



JAN SCRUGGS volunteered for service in Vietnam and suffered shrapnel wounds over much of his body when his unit was ambushed in May 1969. After the war, while studying for a graduate degree, Scruggs researched the psychological conflicts experienced by people who survive tragedies. In 1979 he decided a memorial to those who died in Vietnam would help veterans—and the nation—deal with the war's emotional wounds. His idea turned into the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, "the Wall," dedicated in November 1982. Today, Scruggs is working on the creation of an education center near the Wall. (See pg. 8 for an update on the center.)

Born— Washington, D.C., March 11, 1950.

Residence today— Annapolis, Maryland, on the waterfront with a view of the U.S. Naval Academy.

College degrees— Bachelor's degree and master's in counseling psychology, American University; law degree, University of Maryland.

In Vietnam— April 1969 to April 1970; D Company, 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 199th Light Infantry Brigade; left the Army as a corporal.

Current positions— President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, chairman of the Selective Service National Appeal Board.

What do you see as the legacy of the Vietnam War?

— The Vietnam War frames the issues for other engagements. The basic lesson of Vietnam is that war is extremely expensive. Financially, it is a very big event, and it is a very big expense for the people who end up getting wounded and dying. That is the big lesson of Vietnam: Think things through before you go to war.

Do you think anything could have been done differently that would have changed the outcome?

— I think the trick is counterinsurgency. The people of South Vietnam, or wherever you want to go, need to have a strong army with an allegiance to a central government. We provide them with air power, equipment, some artillery battalions and so forth. There could have been a more robust effort that combined military and political and cultural forces. Maybe if there had been a messianic leader in South Vietnam to go toe to toe with Ho Chi Minh; to say, We are our own country, and we're going to fight to the last man.

In the '60s and '70s, what music did you listen to?

— This was a renaissance of music. The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Motown, the Kinks. Everything was so good, people are still listening to it. For me it was the Four Tops, the Supremes. I loved all the Motown stuff. Also the Beach Boys, Frankie Valli.

Were there movies about that era that you liked? — I thought the best cinematography was from the documentaries. I liked *Brothers in War*, about the boys of Charlie Company. I think the treatment of Stanley Karnow's book *Vietnam: A History* in the 13-part PBS series was pretty good. *Full Metal Jacket*, I liked that. I thought *Platoon* really captured the confusion, the artillery landing short, the people not knowing which direction to shoot. And I liked *We Were Soldiers*.

Any fashions you would be embarrassed to wear today?

— It would have to be the bell-bottom trousers and my hair. I was in the Army for two years, so I said, I'm not going to cut my hair for two years. I had long flowing locks, paired with my bell-bottoms. I looked like a poster child from Woodstock.

Is there any other memory you would like to share?

— I remember how bad it was coming back from Vietnam. We were so vilified, and it was so hurtful. In one sense it wasn't personal. People could not separate the war from the warrior. With the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, we said, You can despise the war or support the war; it doesn't matter. This is for the people who served and a special honor for the fallen. So we made that message, and people automatically got it. H