

**Brunswick Memorial Funeral Home, East Brunswick, NJ**  
*Mount Sinai Memorial Chapels, East Brunswick, NJ*

“Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall”

Brunswick Memorial Home teamed up with Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Post 133 (VFW Post 133) and many other local volunteers in coordination with the Township of East Brunswick to bring the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) to the East Brunswick Community Arts Center on Memorial Day Weekend, May 23 through May 27, 2024. The AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall is an 80% replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Wall contains the names of U.S. Military personnel who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Accompanying the Wall will be Cost of Freedom tributes to every U.S. military action since World War I. The American Veterans Traveling Tribute is an independent organization, committed to travel the U.S. to honor and remember those who served, and pay tribute to those who gave all in service. Built in 1998, AVTT's Traveling Vietnam Wall is the largest replica Wall traveling the U.S. It provides those who are not able to visit the memorial in Washington D.C. with the opportunity to honor and pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the Vietnam War.

Meetings began in November 2023 and a board of directors was created to steer head this project in the right direction. Randy Gagnon, a funeral director and one of the owners of Brunswick Memorial Home, was on that board. Meetings were conducted every other week at first and then once every week in town at the VFW post and eventually at the Community Arts Center. The two weeks directly prior to the event there were meetings every other day. Individuals who were a part of the VFW post, local businesses, the town's economic developer and OEM coordinator, and local councilman comprised the board. Every detail of the event from logistics, fund raising, volunteers, etc. was decided by this group.

A motorcade escort was scheduled on Wednesday, May 22 to welcome the Wall as it arrives at the East Brunswick's Community Arts Center. The funeral home was outside to welcome them as they passed. An opening ceremony was held on Thursday, May 23, at 10:00am. Following the ceremony, the Wall was open to visitors through Memorial Day, May 27. Throughout the five days there were guest speakers including a general, a past commander of the national VFW and other heads of local/national veteran's organizations. Other attractions were a New Jersey State Police helicopter landing, a 9/11 tribute, a F-16 Fighter Jet flyover, raffles, and much more. A museum was created on site displaying memorabilia donated by the local historical society and members of the VFW post from the Vietnam War.

Our Brunswick Memorial Home Care Team helped erect and take down the wall, assisted families on finding their loved one's name on the wall using a QR code to find the panel and location, cleaned up, drove golf carts to assist elderly and whatever else was needed. Our Care Team created a video tribute using photos provided by members of our local VFW. The video was a montage of images from their service during in the Vietnam War. They were so touched by the video they decided to display it at the in-house museum throughout the weekend. In addition, the Care Team created prayer cards in honor of those who gave all to go around 100+ flags that were displayed at the event. Emails were sent out to the funeral home's contacts to notify them of the event and Facebook posts were also created. Some of the Care Team were former military and others had family members who served. The whole event moved them and brought an increased level of respect and admiration towards those who lost their lives during the Vietnam War and other US military actions.

The Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall brought in tens of thousands of people over the course of the event. A strong belief in patriotism was felt by all. Locals who may not have been able to make it to Washington D.C. had an opportunity to view the wall and experience the event. Veterans of the VFW Post 133 and those in surrounding towns had a sense of pride in honoring their fallen veterans. The Wall has become a somber and sacred tribute to the more than 58,000 men and women who gave their lives during the Vietnam War. On Memorial Day 2024, we commemorated their sacrifices and the sacrifices of men and women in so many other US military actions. Let us also not forget those who have passed from their wounds upon returning home. Freedom is not Free.