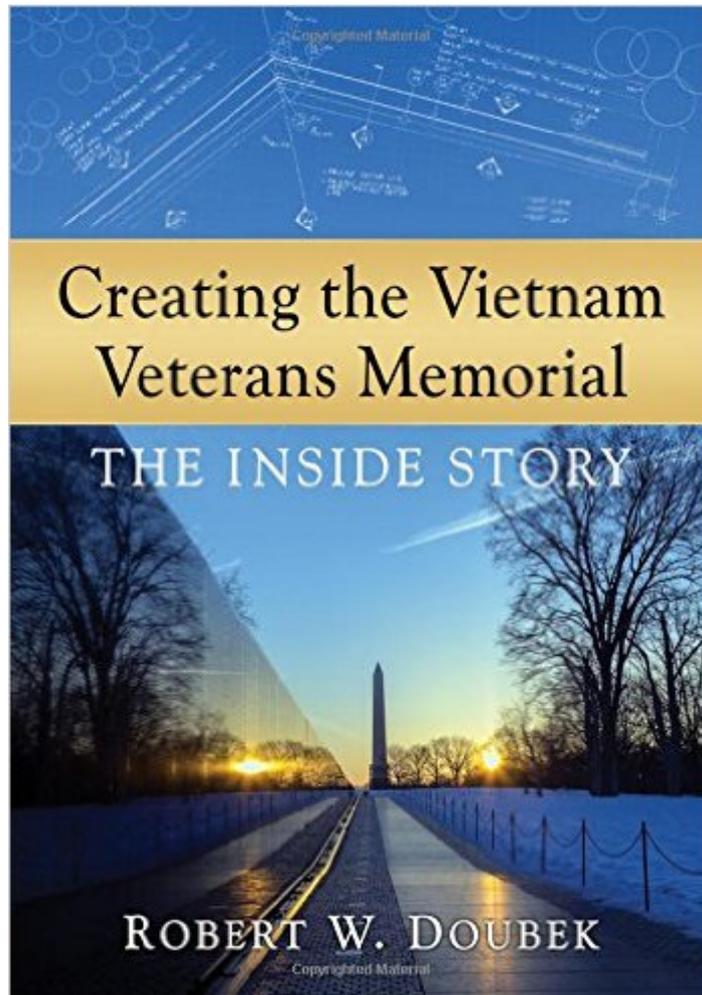


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# Creating The Vietnam Veterans Memorial The Inside Story



## Synopsis

Since its dedication in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has become an American cultural icon symbolizing the war in Vietnam--the defining experience of the Baby Boom generation. The black granite wall of names is one of the most familiar media images associated with the war, and after three decades the memorial remains one of the nation's most visited monuments. While the memorial has enjoyed broad acceptance by the American public, its origins were both humble and contentious. A grassroots effort launched by veterans with no funds, the project was completed in three and a half years. But an emotional debate about aesthetics and the interpretation of heroism, patriotism and history nearly doomed the project. Written from an insider's perspective, this book tells the complete story of the memorial's creation amid Washington politics, a nationwide design competition and the heated controversy over the winning design and its creator.

## Book Information

Paperback: 324 pages

Publisher: McFarland (June 18, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786479094

ISBN-13: 978-0786479092

Product Dimensions: 10.1 x 6.8 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (15 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #375,629 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in [Books > Arts &](#)

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## Customer Reviews

If you go to the Memorial Day Writer's Project at [the Wall](#) • on Memorial Day or Veterans Day (as I've been fortunate to do on and off for the past 10 years) you never know who might be singing, reading, or reminiscing about that theatre of courage known as the Vietnam War. This past November, in addition to hearing my favorite war poets, I enjoyed a reading from *Creating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: The Inside Story* (2015) by author Robert W. Doubek, a pioneer of the memorial. As I left, I asked how much it would be to buy his book. In apologetic tones, told me the price (\$35). It was a pittance in exchange for the 300+ page massive volume, with many

photographs. I gladly paid it and became the owner of this gripping account of how the memorial moved from an idea in the mind of veteran Jan Scruggs to the reality of names in a sacred space (the eloquent name of one of the book's chapters). Here's an excerpt: "What about a memorial?" the man said hesitantly. "Lean, with an angular face, he wore Levi's and sat hunched over at the far end of the rectangle, keenly observing the proceedings." "What do you mean?" someone asked. "I mean having a national memorial for Vietnam Veterans." "Vietnam veterans don't need a memorial. They need better benefits." No one spoke in support, and I felt sorry for him. As the room emptied, I walked around the table to the man, who stood alone, slouching. About five feet nine inches tall, at most, he was thin with drooping shoulders. His dark brown hair fell to cover most of his ears and forehead. I introduced myself. He didn't look at me, and gave me a limp handshake. His name was Jan Scruggs. "I think a memorial is a good idea," I said. "Well, what do I have to do to do it myself?"

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