

Swords to Plowshares Memorial Belltower

Healing the Moral Injury of War to Let Peace and Freedom Ring!

Washington D.C. or Bust!
We urgently need YOUR SUPPORT for
Lincoln Memorial / Vietnam Memorial Installation
*****24 Hour/ 2 Week Vigil*****
MAY 14 – 27, 2015



Please consider volunteering and making a donation!

The 24 foot tall touring tower is covered with over a thousand silver wind-blown 'bricks' made from recycled beer and soda cans. It was created by volunteers and dedicated by Veterans For Peace to ALL victims and veterans of war, regardless of race, faith or nationality. Wherever the tower has appeared, visitors have added personal inscriptions to the cans, rung the bell, and shared stories about how they have suffered from war.

We just found out our DC permit will require us to maintain a 24 hour vigil at the Belltower. This is a huge opportunity with thousands of visitors to the area around Memorial Day, but it is also a huge challenge. Please CONTACT US if you can be in the D.C. area during May about potentially doing a shift with a partner at the tower. Even if you CANNOT come to DC please DONATE so we can meet expenses of veterans and volunteers who can. The installation is being planned in conjunction with the arrival of Sam's Ride for Peace, VFP lobby days and Vietnam Full Disclosure's Memorial Day 'Letters to the Wall' Effort.

Sign up for one shift or many! Volunteers needed for:

- Tower Raising and Stand Down (4-5 strong volunteers) on May 14 and May 27.
- Vigil - participate in 2 person shifts, at night, from May 15 – May 26 period.
- Food and Housing - bring food for one or more days or provide local housing.
- Tower staffing - instruct visitors in creating a commemorative inscription.
- Publicity/media outreach – help distribute flyers, contact media and get the word out!
- Documentation – help with graphics, video, webpage, and public history interviews.

To **REGISTER TO VOLUNTEER** send an email to: progerehrich@gmail.com or stpbelltower2018@gmail.com.

To **DONATE** via **PAYPAL** click on the Belltower Memorial link at: <http://ncveteransforpeace.org/contacts/contacts.html>

BACKGROUND: (Follow the project at: <https://www.facebook.com/STPBelltower>)

In addition to the shimmer bricks that people can inscribe and the big old bell, the touring tower has a reproduction of the bronze door on a WWI-era belltower in Raleigh, NC with the inscription, "And They Shall Beat Their Swords into Plowshares." As part of a public history project we also will be asking people to share their positive examples and visions of how that might be done. We are creating a long black mesh wall for posting people's writings - including 'Letters to the Vietnam Wall' - and some history about how veterans and others have worked to free the world from militarism.

Veterans and victims of war and their relatives know that the forms of suffering are complex and not suffered by only one nation. Nationally-chauvinistic ceremonies that remember only the American deaths, and glorify them as sacrifices for freedom create cover for politicians and war profiteers. However they repress the sort of honest dialogue essential for healing and for preventing future wars and future trauma. It is well known that war leads to violations of human rights and civil liberties at home and abroad. Isn't it truer to the core values of democracy,

and more supportive to veterans trying to recover from moral injuries, to take time to remember that ALL suffering from war is tragic, and that heroic and horrible acts are committed on all sides?

We hope to continue to build this project internationally through the 2018 Centennial of the Armistice that was supposed to end "The War to End All War." By involving people in public rituals mourning ALL the dead and wounded as OUR dead and wounded and challenging the myth of war as "the price of freedom" we hope to help reignite the international movement for disarmament (or "beating swords into plowshares") that flourished at the end of World War I. A century later, we hope that global awareness of our commonalities will have become stronger than racism and national and religious chauvinism, and the prophecy of worldwide disarmament and an abolition of war may be fulfilled.

Mourn ALL the Dead and Wounded, Rid the Earth of the Waste of War, Beat Swords into Plowshares, Let Peace and Freedom Ring!